

Forum

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NO MAGIC FROM BHANDARI

Romesh Bhandari did not bring any magic formula to solve the ethnic crisis, contrary to many people's expectations on this his second visit to Sri Lanka in recent times.

The Indian Foreign Secretary repeated the message he brought on

his previous visit : that India was deeply disturbed by the plans to set up a powerful Voice of America station here, the most powerful outside the United States. India was also concerned about the future of Trincomalee harbour ; and about the presence in Sri Lanka of

foreign agencies like Mossad and the SAS.

Mr. Bhandari is believed to have sought reassurances from the Government on these matters.

Although he did not bring any hard pre-Summit proposals on the

ethnic issue, he is believed to have suggested a diluted version of the original Indian sponsored "Annexure C" which was earlier rejected by Sri Lanka, following Sinhala and Buddhist opposition.

The Indian Foreign

Secretary's discussions with Sri Lankan leaders revealed one thing : India was evidently *not* treating Sri Lanka's ethnic issue as a major problem for India. India's view is that the problem is Sri Lanka's and a solution has to be initiated by Sri Lanka.

UNP MP'S

SECURITY SITUATION

REBEL

For the first time, there was a near rebellion by the UNP's hitherto docile MP's after the holocaust at Anuradhapura. They voiced the dissatisfaction spreading among the people about the security situation in the country, at their Parliamentary group meeting chaired by the President.

Some UNP MPs commented that this was the first time that there had been such a revolt. The reaction to the prevailing situation in the country had been sharp, they said.

The President has now decided to delegate presidential executive powers to MPs, in their electorates. This would

make the MPs happy once again. It will enhance their power and prestige in their electorates. By this move the President could induce a temporary lull.

The Prime Minister too, it is believed, supports this move. It will reduce the power of the National Security Minister, who, it is reported, opposed it though he is on record as having publicly said that he has in fact suggested it. Later Lalith Athulathmudali responded angrily with a reference to throat-cutters at times of crisis

Some political observers commented that this move to

delegate executive powers to MPs could be a sop to the TULF to return to Parliament. It could be another form of devolution of power, they said.

However, Constitution experts say that under the present Constitution the President can delegate executive powers only to Cabinet Ministers. But, given the UNP government's past record this may not be such a formidable

obstacle. The President can make all MP's Cabinet Ministers. There are already about 90 Ministers and Deputy Ministers of various descriptions.

In the meantime, the government has decided to form a National Auxiliary Force to assist the security forces. Legislation for this, drafted within the emergency regulations, is now ready.

Many fear that the new army will consist of JSS storm-troopers who will be used for repression in the south exclusively.

Windfall for MP's

Members of Parliament will get a windfall of three lakhs of rupees each. These are arrears of salary calculated back from their recent salary increase.

Wellessa Peasants in Custody

The peasants of Wellessa who are losing their land to a mutli-national sugar company, are being rounded up by the police and locked up. Eighteen were taken into custody recently, and eighty-three more on a list were being looked for. Their crime ? A few days earlier these people had gathered at the gates of the MNC's office at Pelawatte and protested about their cultivated lands outside the demarcated area of the sugar company being bull-dozed by the Company.

The peasants are to be charged for unlawful assembly, on orders from above, the police told lawyers who called at the police station.

OUT OF BOUNDS

Users of the British Council Library off Duplication Road in Colombo 3 are an angry lot these days. They have nowhere to park their cars. No parking is permitted inside the premises, and no parking is permitted in the vicinity outside because a VIP has

bought a multi-million rupee house nearby. So attendance at the library is dropping off because most of the patrons are car owners who are not used to walking great distances. The police explain that they have orders to keep the area clear, for security reasons.

They are building a ten million rupee summer palace for Mr. Premadasa, the Prime Minister, at Embilipitiya. Mr. Premadasa will be in residence for about two weeks at Embilipitiya this month, for the Gamudava exhibition and carnival. He will also celebrate his birthday there, which coincides each year with the Gamudava bajau — a movable feast held annually in different parts of the country.

The ten million rupee summer palace for the Prime

Minister has the view of the Chandrika Wewa. The original estimate for constructing the luxurious residence was seven million rupees. It was later revised to ten million to include extra fittings and decorations.

For the approach road and bridge to the summer palace they are spending another five lakhs of rupees.

And for up-grading an existing bungalow nearby for the Prime Minister to supervise

work on the summer palace and other Gamudava constructions, they have spent a further twelve lakhs.

Earlier, another palatial mansion was constructed for the Prime Minister in Kandy. On a lofty site in Bahirava Kande, and commanding a majestic view, this mansion has been reserved for Mr. Premadasa's exclusive use. It remains under tight security, rarely used.

A ten Million Rupee Summer Palace

Israel's economic mess

By : SAYBHAN SAMAT

Since the late 1960s, the Israeli government has been spending beyond its means. Military spending increased from 5% of the GNP in 1961 to 30% in 1982. The government spends billions of dollars annually on food, fuel and housing subsidies and on constructing settlements in the occupied West Bank. For years, Israeli workers enjoyed wage increases tied to the rising cost of living index.

As a result of this over-spending a permanent feature of the Israel economy became its budget deficits which the government tried to cover either by printing new money or by incurring foreign debts.

The printing of new money led to high inflation — the rate rose from 35% in 1972 to 400% in 1984. Since wage increases were linked to the inflation rate, wages rose accordingly. Higher wages not only caused higher budget deficits but also pushed up the cost of production, thereby reducing the competitiveness of Israeli products on foreign markets. Declining exports and rising imports resulted in large trade deficits, increasing from \$ 1.2 billion in 1980 to \$ 3.5 billion in 1983.

Israel has accumulated a foreign debt of almost \$ 30 billion and needs \$ 5 billion annually just to service its outstanding foreign debt. Today, Israel has the highest per capita foreign debt in the world! Its foreign reserves have declined from \$ 3.5 billion in 1980 to 1.2 billion in 1983.

The rising budget and trade deficits and the accumulation of a huge foreign debt have resulted in the depreciation of the Israel currency to significantly low levels. In 1979, 5.5 Israel Shekels used to buy one U.S. \$, today 730 Shekels are needed.

In its 1973 war with Egypt, Israel not only incurred heavy losses in terms of men and

materials, but its economy was also severely hurt by the subsequent oil embargo and price hike.

