

Vote Mahinda Rajapaksa: The Journey Continues



Wimal Weerawansa MP is the leader of the Jathika Nidahas Peramuna and is a

partner of the alliance of UPFA of President Mahinda Rajapaksa. Having supported the President since 2005, Wimal Weerawansa spoke to Business Today about the importance of re-electing President Mahinda Rajapaksa at the 2010 Presidential elections. He stressed the need to support the President as the country moves towards eliminating poverty and reaching developed status during the next decade.

By Udeshi Amarasinghe & Thilini Kahandawaarachchi | Photography by Menaka Aravinda

Why should we re-elect President Mahinda Rajapaksa as the President of this country?

If we ask a counter question to that question, why should we not re-elect him? Has he done any wrong to the country, for him to not be re-elected. Has he done something against the country, has the country's journey been regressed, has he betrayed the country to terrorists or allowed foreigners to pillage the resources of this country? To ask simply, has he destroyed the country in the last four years? Has anyone accused the President of doing such things? No. Therefore, the answer to the question is firstly, the President did not harm this country. Secondly, he did something good for this country, that is, he defeated terrorism that had gripped this country for three long decades and he created an environment where Sinhalese, Tamils and Muslims can live together in peace without any fear. It is to curb that fear in the minds of people that President Mahinda Rajapaksa won the mandate of the people in 2005. Now that President Mahinda Rajapaksa has successfully eliminated the fear in the minds of the people, in order for the President to take the country towards a developed nation he needs the will of the people again.

In the 2005 Presidential election, the people of the North were prohibited to vote by the LTTE, even the Tamil population in the East were only able to use their vote in a limited manner. Today, the people in the North and East have the freedom to vote. The mandate of the people of this country is needed so that the new found freedom is not wasted and we are able to develop the whole country, including the North and the East. Then it will be possible to take this country forward towards socio-economic development and that is why we should re-elect

President Mahinda Rajapaksa.

Why did we elect him as the President in 2005? Before we re-elect President Rajapaksa in 2010, we have to see why we elected him in 2005 and whether he has been successful in fulfilling the promises he made. In 2005, we elected him as the President so that he could put an end to the fear that was in our minds, the fear that had gripped the whole country due to terrorism. President Rajapaksa was able to achieve this in less than four years. He successfully eradicated terrorism from this country. Therefore, since President Rajapaksa fulfilled the task that he undertook in 2005, the people have a duty and a responsibility to re-elect him in 2010.

Why did the JNP decide to join the President and how will it support the President in the future campaign?

JNP is a political party with a history of just above one and a half years, considering that we have been part of a considerably important task. If you look at recent world history, no country in the world has been successful in defeating separatist terrorism within a country except Russia under the leadership of President Vladimir Putin who defeated the Chechnyan separatist movement. During our lifetime we only saw countries separating, such as East Timor from Indonesia, Kosovo from Serbia, South Sudan from Sudan. The leaders of those countries had to give into terrorism within those countries.

As We Move Forward It Is Our Duty To Ensure That The Peace That Was Achieved Through The Sacrifices Of The Young Men And Women And Mothers And Fathers Of Rural Sri Lanka Is Protected. It Is Our Responsibility And Our Duty To Create A Sri Lanka Where There Are No Conflicts Between Communities.

After the 2005 election, our small country sent a big message to the whole world; we showed to the world that we need not bow down to internal terrorism and that it can be defeated. We played a key role in putting an end to terrorism within the country and to take that message to the world. We are proud of our contribution towards this victory.

As we move forward it is our duty to ensure that the peace that was achieved through the sacrifices of the young men and women and mothers and fathers of rural Sri Lanka is protected. It is our responsibility and our duty to create a Sri Lanka where there are no conflicts between communities. Simply said, to create a

good future for the children of Sri Lanka. In order to build a prosperous future, a new mandate is required in 2010. It is based on that mandate that changes in the administration, political perspectives and development programmes can be carried out.

