

RedPower

THE CENTRAL ORGAN OF THE PEOPLE'S LIBERATION FRONT (JVP) - SRI LANKA

VOLUME-20 NO.05

SEPTEMBER - 2023

ISSN 1391-1023

Registered as a Newspaper

www.jvpsrilanka.com

e-mail : niyamuwanews@gmail.com

Donation - Rs.100.00

POLITICS

ECONOMY

NEWS

INTERNATIONAL

MEDIA BRIEFINGS

CURRENT AFFAIRS



Let's defeat the 30% tax bill that robs employees' funds, including EPF/ETF...

Several trade unions representing the government, semi-government and private sectors jointly held a protest demonstration on Sep 07 in front of the Parliament roundabout. The protest was held demanding the repeal of the 30% tax bill to be passed by the government on Sep 07, which robs employees' funds, including EPF/ETF.

Implement law against Sallay & Pillayan without excoriating Channel 4

Comrade Vijitha Herath, MP

As the information disclosed by the British 'Channel 4' channel indicates that the former Chief Minister of the Eastern Province and the current Member of Parliament, Pillaiyan and the current head of the State Intelligence Unit, Suresh Sallay, have directly dealt with the groups involved in the Easter attack the government should make a formal inquiry about it says Comrade Vijith Herath, the National Executive Member of the National People's Power. He also said that the defense minister, President Ranil Wickremesinghe, should remove the officer said to be involved from his post before the investigation is conducted. He said this at a special press conference held at the JVP head office.

According to the information disclosed by Mawlana through 'Channel 4', it is clear that the former Chief Minister of the Eastern Province Pillaiyan and the current head of the State Intelligence Unit, Suresh Saleh, had direct dealings with the group that carried out the Easter bombings. As soon as it was announced that this report would be released, several government members presented various accusations about Mawlana in the Parliament on the 05th. Nevertheless, the photographs of Mawlana with Gotabaya Rajapaksa and Pillaiyan have been found. He himself has



revealed his relationship with Pillaiyan. As investigations into the Easter attack have not been carried out properly, the real accused are still at large. However, this information explains the mastermind of the massacre and their needs very well.

It is very clear from the programme that the extremist ideas of the Saharan group were used, and the attack was launched through them. The finger has been pointed at State Intelligence's head, Suresh Saleh. He was appointed to that position as soon as Gotabaya Rajapaksa assumed the office of President. Despite it being said from the beginning that Suresh Saleh was an accused in this regard, as soon as Gotabaya Rajapaksa assumed the office of President, Saleh was made the head of the State Intelligence Department. It is apparent to the public that there is an interrelationship between these two events.

At the time of the Easter attack, Ranil Wickramasinghe was the Prime Minister of the country and his closest disciple, Ruwan

Page 07 >>>

Let's build a People's Govt. against the corrupt ruling gang!

National People's Power points out that there has been a decisive and clear dividing line in Sri Lankan politics at present and that it will build a government that stops theft, punishes those involved in theft and corruption, and takes over the wealth collected from theft and emphasizes that a rule of the people should be established.

These views were expressed by Comrade Anura Dissanayake, the leader of the National People's Power, while addressing the Borella Constituency Conference of the NPP on the 27th.

Comrade Anura Dissanayake said, "We have entered a critical juncture. They are the camp that is destroying this country; we are the camp that is working to build the country. They are the ones who steal; we are the ones who stop thieving. They are the ones who protect the stolen; we are the ones who punish the thieves. They sell national resources; we

protect national resources. They are the people who break the law of this country; we protect the law of this country. They are the ones who destroy national unity; we are the ones who create national unity.

The secret of the development of every developed country in the world is the creation of a productive economy with the resources, knowledge, and well-managed resources of that country. The economy of the likes of Ranil and Mahinda is a 'selling' economy. The economy of the National People's Power is a productive and building

economy. They represent racism. They want to foster hatred, anger and suspicion among nationalities. They do not want unity between Sinhalese, Tamils and Muslims. We need a country accepting equal rights for all- the Sinhalese, Muslims and Tamils where everyone lives peacefully and cooperatively.

In every election in Sri Lanka, different camps were created. People only looked at two centres. They managed to suppress real issues and bring up false issues. Society was divided on those issues. During election times, these ruling gangs create problems. The people get divided. People's fundamental issues are thrown aside. However, recently, a struggle arose. That struggle arose against the oppression of the people. For the first time in Sri Lanka, the people came forward on their real issues, against the problems of power cuts, water, gas, jobs and fuel, against being oppressed.

Today, the rulers are in one place, and the people are in another. The rulers of that time created various divisions among the people. Today, there is a decisive and clear dividing line in Sri Lanka. Ranil Wickramasinghe, Mahinda Rajapaksa, Ravi Karunanayake and Basil have come to one stage. The rulers have joined one platform for their safety.

So far, there has been no real division in the society. There are a handful of people on top who are exploiting us. Underneath, there are a large number of people who are suffering. Until now, their gang had been in power. All those people will come to one camp against the National People's Power in a national election.

In future politics, no one can be in the middle. A good government should be formed to give our children a better life. We need to free this country from this corrupt gang. The only movement that will do it is the National People's Power.

A Rational Land, a Just Society and a Liberated Human Being!

464/20, Pannipitiya Road, Pelawatta, Battaramulla, Sri Lanka
Tele. +94112785612 | Fax. +94112786050
www.jvpsrilanka.com
e-mail : niyamuwanews@gmail.com

They are also dignified Sri Lankan citizens!