The miscalculated invasion of Lebanon in 1982 also dealt a devastating blow to the Israel economy. This military expedition cost Israel \$ 3.4 billion in the initial operation, more than 600 dead and almost 4,000 wounded, in addition to an expenditure of \$ 1 million per day during the entire period of the occupation of Lebanon.

The Israeli economy, which had been registering a decline throughout the 70s, slid into a severe crisis and recorded a zero growth rate by the end of 1982, rising to a mere 1% in 1983 and a little over 1% in 1984. At present the rate of unemployment stands at 7%, the highest rate in Israel in the past 20 years.

As the Israel economy grows increasingly unstable, the number of Jewish immigrants is declining, while the number of skilled workers emigrating from the country is rising.

The recent airlift of 10,000 black Jews from Ethiopia was simply a propaganda exercise to extract more donations and charity from outside Israel.

For the fiscal year 1984/85 the U.S. provided Israel with 1.2 billion in economic aid and 1.6 billion in military aid. However, in response to a request for an additional \$ 800

million, the U.S. government has promised only \$ 400 million.

Expecting the U.S. government to be more generous to rescue Israel from its current financial crisis and keep its economy afloat, Israel has requested \$ 1.9 billion in economic aid and 2.2 billion in military aid for the fiscal year 1985/86.

From an American perspective Israel is now more of a financial liability than a strategic asset and it was this consideration that led the U.S. administration to advise the Israeli government to tighten its belt. Under pressure from the U.S. the Israeli government recently cancelled fuel subsidies, reduced food subsidies and imposed a ceiling on wage increases. These austerity measures have already created social tensions and any further reduction in social services would further increase unrest which the Israeli government can hardly afford to sustain.

It is now obvious that neither the generosity of Washington nor an increase in the flow of charity from foreign sources can help Israel to deal with its long persisting economic problems.

For Israel, the day of reckoning has come; Israel recognises this, even if Sri Lankan leaders do not!

SHOULD THE PEOPLE TRUST THESE RULERS?

— Ven. Labuduwe Siridhamma

If the terrorists could get away from Anuradhapura after such a devastating massacre of the innocents, if the security situation at Anuradhapura, an ancient city of priceless archaeological treasures, is such, what could be said about the situation in the rest of the country?

This question is asked in a statement issued by the chairman of the Eksath Tri

Sinhala Vimukti Sangvidhanaya and the Sri Lanka Jatika Bauddha Sammelanaya, the Venerable Dr. Labuduwe Siridhamma Thera.

The statement adds: Could the people continue to place their trust in the present rulers? Should the people continue to follow them?

"The time when these rulers should have resigned is long past", says the statement.

TOPICS

RATS AT AIR LANKA

Is it not a case of rats deserting a sinking ship but abandoning a doomed airline. Many in the top rungs of Air Lanka (after having enjoyed more than the perks offered by the Bird of Paradise) are privately forecasting a crash landing. A possible future public investigation looms large, so like the blind mice they have decided to run.

A big one who has always played safe by uplifting opposition politicians' low priced tickets to 1st class status is already exposing the misdeeds to eager ears to save his skin. He says he is quitting before it is too late to make an emergency exit.

A SEARCH FOR SYMBOLS

The government's propagandists proudly announced in every foreign capital that the former I.G.P. was a Tamil. Will they now go around trumpeting that the present I.G.P. is married to a Tamil? She comes from a respectable Tamil Catholic family in Mannar.

The government seems anxious only to chase after symbols to solve the ethnic crisis — oaths, flags and dropping names.

LIST OF PRIORITIES

Appearing on Television long after the Anuradhapura incident, National Security Minister Lalith Athulathmudali smartly shifted the current public opinion against himself by declaring, "People are criticising the security Forces."

However, two prominent members of the Cabinet seem to think otherwise and have expressed their dissatisfaction with the National Security Minister's performance.

Lalith Athulathmudali still seems most relaxed, unlike many of his countrymen. During the height of the period of tension he calmly distributed awards to Mahapola scholars.

HIGH TENSION

Pressmen accompanying Minister Gamini Dissanayake in his Anuradhapura walkabout were in for a rude shock.

An elderly man spat on the ground as the Minister's party were engaged in open air discussion. When officials quizzed him the old man spat again.

Before the Minister's party sat for lunch a man seated nearby shouted "what the hell is the government doing" several times. All attempts to restrain him were not successful.

Disguised Fuel Adjustment Charge

Has the Electricity Board, while claiming to have withdrawn the Fuel Adjustment Charge, incorporated this same charge in its new tariffs? The new tariffs cost the consumer more than when the Fuel Adjustment Charge was in operation, because that charge was levied only above a certain

level of consumption. Applying the new tariffs at all levels has resulted in bills which are much higher for everybody, including the small and very sparing consumer, than when the FAC was levied.

This question has been taken

up in the Dehiwala-Mount Lavinia Municipal Council by its opposition leader, Mr. C. V. Gooneratne, who has given notice of the following resolution:

"This Council strongly condemns the action of the

Ceylon Electricity Board, in that while claiming to have withdrawn the Fuel Adjustment Charge, has surreptitiously incorporated the same charge in its new electricity tariffs, which has resulted in the consumer having to pay more than when the Fuel

Adjustment Charge was in force.

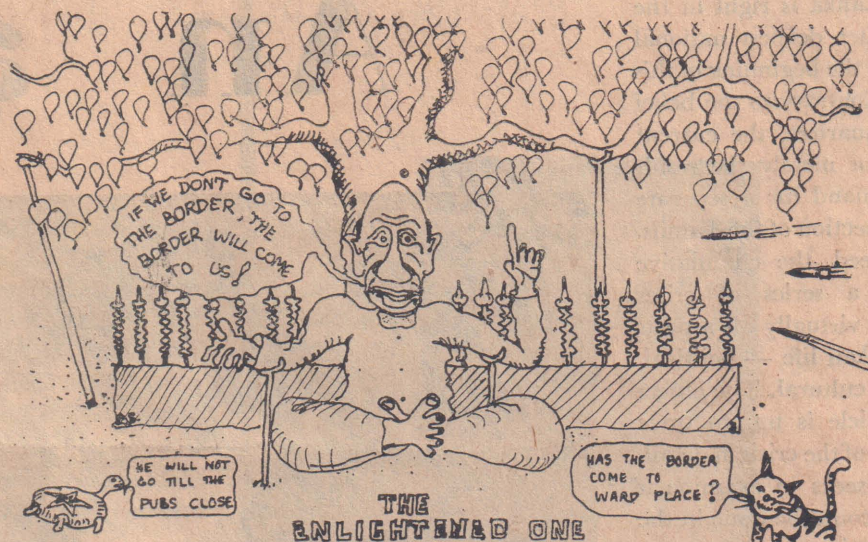
"This Council therefore requests His Excellency the President to take remedial action to protect the interests of the consumer who is already overburdened with water bills and an unbearable cost of living."

