

## Govt. tumbling towards anarchy...

*A series of public protests has arisen against the government all over the country demanding solutions for just grievances of the people. Some of these protests are against the government's attempt to continue certain wrong decisions or programs started by Rajapaksa regime or against the wrong decisions taken or programs launched by the current government.*

Protests against SAIMT private attempt to sell lands in Uva-Willassa for medical faculty, Uma-oya project and the a sugar farm project, farmers' struggle

to get compensation for crop losses, dairy farmers protest, protest against privatization of state properties are among them and government has failed to give solutions to any of these issues. As a result massive public protests have cropped up and there is a significantly high peoples' participation in these struggles. Government's failure in giving solutions to

garbage issue and Dengue epidemic too is a reason for increasing public protests against the government. According to political analysts this series of public protests against the government has posed a threat to stability of the government. The agreement of two year administration between the two factions of present hybrid government -



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## Is SAIMT the ‘Waterloo’ of ‘yahapalana’ government?

Napoleon Bonaparte, the Emperor of the French and the French military and political leader was defeated at the Battle of Waterloo fought with British forces on 18th Sunday, June 1815. The place where Napoleon’s historical defeat occurred was a place near Waterloo in present-day Belgium. Now ‘Waterloo’ is used in the English language as an idiom to indicate ‘a decisive or crushing defeat’. It seems that anti- SAIMT struggle is becoming the ‘Waterloo’ of the Ranil – Maithri ‘yahapalana’ government.

The agitations demanding the abolishment of SAIMT institute at Malabe that harms free education, free health service, the qualitative character of education and health services in the country are intensifying day by day. Already, university students, students of all medical faculties in the country, their parents, doctors, several political parties including the JVP and several trade unions have joined the struggle. Despite there are many clear cut reasons, when a large number of people, organizations and forces are clamouring for the abolishment of SAIMT, the government and the ministers of education and health act in the most naïve, idiotic and arbitrary manner.

They, who do not listen to just demands of the masses, turn up on behalf of the SAIMT private medical degree selling boutique. The government that takes measures to arbitrarily defend SAIMT deploys police to baton charge and tear gas students who peacefully agitate demanding the government to abolish the illegal degree selling boutique and attempts to suppress the students’ movement by smashing students’ heads and imprisoning them.

Struggles that represent the aspirations of the majority of the people and participated by large crowds cannot be stopped by suppression. The government should understand it. The attempt to suppress such struggles would bring in more and more forces to join it, strengthen it and would broaden it until the idiotic government is dislodged.

The destructive moves created by the previous Mahinda Rajapaksa regime are being continued by the present regime as well. SAIMT issue and Uma Oya are two such projects. Also, as a result of the anti-people’s moves of this government, the attempt to sell valuable lands of the country, several more ‘battle’ fronts have been created.

One such front is the massive mass protest that was held in Bandarawela town on the 28th of last month. Many other struggles such as the protest against selling lands at Uva – Wellassa, farmers’ struggle demanding solutions for their issues, trade union struggles of the working masses are only a few fronts that have emerged demanding solutions from the government. However, the present regime that has no vision and is impotent politically is unable to find any solution for the issues.

Their attempt is for midway solutions or to put off issues after presenting bogus solutions. They have no intention to find genuine solutions. However, struggles cannot be stopped with deception. For, most of these struggles have the leadership of the JVP while many others get its contribution and also as they are genuine struggles of the people.

The creation of a wave of struggles throughout the country on various issues indicates not only the crisis and impotency of the Ranil – Maithri ‘yahapalana’ government but also demonstrates the crisis and the failure of the capitalist system in Sri Lanka. At present, capitalism in Sri Lanka cannot fulfill the needs of the people. This is why the capitalist government has to be stubborn and behave in an uncivilized manner when confronted with people’s struggles.

If the government is not prepared or unable to find solutions for the issues within capitalism, or there are no solutions for the issues within capitalism, whatever the struggle is, the forces that are engaged in the struggles will, finally, have to choose only one path. It is to strengthen the common struggle that would defeat capitalism as well as the present regime. It is evident that struggles that are scattered should be linked up and turned into a massive struggle against capitalism. It could be done only by a strong political movement with a correct vision, dedication and is prepared to make sacrifices. In this endeavour the JVP will have to fulfill a colossal task. All forces of working masses and the general public should understand this reality.

Accordingly, the SAIMT struggle could be a struggle that would end with the fall of the government. Uma Oya struggle too have the same characteristics. Any other struggle too could be decisive. As such, it seems that the government is confronted with not one ‘Waterloo’ struggle but is confronted with multiple ‘Waterloos’. It is the responsibility of the people to win those struggles.

## Rulers without heads bash students’ heads



“The headless government doesn’t like students with heads. That’s why they get students’ heads bashed. The Ministers of Health and Education who have heads without brains attack students who have to take over the future of the country. The students’ movement has been struggling for several years demanding the government to abolish SAIMT institute that has no standard and is harmful to free education in the country. Despite parents, trade unions, doctors, intellectuals, political parties including the JVP and several ministers demanding the close down of SAIMT, the government arbitrarily has allowed it to continue. This is why students have to carry out struggles within the democratic framework to pressurize the government. This is why they go on a protest march on the

21st. It was a peaceful march. The government got the peaceful march to be brutally attacked. Students’ heads were bashed with poles.

