

# PAFFREL asks Govt to halt election 'gundus'

BY NIRANJALA ARITAWANTRA

People's Action for Free and Fair Elections (PAFFREL) has requested Secretary of the Ministry of Public Administration and Disaster Management J.J. Ratnasiri to immediately intervene and halt all appointments made to State institutions benefitting certain political parties, at a time when a presidential poll has been announced in the country.

Executive Director of PAFFREL Rohana Hettiarachchi had made this request in writing yesterday (25). PAFFREL has called on Ratnasiri to also bring the issue to the notice of all Ministry Secretaries

and Heads of Departments as well.

The election watchdog has sent a copy of the letter to the Chairman of the Elections Commission Mahinda Deshapriya.

Hettiarachchi told *Ceylon Today* that they had made the request to Ratnasiri in his capacity as the competent authority in charge of all appointments made to Government institutions. The polls monitor, through its letter, noting how important a presidential poll was to the country in comparison to minor polls as it selects the next Head of State, stated that it is the duty of everyone concerned to conduct a free and fair poll without favouring any party or any of the candidates.

PAFFREL noted that even the Elections Commissioner had warned through a circular that the conducting of interviews to select employees for State institutions, giving appointments, granting promotions, and carrying out transfers are in direct violation of the provisions contained in the Election Act.

"However, we have learnt through reliable sources that seminars, training workshops among others, are being held at various locations in order to appoint people to the State sector. We have also briefed the Ministry Secretary of these moves that go against the Elections Act," Hettiarachchi explained.