

Lalith Athulathmudali's death anniversary today

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"The time has come for me to leave, for you to live and for me to die. Yet, who will be bestowed upon a prosperous tomorrow, is it you or me?"

Even though this quote somewhat resembles a question which Lalith posed from his assassins themselves, these were the words of 'Sophocles', the famous Greek philosopher. And it was these words repeated once more in the words of Lalith in 1987, when he was under medical treatment for one month and a day due to a bomb blast at parliament. "I was reminded that I might have faced such disasters constantly throughout my transmigration in accordance with Buddhism. It is not unaccustomed to me. I am ready to accept this as I have done in the past. Civilization might be at hand sooner than I realize. Yet, that does not make me sorrowful or leave me in consternation. Inwardly, I have accepted the dissolution of my life. Yet, I have been attempting to be alive while feeling it consciously and physically. But sooner or later, life will be extorted from me. Life is not something that is given yet something that is being forcefully taken away." — Lalith Athulathmudali (*Reflections on Life and Death*)

The biography of Lalith William (Samarasekera) Athulathmudali consists of a series of chaotic events that resemble burning pyrotechnics.

Higher education

Whenever he visited his most preferred confidante in Switzerland, it had always been a much awaited affair. Even though he had a conciliatory married life after the espousal, it was a matter of living apart. When the first child was born, there was not a servant that could have helped and the second faced an untimely death. It took him 10 years to embark on his political career. His Ministerial statuses were confined to very short periods hence sustaining in those were somewhat a challenge and it was a matter of litigation for mere membership of party. He had to spin others string due to so called 'impeachment'. The bomb which was aimed at J.R. fell on to his lap. Owing to aspersing of others even on tentative terms, his spouse separated from him. Although he performed round-the-clock for the sake of others, his heart was pierced by a bullet which came out from a



"Search for what is right but not for who is right,"

was his motto. Higher education was the main artefact in order to explore the prevailing truth. He designed a strategy foreseeing the succeeding challenges by applying knowledge acquired through education locally and overseas. The chronically established traditional Sri Lankan social background was

the main state of difficulty that needed to be resolved during the implementation of his plan.

as the pertinent minister. Lalith met Sirimavo Bandaranaike in March 1973 who was attached to UNCTAD in Switzerland. A friend of his brother Davula Athulathmudali. Yet, he was only determined to get married in 1981 December. Due to non-availability of a registrar in Geneva their marriage was registered through the Sri Lanka Ambassador in Switzerland. A small evening function was arranged to celebrate the event where Dr. Gaurini Corea, the General Secretary of UNCTAD at the time (a relative of Sirimavo) was of significant presence on the occasion. Although they got married, they led separate lives in two different countries until Sirimavo Athulathmudali returned to Sri Lanka in 1982.

Even after her arrival, it was a busy life that Lalith had to lead due to the Presidential Election in 1982. The arrival of his first baby was the leading factor for him to implement a policy for education and nutrition. The birth of his daughter 'Sarali' and the implementation of the concept every student is to be provided with a free glass of milk, took place hand in hand.

Soon after, a student scholarship scheme namely 'Mahapala' was introduced since Lalith emphatically believed that the young generation should be well educated to build a prospective future. Furthermore, they should

Trailblazer of recent times



Lalith had been continuing his studies in England at Universities of Harvard and Oxford for many years. Yet, it was a much awaited period of 10 years after he returned (while practicing as a lawyer) that finally took him to embark on his political career with the UNP.

often visited Sri Lanka and had the opportunity of associating with the politicians of various capacities. Considerable numbers of experts and intellectuals were accumulating around J.R. who was a brilliant politician. But what I realized was that Lalith Athulathmudali was the most congenial young politician who was best suited for J.R. as well as the