

JANASAVIYA – A NEW ROAD
TO DEVELOPMENT



RESIDENTIAL SECRETARIAT
LIBRARY

**ADDRESS BY
HIS EXCELLENCY R. PREMADASA
PRESIDENT ON JANASAVIYA
OVER SRI LANKA RUPAVAHINI,
4TH SEPTEMBER 1989**

All arrangements have now been made to commence the Janasaviya Programme. You will remember that Janasaviya is a very important priority programme that the UNP put before the people both at the Presidential Election and the Parliamentary Election. Janasaviya is essentially a programme formulated to strengthen the people. It is not a system of handing out doles. Janasaviya means a programme aimed at directing and assisting people to get down to production and self sustenance. It is a laudable and a meritorious programme aimed at transforming the weak and the poor into those with strength and means.

I have with me right now the Election Manifesto of our Party. I would like to draw your attention to paragraph 44 on page 17 of the Manifesto, which reads ; "This historic programme which will address the poverty issue in Sri Lanka head on, will begin country-wide implementation within one year of our Government being elected in December 1988". This is the promise we gave the people. This is a struggle against poverty in this country. It is intended to address the poverty issue head on. You know that one half of our population is made up of very poor people. Now they subsist on food stamps. Under the food stamps system, how much does a family – a family consisting of five

members – get for a whole month ? The maximum that they will get is Rs. 300 or Rs. 350. Everybody knows that this type of assistance is not capable of extricating the poor and the deprived from the grip of poverty. If the food stamps system continues, the poor will also continue to remain in the depths of poverty. That is why, we thought of implementing this programme to alleviate poverty.

Poverty alleviation means making the weak and the poor strong and capable. Even though poor, our people have many talents and capabilities. But they do not have the basic facilities necessary to fully exploit these talents and capabilities. It is to fulfil that need that we are implementing the Janasaviya Programme.

Our poor people are today under-nourished and physically weak. When people become physically weak they become enfeebled mentally also. They will then become incapable of standing on their own feet economically or socially. We launched the Janasaviya Programme in order to provide for them the necessary level of nutrition and make them physically strong and mentally energetic so that they could be made active participants in the process of development and production. This will not only help their personal advancement, but also make them useful contributors to national prosperity.

A country can sustain its population only if production is pushed up. There are two ways to do this. One method is to have recourse to the use of machinery. The other method is to secure the wide participation of the people in economic activity. We have any amount of man-power. We must therefore launch a system to get people's participation, make intensive use of human labour to increase production. Then, on the one hand people will find nourishment and, on

the other, the nourished and strengthened people can contribute to increase production: What we really need is not mass-production, but production by the masses. This noble principle was introduced to us by Mahatma Gandhi. We expected to start implementing this programme within one year from the establishment of our Government. But we will not wait till we complete one year to do this. We have made arrangements to start giving Janasaviya assistance from the end of this September.

We have already distributed the Janasaviya Entitlement Certificates. That is, we have given the certificates to all Food Stamp-holder families. But there are other families who are eligible to receive Food Stamps but have not got them. The Programme covering such families will be implemented after all existing food stamp holders have been granted Janasaviya assistance. When the Janasaviya Cards were being distributed nearly 10% of those who held food-stamps did not turn up. On this basis we can look into the question of others who genuinely deserve Janasaviya assistance. The seven million people who now live on Food Stamps consist of about 1.4 million family units. We expect in the first instance to make Janasaviya assistance available to the present seven million people or the 1.4 million families who presently hold Food Stamps. Now the immediate task is to make Janasaviya benefits available to the families who have already received the Janasaviya Entitlement Certificates.