This year completes two hundred years since the British colonial government brought down Tamils from India to work in their plantations. Although they had been living in Sri Lanka and contributing to Sri Lanka's economy for more than six generations, they are not considered Sri Lankan citizens with equal rights. They are referred to as Indian Tamils in Sri Lanka and Sri Lankan Tamils in India.

There are not even proper statistics regarding the upcountry Tamil community. According to the 2012 census, their population is 842,323. It is 4.2% of the population in Sri Lanka. 2/3rd of these people still live in line rooms built during the colonial times. They do not have even the ownership of these 'abodes' or any land. They do not even have permission to construct a necessary extension or a washroom when their families get extended. While the whole world is digitalized, the life of these upcountry Tamils in these line rooms is arduous.

The highest nutritional deficiency and malnutrition in Sri Lanka is among these people. The highest ratio of anaemia among pregnant mothers, low birth weight babies and babies born with nutrition deficiencies such as stunting, wasting and malnutrition is recorded from the plantations.

Poverty is also high among the upcountry Tamil people; they still struggle to get a salary of ten thousand rupees per day. According to the current cost of living, the daily allowance of ten thousand rupees is insufficient. The representation of the upcountry Tamil people in the public service is less than three.

The dispensaries in the plantations are still maintained by the estates, and the dispensaries do not have the same maintenance as in a typical government welfare centre. There are no well-trained health professionals in these dispensaries, and no government that has come to power has made enough mediation to improve the health of the people who strongly contribute to the country's economy. Some welfare services in these plantations, however, are carried out with the support of State or non-governmental organizations with foreign aid.

Even the political representation of the upcountry Tamil people, who are affected by all these problems in life, is also at a low level. Several political families who share the ministerships of all the governments that have come to power have entered the parliament on behalf of these people and live a luxurious life. They are close to the elite corrupt political gangs that have ruled the country and are not interested in gaining respect for the people they represent.

At this 200th anniversary, all Sri Lankans should have the political will to recognize the upcountry Tamil people who bring dollars to the country from the tea plantations as dignified Sri Lankan citizens and fulfill their basic needs.

Restore Old Pension Scheme before 2024 election - demand India's employees



Thousands of Union government employees and Central public sector undertakings, including the defence establishments, marched on August 10 demanding the restoration of the Old Pension Scheme.

After the protest rally, organised by the Joint Forum for Restoration of Old Pension Scheme (JFROPS), a platform of about 60 unions,

the employees sent a memorandum to Prime Minister Narendra Modi stating that if the existing National Pension Scheme (NPS) is allowed to continue, employees recruited on or after January 1, 2004, will be discriminated against and will be "left in the lurch" after retirement.

The memorandum said that under the OPS, 50% of the last basic pay drawn by the employees was straightaway given

as pension, and the Dearness Allowance was revised twice based on inflation. It points out that the new pension scheme is total discrimination and in violation of Articles 14 and 16 of the Constitution of India, since based on the date of appointment, the government employees have been divided into two classes, one group getting defined and guaranteed pension equivalent to 50% of their last pay drawn without any contribution whereas the other group getting a meagre pension with a contribution which depends on the vagaries of the market.

Tram workers in Adelaide strike after pay negotiations stall

Tram workers in Adelaide, the capital of South Australia, struck for three hours on Friday after negotiations between the Rail Tram and Bus Union (RTBU) and tram operator Torrens Connect for a new enterprise agreement (EA) reached a deadlock. An RTBU spokesman claimed a deal could not be reached while Torrens Connect management refused to meet the

union's demands.

The workers want a three-year agreement with 3 percent annual pay increases, or CPI, whichever is greater, removal of split-shift provision from the agreement to reduce fatigue and improved training with a recognised Light Rail Operators Certificate issued to all operators.

Brazil's Black movements rally against police violence

Brazilian Black movements organized a national act on the 25th of August to demand the end of what they call a racist violence in the country, after a series of police violence cases and massacres in several states.

Called "National Day of Fight for Black Lives", movements also claimed for justice on the killing of a leader of an Afro-Brazilian resident of quilombo settlements in Bahia, brutally murdered on August 17th inside her home, and a 13 year old boy shot dead in a police operation in Rio de Janeiro.



August 24th marks the anniversary of the death of Luiz Gama, a lawyer from Salvador who was an icon of black resistance in the late 1800s.

Data from the Brazilian Public Security Forum (FBSP) shows that in 2022, 47,508 cases of violent deaths were recorded and 76.5% of

the victims were black.

The data is included in the latest edition of the Brazilian Public Security Yearbook.

The organization points out that blacks are the main group victimized by violence, regardless of the occurrence recorded, and accounted for 83.1% of the victims of police interventions.

Polarization of global and local politics

The world is becoming a peaceful place no longer. An intense competition is being built up again between power bases for natural resources and markets. After the collapse of the Soviet Union in the early 1990s, the uni-polar world around the United States can no longer be seen. Western imperialist countries led by the United States on one side and China and Russia on the other have created a multi-polar world.

In the recent past, the failure of the neoliberal policy in the world economy that collapsed the economy in the United States and Europe brought about a new situation in the world economy and politics. In such a situation, new economic alliances such as BRICS have challenged the world dominance maintained by the USA and the European Union. The 'Russian-African Conference' held in Saint Petersburg, Russia on July 28th, as well as the fifteenth BRICS Conference held in Johannesburg, South Africa on August 24th, are examples of this situation. Argentina, Egypt, Ethiopia, Iran, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates will join the BRICS membership from January 2024, marking their respective polarization in advance.

This kind of polarization can also be seen in the politics of Sri Lanka, which is entering the worst economic crisis in history. Predictably, the economic crisis has brought a political crisis to the fore. On the one hand, the crisis has worsened to the extent that ordinary people can no longer live in the old way, and because of that, they have been forced to think about a complete change. It can be understood as the crisis from below. On the other hand, a crisis from above has also emerged. It is the crisis of the ruling groups that can no longer carry on their rule in the old way. Both these crises have also raised an opportunity for profound social transformation.