Booted out by UDA

A fifty year old establishment, a landmark in Kollupitiya, has been booted out literally on to the pavement, by the Urban Development Authority. The establishment is the well known Alexis Auction Rooms. Recently, the UDA took possession of the premises and dumped the antique furniture and other items awaiting auction on to the Galle Road pavement. The value of the items so dumped has been estimated at about two and a half million rupees. There was no fiscal's notice or court order accompanying this action, according to the auctioneers.

Alexis Auction Rooms were begun by Alexis Siriwardhane about fifty years ago. After his death the business has been continued by other members of the family. No alternative accommodation has been provided for this old establishment to continue in business.

The UDA has turfed out other occupants of premises in this vicinity and elsewhere. Sometimes these have been then given over to other private parties at nominal valuations, and in some instances they have resold them at enormous profit.



D. B. I. P. S. Siriwardhana

"Acted Arbitrarily And Capriciously"

In dismissing the application of Mr Elmore Perera, former Deputy Surveyor-General, challenging his compulsory retirement, Chief Justice S. Sharvananda said "It is with regret that I have to reject the Petitioner's present application for the reason that it does not show a violation of a fundamental right for it to be maintainable under article 126 of the Constitution, for the record discloses an instance of grave miscarriage of justice resulting from blatant abuse of power by top officials. I must say that had the the second respondent Mr. D. B. I. P. S. Siriwardhana not misused the powers delegated to him by the Cabinet and wrongly contrived to terminate the services of the petitioner prematurely on tenuous charges, the petitioner would not have been left with a stigma at the tail end of his career of efficient service which had earned him quick promotions."

"It is fundamental to fair procedure that the second respondent, Mr. Siriwardhana should have heard the petitioner before he took such a prejudicial action against the latter. He has violated this basic principle of fair procedure. He did not wait for and take into consideration the explanation of the petitioner in answer to the allegation against him.

The hurry to take action against the petitioner cannot be appreciated. The motivation for it has to be surmised.

I agree with counsel for the petitioner that the petitioner was not given a fair hearing. Certainly the conduct of the second respondent is not calculated to enhance the reputation of the State for fairness.

The powers of public authorities are essentially different from those of private persons. A private person may have unfettered discretion to regulate his affairs. But a public authority like the second respondent (Mr. Siriwardhana) is bound to act reasonably in good faith and upon lawful and relevant

A Good Time was Had by all

Two days after the massacre at Anuradhapura practically the whole of the cabinet were having a ball at the lush five star Galadari. Anuradhapura, after all, was more than a hundred miles away. Besides, no VIP was among the 146 dead. At the Galadari in Colombo the bigwigs of the government, the leaders of the nation, though not literally fiddling, were eating wedding cake. It was a colleague's daughter's wedding. Fellow guests reported that a good time was had by all.

grounds. He should observe principles of natural justice when exercising his power against any officer. The omission of the second respondent is destructive to the claim of the state, to rule of law or to the status of model employer.

"There is abundant substance in petitioner's complaint that the second respondent acted arbitrarily and capriciously."

"The second respondents decision to retire the petitioner compulsorily on the alleged ground of inefficiency is unreasonable and unjustifiable and lacked bona fides."

Death of a Monk

A scholar monk who was in the forefront of the national struggle for freedom and justice died suddenly in Kandy on May 27. He was the Venerable Dr. Labuduwe Siridhamma Nayake Thera, Viharadhipati of the Getambe Rajopavaramaya.

A few days before his death, the Venerable Siridhamma Thera was among the leading members of the Maha Sangha who performed satyakriya on the road to Parliament. He had been ailing from a heart condition and had been advised rest by his doctors.

Dr. Siridhamma was the first Buddhist monk in the world to enter Oxford University, where he completed a five year course. He also earned a P.D. His thesis was on the Buddhist theory of Karma.

Oh, what a Lovely war!

The birthday present that Dr. Colvin R. de Silva received from the President, a book entitled "The Last of the Kings" brings to my mind another "Last King", Bhadin Shah, the last of the great Moghuls, in his declining years. When of advanced age and failing mental and physical faculties and his empire crumbling around him and the enemy at his gates, his subjects unkindly but accurately said that "the borders of his empire was the distance he could relieve himself from the ramparts of the Red Fort in Delhi."

After recent events, the country's border has shrunk dramatically; in the minds of the ordinary citizen it has completely evaporated and the borders of the "Kotte Kingdom" are now confined to a few pockets in the City of Colombo.

It was said of Nero, that when Rome faced famine, and his ships were waiting in Libya for his order to load food or fine sand (used in the Colosseum to absorb the blood of fallen gladiators) he ordered sand to be loaded as the circus, the show, had to go on. Like a great Roman circus, the show goes on here regardless, leaving the spectators aghast, the tent is aflame but yet the acrobats, the jugglers, the tightrope-walkers, the chorus in their sequined costumes and a whole variety of wild beasts perform with gusto to the crack of the whip of the decrepit doddering ringmaster inebriated with power, whose band belts out the same tunes repeatedly, adding to the din.

The clowns under the great "tent" at Kotte put on their act. One says "he has no powers to issue instructions to

the troops." He quotes Churchill and says that "the ugly and unpleasant would happen," and the people must "be prepared", the motto of the Boy Scouts, to whom the ringmaster says that "he won't go home till the pubs close." One blames the B.B.C. while another says "45% of the people are against us" (a good reason for not holding elections), and that "all those against us are terrorists." A magic act that multiplies their numbers astronomically.

It's superlative entertainment except for those who are thrown to the "lions and tigers." The flames rise higher, the heat is intense, the spectators have had more than a bellyful and all they want is to get out. But all the exits are closed (except for refugees), the ringmaster holds the keys. He warns them that if they don't clap to his tune, he will use the whip of martial law. His show must go on, he says. But do we want it to go on? Who will stop the show?