We expect to implement the Janasaviya Programme in all the Districts in the country in eleven rounds. For the first round we have selected one AGA Division from each of the 25 Districts. That means from every District one AGA area will be included in each of the rounds of implementation. In this manner the whole programme will be completed in eleven rounds. For the first round of implementation we

select from each District the AGA area with the highest number of holders of Food Stamps on the basis of population ratio. That means, we select the AGA area with the highest number of poor people. For the second round, the next AGA area with the second highest number of poor families will be selected. Already AGA areas from all the 25 Districts have been selected for inclusion in the first round. But from certain Districts where poverty is very widespread two AGA areas have been selected for the first round. Accordingly, the first round of implementation embraces 28 AGA areas. This same process of selection will be repeated for the second round of implementation too. When all the 11 rounds are completed in this manner the Janasaviya Programme would have been implemented in all the AGA areas of the island. By the time the 11 rounds of implementation are completed all the present seven million people holding Food Stamps will be receiving Janasaviya assistance.

Why did we divide the implementation of the programme into 11 rounds? We did so because we want to implement the programme systematically and on a sound footing. When people begin to receive Janasaviya assistance, they will have to go to the village Co-operative Stores in their area to obtain the food items necessary for their nutrition. The Co-operative Stores must be prepared to sell these food items to the people. If the Co-operative Store is to have the food items in sufficient quantity, their production will have to be increased. For the regular provision of food stuffs, textiles and other consumer goods to seven million people it will be necessary to effect a marked increase in their production. This process will necessarily take some time. Families of food stamp holders in each of the AGA Divisions will receive Janasaviya in turns. Food Stamps will be continued to be made available to

every one of the present Food Stamp holder families until each such family gets its turn for Janasaviya assistance. From the date the family gets Janasaviya assistance, it will be continued for 24 months.

Each family will be given a Janasaviya card for the purchase of food items and other consumer goods to the value of Rs. 1,458 for a month. They have to buy these items from the Co-operative Store. The families buying their necessities will find that all these items are produced in our country. Thus, production of local foodstuffs, goods and articles will increase because of Janasaviya. Seven million people will begin to consume more nutritious food in greater quantities. They also will buy other necessities more than ever before. This is why Janasaviya has become a programme which strengthens the people and the country in every respect.

What are the items that a family can buy with the sum of Rs. 1,458 given for consumption? I have a list of them with me. These are the items – rice, sugar, cowpea, greengram, red onions, big onions, potatoes, vegetables, fruits, coconut, dried fish, Vitamilk, eggs, fish, textiles, exercise books, pencils, agricultural implements, umbrellas, instruments and implements necessary for various crafts, fertilizer, kerosene, pots and pans, chinaware, aluminiumware, mosquito nets, coir and ekel brooms, coir yarn etc. With the Janasaviya Entitlement a family can buy many essential needs like these. All these are products of this country. There will be a great revolution in the field of production due to Janasaviya.

Under the first round of implementation the consumer needs of 192,000 families have already been estimated.

According to this estimate how much will the monthly requirements of various items be ?

<i>Consumer items</i>	<i>Total Quantity</i>	
Rice	Metric Tons	8,832
Sugar	Metric Tons	480
Cowpea	Metric Tons	384
Greengram	Metric Tons	576
Red onions	Metric Tons	192
Bombay onions	Metric Tons	192
Potatoes	Metric Tons	288
Vegetables	Metric Tons	960
Fruits	Metric Tons	96
Coconuts	nuts-million	1.92
Dried fish	Metric Tons	192
Vitamilk	packets	96,000
Eggs	million	0.96
Fish	Metric Tons	384
Textiles	meters-million	0.576
Exercise books and pencils	units-million	0.432
Agricultural implements	units	30,720
Umbrellas	units	11,520
Instruments and implements required for crafts	units	960
Fertilizer	Metric Tons	2,112
Kerosene	litres-million	0.576
Pots and pans, chinaware, aluminiumware	units	268,800
Mosquito nets	units	1,920
Coir brooms and ekel brooms	units	9,600
Coir yarn	Metric Tons	7.68

This is the requirement for one round. For eleven rounds, eleven times this will be necessary.