Criminals did not take part in this protest march. Even female students and Bhikkhus who participated in the protest march were savagely attacked. An agitation held in Galle protesting against the attack on university students on the 21st was also attacked by deploying thugs. The skull of a student was seriously damaged due to this inhuman attack. The JVP vehemently condemns these attacks. We also demand the government to stop attacks carried out on students and abolish SAIMT illegal institute immediately,” said the General Secretary of the JVP Comrade Tilvin Silva. He said this at a press conference held at the head office of the JVP. The Member

of the Political Bureau of the JVP Comrade Sunil Handunneththi MP and the National Organizer of Socialist Students Union Comrade Rangana Devapriya also participated.

Comrade Tilvin Silva speaking further said, “The SAIMT crisis is getting worse. If it continues it would mark the end of this government. Hence, we tell the government not to make it their swan song. For, what students ask is not something the government cannot give.”

He said, “We warn the government that all forces would be rallied against the government if SAIMT issue is not solved soon. Struggles cannot be weakened by carrying out attacks against them. The rulers will have to decide whether the government is sacrificed for SAIMT and allow SAIMT issue to mark its end.

## SSU condemns brutal attack on students

The Socialist Students’ Union (SSU) has issued a press release vehemently condemning the government’s move to deploy police riot squads and the STF to brutally attack university students who marched to the Ministry of Health on the 21st June to ask for a discussion with the Minister of Health in a bid to get a solution for the SAIMT crisis.

This is stated in a press release issued by the National Organizer of the SSU Comrade Rangana Devapriya. It states, “The current Prime Minister, who was the Minister of Education for some time in the past having brought treacherous proposals attempted to suppress the students movement that opposed such proposals, has forgotten this history. It is regrettable that he has forgotten that his proposals had to be withdrawn when the students’ movement stood steadfast even when more drastic oppressive campaigns were carried out against it. We propose to the government that students’ struggles could be stopped not by suppression but only by withdrawing the proposals that destroy education and the future of the country.

We demand the government to stop suppressing students who struggle for their rights and immediately abolish SAIMT, the illegal degree boutique at Malabe.”

# Sri Lanka's economy & Leukemia

Daily occurrences in Sri Lanka indicate that the economic crisis confronted by the country currently is very serious. This is manifested to the society through many issues including the devaluation of the rupee, slashing relief, increasing taxes, weakening of income sources etc.

As citizens of this country it is necessary to understand the extent of the economic crisis the country is confronted with at the moment, the real reasons for such a crisis and how it affects the people.

The economic crisis of Sri Lanka's capitalism, in whatever sector or whichever manner it manifests is linked to negative production. Sri Lanka, as a country, has failed to earn the income necessary for its essential expenditure. This is the truth. The capitalist economy of Sri Lanka is unable to earn the income necessary for the country. Due to the weakening of avenues of income the avenues for production have become non-productive. While old production avenues are non-productive the capitalist governments have failed to create new avenues of production. This is manifested in many ways when the economy fails to create new means and the existing sources are not fruitful.

This crisis that exists in the economy in Sri Lanka could be better understood with a few examples. Throughout the recent past the rupee got depreciated in relation to the dollar. Now a dollar is about Rs. 153. Why does the rupee get depreciated continuously? The value of the currency we use depends on the value of the goods and services we produce as a country. When the value of goods and services we produce decreases, the value of our currency decreases. Specially, the value of the rupee in relation to foreign currency depends on the value of foreign assets the country possesses. When foreign assets decrease, the value of the rupee decreases in correspondent to it. Though this could be temporarily patched up with foreign loans, as an inevitable result of having got to pay back the loans with

interest, the crisis deepens. This is what is happening at present.

Sri Lanka spends roughly about US\$ 20,000 annually to import goods. It should be understood that some of these goods could be produced in the country. However, when the import expenditure in the country is US\$ 20,000 the export income of the country is US\$10,000 only. This means Sri Lanka incurs a loss of 100% from foreign trade. The reason for this is the weak production avenues in the country. As a result the government is in a dilemma. The main solution the government has for this is selling valuable resources of the country such as lands, ports, airport, oil tanks and islands to foreign companies in exchange for a few dollars. However, this too is not possible due to the strong mass protests that come up against selling assets of the country. The foreign assets crisis the government is confronted

is so acute that the government has taken a decision to award a 5 year visa to any foreigner who brings US\$ 300,000 to the country. However, there isn't any information of any such person coming to Sri Lanka.

***If a country fails to earn enough for its expenses and if it is necessary to beg for loans continuously for its expenses the economy of that country is in dire straits. It is like suffering from Leukemia.*** Leukemia is a cancer of the blood cells. The red blood cells produced in the body of a person with leukemia get destroyed and they are not produced. The person could live any longer only by blood transfusion. During a blood transfusion, donated blood is added to a person's body.

Sri Lanka's economy is maintained likewise. The economy is inadequate to earn assets needed for the country. Then, just like leukemia patients need blood transfusion, Sri

Lanka has to get foreign loans.

