

The Friday Forum

2, Greenlands Avenue, Colombo 5, Sri Lanka

E-Mail; chandraj111@gmail.com Telephone; 0773634444 Fax; 2504181

The Friday Forum is an informal and self-financed group dedicated to democracy, good governance, human rights and the rule of law. It has for over five years sought to alert the public on issues concerning the rights of the citizen. We work on a non-partisan basis and have been critical of both the Government and Opposition.

2nd January 2015

Media Release

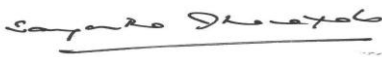
A Final Appeal to Fellow Voters

In less than one week, the Sri Lankan electorate will go to the polls to elect a President who will hold office for the next six years. This is probably the most decisive election in Sri Lanka's post-independence period, and one which will define the destiny of our country as never before. Exercising one's franchise is both a right and a duty and we urge all Sri Lankans to do so. At this time the Friday Forum calls upon all Sri Lankans, whatever their political affiliation, to carefully consider the issues at stake when casting their vote. Our vote will determine the political, social and economic future of our country and that of our children for many years to come.

Our statement of December 12 appealed to the various categories of officials responsible for the conduct of a free, fair and violence-free election. Since then we deeply regret that we have witnessed outrageous acts of violence like the clash in front of the UNP headquarters, violations of election law such as the continued display of posters and cut-outs, and the reported escape of Deputy Minister Nishantha Muthuhettigama to Singapore via the VIP lounge at the Bandaranaike Airport while being a suspect in a case of arson with a warrant issued for his arrest - none of which appear to have had any legal repercussions.

This election gives us the opportunity to decide whether it is possible that we, our children and future generations will live in a country founded on the norms of participatory democracy, the rule of law and good governance, reinforced by an independent judiciary and public service. We must reflect on which of the choices before us best promises us a government which implements a model of sustainable and people-centred development, ensuring equitable allocation of resources and meeting the needs of all our people, particularly the most disadvantaged. When voting, we must choose which candidate is most likely to achieve what we want for ourselves and our children - a country where all communities will live in peace and harmony with respect and tolerance for our heritage of cultural, religious and ethnic diversity, and where we are all able to exercise our human rights guaranteed under the Constitution.

This election gives us many choices as to the candidate we vote for and the Friday Forum urges all voters to exercise what is their constitutional right and civic duty, and vote. We call on our fellow voters to consider which candidate gives us the best opportunity to achieve democracy, rule of law, peace and harmony in Sri Lanka, for ourselves and future generations. This will not be achieved easily but the process must begin and we can make it happen.



Jayantha Dhanapala

Professor Savitri Goonesekere

Professor Camena Gunaratne

On behalf of The Friday Forum;

Mr. Jayantha Dhanapala, Professor Savitri Goonesekere, Professor Camena Gunaratne, Mr. Faiz-ur.Rahman, Mr. Pulasthi Hewamanna, Professor Gananath Obeyesekere, Mr. Javid Yusuf, Ms. Manouri Muttetuwegama, Professor Ranjini Obeyesekere, Mr. Priyantha Gamage, Professor Arjuna Aluwihare, Mr. Tissa Jayatilaka, Ms. Radhika Coomaraswamy, Ms. Damaris Wickremesekera, Ms. Shanthi Dias, Dr. Deepika Udagama, Ms. Suriya Wickremasinghe, Dr. Selvy Thiruchandran, Rev. Dr. Jayasiri Peiris, Rt. Reverend Duleep de Chickera, Professor Gameela Samarasinghe, Dr. A. C. Visvalingam, , Mr. J.C. Weliamuna, Mr. Ahilan Kadirgamar, Dr. Upatissa Pethiyagoda, Dr. G. Usvatte-Arrachchi, Mr. S. C. C . Elankovan, Mr. Danesh Casie Chetty , Dr. Jayampathy Wickramaratne, Mr. Suresh de Mel, Mr. Chandra Jayaratne