

Elephant or Swan – what is the best symbol ?

According to the UNP party president Gamini Jayawickrama Perera, the party is yet to decide whether to contest the upcoming General Election under the Elephant symbol or not. Mr. Jayawickrema Perera says there are requests from several parties to continue with the existing United National Front coalition or to form a common alliance for the General Elections.

However it is also reported that the constituent parties of the UNF which contested as a single opposition Front at the Presidential elections might contest independently at the forthcoming General elections .

The main reason for this is the failure of the parties to agree among them to select a common symbol. The UNP insists that at the General elections the symbol shall be the elephant. But the JVP prefers to use the symbol ‘Swan’ of Gen. Fonseka instead of the bell which was JVP’s symbol. Mangala Samaraweera’s Mahajana Wing of the SLFP too had agreed for the swan symbol while Mano Ganeshan has not expressed displeasure over the use of the swan symbol . The SLMC too has still not decided on the symbol.

Lately Gen. Fonseka stressed that he feels comfortable to running for elections with the Swan. Ravi Karunanayake owns the Swan symbol. Ravi and Shamala Perera,(the former secretary of late Lalith Athulathmudali) played a key role behind the scene getting the Swan as the symbol of Gen. Fonseka during the presidential election. It is reported that Fonseka has requested Ravi K to have the rights of the swan and Ravi K seems to be in an uneasy position because now he is a strong support for the UNP leader’s proposal for the use of the elephant symbol at the General elections.

It is been reported although the constituent parties are in support of swan as the common symbol, the UNP is determined that they contest under elephant as the common symbol. The Deputy leader of the UNP Karu Jayasuriya has stated to one of his German NGO allies that, UNP lost at the last election because the elephant symbol was not there and therefore a many UNP ers have not voted.

However, few UNP leaders including Karu Jayasuriya is to meet Gen. Fonseka to discuss about the Symbol and the UNP Working Committee is to meet on February 11 regarding the common symbol.