University Results Suppressed

University examination results were out recently. But not results of the English Honours Course. The results are known but they are not being released. Campus gossip has it that these are being withheld because the offspring of a big wig of higher education has not done too well. Those who have passed with honours fear that some fiddling is afoot.

Hardly any one will disagree that Sri Lanka is right in the midst of her deepest national crisis since the beginning of this century. Contrary to the belief in some quarters, the current crisis is not merely the result of the demand for a separate state by a section of the Tamils. It is indeed the cumulative effect of a series of crises embracing virtually all aspects of Sri Lankan life — political, social and cultural. The object of this article is not to trace the history of the crisis in detail. It merely seeks to examine if any thing could be done in the short run which may eventually pave the way to a lasting solution.

It is significant that despite relatively minor occasional eruptions, Sri Lanka enjoyed a fair degree of social peace until the early years of this decade. Professor Robert N. Kearney, the well known student of South Asian politics, referring to the challenges facing the political order in Sri Lanka commented in 1973 as follows: "Through much of the period since independence, the political system has been concerned with questions of vertical integration involving a narrowing of the psychological and material gulf between the elite and the masses, and major strides toward satisfying emerging egalitarian sentiments have been made without severe disruption or upheaval."

Writing in April 1981, John S. Blodgett, a Princeton University researcher quoted statistics from the World Development Report, 1979 (published by the World Bank) in support of his view that Sri Lanka was a success story in the developing world. Blodgett argued that "the literacy rate of 80%, and life expectancy of 69 years, are well above the typical levels for low income countries. The distribution of income, too, is very equitable by LDC standards, and in fact comparable to that of the United States as indicated in the following selection of figures. Thus in some sense the "quality of life" may be better in Sri Lanka than in most developing countries."

FORMIDABLE MANDATE

By and large, this was the general picture of the country when President J. R. Jayewardene took over the stewardship in 1977. No other leader received such a formidable mandate at a general election as he did. He had a 5/6th majority in Parliament and he himself is reported to have claimed that the only thing that he could not do was to make a man a woman. He had considerable political experience, having been an active politician from the days of the

State Council, and has held ministerial office many a time since independence. He also enjoyed the friendship of the Western block and thus had the reassurance of their uninterrupted economic aid, most notably from the United States. Admittedly, this is rare combination of factors in favour of a Third World leader.

Despite the social welfare gains at home and a high international reputation, Sirimavo Bandaranaike received a humiliating defeat at the July 1977 Elections. Her party was reduced to a mere eight members in Parliament and could not even secure the leadership of the Opposition. Meanwhile, a new factor had emerged in Sri Lankan politics in that for the first time a Tamil minority party led by Amirthalingam became the largest component of the official Opposition in Parliament.

J. R. Jayewardene held some far reaching pledges from his election platform: among them were a package of cheaper food and consumer essentials; jobs for the young unemployed; a clean administration, a development plan leading to a Dharmishta (Righteous) society and an undertaking to call a Round Table Conference to consider the Tamil minority rights.

However, on assuming office Jayewardene had drawn up an entirely different list of priorities. The new regime immediately launched a 180 degree reversal of economic policies. Broadly speaking, the emphasis shifted from equity to growth orientation and externally from restrictive to liberal imports. A credit squeeze was imposed and interest rates allowed to rise.

consumer prices. The curtailment of food and other subsidies meant a certain amount of belt-tightening by average Sri Lankans. In order to impress prospective foreign investors the Government was determined to suppress all trade union action by the unionized labour.

Simultaneously with the launching of the new economic

a person in this frame of mind saw the Westminster system of government that prevailed until then as a nuisance and a risk. Jayewardene lost no time in changing it by using his five-sixths majority into a system, which ensured his continuance in power indefinitely. He amended the Constitution, making himself the Executive President and the current M.P.s the representatives of the new system, which he called the PR system. The new system also contained a built-in mechanism by which the President could nominate someone to take the place of an M.P. who either died, resigned or was expelled from his party. This had been introduced to by-pass the need for bye-elections.

Meanwhile, Jayewardene had contrived to remove Sirimavo Bandaranaike, his principal rival from the political arena by means of a presidential commission, which was subsequently held to be unconstitutional. He thus deprived the principal opposition party of the opportunity of fielding its most formidable candidate at the presidential election. Political observers have pointed out that Mrs. Bandaranaike might well have won the Presidency if she had been allowed to come forward. This was not an unrealistic assessment considering the fact

(Continued on page 5)

An appeal for



Mrs. Bandaranaike and Mrs. Indira Gandhi: Good neighbours

In this darkest hour.....

AS MRS SIRIMAVO BANDARANAIKE, LEADER OF THE SRI LANKA FREEDOM PARTY, COMPLETES 25 YEARS IN THE FOREFRONT OF POLITICAL LIFE IN SRI LANKA THE WRITER OF THIS ARTICLE MAKES AN APPEAL FOR HER RETURN TO THE LEADERSHIP OF THE NATION, IN THIS ITS DARKEST HOUR....

Food subsidies were curtailed but public expenditures were doubled. The Rupee was devalued by 100%. Price controls were lifted and the rate of inflation allowed to rise. Foreign investors were welcomed with open arms. In short, central controls were removed allowing the free play of market forces. A Free Investment Zone was opened at Katunayake where liberal tax concessions were available for multinational corporations.

Instead of the long awaited economic relief the people had to be content with much higher

programme, Jayewardene began to translate his political philosophy into action. He has a peculiar combination of tastes: He liked capitalist economics but he had an intense dislike for Western liberal political ideas and ideals. To him, democracy is simply a ladder to power which he does not hesitate to kick and throw out once his position in the political saddle is secure. His life long friends have affirmed that Jayewardene has inherent qualities of a ruthless dictator. He tolerates no criticism from friend or foe. It is not surprising therefore that

Leadership

(Continued from page 4)

that Jayewardene's nearest rival had come a close second and that he was not the most favoured number two in her party.

The first Presidential Election under the new constitution was held in October 1982 and Jayewardene was elected President with 52 per cent of the votes polled. A general election under the Proportional Representation system was expected to follow. But in fact no general election was held. The day after the Presidential election Jayewardene summoned a press conference and announced that his intelligence men had warned him of an impending "Naxalite Plot" to assassinate him and other political leaders to be followed by a coup d'etat and that therefore he had decided to call a Referendum instead of a general election.

