

Fortnightly
FOR PRIVATE CIRCULATION ONLY

**SRI
LANKA**

**SITUATION
REPORT**

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SITUATION REPORT

Note to Readers :

This issue of Situation Report was printed late. Although it is dated February 1st, we have availed of the delay by incorporating more recent news reports.

Train blast Lankan Tamils ruled out

A hitherto unknown leftist radical group, fighting for secession of the Southern state of Tamil Nadu from India, was behind the blast of a railway bridge, killing 25 train passengers earlier this week, police said today.

Tamil Nadu Police Inspector-General Rajasekharan said a 28-year-old activist belonging to the Tamil Nadu Liberation Army had been arrested and gelignite sticks of the kind used in the blast had been seized.

The group also favours, among other things, formation of a separate Sikh state of Khalistan. It has no links with the Tamil separatists of Sri Lanka Rajasekharan said, adding earlier suspicions about the involvement of Sri Lankan Tamils on the blast had turned out to be unfounded.

..(Weekend - 22nd March, 1987)

Lanka's U.N. Envoy in Geneva Resigns

Sri Lanka's Ambassador to the United Nations in Geneva, Jayantha Dhanapala, has resigned.

Mr. Dhanapala, who recently spearheaded Sri Lanka's defence against an Indian-Argentine resolution condemning Human Rights violations in Sri Lanka is learnt to have joined The Institute of Disarmament.

No official reasons for Ambassador Dhanapala's resignation are known.

Ambassador Dhanapala's post is likely to be filled by Sri Lanka's Deputy Permanent Representative to the UN in New York, Nihal Rodrigo, but official confirmation of this is being awaited.

Ambassador Dhanapala served as Deputy High Commissioner to New Delhi. A fluent speaker of Chinese, he played a prominent role during the Non-Aligned Summit held in Colombo in 1976.

(Sun - 23rd March, 1987)

Air Cover for Soldiers

Security forces has to be provided air cover on Saturday as the regular troop change over took place amidst fighting with terrorists. First Ceylon Light Infantry Battalion moved into Jaffna to relieve 4th Sinha Regiment.

Six soldiers were seriously injured and were airlifted to Sri Jayawardene-pura hospital as separatist terrorists continued to shells three army camps in the Peninsula while the troop change over was taking place, reports from Jaffna said.

Heavy firing with mortars, Rocket Propelled Grenades had continued when over 500 soldiers were proceeding in Armoured Personnel Carriers (APC) towards the island of Mandathivu. The troops were travelling to Kankesanthurai to board Navy vessels to proceed to Puttalam, military sources said.

One soldier was injured when he got down from APC after a bullet hit the tyre. Air cover was called as the Tigers continued to fire mortars, the reports said.

Later in the afternoon Tiger terrorists launched mortar attacks at the Navatkuli, Point Pedro and the Jaffna Fort security camps. Five soldiers were injured at the security force camp at Point Pedro, reports said.

In the cross fire eight civilians were also killed at Mavattapuram, two miles away from Kankesanthurai.

Terrorists have also fired mortars at the Pannai army detachment, military sources said.

On Saturday evening the Tiger television net work had telecast for an hour a programme on the eight security force personnel who are now in their captivity.

(Sun - 30th March, 1987)

Daily Diary of Events

Commencing from Situation Report No. 1 dated December 15, 1985, we had been recording the Daily Diary of Events on Sri Lanka, pertaining both to Human Rights violations as well as acts of violence going back to October 15, 1985, along with other relevant data that have a bearing on the ethnic issue. We have managed to make the record as comprehensive as possible, and the following sources are consulted in the preparation of the Diary of Events:-

1. Information given by Citizens' Committees
2. Daily News ... English language daily (Colombo)
3. The Island ... English language daily (Colombo)
4. The Sun ... English language daily (Colombo)
5. Virakesari ... Tamil language daily (Colombo)
6. Eelanadu ... Tamil language daily (Jaffna)
7. Eelamurasu ... Tamil language daily (Jaffna)
8. Uthayan ... Tamil language daily (Jaffna)
9. Murasoli ... Tamil language daily (Jaffna)
10. Saturday Review ... English Weekly (Jaffna)
11. Seithi Kathir ... Tamil Fortnightly (Jaffna)
12. Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam Press releases (These include Sunday issues of daily newspapers)

Wherever corroboration on a given incident is not available we identify the source of information by name

DIARY OF EVENTS

and

Human Rights Violations & Ceasefire Violations

Events from January 7 - January 24 were carried in Issue No. 27 of the Situation Report

JANUARY 25

In Velankulam, Vavuniya, soldiers in ambush open fire at tractor carrying LTTE militants and second Lt. Nesan is killed. Militants retaliate. Details not known.

