

NORTH & EAST

NEWS AND VIEWS IN MASS MEDIA

This is an attempt to provide an account of the current situation in our homeland. We have collected these news and views from a variety of newspapers and magazines. We hope that this will help our readers to get most of the information necessary to understand the conditions prevailing in our country. Almost all of them are just mere copies of their originals. We have provided only an opportunity for an easy access to them. Therefore, by no means, they give our own opinion. Instead, they will only help the reader to look at the different aspects of the current situation.

While our people are suffering, we hear lots of nice-sounding pronouncements made by the governments of Sri Lanka and India, which suggest that they have sympathy for our cause. But do we know their actual desire? This is the time to be more vigilant so that no one cheats us the victory we deserve. Our courage, determination and sacrifices of the past should not be allowed to amount to nothing. The blood of our people should not have been shed in vain.

Finally it will be of no use if we just know the truth, without showing an interest to relieve the suffering of our people. Therefore, we will be satisfied if this could help you, as a supplement, to clarify different issues and to think the feasible ways to go forward in the process of our struggle to achieve self-determination, freedom and peace.

We welcome your suggestions and constructive criticisms.

BACK COVER: The sources utilised to prepare this issue.

LTTE bid for secret deal?

Tamil militants have been talking secretly to certain members of the Sri Lankan Government, but any attempt to circumvent India would not be accepted, the Indian High Commissioner, Mr. J. N. Dixit, said here on Saturday.

"No unilateral decision by any party can be imposed suddenly on India, which has lost nearly 400 soldiers", he told reporters here. But, he said the Sri Lankan President, Mr. Junius Jayewardene, was not involved in any negotiations with the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam.

"We are taken aback", he said, referring to the alleged talks between the dominant Tamil militant group and certain members of the Sri Lankan Government whom he did not identify.

While the discussions between LTTE and the Sri Lankan Government leaders had been going on, LTTE emissaries had been meeting him also, Mr. Dixit said. He had also received a telegram calling for a three-day cease-fire by the IPKF.

Mr. Dixit said proposals being bandied about in the alleged talks amounted to "scaling down" Tamil aspirations. "Some of the proposals are extraordinary," he said.

Proposals: The LTTE had been told (by the Sri Lankan Government) it would have to "vacate" the island's East, but could keep arms in the North and run the local administration there without facing any elections, he said.

"If this is true, Sri Lanka and the LTTE should jointly demand that the IPKF should withdraw", Mr. Dixit added.

Mr. Dixit said according to reports received by him, some of the proposals being discussed were that the LTTE would vacate all claims to the Eastern Province and move to the North, in return for being allowed to set up an interim administration there for a period of three to five years without holding elections. The Eastern Province would be divided into Sinhala, Tamils and Muslim areas under the proposals, he said.

There was no immediate reaction from the Sri Lankan Government, but Mr. Dixit, who met Mr. Jayewardene yesterday, said both New Delhi and Colombo were committed to the Indo-Sri Lanka peace pact.

The Sri Lankan National Security Minister, Mr. Lalith Athulathmudali, told Parliament yesterday that the LTTE was having informal talks with Indians in Colombo and the Sri Lankan Government", but gave no details.

Mr. Dixit said all parties involved in the agreement, including India, would have to agree to end the fighting between the IPKF and the LTTE. An indefinite hunger-strike by two Tamil women in Eastern Batticaloa district would not force India to order a ceasefire against the LTTE, he said.

FINAL PHASE OF MILITARY OPERATIONS IN EAST

Indian troops continued their search operations in Batticaloa yesterday to neutralise the Tamil Tigers in what appears to be the final phase to clear the decks for political developments.

Friday's house-to-house searches by heavily armed Indian troops, some of them drawn from crack units specially ferried from India for the operation, which netted 97 suspected hardcore Tigers, were extended yesterday as the military manoeuvres intensified, informed sources said.

Little or no direct confrontation between the Indian troops on the offensive and Tigers was reported as the separatists resorted to the classic guerrilla tactic of melting away into the jungles ahead of the search operations.

While Batticaloa town area was the centre of concentration at the beginning of operation cleanup, Indian troops were deployed north of Ampara and have been conducting searches in Kalmunai, Akkaraipattu and some other areas.

Batticaloa residents said 1,500 to 2,000 Tamils some carrying rice in plastic bags and water in whisky bottles, lined up at the town's stadium on Sunday to let an informer attempt to spot Tiger rebels.

Five men suspected of belonging to the group were detained after the informer, hidden inside a tent in the stadium, pointed them out to Indian

military officials during an identification parade.

A thousand soldiers were seen walking on Sunday morning near the lagoon dividing the town of 150,000 people. The soldiers fanned out into groups of six to 15 men each.

"Our group has completed 55 houses today," said one Indian searcher. Another said there were about 20 search teams spread out in the town.

16,000 Indian troops

Nine LTTE targets in the Trincomalee district and six in the Batticaloa district had been earlier identified and Indians have been pouring in troops to take these targets through a 'saturation' strategy.

About 16,000 Indian troops have been thrown into the operation in the east and another brigade was due to be deployed in Vavuniya yesterday.

While military analysts said it was difficult to estimate the strength of the Tiger fighting units in the east because they kept fluctuating, they were concerned that the Tigers might retreat to the Trincomalee district and attack isolated villages there.

The 'tongue' of land between the Batticaloa and Trincomalee districts provides an escape route and if the Tigers decide to pull back from the Batticaloa area they could begin looking for civilian targets to hit back at in anger.

Name Games

● Sometimes, South Block's sensitivity to public opinion in Tamil Nadu on its Sri Lanka policy can take the most ridiculous forms. Since July 29, when Indian troops first set foot on Sri Lankan soil, they have been officially referred to as the Indian Peace Keeping Force (IPKF). But suddenly, Doordarshan and All India Radio have started referring to the IPKF as the Peace Keeping Force (PKF). The reason, however, is disappointingly banal. Some bright spark in the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting pointed out that IPKF, when translated into Tamil, sounded "more poetic" and less sinister without the prefix. The Tamil translation of PKF is *PaduKappu Padai* whereas IPKF translates into *Bharata PaduKappu Padai*. On such minor issues is policy made.

But that is not the end of the re-christening. Now, the Indian Army top brass has suggested another change of name. They would prefer it to be called the Accord Implementation Force since they view that as their primary role in the troubled island.

Bid to join Police**16 Tigers held**

By Premakumar Rajapakse

The Indian Peace Keeping Forces took into custody in Vavuniya Friday 16 suspected Tigers who were coming to Colombo to appear for interviews for the recruitment of Police personnel for the Provincial Police Force. Police sources told the Sunday Times.

Police had received nearly 40,000 applications following the gazette notification calling for applications for the Provincial Police Force. Senior police officers fear that there could be many members of the LTTE among the applicants.

Police had received information regarding the 16 suspected Tigers from other applicants from the North. They are now being interrogated at the Vavuniya army camp.

Explosives dumped

Giving details of operations in Jaffna, official sources said that on information received from three captured LTTE terrorists, Indian troops unearthed a cache of weapons at Tellipalai comprising three AK 47 rifles, three AK MS rifles, one MMG 7.62, three SLR (lost by IPKF), 400 .03 rounds belted, 400 7.62 rounds belted, 500 7.62 rounds and two AK47 magazines.

Three killed

Three civilians were reported killed in Kalmunai yesterday morning when LTTE attacked an IPKF patrol which was taking a LTTE suspect for questioning.

IPKF pincer probe Vavuniya

Indian troops yesterday prepared for a third major thrust against the LTTE, this time in the Vavuniya district, on the border of the north-central and northern provinces.

Heavy troop movements in this sector were reported yesterday. There were indications that the IPKF was receiving further reinforcements, to ensure that this operation continued simultaneously, with no troop withdrawals from the eastern province where a massive search was reported to be still in progress yesterday.

On Saturday, LTTE gunmen killed a member of the left-wing Eelam People's Revolutionary Libe-

ration Front (EPRLF) in Vavuniya district, the spokesman said, adding the Tigers also killed social worker, Shanmugam in Jaffna overnight.

Also in Vavuniya, 10 members of the People's Liberation Organisation of Tamil Eelam (PLOT) were arrested by the Indians Saturday shortly after three other PLOT men were handed over to them by local officials.

IPKF poised for B'caloa thrust

With all evidence indicative of an imminent, major anti-terrorist thrust by Indian troops in the Batticaloa district, civilian apprehension mounted to fever pitch in the more thickly populated areas of the town yesterday.

Military sources in Colombo, who confirmed that a major action was being planned by the IPKF, were certain however that fears expressed by civilians of a repetition of the hardships experienced in Jaffna last October, were largely unfounded.

"There can be no comparison between the two districts. The density of population in Jaffna is nearly four times higher than in Batticaloa. If anyone has cause to be apprehensive it should be the Indians themselves", a military observer said.

Although the warring LTTE and EROS cadres out in the 2,464-square kilometers of Batticaloa district have lost a formidable quantity of their arms and ammunition to searching Indian troops, the landmine is still a major factor to be reckoned with, observers said.

Officials said the IPKF, which has been in re-

gular consultation with Colombo, has expressed a high degree of mindfulness for the safety of the civilian population should an all-out campaign be mounted against terrorism.

Batticaloa district measures to 2,464-square kilometers in comparison to Jaffna's 2,072 sq. k.m. Jaffna's population however is around 830,000, as against Batticaloa's 331,000.

Population density in Jaffna is 400 per sq. km. to Batticaloa's 104 per sq. km.

Citizens contacted on the telephone yesterday voiced rising fears of a full scale thrust which they believe will be launched "any moment now". Troop deployments and the steady drone of Indian aircraft arriving and departing from the Batticaloa airstrip with increasing frequency in the last 48 hours or more, provided evidence of a major reinforcement of the 8,000-odd IPKF force in the sector.

Military observers acknowledged that reinforcements were being flown into Batticaloa - "but not on the exaggerated scale some people have claimed", an official said.

House-to-house search for Tigers in Colombo

Sri Lankan security forces yesterday began a systematic house-to-house search for Tamil separatist subversives in Colombo, following intelligence reports that a number of the senior cadre of the LTTE had fled to the metropolis, evading arrest by the Indian peace-keeping forces in the east.

Officials said their information indicated that the LTTE cadres in Colombo had brought their arms with them, and a close search was therefore necessary.

In an official release yesterday, the government called on all youth from the north and east who

have taken up temporary residence in the city of Colombo, to call at the nearest police station or Red Cross centre for protection.

"The government will provide food and accommodation and ensure their protection till such time as the situation in the northern and eastern districts of the island normalises", the release said.

The release said that the presence of a large number of youth who had sought safety in Colombo had come to light during the investigation of several acts of violence which occurred recently in south Sri Lanka.

15 Tamil males rounded up

Fifteen Tamil males from the north and east of the island who could not explain their presence in Colombo were rounded up by the Wellawatte Police on Friday night.

According to Chief Inspector Lalith Lekamge, OIC of Wellawatte Police the men, between

the ages of 20 to 40 years were rounded up from a lodge and boarding houses in Boswell Place, Nelson Place and W. A. Silva Mawatha. None of them had registered themselves with the authorities as requested sometime ago.

Detectives are now questioning them to ascertain whether any of them have any connections with the LTTE and have sneaked into Colombo to escape the ongoing IPKF operations against terrorists in the north and east.

UNPer shot

A prominent supporter of the United National Party a male nurse was shot dead at Blackpool, Nuwara Wliya on Friday night. He was feeding his dog when he was shot dead.

70,000 IPKF troops to saturate North and East

5390 new settlers in East

By J.S. Tissainayagam

The strength of the IPKF in the Northern and Eastern Provinces is to be boosted to about 70,000 this month, according to informed sources.

Planes flew in IPKF troops into Batticaloa following what is described as an all out offensive against the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam in the Batticaloa and Amparai districts, sources told the Sunday Times.

Up to thirty thousand troops are now in the Eastern Province in the wake of a policy of saturation to flush out the LTTE there. The saturation policy was also carried out in the northern areas to achieve the same purpose.

Meanwhile the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam killed a girl of ten years in Satturukondan one mile north of Batticaloa on Friday. On Friday two

people were killed in Arandichenai when the IPKF retaliated after two of their men were killed by a landmine.

Batticaloa citizens expect the IPKF to launch a Jaffna style operation against the LTTE in the East soon. In a bid to prevent large scale suffering to the civilian population 500 women belonging to the Batticaloa Mothers Front are staging a fast and prayer campaign call-

ing on the LTTE and the IPKF to observe an immediate ceasefire as the first step towards arriving at a peaceful solution. Batticaloa citizens committee sources said. The Indian Peace Keeping Forces (IPKF) moved into the Batticaloa hospital a few days ago and are in occupation of the hospital now. Troops are patrolling the corridors and are stationed outside wards of the hospital.

A total of 5,390 Sinhala families other than those displaced in the recent disturbances will be settled in the Trincomalee and Batticaloa districts in the next few months.

Mahaweli Development Minister Gamini Dissanayake told the Sunday Times that this would be done with the full knowledge and approval of the Indian government. It was one of the issues on which agreement was reached during the recent visit to New Delhi by President J.R. Jayewardene.

Apart from persons displaced by the recent violence in the Eastern province, the new entrants who will be drawn from all ethnic communities, will be settled under the Mahaweli Development Programme. A total of 31,390 new families are to be settled in systems A, B, and D, in the Trincomalee and Batticaloa districts.

