

Why coal power plant in Trinco? 30/05/02 Island

Most persons who have studied the coal power controversy and the many reports thereon, will be in full agreement with the statement of Ranjith C. Dissanayake that Mawella is the best site, (*vide* his article "Mawella — for solving the power crisis" in *"The Island"* of 23.04.02). We have to presume that the Minister of Power would have studied the many reports of consultants and engineers on the various sites that were examined for a coal power plant. Then he could not have missed the fact that

Mawella had been recommended as the best site, as it had all the facilities needed: a deep sea bay that would enable coal ships to be brought quite close to the power station, a thinly populated area which would minimize the number of families to be relocated, absolutely no risks from terrorists. It is difficult to understand why a competent minister should dally for so long about the site, and strangely veer to Trincomalee, the worst from a security point of view.

This has brought up a remark I used to hear when I was a small boy. Older people used to say (jokingly) even a kitten from south of the Kalu Ganga should be brought to Colombo before it opened its eyes. Is it possible (but I hope not) that this prejudice is lurking hidden (unknown to them) in the minds of some ministers born and bred in Colombo and its suburbs. Can such a hidden projection influence one to gift the first coal power plant to the murderer Prabhakaran's Eelam (or let him

blast it) rather than let the southern *Sinhalaya* get its benefit?

Else can it be because they do not wish to provide a feather to the cap of Mahinda Rajapakse of the PA?

Whatever his basis for disregarding the best site at Mawella and veering towards Trincomalee, let the Minister of Power give his reasons.

Transparency is most important.

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