To meet this demand an unprecedented increase in production in these items will have to be effected. This production effort will open up employment opportunities for a large number. The Janasaviya assistance recipients

themselves would be able to produce food and other consumer items and earn an additional income themselves. This will be possible because of the new expansion of the market.

A Janasaviya assisted family will receive another sum of Rs. 1,042 as the second component of the assistance. This amount is given for investment through savings. It is only when this savings component is also added that the total Janasaviya monthly assistance will add up to Rs. 2,500. Thus, at the end of the 24 month period of assistance, the total saving with the family will be Rs. 25,000. Now you will see that a family which formerly eked out a miserable existence and did not have any saving whatsoever, will in addition to getting a satisfactory level of nutrition also be the proud owner of an investment capital of Rs. 25,000. The family will be able to make use of this asset in many ways for its advancement. Banking facilities too will be made available for the family to obtain a loan offering this financial asset as security. Under the Agency Banks System, credit facilities will be made available to the Janasaviya families at the village level itself. When the implementation of this programme gets underway the Co-operative Societies movement will also get revitalised. The reason is that in the process of providing the Janasaviya assisted families with their needs, these societies will become commercially more viable. Janasaviya assistance recipients can also become shareholders of the Village Co-operatives.

In Sri Lanka we have 25 Districts. We also have over 273 AGA areas. Within these AGA areas we expect to establish about 30,000 hamlets. It is in order to obtain best results that we have spread out the implementation of this programme to 30,000 hamlets. Each of the hamlets may consist of 100 to 110 families. But all these 100 families may not be Janasaviya

receptients. There may be among them people of some means. In each of these villages there may be fifty to sixty per cent food stamp holders. In some villages there could be seventy per cent food stamp holders.

Let us take a case where 60 per cent of the people in a village on an average are food stamp holders. The other 40 per cent are non-food stamp holders who have some means of income. But we will not ignore that forty per cent. We will find out in what way these families too could be helped for their well-being through various programmes of the Government. We are setting up support groups to meet and help not only food stamp holder families but also non-food stamp holder families. Government officials will help and encourage these support groups, who will find out what form of assistance each family needs to live with self-reliance. They will specially look into the needs of Janasaviya families. This is imperative because during the 24 month period the poor families receive Janasaviya assistance, we must give them the know-how as well as prepare programmes for them to lead a life of self-reliance. How should this be done ?

Let us take the case of a Janasaviya recipient family. Such a family may consist of five or six members. In what direction and aim should we guide these families for them to rise up to the levels of leading a self-reliant life ? We will look into that aspect. We will ask the families what mode of life they like to lead. Some families will say that they would like to do farming. We should then prepare a programme to accommodate them. There may be a member of this family who would like to do hired labour. We will provide that opportunity to him. There may be youths in the family who are good at studies and would like to pursue their studies. Janasaviya assistance will help them to pursue their

education. Some children would like to obtain some technical knowledge or training in some vocation or technology. We will provide for all these. We will draw up programmes to provide for the development of talents and capabilities of members of each family so as to direct them towards a particular vocation and mode of life for them to live with self-reliance.

Every Ministry of the Government has a role to play under this programme. Arrangements have been made to provide members of each family the knowledge, help and guidance be it in the field of agriculture, small industries, vocational training or on health matters. There may be in a family a child showing promise and talents in artistic fields, like song, dance or drama. There may be others who are good in sports. We will help to sharpen those talents. We will find out their talents. Under this programme we will find out the capabilities of not only the families receiving Janasaviya assistance in a village, but also those who do not receive such assistance. There are many programmes and schemes launched by the State Sector through which such assistance and encouragement could be given. Many poor people living in our towns and villages are unaware of these benefits. They do not know how to set about to get these benefits. No one has told them nor looked into their problems.

Human resources are our biggest asset. This is a time, an era when even the physically disabled are doing great deeds despite their disability. One could visualise what a big change we could bring about in our society, if we guide and give encouragement to able bodied persons with intelligence and sound physique. We should think what benefits would accrue if we adopt such an attitude towards our people.