Of new allotments, 17,000 will be for Tamils and 8,100 for Muslims. The 5,390 new Sinhala families being resettled, therefore comprise only 17% of the total of 31,390 new families being resettled in the Trincomalee and Batticaloa districts.

The settlement of new families is expected to take place along with the resettlement of displaced persons who now live in refugee camps. Of a total of 101,480 new allotments in the dry zone, 26,980 are for Tamils and Muslims.

IPKF kills a LTTE leader

Prasad, a high ranking LTTE leader belonging to the organisation's political wing was killed in an encounter with the IPKF at Chullipurum in Jaffna yesterday. Arms and ammunition were recovered from him.

'Indians want to get the hell out of here'

National Security Minister Mr Lalith Athulathmudali and Mahaweli and Land Minister Mr Gamini Dissanayake accompanied President Jayewardene on his recent trip to India as Chief Guest at the Republic Day celebrations. They had important discussions with Indian leaders and officials and Vijitha Yapa sought their views on what implications there are as a result of the trip and the discussions.

Q. Some have criticised the recent visit as a vassal state paying tribute to India.

LA - No way. It was an honour on Sri Lanka. No Sri Lanka leader has been honoured like this on India's biggest day.

The visit has helped to create better understanding and better appreciation of what can be done militarily and otherwise. There is a sense of urgency on both sides. There is conviction that ultimately what is needed is an activation of the political process.

G.D. A vassal state is an anglophile concept. It is not manifest in the eyes and minds of the people. Some were expecting the US to bail us out even though they were not interested in Trincomalee. The Americans are no fools to get involved in "bush wars" to borrow a phrase from Henry Kissinger. So are we to presume that being a vassal of US would have been OK?

No, India is our neighbour and whatever the

party, whichever the Government, no one denied that good relations with India was a key factor.

Trinco is no longer the important port it was in the second world war. It is good if you are fighting a traditional war. But who fights wars with 200 or 300 naval craft today? Its anachronistic to think of Trinco for a strategic war. One doesn't become a vassal state merely because one enters into an agreement. Does an agreement with the Maldives make it a vassal state of Sri Lanka? No.

Sri Lanka cannot spend large sums on defence. We can't afford it. This is why a reciprocal agreement with India will be helpful. India is willing to structure a treaty with reciprocity.

Q. Was the President able to get a detailed picture of the situation in the island? Has the Indian perception of the complexities of the Sri Lanka situation changed?

L.A. India now talks of the aspirations of all Sri Lankans, which is a good thing. The President did give the full picture and Rajiv Gandhi now knows the intricacies. What was seen merely as a Tamil problem has now become more complex and more difficult. The Muslim factor, the Indian factor, the JVP factor...

G.D. India looking at only the Tamil aspirations was a more recent phenomenon. There have been issues before, like the disfranchisement of the upcountry Tamils in the early fifties, etc. where they felt it was an issue for Sri Lankans to solve. But the nexus commenced in the last few years. One was the MGR factor. The other was the TULF leadership deciding to go to Madras and openly saying that they wanted the Government of India to guarantee their security. This is also why Prabhakaran was accepted.

(Continued on page 16)

LTTE ready for talks

The Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam are prepared for negotiations with either the Sri Lankan or Indian Governments following an unconditional ceasefire, said Sitta the leader of the political wing of the LTTE in Batticaloa.

He told the Sunday Times that the LTTE envisaged a three stage process to establish peace in the troubled Northern and Eastern regions. The first step would be the establishing of a ceasefire without conditions which would have to be honoured by both sides.

This would be followed by setting into motion a process of direct negotiations between the LTTE and any government that was prepared to have discussions with them. These talks will not be conducted through mediators he said. In

these discussions among other things the future role of the Indian Peace Keeping Forces and of bringing the IPKF before a court or tribunal of inquiry to answer charges of torture, looting, rape etc. could be discussed.

During the discussions the final stage of the process of setting up an Interim Advisory Council of twelve members could be negotiated. The twelve members would comprise seven of the LTTE one of the EROS one from the TULF and others to represent government interests. The Council would be similar to the one proposed by the LTTE before the IPKF offensive in October last year. However, the militant organisations which had accepted the Peace Accord would be excluded from the seats in the Council, he said.

New law to cover emergency rules

By Romesh Fernando

The government is considering the enactment of new national security legislation incorporating emergency regulations in respect of arrests, the detention of persons, and procedures related to court trials. A senior Government Minister told the "Sunday Times" that the new law would cover emergency situations such as riots, ethnic clashes and insurgent activity. At present, once the state of emergency lapsed, emergency regulations related to court procedure, detentions and arrests cease to

operate. Informed sources said it had been found necessary to incorporate emergency regulations governing arrests, detentions and court procedure in the permanent laws of the country.

At present emergency regulations are made under the Public Security Ordinance provided for Article 155 of the Constitution. The government is examining the provisions on Public Security set out in chapter 18 of the Constitution which may have to be amended if the new national security law is to be enacted, these sources said.

De Mel May Enter Race

COLOMBO — Sharp differences have split the ruling United National Party (UNP) as it is preparing to seek a popular mandate for the India-Sri Lanka pact on Feb 18.

Ever since the accord was signed by Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi and President Junius Jayewardene on July 29, there have been differences in the party. They came into sharp focus during a debate on the accord in Parliament on Jan. 21.

Prime Minister R. Premadasa openly criticized the Indian Peacekeeping Force (IPKF) and made a number of allegations of excesses committed by it.

Don't Need Stepfathers

Premadasa said, "The people of the North and East (Tamils) who at one time condemned the actions of the Sri Lankan security forces are today saying that they need 'fathers' and not 'stepfathers', implying that they wanted Sri Lankan security forces and not the IPKF."

He referred to a case of a 79-year-old woman having been raped in the Tamil-dominated northern part of the nation.

"I do not have words to describe that act," he said. "After incidents of that nature, the people are asking for 'fathers'. They have experienced the treatment meted out by 'stepfathers'."

The National Security Minister, Lalith Athulathmudali, who opposed Premadasa at one time, used harsher words not only against the IPKF but also against the sponsors of the India-Sri Lanka accord.

Security Forces Lauded

Without naming individuals, he said "Mahadanamutta" (foolish pandit or "Popat Rajah") was critical of our forces, while *The New York Times* in a writeup had lauded Sri Lanka's security forces for their bravery.

Athulathmudali alleged that the "achievements of our forces" had afforded the Indians a chance to step in. "Mahadanamutta" at one stage told the President that he himself had invited the Indian forces to Sri Lanka, he said.

He alleged that the person tried to act over the head of the President. "Maybe he had dreams about being President, but there were village lads who put up a good fight to save the country."

Obviously he was referring to the resignation of Ronnie De Mel as Finance Minister on Jan. 18.

The resignation of De Mel has prompted opposition speculation that he might be fielded as a ruling party candidate for the presidential election with India's backing.

The official organ of the Sri Lanka Freedom Party called it a "conspiracy"

by the ruling United National Party to "pull the carpet from under the feet of Prime Minister Ranasingh Premadasa."

The paper, *Dinara*, said in its lead story that two strong supporters of Premadasa — Colombo District Minister Mallowarachi and Colombo Mayor Cooray — were not renominated to the UNP's working committee to prevent Premadasa's name being proposed as presidential candidate.

The working committee is likely to decide on the party candidate to succeed Jayewardene for the presidential election scheduled for December.

According to an opposition MP, De Mel's candidacy has the full backing of India. He pointed out that the Indian High Commissioner, Jyotindra Nath Dixit, had a three-hour session with De Mel on the day before the resignation was announced.

Meanwhile a controversy has arisen over De Mel's performance as Finance Minister during his 10-year tenure.

While he boasted of the large volume of foreign aid, in his farewell address to the employees of his ministry, several ruling party politicians, who wished to remain anonymous, said that securing foreign loans and grants were not a great achievement.

They said that De Mel had failed to keep his promise to make the Sri Lanka rupee one of the strongest currencies in the world. In the past decade, the Sri Lanka rupee had depreciated by nearly 100 percent against the United States dollar.

In another development, the Sri Lankan Parliament on Jan. 22 passed the provincial election bill by an overwhelming majority, paving the way for early elections to the proposed council under the India-Sri Lanka accord.

Replying to the debate on the bill, the Lands Development Minister, Gamini Dissanayake, said the measure provided an opportunity to the people of the North and East to elect their representatives.

In View of Sacrifices

He said certain organizations had said that in recognition of the sacrifices made by the people of these areas they should be afforded this opportunity.

Dissanayake, who gave a detailed explanation, said a country like Sri Lanka could not afford to spend huge sums of money on war even if victory was assured at the end. Therefore, a political solution had to be found, he added.

He said the government was ready to hold talks with any organization that was prepared to accept the peace accord and lay down its arms.

Niranjana's arrest cripples LTTE arms run east

The LTTE's main arms supply line to the east crumpled on Friday with the arrest of the group's commander of this area - Joseph Kingsley alias Niranjana, reports said.

Niranjana, according to intelligence reports, was responsible for the ferrying and distribution of the LTTE armoury from points on the northern and eastern coastline to camps on the main front. He fell into IPKF hands by a pure stroke of luck, an official said.

The 27-year-old militant was hiding in a house in Batticaloa and peeped out just as an Indian search patrol passed by. They called him out the moment he was spotted and Niranjana, who believed he had been identified, called out: 'Don't shoot! I am Niranjana'.

Soon after he was apprehended, Niranjana made an attempt to reach for his cyanide capsule, but an Indian soldier seized him by both wrists.

Born in Jaffna but educated in Batticaloa, Niranjana is known to be fluent in Sinhala, Tamil, English and German.

Other important members of the LTTE's front-line, now captured, include Ponnadurai Wijeyan, a law student who has acted as the group's chief indoctrinator in recruiting camps, and Ratnaiyah Narendrakumar, believed to have been Batticaloa town leader Sitta's second in command.

Interrogation of these key men led to the discovery of a number of sizeable arms caches in the Kalkudah sector of Batticaloa, reports said.

Sri Lankan Forces to guard villages

While the Indian troops will be deployed in numbers over a wide area which will be under review, Sri Lankan troops will provide static security to villages particularly in the Eastern Province to guard them against separatist attacks, the sources said.

Already local troops in battalion strength is being moved out and around 20 villages particularly in the Trincomalee district are being provided protection.

It is expected that two more battalions of Sri Lankan troops will be deployed to guard the villages from where thousands of residents fled after the Tamil Tigers re-launched hit-and-run raids late last year.

Thousands of Sinhala, Tamil and Muslim residents who fled later said they would return only if Sri Lankan troops provided them with security.

Return of refugees

Since the return of "refugees" to their original settlements is a precondition for the holding of the Provincial Council elections, it was agreed between Sri Lanka and India that Sri Lankan troops be deployed to protect villages.

Under the Indo-Sri Lanka Peace Accord, the local troops were confined to barracks while the Indian soldiers took over the task of disarming the Tamil

B'caloa mothers launch fast

Hundreds of onlookers, mostly women of the 'Mother's Front', in Batticaloa town today began an indefinite relay fast demanding an immediate ceasefire between Indian troops and the LTTE. The front, known to be sympathetic to the militants, also pressed for resumption of negotiation with the LTTE to bring normality back in the North and East Provinces.

The venue is the Manmagam Pulliyar temple within the municipal limits of Batticaloa town. — Reuter, PTI

Fasting mothers critical

The health of the fasting mothers Nesamma and Annamma of the Batticaloa Mother's Front continues to be critical, sources in Batticaloa told the Sunday Times

They said they were very weak and that "anything can happen in the next two days".

The mothers, identified as voices of moderation trying to bring about an end to hostilities between the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam and the Indian Peace Keeping Force was watched by many

people at Mamang where they are staging their fast.

Meanwhile Indian officials were getting ready for the Provincial Council elections announced by the Government. The IPKF headquarters have been moved from Mandressa to the Batticaloa Rest House and the Indian Army's Military Police have taken Mandressa.

Also many of the larger buildings in Batticaloa have been taken over by the IPKF

to house Indian officials

Tea workers plan fast today:

Feb. 27. — Hundreds of tea plantation workers in the island will go on a day's hunger-strike tomorrow to demand the release of 144 colleagues arrested on charges of being linked to Tamil militants, the organisers said today.

Nearly 3,000 relatives and friends of the detainees will stage the 12-hour fast at Talawakele town, 160 km east of Colombo a leader of the Ceylon Workers Congress, Mr. Chandra Shekharam told AFP by telephone from Talawakele.

separatists and providing security to all communities.

Mobile security for villagers leaving their settlements on business or work will be provided by both the local police and the IPKF, sources said.

Some of these details were thrashed out during talks between Indian and Sri Lankan authorities here and more recently in New Delhi.

Although many displaced persons have returned to the East, there are still thousands who have to be resettled before elections can be held.

Seminary take-over

The Batticaloa seminary may be taken over by election officials from India.

A source from Batticaloa told the Sunday Times that the negotiations were going on with the Joint Operations Command of Sri Lanka to prevent the Indians from taking over the seminary.

The taking over of the Catholic Seminary means that up to forty to fifty students studying at the seminary would be displaced. Alternative accommodation is difficult to come by since buildings are not easily available.

Special attendants

Injured police officers who have to be hospitalised will be assisted by special attendants in hospital. Police say this has been made necessary by recent events.

If a police officer is injured and warded all that would be needed to obtain the services of a special attendant would be a certificate from a medical officer looking after the police officer to the effect that a special attendant is necessary.

IN such circumstances the state will bear the cost of hiring a special attendant.