Some people who failed to find a camp to survive politically in this crisis have become

refugees in Sri Lankan politics. These days, they can be seen roaming in the political field looking for a 'lodging'. These politically displaced groups' desperation has intensified, mainly because the new political dynamic, the National People's Power, is emerging as a vast mass power against the existing Ranil-Rajapaksa regime. The Sri Lankan political landscape is divided into two apparent camps. Accordingly, the ordinary people, who have been oppressed and deceived by all the governments in this country, are uniting around the National People's Power as a left-wing progressive democratic camp and turning that camp into a significant and vital force.

On the other hand, all the parties and factions that were and are in power are coming to one goal against the left, a progressive new camp. They are in the state of political refugees due to the absence of a single platform for them to climb. However, in order to defeat the rising left, progressive, democratic mass overflow, these groups are throwing brickbats against it from different places. Interestingly, this group gathered against the emerging leftist, progressive new camp are groups of people ranging from extreme leftist, counter-revolutionary gangs to extreme racist and extreme right-wing groups. However, the growing political crisis will soon force all of them to polarize.

Currently, the UNP, the main right-wing political movement in the country, has split into two and is weak. The SJB, which emerged from it, is stagnating without popular appeal. While some try to combine the two sections, they are still separate, thinking about their positions and the number of MPs they get. There are hints that a group of people from SJB will go to the UNP, and at the next moment, it is said that it will not happen. While trying to appear anti-government, SJB also expresses opinions about supporting the government.



There is no political argument that the UNP and SJB have the same economic and social policies and can have separate existences. Nevertheless, they are further divided by personal greed for positions and power. Nevertheless, they will come together under one tent at any moment.

Meanwhile, the Sri Lanka Podujana Peramuna (SLPP), which holds parliamentary power, was formed as a group centred on the Rajapaksas rather than a party. Now, the Rajapaksas are thrown away from the centre. The result is that the SLPP is divided into different gangs. In that, several unrelated groups have been formed, such as a group that wants to win President Ranil, a group that wants to bring Basil, the founder of SLPP, a group that is still trying to 'stand up' with former President Mahinda, a group that wants to infiltrate the SLFP, seize its power and come to an agreement with Ranil etc. However, for many who have engaged in fraud and corruption together with the Rajapaksas, the coming to power of the National People's Power, which is against fraud and corruption, is a nightmare. So they will naturally try to group against it.

Although they are currently separated from the ruling party and occupy seats in the opposition, groups like Gammanpila and Weerawansa, who did politics to get several ministerial posts, while the Rajapaksas were powerful, and

On the other hand, all the parties and factions that were and are in power are coming to one goal against the left, a progressive new camp. They are in the state of political refugees due to the absence of a single platform for them to climb. However, in order to defeat the rising left, progressive, democratic mass overflow, these groups are throwing brickbats against it from different places.

Dallas and others who left the SLPP, are now in the category of displaced people who have failed to find a base.

Meanwhile, people like Sarath Fonseka and Champika Ranawaka, who thought they could get the role of the common candidate during the crisis, have become refugees in this political field. In the upcoming political battle, the concept of a non-partisan common candidate, which was once in demand in the political arena, does not have any demand. Now it is outdated. Now, the political spectrum is divided into camps. Ranil Wickramasinghe currently

appears as the representative of the elite class and leads the reactionary camp. A situation has arisen where a common candidate is no longer needed to defeat the representative of the reactionary right-wing camp. That is because the National People's Power has been built as a strong people's movement capable of defeating the reactionary gang led by Ranil. Comrade Anura Dissanayake, the leader of the 'Compass', has already been accepted as the candidate of the left progressive camp and parachute common candidates have lost their chance in this political environment.

Now in the political field of this country, all the displaced people, villains, clowns etc., are looking for a camp to lodge. Or they are hiding the landing camp and throwing brickbats at the National People's Power. Some also think of bringing the National People's Power back into the politics of bringing a common candidate. However, they still do not understand that the politics of the past have changed, and the Sri Lankan society is polarizing into two main camps. Such thinking is but a problem with their political reading.

However, it is very clear that the upcoming Sri Lankan political struggle will be resolved by the victory of the progressive left camp in the struggle between the elite and the right-wing reactionary camp on one side and the progressive left camp on the other and the emergence of a people's rule.

Tyranny of current Presidency & the collapse of democracy:

a pattern we must break

It is said that the four pillars of democracy are the Executive, Legislature, Judiciary and Media. However, in the current context, the Executive pillar cuts through all other three pillars of democracy in Sri Lanka. Misusing powers of the Executive Presidency is not something unprecedented, and in Sri Lanka, all the Executive Presidents appointed have misused the powers of the seat. Ranil Wickremasinghe's 1st year in office indicates this vividly.

To recognize a democratic society and to evaluate the existence of democracy, several characteristics should be visible, such as fair and periodic elections, independence of the judiciary, equality before law, intellectual and media freedom, protection of fundamental rights etc. Evaluation of the current context of Sri Lanka manifests to us the rapid diminishing of these characteristics and the collapse of democracy due to the actions and decisions of the current Executive President of the country.