Let us take the instance of various plantations in our country like tea, rubber and coconut. If we detect some kind of disease on a tea leaf, in a tea bush we do research to find out why the leaves are dying. We get advice from the Tea Research Institute and provide the necessary treatment and nourishment to the tea bush. Similarly, there is the Rubber Research Institute to look into the weakness of a rubber tree and the Coconut Research Institute to look after the coconut tree. Not only nationally, we would do research internationally to find a remedy to the defects. Consider for a moment whether we do such research and care for our biggest asset – human resources. Whether we give the same care and attention to the human being as we give the tender tea leaves, rubber tree, the coconut tree, or ears of paddy – though it is a human being who produces all these plantation crops? No. We have not treated the human being even as an object – not even to the extent we treat an agricultural product. We have got used to treating the poor as a set of worthless beings.

Through this Janasaviya programme what we attempt to achieve is to bring out the latent strength of our people. However poor they are, however desperate they are, every family would inherit some skills by birth. We should bring them out and we must discover them. There is no doubt that according to their intentions, objectives and skills, if we direct them on the correct path they will rise through self-reliance.

Janasaviya does not mean giving out a dole. It involves the identification of the strength of our people and giving strength to those who don't have. It signifies a programme to increase production of the country utilising all these capabilities.

Today, see the burden of the cost of living on wage earners. When there is a shortage of foodstuffs, clothes and other commodities, the prices of these items increase. Now, because of this Janasaviya programme, a great benefit will accrue to those who have an income as well as to wage earners. What is that benefit? When the recipients of Janasaviya engage in agricultural and industrial production, the cost of living will come down. When there are ample local foodstuffs, clothes, as well as other goods, the prices of these goods will even out to a level which could be afforded by everyone. When viewed in this light, you will realise that Janasaviya is a programme meant both for the poor who live on food stamps and also for those who are employed and who receive an income as wage earners.

Because of Janasaviya a large number of people could get interested in development work. We can involve the people in various rural development programmes at village level. Today, the poor have no strength to get involved in them. They are very weak. We have our Housing Programme. We can easily bring in the Janasaviya recipients into that programme. Today there is a programme to alienate land to those who do not have land. These people too could be brought into that programme.

However much we launch programmes of health and education, however much roads, bridges, culverts, schools and hospitals are constructed, however much programmes are formulated for housing development, if the under privileged cannot rise on their own strength, they will not benefit from these programmes. Even if they are involved they will not be able to achieve any self advancement. This is why we thought of this programme. We thought of this before the Presidential Election and the General Election. We thought of this having studied all the programmes the