Therefore, as a party we believe that President Mahinda Rajapaksa's Government is aptly able to do that, we support their mission. Particularly because we believe that if the opposition comes into power, then this country will go backwards; this country will go back to those unfortunate days of our past. It is due to the aforementioned reasons that we are supporting President Mahinda Rajapaksa.

JNP is an independent party but also part of the UPFA alliance, can you tell us how the party has remained true to its party identity while being in the Government of President Mahinda Rajapaksa?

Though we are part of the UPFA, we have always worked in a way that preserved the independence of our party. In a political alliance, any political party has to make certain sacrifices, but in a number of instances we were able to retain our independence and have clearly and fearlessly expressed our independent opinion: when there were differing opinions regarding the 13th Amendment, and when Minister Tissa Vitharana spoke about devolution of powers beyond the 13th Amendment, we expressed our strong opposition. Therefore, within the UPFA, within this patriotic camp, we are working together to achieve a common goal, but within this group when there are opinions that become obstacles to achieve a common goal, we have worked according to what we believe and we have acted in an open manner. Thus, we have shown that within a coalition an active role is played by all political parties. We aim to play an active role in the Government that will come to power in 2010 with its renewed mandate of the people.

It was the aim of President Mahinda Rajapaksa to go beyond party politics and build one united front, would you say that he has established that?

We need a national consensus. After we gained independence from the British as a country we have not been able to come to a national consensus regarding important aspects such as education, health, agriculture and infrastructure. As a result of the failure to come to a national consensus, the various regimes that came into power followed numerous policies and thus our country reached a state where we have become unable to achieve the desired results .

The Government was able to defeat the LTTE mainly because there was a national consensus regarding the need to defeat terrorism, because it was the common man who had to face this terror. All media organisations, except a few, gave their support to this cause, because the parents of this country sacrificed their children in thousands for this war. That was the secret formula behind this victory in addition to the leadership of the three Commanders, Defence Secretary and all military personnel. Even when some people laughed at the war and said that General Fonseka was not suitable even to lead the Salvation Army, the common man who took forward this struggle was why we could achieve this victory.

It is the same with all the challenges we have ahead. As a nation, we have to come to a consensus, we have to come to a common understanding. We should unite not only against terrorism, but even other challenges have to be faced as one nation, comprising of all communities.

Only then will the next decade, that is 2010 - 2020, become a decade that will renew the history of our country. It will be a decade that will create new hope and confidence for our children. It should be a time where we should put behind the period where we were pressurised by war and were in fear for our lives. That decade should be for a bright tomorrow with new hopes for a prosperous future where we rapidly move forward. In order to do that it is necessary to bring national peace and reconciliation.

The next parliament should be the one that will bring in national reconciliation. It should be to rectify the inconsistencies within the constitution and reaffirm this country as a united nation, to further create harmony between communities, to take socio-economic development to the grassroot level and to make new changes in the political arena. A large support base on national consensus will be created with the new mandate. We as the JNP work with that aim in mind and we are dedicated towards achieving that mandate.

We Should Unite Not Only Against Terrorism, But Even Other Challenges Have To Be Faced As One Nation, Comprising Of All Communities... 2010 - 2020 Will Become A Decade That Will Renew The History Of Our Country. It Will Be A Decade That Will Create New Hope And Confidence For Our Children.

Can you elaborate on the international alliances built by the President during the past four years?

Until now, the Opposition made fun of the foreign policy of the Government saying that it is the “Medemulana foreign policy”. Until now this country was ruled by those from Rosemead Place, Ward Place or Colpetty. We have now proven that the so called “Medemulana foreign policy” has been effective than that of Rosemead Place, Ward Place or Colpetty. The foreign policy of the Opposition could not put an end to the LTTE. All leaders who followed that foreign policy, kneeled before the international community, did whatever they were asked to do and ruined this country’s independence. President Mahinda Rajapaksa has set aside and for the first time without dancing to the tune of international powers, we have started a journey while keeping our sovereignty and pride.