Postponing elections and undermining representative democracy

Within the first quarter of 2023, the Election Commission declared the dates for the election and postal vote to appoint representatives to the Local Authorities. On 14th February, the Election Commission issued a letter indefinitely postponing the date of postal voting and, thereby, the election itself. The reason for the postponement is that the Government Printer has informed the Election Commission that she does not have sufficient funds or security to print ballot papers. Providing funds for the printing of ballot papers is the responsibility of the Secretary to the Treasury and the Minister of Finance, who is the President himself. Providing security is the responsibility of the Inspector General of Police. Even though another date for the election was declared as 25th April 2023, it was just a bluff to evade public vehemence. Once again, the



election was postponed indefinitely. This lack of cooperation between the Government Printer and IGP occurred after the President had summoned them.

The current Executive President of Sri Lanka sits without an authentic people's mandate. He was not even elected to the Parliament by the people and came to Parliament from the only bonus seat his Party got from the General Election. He was appointed by the Parliament, majorly biased to Rajapakshes. He was selected to protect corrupt Rajapakshes and their corrupt government. Therefore, there is no wonder that he even fears the election and tries every possible way to evade elections until he thinks the ground would be favourable for him. This tendency is a clear violation of people's sovereignty.

Suppression on Fundamental Rights

The Fundamental Rights chapter of Sri Lanka's Constitution guarantees several rights to which Sri Lankans are inherently entitled. It is disrespecting Fundamental Rights amounts to disrespecting the Constitution. The Fundamental Rights chapter of the Constitution, among other things, guarantees

freedom of thought, conscience and religion; freedom from torture or cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment; right to equality before the law and equal protection before the law; the right to non-discrimination; freedom of speech and expression; Freedom of peaceful assembly and association. These are in the Constitution not just for decoration purposes, but the visible Executive President of the country could not care less about it.

Being appointed President, he first did crackdown and the cruel and barbaric attack on the Galle Face protest site using military and paramilitary. That was just the start. After that, at every peaceful demonstration or protest, police personnel were flooded to the site of demonstrations with the intention of intimidating and scaring people as well as suppressing people with confrontations, baton charges, tear gas and water cannon attacks. Police do these with the blessings of the higher up. From the beginning, several methods were used to undermine and violate the freedom of expression and peaceful assembly of people. Such included imposing a curfew, blocking Social Media, attacking protestors using goons, imposing emergency

regulations, attacking protestors using armed forces, abductions and baseless arrests, entrapping protestors unnecessarily in court cases, intimidating and demonizing protestors, using draconian laws like Prevention of Terrorism Act.

Equality before the law and equal protection before the law are visibly diminishing. While culprits in Parliament and government and the henchmen of Rajapakshes are spared inquiries and punishments, people who are trying barely to survive and demand their rights are treated with the strictness of the law.

Attacks on Intellectual Freedom and Media Freedom

Genuine intellectuals and genuine journalists cannot stay silent in this situation. However, the opinions of the intellectuals and media are not taken into consideration. Simultaneously, the President himself is not reluctant to mock the journalists. Some statements are taken out of context, and such statement makers are summoned for inquiries and sometimes sued. Some journalists are targeted in protests and bashed.

Interfering with the Independence of the Judiciary

In the current system, the last resort the general public will turn to seek justice is the judiciary. Though not very strong, checks and balances are provided to secure the independence of the judiciary. However, in the current context, the country's Executive President makes statements intimidating the judiciary while trying to collide legislature with the judiciary. Members of the Parliament who are biased toward Rajapakshes follow in the very footsteps. Ranil Wickremasinghe and his allied Members of Parliament are misinterpreting, manipulating, bending and disregarding laws. Postponing legally mandated elections, undermining fundamental rights, using the legislature to intimidate the judiciary by threatening to summon Judges, using the legislature to pass anti-people laws, using the legislature to misinterpret laws, attempting to adversely impact members of the judiciary by intimidating the judiciary in public forums are clear blows on the rule of law and judiciary which act as strongholds within the current system that stop society from going towards anarchy.

The pattern we need to break

There is no doubt that in the capitalist system, the executive, legislature and judiciary are designed for the survival of capitalism. While we are determined to change the current economic, social and political system, we must work to protect people from the tyrannies of the current system and perils of capitalism as well as from going into anarchy. JVP, NPP, and the affiliated trade union, students, youth, and women's unions are not ready to allow this pattern of mandate-less, tyrannical governance to continue. We take action and struggle in the streets, in Parliament and the judiciary to break the trend of lawlessness. Soon enough, this President must be made to understand sovereignty is in people, and people have the supreme power. Our struggles will continue until every governing establishment serves the interests of the people in Sri Lanka.

Debt restructuring programme severe plunder of employees' funds

Comrade Wasantha Samarasinghe



[Excerpts from an interview Red Power had with Comrade Wasantha Samarasinghe, Member of the Central Committee of the JVP and President of the Inter-Employees Union]

Red Power:- What do you mean by the investment in EPF and ETF funds?

Comrade Wasantha Samarasinghe:-

Employees Provident Fund and Trustee Fund are funds created jointly with the contribution from employee's salary and employer's contribution for the employees of the country, especially in the semi-public sector and private sector, who do not have a pension scheme, to spend their retirement period or the twilight period of their lives. Due to their size, the Employee Provident Fund and the Employee Trust Fund are subject to looting at various times. By the end of 2022, the Employees' Provident Fund was 3.7 trillion rupees. That is 3700 billion rupees. If we take the employees' trust fund, it is almost 460 billion rupees. The sum of these two is nearly 4300 billion rupees.

The government has borrowed 98% of these funds of more than 4000 billion. The EPF is managed by the Central Bank's Monetary Board. A Central Bank authority as a superintendent makes decisions by an investment committee. The ETF has a Board of Trustees. It is controlled by the Department of Labour. It is governed by a chairman and a board of directors.

That's how these two are managed.