REFERENDUM

It is now common knowledge that the real reason for the abolition of the general election was the fear that the U.N.P. might not have retained its majority if a general election was held. Moreover, winning a referendum was relatively easy for the Government had at its command the power to mobilize institutionalized violence to deliver the vote. What was in fact striking at the referendum was the mass scale impersonation of votes by the supporters of the Government. The people had been threatened the previous night and asked to refrain from voting and their votes were cast by impersonators. Public officers manning polling booths had been openly "ordered" by goon squads not to report fraudulent voting to the higher authorities.

The referendum itself was held under a State of Emergency under whose rules prominent campaigners for the Opposition had been arrested. One opposition newspaper was closed down. Even newspapers normally supporting the Government reported cases of intimidation and flagrant violation of election law.

Although the Government "won" the referendum public disillusionment regarding elections was clearly manifest in a substantial drop in the votes cast. There is the general feeling that the days of fair and free elections are gone for ever!

Prior to the referendum, the President had obtained from

Members of Parliament of his Party undated letters of resignation and these letters have given him a powerful stranglehold over their behaviour. The President in his absolute discretion could now dismiss any M.P. who held dissident views and replace him with any one of his choice. Thus the Members of Parliament have been reduced to a group of voiceless men who had no option but carry out Presidential directives.

It will be recalled that the validity of Parliament elected in 1977 expired in July 1983, when the next general election was due. As the general election has not been held yet there is no proper representation in Parliament. Even if we accept the dubious view that the referendum had given the current M.P.'s a further lease of life, they remain ineffective and inarticulate because of the Democles' sword of undated resignations hanging eternally over their heads.

By
Dr. Piyasena Dissanayake

Thus, for all practical purposes the democratic process has ceased to function and what is obtained in its place is an absolute one man rule!

DEMOCRACY DESTROYED

Not being content with the taming of M.P.s the Government has effectively destroyed other democratic institutions such as trade unions and voluntary organizations of academic and cultural interests by getting the state sponsored "goon squads" to smash trade union meetings and academic seminars.

The Government has quite brazenly interfered even with the administration of justice! The judges of the Supreme Court who delivered judgments not to their liking were intimidated by the goon squads by staging demonstrations before the Judges' bungalows and instructing the Police to take no notice of them. Some public officers who were found guilty by the highest Court of violating human rights clauses enshrined in the Constitution were either promoted to higher ranks or the fines imposed on them by the courts were paid out of public funds.

The non-aligned policy in the sphere of foreign relations which the previous Government consistently maintained and won friends and influenced world affairs was abandoned by the Jayewardene Government for no valid reason. Apart from the loss of international prestige the new policy has given rise to suspicions in the minds of leaders of the region, particularly India. On the one hand these suspicions could prove to be positively harmful to our national interest while on the other they are liable to create international tension and thus disturb the peace in the entire South Asia region.

The most severe criticism of Jayewardene's 'open economy' policy has to do with the over exposure of Sri Lanka to outside forces and the consequent erosion of the country's traditional value system. Acknowledged leaders of the different communities have repeatedly pointed out the pernicious effects of this policy

and predicted disastrous consequences in the future.

Even the unity and integrity of the country is at stake. Already the writ of Government does not run in nearly a third of the country, where its sovereignty has been effectively challenged by a group of terrorist organizations whose declared ultimate objective is to carve out a separate state for themselves out of the existing territory.

The cry for a separate state has already cost several thousands of lives the majority of whom were innocent civilians. It continues to be a severe drain on the country's resources and has disrupted normal life in many parts of the island.

The recent mass massacre at Anuradhapura has rudely shaken the rest of the country. People are increasingly beginning to doubt the capability of the men at the helm to provide them security. The feeling is steadily growing that the armed services and the police are not equal to the armed might of northern terrorism. There is a general



Mr. Jayewardene: Loss of confidence

sense of insecurity and despondency. The spectre of an Indian invasion or a violent take over by terrorists is haunting the country.

Despite repeated solemn promises by the highest in the land, no meaningful step has yet been taken to eradicate the terrorist menace; nor is there any prospect of a solution in the near future.

Meanwhile, the separatist lobby both at home and abroad has quite successfully internationalized the issue thereby causing irreparable damage to the good name of the country. Above all, they have established a base of operations in the South Indian state of Tamil Nadu and effectively induced India to interfere in purely an internal Sri Lankan issue. This in turn has led to a severe straining of age old good neighbourly relations between the two countries.

The curtailment of welfare services has brought untold misery to over two-thirds of the population. Malnutrition is on the increase. Public health services are swiftly grinding to a halt. Bribery and corruption and waste in public institutions are rampant. Even the highest ranking men in positions of authority have no sense of shame in taking bribes. What is more, people found guilty of bribery have in fact been promoted to higher positions in the Government.

It will thus be seen that the country is on the brink of a cataclysm the like of which has not been experienced before in this century. The country has lost her honour and prestige; the people have lost confidence in the political process; Parliament does not represent

the genuine voice of the people; the leader of the principal opposition party and alternative leader of the nation remains unjustly incapacitated by Presidential manoeuvre; economic policy of the Government is clearly designed to create pockets of privileged groups and to widen the gap between the elite and the masses still further; cultural traditions and values have been severely undermined; the largest minority group has openly challenged the Government in an armed rebellion.

LEADERLESS

In the face of this depressing national scene the country has been rendered leaderless. The man whom the people elected overwhelmingly in 1977 stands condemned by a grief-stricken nation crying desperately for the restoration of their pristine honour and lost rights as well as their cherished traditions of democracy and humane values.

Above all else, the country needs the feeling of confidence that they have the capacity to stand up once again and keep their heads high in honour and dignity. Only a leader possessing the qualities of true statesmanship and patriotism could generate this confidence.

It is rarely that these qualities combine in one individual. Fortunately, this country has at least one such individual and, that is Sirimavo Bandaranaike.

In this darkest hour, the nation expects her to rise to the occasion and lead them once again!

The following are some excerpts from the controversial statement made by India's Minister of State for foreign affairs Mr. Kurshid Alam Khan in the Rajya Sabha as reported to the Foreign Office in Colombo by Sri Lanka's mission in New Delhi :

"India wants to make it clear that she cannot impose any restrictions or conditions on the Tamils of Sri Lanka. What India has tried is to use her good offices to bring about a political solution. So it is entirely up to the Tamils to decide on their course of action in their own wisdom."