In this journey, first Germany said that they will not give us loans. Then many other countries influenced the EU to withdraw the GSP+ concession. Various countries made numerous threats, it may be USA or UK who came together and influenced the donor countries. However despite the various pressures and influences we were able stand firm in our beliefs and find a solution to the great problem that we had.

Secondly, we made new international friends. We maintained our cordial relationships with India. At the time the UNP signed the Ceasefire Agreement, he handed over the oil market to IOC in order to stay on good terms with India. Now this time, did the Sri Lankan Government give anything to maintain cordial relations with India? No.

We Consider Being In The Bad Boys Club As An Honour Because The “Good Boys” Are Offering Their Own Countries To These Western Powers.

Then, we entered into major economic transactions with China, which is not considered a good friend of India. We had arms and war related transactions with Pakistan which is again a country that is not traditionally considered a friendly nation of India. We worked with the USA to obtain certain information necessary to carry out the war. Similarly we maintained close economic ties with Iran, which is not in favour of the USA. We built new ties with Lebanon and other Middle Eastern countries. Through this we were able to stand tall with new friends behind us that is required for the forward march of this country. That was why when Hugo Chavez, the President of Venezuela met President Mahinda Rajapaksa, he said, “you and I belong to the bad boys club.” That is the bad boys

club as referred to by the Western countries including the UK. We consider being in that bad boys club as an honour because the “good boys” are offering their own countries to these Western powers. The good boys of the USA are doing whatever they are asked to do. Our former leaders were “good boys” of the UK, but those “good boys” could not find a solution to this problem or protect the pride of this nation.

Therefore, it is very clear that through this foreign policy we have built new friends. It has paved the way and given hope to this country and now we must go forward. This does not mean that we should become enemies with the USA or the UK. While preserving the traditional friendships that we have had over the years we have to move forward with the new friends that we have made in the international arena. Therefore even by winning the war, it has been proven that this foreign policy of President Mahinda Rajapaksa is correct.

At this time when President Rajapaksa is going for an election, he has fulfilled about 90% of promises made in his 2005 manifesto, Mahinda Chintanaya. What are your thoughts on this?

Yes, unless those promises have been fulfilled, President Rajapaksa can not go into an election when there are two more years left in his term. Any ruler would have an early election based on two factors. One is when a considerable amount of work has been completed; two, when the time is good to hold an election. Even if the time is good, a ruler can not go for an election if he has not completed a considerable amount of work that he has undertaken to do. President Mahinda Rajapaksa is contesting this election after fulfilling both of these factors. President Mahinda Rajapaksa has successfully completed a considerable amount of work that he had promised in 2005.

Was the subsidy on fertiliser removed merely because the war was going on? When there was an energy crisis in the world, and when the prices of fertiliser had skyrocketed, while making huge expenditures on the war, the fertiliser subsidy was still given to the farmers. In fact more has been given than what was promised. Therefore, President Rajapaksa is going for this election after doing all that. Prior to this, none of the leaders could contest an election with such confidence after completing his work within four years.

Any Ruler Would Have An Early Election Based On Two Factors. One Is When A

Considerable Amount Of Work Has Been Completed; Two, When The Time Is Good To Hold An Election... President Mahinda Rajapaksa Has Succeeded In Completing A Considerable Amount Of Work That He Had Promised In 2005.

We know that in 1978 J R Jayawardena became the Executive President and as soon as he came into power he curtailed the democratic process. He did not hold the General election that was supposed to be held, because he did not have the confidence to take part in the elections. President Jayawardena went on to contest the next election by curbing the civil rights of Sirimavo Banadaranaike. There was no political assurance. That's how elections were held. Is it in the same manner that we are going into this election? No.

The Opposition has been looking for a suitable candidate and when it failed to do so, they found a retired General. This is akin to the trick of giving away the elder sister in marriage by showing the younger sister. However President Mahinda Rajapaksa is going into this election within four years by not resorting to such tactics.

