



remember that the military destruction of the LTTE is only 25 per cent of the issue at hand and that there is a whole 75 per cent left for us to deal with. The LTTE is a symptom of a deeper problem, namely the alienation of the Tamil community.

The downsides of our triumph stares us in the face: a deeply frustrated Tamil community who are left without leaders worthy of representing them; a massive problem of 300,000 IDPs who are cramped together in makeshift refugee camps having lost their kith and kin, their belongings and their dignity. Sinhala-Tamil relations have never been any lower than it is right now

Have you seen the clip "Maharajani" played by the government-controlled Rupavahini and ITN? Young girls chanting a specially choreographed song as our President, Mahinda Rajapakse, emerges in triumphant gesticure as if riding on air, wearing a gracious smile and waving his shawl? The coming of the messiah? The rise of the mythical Diyasena? More appropriately King Dutugemunu II? Or as our famous Professor and lyric writer named him, King Mahinda IV?

If you visit Colombo these days your eyes will be hit by life-sized cardboard cut-outs of the President all over complete with emotional slogans.

Let's look at the bottom line: Our President did achieve greatness by militarily decimating the nation's huge enemy Prabhakaran and his clan of brutal killers. Not that we like killing but there was simply no alternative as these fellows provoked the government to war and war is all about killing.

On the other hand, the media build up of an ugly triumphalism is not the right path to take. It is not Buddhist wisdom either although we notice our monks joining in the euphoria. Said the Buddha: "Victory indeed breeds hatred; the conquered dwell in sorrow."

There is no need to beat about the bush; the fact is that the broad Tamil community saw in Prabhakaran the man who will restore the dignity they believe they have lost living as they do in a majoritarian polity dominated by the Sinhalas.

The true statesman will show humility in victory. However, government media managers had found this a great opportunity to politicise. It is unfortunate. We must

The government just hasn't got that plan. Sri Lankan rulers should hasten to sense and solve these serious issues, restore the economy, reinstall the rule of law, and take the country forward. The loss and maiming of over twenty five thousand brave soldiers would not be in vain if these tasks are addressed.

Before he could do all this our President has to defend himself against "prashasthi -gayakayas" or sycophants. These may be political fellow travellers within his



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and our nation is deeply polarised and divided.

The government has the daunting problem of rebuilding a Sri Lankan nation. This demands a multi-faceted approach that involves not only infrastructure and jobs for the North but also language and educational policies, and power sharing.

immediate fold who want to consolidate themselves or those on the fringe who are manipulating to get inside. Janaka Bandara Temekone is one of those fringe leaders trying to circus their way inside.

We have good reason for singling out mention of Janaka Bandara Tennakone. This guy is somebody who is educated, well-travelled, and who is capable of knowing the right and wrong of politics. He has picked up the monarchy line of thought and is heading a campaign to let Mahinda Rajapakse continue in his position without facing the people at an election as prescribed by the constitution. The Dambulla Pradeshhiya Sabha has already passed a resolution to this effect. Other local regimes are expected to follow, Janaka states.

Just take a look at the argument that Janaka gives: He says a Presidential election is too costly for the country. Surely, Janaka knows that according to the constitution a general referendum would be required to endorse any proposal to extend the President's term of office. Prey, what is a general referendum but another election that incurs the same costs?

The referendum procedure can be distorted by the subtleties of the electoral

process. Why does Janaka prefer the path of manipulation given his assumption that the people want the current President to continue?

Sri Lanka has had a long history of monarchy. Our leaders in the post-Independent era have revealed in many ways a subtle passion to live like monarchs. This meant, firstly the self-belief that they have come to stay for life. Sirimavo Bandaranaike rode to power with a two-third majority. She was reluctant to leave at term- end initially having allowed herself to be seduced by constitutional pundits in believing that she had the backing of the people to extend the life of parliament by a further two years. But good sense prevailed and the lady held

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elections. She suffered a heavy defeat at the elections that followed and later lost her civic rights.

JR Jayawardena gloated that he could do anything except "make a man a woman or a woman a man." This old fox succeeded in a jugglery where he held a referendum to extend the life of parliament. But he was outfoxed by the JVP that obstructed his path

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Shyamon Jayasinghe

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16 Bellerive Avenue Mount Waverley
 Tel : 9544 7189 Mob 0418 351 620 Fax : 9562 5503