

The Animal and Insect Act

By Cecil Rajendra

Finally, in order to ensure absolute national security they passed the Animal and Insect Emergency Control and Discipline Act.

Under this new Act, buffaloes, cows and goats were prohibited from grazing in herds of more than three. Neither could birds flock, nor bees swarm... This constituted unlawful assembly.

As they had not obtained prior planning permission, mud-wasps and swallows were issued with summary Notices to Quit. Their homes were declared subversive extensions to private property.

Monkeys and mynahs were warned to stop relaying their noisy morning orisons until an official Broadcasting Licence was issued by the appropriate Ministry. Unmonitored publications and broad-casts posed the gravest threats in times of a National Emergency.

Similarly, woodpeckers had to stop tapping their morse code messages from coconut tree-top to chempaka tree. all messages were subject to a thorough pre-scrutiny by the relevant authorities.

Java sparrows were arrested in droves for rumour-mongering. Cats (suspected of conspiracy) had to be indoors by 9 o'clock. Cicadas and crickets received Notification to turn their amplifiers down. Ducks could not quack nor turkeys gobble during restricted hours. Need I say, all dogs – alsatians, dachshunds, terriers, pointers and even little Chihuahuas – were muzzled.

In the interests of security penguins and zebras were ordered to discard their non-regulation uniforms. The deer had to surrender their dangerous antlers. Tigers and all carnivores with retracted claws were sent directly to prison for concealing lethal weapons.

And by virtue of Article Four, paragraph 2(b) sub-section sixteen under no circumstances were elephants allowed to break wind between the hours of six and six. Their farts could easily be interpreted as gunshots. Might spark off a riot...

A month after the Act was properly gazetted the birds and insects started migrating south the animals went north and an eerie silence handcuffed our forests.

There was now Total Security.

