

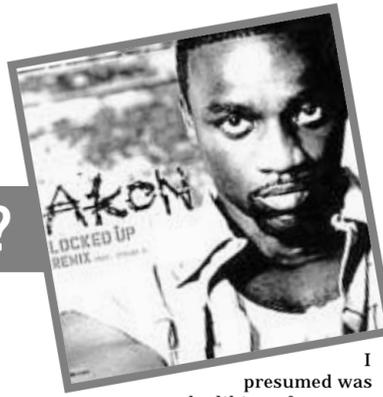
Until the Sri Lanka Tourist Board sponsored Akon concert hit the headlines I did not know who this man was. So I browsed the internet to find that he is known as one of the most successful and versatile R&B singers of the 21st century. Among his records are his debut album,

<[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Trouble\\_%28Akon\\_album%29](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Trouble_%28Akon_album%29) Trouble  
<[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Locked\\_Up](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Locked_Up) Locked Up" and  
<[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lonely\\_%28Akon\\_song%29](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lonely_%28Akon_song%29) Lonely",  
<[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Belly\\_Dancer\\_%28Bananza%29](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Belly_Dancer_%28Bananza%29) Belly Dancer (Bananza)",  
<[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pot\\_Of\\_Gold](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pot_Of_Gold) Pot Of Gold",  
<[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ghetto\\_%28Akon\\_song%29](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ghetto_%28Akon_song%29) Ghetto." and

I wanna \*\*\*\* you .  
Meanwhile a friend of mine forwarded me Akon's controversial music video "Sexy bitch/sexy chick," in which half naked girls with bra and panty are dancing in front of a Buddha statue .

International tourists? Or the Tourist Board? What does the country get in return by his performance? And how much would it have cost the poor taxpayer?

As referred to in your editorial of the 25th March some months back,



I presumed was not to the liking of Buddhists. Now comes the Akon show! It seems SLTB has neither a vision nor mission nor policy. Otherwise it

won't act in this manner. As a State institution, the SLTB should be sensitive to the cultural and religious factors of the people. I can't understand why SLTB have to import controversial artists to promote tourism. Sri Lanka has so many other attractions. The National Geographic Channel in an exclusive report recently has categorized Sri Lanka as the second best place to visit. With the dawn of peace, there is a surge in the arrival of tourists. I doubt their coming here to listen to Akon!

As much as police is making inquiries about the unfortunate incident on March 23, the government also should inquire into the background of the whole episode? Who mooted the idea of inviting Akon/last year's beach show, etc? With or without the SLTB tourists are visiting Sri Lanka!

C. B. Punchibandara

## Quo Vadis Sri Lanka Tourist Board ?

Akon is a millionaire and a businessman and how he goes about his business is his business. But what is the role of the Sri Lanka Tourist Board (SLTB) in this whole episode? Is it to promote his business or to promote Sri Lanka tourism? Akon is an entertainer. So whom is he going to entertain in Sri Lanka? Local tourists?

there was the famous beach party which drew flak from many. Before that the SLTB was trying to promote the non-existent Rama Trail to attract Indian tourists. The SLTB was also to have a light and sound show at Sigiriya sometime back. There was also the proposal to have a tourist promotion project at Anuradhapura which



Mahaweli



Kalu



Kalu



Walawe

## Origin of Kelani, Mahaweli, Walawe and Kalu Ganga

I refer to the article on the Sri Pada which appeared in The Island of 22.03.2010, where it has been mentioned that the four main rivers in Sri Lanka - Kelani, Mahaweli, Walawe and Kalu Ganga originate in the Adam's Peak. This is a common fallacy prevailing in the country and is found in the literature and even in songs.

If one examines the Nuwara Eliya and Balangoda topographical sheets, the drainage pattern of Adam's Peak becomes evident and it shows the origin of these four rivers. The Adam's Peak stands above the surrounding range appearing like a cone. All the water falling on this cone end up only in the tributaries of either Kelani River or Kalu Ganga, and not a single drop ends up in the other two rivers.