Last night, shells are fired from Killinochchi army camp towards Paranthan. 5 shells alight on Paranthan vegetable market and the junction and explode. Of those sleeping in the market one is killed with his chest split open, 2 are injured and admitted to Jaffna hospital. Wife of deceased also injured and admitted to Killinochchi hospital.

In Manthoddam, Mannar, security forces travelling in a train shoot and kill 2 civilian pedestrians.

Armed forces stationed in Harbour View Hotel, Kankasanturai shell civilian areas. One of the shells lands within cement factory. Soldiers in the "Quarry" camp also attack civilian areas with shells. One alights at Kollankaladdi, opposite a cycle repair shop, and explodes. Two civilians are injured and admitted to Tellippalai hospital.

Security forces set ablaze number of houses in Pannai close to the Fort army camp.

JANUARY 26

Last Friday morning, (according to a delayed report) over 300 armed forces in black uniform, cordon the village of Tambalakamam and whilst conducting search operations shoot and kill K. Akilanayagi (37) an expectant mother, S. Kathirgamanathan her husband, K. Suriyakumaran (7) their son, Ambikai Rasa Sellathamby (81) and S. Thanalechumy (59). More than 40 Tamil civilians also arrested and taken to camp.

Navaratnam Balasingam who disembarked from a flight from Paris and allegedly found wandering around a restricted area, some distance from the radar tower, arrested by security marshals at the airport and handed over

to police. He tells police that he is returning from France after 2 years and is from Temple Road Jaffna.

Shelling and firing from inside Valvettiturai army camp has become a daily routine. In today's shelling, a fairly large bungalow, whose occupants had already evacuated, is hit and damaged. Bullets cover a range of 1500 to 1800 yards and civilians move about in fear. Invariably militant sentry post is the target.

In a landmine blast laid by LTTE guerrillas in Palaly, Airman Ranatunga is killed and 4 others are injured. Injured flown to Colombo for treatment.

Fifty soldiers called "Sniper Airmen" specially trained in sniping at Diyatalawa by Mossad arrive at Jaffna Fort, Palaly, Thondamanaru and Pt. Pedro camps.

JANUARY 27

Two soldiers who sneaked out from Police Married Quarters attempt to attack militant sentry post at Koddady end. Shot at and injured by militant sentry. Sentry also injured.

Civilian areas in Keerimalai shelled from inside "Quarry" camp in the cement factory. No casualties, but tension prevails.

Security forces in ambush shoot and kill 28 Tamil civilians at Valayankattu. These people are farmers from Mallavi Pandiankulam, Vavunikulam who were returning from Vavuniya in their tractors and push bicycles with diesel and other commodities purchased there.

Two LTTE fighters Lt. Pandi (C. Thar makulasingham, Thiriyai) and Osless (M. Sivarasa, Trincomalee) are killed in a boat mishap in the Mullaitivu seas.

Ban on fuel supply to the peninsula seriously affects all essential hospital work. Emergency operations and other surgical treatment are also affected because of non-availability of oxygen cylinders.

Stanley Road is crowded with vans, mini buses, pavement hawkers and other petty traders who have moved in, following intensified shelling from inside Fort aimed at Jaffna bazaar and hospital road.

JANUARY 28

Twelve police commandos are killed in Batticaloa in a landmine attack by LTTE guerrillas on armoured personnel carrier on its way to Kokkaddicholai. Four more commandos and 27 civilians are also killed in shoot out that followed. A helicopter damaged.

LTTE guerrillas force back an army unit that come out of Palaly. Army camp with armoured cars and helicopter providing air cover. Helicopter flies into Air base when attacked with rocket launchers. Vasavilan, Kurumbacitty, Kadduwan areas strafed right through the night and residents move out interior for safety.