"India will give full protection to her fishermen and instructions have been given in this regard to the Navy and Coast Guards. Since February 18th there had been no killings of Indian fishermen. India has lodged a strong protest with the Sri Lanka government about the five fishermen killed earlier. The Prime Minister has sanctioned Rs. 10,000 per family as ex-gratia payment. India has asked Sri Lanka for compensation."

From the Alam Khan Speech :

DELHI TO COLOMBO

"The intrusion of foreign agencies like SAS and Mossad is very serious and the Sri Lanka government has been told that these agencies should not have been allowed to come to Sri Lanka. Similarly, objections were raised about allowing the VOA broadcasting station as it would not be in the best interests of the region. The region should be free from all such agencies just as much as the Indian Ocean Peace Zone is desired."

CONCERNED

"The Prime Minister is extremely concerned about the whole problem and that is why he immediately decided to constitute an advisory group to handle this problem. He is doing all that is possible to arrive at an understanding with the Sri Lanka government so that immediate steps can be taken to arrive at a political solution".

"Members had expressed fears that Sri Lanka was acquiring arms. Sri Lanka or any other country can acquire as much arms as they want but India is prepared to face challenges from any side. However, India has not attacked anyone and it was Pakistan who declared war on India".

"The confiscated Naval boat was returned to Sri Lanka on the understanding they will never allow any intrusion in Indian waters in future. Sri Lanka government has learnt a lesson and has not repeated it".

"Sri Lanka government had been dragging its feet in implementing whatever agreement arrived with various parties in Sri Lanka. India has told the Sri Lanka government that whatever they do, they cannot solve the problem by military means. They will have to negotiate and find a solution

acceptable to all within the framework of the Sri Lanka Constitution. This will also mean taking back the one lakh of refugees in India. They should go back with honour, dignity and safety".

ANXIOUS

"Members were anxious to know what India has told the Sri Lanka government. It does not matter who goes to Sri Lanka and talks to them, but it is the objective India wants to achieve (this is a reference to Bhandari's visit). As regards the objective, India has suggested the withdrawal of troops and the restoration of civil administration. India has also suggested the suspension of the policy of settling Sinhalese in Tamil areas, withdrawal of the Eighth Amendment, removal of restrictions from restricted, prohibited and surveillance zones. The intrusion of foreign agencies was a matter of great concern to India and this is

why the government refused the Sri Lanka proposal of joint patrolling by the two navies. A solution cannot be found in isolation but in totality."

"The allegation that India is encouraging terrorism is baseless and false. India will take steps to contradict this propaganda and do it in a dignified manner and not in the way Sri Lanka was doing."

"When asked by a Tamil Nadu MP (Kolandaivelu) re the recognition of the Tamil liberation movement, he said that this question was complicated and it was not possible for him to say anything about this at the moment."

Twenty-one thousand Passports

In the month of March a total of 18,486 applications for passports were received by the Controller of Immigration. A total of 21,357 passports were handed over and posted during this period.

In the first three days of April, 2,798 passport applications were received.

LETTERS

Democracy : Doomed by UNP

By : WINGED BEAN

Refreshed after a month long junket abroad, the Prime Minister is keeping chroniclers busy with his predominantly moralistic speeches on democracy, unity, and Piety. And all this, while his government is condoning rapacious corruption but attempting to dominate peoples conscience and encircle their democratic rights and human liberty through mosaics of falsehoods and half truths.

At one of the many frequently and regularly held political festivals, with drummers and gyrating school girl beauties, he is reported to have stated that with terrorism democracy is doomed. Is this an accurate statement of fact? Perhaps answers to two questions—when did terrorism begin and when did democracy end, might shed some light on this subject.

Terrorism began in 1976 and continued through 1977 when a just and fair election which allowed the free exercise of the vote brought the present government into power. There was terrorism but democracy was not doomed. Democracy

was doomed only after 1978 when the people were prevented from **freely** participating in the democratic processes and exercising the vote at Village Council, Town Council, and Municipal Council elections, and parliamentary elections. It is a lack of these safety valves that is threatening democracy and increasing the influence and intensity of terrorism. What is crystal clear is that it is not so much terrorism that is dooming democracy as much as the mutilation of democratic processes and the democratic structures we had and have. The postponement of local level, district level and parliamentary elections, the devaluation of parliament and the intellectual incapacitation of government MP's by extorting undated letters of resignation, the substitution of a rigged referendum for a general election, the resort to violence and even the bullet to prevent the free exercise of the ballot, the resort to two systems of elections as and when it benefits the party in power, the holding of selective by-elections and manipulating rather diabolically the democratic process to give a semblance of democracy to undemocratic

actions, or instituting facade democracy, following the examples of dictators like Marcos and Zia who imprison their chief political opponent but instead adopting the "democratic device" of imposing civic disabilities for abuse of power, while blatantly abusing power and sharing it with a coterie of followers, and resorting to mafia style methods of eliminating any form of dissent whether it be Trade Unions, Intellectuals, or Judges of the supreme court by resort to terrorism. These are the factors that doom democracy.

Terrorism has not doomed democracy. It has been "democratically" tombed by the UNP, since 1978.

Here lies democracy,
Prodigal of the UNP,
Foster fathered by the SLFP,
Disposed by the Uncle
Nephew Party.

UNP May Day

K. C. FONSEKA.
Colombo 2.

Why does the United NATIONAL Party always get FOREIGN artistes?

DPL recognition?

MAHINDA RAJAPAKSE.
Tangalle.

There is a sinister attempt being made to get full DPL recognition for Israel. Ghost writers are busy pleading for Israel. Cocktail parties are held in Colombo in order to regularise the illegal stay in Colombo. Let those who consider that Israel should be recognised think about its most undemocratic ways of ruling the country. Let me list a few.

1. Israel has denied the right of self determination to the Palestinians and has dispossessed them of their homeland.
2. The Palestinians are not free to return home while on the other hand, Israel's racist Law of "Return" allows Jews born anywhere in the world to immigrate to Israel and become citizens.
3. The Jewish Fund has acquired the land stolen from the Palestinians and continues to increase its holdings through land seizures by the military. Land it holds cannot be bought back by Arabs.
4. The education system forced upon Arab students is characterised by

the disparagement of Arab history and culture and is designed to discourage Arab nationalist feelings amongst students.