Journalist released

The IPKF have released M.S.M. Gopalaratnam, the editor of 'Eelamurusu' in Jaffna. His continued detention since November was spotlighted in the Sunday Times on January 17 and he was released on January 25.

Gentleman in politics

By Qadri Ismail

It was Che Guevara, no less, who said that a revolution cannot succeed in a country that is even in some measure democratic. "It must always be kept in mind", he says in his classic 'Guerilla Warfare', "that there is a necessary minimum without which the establishment and consolidation of the first centre (of revolt) is not practicable... Where a government has come to power through some form of popular vote, fraudulent or not, and maintains at least an appearance of constitutional legality, the guerilla outbreak cannot be promoted, since the possibilities of peaceful struggle have not yet been exhausted."

For those who do not think Che knew what he was talking about, just a glance at places where revolutions have been successfully carried out will give his statement the status of fact. For instance, there were autocratic monarchs in France and Russia; nearer our own day, there were terrible despots in Nicaragua and Iran; those governments were all overthrown. On the other hand, elections have immeasurably set back the progress of guerillas in El Salvador and the Philippines, who were flourishing under dictatorships. We will do well, as a people, to keep this in mind.

Take our own case. Velupillai Prabhakaran dates the beginning of his battle against the state at 1972, with the promulgation of the First Republican Constitution. He has said many times that it was only then - despite 'Sinhala Only', standardisation and so on in the preceding years - that a section of the Tamil youth decided, with successive parliaments and constitutions in Colombo only worsening their grievances, they were forced to think in terms of constitutions and parliaments of their own. To Prabhakaran's generation of Tamil youth, virtually excluded from the system, democracy became a dirty word.

Peaceful struggle

At that time, just two years after a General Election, Prabhakaran had negligible support among the Tamil people. Support which had not increased very much by 1977, when the Tamil people were granted a vote. That was the year when, out of deep frustration, they signalled to the centre that they were prepared to go to the extent of secession if their rights were not granted. Despite which, nothing much happened for four years.

Then came the introduction of District Councils. With it, it seemed the Tamils would be finally granted a limited amount of control over their own affairs. But even before they were created, those councils were not given a chance. The elections for the Jaffna DDC were disrupted; from there it was only logical that they would be denied the resources necessary to function. Many senior Tamil militants put 1981 as the date when the possibility of peaceful struggle absolutely exhausted itself.

From there, with an insurgency growing steadily, a major race riot was inevitable. It took just two years to occur and predictably swelled to bursting point the ranks of all resistance groups. The DDC election in Jaffna, not July 1983, was the water-shed. The riots only convinced the Tamils in the south that they were not wanted; those in the north and east had been convinced for some time. Thus the process of national disintegration that commenced in 1947 picked up pace. It is one of the many nasty ironies of our time that an external power had to intervene to prevent this country from bifurcating itself.

Ink-blob strategy

At this very moment, that external power is consolidating its hold over the Northern and Eastern Provinces. By beginning the second round of its operation to defang the LTTE in Batticaloa, they prevent access to the final stretch of beach the Tigers enjoyed. Having already lost Valvettiturai (during Vadamardchi), Mannar north (south is with PLOT) and Mullaitivu, the Tigers are no longer in a position to unload large quantities of arms and ammunition from ships

They will have to melt into the jungles, draw the Indians into unfriendly terrain and pick them off. Indian High Commissioner J.N. Dixit has said to interviewers that the IPKF would not stop at controlling the towns and highways but would follow the guerillas into the scrub. Alternately, the IPKF could surround and starve the Tigers. Either way, the guerillas, will try hard to survive until Provincial Council elections are scheduled and then try even harder to disrupt them.

This will not be very difficult. One of Mr Dixit's aims is to get the civil administration, halted since Thai pongal by the Tiger disruption call, functioning again. Mr Dixit maybe being a trifle over-optimistic. A visitor from Jaffna last week said that the Kachcheri was functioning there until the killing of the Mannar Government Agent, whereupon, through fear, even Jaffna government servants stayed away from work. This only serves to confirm the view of a top Marxist Tamil militant that all the Tigers have to do is wait and kill a few people - something quite easily done-just before the poll. "Unless you can prevent communication from village to village," he said, "this will make sure that most people will not go to vote."

Therefore, unless a deal is made with the Tigers, even after they are militarily broken, they will retain the capacity to make a mockery of the elections. Nominations were called for them this week, but they cannot be held for some months yet. The pace of the IPKF's current offensive - intelligently slow, following the near disastrous rush in Jaffna - shows that they will take time to control the two provinces

In a three day operation in Batticaloa, they caught some important leaders and set up fifteen new mini-camps; then they decided to strengthen before expanding. What military men call the ink-blob strategy. They will only gradually spread out over the Tamil areas. And even Mr Dixit is not sanguine enough to believe that his army can prevent the occasional landmine or sniper-assassin. Thus, one can only keep one's fingers crossed about peace

And in the south. We may be a long way off from landmines in the south, but assassins we have plenty. And the JVP has given us no doubt now that we will have plenty more. Without much reason, too.

An argument could be made that the JVP felt it necessary to kill top UNP's because they sent the party underground. Vijaya Kumaranathunga, though, had done nothing to physically affect the JVP. He was only a political, an ideological, opponent. By killing him, a symbol of ethnic unity, the JVP can no longer pretend that it is not a racist organization - let alone a democratic one.

This was known by all but the wilfully blind many months ago. The JVP has now proved something else: that they do not intend to capture power by convincing the people of the superiority of their ideas. They do not have any. They intend to capture power by

(Continued on page 7)

Prisoners condemn JVP

A group of political prisoners from the 'Vikalpa Kandayama' currently in Welikada Prison have issued a statement strongly condemning the "brutal Murder" of the SLMP leader, Vijaya Kumaranatunge. It not only blames the "racist and fascist" JVP for the killing but states that the government must also take some part of the responsibility because it did not completely implement the accord.

The statement concludes by urging "all democratic and progressive forces to unite in order to politically isolate defeat . . . the forces opposed to peace and democracy through the granting of regional autonomy to the Tamil people."

Uma Maheswaran, leader of the People's Liberation Organisation of Tamil Eelam, came down to Colombo last week to pay his last respects to the slain SLMP leader, Vijaya Kumaranatunge.

5000 elected members under new system

Education, Employment and Youth Affairs Minister, Ranil Wickremasinghe, on Saturday said that under the proposed future electoral changes expected to take effect soon, there will be nearly 5000 elected representatives of the people in various assemblies.

He said there would be 225 members of parliament, 225 municipal councillors, 410 urban councillors, 3695 pradeshiya sabha members and 445 provincial council members.



Peace accord with India will be re-negotiated

Lakshman Jayakody, SLFP member of Parliament for Attanagalla and former Deputy Minister of Defence and External Affairs

The SLFP is conscious of the fact that Sri Lanka cannot fight India all the time. Certainly not in the military sense. Before 1977 however we fought with them on many issues through diplomacy. When the SLFP was in power our main line of defence was a balanced foreign policy adhered to by the Bandaranaike governments. We were friends with all including the Western countries.

Our non-aligned stance resulted in Sri Lanka receiving aid, economic as well as military, from the United Kingdom, United States, Soviet Union, China, India, Pakistan, Egypt, Yugoslavia and a host of other countries. Today the Western countries whom we assiduously courted have ignored our request for help in the hour of our greatest peril. Therefore the present has now come to rely solely on India.

It is ironic that our foreign policy establishment considered Tamil Nadu to be more important than the central government at Delhi. Therefore our relations with Delhi were neglected with the result that India did nothing to prevent the terrorist operating from Tamil Nadu. In the hasty attempt to improve relations with Delhi we conceded too much of our freedom of action in the peace accord.

In the exchange of letters between the Sri Lankan President and the Indian Prime Minister which is part of the accord, we bartered away our sovereignty. Today Trincomalee and other ports in the North and East are virtually under Indian control. Sri Lanka cannot take foreign policy decisions in its own interest without Indian acquiescence. In the defence sector also India is now calling the tune.

Very soon in the economic sector too India will intervene to gain monopoly over various sectors such as trade and monetary policy. Already there is a new fiscal policy for Indian goods coming into the country. It is unlikely that Indian interference in our internal affairs will stop until we prove that Sri Lanka is not a threat to India's security. At present our status as a sovereign nation is questioned by the world.

The peace accord that we have signed with India also denies the concept of Sri Lankan identity. It is acknowledged that Sri Lanka is a multi-lingual, multi-religious, society. By this is meant that we are divided into various communities and groups such as Sinhala Buddhists, Tamil Hindus, Burgher Christians and so on. If we are to regain our status as an independent nation with a foreign policy of our own we must think as Sri Lankans.

As for the future the SLFP believes that the strained relations with India must be healed. If the SLFP is re-elected we will renegotiate the peace accord to regain our sovereignty. There is however no need for a friendship treaty. A friendship treaty with India is needed only if we consider that country to be an enemy. Perhaps the government should sign a non-aggression pact with India if it considers India an enemy.

Passport rule : dons may go to court

University staff are considering taking legal action in respect of the recent decision of the government to issue restrictive passports to academics who go abroad on scholarships. The decision was taken in an effort to check the brain drain.

Professor Osmond Jayaratne, President of the University of Col-

ombo Teachers Association, said that university staff had reacted strongly to the announcement.

He expressed the view that the ruling was an infringement of the fundamental rights of a person and that serious thought was being given to the question of whether a fundamental rights case should be filed.

silencing all those with ideas. Then the only thing left will be the JVP - and its guns; for the only option left for Wijeweera now is to kill all those standing in his way - even if some of them are now his allies and sympathisers.

Celluloid hero

The move to claim responsibility for the killing through the Deshapremi Janatha Viyaparaya was extremely smart. Vijay was extremely popular and had never harmed anyone; people were angry that he was murdered. Wijeweera turned the tables by calling him a traitor. Except that, of course, Vijay was one of the few true patriots this country possessed; he was one of the few who, in his person, focussed the desire of the majority of people of this country, whatever their race, to live in ethnic peace. For, if he had died at a time of peace, all Sri Lankan political leaders of all communities wouldn't be bowing their heads at Independence Square today.

Sitting outside his house and watching the many thousands of mourners pass by, one wondered what went wrong. The vast majority of those who came to say goodbye were young. Yes, they came not to salute a political leader, but a celluloid hero; but they came despite the fact that they may have disagreed with his politics. Which meant that they did not agree with the JVP's politics either. If there are so many young people in this country who have not been corrupted by Wijeweera, who had the guts to defy his death squads and make the trek to Polhengoda, why are we in such a mess?

Because the anger will soon pass. And because, even if someone steps up to pick up the mantle, even if she has the charisma and the sincerity and the dedication, she will not be given the chance to display it. What this country needs now more than ever is the breathing space that only a General Election allows.

Lets us not forget - in our anger or in our fear - that the JVP is a product of the post-1947 process. Let us not forget that, if it was not proscribed after the riots of 1983, things may have turned out very differently.

If ... History has no room for the word in its thesaurus. This is not the place to discuss the failure of the left to meet the forces of chauvinism with that of reason. The left was caught in the vice of history, trapped, and pushed into a blind alley. Its failure can only be understood in the larger context of the failure of democracy in this country. Let all that be as it may. The gentleman in Sri Lankan politics has been killed. For the crime of threatening to unite this country.

Meanwhile, a meeting of the Sri Lanka Federation of University Teachers Associations, consisting of 22 unions in all nine of the country's universities is being convened to consider whether legal action is necessary.

The University of Colombo Teachers Association, too, is to summon an emergency meeting to discuss the issue.

The Professor said that discrimination of that nature against the entire university community was not appropriate when only to a certain sector had flouted the rules.

DJV plan to attack green tigers

The Deshapremi Janatha Viyaparaya plans to organise a campaign of violence against the 'Green Tigers' in the South, according to security sources.

Leaflets recovered by a police team which raided an insurgent hideout in Angunukolapalessa Monday indicate that the DJV blames the 'Green Tigers' for the campaign against suspected subversives.

Posters with headings, such as "Death to Green Tigers", "This is what happens to Green Tigers", and "This is where the battle against the 'Green Tigers' begins", were found by police during the raid. Another set of posters bearing the slogan "We salute the Green Tigers" was also found.

Keeping alive the spirit of in.....dependence

Forty years of recurring Independence Day celebrations - haven't we seen them one too many times before? So how did they manage to make this year's pageant seem different, even quite extraordinary?

That slightly dazed expression you noticed on people's faces - I attribute it to February Fourth and the Aftermath. First of all, this has been a most confusing week. True, we are a country internationally renowned for its public holidays but this week takes the cake, so to speak. It even completely baffled those folks who routinely scan the year ahead for long weekends and suchlike for what can you do with holidays that interject themselves between weekdays so haphazardly?

A new nation

Forty years ago, the British, having had enough of colonial rule to prevent them from ever collecting together an Empire again, left us. Good. And look what they gave us - a "unified" country by the name of Ceylon (which certainly wasn't our name for ourselves!), some alien system of government called a Parliamentary democracy (heaven knew what that meant as we certainly had no taste of any such thing when the Brits were here) and a few odds and ends like Tea, the English Language and some nice buildings.

What a simply spiffing way to begin a new Nation! For that, we have been so grateful that we parade around every February Fourth to keep alive the spirit of independence in our little hearts. And just in case the Brits ever doubted the extent of our innovativeness we have gone one better. Or is it two?

Well, no one calls us 'Ceylon' anymore. Even better, we have completely modified that outmoded leftover called Parliamentary Democracy until it now bears no vestige of British influence at all - so there!