Again more than 325 lorries are detained at both ends of Elephant Pass barrier for army check.

An Indian fishing vallam collides with a navy boat in the Palk Straits. The five occupants of the vallam rescued and taken to Colombo.

JANUARY 29

Over 2000 troops rampage Kokkaddicholai for the second day. Air cover is provided to the ground forces. Several houses, shops and buildings set ablaze and destroyed. Number of civilian corpses on roads and in fields. Relatives fear to move in to fetch corpses for funeral rites. Over 20,000 people dislodged from 15 village flee into jungles. No transport. Food is scarce.

Co-ordinating Committee of Citizens' Committees releases statement that 2805 Tamils had been killed in Tamil areas, during the year 1986 on account of army excesses.

It is understood that Minister for National Security Athulathmudali visited

Diary of Events

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the Elephant Pass army camp by special helicopter. Whilst he was inside the camp a helicopter was continuously in flight circling over camp. Traffic at both ends of barrier held up for over an hour. Co-ordinating bus services for Yal Devi also delayed.

Armed forces out on search operations shoot and kill S. Balaganesh (15) student at Wesley College, Kalmunai, S. Thangavel (35) father of 3 children and K.Vellayan (16) at Senaikudi, a village west of Kalmunai.

Vehicles arriving at Elephant Pass barrier after 5 p.m. are refused permission to enter peninsula. Passengers are much inconvenienced.

JANUARY 30

STF commandos camping in Kokkadichcholai conduct search operations in Paduwankarai for the third day. More than 150 Tamil civilians killed during the three days of army operations. 23 youthful workers of Serendib Prawn Farm dragged out and shot dead. Marimunai, Ampalanthurai, Muthalikuda, Kokkadichcholai, Vavuniya, Arayampathi villages are the worst affected villages.

A hartal protesting against massacre of Tamil civilians in Batticaloa and ban on supply of fuel to the peninsula is observed in Jaffna peninsula. Unlike previous hartals, to-day's hartal is observed in almost every nook and corner with spontaneous response from the public. Markets, shops, schools, libraries and other institutions remain closed. No transport.

Veerakathippillai Maha Vidyalayam, Thondamanaru lying close to the army camp set ablaze by LTTE militants. It is claimed that this has been done as a preventive measure from being occupied by armed forces.

In Koomankulam, Vavuniya, army ambush attacked with hand grenade by a LTTE militant who escapes after flinging the grenade. It is understood that one or two soldiers were killed.

Navy boats on patrol capture 4 fishing boats off Poonakari - Kalmunai seas. Three boats are from Navali and one from Navanturai. Nicholas Vincent and Nicholas Johnson two brothers, went out fishing in the boat that left

from Navanturai.

JANUARY 31

Soldiers attempt to sneak out from Army - Police joint camp, Pt. Pedro and reach Suppamadam, College Street, Vinayagamudaliyar Veethi, Old Post office road. In a cylinder attack by LTTE guerrillas, 8 soldiers are killed on the spot. Following this incident, heavy gun battle ensues and lasts for nearly 10 hours. Strafing from helicopter gunship and shelling of civilian areas from army camp goes on simultaneously with gun battle. Three militants are also killed. A 14-year old student is killed and several are injured. Army retreats later in the day.

At Kokkadichcholai, it is reported that the death toll in the three days of army operations has exceeded 200. STF commandos are said to have removed large number of unserviceable tyres from C.T.B. depots to burn the civilians killed.

FEBRUARY 1

A C.T.B. bus from Pt. Pedro to Vavuniya shot at by armed forces as it passed Kilinochchi army camp. Fortunately no passengers are hurt. On receipt of information, buses and other vehicles following deviate at Paranthan junction and go through Mullaitivu.

Recent three-pronged army attacks force residents of Viyaparimoolai, Inparuti, Pt. Pedro, V. M. Road, Vavunathurai and adjoining villages to move to Varani and Thunnalai. Majority take shelter at Thambacitty School, Methodist Mission school, Nelliady and Thevarayali Hindu school.

Soldier on guard duty at Killinochchi army camp is killed in militant sniping.

It is reported that the army has closed the sluices at Iranaimadu Tank that irrigates 60,000 acres of paddy lands in Killinochchi District.

