



downwards without a commission to this Yakka. The Bribery Commission used to catch at least the small fish those days but now that position has not been filled. Huge scandals involving the 'hedging deal,' 'poor quality petrol imports, sale of invaluable government land to foreigners etc have been brought to light but offenders have been lucky. The former Chief Justice had given a firm verdict about the offender in the hedging deal but that individual was re-recruited. Some roads have been built at a cost of Rs 100 million per kilometre but those involved have got away. Anna Hazare of India, were he a Sri Lankan citizen, would have died fasting. He should be happy that the Indian government has tolerated his

'thitha' will come down on this dreadful and dangerous occupation that rips youth in the bud...

Probably the Yakka behind most of these Yakkas is the Deshapalana Yakka. This terrible guy is all over the show-in local councils, in government departments, police, army, Cricket Board, schools, and even the once pristine Sangha. Some say even the judiciary is not let alone by these Yakkas. Deshapalana Yakka is the most



slippery of devils and he often is masked in patriotic or religious garb. The Paga Yaka and the Kudu Yaka thrives on this genre of Yakkas and if one theory is right the Grease Yakka itself is a manifestation

OF GREASE YAKKAS AND OTHER DEVILS THAT STALK OUR LAND

Our 'thrice- blessed' land of birth and upbringing is never out of news. The latest (at least at the time of this newspaper going to print) is the 'Grease Yakka' phenomenon that began in the East and North and is now invading the South and the hills. Sri Lanka, resilient as anything, manages more than what it can hold on its plate. It managed Ban Ki Moon and Channel Four at least for the time being and it is now confronting a burgeoning mys-

tery of national proportion. the government was able to cover the tracks of KP in Malaysia why can't it seize the Grease Yakka!

This escaping ability of the Yakka thus lends itself into a suspicion in the public mind that the government players are behind this nasty and increasingly frightening phenomenon. According to this suggestion it is not the grease but the political patronage that gives the leverage to escape. Dozens of suspects are reported to have been arrested by the Police but there is no evidence to frame charges. Police intelligence is either dead or is not working partly because of interference by local politicians. Catching the wrong man is the modus operandi. Sri Lanka is a country where even VIPs can be arrested and even jailed without offence.

high profile protests.

Kudu Yakka is another member of the pantheon. The Prime Minister went on record saying that government politicians are engaged in the narcotics business. No follow up on this serious charge has yet been made. One of these alleged Yakkas is said to have been put in a position of responsibility in a place none other than the Defence Ministry! Mahinda Chinthanya commendably gives place to Mathata Thitha (project to stop liquor). Apparently the narcotics had been overlooked. Let's wait for the revision and hope that the

of the Deshapalana Yakka. Deshapalana Yakka is often the gatekeeper to contracts in government agencies. His ability to transfer honest officers clears the path for him.

Finally, at election time the Polythene Yakka comes into play. Reels and reels of coloured polythene are used for political decoration. This paper is allowed to wash away into drains thereby blocking the latter. The resultant stagnant water helps the Dengue Yakka to fertilize.



Shyamon Jayasinghe

There are many theories: The IGP, Mr NK Illangakoon, stated that the Grease Yakka is a myth that was spreading among the rural folk and that people were using it as a scapegoat for other misdoings. What exactly is the myth component here, Mr Illangakoon? The myth may be that of the devil or Yakka concept itself because there are no beings called devils in the universe-not even the Devil of Devils- Satan. Yakkas have always been part of Sinhala mythology and will remain there. What the IGP avers is, therefore, nothing new. He doesn't touch on the real problem here namely that of somebody behaving criminally and being able to escape from the clutches of the law.

With its almost total politicisation the Sri Lanka Police appears to be unable to track down any offender-especially if he has links to the government chorus. Someone satirically remarked in one of the internet circuits that if

Tamil leaders (TNA) in the North complain of incidents where people have identified army soldiers in camps as the Grease Yakkas in the North. This charge may be out of natural hatred for the army-we don't know...

The law enforcers having apparently abdicated their responsibilities people in these areas have taken upon themselves the task of self-defense. This has happened in the North, too. There is a danger in this: Many instances have been reported where residents have attacked innocent persons on suspicion. Two people were killed and three others were injured in Haputale after they were mistakenly identified as Grease Yakkas. Two men whom villagers identified as "grease devils" were hacked to death on Wednesday by a mob in the central Sri Lankan village of Kotagala. In Puttalam an innocent policeman was beaten to death by mobs.

Like Dengue, the government appears to be unable to solve the Grease Yakka problem. Maybe there will be a big thovile at Diyawanna Oya to exorcise the Grease Yakka. Speaking of Dengue this is also a Yakka of contemporary times. Hence, we have the Dengue Yakka. Former Health Minister could never drive away the Dengue Yakka that has already this year taken over 120 lives. His successor, Maitripala Sirisena, complained that the predecessor ran a corrupt administration and vowed to sort out problems. But now, into over one year Sirisena, too, has not been able to tackle the Dengue Yakka. Dr Merv tied a Samurdi Niladari to a tree for not attending an anti-Dengue conference organized by him. Yet, Dengue Yakka is still at large.

Sri Lanka also has the Paga Yakka. It is reported that little can be done higher-up

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