Sri Lankan identity

Every February Fourth, we pat ourselves on the back for having got rid of the British. (even though we know that they didn't really care to stay). We also applaud ourselves for having succeeded a few more inches up the greasy pole of nation-building. Of course, every government has its own definition of nationhood. But this year, we may have actually caught a glimpse of the top - of the greasy pole, I mean.

No-one watching the Kotte pageant (which most of us did, thanks to television) would ever remain in the dark about that elusive thing called a Sri Lankan identity. For there on the screen, on float after float, band after band, troupe after troupe, was arranged the totality of the Sri Lankan experience.

Gone was the old gung-hoism, the exclusivism, the chauvinism, the puritanism. In its place was pluralism, cosmopolitanism, modernism. From

swashbuckling Arabs, flashing swords and all, to breakdance and disco (whatever that means), we had them all. For isn't it a truism that a truly living nation, like a living language, must absorb like a sponge in order to stay alive (or stay afloat, I hear my friends, who suffer from fear of being pushed into the Indian Ocean, say.)?

So, Ves dancers strode beside ballerinas (who unfortunately unlike their western counterparts could not dance and wore socks.), Kafringa rhythms blended with nagasalam and East and West and did in fact meet in a clashing, blending sort of way.

Now can you understand why the nation is suffering from Aftermath? We aren't quite sure what being a nation means anymore. Nothing seems to fit with what they've been telling us all these years. So, what now? Pick up and carry on as if February 4th, 1988 did not happen? Or wait for some more pointers on the New Identity, only in the future with a little more taste and finesse?

What one missed in the Parade

On February 4th Sri Lanka celebrated 40 years of independence from colonial rule. The pageant held that day had a special section on Disco and Break Dancing as part of contemporary culture. On the same day Dhamma Jagoda passed away.

Dhamma tried hard and achieved much success in combining traditional and modern dance and theatrical forms. He was among the few responsible for the vitality of Sinhala theatre in the sixties and the high quality and basic decency of Rupavahini teledramas, demonstrating skill in a medium he had easily mastered.

His death in the early hours of February 4 may have spared him the agony of seeing Disco Dancing presented in a Freedom Day parade as a contemporary dance form in this country.

Vain attempt

We are now used to the spectacle of independence day pageants which use cheap gimmickry and descend to a total lack of artistic form in a vain attempt to depict national unity. More and more, the idea seems to be dominant in some minds that the depiction of difference is the mark of unity. Unity in diversity is certainly a laudable goal to reach, but when the emphasis on difference transcends the diversity of reality, then it is the goal of unity which has to suffer.

Some people are obviously thrilled to see school children depict as many walks of life as possible, or as many things as people do, often dressed in costumes which evoke laughter when humour is the least intended.

High Anxiety

● During the recent visit of Sri Lankan President Junius R. Jayewardene to New Delhi, the foreign office had its diplomatic fingers nervously crossed. For, the old fox, as the wily Sri Lankan leader is called, has a habit of shooting from the hip while making statements



in public. And quite often, he does not care about whom he offends or which diplomatic niceties he transgresses when he gets going.

So, in order to avoid any kind of embarrassment, the foreign office had to tread an extremely sensitive line. Indian diplomats in the capital discreetly informed senior members of the Sri Lankan delegation to impress upon their leader the supreme importance of keeping away from prying members of the press. And the visiting delegation, having given its word, dodged the mediemen at every opportunity.

What was worrying the foreign office most of all, one insider confided, were reports they had received that President Jayewardene, in talking to journalists, might openly call for the withdrawal of the Indian Peace-Keeping Force. Such a statement from the Sri Lankan leader on Indian soil would have been a diplomatic disaster for South Block. But it all ended well and the foreign office is still sighing with relief.

SRI LANKA

Running out of Time

Delhi talks focus on a new treaty

IN his latest book, *Windows on India*, Sri Lankan political scientist Ralph Buultjens, a close friend of the late Indira Gandhi, concludes that "India and Sri Lanka are like a husband and wife who can marry or divorce but can never separate." The allegory could not be more apt. With the initial, stormy

South Block's official stand has to be seen as one of total support for Jayewardene. But having burnt its fingers somewhat, the Indian Government wants to take its time before entering into a broader and more binding agreement. "We have no objection in principle to the signing of a treaty," says a senior External Affairs



PRASHANT PANJIAR

ardour of their regional matrimony last July having cooled considerably, the pressure is now on for a re-examination of the nuptial contract.

Sri Lankan President Junius Jayewardene, during the latest round of official talks between the two countries recently, made it abundantly clear that with the July accord under domestic attack, Colombo wants a long-term friendship treaty with New Delhi to salvage prestige at home and counter the charges of a "sell-out".

The timing is crucial: 1988 is going to be an election year in Sri Lanka. Colombo has announced that the all-important Provincial Council elections will take place in March or April. This will be followed by general elections—the first in 10 years—and presidential elections. Jayewardene, under intense pressure from his nervous ruling United National Party colleagues, is thus running out of time in his attempt to convince the electorate that the accord will ultimately bring peace to the troubled island.

For New Delhi, the treaty twist has posed some delicate diplomatic problems though Colombo's desire for additional dowry has been obvious for some time.

(From right) Gandhi, Jayewardene, Athulathmudali and Natwar Singh

Ministry official. "What we are concerned with is that it does not dilute the provisions of the July accord."

That concern is understandable. It is essentially the fine print in the original accord that has forced Colombo to now go in for a friendship treaty with India. The anti-accord forces in Sri Lanka have been harping on the lack of "reciprocity" in the exchange of letters between Rajiv Gandhi and Jayewardene last July which form the annexure to the accord. The key phrase is in Rajiv's letter which reads: "Trincomalee or other ports in Sri Lanka will not be made available for military use by any country in a manner prejudicial to India's interests...." Domestic Sinhalese opinion feels that New Delhi should make an equivalent commitment in return.

South Block's strategy is to stall the treaty discussions till after the crucial Provincial Council elections—a make-or-break issue as far as the accord is concerned. In fact, the success or failure of the elections is more dependent on India than it is on Sri Lanka. The decision

to push it through is yet another gamble that rests on whether conditions in the northern and eastern provinces will be conducive to the conduct of a poll.

To ensure that, New Delhi has launched a two-pronged offensive. By the end of the fortnight, the IPKF strength in Sri Lanka is expected to be around 60,000 troops. One additional brigade (over 3,000 men) moved into the eastern province just before Jayewardene arrived in New Delhi. Another is scheduled to be flown into the province—where the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) have regrouped and caused considerable insecurity. Once the troops are in place and have been properly briefed, New Delhi hopes to launch a combing operation that will "secure" the province in time for the elections.

At the same time, India's overworked High Commissioner in Colombo, J.N. Dixit, has flown into Jaffna and Batticaloa where he has had discussions with local citizens' committees and prominent people to convince them to participate in the election process.

Of the two, Dixit's is the trickier mission. If the LTTE boycotts the elections, its validity will be in question. Similarly, if the Tigers lie low for now and strike when the elections are on, they still have the capacity to render it inoperable. The Tigers also have the capacity to threaten prospective candidates and prevent them from taking part in the process.

To counter that, New Delhi has used the recent talks to convince Jayewardene that a few additional concessions to the Tamils, in the devolution package agreed upon under the accord, will go a long way to swing Tamil opinion solidly for elections. The Sri Lankans have agreed to look into the matter without making it seem that the Jayewardene Government is giving in to Tamil—or Indian—demands.

There are also feelers being sent to the LTTE for some sort of compromise whereby the LTTE will be given political control of the northern province on the condition that it abandons its claims to the eastern province. Having lost its northern stronghold to the IPKF and under increasing pressure in the east, the LTTE just might be agreeable to the conditions—or so New Delhi and Colombo are hoping. The problem is whether Tigers can change their stripes.

—DILIP BOBB

Terrorists discourage rebuilding

By M. Ismeth

Terrorists roaming around Muttur have made thousands of refugees both Sinhala and Muslims now in camps, to decide against rebuilding their houses in Muttur.

17,492 Muslims and Sinhalese were rendered homeless late last year when terrorists set ablaze the entire township and houses of the residents of Muttur. Since then they are confined to refugee camps and have been living on subsidies the Ministry of Rehabilitation was providing them. But this too had got delayed during the last few days following

terrorist campaign to disrupt civil administration, refugee sources said.

They said that the Ministry of Rehabilitation was going to provide them with Rs. 7,500, for rebuilding and reconstructing their houses but now "we have second thoughts of rebuilding our homes with terrorists roaming the streets of Muttur. We want hundreds percent security from our forces.

Only then we would start rebuilding otherwise many of us who have been living here for generations would leave Muttur for good, they added.

Recommendations to solve NCMC issue

By Prema de Mel
The Senate of the University of Colombo has made a series of recommendations to solve the North Colombo Medical College (NCMC) issue reliable source said.

On the recommendations of the Senate the Council has agreed to award the degree as MBBS (NCMC) provided that steps be initiated by the Faculty of Medicine and Senate to enable the MBBS (NCMC) to be registered for medical practice in Sri Lanka.

It has also recom-

mended that the Medical practitioners Ordinance be amended to make the MBBS (NCMC) acceptable.

Among the other recommendations are:-

1. The bye-laws of the University of Colombo be amended to make various sections consistent.

2. A separate bye-law to deal with the MBBS (NCMC).

3. Make all benefits applicable to all six batches at present in the NCMC.

4. To amend the Postgraduate Institute of Medicine Ordinance, if necessary, to enable the MBBS (NCMC) acceptable for postgraduate degrees.

5. As suggested by the Dean of the Faculty of Medicine to issue a document certifying that

the MBBS (Colombo) and the MBBS (NCMC) are equivalent.

6. That the results of both examinations be released simultaneously.

7. Recommend to the Ministry of Health that a common merit list be adopted.

University sources said that the various authorities of the universities were performing their functions in keeping with their autonomy and academic freedom and the teachers of the Medical Faculty must now accept, adopt and implement the Council decision.

They said that no outside body like the University Grants Commission, Ministry or trade union like the GMOA can dictate to a University what academic freedom means.

Indian troops sink Tamil guerrilla boats

— The Indian Peace Keeping Force sank two fibreglass boats belonging to the LTTE and apprehended three senior LTTE is not known how many LTTE cadres were on board, and whether they were carrying any arms and ammunition.

Since both the boats were sunk, the men on board are presumed to leaders in the course of its operations in Batticaloa in Sri Lanka's eastern province during the past 24 hours.

The boats were fired upon from helicopter gunships off the coast of Batticaloa town. It has been killed.

An official spokesman today identified the three apprehended leaders as Joseph Kingsley alias Niranjana, Punathurai Alias Vijayan and Rathnaniah Narendra Kumar.

Half the robbed weapons recovered from the JVP

Thirty seven of the 65 automatic weapons taken by the JVP in raids on Army and Police establishments in the last 6 months have been recovered, accord-

ing to security sources. This is more than half the quantity and the authorities are confident of getting back at least another 15.

Suspect arrested

Police have arrested one suspect in connection with the killing of Sri Lanka Mahajana Party leader Vijaya Kumaranatunge.

The suspect was taken in for questioning when he was standing close to the body of Mr. Kumaranatunge at the Art Gallery, where his body was lying in state, on Friday night.

Police believe the person is one of the six suspects also wanted in connection with the killings of Counter Subversives Unit chief DIG Terrence Perera and United National Party Chairman Harsha Abeywardena.

Batticaloa prison closed

The Batticaloa Prison which can officially hold 150 prisoners has been closed.

Of the 55 prisoners who were there last, only ten remain in custody still, but in a police cell, after being re-arrested following the forced evacuation of the prisoners by the LTTE on January 19.

A squad of IPKF personnel who moved into the prison after its inmates were chased out by

the Tigers, have now left the prison, firmly locking its gates behind them.

The 60-odd prison staff including officials and guards have been unable to resume work due to fear of reprisals by the terrorists.

According to Prisons Chief Mr. H. G. Dharmadasa, arrangements are now being made to take over the ten prisoners in police custody and transfer them to another prison.

Tigers kill woman, child

Tamil Tigers killed a 40-year-old woman and a school girl in the Batticaloa district on Friday, informed sources said.

Kodayamma of Kunnankuda whose husband is in the Middle East used to talk with the IPKF personnel off and on

when she passed their barriers. Tigers who considered it harmful for their cause killed her, informed sources said.

The second victim was a 16-year-old school girl who had a brother who escaped from Tiger custody recently.

Appoint Commission to probe I P K F activities

India is a great country. It is a subcontinent vastly developed with the fourth largest army in the world. It has a long spiritual tradition, having produced the Buddha, Adi Sankaracharya and a long line of saints and sages including Mahathma Gandhi.

It is, therefore, most unfortunate that India should have used its might on the Sri Lanka Tamils, its own people apparently to disarm a handful of Liberation Tigers whom India had nurtured, trained and armed.

The worst sufferers in this brutal military operation have been innocent citizens of the North and East and not the militants. Rajiv Gandhi said that the operation will take one week or the most two. But even after three long months of furious military operations all arms have not been recovered. They are everywhere killing the army and innocent civilians who do not favour them, in spite of the Indian army being everywhere with checkpoints everywhere. The public continue to suffer. Neither India nor Sri Lanka seems to worry.

The problem should have been solved through diplomacy. India had many opportunities when the Tiger leaders went for talks with the Indian High Commissioner, who said that 70% of the arms had been taken away. Did it take three months to take the balance 30% or is India finding an excuse to stay on indefinitely?