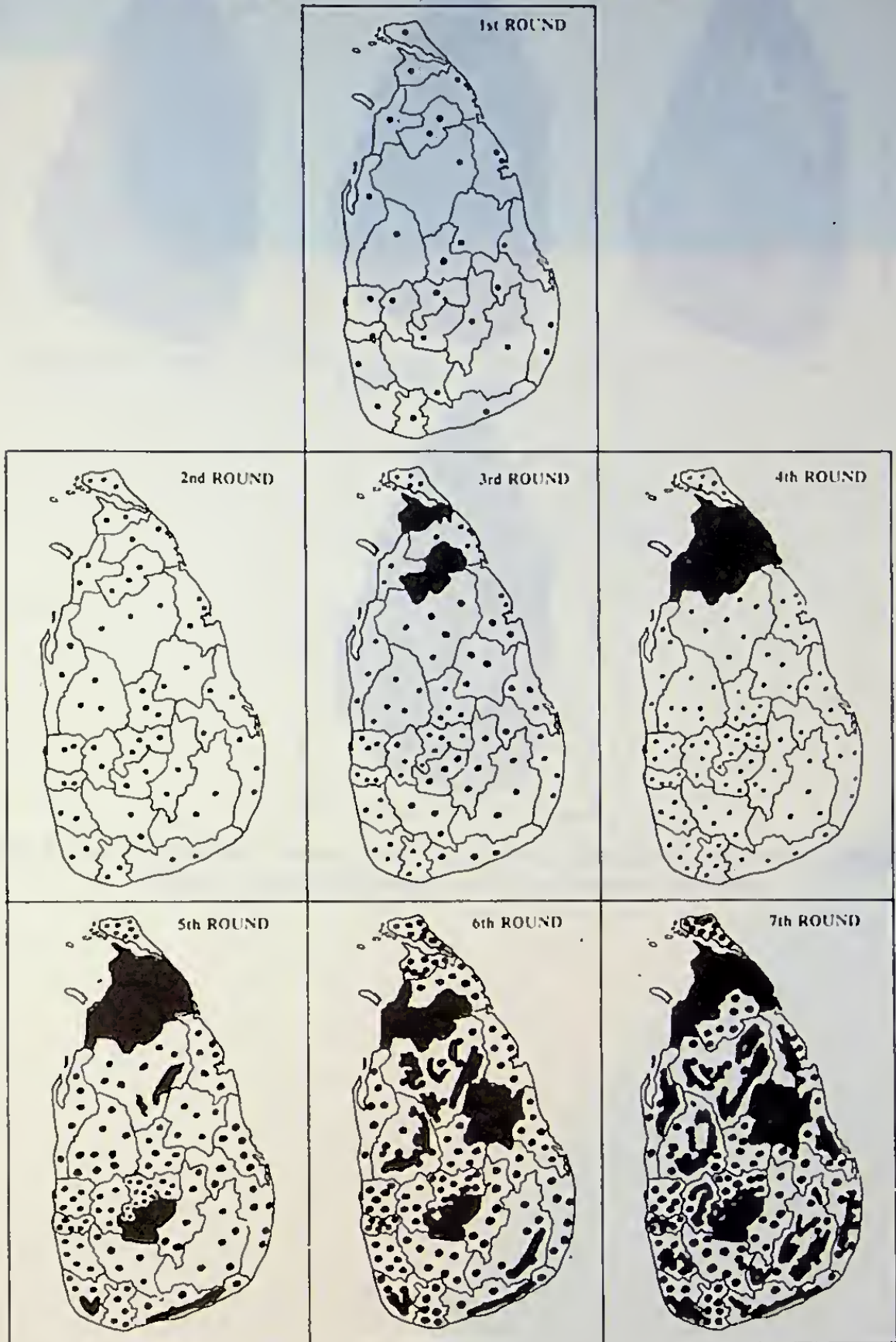
former Governments implemented for the alleviation of poverty. We were wondering whether we should keep the under privileged in the same state for ever. Or else, do we give some basic assistance and bring them to a position where they could stand on their own feet ? It is in pursuance of these thoughts, that we decided to implement the Janasaviya programme this way.