A senior army officer arriving in Vavuniya from Colombo interrogates a Buddhist monk residing in Vavuniya at his residence. It is understood that the inquiries related to the monk's recent contact with local militant leaders.

Secy., Ceylon Workers' Congress strongly protests to the Inspector General of Police at the arrest of over 50 innocent upcountry Tamils working in private establishments in the Pettah. All these persons have been taken into custody on suspicion of links with extremists responsible for recent bomb explosions in Colombo.

FEBRUARY 2

Tractor taking firewood to army camp with 10 soldiers and 7 Home Guards trapped in landmine blast detonated by LTTE guerrillas at Munthirikaikulam that is close to Dollar Farm and Kent Farm in Mullaitivu. Soldiers and Home Guards are killed and militants claim to have captured arms and ammunition.

Armed forces at Elephant Pass barrier detain lorry taking medicines and drugs, meant for Govt. hospitals in the North worth lakhs. After 2 days of detention, when they finally started checking, permission has been refused. Superintendent of Health Services (Northern Region) is taking up the issue with higher authorities.

Navy removes 5 motor launches that are operating between Jaffna mainland and the islands. 22 employees engaged in operating these launches are also taken to camp.

Shell fired from Jaffna Fort last evening explodes in Koddady.

In Padaviya, Trincomalee a constable is killed in a landmine explosion, another is injured.

FEBRUARY 3

Whilst a helicopter was circling, 2-bomber plane bomb the ordinance factory of LTTE at Anaikoddi. Although 8 bombs are dropped, none hit the target. A house next to the factory was gutted and nearly 10 people in the neighbourhood injured. Simultaneously, another LTTE arms base at Neervely also bombed. Bombs alighted 500 yards away from the base. The bombing went for nearly ½ an hour. An old man is killed.

Gafoor (26) from Batticaloa, whilst washing his face at the Jaffna 2nd Cross Street junction pipe, shot at by armed forces at Fort and killed. He was

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working in a hotel in Jaffna. At about the same time, a shell fired from inside Fort lands in Koddady and explodes. Fortunately, none are injured.

Nearly fifty passengers coming to Jaffna from Colombo in a private coach intercepted at Vavuniya by armed forces and taken into custody. Their whereabouts are yet unknown and it is suspected that they are to be used as human shields when armed forces operate on foot.

FEBRUARY 4

Nine Sinhalese civilians gunned down by unknown persons in a colonisation settlement in Amparai District. Fourteen others wounded. Seriously injured admitted to Badulla hospital.

Last night, shell fired from inside Jaffna Fort explodes as it lands, on a house top in Vembadi Road, Baby boy Reagan (2) sleeping within the house is seriously injured hit by shrapnel and admitted to Jaffna hospital.

Hundreds of women join in a protest march, organised by the Mothers' Front decrying Independence Day. Procession that left Kandasamy Temple in the morning passes through Nallur Arasady Veethi, Palaly Veethi, Martin Road, Main Street and arrives at Secretariat. A memorandum to be forwarded to President is read out and the marchers sit opposite the secretariat in silence and remain there for over 2 hours. They disperse after an address by Mrs. Thema Gunanayagan, president of the Mothers' Front.

Maternity clinic, Hospital Telephone Exchange, E. N. T. ward of Jaffna hospital damaged in shell attack from Jaffna Fort last night. The severe damages to window panes, walls, furniture and tiles estimated at over a lakh. G. A. Jaffna visits hospital and sees for himself the damages caused. New market, 2nd Cross street, Windsor Theatre junction, B., A., Thamby Lane, Vairavar Kovilady also subjected to shell attack.

FEBRUARY 5

It is reported that over 500 soldiers are marching towards North from Mankulam army camp through jungles guided by transmission lines carrying electricity to Jaffna. Aerial cover being

provided by helicopter gunship.

Lorry load of tyres (both push bicycle and motor bicycle) and spare parts confiscated at Elephant Pass barrier check post. Checking staff say that this has been done on instruction from higher authorities. Lorry arrives empty in Jaffna.

Aluminium sheets, cables and wires meant for Jaffna Electricity Board confiscated at Elephant Pass barrier check post. Though these were permitted at Vavuniya, Checking staff at Elephant Pass refused permission despite letter of authority from Ceylon Electricity Board in Colombo being shown to them.