In the introduction of this fund, the act itself has given instructions on how to invest from this fund. It says to invest in government securities. The government invested nearly 05% in the stock market under some understanding of the monetary board. However, that 5% changed at times. The reason is that there were times when the Mahinda Rajapaksa government increased this figure to 10% or 12%. That was the time when it was looted with deals in the stock market. During 2008-2012 period, EPF was looted using the stock market. In 2008-2012, ETF lost more than 30000 million by investing it in the stock market. After that, the damage done to this fund was the 2015 bond scam. The fund lost 45,000 million rupees due to the fraud carried out by Ranil Wickramasinghe, Arjuna Mahendran and his nephew. In 2011 Mahinda Rajapaksa put forward a programme and a bill to loot 1/3 of this fund, stating it was to build a pension fund. However, the people of this country defeated and sent the Rajapaksa government home, denying them the ability to carry out the programme.

RP:- How has the government's loan optimization

programme jeopardized these funds and the benefits the working people can get?

WS:- The government is facing a crisis in paying domestic and foreign debts. To answer this debt crisis, the government has agreed with the International Monetary Fund to restructure the domestic debt. In restructuring foreign debt, there has been an agreement to restructure domestic debt as well. In that agreement, the International Monetary Fund says that the interest on local loans is high. That means debt servicing is more expensive. It is hard to pay now. Therefore, reducing debt servicing by 0.5% of GDP annually is suggested. If you want to reduce the amount of 0.5% of the gross domestic product annually, you need to reduce the interest paid on the loan. If the interest paid for loans is reduced, it should be reduced from the total loans taken by the government locally. These funds are invested in the treasury bills and bonds of the government of this country. The government now says that a new restructuring bond would be issued through the domestic debt restructuring proposal. However, to whom will these new bonds issued? It is very clear that this restructuring bond has been prepared to be issued directly to EPF only.

This bond is intended to be issued targeting Superannuation Funds).

Then the government has taken 16 trillion in loans locally. (16,000 billion). In 1958, there were 117 employee funds in the country before this fund was created. The government has taken an amount of debt from these 117. However, if we take the total debt in the country, only 26% of that 16,000 billion is taken from these pension funds. The remaining 74% is taken from the private sector. There are loans taken from big capitalists, private sector banks and insurance companies. Nevertheless, this proposal of the government does not affect them. It affects the fund of those who hope to save some money for retirement age and use it as a pension.

If we talk about how that affects, these pension funds have a bond issued for the loans taken from them. For example, let's take the EPF, which is a large fund. This fund has invested in treasury bonds till 2045. From 2023, some bonds are invested for 10, 15, 20, 25, 30 years annually. There are 20-year investment bonds from 2023 to 2043.

Now, we get an annual coupon rate for these. We also get a maturity rate. If the government does not do anything about this bond and it remains as it is, if we get the interest received during the maturity of the invested investments and the interest agreed to be paid annually, in another 15 years, the current fund of 3700 billion will be 16 trillion. However, by this

government proposal, the fund that can grow to 16 trillion in 2038 or 15 years is limited to 10 trillion. The domestic debt restructuring proposal is for 15 years till 2038. How does that happen?

Now they are trying to renew all the bonds they have given us. For example, suppose the EPF invested in a bond maturing in 2030. The coupon rate is 12%, and the maturity rate is 20%. A private bank, an insurance company, an ordinary person and an employee provident fund have taken that bond. Now they say that they will give a bond for 09% only to the employees' fund without the other three. This is clearly unequal treatment. This is what happens here. Then they say only 26% of the people will be given a bond at the rate of 09%. No one else is affected by this. The government's domestic debt restructuring has made the impact happen to the institutions that should not be affected. It causes a massive loss to the employees. The government is planning to cut nearly 150 billion as interest per year from the EPF. In debt servicing, 0.5% of the gross domestic product is to be deducted from the interest to be received. The employees will lose the money they have to get from this. For example, an account with one million rupees will lose more than 100,000 rupees in a year. At the end of 15 years, that person will lose 1.5 million. Although his account is supposed to be 4.0

million, it will stop at 2.5 million. The programme called domestic debt restructuring is a severe plunder of employee funds.

RP:- The effects of the escalation of the crisis and the effects of the measures taken by the government now claiming to get out of the crisis are for the people. What is the option for the people in this situation?

WS:- We have failed because of the economic policy and methodology that our country is following. Then, the same people who follow that economic policy, calling themselves economic wizards, are trying to find these answers for us again. When the people were trying to find a new answer, they did not allow the people to find that answer. Today, elections have been postponed in an anti-democratic manner, and even the people's right to vote has been robbed.

Nevertheless, as the National Peoples Power and the trade union movement of this country, we believe that the society expects a new social transformation. It is the time the people are preparing for a new political transformation. So, the answer is a new political transformation that brings about a new governance with a new political culture. There should be a country where people can live steadfastly.

Sri Lanka's Ranil-Rajapaksha government is on the cusp of bringing in sweeping changes to the country's labour (industrial relations) laws. Proposed expansive laws are being presented as a step forward to modernise Sri Lanka's industrial relations landscape to face the challenges posed by new technological advancements, including the arrival of artificial intelligence-related technologies and to attract foreign direct investments. It aims to amend the existing 13 labour legislations that had come into effect between 1935 and 2021. A careful review of the proposed changes reveals that they incorporate some changes that will contravene the fundamental rights of workers, introduce an uneven playing field skewing it in favour of the employer and subject employees to, in some instances virtual servitude, impacting their right to have a decent basic quality of personal life as a human being. The changes would also undermine certain specific labour rights accorded to women workers.

