

May 19th, 2023

The General Secretary of the People's Progressive Party (PPP) Mr. Bharrat Jagdeo during his recent press conferences has been using these opportunities to forge ahead with his government's campaign to discredit the Guyana Press Association (GPA). Jagdeo is at the helm of a band of paid tools, who have re-emerged from taxpayers' cushioned jobs over the last few weeks and have ventured their self-absorbed opinions about the press association, its members, its elections and its registration.

Prior to the May 14th, 2023 elections which were delayed mainly due to the COVID-19 pandemic and the protracted general elections process that affected many facets of national life, the GPA last held its election for office bearers on January 7, 2018.

The executive takes full responsibility for this public omission. The GPA held its free, fair, and transparent elections on May 14th, 2023, despite efforts by Mr. Jagdeo directly and through his handled agents to influence or derail the process and to seek to justify support for a splinter faction. So much for making a mockery of President Irfaan Ali's 'One Guyana' mission in this land whose motto is 'One People, One Nation, One Destiny'.

Mr. Jagdeo's PPP last held its Triennial Congress in December 2016 and should have held another in 2019. None has been held to date. That means that the PPP's Biennial Congress is six years overdue and may likely be seven years if not held in 2023, as he suggested. He put an outside time-frame of 2024, which means that the PPP's Congress will possibly be held for the first time in almost eight years.

Mr. Jagdeo pinned the delay of the PPP's Congress on the COVID pandemic. Does that delay convert the PPP into an undemocratic party?

While Mr. Jagdeo said the decision to postpone the PPP's Congress had been taken by its Executive Committee, the fact of the matter is that that is a decision for the Central Committee. When last has the PPP's Central Committee met?

Can a member of either of Guyana's two mass-based parties be provided with a list of all members at his or her request?

It is typical for Mr. Jagdeo to side-step all information available to him and to use selectively information he feels will discredit an individual and/or organisation. Mr. Jagdeo's disinformation campaign conveniently failed to acknowledge that GPA's Business Registration was first done in the name of Neil Marks since 2015 following an executive decision.

Is there a reason Mr. Jagdeo is omitting that publicly stated fact in his unvarnished preferential attack?

In fact, the GPA's records show that significant progress had been made prior to the GPA's elections this month to regularise our systems.

The government, through Mr. Jagdeo, has signaled its intention to continue its attack on the GPA and the free press. The GPA will continue to engage all, including the government in the interest of our members and freedom of the press.

Coming from Mr. Jagdeo who banned a journalist from covering his assignments at State House and Office of the President, withholding government advertisements from Stabroek News and suspending CNS TV 'Sharma' television station, Guyanese generally and the media in particular, including those aligned to his party and government, know when not to believe his disgusting and fallacious assurances of press freedom.

By Mr. Jagdeo's attack of real and perceived critics, he unashamedly exhibits his intolerance for other views no matter how well-intentioned.

Today, the GPA calls out Mr. Jagdeo for his brazen attack and intolerance for anyone or any organisation that criticises him, his party, and government.

The success of numerical democracy is augmented by tolerance and good governance. That's what the GPA is doing, hence its broad-based representation.

The GPA denounces all forms of intimidation and attacks on and calls on President Mohamed Irfaan Ali to stay true to his government's commitment to the Media Freedom Coalition.