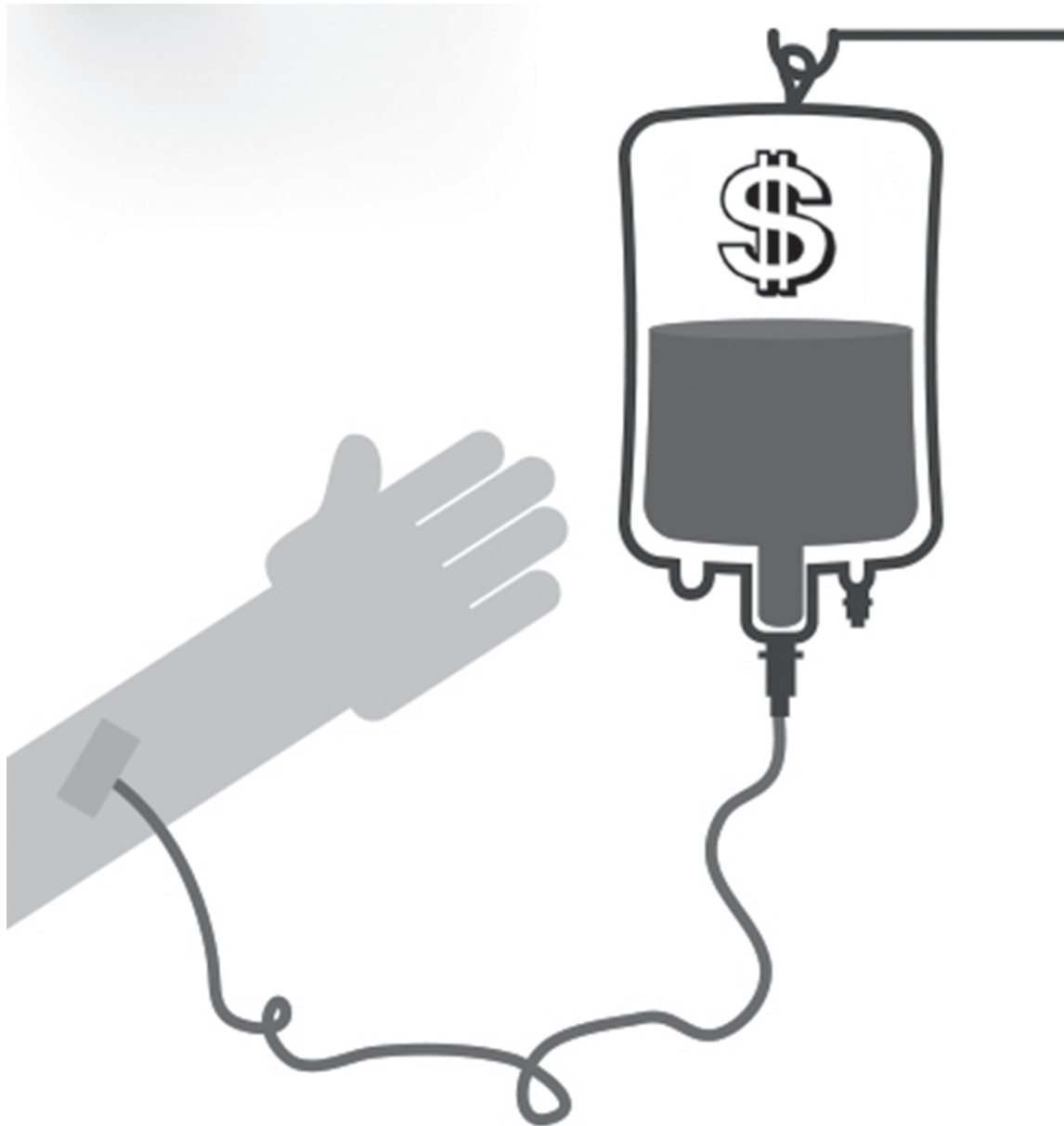
If the economy of a country depends on loans, and if the amount of loans is close to 80% of the national income of the country, it is a very dangerous situation. Sri Lanka is in this dangerous zone at present. 'Capitalism is nearing its death day by day' is not an incorrect statement.

Notwithstanding this grave crisis, what is the conduct of the capitalist government? If what the country earns is not adequate for its expenses, such a country has two solutions. One is increasing the income to tally with the expenses. For this priority should be given for production. This could be done by a production economy. However, there is no such move in Sri Lanka. Even the old conventional plantations are being destroyed. The second solution for this crisis is to cut off unnecessary expenses. The dairy products, vegetables, fruit,

cereals could be produced in Sri Lanka so that flow of money abroad for these products could be stopped. As most of the fuel imported is used for producing power, alternative sources of power such as solar and wind power could be used to reduce the amount of fuel imported to Sri Lanka. However, the government is reluctant to take such steps as the crisis is so acute that the government is incapable of taking such measures. As Lenin had once said capitalism has no solutions for the crisis in capitalism. Lenin compared the attempt by capitalism to get over the crisis as an attempt to lift oneself up by pulling on his own shoe laces.

What does the government do to counter its inability to increase income over its expenses in a bid to escape the capitalist crisis? It limits or slashes its expenses. However, what is slashed is not its expenses but the expenses of the people. The unnecessary expenses of paying salaries for a mammoth cabinet, to buy luxury cars and rent out buildings for ministries and to hold tamashas or go on foreign trips are not curtailed. There is no limit to frauds and corruption either. However, the services provided for the people, free education and free health services are slashed instead. Government's craving is to reduce its contribution and expenses for education and health. This is why privatization of education takes a center stage. This is why the pension of government employees and the compensation due to farmer community are denied to them. It is the rights of the common people that have been slashed due to the capitalist crisis.

Expecting relief from a capitalist government in crisis and whose economy is in crisis is like 'getting blood from a turnip'. Sri Lanka's capitalism is unable to develop the country or fulfill requirements of the people. It is now like a moribund leukemia patient. It could only live for a short time sucking people's blood. This is why forces should be rallied to drive away capitalism from administering this country. The struggles being carried out to win rights, to protect education, stop selling assets and resources, to establish social justice and good morals should continue without stopping at those levels until capitalism is defeated. There is no other alternative for the people to overcome the capitalist crisis. Let's do it!



