

Remove the cause of violence now

Two great national leaders have been brutally murdered, in the capital city, within the course of just a few days.

The list is gradually becoming big and it would be foolish to assume that it would not become bigger and bigger.

Several theories have been espoused to explain the killings — some with the idea of gaining as much political mileage as possible. But if we believe that these do not have any connection to our burning national question it would be the greatest blunder we would be committing.

Understandably the Government did not press on very much with the LTTE angle - perhaps to avoid a repetition of the 1983 orgy. All right thinking citizens should congratulate the new President and the security forces for the excellent manner in which they handled the situation. Due credit also should go to the media for the responsible role — thus preventing a national calamity.

Of course the Tamils living all over the island had some anxious moments. Many went into hiding abandoning all their worldly belongings to save their dear lives —

once bitten twice shy.

It was encouraging to note that the new President in his first message to the nation has stated that finding a solution to our ethnic problem is one of his highest priorities.

This is not something new. Many, before him, have said the same thing before. Once in power nothing tangible happened proving the often repeated LTTE slogan that the Sinhala Buddhists would never give the Tamils anything worthwhile to abandon their demand for an Eelam.

While on the other hand in a situation where being in power or getting into power is the main objective, it would be ridiculous to expect any political party to antagonize the Sinhala Buddhists on whose votes their destinies depend. Unfortunately the Sinhala Buddhist sentiments are hardening everyday and the military option seems to be gaining popularity.

A very common allegation that was levelled against the former President was that he prevented the army from taking over Jaffna on several occasions. This may be far from the truth but a wide cross section of the Sri

Lankān people, from the ordinary man on the street to the rich and the intellectual, seem to be believing this — lock, stock and barrel.

Venerable Galaboda Gnaniswara thero, one of the most trusted friends of the late President, very correctly mentioned in his funeral oration that it is time that all major political parties got together to find a solution to the national problem.

Once again what type of a solution he had in mind was not clear. Is it to solve the terrorist problem by defeating the LTTE or is it to agree on a common agenda to discuss and decide on the demands of the Tamil people — which have been dragging on for a long long time?

The LTTE is no doubt a racist, terrorist group whose activities are being condemned by the civilized world. But in the war against them the victims have invariably been innocent civilians, men, women and children belonging to all the communities.

So how are we going to solve this problem? It indeed is the million dollar question.

In my opinion it is time that the ordinary people of this country who are financing this expensive war took some initiative of their own to press all political parties to declare their stand clearly and openly.

People should be made fully aware of the colossal expenditure that is being incurred on the war and the long term social and psychological effects on the whole population — children in particular.

Government policies should be geared to remove all forms of discriminations and to bring about reconciliation and peace among all ethnic groups. It is sad to note that many progressive policies are only in paper and no action is being taken to implement them. One good example is the use of the Tamil language or for that matter the English language in government offices.

If we fail in this endeavour, very soon we would be killing each other. We have no time to loose.

Let us decide, today, what we are going to do next.

N.M.M. Rajudeen,
Peradeniya.