The proposed amendments, significant in their impact on workers, have been introduced without any prior consultation with the trade unions, labour law experts or the public. President Ranil Wickremesinghe and Rajapakshas' credentials over the last few decades concerning the workers and people's welfare have been abominable on many fronts. The recently passed Inland Revenue (Amendment) Bill is another such example. The bill imposed detrimental changes to the benefits the fund members receive from the Employee Provident Fund (EPF), currently the largest social security scheme. The members of the fund were left watching as bystanders while the government used its majority in parliament to pass the bill that would reduce the dividends of the fruits of their labour of a lifetime.

In a highly undemocratic move, the government bypassed consulting the National Labour Advisory Council (NLAC) on proposed changes to the country's labour laws. ALAC is a tripartite consultative mechanism for consultations and cooperation between the government, the trade unions and the employers on social and labour policies and international labour standards.

Threats to the trade unions and the workers

If the proposed reforms are passed through the parliament, there would be multiple threats to labour rights.

recruitments would be done under the terms and conditions that would unfairly advantage the employer

Labour reforms from whom and to whom



Flexibility of working arrangements has swung towards the employer
Curtail trade unions' rights
Increased flexibility in discontinuing employment
Incorporating outsourcing and third-party recruitments that would lead to undermining workers' rights

Recruitments would be done under terms and conditions that would unfairly advantage the employer.

The new law reforms propose to legally allow the employer to label the employees as casual, temporary, part-time, fixed-term, seasonal etc., for recruitment purposes (Section 5 of the proposal). The prevailing statutes do not accord a legal provision for the employer to enforce a categorisation of the employees. The Labour Courts have the power to make judiciary review whether the employee is actually of a particular category, and the employee also has the right to challenge the employer if they have labelled him/her.

The proposed part-time employment contract will be a newly introduced mechanism in Sri Lankan labour law. While part-time employment can be an acceptable form for some employees, what is proposed under the part-time contracts in the new bill includes provisions that will deprive many statutory rights of the new employees and allow for ruthless exploitation of their labour.

For example, Section 11 of the proposals states that on occasion, a student is employed under a "part-time contract of labour", he/she will not be paid EPF, ETF, Gratuity, and any other statutory payments/ social security benefits currently entitled to a worker.

The employer has been freed from such responsibilities.

Even though the other categories of employees would be paid for overtime when they

are employed on a Public Holiday, the employer has been released from this obligation with regard to part-time workers who are to work on a public holiday (Section 11.6 of the proposals).

Flexibility of working arrangements has swung towards the employer

'Compressed week' is another new mechanism that is introduced.

The employer is vested with the power to include 'compressed week' in the employment contract. This would allow the employer to enforce a 12-hour work shift on a part-time contract worker without paying overtime (Section 32(1)) for any hours worked exceeding 8 hours. Currently, the hours worked exceeding 8 hours trigger an overtime payment.

This overtime payment is to compensate the worker for spending time at work that they should otherwise spend on their personal life and family.

Further, in addition to overtime implications of the compressed week, Section 33(2) allows employment of a worker for a period of 16 hours per day without paying for overtime.

Section 33(3) enables the employer to enforce 24 hours of work per day with only 6 hours of overtime payment, although the employee has worked 16 hours in excess of an 8-hour working day. Section 8 would permit the employer to move the employee across different work responsibilities besides what is stipulated in the employment contract.

Currently, labour laws prohibit women from being rostered for nightshifts in industrial settings and factories. Chapter X of the proposed legislation would change this safeguard. Further, a woman employee's overtime hours are currently capped at 60 hours. The new bill seeks to extend it to 80 hours. It would invariably lead to exploitative

working conditions and family-unfriendly situations for women workers.

Flexibility in discontinuing employment

As of now, in case of non-disciplinary termination of employment, the employer must obtain the consent of the employee in question or of the Commissioner of Labour. Nonetheless, Section 16.1 of the proposed bill would allow the employer to terminate an employee without satisfying any of the above.

Section 18(1) would permit the employer to terminate an employee with no compensation paid when the employer feels a danger has arisen towards person(s) or/property of the business. This proposal, which is broadly worded and lacks specificity, could undoubtedly be misused to target trade union leaders and labour activists.

Curtailing trade union rights

The proposed bill requires 100 persons to form a trade union, whereas the current law requires 7 persons. The new law will effectively abolish the right of thousands of workers to be represented by a trade union. This appears to directly violate the fundamental democratic rights of working men and women.

The government's new labour reform proposes to characterise any workers' strike as one that is illegal unless it had the approval of the majority of the employees through a secret ballot. Obtaining approval through a secret vote is something that is next to impossible for the trade unions to perform, especially when the workforce is scattered across a large geographical area.

This requirement will also effectively stop joint trade union action. Therefore, this proposal directly undermines the employees' collective bargaining

rights.

Outsourcing and third-party recruitments

In Chapter XIII of the labour law reforms, employment contracts are allowed between business entities and third-party recruitments agencies or "manpower agencies".

It precludes the employees from sharing any benefits the business entities accrue from their labour, namely from profit sharing in the form of bonuses or, in cases of public liability companies, participating in share issuances. In addition to the complexity encountered when industrial action is required, there are many other ramifications of 'manpower' agencies that would lead to job insecurity, vulnerability and exploitation of working men and women. Third-party recruitment also relieves business entities (otherwise the actual employer) from their direct obligations and responsibilities towards the working men and women whose hours of labour translate to profits for them. The labour of the workers will also have to effectively pay for the profits of the third-party recruitment companies servicing the business entities.

The Ranil Wickramasinghe government, which is propped up by former president Mahinda Rajapaksha, his family and allies, has no moral mandate to govern the country. While multiple elections have been postponed repeatedly, the country is going through the most profound man-made political and economic crisis ever experienced in 75 years of the post-independence period. The government effectively uses the current turmoil as a smoke screen to introduce labour laws that are detrimental to the well-being of working men and women of a largely poverty-stricken nation.