# It's time to merge all struggles

Comrade Samantha Vidyaratne  
Central Committee member of the JVP



**RP: Environmental destruction can be seen everywhere in the country today. This is a result of negative environmental impacts caused by human behavior over a long period of time and intensifying them in the recent past. How does JVP recognize this issue?**

**SV:** Capitalism is only concerned about financial profit and factors such as environment are not matters to be considered. During the era under imperialists as well as nearly 70 years after the independence rulers of this country have neglected the environment. Therefore the country and the people have to face serious adverse consequences of so called development projects. Recent floods is one of them and it is an issue created by rulers of this country under the pretext of development rather than a natural disaster.

We think that the country should have been in a correct development path. There are two paths in development; environmental friendly development and environmental unfriendly development. In our country the environment has rejected the development path we have followed. Landslides, flood and droughts are the signs of that rejection by the environment. All these facts have clearly shown what we have done under the name of development is not sustainable and long term beneficial.

**RP: Uva province that you represent has faced serious environmental issues and risks in the recent past. What are the reasons for this?**

**SV:** Uva province means Central Highland (CH) of the country. Therefore any damage caused to the CH would not limit to that region. It impact would affect people all over the country. There are few countries in the world that have highlands in the center of the country and Sri Lanka is one of them. If we assume we lost CH, then we would not receive North Eastern and South Western monsoon rains. The monsoon winds would just pass the country without giving rains. Therefore this CH is a fortune and the symbol of prosperity. Our rulers have not understood this

value.

During the era of Asiatic Social System that prevailed in the country before imperialist invasion in 1505 or during the era of our ancient kings when over 30,000 reservoirs were constructed, consciously or unconsciously this CH was considered as the upstream of the country or head of the country. Therefore they did not start colonies, large scale constructions or reservoirs in the CH. However, imperialists and their predecessors, local rulers after independence, have done all the damage to the CH. They raped the virgin environment of the CH. There are agencies and police units to investigate child rape and abuse of women but there is no agency to investigate or take legal action against these crimes committed against the CH and other environmental systems.

Massive environmental destructions have been going on in the Uva province. However, our rulers describe them as 'mega development projects'. But these projects do massive destructions to the environment. Government introduced the Uma-oya project as 'multipurpose development project' because it provides drinking water and water for irrigation and generates electricity. But we call the project as multi-destructive project. Because this CH is the water source where all springs are situated. This is the starting point of 103 rivers that flow to all directions of the country. This is the source of all drinking water, irrigation water and hydroelectricity of the country. Destruction of CH means destructing all these sectors. Construction projects of roads, reservoirs and large buildings in the CH will definitely become a curse to the country in the future.

**RP: You are one of the leaders in the farmers' movement against handing over of lands in Wellassa for multinational sugar companies. What is the situation of this issue?**

**SV:** By 26th November, 2018 we commemorate the 200th anniversary of beheading Keppetipola Adikaram who led the armed uprising against the British Empire. The British Empire failed to curb this Uva Wellassa

liberation struggle during 1817-1818. They brought additional forces from other colonies in the region to suppress this struggle. After crushing the uprising governor Robert Brownrigg boasted that people in the Uva Wellassa would not rise against the British in the next 200 years. His statement seems to be true as Monaragala is the poorest district of the country according to the Ministry of Finance. When the 200th anniversary of the defeat of Uva Wellassa uprising is marked, present rulers are attempting to betray the country again to foreigners.

It has been proposed to hand over 62,500 acres of land to Gassal Ventures Company of Singapore. This land area is larger than Singapore. Our leaders are attempting to do similar betrayal that their predecessors did 200 years ago by handing over 62,500 acres fertile lands to foreign companies. This is a betrayal similar to the one committed on 2nd March, 2018. We do not like to sell an inch of our land to foreigners. Because we know that our ancestors shed their blood on this land in the struggle against British imperialists. These trees, water sources and animals are living on this fertile soil that is nourished with their blood. We are not ready to give them back to foreigners.

We formed a massive peoples' movement, "Front to Protect Uva Wellassa Peoples' Rights", against this move combining Ampara, Badulla and Monaragala districts. It is a front lead by leading Buddhist monks, intellectuals of the country and the farmers in the area. We have used strategic values in the area and we would definitely defeat this move by forming massive peoples struggle against the sordid moves of the rulers.

**RP: The Umaoya multi destructive project has already shown signs of huge environmental damage and human tragedy. Could you tell us about the peoples' struggles against this?**

**SV:** By now there is a serious environmental destruction in the Eastern slopes of the CH from Nuwara Eliya to Mahiyanganaya and Wellawaya. Over 7037 houses have been damaged in Uvaparaganagama, Welimada, Haliela, Bandarawella, Ella and Wellawaya DS divisions. Buddhist temples, churches, schools and business ventures are among them. On the other hand 3112 wells, water streams and ponds have dried up. This damage is insignificant compared to what will happen in the future.

Now the cohesion of Eastern slope of the CH has lost its cohesion. There are huge cracks on the ground coming from over 1000 ft. running towards the bottom of the earth and the houses along this line have been damaged. The earth's surface has fragmented. After the landslide at Meeriyabedda in 2014 we demanded the government to conduct a geological survey. Geological Survey and Mines Bureau has conducted a survey and the report has been handed over to the government. According to the report 66.9% of the land area of the Badulla district is under landslide risk. This kind of a project in a land slide prone area would double the risk. We cannot predict the damage in a situation of heavy rain or even small tremor.

