

GOVT. ALTERED ECONOMIC DATA TO OBTAIN LOANS-JVP ALLEGES

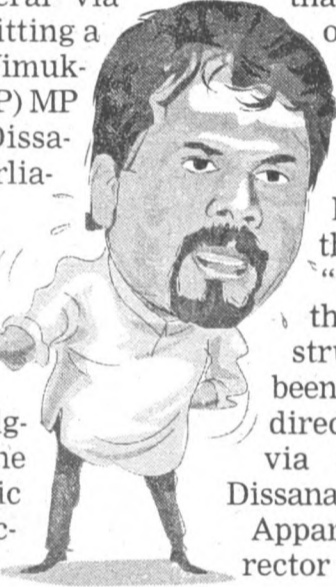
By YOHAN PERERA

FALSIFY

Important statistics prepared by the Department of Census and Statistics pertaining to the country's economy had been altered before its publication following a request made by its director general via email thus committing a fraud, Janatha Vimukthi Peramuna (JVP) MP Anura Kumara Dissanayake told Parliament yesterday.

Mr. Dissanayake, who was speaking during the committee stage debate on the budget, said that the country's economic growth in the second quarter this

year had been altered from 5.5 percent to 6.6 percent following the instructions sent by the Director General Department of Census and Statistics to one of his junior officers. He said that the source



of this disclosure was the junior officer in question, who had revealed this to him. "He told me that these instructions had been issued by the director general via email," Mr. Dissanayake said.

Apparently the Director General of

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the Department of Census and Statistics had wanted its officers to increase the economic growth figure by one percent. The original economic growth according to the statistics computed by the department had been 5.5 per cent. This, he said, was the real economic growth of the country at that time. The MP charged that the employment rate and the inflation rate had also been changed in this way

He alleged that the statistics pertaining to the economic performance of the country had been manipulated in order to show healthy figures to the international community with the objective of obtaining foreign loans. "We never expected that the government would engage in such a despicable act though we knew that it often tries to deceive the people," Mr. Dissanayake added.

The JVP MP therefore called for the setting up of an independent commission to prepare economic statistics in the future. He said that Sri Lanka should use India as a role model in this instance as such an independent commission was set up in that country some time back.