History has Spoken!

Golden Assets of Socialist Soviet Foreign Policy and Modern Hypocrites!

The second Russia Africa summit was held in St. Petersburg on the 27th and 28th of July, 2023. The first Russia Africa summit was held in 2019, and 43 countries participated. This time the meeting was represented by 49 African nations, including 17 Heads of state, including the presidents of regional powers Egypt, Congo, South Africa etc.

The summit was a homage to the Soviet Union and its Socialist Foreign Policy. Just two days before the beginning of the Ukraine War, Putin, in his initial national address on 22nd of February 2022, bitterly criticized Comrade Lenin, the Bolsheviks and the constitution of the USSR for giving self-determination to Ukraine and other Soviet socialist republics. Even just two months ago, after his foster business child-like Wagner launched a mutiny, Putin went to criticize the Great October Revolution by equating it with a silly puppet show like mutiny (it lasted only 24 hours, but the Great October Revolution lasted for 74 years, making the USSR a Super Power). But on the 27th and 28th of July history has slapped Putin's face in his home by African Leaders for being Hypocrite to the Soviet Foreign Policy. They openly paid homage to the great support they received from USSR during their liberation struggles and their efforts to defeat various imperialist aggressions. Finally, cornered by the Journalists and the objective reality of the summit, Putin had to assume that Russia was greatly benefitting from Soviet Socialist Foreign Policy. We have published his answers to the journalist's questions after the 2nd Russia Africa Summit. The questions and answers we directly copied from kremlin.ru, President of Russia website.

Question: Vladimir Vladimirovich, during the summit and at your meetings, African leaders have repeatedly mentioned the Soviet Union, about the strong relations that were created then. In this regard, I have a question. In Soviet times, our country was the leading voice of national liberation and social justice for the whole world, including the African continent.

Vladimir Putin: The lead voice is very good, but the lead voice and the Kalashnikov assault rifle were much more effective at that time. Therefore, everyone remembers our concrete assistance to African countries in the struggle for their liberation.

Question: What meanings does modern Russia bring to Africa now? Do we have something to offer besides trade and economic cooperation, and what kind of cooperation is in demand from Africa?

Vladimir Putin: You know, I often think about this when I meet with our African friends. At some point in Soviet times, I remember it well, our society formed an opinion that we were wasting money. Well,

why are we spending money on Africa? Where is this Africa? We have many problems of our own. And now, when I communicate with our friends from Africa, I think with gratitude of those people who carried out such a

policy in Africa. They have created a powerful reserve of strength, friendly relations with African countries, which... I don't know if they themselves were counting on such a result or not. And this, of course, was done then, and our attempts to work in the African direction today are made in the interests, first of all, of Russia.

There are a lot of ingredients here. Economics - start with economics. Such a huge potential, and it is growing, and at a very fast pace, exponentially. There are already 1.5 billion people in Africa, and this is a very young population, growing at a very fast pace. Everyone knows that the African continent is a storehouse of mineral resources, and it is. Some countries in Asia are actually transferring their reserves into the mineral resources of Africa. You know, talented people, we are developing very quickly. Yes, there are still poor people, this is understandable, we all know this very well, but progress is very fast. You know, we all live, this also applies to you: in the morning you got up - to work - home from work. And those who are engaged professionally, including those from the journalistic environment, these people, of course, see what is happening in the world. The world is

changing rapidly. Here is Indonesia. Such potential is colossal, huge potential. Now I'm not talking about India, about China, everyone knows about it. Brazil. Africa. There are countries there - just leaders, you know? I cannot say that the whole future belongs to Africa, no, the world is diverse. But Africa has great potential. Therefore, of course, we must use everything that has been developed since Soviet times, these very good, trusting relations, and work in a new way, of course.

Yes, then we did a lot unilaterally, but it was impossible in a different way. But it all plays [a role], including in practical terms. Let's say we have built many power plants, built many metallurgical plants and infrastructure facilities. This requires renewal, repair, development - and on our own, domestic, and even if still Soviet, base, of course, it is easier, cheaper and more efficient for us to do this. It's just a real practical groundwork that we have to deal with. We do it in some places. But now, you know, our African friends are not asking for handouts. Moreover, both at the first summit, and then in a bilateral format between summits, and at this many people said: we did not come to ask for something. And it is true. There

was not a single direct request: give us this, give us that - no, everyone is trying to find mutually acceptable and interesting projects for both sides. This is a change, and a big one at that. But everyone remembers what happened during their struggle for independence. Therefore, these two or already two and a half, one might say three days, I was very pleased to realize that ... There are different people, of course, different countries, and different policies, but in general, the African continent is extremely friendly and positive towards us. It is an important base on which to build a relationship and a business plan.

... You know, all over the world in developing countries... In Asia, look, quite recently in some states it was hard to imagine - today they fly into space. All this happens very quickly. We must not miss it, especially if we have such a colossal backlog of the Soviet era.

... As for Africa, we have nothing to reproach ourselves with. We have done many useful, good deeds in relation to Africa. And when we communicate with African leaders, and they themselves talk about it, there is still a feeling that we are decent people. In this case, it is, and it is very good.



Implement law...

From Page 01

Wijewardena, was the Minister of State for Defense. President Maithripala Sirisena was out of the country. Because of this, both Ranil Wickramasinghe and Ruwan Wijewardena were the heads of the country's security. They cannot escape these charges. Today,

Ranil has been withdrawn from those charges due to presidential immunity. The former rulers are fully responsible for not preventing the Easter attack.