At this moment the water leak of the tunnel is 2562 liters per second. The officials who came from Colombo to inspect this water leak reached the place by a boat. Up to now the transportation in the tunnel was done by a train. Now water flow is high and the train cannot be

used and a boat service was launched in the tunnel. Surface layer of the CH has been severely damaged by various environmental damages but the underground – the inner layer had not been destroyed. What is happening is the destruction of underground. It is similar to internal bleeding and internal bleeding in this nature will definitely cause death. The water leak is 2562 liters per second. You just calculate the amount per day and it is more than water required per day for 20 million people. This is a serious disaster and who can measure future cost of this? We believe a scientific study is needed to estimate future impacts.

We started the struggle against this project in 2007. On 29 April 2007 Mahinda Rajapaksa laid the foundation stone for this project and after a proper study we raised our voice in the Parliament and asked the government not to launch this project. In the Provincial Council too our representatives demanded not to start this project. Rajapaksa regime did not listen to our voice. As a group that foresees the destruction, we decided to fight to stop this project and we formed "Movement to protect Umaoya". Without racial or political division intellectuals, doctors, lawyers and villagers joined hands and started a campaign against the project. We decided to form a massive peoples' front against the project.

However, during the Rajapaksa regime people were scared to join us. When we visited some villages people did not like even to talk with us. In our country people cannot understand future threats until they themselves experience the tragedy. Since the government did not listen to our voice and people did not understand what we said we

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# Qatar heats up Middle East



A diplomatic crisis erupted in Arab Gulf Regional countries suddenly and unexpectedly. Several countries including Saudi Arabia, United Arab Emirates, Bahrain, Egypt and Maldives took several moves against Qatar in June 2017. The moves included cutting off diplomatic relations with Qatar and imposing trade and travel bans.

The main allegation of these countries against Qatar was that it 'supported international terrorism'. Accordingly, these countries severed relations with Qatar and withdrew their ambassadors. Bahrain, Saudi Arabia and United Arab Emirates informed Ambassadors of Qatar in their countries to leave their countries within 48 hours. Qatar residents living in those countries were asked to leave the countries within two weeks. Saudi Arabia closed all land, air and sea routes to Qatar. The demands by these countries include that Qatar should end any support for the Muslim Brotherhood and expel all its members, close down broadcaster Al Jazeera, severe diplomatic ties with Iran and shut down a Turkish military base in the peninsula. They also included suspending all bank accounts of the members of Hamas organization.

Despite these countries headed by Saudi Arabia complaining against Qatar, Saudi Arabia together with Qatar cannot evade the allegation of 'supporting international terrorism'. Both these countries nourish and maintain Islamic terrorist groups. Saudi Arabia is the center of Wahhabism.

Meanwhile, US President Donald Trump has called Egyptian President Abdel Fattah el-Sisi to discuss the ongoing dispute between Qatar and its Arab neighbours. The involvement of the USA in the crisis is evident when Trump talks about "the need for all countries to follow through on their commitments at the Riyadh Summit to stop terrorist financing and discredit extremist ideology."

## Reasons for the crisis...

However, it seems the USA, Israel and Saudi Arabia have minutely changed their strategies during the past few months. As such, their latest attempt is to use the allegation 'supporting international terrorism' against Qatar and Iran. There are several reasons for this.

A massive opposition against Islamic terrorism has developed among European and US citizens due to the repeated terrorist attacks carried out in Europe and the

USA. The security forces have failed to prevent the repeated attacks. The leaders of these countries know the attacks are being carried out by the same terrorist groups they created and nourished. Sooner or later the people too will come to know it. When this happens the people in Europe and the USA, who already are burdened due to the economic crisis, would launch a massive protest against the present rulers. As such, if the allegation of terrorism could be heaped on Qatar and Iran beforehand, it would be a bonus for the interested parties. It seems that the world political balance of power plays a major role in the issue. Preventing forces that rise against the Saudi-Israel-USA getting strengthened is a mutual need of this 'unholy' trinity.

If Qatar, that is building a close relationship with Iran due to the moves taken against it by its neighbours, could be distanced from Iran, it would be important for Saudi Arabia as well as Israel and the USA. On the other hand it would be a double bonus for Saudi Arabia if it could 'devour' the financial resources in Qatar as Saudi Arabia is immersed deeply in an economic crisis.

Saudi Arabia, Israel and the USA do not want to see Iran rising up as a regional power. Iran is one of the biggest military

powers in the region and has the most number of active personnel in its forces. This is why decisions are taken to immediately stop states like Qatar developing close relations with Iran.

Also, it seems the Turkish military base in the peninsula has become an issue for Qatar's neighbours. This new position could be due to Turkey not being amenable to the USA at the final phase of Syrian war.

## Proposals to resolve the issue...

Meanwhile, on 23rd June Saudi Arabia, United Arab Emirates, Bahrain and Egypt announced that Qatar should agree to 13 of their demands to solve the issue. Qatar was given 10 days to decide. However, the very next day Qatar rejected the demands.

In power and energy, within the region, Qatar is only second to Saudi Arabia. 90% of Qatar's export earning is from liquid gas from world's third biggest natural gas reserves which accounts for around 13% of the world's total natural gas reserves. Qatar is also the single largest LNG supplier in the world. Recently, Qatar also made a capital investment with Rosneft, Russia's biggest oil producer.

