

# It's the economy, stupid, says Milinda Moragoda

Pathfinder Foundation Founder and former Cabinet Minister Milinda Moragoda issued the following statement:

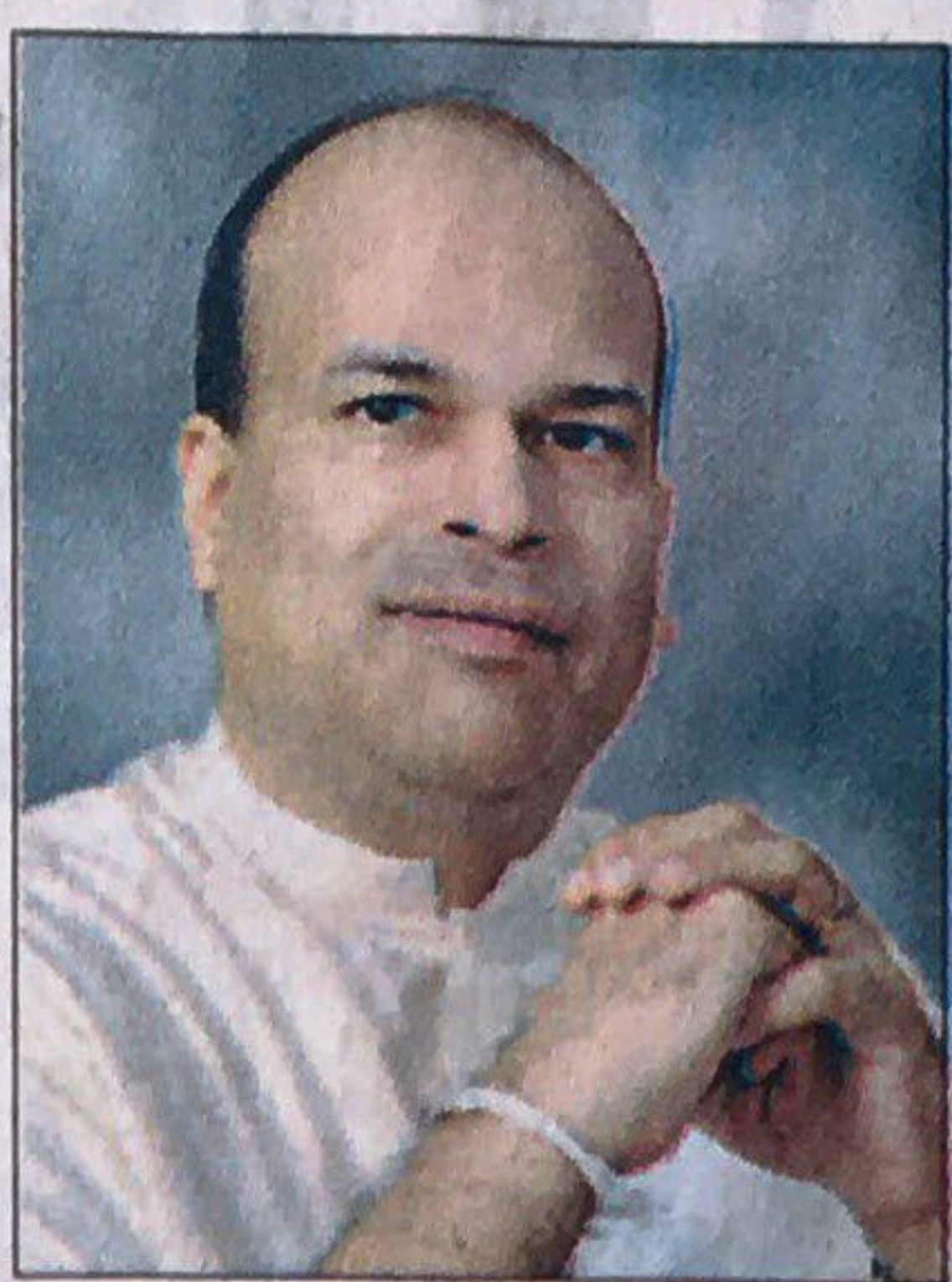
IT was James Carville the political strategist behind Bill Clinton's rise to the US presidency who introduced the phrase 'It's the economy, stupid' to the lexicon of political campaigning. He made this comment to draw the focus of his campaign workers on the issue that truly mattered to the voters at that time.

So far, Sri Lanka's 2020 parliamentary campaign has been a cacophony of political slogans and ego-trips. Unfortunately, candidates and political parties are yet to present coherent and viable economic strategies to the citizenry for the post-COVID era.

When they do address economic issues, many candidates espouse impractical and discredited ideologies that make no economic sense and seek to isolate Sri Lanka from the world at large. Such inward-looking policies if implemented will seriously jeopardise Sri Lanka's economic future and set us back several generations. A small economy with a limited internal market like ours cannot survive by isolating ourselves from the world.

Today as the world at large and Sri Lanka in particular face the greatest economic challenge in over a century, campaigning candidates appear to be oblivious to the impending economic and social consequences of the pandemic.

It is an undisputed fact that our President has provided effective leadership to pro-



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tect our nation from an outbreak of the global COVID19 pandemic. While the world endures untold misery and disaster, Sri Lanka has almost miraculously remained relatively unscathed, but this situation may change as the country opens up, and nothing should be taken for granted. We have done admirably well, but we cannot let up our guard, especially as no vaccine is still available.

Our two major challenges now are for us to take precautions against a possible second wave, and to restructure our economy to adapt and survive in a more unpredictable, unstable, and competitive global arena where nations will be pitted against each other in an attempt to push their interests forward. Unless we are united and focussed, Sri Lanka will be left in the dust.

It is hoped that the public at large grasps the gravity of the predicament our country faces and demand that candidates and their political parties present clearly laid out economic policies before the electorate, so that voters can make an informed choice at the polls. It is against this backdrop that the slogan 'It's the economy, stupid' bears relevance to the ongoing election campaign.