Gotabaya Rajapaksa is not in the presidency now. Therefore, he is not immune. The Defense Minister

can now take steps to re-examine all the charges against Gotabaya Rajapaksa at any time. Ranil Wickramasinghe's responsibility is to give the necessary instructions to implement the proceedings immediately. Suresh Saleh, who is accused, is still the head of the state intelligence agency. There is no point in carrying out the investigation and keeping him in that position. That

is why we in the National People's Power urge the country's Defense Minister Ranil Wickramasinghe, to remove Suresh Saleh from his post immediately. Also, an impartial investigation should be conducted immediately against him and Pillaiyan, and the law should be enforced. As the country's defense minister and chief of armed forces, Ranil Wickramasinghe should first

fulfill the responsibility of removing Saleh from his post. Aleh also has a duty to voluntarily resign in the face of these allegations and allow an independent investigation to be conducted. If the people are not served with fairness and justice, the country will be discredited. There is no point in excoriating Channel 4, which revealed the information.



A meeting between the United Nations Permanent Resident Representative, Mr Marc Andre Franch, and the leader of the National People's Power, Comrade Anura Dissanayake, occurred on the morning of August 29 at the JVP head office. Mr Edward Rees, Development Adviser and Resident Coordinator of the United Nations Sri Lanka Office, and Comrade Bimal Ratnayake, National Executive Member for the National People's Power, were present. This discussion focused on the current economic crisis and political situation in Sri Lanka and the challenges facing democracy.



The National Bhikku Day celebration was held under the theme 'Modern Discourse on Freedom Struggle to defeat unpatriotic rule', with the participation of Comrade Anura Dissanayake, the leader of the National People's Power.



Demonstration organized by Women for Rights against the government destroying the health system.



Let's defeat the crony gang that destroyed the game of cricket! Stop the political coercion of Sri Lankan cricket and other sports! Kurunegala District branch of the Socialist Youth Union organized jointly with 'Save the Sport' organization a campaign to sign a public petition protesting against injustice in sports in the country.

Let's take to the streets as a National Movement

**Comrade Lal Kantha,
President of the National Trade Union Center**

The repression cannot be stopped when the class engages in a struggle. However, suppression cannot be carried out if an organized class struggle is launched, says Comrade Lal Kantha, the President of the National Trade Union Center. He emphasized that all should prepare for a national struggle and take to the streets as a national movement combining economic and political slogans.



Comrade Lalkantha stated this while addressing the Colombo District Conference of the National Trade Union Center held on the 22nd.

Comrade Lalkantha said, "We have to play

this election game and win. We have three basic things to complete. One is the ideological struggle. We have already completed it. The people of this country have been struggling against oppression for decades. The proof that we have completed the ideological struggle is that people have not been allowed to mark their oppression on a ballot paper.

We have to strengthen the ideological

struggle and move forward. The second is the organizational struggle. We should strengthen our organizations everywhere. Thirdly, we should take to the streets with proper slogans.

Let's get ready for the election battle. If they deny us an election, we will gather all the people and take to the streets as a national movement combining economic and political slogans. Let's get ready for it."

What comes next is a year that transforms people's demands

Comrade Dr Harini Amarasuriya, MP



Comrade Dr Harini Amarasuriya, the National Executive Member of the National People's Power, stated that The country needs a leadership that can provide solutions to the problems that the people feel and face and that leadership is present on the platform and in front of

the platform. She also pointed out that it is a year to bring about the transformation expected by the people.

Comrade Dr Harini Amarasuriya said this while addressing the Moratuwa Constituency Conference of the National People's Power held on the 13th. August,

She said, "Today, through the National People's Power, we have been able to produce several new leaders who will do politics in a new way for our country. This movement is growing day by day. That is the success. Our movement will continue to produce leaders who can think in a new way, make the right decisions for the people,

understand the people, understand the people's problems and who can understand where the people are.

We have to face the disasters our country is confronted with because we do not have such leaders. Because of that perverse political leadership, it denied water to farmers for their cultivation. Is it possible to cut off the water going to the farmers' fields and sleep? How can this country develop with a leader who does that?

We have much work to do before us. Let us all come together for that. Be courageous. Let us persevere to build a new country. Let us change this country."

Government has no right to sell country's resources

**Comrade Dr. Nalinda Jayatissa
member of the Central Committee of the JVP**

All must oppose those who have thrown the Rupavahini Corporation into a financial crisis due to non-payment of money by government agencies that got programmes made to inflate their political images to telecast and abandoned the production of quality programmes have started selling the airtime owned by the television to find money pointed out Comrade Dr. Nalinda Jayatissa, a member of the Central Committee of the JVP. He emphasized that the President and the government have no right to sell the country's resources.

Comrade Dr Nalinda



Jayatissa expressed these views at a press conference held at the main office on the 14th of August.

He said, "The Sri Lanka Television Corporation was established by the Television Corporation Act No. 06 of 1982 as a donation to the Sri Lankan people from Japan. It

was given for the broadening of entertainment and educational activities of the people of our country. The rulers have dragged the Corporation to a situation where paying the employees for some months is impossible.

The government ministers rush to bankrupt the institutions and then sell them to their crony institutions. Various rackets are carried out under 'emergency purchases' when buying medicines, fuel and electricity. It is a racket to

sell people's resources at will. At a time when the people of the country are struggling to make a living in the face of the economic crisis, the ministers and the President are acting to use their power to sell off the frequency that belongs to the people.

We also emphasize that people should focus on such activities while struggling to make ends meet. We earnestly request that the attention of not only the employees of Rupavahini Corporations but also that of the people of the country be focused on this 'selling process'.