The streams flowing on the

Southern face either end up in the Kalu Ganga or its tributaries Mapalana Oya and Rat Ganga. The streams flowing on its Western side end up in the Kuru Ganga, a tributary of Kalu Ganga. The streams flowing on its Northern and Eastern sides end up in the Maussakele reservoir feeding the Maskeliya Oya, a tributary of Kelani river. So, it is clear that only the waters of Kelani and Kalu Ganga originate from the Adam's Peak.

To the east of the Adam's Peak range, there are three valleys. The Maskeliya Oya flows in the first, Kehelgamuwa Oya flows in the second, and these two merge at Polpitiya to form the Kelani River. The Mahaweli River flows in the third valley, completely cut off from the Adam's Peak range. It flows past Hatton town, originating

in the hills to the east of Hatton stretching up to the Horton Plains. So, not a single drop of water falling on the Adam's Peak range has any chance of reaching the Mahaweli River.

All the streams flowing on the Southern face of the Adam's Peak range beyond Mapalana up to Dehenakanda end up in the Rat Ganga. Streams flowing beyond Dehenakanda and far away from the peak only end up in the Walawe Ganga. Therefore, the waters of Walawe Ganga also cannot be said to originate from the Adam's Peak.

If any text book contains this information that the Adam's Peak is the source of the four major rivers in Sri Lanka, it should henceforth be corrected.

Dr. Janaka Ratnasiri  
Nawala

## Do it now, Ranil!

Ranil says he could bring GSP+ back if he wins. But my question is: Why doesn't he do it now? If he did when he is not in power, it would most certainly win him votes. A patriotic person would not miss a chance to help his people whatever way he could.



Ranil

Lisbon Knight

## ICC Good Friday tamasha

I refer to the news item reported in today's edition on the ICC bash to be held on Good Friday. Good Friday is held with utmost veneration by Christians and holding a banquet with liquor flowing and possibly sexy dances is both sacreligious and a grave insult to Christianity. Christians who read this would no doubt have been shocked that SLC Interim Committee permitted this bash to be held on this day. Could they not have selected another day? What has the Minister of Sports, who no doubt would have received an invitation, to say about it? We therefore request the President to intervene in the same manner that he intervened on the Akon show and give instructions to cancel this tamasha.



Lokuge

Nimal Bhareti

## Tribute to late Philip Gunawardena

I was happy to see Walter Wijenayake's tribute to late Philip Gunawardena in your March 29 issue. Unfortunately, this article contains several factual errors which should be noted:

- Philip was 14 years old, not 11, when he made the legendary trip to Queen's house with his mother to present a petition for the release of his father.
- Philip met Jomo Kenyatta and Seewoosagar Ramgoolam not in the US but in the UK.
- Philip and three other LSSP leaders were arrested in 1940, not in 1942.
- Leslie Gunawardena was not one of those who were jailed; he evaded arrest for the entire duration of the war.
- Philip split away from the LSSP in 1950, not 1949.

I have documented Philip Gunawardena's activities in the US and England in my booklet, Philip Gunawardena - The Making of a Revolutionary (Social Scientists' Association, 2001), which was translated by W.T.A. Leslie Fernando as *Pilip Gunawardhana: Viplavavadiyakuge Hadagasma* (S. Godage, 2005).

Charles Wesley Ervin

## What is an election?

An election is a process of choice and, as it relates to persons, it implies that he or she is chosen and elevated to some high level for a purpose. Usually, the position to which someone is chosen is one of authority to enable the chosen one to use that authority in return to fulfil the expectations of those who choose him or her for the purpose.

The emphasis is therefore on choice and it follows that people do not choose someone for the purpose of harming them in various ways such as by depriving them of their basic livelihood - food, clothing and shelter - of finances, of their human rights and even of life itself. When one contrasts political elections with those associated with elections in civil society organizations and associations one sees a distinct contrast. Why?

