

# Enthusiasm of voters and candidates at low ebb: Polls monitors

BY RATHINDRA KURUWITA

**M**ore than 8,800 candidates were contesting this year's general election, but fewer than 1,000 of them were actively campaigning, Rohana Hettiarachchi, Executive Director of the People's Action for Free and Fair Elections (PAFFREL), said yesterday.

"This low level of enthusiasm reflects the strain on political parties which have had to contest elections one after the other," Hettiarachchi said, noting that voters themselves seemed less enthusi-



Rohana

astic about the election. "There is significant disillusionment with traditional parties.

Additionally, with campaign finance laws now in place, questionable individuals and entities are restricted from injecting money, leading many big spenders from previous elections to withdraw," he said.

Although hundreds of political parties and independent groups were contesting and are allowed to establish around 600,000 campaign offices, only about 9,200 offices have been set up, Hettiarachchi added.