Seventeen Muslim youths, being trained as Home Guards for Nintavur electorate. They have been provided with guns and cartridges by the Defence Ministry. The people of Nintavur, are not happy with these appointments because of the ugly incidents at Kalmunai caused by the Home Guards there.

FEBRUARY 6

With aerial cover by a sea plane and 2 helicopters, an army unit approach Punnalaikadduwan on foot. On signal from militant sentry LTTE guerrillas mount offensive detonating landmines and attacking with cylinders and "cannon charge" devices. It is believed that 7 soldiers were killed and many seriously injured.

Whilst above confrontation was on, another unit of about 200 soldiers come up to Kadduwan, Mavadi Vairavarkoilady. LTTE guerrillas open offensive and force them to retreat.

Tellippalai, Kadduwan, Kurumbacitty, Punnalaikadduwan and Vasavilan villages strafed by helicopter gunships at 7 a. m., 10.30 a. m., 1.30 p. m. and 3 p. m. 50 calibre, shells and incendiary bombs dropped from helicopters.

LTTE Guerrillas confront army unit from Murunkan at Parappukandal and force them to retreat. Soldiers from Thallady camp also intercepted by militants at 9th mile post who stall their advance.

FEBRUARY 7

Army authorities prohibit transport from Vavuniya to the North. It is reported that this has been done to facilitate

movement of troops and armoured vehicles engaged in "search operations" in Paranthan, Kilinochchi and Parapankandal in Mannar District.

Over 500 soldiers accompanied by number of armoured vehicles proceed towards Uruthirapuram from Kilinochchi camp. Aerial cover provided by bomber planes and helicopter. As the army unit approaches Karadipokku, LTTE militants open fire and confront them. LTTE claims that at least 10 soldiers are either killed or seriously injured. Two of their fighters slightly injured.

An army contingent from Palaly camp attempt to come up to Kadduwan junction. LTTE guerrillas mount fierce offensive on them at Mavadi Vairavarkovil point. Unable to withstand the guerrilla attack, contingent retreats to camp with losses. Suntheralingam, Santhakumar (20) and P. Balasubramaniam who visit the site of confrontation (after the army had left) are trapped in a land mine explosion. Santhakumar loses his right leg and Balasubramaniam is seriously injured.

"Kumuthini" boat involved in the boat massacre of 15th May 1985 inspected by navy men in mid-seas off Delft. Passengers alarmed. Fortunately nothing happened. "Kumuthini" arrived late at Kurikadduwan.

Soldiers fire and injure Thambiah Premkumar (24) who was passing Koddady junction in a push bicycle.

FEBRUARY 8

LTTE guerrillas "cannon charge" an army unit moving into Parappukandal on foot killing 4 soldiers on the spot. Number of soldiers injured

Swiss journalist Romaine arrives in Jaffna by plane. He interviews the commanding officer of Northern command at Palaly and is told that Jaffna town could be reduced to a cemetery within half an hour by the army if not for the heavy concentration of people living in the area.

Soldiers coming out of Mullativu army camp is attacked by militants. They retreat into camp and shells are fired into civilian areas. More than 5 houses are damaged. Number of people are injured including S. Rajeswaran a boy of 7 who is admitted to Jaffna hospital.

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Special army unit arrives in Amparai District to provide protection to Sinhalese residents in Amparai and Pottuvil.

FEBRUARY 9

Fierce battle between armed forces and LTTE guerrillas at a point 5 kms from Madhu Church. Many houses in the area set ablaze. Three civilians are killed in the army firing. Armed forces also enter Madhu Church and arrest 22 Tamil youths who had gone there as refugees.

STF commandos travelling in a bus attacked by LTTE militants in Amparai. It is believed that a number of them are killed.

20,000 acres of paddy lands awaiting harvest in Kokkaddichcholai remain grossly neglected by farmers, because of recent atrocities by armed forces. No one is willing to step into the fields for fear of the army.

One of the Secretaries in the Canadian High Commission Michael Semble and another official Bruce Kayes visit Batticaloa to obtain first hand information on the situation there. It is reported that they couldn't go to certain specific areas.