[1] In politics, no criteria/qualifications are required of the candidate whereas in civil society organizations candidates vie with each other on the basis of qualifications, proven merit and past performance and experience.

[2] The difference in size between the political and non political body.

[3] The difference in the length of time within which the chosen can be subjected to another election is understandable in a political body as it takes time to formulate and implement policy, as there is more opposition to any policy or act contemplated by the chosen than in a an institution, because opposition is the best modality to use as a vehicle by those not chosen - in the political body - to both prevent the success of the current chosen one and hope to be chosen next time in his or her place.

[4] The terminology used in the political and the non-political domains is markedly different. In the political, the popular jargon in Sri Lanka is that the chosen are elected to or have "come into power" whereas in both the political and non-political domain the election is to Office. Of course, Office implies authority which implies power, but this is not to imply naked power which corrupts and absolute power corrupts absolutely. On the contrary, authority implies responsibility for good governance in whatever sphere the election takes place, and that responsibility is to fulfil the expectations of the electors, not to entice them with bribes which corrupts both them as well as those asking to be elected in return for them.

When we apply this attitude of power to the coming into office through an election, we are virtually inviting them to wield power rather than responsibility, so let us place the matter in perspective and have in mind the real principle and meaning of the true sense of what an election really is both from the point of the electors as well as that of whoever may be elected.

by Manel Abeysekera

Now that Sri Lanka has finally got rid of the terrorism problem, it is an opportune time for the country to look at how it can advance and promote the "Sri Lankan" identity above all as opposed to concentrating on individual races and ethnicities.

In the past, Sri Lankan governments of all persuasions have been criticised for not having done enough to ensuring that the country do away with any discriminatory policies and practices against minorities. In addition to the issue of minorities, historically, Sri Lanka as a whole has had various covert and unwritten sub group identities (ethnic-based political parties, various castes and, up county /low country and south vs north mind-sets) and many of these still continue. All of these forces are pulling the country backwards.

As the war is now over, there is no better time for the government to make a genuine attempt to look at whether there are any current practices and policies in the country which are perceived to be discriminatory for any particular group.

As a first step, what Sri Lanka currently needs is an Equal Opportunity legislation. Such a legislation should explicitly dictate that every citizen, regardless of one's ethnicity, has equal opportunities in accessing all rights of the citizenry. That legal framework must have the 'merit-based' principle as one of its corner stones, i.e. selection for

various opportunities including for jobs, higher education and many other entitlements should be based on merit and never based on one's ethnicity.

There should not be a requirement (other than for statistical reasons) for disclosing one's ethnicity in any public document including in national identity cards, pass-

ports and job applications. All that is required is for every individual to have the freedom to practice and observe his or her faith, cultural and other practices specific to their ethnicity. This freedom should be independent of the policy formulation process at large. Targeted policies for disadvantaged communities, which could very well include some particular ethnic groups, might still be needed and be implemented on a need basis.

In such a set up then, there is no place or need for ethnic-based political parties as well.

## Let's do away with ethnic-based groupings



education institute, what hope do we have for the future of this country as a whole?

It is time that the government carefully consider introducing Equal Opportunity legislation as a first step towards achieving and advancing ethnic integration of the country and promoting 'Sri Lankan' identity above anything else. Such an action is also likely to silence many of Sri Lanka's international critics as many of these critics' own countries have such policies.

One of the most unwelcome legacies of the country's long ethnic war has been the presence of mono-ethnic universities in the country's North and East. When the country's best and brightest are segregated in such a way, it is a big blow to advancing ethnic integration as those individuals in universities will one day become part of the government's policy making hierarchy. When such people have not been exposed to living and interacting in a multi-racial environment of a higher

education institute, what hope do we have for the future of this country as a whole?

It is time that the government carefully consider introducing Equal Opportunity legislation as a first step towards achieving and advancing ethnic integration of the country and promoting 'Sri Lankan' identity above anything else. Such an action is also likely to silence many of Sri Lanka's international critics as many of these critics' own countries have such policies.

Nishantha Sanjeeva  
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