



With President Mahinda Rajapaksa at the oaths taking ceremony



The late minister with his family



With President Mahinda Rajapaksa at the opening of the Peliyagoda flyover last month



Taking oaths before Prime Minister Sirimavo Bandaranaike



At Dambana

With SLMC Leader Rauff Hakeem

## Long, arduous journey to top-level politics

The little boy was tough for his age. And also being 'brave', the five-year-old lower kindergarten kid walked eight kilometres alone from the Ave Maria Convent, Negombo to his house, the day he was punished for wasting water filled in a bucket at the school premises. "When I recall that incident which happened in 1958, I feel, a bit scared as it is dangerous to walk eight kilometres alone at that age".

That was the feeling of a Minister about his own mischievous past when he was the naughtiest of his family.

Having no more hopes, he is happy that he could fulfil his life long desire to become a Cabinet Minister.

"I have no other hopes. But I would like to see my son, who wants to study law, enter politics one day".

That was the wish of the Chief Government Whip and Highways and Road Development Minister Jeyaraj Fernando-Pulle, a wish he could not unfortunately live to see.

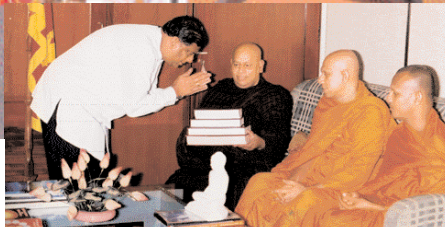
Unable to bear the injustices, the young Jeyaraj, who was the Head Prefect of the school, protested against a certain decision of the Chemistry teacher of Maristella College when he was doing his A levels. He led a group of 37 students to boycott the exam and refused to 'say sorry' as he believed he did not do anything wrong. But he was suspended from sitting for the exam.

This incident spurred his longing to become a politician and the determined youth decided to become a lawyer before entering politics. This experienced politician who faced many ups and downs in his political life believed that the younger generation needed tough skins to survive in politics. "I do not think that they will be able to face the agony we faced in politics", he said.

This Government Whip was not afraid to say anything against those who harm the image of the country.



Casting his vote at an election



Presenting books to the Maha Sangha



With Catholic priests



At a Hindu Kovil

With Opposition Leader Ranil Wickremesinghe



At a public function



At last Sunday's SLFP Convention at Temple Trees