The I.P.K.F. was welcomed by the people

who thought they would get rid of the Sri Lanka army which had committed atrocities. The remedy has been worse than the disease. The people want the Indian army to go. Reports of the capture of arms are issued periodically but the people have no way of verifying them.

The I.P.K.F. gave no warning to the public before launching this massive attack. The people did not prepare themselves for a long period of agony. No foodstuffs were stored. At the beginning all shops were looted by the army and other looters. When all this was over there was starvation. The army did not take steps to supply food for about two months. Even the Sri Lanka government stopped its supplies. There was widespread starvation. The army fired shells everywhere indiscriminately, destroying houses electricity supplies and water services. People ran from place to place. Many were killed and almost all buildings were damaged, partially or fully. Refugee camps were filled to capacity. There were over 25,000 refugees at the Nallur temple. At the Kokuvil Hindu College there were about 8,000 refugees. This refugee camp was shelled mercilessly. Over 100 died and were buried in the school playground. The commander of the army there, did not permit medical treatment even to the injured. There was no justification for such brutality by the Indian army towards a people whom they say they came to protect. The Jaffna hospital was attacked and about 125

were killed including 3 doctors, nurses and patients.

At Urumpirai tanks moved about through lanes, destroying buildings and entire families. Such brutality was experienced by almost all villages. Among those killed were two sons of Sir Waitilingam Duraisamy both over 60, the sister and brother-in-law of Chief Justice Sharvananda, Attorney G.V. Balasingam and his family, district Land Officer Sambanthan and hundreds of others.

At the hospital and the University, valuable equipment was destroyed.

Was all this necessary to disarm the Tigers and arrest their cadres? Newsweek magazine once described the Sri Lanka army as the most indisciplined in the world. The Indian army is the most brutal and most disgraceful in the world. It is meaningless

for Indian leaders and the people of Tamil Nadu to praise them. They have destroyed all they touched.

All newspapers were suppressed and their presses destroyed. The world outside does not know what is happening in the North and East. Indian news media give false news. We are thankful to some Colombo newspapers for publishing at least some part of the truth. In fairness to the people of the North and East they must report all that the Indian army did.

Why does the Indian High Commissioner object when the papers publish facts? He has never visited Jaffna after the operation was commenced. The people of Jaffna demand that the army be withdrawn. They do not want anyone to go about armed. They also want the L.T.T.E. to give up violence and surrender their arms. They have caused

hardship to the people. Extremists of the North and the South have ruined a beautiful country. This must stop.

The Tamils accept the Accord as a progressive step. The cry for Eelam must be given up. Provincial Councils with full powers must be established. The Tamils must be allowed to live with self-respect and with full security. All military operations must stop. To a question by Venkat Narayan as to whether he foresees the I.P.K.F. refusing to go even when asked by him, the President said he couldn't dream of this, and that he had full trust in Rajiv Gandhi. The I.P.K.F. is reported to be leasing houses for 5 years. The danger of their remaining here will always remain.

The Tamil people demand the appointment of a commission to inquire into the activities of the I.P.K.F. in the North and East of Sri Lanka.

A Jaffna Tamil

Refugee youth in Colombo Register with police or the Red Cross

The government yesterday advised all youth who have taken up temporary residence in Colombo to register at the nearest Police station or the Red Cross Centre.

In a press release issued yesterday the government said - In the course of investigations into recent acts of violence in the District of Colombo it has come to the notice of the Police that there is a large number of youth

who have taken up temporary residence in the District of Colombo for their own safety.

In order to avoid inconvenience, all such youth who have taken up temporary refuge are advised to register at the nearest Police station or the Red Cross Centre, and if they so desire they may apply to such Police station or Red Cross Office at 10, Dharmapala Mawatha, Colombo 7, for protection.

LTTE shoot at informer

An EPRLF informer travelling with an Indian Army patrol in Kalmunai was shot at by LTTE gunmen at Kalmunai yesterday. The informer escaped unhurt though three civilians were seriously injured by the return fire of the Indian soldiers. The injured civilians are now lying in a critical condition at Kalmunai base hospital, Batticaloa citizens committee sources said.

Threats thwart varsity reopening

By J.S. Tissainayagam

Moves to reopen the University of Colombo's Arts, Law and Science faculties by tomorrow the 15th were stalled when a group of Law students believed to be associated with the DJV met a senior staff member of the Faculty of Law and threatened to disrupt examinations unless the six students taken into custody by the police are either released or charged in courts.

A senior member of the staff of the University of Colombo told the Sunday Times that unofficial discussions on holding examinations once the Uni-

versity reopened had been held. The faculties involved were all of the Colombo University except for the Medical Faculty, which is on strike over the NCMC issue. Though the substance of the discussions was not made public, the students seemed to have learned of the tentative decisions before they met the member of the staff from the Law Faculty and issued the threat.

The plan, he said, was to go into examinations almost as soon as the university reopened since all the teaching for the academic year 1987/88 was over. "The fact that we're

going straight into exams in hampering" he said. If the academic year was in progress even if the students boycotted the lectures, the University could remain open, he said. On the other hand if there was a boycott of examinations or disruption of the conduct of these examinations, the authorities would be left with no option but to close the Campus. Furthermore, it was the right of every student to sit the examination and this was being cited by the Action Committee as a reason for boycotting the examinations since their six colleagues who were in cus-

tody were being denied that right.

The threat has resulted in a standstill at the campus and the University will continue to remain closed. The faculty source said that the Campus was further hampered by the absence of the Vice-Chancellor, which made decision making on important issues difficult.

Soon after the students were taken into custody, the Chairman of the University Grants Commission, Dr. Stanley Kalpage appealed to the police either to charge them or to release them.

Fraud Bureau cracks racket in forged passports

The Colombo Fraud Investigation Bureau believes it has cracked a big racket in forged passports and visas, following Saturday's arrest of four young Tamils, including two girls, who were attempting to travel to Germany on forged papers.

The airport arrest was followed by a swoop on a Slave Island premises and the arrest of two men allegedly involved in forging passports and visas.

Attack on police station foiled

A joint Police - Special Task Force (STF), Army and Airforce unit consisting of nearly 300 personnel took into custody 20 persons in an operation launched to thwart an attack on the Beliatta police station yesterday.

Earlier police arrested 120 persons at a village fair in the area and released them.

The operation was launched on receipt of information from two sources that subversives were planning an attack on the Beliatta Police Station.

The operation was led by Mr. Richard Wijesekera, Co-ordinating Officer Air Commodore A.B. Soza and SSP Udugampola.

Search for elusive PC candidates

The announcement by the Government that nominations for the Provincial Councils will be accepted from March 2 - 9 has caught many by surprise, including some in the UNP. Deputy Minister of Justice Mr. Shelton Ranarajah said he was surprised by the announcement. "We are still not prepared," he said, adding that to date no one in the Central Province had told him that he or she wishes to be a candidate.

"The members of Parliament have not been consulted on the matter," he said. "The Secretary of the UNP has asked us to write to the party high command about candidates but we have not had any meetings so far in our areas to decide who the candidates should be."

The UNP head office is receiving applications, says a UNP official. "We don't know the numbers but they are pouring in. We haven't counted them yet", he said. The SLFP and MEP will boycott the polls saying that the provincial council bill and the 13th amendment were not placed before the people at a referendum. The United Socialist Alliance is expected to participate, but the TULF says it will not. (see separate story).

But those who want to contest are not making a song and dance about it, a UNP source said. The fear of LTTE reprisals in the North and East and JVP reprisals in the south are strong and people do not want to attract too much attention to themselves by premature publicity, he said.

The Eelam Peoples Revolutionary Liberation Front (EPRLF) which obtained recognition from the Commissioner of Elections is expected to field candidates in the North and East. The Peoples Liberation Organisation of Tamil Eelam (PLOT) whose application for recognition was late by a few days are also expected to participate though disappointed by the non-recognition.

But the unknown quantity remains the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE). There is speculation that they will sponsor independent candidates and try to influence voters to elect their nominees to the District Council.

The elections will be the first held under the Proportional Representation system in Sri Lanka but unlike at the general election, there will be no cut off point. The Provincial Council elections are expected to be held in May or June.

Two civilians hit in crossfire

Two civilians, including a woman, were seriously injured when they got caught in a crossfire between Indian troops and Tigers at Pandirippu in Kalmunai yesterday, police said.

They said the civilians, along with two injured Tigers were rushed to the Batticaloa hospital for treatment.

The gun battle followed off after the Tigers ambushed an Indian patrol on a search operation, police said.

They said there were no casualties of Indian troops in the one and a half hour long shoot-out.

At Senakudiruppu in Kalmunai, Indian troops on Friday shot at a group of Tigers who were attempting to attack a state-run bus which was plying from Madha-Ur to Kalmunai town.

A Tiger whom police identify as Selvaraja alias Thurni is reported to have died when the Indian troops fired.

Indian Ocean – a Peace Zone!

The Baltic and Greenland seas are literally poles apart from the Indian and Pacific Oceans but they are now being grouped together under one subject: Zones of Peace. The Soviet leader Mr. Mikhail Gorbachev in October last year in a speech made in the Arctic Port of Murmansk called for the creation of nuclear free zones and zones of peace in the region. This call, was of course in line with the support given to other Zones of peace called for in the Indian and Pacific Oceans. But convincing as Mr. Gorbachev may seem in some of his peace offensives his latest move in "leasing" out a nuclear submarine to India has considerably diminished his credibility on his proposals for peace zones.

The Soviet built nuclear submarine now renamed INS "Chakra" was inducted into the Indian Navy on February 4 in a bout of not so convincing sophistry by Mr. Gandhi. Obviously having the image of India as the leader of the non-aligned and crusader of disarmament in mind Mr. Gandhi went on to reiterate India's commitment to peace denuclearisation and of course her determination to defend India at all costs from threats to Indian sovereignty and integrity etc. Mr. Gandhi's speech however failed to mention any specific threats that India faced or how a "leased" out soviet submarine could help in the defence of India for it to have "full control of the water around us (India) and

the thousands of kilometers of shoreline that stretch along the Arabian Sea and the Bay of Bengal" — as he said on February 4.

There are reports however that two more Soviet nuclear submarines are to be inducted. According to a report appearing in the 'Pakistan Times' India has shown interest in acquiring two more submarines although there has been no official announcements. New Delhi believes

in finance and smear its image as a peace-loving nation by acquiring one nuclear submarine. There is every likelihood that India will go ahead to build a fleet of nuclear powered submarines as a part of its blue water navy.

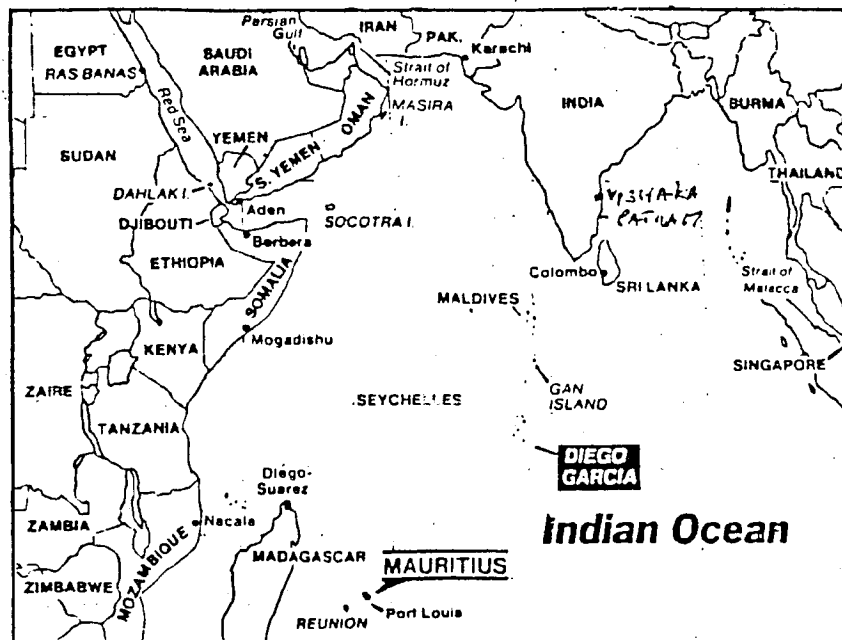
While it could be argued that India needs such a defence specifically because as Mr. Gandhi claims "the Indian Ocean has been militarised and infested with nuclear

India not voted against the Pakistan proposal for a nuclear free zone in South Asia. It has abstained from voting — the implication being that it is for the nuclear non proliferation treaty but does not want to go against India on a matter New Delhi feels so strongly about.

It could be pointed out that the nuclear submarine in question does not carry nuclear weapons but that it is only nuclear prop-

be from China which has nuclear powered submarine but India is reluctant to admit any perceived threat from China for a threat from Pakistan has a far greater political clout in the Indian constituency.

The acquisition of nuclear submarines of the Soviet Union by India certainly brings in a totally different dimension to the proposed Indian Ocean Peace Zone where the concern was super power presence. But Sri Lanka had envisaged the emergence of naval powers from the region itself. Gamini Keerawella, Lecturer of the Peradeniya University in a paper titled Sri Lankan Responses to Super Power Rivalry in the Indian Ocean 1970 — '77 (presented to the recent seminar on Regional conflicts in South Asia conducted by the International Relations programme of the University of Colombo) refers to the developments at the UN after the proposal was accepted by the UN General Assembly in 1971. He says: "The original proposal made by Sri Lanka in the First Committee was very comprehensive and it related as much to the naval forces of the littoral states as to the forces of outside powers. It envisaged the exclusion of armaments, defensive and offensive and military installations from the prescribed areas. As Philip Towle (Australian Analyst) pointed out the strong Indian countries brought pressure on the Sri Lankans behind the scenes to slant their resolution only against the Great Powers." Keerawella quotes Sri Lanka Permanent Representative in the UN Shirley Amerasinghe as follows: "In the course of our consultations it became apparent that members of the committee were not ready for such a comprehensive scheme for demilitarisation of the Indian Ocean and our proposal and our approach have therefore undergone a radical change in deference to restrictions expressed by



that these will be arriving soon. Each second hand submarine the report says, would cost around two billion rupees and a further 5 billion for spare parts, repairs and maintenance incurring at least Rs. 21 billion on the three submarines pushing up the Indian share of the Navy in the Indian defence budget from 13 percent to 25 percent.

