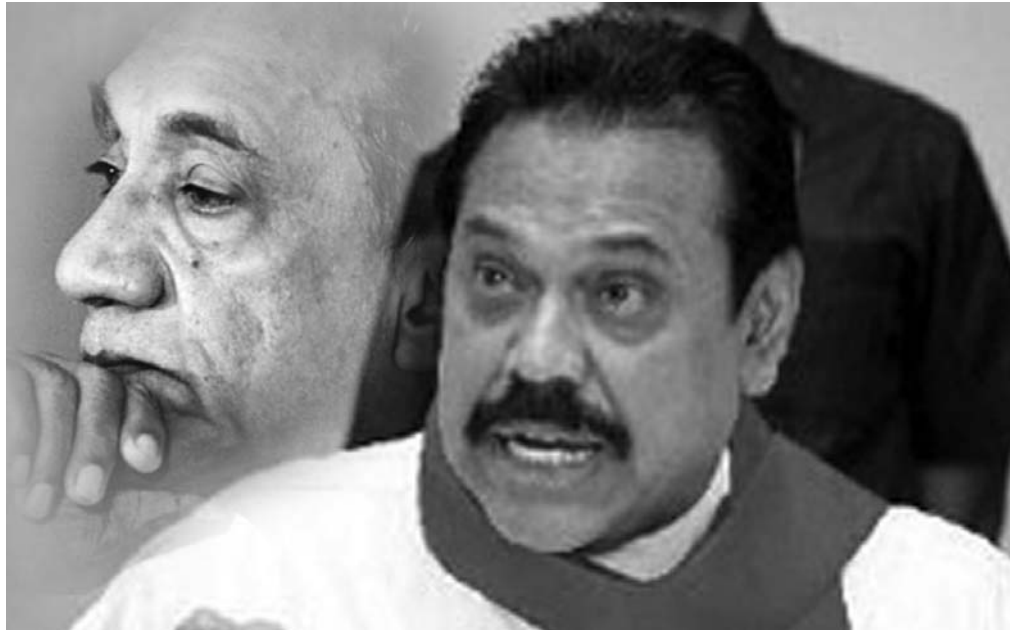


Our motherland is noted for so many achievements and also mishaps. One of the casualties in nthus game has been the judiciary. It goes back to the time our Excellency was still a lesser politician, but powerful all the same.

Skandaraja was a judge regarded by everyone as a fair and fearless officer. He happened to deliver a judgement that was not welcome by J.R. Skandaraja ended up in some outlandish place, Batticaloa or some such place.

Independence of the judiciary is one of the keystones of a true democracy. True democratic traditions that Sri Lanka was developing were shattered by no other person than our own H.E. It staarted when he managed to get more than three fifths of the votes in parliament elected in 1977. Knowing very well that getting that type of majority was impossible, he set about making use of that majority to the utmost advantage.

It must be said to the credit of SWRD Bandaranaike that he was laying the foundation for a true democracy in the island when he was d gunned down. His wife who succeeded him also upheld those values and traditions, a fact amply demonstrated by her decision to dissolve parliament after the defeat of a key bill put up by her government. She did this inspite of demands by the leftists for her to continue regadless. She preferred to follow tradition rather than seeking to strengthen her own power base. It is a known fact that she lost the subsequent election. That was something a man like J.R. would never have done.



QUO VADIS MOTHER LANKA ?

Does the president not realize that he is sending the wrong message to the whole world by this silly and ill-thought action?



J.R.'s so-called referendum agin was another pretext to continue in power with that huge majority, which he conducted in the most corrupt manner employing all the government resources to get what he wanted. That was adding insult to injury as it was done in order to carry on with a government already out of date and really going on in an irregular basis. Once a ruler and his government disregards all accepted norms of democracy it is very easy to stoop down to any level to get what one wants.

In short one can safely asty that H.E. J.R.

set the ball rolling as far as the deterioration of democracy and fair play is concerned in Sri Lanka.

Having achieved all that he still failed to get one thing done, that was to amend the constitution enabling him to go for as third term as President. Not only did he fail, he also sacrificed the lives of so many of his faithful followers in the process, namely those of Tudor Keerthinanda, Harsha Abeywardene, Lionel Jayatilake and Nandalai Fernando. Even J.R. had to curb him operation because of another power quietly raising its head in a corner.

Mahinda Rajapakse did what J.R. failed to do. There were no killings or threats to anyone's life. Rajapakse did not enjoy the majority that J.R. commaded in parliament, jst managing to garner enough votes to pss his bill by a two third majority.

It truly was a victory for Rajapakse, A victory for what? For whose benefit?

Whether they expected or not, they are already witnessing the gradual appearance of the world that they are going to live in, or is it the gradual erosion of all values and traditions that Sri Lankans once looked up to as sacred?

President Rajapakse did achieve something almost impossible. He whstood the pressures from so many foreign quarters and proceeded with the war and brought it to a logical conclusion. That was something the earlier rulers failed to do. However, in politics one cannot rest on the laurels of one victory and forget the pressing problems that come up now and again. It is in a way a constant struggle to keep pace with reality.

That exactly is what the President and his men failed to do. Overjoyed by the euphoria of an almost impossible victory they

the advisors of the President? Did they not see thgis menace continuing? Why wasn't the discussions with all political partues continued in all earnestness?

Did the President do anything to tackle the ever growing problem of corruption in all quarters of the government and administration? Does he not realize that no single parliamentarian is above board when it comes to corruption?

Does he also not see that judiciary is one area where some semblance of decency and fair play are still preserved?

If officers are to be put on the mat, aren't there thousands of them all over the land to be charged and put in jail? Why pick on the Chief Justice who had the guts to deliver a judgement offensive to a minister? Is that the way to respect the independence of the judiciary?

In Sri Lanka there were enough pepole, including the Buddhist clergy who were prepared to support the President although they knew nothing about the intricacies of democracy or the constitution.

There is a rule and a convention in almost all democratic countries that an elected President should hold office only for a maximum of two terms. this is what happens in the US and France. Politicians in those countries have never dreamt of getting this changed and hanging on to power. They simply could not and would not, because traditions are firmly established and sacredly protected. In Sri Lanka there were enough pepole, including the Buddhist clergy who were prepared to support the President although they knew nothing about the intricacies of democracy or the constitution.

The country and the people apparently accepted the change.

Did they expect any miracle to take place because of this change or for the President to create a heaven on erath in Sri Lanka?

immediately went into a new type of hybernatia and started doing everything else other than attending to the pressing needs of solving tyhe problems that made the war unavoidable.

President and his men suffered from another ailment, amnesia thus forgetting that they enjoyed power as elected representatives of the masses. Thrie main concern became the celebration of that victory and glorifying themselves and the war heroes. At least the wear heroes needed that recognition, but what theyb ignored is the fact that there were thousands of Tamil youths who sacrificed thegair lives for a cause which they thought was a just one. All the war memorials erected in Tamil dominated ares would not have pleased those grieving the death of their kith and kin.

That again is trivial matter compared with the bigger issue, which was to solve the main problem once and for all, so that all Sri Lankans could live in harmony.

Nothing whatever in that area was done for three long years. What tookmpossession of

ciary? Can he not find way to rectify an error if at all there was an error in that judgement?

Does he not realize that he is sending the wrong message to the whole world by this silly and ill-thought action? The Commonwealth Secretary appears to have already sent his observations or warnings on the matter. Whether such messages come or not, it is pretty obvious that the image of the country is going to suffer immansely if the government does not think twice before going any further.

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