Continuous and heavy firing around Palaly Air base the whole day. Believing that the army is emerging out of Palaly camp to move into adjoining villages, people of Vasavilan, Kuttipulam, Thidatpalam, Kurumbacitty and Kadduwan villages evacuate interior.

FEBRUARY 10

LTTE guerrillas mount offensive on armed forces proceeding to Paranthan from Kilinochchi at Karadipokku. Following this, armed forces fire shells towards Paranthan. Two bomber planes and a helicopter circle over area and give aerial cover to the land forces. Soldiers from Elephant Pass camp proceed to Karadipokku to join their ranks. No vehicles are permitted to enter the mainland. Buses to Colombo, Batticaloa and those co-ordinating train service at Vavuniya return to Jaffna. Fighting is on.

In a gunbattle at Thondamanaru between armed forces and LTTE guer-

rillas, Kapilakumara of the Gajababu Regiment is killed and another, seriously injured according to Colombo newspaper "Sun". Local information in Jaffna puts the death toll to 10 soldiers and injuries to many. Second Lt. Ravi (Pooologam Thangathurai of Vettilakkerni) of the LTTE cadres killed in the confrontation.

Six persons are injured in the morning till evening shelling from Thondamanaru army camp towards Kerudavil, Thondamanaru, Mailiyathanai areas. People in these villages evacuate and take shelter in Navindil Appa school, Udupididi American Mission School and Imayanan Govt. Tamil Mixed School. Injured admitted to Indirani Hospital, Valvai, Puloli, Manthikai and Jaffna hospitals.

More than 80 civilians (men, women and children) reported killed in Mannar District during the past three days of army atrocities. Ten persons who took refuge in the historical Thiruketheeswaram temple are too among those killed in the army outrage.

FEBRUARY 11

36 hours curfew imposed in Mannar, Mullaitivu and Kilinochchi districts from 6 a. m. to enable armed forces to carry out search operations. Adamp-an gov't. hospital bombed and demolished. It is feared that most of the patients are killed.

Soldiers in ambush near a culvert 300 yards from Paranthan junction open fire at a V. I. P. bus going towards Jaffna. Driver Arunthavarasa of Thambacitty, a muslim passenger from Kandy, a woman passenger from Madduvil are killed on the spot. A young boy is seriously injured and admitted to hospital. 6 more passengers injured and admitted to Kilinochchi hospital.

Because of army atrocities during the past three days, more than 20,000 in the Kilinochchi, Paranthan and Uruthirapuram areas have evacuated their homes and taken shelter in other villages as refugees. Big scarcity of food.

FEBRUARY 12

Curfew whilst being lifted, in Mannar and Mullaitivu is extended till 6p. m. in

Kilinochchi.

More than 10,000 villagers who moved out of Kokkaddichcholai arising out of army operations are yet to return and it is believed that they are wandering in the jungles.

Vinayagamoorthy (33) working in the Water Supply Services Board in Mannar killed in the aerial bombing on 10th. His wife Indrani (27) and son Vigneswaran (7) and another young girl Leela (18) are injured. Admitted to Jaffna hospital.

Paranthan chemicals factory, Post Office and Peoples' Bank occupied by armed forces have been converted to mini camps. Several shops in Paranthan have been looted and number of houses set ablaze. People have already deserted their homes and moved away.

FEBRUARY 13

Fifteen Tamil civilians who have taken shelter in a house at Paranthan junction perish when a bomber plane drops bombs repeatedly on the said house. This happened during curfew time and none dared to approach the site to even remove the injured for treatment.

Electric transformer at Mutur bomb blasted by unknown persons. Supply of electricity to adjoining villages cut off.

An army camp is opened at Kurumbupitty. This is the 56th army camp in Trincomalee District. It is reported that opening up of army camps is being speeded so as to consolidate the gains attained through savage military operations.

Sentry at western entrance of Jaffna Fort army camp shoot and kill A. X. Fernando (51) father of 5 children, who was net fishing in the Alupanthi area. His colleague Velan Jacob (55) is seriously injured and admitted to hospital. Both from Gurunagar.

An unidentified woman of about 50 years of age who had gone into the guard range of Thondamanaru army camp sentry is shot dead. She is reported to be mentally sick.

Civilian corpses brought to Kilinochchi and Vavuniya hospitals after recent operations in Paranthan are yet lying in these hospitals in decomposed state awaiting identification.