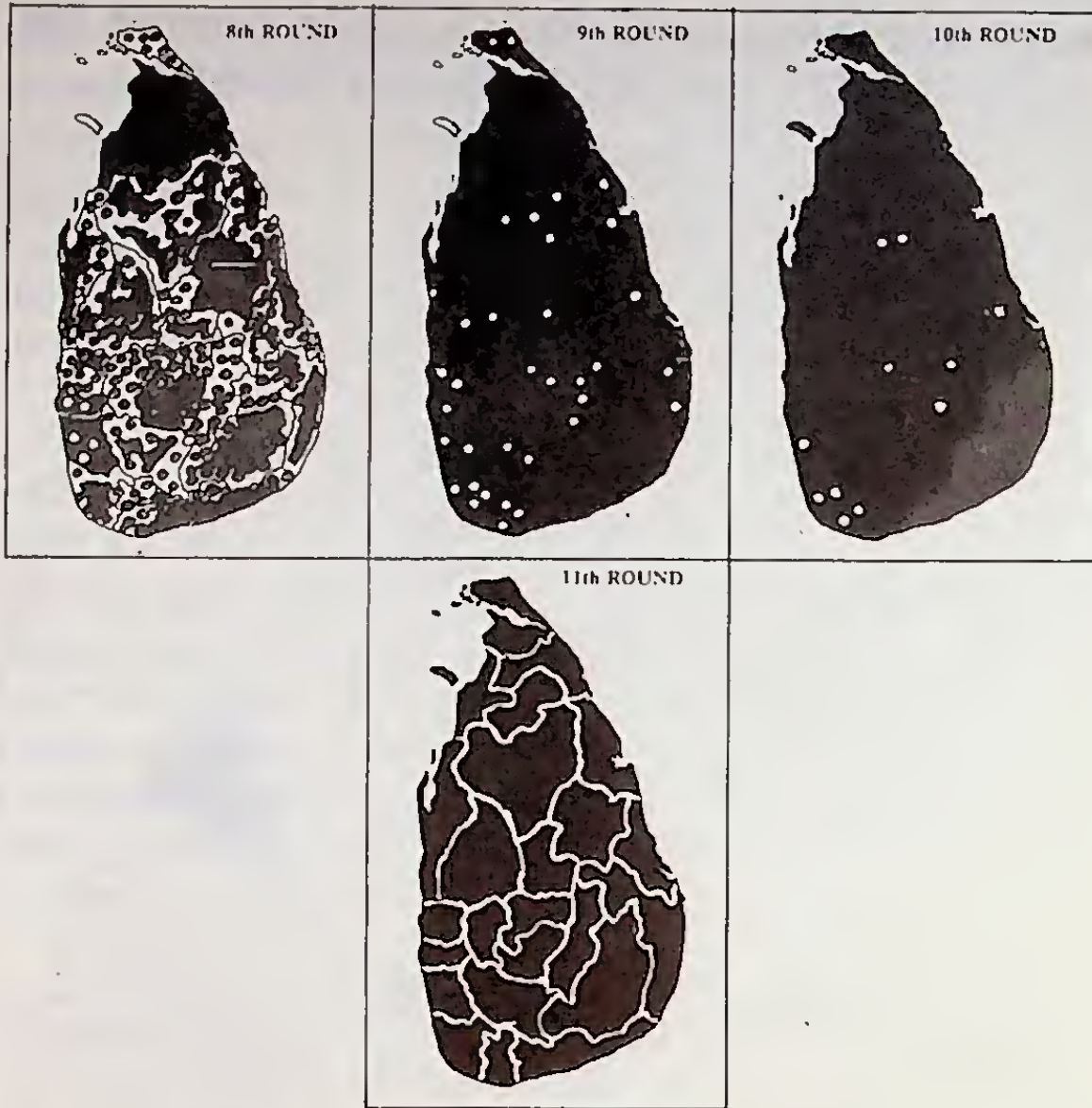
The distribution of the Janasaviya entitlement certificates will be completed by the end of September. September 30th is a Saturday. October 1st is a Sunday. It is possible to get the goods from the Co-operative Society on Monday the 2nd October. October 2nd will be a historic day. It is not only because it is the day on which the Janasaviya programme was launched for the nourishment of the people : but because it is the birthday of Mahatma Gandhi who rendered noble service for the upliftment of the poorest of the poor.

The Ministers of the Cabinet, Ministers of State as well as Heads of Departments will speak to you from time to time on various aspects of the Janasaviya programme.

May the Blessings of the 'Triple Gem' be on you.

HOW THE JANASAVIYA PROGRAMME COVERS THE ENTIRE COUNTRY IN ELEVEN ROUNDS





Indicated in dots are the AGA's divisions in each District. In each round the number of AGA's divisions increases and covers the entire island in 11 rounds.

PUBLISHED BY THE
PRESIDENTIAL PRESS SECRETARIAT

Printed By The Government Press