As soon as the dispute surfaced Qatari Minister of Foreign Affairs met his Russian counterpart and had a special discussion regarding the situation and also decided to strengthen relations between the two countries.

All this points to the move planned by the USA, Saudi Arabia and Israel has not given the expected results but seems to have boomeranged on them. It looks like Qatar, without being subjugated by the trio, would strengthen ties with Russia, China and Iran.

## France: More power to President

The general election in France took place on 11th and 18th June to elect 577 representatives to the Parliament.

At the election France's President Emmanuel Macron's En Marche party and its allies won with an outright majority in the lower house National Assembly getting 350 seats. As a result of Macron consolidating his power, he would be able to implement his neo-liberalist policies without any hindrance.

The Republican Party came second at the election receiving 112 seats and the Socialist Party received 30 seats. The National Front, a rightist nationalist party could get only 8 seats. The leader of this party Marine Le Pen was elected to the second round of the presidential election.

## Cuba: Trump's Howls for Vengeance



On June 16th US President Donald Trump re-imposed restrictions on travel and business in a move he said would "empower the Cuban people and hold the regime accountable". He completely cancelled certain restrictions on Cuba that had been removed by former President Barak Obama saying he was "cancelling completely the last administration's completely one-sided deal with Cuba."

Accordingly, the agreement between Obama and Raul Castro on 14th December, 2014 to restore diplomatic relations, ease trade and financial restrictions as well as limits on travel by Americans to Cuba has been abolished.

## NATO increases defence expenditure

NATO European countries and Canada have decided to increase their defense spending this year. Accordingly, the defense costs would be increased by US\$12 billion this year.

NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg says the annual defense spending would be increased by 4.3%. This means NATO members have spent almost \$46 billion more on defense over the last three years.

It was said that the \$46 billion will be spent on "many different things," including investing in new equipment and military exercises.

NATO's collective agreement in 2014 was for its 28 member countries to spend at least 2% of their gross domestic product on defense spending by 2024. By 2017 only Britain, Estonia, Greece, Poland, and the United States were doing so.

# Government's incompetence hinders officials' commitment

The Member of the Political Bureau of the JVP Comrade Bimal Rathnayaka MP speaking at a press conference held at the head office of the JVP said, "Eight days have gone by since the flood debacle. The situation confronted by the masses in areas that were flooded and where landslides occurred is very pathetic. Destruction in certain areas in Kalutara, Galle, Matara and Rathnapura districts are so severe that they cannot be brought to a normal state even if relief groups work for several more weeks say relief groups and officials. The situation has become worsened due to political pageants of the government that has no plans for rescue work."

The Member of the Political Bureau of the JVP Comrade Sunil Handuneththi too participated.

Speaking further Comrade Bimal Rathnayaka said, "The main reason for landslides and flooding is the destruction of central hills. Imperialists had their plantations in hill areas above 3000 to 5000 feet above sea level. The development process in our country was carried out for more than 2000 years protecting the central hills. As springs are the sources of rivers they were protected. The river was dammed, a tank built and cultivations were carried out in the plains. However, white imperialists deforested mountain regions and planted tea. They named plains as reserves. They did not conserve the areas that should have been conserved. This destruction began after 1815. This destruction cannot be reversed instantly. The rulers who came after the imperialists continued the destruction started by imperialists. They continued to destroy the hills. Companies destroyed the environment to boost their profits. Even the government going behind companies destroyed the environment. People too in various ways contributed to this destruction. However, the destruction by the government and the companies is larger than the destruction the people could commit. This is why a disaster situation has occurred at present. Water doesn't easily flow out to the sea from the rivers. The water that spills onto the plains doesn't subside due to the improper 'development' of the rulers. However, there are several measures a government could take to prevent disasters.



This is why a ministry of disaster management exists.

Harm to the country and the people from disasters have escalated. Our country was confronted with disasters due to floods in 1956, 1969, 2003, 2005, 2016 and in 2017. However, during the past 1 ½ to 2 decades the disaster situation has escalated. Environmental destruction, irregular development and inability to prevent disasters have aggravated the situation. One of the main reasons is inability to predict correctly. A newspaper had reported that the south west monsoon had taken 91 lives. It is not correct. We all know south west monsoon brings rain. By making correct predictions people could be evacuated from the dangerous zones. Now predicting weather conditions have come down to the level of soothsaying. Predictions could be made using technology. However, a fraud has been committed regarding the Doppler radar that was bought by the country. With this machine the exact rainfall for various areas could have been predicted. However, predicting in our country is at a very low level. It is reported that 212 people have lost their lives and more than 90 have disappeared. Property worth billions has been destroyed. As such, the government should be held responsible for the weakness in predicting.

Also, the government should have a plan to provide

disaster relief. Parliamentarians and members of our party not only did relief work with the 'Red Star' Relief Service Brigade of the JVP but several MPs also participated in administrative meetings of the government. What we came to know at these meetings is that the government did have neither a long term national plan nor an emergency plan to confront a disaster. Many beautiful plans had been presented also at meetings the President participated. However, the information in such plans was archaic. They had not been updated. There were no plans to prevent disasters. When we were children May and June were 'Wesak and Poson' months. Now they have become 'disaster' months. We all know May and June receive a lot of rain. However, the government does not have a plan to prevent disasters that would occur during these months.