Even though the report of 3 submarines is not confirmed there appears to be little reason why India should invest so much

weapons" — it is a fact that every war mongering nation has built up armaments on similar excuses. Kaiser Wilhelm of Germany in World War I did so precisely for the same reason. But neither Mr. Gandhi nor Mr. Gorbachev can get away with such excuses for both are strong supporters of the Indian Ocean Peace Zone proposal — Mr. Gorbachev wanting more peace zones. The Soviet Union has even gone further than India for at the United Nations, it has unlike

elled. But as a senior Sri Lankan diplomat points out nuclear powered submarines are not the best examples of the peaceful uses of nuclear energy. Pakistan Prime Minister Mohamed Khan Junejo had already said it would seriously affect the balance of power in the region and urged the Soviet Union not to supply such sophisticated weapons to India. India the biggest country in South Asia faced no threats from its neighbours, he has said. A threat, if any, India will perceive will

(Continued on page 15)

IPKF men marry Tamil women

In addition to the story of a Jaffna Tamil (Sunday Times, February 14) I have more information on the acts of brutality of the IPKF.

When the IPKF came to Sri Lanka, what happened? They came with the 3 stars. Do you know what the flag of the 3 stars or ENDLF is? The 3 stars flag and the Indian RAW flags are the same, no difference

If the IPKF came to disarm the militants, why is it that their officers marry women in the

North and East? The IPKF Neervely camp commander, for instance, married a Tamil woman at Chempadu Pillayar Temple. About a hundred people attended this wedding. I am informed that the marriage was registered and that the deed of dowry was also executed. The officer in charge of the IPKF at Chunnakam has married the daughter of a well-known ayurvedic physician of the area.

The OIC of the Kokuwil, IPKF detachment

married the daughter of an Appeal Court Judge. About a hundred such marriages took place within one month. Why?

The Tamils fought for a separate state and against Sinhala as the Official Language. But what do they say now? India plans to take over Sri Lanka and make it its 26 state, when we will have to study Hindi. If you don't believe this go to the Attorney-General's Department and ask the Tamil Staff who were here during

the IPKF action. Now every Tamil realizes the IPKF will not leave. So they cooperate with them with fear.

During the IPKF operation Indian troops raped about 2000 women, most of whom were unmarried women. A 40-year-old woman of Inuvill was shot and then raped by a Sikh member of the IPKF. But the woman was dead when the officer raped her. When the Sri Lankan Army moved into villages such things did not hap-

pen, except for one or two incidents.

Beside this, electrical items such as watches, clocks, radios, Japanese made cooking items, as well as clothes were stolen by the IPKF. Many women were shot dead because of the jewellery they wore.

Because of the brutality of the IPKF, many Tamils now support the LTTE.

S. Ponniah
Koduvil

Indian Ocean

(Continued)

our critics.

However much the text of the Indian Ocean Peace Zone resolution may have been diluted in the interest of India the introduction of nuclear powered naval vessels into the region certainly alters the balance of power in the region and the smaller countries are bound to react to the growing Soviet influence via its client to whom naval vessels are "leased" to. It has been pointed out by Keerawella that the explosion of the "peaceful nuclear device" in the Rajasthan desert in 1971 resulted in Sri Lanka changing its attitude towards the IOPZ. Keerawella observes: 'Accordingly Sri Lanka carefully changed her position regarding the IOPZ, vis-a-vis that of the dominant powers in the Indian Ocean. He quotes Shirley Amerisinghe: 'We do not want any great power there. By the same token we do not intend that we should drive out Satan by Beelzebub and allow other

powers within the group of littoral and hinterland states to take place of super powers.

Thus as we asked some weeks ago in these columns: Will Beelzebub replace Satan? Or will it be Satan's proxy?

While Mr. Gandhi's speech at the ceremony of inducting India's first

the Czars and Commissars: A Warm water port in the Indian Ocean? A breakout through Afghanistan which some said was the intention in the Soviet invasion, now is simply not possible. But a State which is totally dependent on the Soviet Union for armaments would well perform the

by Gamini Weerakoon

naval submarine clearly indicated that he was echoing the thoughts of Sardor Patel Panikkar the Indian Naval Strategist, who envisages India controlling the Indian Ocean from the Island of Socotra to the Straits of Malacca, what made Mr. Gorbachev decide to lease out a nuclear submarine to India which he would have well realised would diminish his image as a great peacemaker — an image which he has been cultivating quite successfully. According to some analysts it could be that he wants to assuage India's fears about an imminent rapprochement with China.

On the other hand is this another way of achieving the dream of

Soviet Union's task flying the flag of Non-Alignment!

Mr. Gorbachev's Peace Zone proposals it has been noted caused concern in areas where the dominance is being held by the United States. The Pacific is one region. In the Indian Ocean evacuation of the super powers would give India its pre-eminent position. Now in the Nordic region he proposes a ban of naval and air activity too. It is the Soviet Union that stands to gain. Western analysts point out.

Recently the European Community Foreign Ministers rejected the Soviet proposal on the grounds that such an agreement would create a sanctuary for the Soviet

Union while eroding the allies capabilities for self defence. Danish Prime Minister Ellemann Jensen has said that the security problems faced by Nordic countries were caused by the Soviet Union and that the Nordic region ceased to be a low tension area because of the Soviet military build up in the Kola Peninsula. Mr. Gorbachev in his speech in Murmansk called for a ban on naval and air activity in certain sectors of the Baltic, Norwegian and Greenland seas and the creation of a nuclear free zone of peace. In return he would withdraw Soviet nuclear submarines from the Baltic Sea and provide Soviet ice breaker services to Northern shipping lanes in addition to other offers. According to NATO defence officials the Soviet submarines in the Baltic sea are obsolete and are of little consequence. However they note that the Peace Zone offer deliberately excludes the Barents sea which surrounds the Kola Peninsula where the Soviet Union has built up — according to Western estimates — the largest military complex.

While the Soviet Union has built this mighty military complex, NATO has responded with countermeasures by forward basing US submarines and other naval vessels. Mr. Gorbachev's proposal, it is pointed out would effectively remove NATO's defences while the Soviet Union would have free access through choke points to the Kola Military complex. Mr. Gorbachev, western analysts claim has once again made a peace move — but very much to the advantage of the Soviet Union's defence strategies.

While the arctic seas are far removed from us, of more immediate concern would be the build up of India's blue water navy with Soviet assistance. With Trincomalee being the subject of so much controversy, it could well be that we might be having a nuclear submarine in our waters without our knowledge. True, there are no nuclear weapons on board the Indian sub but Chernobyl has shown us that nuclear generators could be as deadly as nuclear weapons given a slight human lapse.

(Continued from Page 3)

Our relations with the Tamils in the North was tenuous and even that umbilical cord was severed with the sixth amendment to the Constitution.

Now the Indian Government is once again looking at all the people of Sri Lanka due to the Accord which is a good thing.

Q. Are there more IPKF troops due in Sri Lanka?

L.A. The saturation principle that Sri Lanka applied in Trincomalee, Batticaloa and Vavuniya and Vadamarachchi is now being applied by the IPKF. It has been applied by the IPKF in the Jaffna peninsula and now they want to use it in the Eastern Province.

G.D. The question of the IPKF withdrawing from Sri Lanka was not discussed in India. But Mr. Gandhi made it clear that the IPKF will be withdrawn when President Jayewardene wants them withdrawn. As far as the Indian Army is concerned, they would certainly like to withdraw as soon as possible. The Provincial councils concept makes it clear that there is no federalism, no separation.

I do not know of specific numbers but saturation strategy is certainly one part of the strategy. The Indian objective is to clear the North and create conditions conducive to an election by the end of this month and do the same in the East by the end of April. They want to saturate the areas so that the LTTE will be a spent force and to woo away those who extend support to the LTTE.

We must not forget that the IPKF have lost more men in three months than we have in four years.

Q. Was the dismissal of the Janaki Ramachandran Government in Tamil Nadu at the time the President was in New Delhi meant to communicate a message to Sri Lankans, because of the timing?

L.A. It was a spectacular scene, but absolutely disgraceful. Government and opposition MLAs shouting, the Speaker groping for his chair and saying he is in command, the police being summoned and attacking the opposition.

We can draw lessons from this. India has evolved a system of decentralisation but the Central Government is strong enough to always keep the power. If such a situation happens in Sri Lanka with

a Provincial council, then the Central Government will step in.

G.D. The politics in Tamil Nadu became very factional. The Congress (I) wanted to keep aloof but then they heard that the Janaki group were trying to buy their Members of the Legislative Assembly (MLAs). In fact five had already been purchased according to some reports. So New Delhi felt it had to act. The decision was left to the Congress Party in Tamil Nadu, who said the Janaki faction did not have the support of the people. So direct rule was imposed.

As far as Sri Lanka is concerned, India has been an example of how the Centre can always dismiss a provincial government.

Q. Are the Indians keen on talks with the LTTE?

L.A. The Indians are not eager to talk to the LTTE. They don't want the LTTE to use it to bar or hinder IPKF operations.

But the LTTE consists of citizens of Sri Lanka. Citizens of Sri Lanka are free to talk to each other.

Q. What did India feel about your talks with the LTTE?

G.D. I don't know why they are referred to as talks with the LTTE. Kumar Ponnambalam brought a person who is said to be a financial tax collector of the LTTE, who turned out to be his brother-in-law! The terms for talks are clear. Lay down your arms, accept the Accord. If they are willing to do that, we can talk but not to gain a temporary respite from the fighting for their own ends.

Q. An Indian spokesman had said in New Delhi that they are not interested in individuals, when denying a Reuter report that Prabhakaran had slipped out of the net a few days ago in Velvettithurai.

L.A. I do not want to say anything on military strategy, but the IPKF will try to get Prabhakaran, if they can.

G.D. I don't know about that but General Sunderji told us that on three occasions Prabhakaran had slipped through a IPKF net. In one instance, he had been wounded in the leg. The earlier strategy of the IPKF may have been not to capture the LTTE leadership.

Q. Will the IPKF be deployed in the South?

L.A. Certainly not.

G.D. No. It was not raised in New Delhi.

Q. What is the next step?

L.A. Whatever one's views are on the Accord, I feel it is a difficult situation for the country and we must all help to get out of this situation. It is easy for people to say I told you so. But how does that help? Where does that leave us?

One area I felt I could help was in the resettlement of refugees, especially in Trincomalee.

About 80,000 people have been displaced from their homes in the area. Order must be brought back and adequate protection must be given. The actual deployment of Sri Lankan troops is a military decision as well as which areas the IPKF will withdraw from. The first meeting for this was held in Vavuniya last week. There are some who think that India wants Trinco for herself. But the reality is that the Indians want to get the hell out of here.

G.D. The devolution package has been spelt out in detail. It is the TULF point of view which is now being expressed in some quarters as asking for more. The President has made his views clear. All these can be discussed with elected representatives. But the provincial council elections must come first. So let the TULF contest.

LTTE admits military set-back

Sitta, the leader of the political wing of the LTTE in Batticaloa admitted that they had suffered a temporary military set-back through the seizure of their weapons and the depletion of their members by confronting the IPKF. He was however confident that with the Indian Army acting as it did by killing innocent civilians and torturing prisoners would pave the way for LTTE ranks to swell soon.

The LTTE arsenal said Sitta was not

as well stocked as before. Not only were many of their weapons seized by the Indian army during the search operations for weapons, but also the factories that were manufacturing mortar shells had been destroyed by the IPKF. Only about 40% of the arms they possessed had been surrendered to the Indians and it was the stocks they had retained which had helped them to fight the Indian troops.

Curfew in Batticaloa

An indefinite curfew has been imposed in the Batticaloa district with effect from 6 a.m. today. The Joint Operations Command announced that the curfew will continue until further notice.

The IPKF is expected to launch a cordon and search operation in Batticaloa today. This operation is being carried out to prevent the expression of public support for the death fast conducted by the Batticaloa Mothers' Front.



Gamini Dissanayake

Lalith Athulathmudali

The cost of separatism

As the IPKF is by some accounts gearing itself to launch the final assault on the LTTE cadres to bring normalcy to the North and East in an effort to prepare the ground for Provincial Council elections by April, the government gears itself to resettle over 800,000 refugees, the majority of whom are, quite surprisingly, Muslims and Sinhalese.

The task is of gigantic proportions. Their plight, as National Security Minister Lalith Athulathmudali put it in Parliament on January 26 is "dangerous".