5. Israel has ruled the Occupied territories by martial law for 15 years.
6. Democratic rights are suspended and brutality is very common.
7. Over 20,000 Palestinian political prisoners are held by Israel.
8. Arab political parties are banned and peaceful protests are met with gun fire.
9. Democratically elected West Bank Mayors have been sacked and some deported.
10. Religious institutions and individuals, both Moslem and Christian are harassed and attacked.
11. Arab universities are arbitrarily closed down

Do we need further proof to keep this ruthless dictatorship out of our country? One cannot be happy even about the presence of the Israel Interest Section in the country.

The Animal and Insect act

Finally, in order to ensure absolute national security they passed the Animal and Insect Emergency Control and Discipline Act.

Under this new Act, buffaloes cows and goats were prohibited from grazing in herds of more than three, Neither could birds flock, nor bees swarm . . . This constituted unlawful assembly.

As they had not obtained prior planning permission, mud-wasps and swallows were issued with summary Notices to Quit. Their homes were declared subversive extensions to private property.

Monkeys and mynahs were warned to stop relaying their noisy morning orisons until an official Broadcasting License was issued by the appropriate Ministry. Unmonitored publications and broadcasts posed the gravest threats in times of a National Emergency.

Similarly, woodpeckers had to stop tapping their morsecode messages from coconut tree-top chempaka tree.

All messages were subject to a thorough pre-scrutiny by the relevant authorities.

Java sparrows were arrested in droves for rumor-mongering. Cats (suspected of conspiracy) had to be indoors by 9 o'clock

Cicadas and crickets received notification to turn their amplifiers down. Ducks could not quack nor turkeys gobble during restricted hours. Need I say, all dogs—alsatians, daschunds, terriers, pointers and even little chihuahuas—were muzzled.

In the interests of security penguins and zebras were ordered to discard their non-regulation uniforms. The deer had to surrender their dangerous antlers. Tigers and all carnivores with retracted claws were sent directly to prison for concealing lethal weapons.

And by virtue of Article Four, paragraph 2 (b) sub-subsection sixteen, under no circumstances were elephants allowed to break wind between the hours of six and six. Their farts could easily be interpreted as gunshot. Might spark off a riot . . .

A month after the Act was properly gazetted the birds and insects started migrating south the animals went north and an eerie silence handcuffed the forests.

There was now Total Security.

—Cecil Rajendra

Before the Anuradhapura Incident: Anuradhapura Needs Protection - MAITRI

Speaking in Parliament on 22 March 1985 M.P. for Medawachchiya Mr. Maitripala Senanayake pleaded with the government to provide adequate security arrangements for Anuradhapura after the terrorists attacked Medawachchiya.

Prior to that Mr. Senanayake by letter dated 18 March 1985 requested that points of entry into Anuradhapura should have check points manned by Defence Forces and that safeguards should be provided at key points in the city especially at the Railway Station.

A copy of this letter was sent on 18 March 1985 to the President, Prime Minister, Minister of National Security and the Minister of Internal Security by Mr. Maitripala Senanayake.

The terrorists launched the attack on Anuradhapura a month later.

Chopped for Including Mrs. B's speech

One SLBC news-caster has been interdicted following the broadcast of an excerpt of SLFP leader, Mrs. Sirimavo Bandaranaike's May Day speech. Mrs. Bandaranaike said among other things in her speech that she suspected the government's hand behind the bomb blast near Army Headquarters in Colombo on the eve of May Day.

A witch-hunt began at the SLBC immediately after this came on the air. A large number of employees have been grilled and more heads are expected to fall.

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Army age limit to be raised

The age limit for recruitment to the Army is to be raised. Government has asked the Army Chief to examine the possibility of raising the upper limit of recruitment to 25 years.

Present recruitment to the regular Army is in the age group 19-22 years. The age group for recruitment to the Navy is 18-25 years.

The proposed change will bring recruitment for both services within the same age group.

No funds for New Prison

Lack of funds is holding up the building of a new maximum security prison outside Colombo. Land for a

new prison was acquired at Ratnapura four years ago.

Work has not started on it due to lack of funds.

Belsen and Bitburg: Sorrow and slapstick

President Reagan stood at last in the cemetery at Bitburg yesterday. "Never again," he said later, in his speech at the US military base nearby, referring to Nazism. "Never again", he had said earlier, in his speech at the site of the former concentration camp at Belsen.

He could be forgiven for investing the phrase with more than one meaning. Never again must a combination of an ignoramus of a White House public relations expert, a jovial, but wily German politician, and his own endlessly genial nature land him among the remains of 49 SS men — at least, not with him laying a wreath.

The proceedings lasted about seven minutes. They attained a haunting amalgam of the macabre and the slapstick. He and Chancellor

Kohl looked understandably nervous as they got out of the disturbingly hearse-like American Presidential vehicle that had brought them to the place.

As they entered the cemetery, there was much looking for the right path, and a certain amount of bumping into one another, as each one gestured to the other to go first, their wives and protectors stringing out behind them and the entire scene being played out in silence.

They all made their way eventually up a gravel path. Flowers, put there by the town's people, stretched across a lawn. Some of the SS graves were said to have had fresh flowers too, put there by neo-Nazis, American television companies, the KGB, or any number of suspects. Mr. Reagan's eyes narrowed a little as he looked around him —

perhaps keeping an eye out as he must have done in at least one film or other, for the SS . . .

Afterwards, on the television, Israeli demonstrators ringed by German policemen, danced a hora in a Bitburg street. A young German with a banner spoke passionately against the wreath-laying. An SS veteran next to him said he sympathized "in my heart" with these protests but he had fought on the Russian front and never seen a concentration camp. This fighting was the reason why the Russians were not in Bitburg now.

Suddenly it was over. On the screen there was sport. Mr. Reagan's departure into Air Force One was the proof that it would never happen again.

(Sunday Times, London)

Forum

1 June 1985

In Parliament

The P. T. I. Correspondent affair

The correspondent in Sri Lanka of the Press Trust of India, which is a semi-Government institution, has been produced before a Magistrate and remanded. I would like to know from the Minister of Foreign Affairs or some responsible person — may be from the Gentleman in charge of Justice — what offence this reporter has committed. At the worst, what he has done is to misreport the speech of the President. It is bad. Subsequently it has been corrected, I see, in the "Hindu". There has been another correction. Now, Sir, that is not a criminal offence. He has broken no laws of the country. You cannot take

people and slap them in jail. What is the whole purpose of this, unless it is to provoke and annoy a country? All right, suppose Mr. Kurshed Alam Khan made a statement which was exceptionable. Is that a reason to take, having waited from 14th of April till 10th May, because this report appeared in the newspapers of India on the 14th of April. We waited twenty-six days and slapped that man in jail just after Mr. Kurshed Alam Khan's statement. It is a terrible thing. He is still on remand. Now what has happened? Counter-reactions have started. India has told Mr. Chatwal — "Stay back and negotiate this man's release."