It is a well known fact that President Mahinda Rajapaksa won the war, but many programmes were done to develop the country simultaneously, can you tell us about this?

Even at present, in our country there are a number of power plants being built, there is rapid development of infrastructure. There are concrete roads in all Provinces in the country. Earlier, these roads were constructed haphazardly so that the Provincial Council could earn money. When roads are built with concrete to the proper standard, it is not necessary to rebuild that road for a number of years. Earlier what was done was that the contract was given away and it was constructed in a sub standard manner and within a few months the road would go back to a dilapidated state and work will have to be done again. For the first time, that system has been changed.

The funds allocated for education and health have not been reduced in any manner. The Government has given further support and encouragement where possible. Assistance given to the poor has not been reduced, school uniforms or school text books given to students have not been taken away. During the latter period of the term of President Chandrika Kumaratunga, there was a move to make students buy the text books, but that was stopped. History was included as

part of the school curriculum. In this manner many programmes were initiated with a view to revive the national spirit.

When it comes to development, not just the power plants, if you look at the Harbour in Hambantota, in the next decade it will be the main door to South Asia where the biggest ships will have the capacity to come and they will indeed come. It is a Harbour which has the ability to be developed with all the necessary facilities. In the future there will be a plan where all the larger ships would come to Hambantota while the smaller ships go to other ports. The revenue and foreign exchange that we will earn through that port belongs to the future of this country.

Oil resources have been discovered in the territorial waters of Sri Lanka and necessary steps have been taken to extract the oil so that our country is brought to a level of strength even regarding energy sources. Thus, while continuing the war very successfully and while facing the challenges of the international community, economic development of the country was also achieved. However there is still much to be done.

Looking at Norochcholai and Upper Kotmale, though both these projects were planned by the previous government, due to certain political reasons they could not be implemented. On one hand there was the opposition of the Catholic Church against Norochcholai, while Upper Kotmale was opposed by the Ceylon Workers Congress. When President Mahinda Rajapaksa came into power, he resolved both these oppositions. He spoke with them and made it clear to them that in development there are certain problems that arise and it is only if we bear those, that we can move forward. President bravely made those decisions. Therefore today, both Norochcholai and upper Kotmale power plants are being built.

In the same way, if you look at road development, there are new roads being built all over Sri Lanka today. It is important to develop infrastructure to build the economy of the country. It is not possible to attract investors or investment without improving infrastructure facilities. President Mahinda Rajapaksa has demonstrated the courage that is necessary for various development programmes. President Mahinda Rajapaksa showed courage not only in wiping out terrorism but also the courage that is needed to develop the country.

The village was not neglected and it was a priority of the President, as a JNP member this would have undoubtedly been a priority for you as well,

your thoughts?

Prior to this many leaders did not serve the village and whatever was done, was done for urban areas and towns. It is for the very first time that after 2005 a large amount of resources has been allocated to develop the rural areas of this country. Projects such as Gama Neguma and Maga Neguma are all for the benefit of the rural areas. Currently there is a project by the name of Uthuru Wasanthaya that is focused on rebuilding the rural livelihood in the North. The East is being developed by way of new roads, new bridges, new infrastructure facilities and facilities necessary for the revival of the tourism industry are being put into place. There is a revival in agriculture. There is a regeneration of livelihoods in the North and East. Along with that, new development has reached other villages through Gama Neguma and Maga Neguma. With that, the money spent on development begins to revolve around the same village. It is not a big company that gets to pave the roads in a village, it is a small concrete business in the village that gets that contract and it is the village council that spearheads this. Therefore the money goes to the people of that area. That is the rural and village based development. It is to take this development forward that we believe that we need a new mandate.

In which direction do you see Sri Lanka going under the leadership of President Mahinda Rajapaksa?