What happened in Jaffna on March 23?

The WEEKEND (Sun), published in Colombo, recently began carrying a "SITUATION REPORT" every Sunday, written by its Deputy Editor IQBAL ATHAS. Making allowance for the fact that it is a Colombo based paper and a certain natural bias in reporting becomes necessary, it certainly is the best-informed column in Sri Lankan journalism today. Below, we give an extract from IQBAL ATHAS' column dated March 29, 1987 :-

The lights in the Mess Halls were switched off past midnight. The men who were chatting after a rice and curry dinner, said good night to each other and retired to their beds. March 23, 1987, had just dawned.

Only those on duty continued their vigil at the security forces camp in the 307 year old Dutch Fort in Jaffna. Gun Position Officers stood behind their artillery weapons atop the Fort wall. Others peeped out of the watch holes from the rows of bunkers.

Just beyond the Fort Wall across the shrub covered mound and the moat men on the look out posts set up during February operations to expand the outer perimeters of the camp, were there too.

Among them were six soldiers and three policemen at the Pannai quarters, once the homes of policemen and their families. These rows of buildings on Eastern flank of the camp lay just before the beginning of Pannai Causeway the narrow road that links the island of Mandaitivu to the Jaffna mainland.

PANNAI QUARTERS

The slopy shores of the lagoon is separated from the quarters, barely hundred yards apart by the Navanthurai Road. There were yet others in the neighbouring look out post at the Telecommunication Department building and adjoining Chest Clinic.

Some twenty minutes past 1 am. Rocket Propelled Grenades (RPGs) and Mortar Shells began to rain on the camp. The men inside the Fort jumped out of their beds to see streaks of light flash in the night sky. They clasped their weapons and rushed to take up positions.

At the Pannai Quarters and the neighbouring Telecommunications Department building bursting Mortar Shells hit the lights plunging the two lookout posts in darkness. Alerted by this, sentries took cover. Amidst the bursting of shells, the men heard a group of persons advancing towards the quarters. They spoke in Sinhala and the sentries thought it was their colleagues rushing in to help following the blackout.

FACE TO FACE

It was only when Corporal Pathirana, who was at the entrance to the quarters, met face to face with LTTE's Mohan Raj, did he realise that the Tigers had invaded. He sprayed his T56 rifle. Mohan Raj dropped dead. Another, who was behind him, in turn shot Corporal Pathirana dead. Others ran for cover and a pitched gun battle began. More terrorists clasp grenades and rifles rushed through the outer compound of the Pannai Quarters into the buildings including the Telecommunications Department. Others kept firing towards the Fort forcing the men who were advancing to hug the ground and inch forward. Other soldiers continued to fire at suspected terrorist positions.

An injured policeman related how the confrontation between Corporal Pathirana and Mohan Raj went on. According to him, a terrorist hit squad had crawled along the shores of the lagoon, crossed Navanthurai Road, exploded grenades to clear a barbed wire blockade at the entrance, and burst into Pannai Quarters. All this while RPGs and mortars had begun to fall on the Fort camp from all directions.

As the men inside the quarters and terrorists attempting to gain entry fought a pitched gun battle, troops inside the Fort camp were readying to rush assistance. Unaware that terrorists were holed up in the Pannai quarters compound, Platoon Sergeant M. W. Soysa, led a group of men there. When they were moving in, terrorists opened fire killing him and three other soldiers on the spot.

AMMO EXHAUSTED

By this time, the five soldiers and three policemen inside the Pannai quarters had exhausted their ammunition. They were soon rounded up.

Terrorists continued to pound the Fort Camp and its environs as they took the eight security forces men hostage and moved them out. Officers at the Fort Camp got in touch with the Northern Command headquarters in Falaly. Within moments helicopter moved in to provide air cover.

An RPG that hit the Telecommunication Department compound injured a soldier. Shrapnel from a mortar that exploded inside the Fort injured Lieutenant Dharmasiri. The two were immediately flown by helicopter to Colombo for medical attention. Later 11 others were flown in by a military aircraft.

