

# The placards are back, this time bigger and more ridiculous!



Banners depicting various candidates with the President in the middle

By Munza Mushtaq

It's election fever again, this time in the south and as usual not a by-road has been spared with Sri Lanka's infamous election paraphernalia.

With just a few more days to go for the Southern Provincial Council election, Southern Province's leading contenders, the United National Freedom Alliance, United National Party and Janatha Vimukthi Peramuna are leaving no stone unturned when it comes to maximising public property to put up their fancy larger-than-life cutouts, posters and fluttering plastic flags.

The Southern Province has already seen an eventful election run up from death threats, to arrests, to slandering statements to much hyped candidates who could be better off doing what they are better known for rather than coming into mainstream politics, where they don't even seem to know the difference between politics and hair-clips.

### Colourful decorations

And as usual the colourful decorations take centre stage in Sri Lankan elections, which not surprisingly cost the country millions of rupees per election.

The southern campaign has witnessed some very ridiculously innovative election 'masterpieces' from life size hand made elephants atop a hood of a Montero to colourful red and yellow bells adorning the roof of a security bunker!

President Mahinda Rajapakse seems to be the selling point to all government party candidates with Rajapakse's face right in the middle of a humongous poster adorned with several party candidates along the roads in Galle.

Actress turned politician, Anarkali Akarsha does not seem to like staying in the shadows of others and this was pretty obvious in her banners too.

In a massive cutout, Anarkali who claims to be ever ready to die for the masses stands alone dressed in a saree adorned with her bleach streaked hair.

### Traditional style publicity

While the government appeared to be more satisfied with traditional style publicity, the country's two main opposition parties, the UNP and the JVP looked for more innovative methods, in an attempt to gather their ever dwindling support.

The country would have to wait for October 10, to find out if these so called innovative ideas bear any fruit for the two parties which have been performing like the Bangladeshi cricket team in the recent past.

One would think that the JVP which ever so often praises the security forces for liberating the country from the clutches of terrorism would show more respect to the troops in practice than what they preach, but the audacity to utilise a security bunker in Galle and put up their bell symbol carrying cutouts says a different story altogether.



An innovative election masterpiece — a life size hand made elephant atop the hood of a Montero



A banner depicting actress turned politician, Anarkali Akarsha



Colourful red and yellow bells adorn the roof of a security bunker



Banners ridiculing the whole electoral process