Our aim is 2020. By that time our country would have reached the pinnacle. In 2020 this country will be an economically powerful country, without the burden of loans in the South Asian region, that is the main aim of the President. We freed ourselves from separatist terrorism and now we have to free ourselves from poverty, social injustice, inequality and disharmony between communities. Freeing this country from all these is the aim of the President. In the same manner that this country was freed from terrorism, this country will be freed from all other obstacles. If this country was freed from the most difficult menace, the most ruthless terrorist organisation in the world, why can't we free this country from poverty, discord, social injustice, corruption and waste? We have to take this country to that level. It is to take this country there that the President needs to renew his mandate. It is only if we take this country to that point that this freedom that was won by sacrificing lives would be a freedom that lasts, a freedom that stands the test of time.

Our Aim Is 2020. By That Time Our Country Would Have Reached The Pinnacle.

In 2020 This Country Will Be An Economically Powerful Country, Without The Burden Of Loans In The South Asian Region, That Is The Main Aim Of The President.

Elections have been announced and the UPFA is ready with its candidate, the common candidate of the Opposition has also been announced. What are your thoughts on this?

The Opposition has written a script for a drama. The script has been written in such a way that first, the JVP says that they like General Fonseka, then in a few days UNF says that they like the retired General to be the common candidate, then the retired General says “yes I like it too.” That is the manner in which the script has been written.

This is the first time in history that the UNP failed to put forward a candidate. No matter what political stand it took, it has always been a very strong party, it always had a leader, a strong candidate. At the time that President Ranasinghe Premadasa was assassinated, the UNP had Gamini Dissanayake. It had Lalith Athulathmudali. He was also a strong leader. It was a party that was built by a number of strong leaders from D S Senanayake. Today, the UNP does not have a leader and there is no candidate to put forward from their party. Therefore what are they doing? They are trying to show the younger sister and give away the elder sister in marriage. Who is the younger sister? General Fonseka is the younger sister because he is seen as a patriot and he is put forward to bring into power the UNP, who is the elder sister. It is the failure of the UNP that can be seen in this. Had the elder sister been pretty, there is no need to show the younger sister. It is because the elder sister is ugly that the younger sister is brought forward to offer the betel leaves and the elder sister is sent out at the time of the marriage. That is the same plan here. They say that the retired General will be the President and he will abolish the Executive Presidency. Then a trustee government will be formed. In any government a President or a Prime Minister should be there, either the Executive President or the Prime Minister has the power, there should be a cabinet of ministers. For any government those aspects are needed or else that does not become a government. So who is that Prime minister? When General Fonseka abolishes Executive Presidency and leaves, Ranil Wickremesinghe becomes the Prime Minister. General Fonseka has said that once he becomes the President, the JVP will get two ministerial posts and TNA will get two posts. Then there will be the General elections.

It can be clearly seen that because the UNP cannot come to power, they are using political tricks and the JVP is being taken for a ride. This is a joke. We all know that it is the international forces who are behind the UNP. They spend large amounts of money for this and those who are making advertisements, digital cut outs and posters will be able to earn a massive income during this period. We also suggest that they make use of this opportunity and make as much money as possible and bring in that money to the country, which is good because they are definitely going to lose. When a candidate who is losing is going to spend millions of rupees it is good for the economy of this country. Since some diplomatic missions are not even providing any loans any more it is good that the money that is given to the General on behalf of the UNP goes to the economy of the country. When President Mahinda Rajapaksa restarts his journey, he does so with an additional amount of money being circulated in the country.

The most unfortunate aspect of the current events is that a hero who should be respected by the people is standing with a team of traitors. General Fonseka had only one month to retire when President Mahinda Rajapaksa came into power. Had he ignored that one month and kept Lt General Kottegoda as the Commander, General Fonseka would have had to go on retirement. However President Mahinda Rajapaksa listened to Defence Secretary Gotabaya Rajapaksa and gave that position to General Fonseka and he became the Army Commander. His service was extended for four years. It was not only extended, he was given all the powers to take the battle forward.