FIVE HOUR BATTLE

The battle had gone on for five hours and twenty minutes. RPG fire coupled with darkness forced the helicopter pilots to operate with caution. Added to it was the fact that they were fighting in a heavily built up civilian area. When the fighting ended at 6.45 am, on Monday five soldiers had died. They were Sergeant M. W. Soysa (Balapitiya), Corporal P H S W Moonesinghe (Matara) Lance Corporal S S Pathirana (Galoya) Rifleman Abeysinghe Bandara (Maha) and Rifleman SC Samarakoone (Kahatagasdigiya).

Tiger terrorists who launched the attack with over 200 men lost some of its hard core members. Sera Kilo Two (Kittu) told a base in Tamilnadu on the high frequency radio that the dead were Hillman, Mohanraj, Aruna, Thurai and Pandithar. The decomposed body of a sixth terrorist yet unidentified was discovered by security forces near the Telecommunications Department building. Also found near his body was an AK47 Kalashnikov rifle and five magazines. Twenty terrorists were injured. The condition of two of them, Alfonso and Morgan, were very critical on Friday. One civilian was also killed and 18 others injured.

THE HOSTAGES

The terrorists had withdrawn from the area with a prized possession - the eight hostages. They were soldiers M G Chandrasiri (Polgahawela) Rodrigo Sisirakumara (Anuradhapura) P B A M Udayawansa (Chilaw), HMR Tilak Kumara (Galgamuwa) and W M R K Bakmeewewa (Ambanpola). The policemen were PC 18760 Palitha Karunatileke (Yatiyewela, Katugastota), PC 7591 U. Gunatunge (Thihagoda, Matara) and PC 19664 Amara sena (Wellawa, Kurunegala).

SITUATION REPORT

Anti - India Cartoons in Sri Lanka Press



"THE ISLAND 17th March, 1987"



"THE ISLAND 13th March, 1987"

Obituaries

In a land where Death by violence is a common occurrence and the names of the victims rarely get obituary notices here are some "fortunate" few who passed away into the void, duly noticed by Sri Lankan newspapers :-

MOOTHATHAMBY Theivanayaki - Relict of Appiah Moothathamby, mother of Balasubramaniam, Vimala, Devikarane, Shanmugaraja, Vijaya, Loganathan Sivakumaran. Pathminidevi and Pushparani. Cremation at Kanatte on 28th February, 1987. 67, 5th Lane, Colpetty.

CHATCHITHANANTHAM Thamootherampillai (Retd. Central Bank)-husband of Sivagamasunderi, father of Dr. Vivekananda (U. K) and Kamalini. Cremation at Kanatte on 1st March 1987. 53/1, Ramakrishna Road, Colombo-6.

MUTHUTHAMBY, Rajasingam husband of Kulamany and son of Mr and Mrs. Muthuthamby of Atchchuvely. Funeral took place in Jaffna on 2nd March, 1987. 212, Stanley Road, Jaffna.

VINAYAGAMOORTHY, S. (Retd. Draughtsman) - husband of Payalamah, father of Guhanathan, Vanespathy, Mithiananthan, Kunavathy Sakunthala and Saravananthan. Funeral took place in Jaffna on 3rd March, 1987. 31, Pandarakulam Lane, Nailur North, Jaffna.

CHELVARAJAH, Joseph Adams -husband of Pushpadevi Joseph, father of Pushparatna (Rajah) Pushparanee, Pushpananda (Bahrain) and Pushpakumar. Interment at Kanatte on 7th March, 1987 19/4, Menerigama Place, Mt. Lavinia.

MANICKASINGHAM, Eliyatamby -husband of Bhavani, father of Indrajith, Kumudini, Ranjith and Yamuna. Died on 8th March in U. S. A. 94, Mt. Vernon St. Somerville, Mass 02145 U. S. A.

RASASINGAM, K. (Retd. Railway) - husband of late Thanalukshmi, father of Dr Padmini (U.S.A.) Sri Ranjan (U.K.) Shanthini (U. S. A.) and Sri Tharan U.S.A. Cremation in New York on 11th March 1987. Apt. 15B, 160, North Main St. New city Ny. 10956, U. S. A.

CHELLIAH, Sivasothy - husband of late Ahilandam, father of Vallipuram, Muthucumar (Kuwait), Balasubramaniam and Poojogasingam. Cremation at Kompayanmal cemetery on 11th March, 1987. 618, Manipay Road, Jaffna.