It should be said that disaster management institutions of the government are listless. There is no administrative leadership. Despite officials work hard, no proper management could be seen in these institutions. They are at a very run down stage. People are severely distressed. Now, it is necessary to go beyond providing emergency relief services and plan to prevent disasters occurring in the future. The President has appointed disaster agents for districts. We have a doubt where some of the ministers were appointed

to create disasters rather than prevent them. The minister who mediated in Kegalle District has said after the meeting the reserve of 1500 acres that was spared should be distributed among farmers to cultivate minor export crops. As such, these politicians cannot prevent disasters. The government, despite talking about protecting environment, attempts to clear a large number of acres in Bibile to plant sugarcane. It avoids talking about the destruction of Uma Oya. When it comes to these projects the government forgets environmental destruction.

Also, it should be mentioned about the re-insurance programme of the government. Due to these re-insurance programs the government should get about Rs. 10,000 million. The government pays only Rs.100,000 when a life is lost. However, according to budget proposals Rs.2.5 million should be paid. As such, we remind the government to pay this amount immediately. Also, there are houses and properties worth more than Rs.2.5 million that have been destroyed. We ask the government to pay a justifiable compensation for the people.

People who were brought down to the bottom have been pushed to the bottom again. The government should mediate immediately to bring their lives to normalcy soon. People do not get a just compensation from certain insurance companies.

Hence, the insurance benefit the government should be given to the people.

Also, a national institute should be established and it should be given powers to take action in a disaster. Countries like Japan, the USA, Italy and India have prevented or minimized disasters by establishing such institutes and long term programmes."

Comrade Sunil Handuneththi addressing the press conference said, "The 'Red Star' Relief Service Brigade of the JVP mediated during the floods in 2003 and after the tsunami debacle in 2004. It is with this practical experience we mediated in disaster relief work this time. There are about 3000 that can be mobilized for 'Red Star' relief services. If the state machinery had been strong in relief work the delay could have been avoided. As the state participation was minimum there were obstacles to the restoration work at the initial stages. The 'Red Star' Relief Service Brigade of the JVP mediated as a separate unit detached from the programmes of the government. However, we mediated initially to save those who were distressed. We gave them food. It should be mentioned that the three services did a massive service. They gave their full support to save people. We were able to go to very difficult areas due to the support of the three services. The 'Red Star' Relief Service Brigade was able to feed people who had been starving for two whole days. What District Secretariats and Divisional Secretariats did was to provide food for those who came to them. But it was necessary to feed people who were marooned.

The government also failed to carry out second stage restoration work once the water subsided. The main issue was providing drinking water and cleaning wells. There were no water pumps or generators in Divisional Secretariats. The government only distributed goods received from private media institutions and supporters. Certain politicians of the government distributed goods received from the people under their labels. One responsible minister came down to the low level of distribution packs of five plantains with a label carrying his name. Government's relief work was limited to distributing goods. However,

**It's time to merge...**

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decided to go to court against the project and defeat it legally. We prepared documents to file a case. We prepared a file with over 600 pages. Professor Jinadasa Katupotha, Sajeewa Chamikara, Athula Priyantha, and Thilak Kariyawasam helped us in this process. We spent Rs.60, 000 for this but we did not have money to continue the process and we became helpless.

We again started programs to make people aware and by this time construction of the tunnel had been started. On 26 December 2014 a massive water leak started in the tunnel under Makulella village. Damages to houses and drying up of wells and streams started thereafter. Thereafter we formed the new movement called "Peoples' Front against Umaoya Multi-destructive Project". We carried out massive campaign against the project and demanded a halt to it.

Over 1000 Buddhist monks participated at protests and Maha Sanga issued Sanga commandment to stop the project but the government did not listen to it. After Mr. Maithripala Sirisena became the president with the greatest difficulty we got an appointment with him on 02 March 2015 to discuss this matter. We went to the Ministry of Environment together with professors, environmentalists and the clergy to meet him. President came and said that only five minutes can be given for the discussion. We struggled and got 15 minutes and told him the issue. But he did not properly understand the issue and finally said that he would appoint a committee to study the issue and steps would be taken based on the report of the committee. The cabinet subcommittee comprised Ravi Karunanayake, Harin Fernando, Nimal Siripala, Dilan Perera, and Ranjith Madumabandara. We made every attempt to discuss with this committee and explain the issue, told Harin Fernando but they never allowed us to explain our view. They never came here to see the real situation on the ground and they met two three hours in a room at the Parliament and unanimously decided to continue the project without any alteration.

So Mr. Maithripala Sirisena is now continuing the project. During the Rajapaksa regime only 16% of the project was completed but now 80% has been completed. The so-called Yahapalana regime has done the larger share of

the project and therefore we can say Mahinda and Maithri together have destroyed the CH or the heart of our country. The adverse consequences of this project are a fatal blow to the people. They have no houses, no water for drinking, temples and schools have cracked buildings that cannot be used, their farmlands, tea small holdings and business ventures cannot be functioned. They are living in fear of disasters such as landslides or collapse of their houses. But the leaders of the government did not give time to discuss this matter. We wrote letters to the president. On June 15 we wrote him and requested to declare this area as a risk prone area and take necessary action accordingly. He did not reply. We cannot let these people to be buried alive in this land. We cannot just be onlookers when this country goes to ruin in this way. So we decided to form a powerful peoples' movement to make the deaf and blind leaders to hear and see. We summoned a massive force of people to Bandarawela town on 28 June and we came to get a clear solution and not promises.

