

Voice of Shakthi Thursday 02 August 2001

Over a billion rupees for a Presidential complex in Kotte, 600 million rupees for a so-called Referendum which, according to our President is going to solve all the current ills of Sri Lanka, duty free vehicles and secretaries upon secretaries for MPs, the "Nava Gilunath Band Choon" ride of our politicians continues.

The arm merchant "kommis kakkas" must be rubbing their hands in glee too as they contemplate the profits to be made from the recent fiasco at Katunayake. Conservative estimates put the loss at over 700 million rupees for this appalling breach of security. A Commission of Inquiry has been appointed as usual and, as with all the other stuff-ups, the findings will be allowed to gather dust in some corner after the Commissioners have been paid in full for their troubles.

So who will foot the bill for all these misdeeds and extravagances? Well, the ordinary people of Sri Lanka of course. After all, they've got lots of money stashed away in Swiss [bank accounts](#) haven't they, petro-dollars they have earned at the cost of broken families and deserted children? Surely they should be patriotic enough to loosen their purse-strings to help the servants of the people as they battle for their seats and increasing weight?

After all, what has the people got to worry about in this Dharmadweepa of ours? Apart from dodging a few bombs here and there, losing an arm or a leg or life now and then while engaged in everyday activity, surely life isn't all that bad in this free, democratic state of ours?

The free market economy has given them so many goodies to enjoy, the shopping malls and supermarket counters are full, more casualties of the war means fuller [employment](#) and the village girls enjoy unheard-of privileges in Free Trade Zone factories.

It's true that the monopoly granted to Shell under this wonderful free trade system allows them to jack up the price of household gas at will, that a slight miscalculation by the Chairman of the Electricity Board about rainfall has resulted in power-cuts and those nasty Sheiks in the Middle-East keep increasing the price of oil forcing the poor bus mudalalis to pack more and more people into their mini-coffins, much against their own, free-enterprise will.

And now comes this latest piece of gloomy [news](#) from yet another NGO called the Asian Human Rights Commission which seeks to besmirch our wonderful country.

According to this Commission, one of Sri Lanka's foremost business partners, the great multinational Nestle, has increased

the price of milk powder from six rupees in 1977 to 119 rupees in 2001. The Commission has quoted official Government figures to say half the population in the country, or two million families, receive less than 1,000 rupees (US\$10) per month in family income.

This means, according to the Commission, that a family with just one child below 5 years of age, who requires essentially to be fed with milk, will have to spend 1,190 rupees per month for that item alone, leaving aside the slight matter of feeding, clothing and sheltering the rest of the family. The Commission has launched a public appeal to protest against the price increase, describing it as a violation of a fundamental human right - the right to food.

What all these gloom merchants fail to understand is that Sri Lanka's politicians are currently fully absorbed in confronting the big issues, not minor irritations like starvation, the breakdown of law and order, economic chaos and environmental degradation.

For they are engaged you see in the fight against terrorists, this challenge against the authority of the Bandaranaiques and Senanayakes, this right to rule of the Sinhalese majority against the Dravidian hordes. These forces must be crushed once and for all, even at the cost of many more millions in commissions.

And in this crusade against the forces of evil, we the politicians know we can depend upon one segment of the population which feels most deeply about our Motherland, the ones who, after gathering the fruits of Sri Lanka's free [education](#), have settled comfortably in Western countries.

Unlike the ungrateful people who still live in Sri Lanka, these patriots can always be depended upon to help the politicians cause at any time, with a sniffer dog here, a few dollars there and lots of military music played over their community radio stations.