It was this same General Fonseka who signed the documents to abandon Jaffna, when he was the Commanding Officer in Jaffna, when the political leadership of the country gave the directive. The Commander of the Army is under the political leadership of the country and when the leadership asks him to abandon, they have to abandon and come. When they are asked to go forward, they go. That is the nature of military leadership.

Just think, in another 10 years, if the economy of this country reaches a growth of about 10%, if Dr P B Jayasundera says that it is my work and I did it, therefore I am a national hero so make me a common candidate and make me win, that becomes a joke. It is not a victory of only Dr P B Jayasundera, it is the result of teamwork. If the Governor of the Central Bank says that this was achieved because of him, therefore make me a candidate and make me win, that becomes a joke too.

What a hero does till the end is of importance. Therefore, we are sad that someone who should join the ranks of heroes is joining the ranks of traitors, we did not expect that or hope for that. However if a sword made of gold is being used to stab, it has to be stopped.

Therefore, the UNP is trying to come into power by using the General or even by using a field martial if possible. Stopping that is the responsibility of the whole Sri Lankan nation.

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UNP and JVP have joined forces for this election. What are your views?

I see that as a tragedy in our history. We all know that the founder of JVP is Rohana Wijeweera. Different people have different views and opinions on Wijeweera, nevertheless, Wijeweera made many controversial contributions to the left wing politics of Sri Lanka. Who decided to kill him once he was arrested? There were two politicians who gave the order that he should be killed immediately without even informing President Ranasinghe Premadasa.

Therefore how can the JVP leaders stand on one stage with the same person who gave the order to kill the founder of your own party? I don't understand that and I wonder whether Somawansa Amarasinghe has a conscience? Where is his heart? 60,000 were killed during that time. Who is the creator of the Biyagama-Batalanda torture chambers? Who is behind the mass murder of these 60,000? There were dead bodies all over the roads and junctions, dead bodies were floating in rivers, newspapers were filled with photographs of headless bodies. How could the JVP leaders stand together with the political leaders who were behind these crimes? They say that they are not joining the UNP, but joining General Fonseka. General Fonseka has already joined hands with the UNP, it was with Ranil Wickremasinghe that he had telephone conversations and it was after coming into an agreement with him that General Fonseka decided to contest the elections. Do you think General Fonseka will agree to this by only talking to the JVP? It was only after getting the assent of UNP, that JVP assent was sought. JVP is saying that they are supporting the General and the UNP is supporting the General. Would the UNP support the General if there is no gain for them? No one

gets into business without any profit. The UNP is putting forward the General because there is a benefit out of this. It is for this purpose that the JVP is supporting. By the very fact of their support it can be seen that they are making a big mistake in politics.

It is to enter into this marriage that the leaders of the JVP kicked us out. They were doing this on the sly those days. Since they could not do this in the open had we been there, they expelled us. Those 60,000 dead would come from their graves to haunt them in their sleep and they will certainly have a sleepless future.

On the other hand, this is the final mistake of the JVP because there will be no JVP after the Presidential elections. The day when a newspaper publishes the picture of Ranil Wickremasinghe and Somawansa Amarasinghe standing together is the day when JVP will be cremated.

The biggest benefits of peace have been to the North and East. In those areas agriculture is being developed, roads are being developed, children go to school freely, parents are relieved, there are no claymores, no shootings and no fear of war... They will be major contributors to build the future of Sri Lanka.

During the last few days we have seen JVP led strikes in the essential services as well as universities. What can you tell us about this?

There are certain things that the UNP cannot do. The UNP cannot organise union strikes or student strikes. Any private organisation, when they cannot do something themselves they outsource it to another company who gets paid for their work. That's how these things are done. Similarly, whatever that the UNP cannot do, it is done by the JVP. They are doing this to create a certain atmosphere in the country, an atmosphere that is required for political upheaval.

