

Editorial April 2014

Tamils and the Electoral Reforms

On the occasion of our Puttaandu 5116, we Tamils of all faiths must sit and reflect on our achievements in the World and in Mauritius in particular. According to historical records, Tamils are believed to be one of the oldest civilisations, and the Tamil Language (the common denominator of the Tamil Diaspora) is classified as one among the rare classical language by UNESCO. 5116 is not yesterday, it's a very very long history. And still Tamils had to fight desperately for decades to get a homeland of their own; and they lost their fight amidst lots of atrocities.

What about our struggle in Mauritius?

It is an undeniable fact that the Tamils were among the first settlers on the island. We came here as artisans, to help in building the country. The artifacts, such as the sculptures engraved on old stone-buildings in Port-Louis, are there to prove it. It was the presence of a Tamil merchant class which made it a necessity for our bank notes to be translated in Tamil. So, what has happened to this "supremacy"? The majority of the businesses in Port-Louis, is no longer in the hands of the Tamils. There is only one Tamil Minister, and yet not with a major port-folio. Tamils simply lost their advantageous position. Why? If we do not dare putting that question to ourselves, we'll never find the answer. Let bygones be bygones, and let us find ways to redress our situation.

No doubt, in all the speeches for the Puttaandu celebrations, there will be call for unity among the Tamils. It's anyway the same year in year out. However this year, a new issue which will surely dominate the speeches is the electoral reform. Are we going to be fairly treated this time? Will the Tamils, together with other minorities, find a better place in the new system? The BLS system, if maintained in its actual form, does not cater for the Tamils as a separate entity. Our concern is therefore a guarantee that Tamils are better represented in the Parliament. Our socio-cultural representatives have started meetings among their elites. Let's hope that this opportunity is seized to redress a situation which is long overdue for the Tamils.

Long live Tamils.

Long Live Mauritius.