This is just one of the many catastrophic outcomes of the five year war against separatism that has claimed over 6000 lives, cost the national kitty over Rs.50 billion, shown up differences in government ranks, some so radical such as that which led to the resignation of Finance Minister Ronnie de Mel, Gamani Jayasuriya and Matugama M. P. Asoka Somaratne - and the near resignation of Justice Minister Nissanka Wijeyeratne over the second Batticaloa Jail break and the assassina-tion that nearly killed Lalith Athulathmudali. The war has helped the radical Marxist JVP to regroup - a regrouping that has resulted in the killing of several government and SLFP politicians. The persisting picture despite all assurances from Colombo and Delhi is one of uncertainty in the North and East and equally disturbing dislocation in the deep South. On the economic front inflation runs at 11 percent, from 6 per cent six months ago. The ravages of the war are exemplified by the soaring cost of living, breakdown in food supply and their attendant inflationary pressures. The nose dive sustained by the unemployment problem estimated to be in the circa of 23 per



cent of the labour force against a backdrop of faltering development (down to 3 per cent GDP last year) adds to the picture of a nation with its back to the wall.

Foreign Minister A.C.S. Hameed's succinct assessment at a prize-giving in Harispatuwa last week was that "... the nation's unity was fractured, its territorial integrity under threat and its future a question mark". Investigations into the upheavals in the country's Universities have established that there has been a breakdown between students and the authorities, that a subversive group has been active in the Universities; that the scenario regarding University teacher problems was a "dismal one" made still darker by growing dissatisfaction among the academic staff.

The Opposition leader Anura Bandaranaike charged in Parliament that the IPKF was not helping to crush terrorism, while Prime Minister R. Premadasa himself, silent on the issue for so long, said in Parliament on January 26 that "... the fourth largest army in the world had failed to contain terrorism in the North and East".

The scenario attending the plantation Tamil sector as President Jayewardene went on international television with the announcement of Provincial Council elections, the Homagama election and thoughts on General and Presidential elections, is one of concern with the whereabouts of an estimated 200,000 Indian Tamils not officially established - a factor that "became part of the disturbed social ethos in the wake of the 1972 Land Reform laws and food shortages," according to Rural Industrial Development Minister S. Thondaman.

Over 40 per cent of these people do not have Sri Lankan citizenship - an issue that has been pending for 24 years, according to the Minister. Ten to twenty per cent of them are believed to have fled to Madras as refugees are they the ones with citizenship or the ones without?

The country's jails are cramped with criminals or 'prisoners of war' - those taken into custody under the Prevention of Terrorisms Act or under emergency regulations.

On the surface, life

apparently goes on as usual in the suburbs. But the street corners are not without their armed sentinels - Testimony to the fear that the state is under siege.

Twelve and a half million Sinhalese, nearly two million Muslims and an equal number of Tamils have begun their struggle through yet another new year, their suspicions of Indian Bona Fides not fully assuaged by statements from National Security Minister Lalith Athulathmudali and Mahaveli Minister Gamini Dissanayake. More gloom is added to the dismal picture with University students spending as much or more time at home than at University.

In the Eastern Province, the Muslims have been muted - their appeals falling on deaf ears.

The upheavals have wrought yet another polarisation - that of the leftist and left oriented political groups into a grand alliance while former terrorist groups and a couple of new political parties have been given legal recognition by the Elections Commission.

EPRLF says time frame not practical for election

The Eelam Peoples' Revolutionary Liberation Front is of the view that the time frame fixed by the government to receive nominations for the Provincial Council election was not practicable.

A central committee member of the EPRLF, A. Vartharaja Perumal, told the 'Sunday Times' that there was no civil administration in the North and the East and that an election could not be held immediately.

"The LTTE could disrupt the election under the prevailing circumstances." He also emphasised the fact that nearly 300,000 refugees who are in and outside the country should be resettled before such a move is taken. He said a proclamation amalgamating the North and the East is a demand of the Tamil people before the elections and was agreed upon by the two countries under the Indo-Lanka Pact.

"There are 1250 Tamil political prisoners still languishing in jail. Half of them are EPRLF members. They are kept in custody even after we have been recognised as a political party by the Commissioner of Elections," he said.

He said that their first and foremost aspiration is to bring peace to the country which has been plagued by acts of violence. He said, "We don't want Indian soldiers withdrawn before the Provincial Council elections. They should be there to ensure

A 'genuine article' for Tamils

The manner in which Vijaya Kumaranatunga was killed and the suspected motive of the killers have brought home the brutal reality that political violence is very much with us.

The assassination of Mr. S. W.R. D. Bandaranaike in 1959 was an isolated act. The killing of former Jaffna Mayor Alfred Duraiappah was the first of its kind in the predominant Tamil areas. Thereafter a series of political assassinations occurred. Tamil politics has never been the same since then. When a popular figure like ex-Manipay M.P. V. Dharmalingam was assassinated, Tamil public opinion was horrified. Political opinion sometimes causes people to view events subjectively. Mountains are made out of molehills and molehills out of mountains depending entirely of course on which side of the fence one is on. Objective reality dawns when a generally popular figure for whom there is an outburst of affection when assassinations take place.

To those who have been following closely the evolution and growth of political violence in the North and East the events in the South are ominously familiar. An amazing number of parallels can be drawn. One such thing is that the killing of Kumaranatunga has caused mass conscience to feel deeply and ponder.

Can the law of the gun be used to suppress and obliterate others holding different political views? is a question to which much thought is being given to now.

One interesting development following Kumaranatunga's death is the mixed feelings of some people towards the perpetrators of the crime. In the North and East the initial stages of violence did not result in civilians being killed. When the Tamil groups started killing civilians many Tamil people could not accept that harsh reality.

"Surely our boys could not do such a thing". This must be the work of some others. The "others" could be anything ranging from the CIA to Mossad but not "our boys." Likewise one sees similar lines developing now over Vijaya's death too. Many bizarre theories about the cause of his death are floating around. Most of them stem from the basic inability to accept the reality that "our boys" in this case the South could also be responsible for the killing. None are so blind as those who have eyes and do not see.

The post Vijaya Kumaranatunga developments have given rise to several demonstrations of sorrow not all of them genuine. The politics of a funeral can be appalling from the perspective of sensitivity. Yet the dynamics of politics not only here but universally will make use of death, devastation and disaster.

Although it may be unpleasant to say this at this juncture one cannot be oblivious of the fact that Kumaranatunga was gradually losing the

political base he once had. At one point many observers felt that Kumaranatunga was the long awaited third force in Sri Lankan politics. However reality of the recent past is that he was increasingly being alienated from his constituency - the lower middle classes and the proletariat. His party was divided within, some were working at cross purposes. Many stalwarts were merely keeping a low profile. He continued to be a popular mass-figure drawing crowds wherever he went. It was very much in doubt as to whether the crowd-pulling ability could be translated into a vote-gathering capacity. The reason for this was the particular stance adopted by Vijaya Kumaranatunga on the ethnic question and the Indo-Lanka Peace Accord. Whereas Vijaya's stance won for him new support areas among the minorities notably the Tamils, section of the Sinhala intelligentsia and sections of radical students, his original support base among the Sinhala community was being steadily eroded. Vijaya's loss was overtly the S.L.F.P.'s and covertly the J.V.P.'s gain.

It is in that context that the spontaneous demonstration of grief in the Tamil areas has to be viewed. The post Independence period has

by D. B. S. Jeyaraj

seen many Sinhala politicians make rosy pronouncements in the peninsula. Those pronouncements were forgotten even before those who uttered them crossed the Elephant Pass. Yet the Tamil people though paranoid of Sinhala politicians also possessed the ability to recognise the genuine article. Former Jaffna G.A. Lionel Fernando was greatly appreciated by the Tamils. There was a genuine wave of sympathy when his mother died. Likewise the death of Sarath Muttettuwagama evoked great sympathy in Tamil areas not because the Tamils were Communists but due to the fact that the Tamils saw in Sarath a genuine friend and fighter for their rights. The same feeling prevails in the case of Vijaya too. It is not because of Vijaya's ideological stance or intellectual accomplishments but due to an instinctive recognition of the man's sincerity of purpose.

At a time when anti-Tamil and anti-Indian feelings were running high Vijaya had the courage to take on this upsurge of feelings. His courage was even greater as he did not belong to the dominant caste or religion among the Sinhala people. Coming from that background he had the temerity to remind hardlines Sinhala elements that Lord Buddha was an Indian too. He said that one takes refuge in the Buddha, the Sangha and the Dhamma and not 'Sinhala Buddhism. Although the irony is that in the light of the Indo-Lanka Accord and the Indian forces pre-

(Continued on page 19

Vijaya's last journey

The funeral of Mr. Vijaya Kumaranatunga, assassinated leader of the Sri Lanka Mahajana Party, will take place at Independence Square today. The funeral procession will begin from the Art Gallery at 1 p.m. and arrive at Independence Square at 4 p.m. The body will be cremated after religious rites.

The route of the funeral procession is Alexandra Road, Deans Road, Symonds Road, Maradana Road, Borella Junction, D.S. Senanayake Mawatha, Dudley Senanayake Mawatha, Horton Place, Maitland Crescent and on to Independence Square.

JVP arms seized

A joint army and police party raided a JVP hideout in Panamure, Embilipitiya and seized a large number of weapons and ammunition including 12 shot guns, 5 galkatas, dynamite, maps of police stations and Very High Frequency equipment robbed from an office in the area. The raid followed information given by a villager that top JVP leaders from Kolonne were visiting the hideout to plan strategy security sources said.

A shootout ensued after the hide-out was surrounded. There were no casualties among the Army and Police. The number of casualties among the subversives was not known. But security sources said there was a trail of blood where the suspects took to the jungles.

Dixit makes assessment tour in the North

by D. B. S. Jeyaraj

The Indian High Commissioner in Sri Lanka Mr. J. N. Dixit returned to Colombo on Friday night after touring the Northern districts of Jaffna, Mannar and Kilinochchi to assess for himself the situation prevalent in those areas.

During the course of the visit, his first to the north for the new year, Mr. Dixit met returning refugees from India, worshipped at the Nallur Kandasamy temple, and discussed

the present situation with citizens committees, in addition to meeting with military and administrative officials.

The Indian envoy went to Talaimannar first where he boarded the S. S. "Ramanujam" and met Sri Lankan Tamil refugees returning from Rameshwaram. 530 persons including 126 children returned.

In Jaffna the Indian

High Commissioner met with citizens committee representatives and discussed relevant issues such as suitable mechanisms for the holding of provincial council elections. The deficiencies from a Tamil perspective in the current devolution package was also discussed.

The citizens committees while being appreciative of the efforts of the IPKF to normalise the situation also pinpointed fundamental

grievances, the fear of living perpetually in the shadow of the gun shortage of food and essential consumer items; the loss of textbooks and uniform by school children; the problem of unemployment particularly among casual employees and those skilled workers in construction industries etc. Citizens also stated that lorries were being hijacked or being levied a heavy extortion dues by

armed youths.

Mr. Dixit assured the representatives that all efforts to redress genuine grievances would be made. He also said that the door to negotiations was still open to the 'Tigers' provided they laid down arms and accepted the accord.

Mr. Dixit returned to Colombo after visiting Kilinochchi and meeting Brig. Kalkhat. He also met military and administrative officials in Jaffna.

(Continued from Page 18)

sence here Vijaya may be accused of not being patriotic. It was actually Vijaya who pioneered and attempted to bring about a rapprochement between the warring people.

The hawks on both sides of the Elephant Pass continued to fight with the hope of a final victory but were deprived of success by the Indians. The Indians could claim this victory only because of the intransigence of the Sinhala and Tamil factions that were in conflict.

What was the process set in motion by Vijaya Kumaranatunga? At a time when "Glasnost" has become a fashionable word one could say that it was Vijaya who introduced 'Glasnost' between the people behind the cadjan curtain and the rest of the country. Commanding high visibility he went to India and met the Tamil militant leaders in Madras, including Prabakaran.

He came back here and publicly articulated that the 'militants' were also humans and Sri Lankans. In that way he undermined the "demonization" of the Tamil groups and in a way legitimised them.

Next he went to Jaffna to negotiate for the release of two soldiers being held in custody by the Tigers. The video cassette he brought back showed Kittu the Jaffna leader, feared as a monster to be an ordinary man. Rahim with his good looks and sophistication made a good impression. Vijaya also paved the way for a delegation of Buddhists priests to visit Jaffna.

Kittu was seen making offerings to the Buddhist priests something which could not be even visualised earlier. The climate was ideal for reconciliation. Yet attitudes hardened and war clouds gathered Vijaya himself was villified mercilessly. His motives and bona fides as a "Sinhalese" were questioned. It could be asked if the Tigers had released the two prisoners to Kumaranatunga unconditionally whether the situation would have been different. He could have gained political popularity in the South. The peace constituency may have been strengthened. The tragedies of 1987 may have been avoided. But the sorry history of Sinhala-Tamil relations is a long list of what might have been.

Vijaya fan in critical condition

A grief stricken fan of the lite actor-politician Vijaya Kumaranatunga, Amarasiri Jayasinghe (30) who set himself ablaze opposite the Art Gallery now lies in a critical state at the Intensive Care Unit of the Colombo General Hospital.

According to hospital sources the condition of Jayasinghe is very se-

rious. Jayasinghe poured petrol over-himself and lit up his body in front of thousands of mourners filing past about 11 p.m. on Friday to pay their last respects.

It took around an hour for some of the mourners to get the young man to hospital.

An Unusual Fall-out

INDIA'S involvement in action in Sri Lanka is hitting Madras residents in the most unexpected of ways. The prolonged fighting has cast its shadow on

of all places, the local vegetable market. Prices of vegetables have shot up by 20 per cent to 30 per cent because Madras has become the main shopping depot for the Indian Peace Keeping Force. Vegetables worth Rs 2 lakh are being bought up by the army every day and since the city's normal consumption is of about Rs 10 lakh, it is only natural that prices have not remained unaffected. Madras housewives could never have guessed that they would one day have to pay for India's involvement in an overseas battle.

