

## Speech of Hon. M.A.Sumanthiran M.P. in Parliament today – 22<sup>nd</sup> September 2022

Thank you Hon. Deputy speaker for the opportunity to speak a few words at today's debate. The Hon. Minister for aviation was here for a moment ago, I want to raise a matter with regard to Palali air Port. That's an International airport, it was opened, and there were flights from Madras, then due to Covid all flight were suspended. Now, this has not resumed yet, and even when it resumes the cost of the airfare is prohibitive. The reason for that is that the airport taxes are so high that people will not be able to afford it – the Hon. Minister is now coming into the Chambers. I have spoken to the Hon. Minister about it, the Mattala airport – airport taxes have been waved and we have been asking that the Palali airport taxes also be waved. Because unlike Mattala, Palali when you resume, will have a steady traffic and that'll be good for our economy. And therefore I am requesting the minister again to please wave the airport tax for Palali airport and there will be a steady stream of traffic. So as we deal with the issues today, in the North and the East, there are other issues that people are facing particularly with regard to the Lands. Yesterday, in Kurunthoor malai there was a demonstration with regard to new constructions that were being undertaken by the Department of Archaeology. Two of our members were arrested saying that they had disrupted the officials from functioning. Now Archaeology is entrusted with the responsibility of preserving archaeological monuments. We know that there archaeological monuments, those must be preserved, but, they don't have the authority to build a new. And there are court orders, restraining them from building new structures, and yet, when people demonstrate against illegal activity by the department of archaeology, they are being arrested. So I want to raise this issue.

குறுந்தூர் மலையில் நேற்றைய தினம் எங்களுடைய கட்சி உறுப்பினர்கள் கைது செய்யப்பட்டிருக்கிறார்கள். தொல்லியல் திணைக்களம் சட்ட விரோதமாக கட்டடங்களைக் கட்டுவதை எதிர்த்து ஆர்ப்பாட்டம் செய்தவர்கள் கைது செய்யப்பட்டிருக்கிறார்கள். தொல்லியல் திணைக்களம் இப்படியாக எங்களுடைய மக்களுடைய நிலங்களை மிக மோசமான முறையிலே அபகரிக்கிற திட்டங்கள் தொடர்பாக பல தடவைகளிலே நாங்கள் இந்தப் பாராளுமன்றத்திலும் வெளியிலும் பேசியிருக்கின்றோம். 600 ஏக்கர் இற்கும் மேட்பட்ட வயற்காணிகளை அபகரிக்கின்ற இந்த முயற்சி தடுக்கப்படவேண்டும் என்று அவர்கள் செய்த ஆர்ப்பாட்டத்திற்கு எதிராக அவர்கள் கைது செய்யப்படுகிறார்கள். இது உடனடியாக நிறுத்தப்பட வேண்டும். ஜனாதிபதியோடு நாங்கள் தமிழ் தேசிய கூட்டமைப்பாக நடாத்திய சந்திப்பிலே இதைக்குறித்துச் சொன்னோம், பணிப்பாளர் நாயகத்திற்கு தான் உடனடியாக அறிவுறுத்துவதாக தெரிவித்திருந்தார். ஆனாலும் இந்த திணைக்களம் மிக மோசமான இனவாத திணைக்களமாக தமிழ் மக்களுக்கு எதிராக தொடர்ச்சியாக செயற்பட்டுக்கொண்டிருக்கிறது. இது உடனடியாக நிறுத்தப்படவேண்டும். இதேபோல கிழக்கிலே, கோணேஸ்வரம் ஆலயத்தை அபகரிக்க ஒரு திட்டம் முன்வைக்கப்பட்டிருக்கின்றது. திருக்கோணேஸ்வரம் இலங்கையிலே இருக்கின்ற ஐந்து கோணேஸ்வரங்களில் ஒன்று. இது மிகப்பழமை வாய்ந்தது. இந்த நாட்டுக்கு விஜயன் வருவதற்கு முன்னதாகவே, ஐந்து ஈஸ்வரங்கள் இலங்கையில் இருந்ததாக சேர்.பால் பீரிஸ் எழுதியிருக்கிறார்.

Sir Paul Peiris a renowned historian has written that long before the advent to Prince Wijaya to this Island, there existed five Eashwarams and one of those is Thirukoneswaram. Thirugnanasambanthar had sung about this temple in the 7<sup>th</sup> century B.C. So, it's ancient, this was destroyed by the Portuguese in 1624, but it was rebuilt in 1959. This is now designated as an archaeological site. But using the fact that it is an archaeological site, it is indeed an archaeological site, there are now, efforts to bring in new people from other districts particularly from the Ratnapura district. There was one politician who took people from Ratnapura district, settled them there, and traders, in that area and now there are 58 shops that have been set up, and now efforts are being made to grant land from this Archaeological site to these 58 shop owners who are actually alliance in that area, they have been brought and been settled there to change the demography. This must be immediately stopped. The issues that our people are facing today particularly with regard to land being grabbed by archaeology, by Mahaweli, by the forest department, by wild life department, various other special laws are used to take away lands on which Tamil people have lived for centuries. Now this is something that must immediately stopped. The Government is now facing a challenge in the UN Human rights council, Hon. Minister of Justice is here, and that's good, I want to refer to some matters that concern him as well. In September 2015, the Sri Lankan government co – sponsored a resolution call HRC 30 / 1. Co – sponsoring means you agree, you sign on to that resolution which then means it is your resolution. Now in that resolution while Hon. Minister of Justice you were the Hon. Minister even then at that time, there was a clause that Sri Lanka agreed, operation paragraph 6 of that resolution, in which it was agreed that Commonwealth and other foreign Judges, defence lawyers authorised prosecutors and investigators will participate in a process. Commonwealth and other foreign Judges, originally that draft you know Hon. Minister, said Foreign Judges. It was at the request of the Sri Lankan government the words "Commonwealth" also was added, Commonwealth and other Foreign Judges. Now this is Sri Lanka's own resolution. But now your foreign minister goes to Geneva and you are seated behind him, and saying participations like this, external mechanisms are unconstitutional, how can that be unconstitutional Hon. Minister, when you yourself in December 2012 presented a bill to Parliament, a private members bill to be presented by Hon. Dr. Wijedasa Rajapakse, M.P. in December 2012, called "Removal of Judges of the Superior court – special provisions act" you yourself have suggested. You yourself have suggested that this inquiry be conducted against Superior Court Judges by Judges who have held office in the highest court of any Commonwealth Country other than Sri Lanka. So even according to you, your own belief, consistently between 2012 and 2015 foreign judges participating in Processes in inquiries in Sri Lanka was not unconstitutional. You wouldn't have presented a bill unconstitutional - surely, you are a constitutional lawyer, so this is your own private member's bill. And then as official position of the Government of Sri Lanka while you were the minister of Justice and while the incumbent President was the Prime Minister, he wanted the words Commonwealth added in that resolution, and it was added and it was resolved. You can't resile from whatever you have agreed to, I can understand when the Government changed, when Gotabaya Rajapakse became the President Statement were made saying we are withdrawing from the resolution, but can you withdraw from that resolution? How can you withdraw from that resolution that you yourself agreed to? So, the resolution now before the council will be put to vote because we are opposing it, opposing the very words that you have agreed to previously, and that's not good for the country. Thank you.