**RP: People are suffering as a result of various environmental issues. In most cases peoples' protests have been started. These individual cases need solutions. But a solution is needed to this environmental destructive social, economic and political system. What is the position of the JVP?**

**SV:** Yes. There are so many environmental issues in the country. Some are struggling for compensation for their destroyed crops, some are fighting for electrified fences to protect their lives from wild elephants, milk farmers are fighting for higher price for milk, upcountry vegetable farmers are crying due to high price of seeds, students are fighting to protect free education, professionals are fighting for higher salaries, pensioners are struggling against the pension cut and entrepreneurs are against higher taxes.

There are a lot of issues



in addition to the environmental issues. Thousands of people are dying as a result of Kidney disease. Dengu epidemic has spread all over the country. So the whole country is in a muddle. We cannot find solutions to these issues individually. This is a result of weak governance and inherent issues of this system. This is the time to change this system and form a government that can change this system. So we have to consolidate these struggles.

As environmentalists and under the names of various environmental organizations we struggled demanding protection of the environment. It is not wrong. That voice and view is good. But you turn back and look. What are the achievements we have got? Have we protected the environment? No. The environment has been destroyed faster than the way we fought against it. Therefore this is not the time for isolated struggles. This is the time to link all struggles.

If we all love the environment, if we all need human development, if we all are patriotic, we all should be able to see the destruction to the environment. Patriotism should be able to see the damage being caused to the CH and damages being done to rain forests. Therefore, all patriotic people, environmentalists, people who want to protect free education and those who want to protect the government service should be united. Intellectuals and professionals should realize that this is the time for common action. To cure the illness created by this system we have to change this system. To get results of this understanding we have to act. It is the request of the Central Hills as well as the whole country. Please listen to this request.

**Govt...**

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the SLFP and the UNP - will end in August. However, the President and the Prime Minister both have the intention to extend the agreement. However, it can be clearly seen that as a result of the increasing public protests the SLFP faction of the government is confronted with serious dissension in grassroots levels.

The main objective of the recent cabinet reshuffle was to demonstrate the authority of the President within the government and his ability to do changes in the government, assure the SLFP faction the power of the president and SLFP in the government and justify the SLFP being in the government. However, the issue has misfired due to the present situation. Political analysts point out that since both parties are greedy for power, they will attempt to continue the government absorbing all the shocks, accusations, charges, differences and brickbats. However, this would not be easy and both parties will become unpopular, face public protests and the government will face violent disturbances leading the country towards Political disorder and confusion. This situation will have a serious impact on the upcoming local government and provincial council elections. Political analysts point out that under these circumstances there is a political vacuum that creates special opportunity for an alternative force.

**Government's incompetence... >>> Page 06**

'Red Star' and other voluntary organizations are still cleaning wells, houses, business places and compounds. Those who were battered by the disaster are not in a position to do the restoration by themselves. As such, they should be assisted. Hiniduma, Mapalagama and certain places in Rathnapura were completely submerged in water. The business places in these towns cannot be opened until they are completely restored. Also, voluntary work is necessary to bring back pre-schools, schools, hospitals to normalcy. Books and equipments in certain schools in Kalutara, Galle, Matara have been completely destroyed. 'Red Star' Relief Services Brigade was able to restore 7 of the 16 schools that were harmed in Galle. However, they need the government to get involved in work that goes beyond voluntary work. Ayagama town in Rathnapura was completely destroyed. The hospital and the police do not exist anymore. Hence, a state machinery is necessary to restore them. However, we do not see such a plan.

The mediation of government politicians has terminated after distributing goods. Certain politicians distribute goods only to their party men. We could say with responsibility that the 'Red Star' Relief Services Brigade has not worked with partiality. Now a mediation to hold medical clinics is necessary.

Many have contributed on behalf of those who were distressed due to the calamity. Also, Sri Lankans employed abroad, 'Ethera Api' organization have collected goods and money

to contribute. We are thankful to them. The next stage would be to prevent such a calamity happening again. A firm step should be taken to avoid such a calamity.

Also, tea industry has been broken down in districts harmed by floods and landslides. Paddy fields have been damaged. Water ways have been destroyed. There is no plan to compensate farmers who have lost their crops and other belongings. The government insurance scheme compensates only loss of life and damage to houses. How the damage is estimated is not clear. Plans should be drawn up to compensate those who lost their cultivations. If not a community of agitators would be crated like at Samasara, Moothotumulla and Salava. The government should stop people taking to the streets instead of saying agitations are wrong. We say people should be compensated without any difference. We ask the government not to underestimate the situation.

Also, religious leaders mediated in a big way to minimize the suffering of the people. Certain groups attempted to rouse communalism and religious extremism recently. However, temples, churches and mosques united to carry out relief work. There was religious consensus. As such, people have practically proved that they are willing to unite. They why can't the government do so? Certain officials have told us that due to strict decisions of the government they are unable to mediate. Hence, the government should get the officials and people to participate in restoration work."

# RED POWER



**Comrade Anura Dissanayaka addressing special seminar organized by 'Ethera Api' committee in Germany**



**Commemoration of National Student Heroes' Day**



**Complaint to HRC on behalf of people affected by Meethotumulla garbage dump**



**March by Lanka Electricity Board Employees' Union to demand rights of CEB employees**

## 'Red Star' at war with dengue

A 'Shramadana' campaign organized by the 'Red Star' Relief Brigade of the JVP to prevent dengue epidemic from affecting school children was held in many schools throughout the island on the 8th and 9th of this month.



## 'Harthal' campaign organized against Uma-Oya multi destructive project