Any worker would like their salaries to be increased. Generally, the Ports have the best salaries in the country, as far as I know the lowest salary is above Rs 30,000. Even in a place where there are good salaries, if you get a Rs 3,000 raise no one is going to complain. They put a slogan that all workers like and continue that strike that the UNP desires. These strikes do not come from the working people. The leaders decide and make the workers come and participate. This is a contract. They are adhering to this contract very well.

The end of the war was a victory to the Tamil people of this country. Your

views?

The biggest benefits of peace have been to the North and East. Today, it is the East that has the highest development. The North is also getting there. In those areas agriculture is being developed, roads are being developed, children go to school freely, parents are relieved, there are no claymores, no shootings and no fear of war. As development progresses these people will be part of the future victory of Sri Lanka. Undoubtedly in another five to ten years there will be players in the Sri Lanka cricket team from Jaffna and Batticaloa. Until now there was only Susanthika and Sugath Thilakaratne in our athletics, but from now on young men and women from Jaffan and Batticaloa will bring gold medals to Sri Lanka. They will be major contributors to build the future of Sri Lanka. Therefore, the biggest benefits of this peace are for none other than the people of the North and East. In the next five years those areas will certainly have a growth rate that goes beyond all the other areas. Even in the tourism sector, the focus is on these areas. Many new investments are done in these areas and even the Tamil communities abroad are sending them money. As a result there will be considerable development in the North and East of the country.

Even if we take, for example, the sea, many countries do not have claim over the sea as we do. Considering the amount of resources that we have, we are only using a very small fraction of it. Sri Lanka, including the people of the North and the East, will become people who reap big benefits from the sea. Therefore undoubtedly the true victory of peace goes to the North and East.

What about Tamil people living in the rest of the country?

In the recent past there were major allegation that the rights of the Tamils were being violated; that they were being arrested, kidnapped and taken in white vans. Now this fear is not there. With the LTTE defeated, that threat is no longer there. Today, there is a considerable number of Tamil people living in the Western Province they do not have to languish in police stations. An atmosphere where Human Rights were violated existed because the LTTE was there. Defeating LTTE meant that it was possible to create an environment where the normal day to day lives of people could be carried out. The benefit is for the Tamil people living in urban areas and the middle class Tamil society. Now they can live happily in this country and live without fear. Tamils and Sinhalese did not kill each other. Even when the war was going on and the LTTE would come in their small aircrafts and

attack Colombo, the Sinhalese, Tamils and Muslims lived in harmony. No one had any fights with their neighbours. The only unfortunate incident was Black July in 1983, which happened with the knowledge of the then Government. Apart from that there was no black mark.

Therefore it is clear that the Tamil people in the Western Province and urban areas have received great freedom and it is certain that they will reap the maximum benefits out of that.

In 2010 What We Can Expect Is That President Mahinda Rajapaksa Wins The Election. In 2020, We Aim To Make Sri Lanka A Country That Is Economically Powerful.

What can we expect in 2010?

In 2010 what we can expect is that President Mahinda Rajapaksa wins the election. In 2020, we aim to make Sri Lanka a country that is economically powerful, a country that has leaped forward in terms of socio-development, a country with a new life, a country where our able and talented youth do not have the urge to go abroad in search of work, a country where their talents and abilities are given the right place. We aim to make Sri Lanka the main centre of economic development in South Asia.

We have heard that at a certain point Singapore and Japan were behind us, now they have moved forward. Our aim is to take Sri Lanka beyond those and take her to her rightful place by 2020. What happens in 2010 is the beginning of that journey. It is in 2020 that we will see the true benefits of development.

If we take this country, the low lands have to be used for agricultural purposes and new industries have to be started in every Divisional Secretariat based on the suitability of those areas, the economy should be planned in such a way that no skilled person remains unemployed, there should be good governance and law and order should be properly carried out, the country should be such that law and order operates above everyone including politicians and the police. There should be an end to corruption and wastage and this country should be taken towards development. The journey towards this goal will start in 2010. In 2005 what was started was the journey towards ending fear of the mind, and in 2010 what will start is the journey towards economic development.