

Noise pollution; is it nobody's business?

Many letters to the press from public spirited persons have focussed the attention of the authorities on the health hazards caused by extremely loud noise created by the tooting of horns of vehicles haphazardly. The authorities who are vested with power on this matter are the police under the Police Ordinance and the local authorities, under the Municipal Councils Ordinance and the Urban Councils Ordinance. The Latin phrase 'salus populi suprema lex' (meaning safety of the people is the supreme law), regards laws protecting public welfare as the highest law. The main end of the government should be the well being of the people; the establishment of law and order and safety, and the infusion of social happiness.

It is pertinent to state that ever since the Police ordinance, the Nuisance Ordinance and the Municipal Councils Ordinance, powers over nuisance abatement and prohibition were vested in the respective authorities. But the local au-



thorities have been slow in the implementation of their powers and indifferent to the health hazards that affect the people through noise pollution.

Professor Dr. C.G. Weeramantry, the eminent jurist of international fame in his essay 'Threatened Peripheries' stated that in the application of the laws in the law books to matters in the field, there are

glaring discrepancies. The Kandy Municipal Council was the first local authority to enact by-laws in 1941 during the Second World War prohibiting the use of high sounding instruments on vehicles during certain times of the day and night. These by-laws were published in the Government Gazette on 19th December 1943. In 1950 under the Motor Car Ordinance, regulations were framed prohibiting the use of vehicles with high sound instruments on certain roads and streets in Kandy.

A special officer called the Nuisance Detection Officer was detailed to every street and road within the Kandy Municipality reporting to the Municipal Commissioner daily. The Central Environmental Authority should get the assistance of the Municipal Councils and the Urban Councils along with their Public Health Inspectors for the effective implementation of the regulations to activate the law.

Cecil Jayasinghe
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The Mirror - 03/05/2008

Unauthorized con

By SUNIL R. PATHIRANA

The residents of the Matale and Kandy districts are perturbed that the unauthorized buildings in the Knuckles and the Castlereigh high sensitive environmental zones would result in disastrous consequences.

The environmentalists' organizations in the two districts recently made representation in this regard to the Ministry of Environment and Forest Resources. They stressed the need to demolish the unauthorized constructions and to prevent the clearing of land for cultivation.

The Knuckles Range that forms the main catchments of the Mahaweli reservoirs has been declared a high sensitive environmental zone by the ministry.

The Department of Forest Conservation that conducted a survey on the environmental effects of the cardamom cultivation in Kalupahana prohibited the cardamom cultivation in the Knuckles Range and ordered the cultivators to vacate the area. The Forest Conservation Officials said the department filed action against eleven farmers who still occupy the area regardless of the De-

creases. But lack of unity prevents them from launching meaningful campaigns to get the authorities' immediate attention to them.

So the resolve of the working class today should be to get the bugbear of political parties with different hues off their back and to forge workers unity which only provides hope to get remedies for their problems.

Trade unions as organizations sensitive to common problems of the people also cannot be unconcerned about them. They are, therefore, under obligation to make their voice heard about the numerous problems the people in this country have to contend with today.

Mirror 1/05/08

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Daily Mirror - 01/05/2008