—Sarath Muttetuwegama

Letters of Resignation

I know that there is a misconception in the minds of certain people because the United National Party obtained letters of resignation from Members of Parliament that these letters are produced to the Secretary-General of Parliament without the knowledge of such Members and such Members have been thrown out of this House without their knowledge. If somebody has that misconception, I challenge it. No such thing has occurred. If a Member had submitted his resignation and if such letter had been sent to the Secretary-General of Parliament, according to the present provisions of the Constitution it is the

bounden duty of the Secretary-General to satisfy himself that such Member had signed that letter himself and that he confirms his resignation. That is ensured by the Constitution. You cannot point out one single instance where a letter of resignation of a Member of Parliament had been sent to the Secretary-General and that Member had objected to it later. In point of fact, the hon. Member for Kelaniya (Mr. Cyril Mathew) wrote to the Secretary-General of Parliament in regard to the letter of resignation which he had given to the United National party. So I do not think there is anything wrong in the present system.

—R. Premadasa

Hayden's visit

Mr. Hayden and he says there is civil war. If there is civil war I do not understand why he is coming here!

Mr. Hayden has thought it fit to say that there is a civil war in Sri Lanka between the Sinhalese and the Tamils. After all, the Air Port, at Katu-

nayake the driveway to Colombo and his staying in Colombo, I am sure, will prove that it is furthest from the truth. These are the losses that are caused to Sri Lanka by this type of false statements. Sir, I would condemn this type of false, irresponsible and impertinent statement.

—Paul Perera

Letters

Strange politics

PUZZLED.

According to the DAILY NEWS, the National Security Minister has taken Mrs. Bandaranaike "to task" for criticising the President's statement that there "is no ethnic problem." The Minister's reply is that "strangely enough" Uma Maheswaran has "confirmed what the President has said."

What is more strange is that Uma Maheswaran has now become the final authority on our problems! Does this mean that President Jayewardene has become a "Marxist-terrorist" or has Uma Maheswaran become "dharmista"?

But what is the Minister's own view? Is there an ethnic problem or not? If there is no ethnic problem, what does he mean by talking about "a political solution" a political solution to what **political** problem is he talking about?

The Minister has accused Mrs. Bandaranaike of trying to "play petty opportunistic politics". What type of politics did the UNP play in robbing the leader of the S.L.F.P., twice Prime Minister, and still the best known international figure in Sri Lanka, of her civic rights? What does the Minister call **that** politics? Is it not the worst form of petty party politics?

Shocking Results

S. NADARAJAH.
Batticaloa.

The results of the Efficiency Bar Examination held on 10.09.1983, for the Officers in Class II Segment "A" of the Local Government Clerical Service were out in the Government Gazette Part IV — of 13.07.1984. It was shocking to note that 44 Sinhala Officers passed in the subject LAW and one Officer has passed in LAW and Accounts and out of this 29 Officers completes this Examination.

It is a curious coincidence that it is in these sad days of ethnic problems that "none of the non Sinhala Officers has passed this examination" leaving room to ponder where the faults lie.

Sliding to disaster

We are living in a country which has allowed itself to slide away from the civilised world. We are living in a country where people are killed singly, or in dozens, or in hundreds, and nobody is brought to justice for these killings.

We are living in a country where there is no rule of law. The law is only that of political thugs and political stooges, and terrorists.

The President of this country said recently at the opening of a three and a half million rupee police station (before opening a Coca-Cola factory) that democracy would be preserved in this country as long as his party remained in power. He was opening a police station, not a hospital, not a school, nor even a meeting hall. The Security services, he said, were part of the democratic system. The truth is that the police station has become the symbol of the "democracy" practised by the present regime. It is a regime which has become totally incompetent in all matters, except in the matter of repression.

This regime keeps telling the world that Sri Lanka is a "Five Star Democracy". They have to keep repeating it in the hope that somebody might believe them. What other people understand by a democracy is a country where free men and women live with a government freely chosen by them, and which they have a free and fair chance of changing. A democracy is not a country where opponents of the ruling regime are disenfranchised for offences unknown to the law and are further disqualified from challenging the ruling regime at elections. A democracy is a country where the rule of law prevails. It is not a country where political thugs and stooges are patronised, pampered and promoted when they break the law in the interests of the ruling party. A democracy is a country which has a government which works for the benefit of all the people, and not for the benefit of mafia, bosses, pimps, prostitutes and commission agents.

A democracy is also a country where the state ensures the security of every citizen within its borders. The President said at the ceremonial opening of Parliament that "The terrorists are attempting to shoot their way through the heart of Sri Lanka to the borders of what they call the state of Eelam. If we do not occupy the border, the border will come to us. We intend to act before they succeed."

After that, **Forum** (May 1) said: "The border, it would now seem, is coming to us. Nikaweratiya is not far from Kurunegala, but quite far from Jaffna. If the "Tigers" can come to Nikaweratiya, attack, and go back unmolested, no part of this country, evidently, is now entirely assured of rule by law and order."

"Is the government acting 'before they succeed'?"

After that, the terrorists came to Anuradhapura, one of the most sacred places of Buddhist worship. They killed men, women, children and pilgrims near the sacred Bo Tree, and members of the Buddhist clergy; then they calmly proceeded to the Wilpattu National Park and killed a large number of employees there. They killed 146 people. And, the Prime Minister, Mr. Premadasa, lamented at a temple ceremony in Kolonnawa after the event that there had not been even a single soldier to shoot at the tyres of the bus that carried the killers, all the way to Wilpattu from Anuradhapura.

So, has the government been acting "before they succeed", as the President said at the ceremonial opening of Parliament? Those who wish to quibble can of course say that what the President said was this: "We **intend** to act before they succeed." This government has announced its **intention** of doing many things.

After eight years of patient suffering the majority of people now know that the lofty intentions declared by this government have no bearing on its pathetic performance. The people want this government to go, before the country slides irretrievably into disaster.