Lanka campaign to woo Muslims

THE MAIN OPPOSITION Sri Lanka Freedom party (SLFP) has decided to launch an island-wide campaign to woo the island's Muslims.

Party leader and former premier Mrs Bandaranaike has instructed all district organisers to intensify political work among Muslims.

Mrs Bandaranaike herself chaired a meeting of the recently formed Muslim

Front of the party held last week where all Muslim electoral organisers were present.

The meeting decided that matters adversely affecting the Muslims be listed and submitted to the party to work out measures to be taken at an appropriate time to grant relief and also to spell out the necessary aspects in the forthcoming party manifesto, a freedom party statement issued last week said.

Story of Jaffna's refugees in Colombo



Vairamuttu and his wife Thilakam with their son, daughter-in-law and grandchildren.

Ever since the troubles in Jaffna began, life for Ponniah Vairamuttu, a poor 66 year old fisherman of the village of Sudumalai, was full of problems. Food, which had always been insufficient for both his wife and himself, was even more scarce, just like for so many others in the area. He earned less than Rs 150/= a month, while his 58 year old wife Thilakam would do odd jobs in return for food and money. They both survived on one meal a day and a mouthful of "bulath".

Vairamuttu's troubles worsened last June when a group of IPKF soldiers broke through his wall in brick and plaster structure in which he and his wife lived and ordered him to leave his home.

His wife Thilakam had already left for Colombo prior to this to get some money to make improvements on their home from a daughter working for a household there.

After several months of sheltering in kovils, refugee camps, school compounds, bad food and outbreaks of diarrhoea in the camps, Vairamuttu went back home. But home wasn't there, any more. All that a horrified Vairamuttu found was a heap of rubble. The few items

of clothing, furniture and crockery that he and his wife had were looted as soon as he left the place. Some of his neighbours told him that they had seen people going into his home and taking out the items. Wearing the dirty sarong and shirt, he was left with. Vairamuttu began a long trek to seek out some of his numerous relations. The old man had been injured in his foot some years ago and walking long distances was no small task. His foot hurt him badly. To get away from the fear and insecurity Vairamuttu together with his son Sivakurunathan, a daughter-in-law, and three small grandchildren decided to come to Colombo last December. Someone had told them about a Ministry of Rehabilitation and possible aid. They pawned items and borrowed money for their fare to Colombo.

They met the only person in Colombo they knew, Vairamuttu's eldest daughter Pakiam, who had lived away from them for over 27 years, working as a housekeeper.

Thilakam, Vairamuttu's wife, had already arrived about two months earlier. She had collapsed a few days after her arrival due to lack of food and was put on

several strong antibiotics by the doctor who saw her and who pronounced her in "very poor condition".

They were put up with Thilakam in the small store room behind a garage which belonged to Pakiam's employer. A few days later they were joined by another daughter Valli, her husband Patrick, and two small children who had also come to Colombo for greener pastures.

Life in a store room

For five adults and five small children life in the small storeroom was not easy. They had arrived with neither money nor clothes, except for what they wore. Three of the children were malnourished, all had constant fever, and one developed measles. Valli's husband Patrick

by Malkanthi Leitan

left to find a place in Colombo for them but has not come back to his family as yet.

The family for whom Pakiam worked for collected clothes, money and food for the refugees, but this in no way altered their plight.

Insecure and afraid they stayed all day in the room discussing their future with each other and wondering what would become of them. "We don't know what to do, we cannot plan anything, everything is so uncertain" says Vairamuttu.

Rude and indifferent

Last month some of these poor village folk went to the Ministry of Rehabilitation which they thought would offer them some help. They approached a

Tamil-speaking official for help. "He was rude to us and said he could not help us", says Thilakam. "Later, another Sinhalese official gave us some forms to fill in".

From this point onwards the Variamuttu family's insecurity and confusion only worsened. Once they filled in the forms and took them back an official told them that they would receive Rs. 100 per family to go back to Jaffna while another told them they would get train fare, plus Rs. 100 per family. But before all this, they would have to get a letter from the Grama Sevaka of the area endorsing the fact that they were staying in Colombo.

Their visit to the Grama Sevaka too proved fruitless. The Grama Sevaka asked them to get a letter

from the area Justice of Peace, whom they were not able to meet at all. At this point the poor family with just a smattering of education and most of whom spoke only 6th grade Tamil decided to give up these wild goose chases.

"We were just wasting money on bus-fare and no one ever took the trouble at the Ministry of Rehabilitation to tell us anything as to how we could get assistance and so on" says Thilakam. "Each one said something contradictory to the other, some did not answer our questions".

Fraction of the many

Vairamuttu and his family are just a fraction of the many homeless people



Valli and her two children — their future is uncertain.

fleeing the north. Their future is uncertain and no form of relief or assistance seems to be offered to them by the authorities concerned. And, for poor people like them with limited knowledge about these current matters, should there not be someone in places, which supposedly offer relief to such people to help and explain things to them.

Unsure

Last week Thilakam, her son Sivakurunathan, his wife Ponnakandh, and their three children, one of them barely a month old, decided to return to Jaffna and find some sort of a solution to their problems. The rest of the family are still in Colombo, without a cent to their name troubled and unsure about what the future holds for them.

Pictures by

Gamini Mendis

The Island

DIPLOMACY

High Stakes Gamble

India's role in Sri Lanka has strategic advantages

"I told my commanders that it was a very difficult mission, a very sad mission and also that we would do our utmost to be fair, humane and use minimum force even at the risk of accepting more casualties than we normally would. They were told that they were going in against their own people."

General K. Sundarji, INDIA TODAY, February 1986.

THE first time Krishnaswami Sundarji issued those orders, it was as head of the Indian Army's Western Command. The mission: Operation Bluestar, the June 1984 army action to flush out terrorists from Amritsar's Golden Temple. On October 10, 1987, he found himself repeating exactly the same orders to his commanders, this time as chief of army staff. The mission: Operation Pawan, the Indian Army action to disarm the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) in Sri Lanka.

Both operations bear traumatic similarities—a battle with unfamiliar constraints; the emotional involvement of the civilian population; a congested, urban battleground; a highly-motivated and heavily-armed foe of the same ethnic identity. But there the similarity abruptly ends. Bluestar was a domestic

operation. Pawan has, for the first time, placed Indian troops on foreign soil to tackle the domestic problem of another country, and at considerable cost.

But in the eyes of South Block, Operation Pawan will be worth every paise—and the life of every Indian soldier lost in Sri Lanka. The immediate objective may be to ensure the implementation of the Indo-Sri Lankan Accord but there is also a broader diplomatic advantage inherent in the presence of the Indian Army on the island that is designed to finally—and

firmly—establish India's pre-eminence as the regional superpower.

That may be a bit premature—the accord has a long way to go before full implementation—but the current air of elation and confidence in South Block has not been in evidence since the aftermath of the 1971 operations in what is now Bangladesh. The Indian Peace Keeping

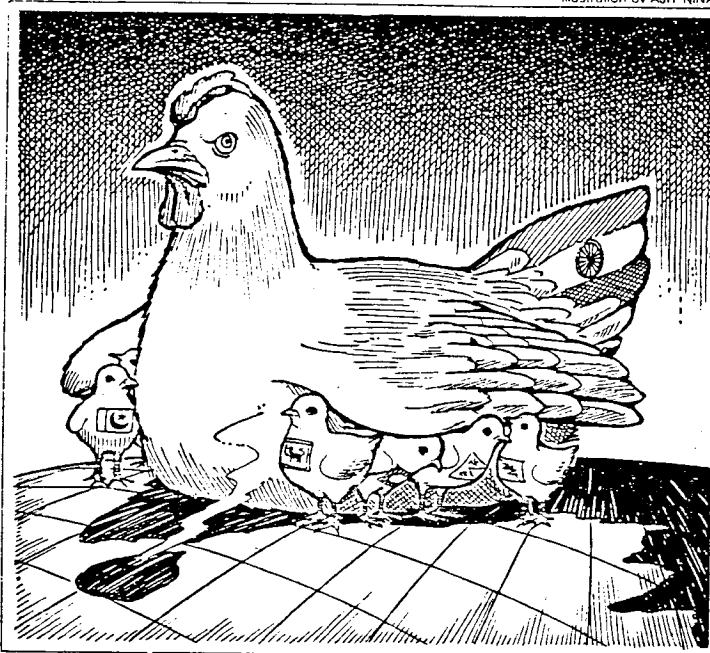


Illustration by AJIT NINAN

There is broader diplomatic advantage inherent in the presence of the Indian Army on the island that is designed to finally establish India's pre-eminence as the regional superpower.

Force (IPKF) in Sri Lanka is seen as the cutting edge of the boldest Indian diplomatic initiative undertaken in recent years. Senior diplomats and army strategists refer to it as a "turning point" in its regional and international ambitions.

In army headquarters, be-medalled generals bandy phrases like: "We're living in exciting times." Others claim: "We are in the process of changing the region's history. It is tragic that we are fighting Tamils but we must use it to advantage."

In that sense, Operation Pawan

(wind) is aptly named. The change in South Block, which houses the offices of the prime minister, the External Affairs Ministry and the Defence Ministry, is remarkable—and palpable. At no other time has the Indian military and political leadership marched so closely in step and to the same drummer. What diplomats refer to as "a projection of India's power", army generals translate as "the higher direction of war". The loss of lives in Sri Lanka, the financial cost and the fact that the enemy is of Tamil origin is seen as small sacrifice compared to the gains for India's long-term strategic interests. According to army sources, the loss of 266 Indian Army lives (the official toll till last

week) is the minimum price they expect to pay for establishing New Delhi's "sphere of influence".

Already, as Indian strategists point out, the effects are in evidence. In one stroke of Rajiv's Parker pen, New Delhi has ensured that the only foreign military presence in Sri Lanka will be Indian. Statements by Sri Lankan ministers like Gamini Disanayake that the accord does not bar Colombo from having Israeli "experts", are seen as catering to a local constituency and not any climb-down on the accord.

More important, in South Block's view, is that Pakistan's military relationship with Sri Lanka has been permanently severed. Prior to the accord, Sri Lankan security forces were being trained by the Pakistan Army in Sri Lanka as well as in Pakistan. The Indian Army brass has also never forgotten that in the 1971

Indo-Pakistan war, Islamabad was allowed to use Colombo as a refuelling base for its aircraft. "That situation will never be allowed to happen again," says a senior army officer. "Pakistan's military involvement in Sri Lanka came to an end on July 29, 1987, and we intend to make certain it stays that way." Officials also point to the fact that the strategic harbour of Trincomalee is now effectively in Indian control and no longer capable of becoming another Diego Garcia. "If the Americans had been given Trinco as an R & R

(rest and recreation) base, we would have had no choice but to treble our naval force," says an Indian admiral.

South Block also points to the potential problem of having 1,20,000 refugees from Sri Lanka sitting on Indian soil indefinitely, a figure that confidential military projections say could easily have doubled had India not intervened. "What we are talking about is the prospect of another Bangladesh in Tamil Nadu. We just could not afford that to happen," says a foreign ministry source.

THESE are, of course, the obvious, immediate benefits for India. But in the high-security corrier of South Block that houses the army top brass' offices, the growing pile of secret position papers, prime ministerial briefs, tactical reports and long-term strategy papers all indicate the broader diplomatic profits from India's Sri Lankan thrust—and a newly-aggressive policy which recognises the growing role of the army as a key element in that policy. Says a serving general: "The Indian Army is not the same as it was in 1962. It now fits into India's power projection."

One such secret report points out that the primary military advantage is that "you are fighting your battles outside your country" (unlike Bluestar), and this has a limited (Tamil Nadu only) domestic fall-out. Army officials insist that Operation Pawan was part of carefully-crafted, long-term strategic planning which included the possibility of high casualties in the initial stages of the operation. "Admittedly, we expected the LTTE to be less intransigent and more in our control. In that sense we miscalculated. But the prospect of the Indian Army having to take on the LTTE militarily was an option in our projections," says a general. Adds Minister of State for External Affairs K. Natwar Singh: "No government can go into an agreement of this nature without having tied up the obvious loose ends. We examined every possible option. There were no low-cost options available. If anybody can suggest a better alternative, we will gladly examine it."

In fact, the secret army papers compare Operation Pawan with the British involvement in the Falklands and forcefully insist that Sri Lanka can "under no circumstances" become another Vietnam or Afghanistan. In military terms, the Indian Army now believes that the LTTE is no longer a major threat and it is only a matter of time before the organisation, or at least a major part of it, surrenders. South Block also claims that in the

event of an unconditional surrender by the LTTE, they will still be ensured accommodation in the subsequent political set-up for the north and east.

Army projections do not, however, discount the prospect of the IPKF being in Sri Lanka indefinitely. In a secret briefing paper sent to Rajiv Gandhi, Sundarji has termed a pull-out by the IPKF as "unacceptable". Says one of his key aides: "We would like to change our nomenclature from IPKF to the Accord Implementation Force. That is our main brief—to ensure that the accord is fully implemented. Pulling out before that will be political and military suicide." In the briefing papers on Operation Pawan, the army has detailed its short-term and long-term intentions which, as one states, "is to

Army intelligence puts the current strength of the LTTE in Sri Lanka at 4,000 men, armed mainly with SLRs (Self-Loading Rifles), AK-47s, G-3 rifles and carbines, heavy machine-guns and RPG rocket launchers. They no longer have the ability to manufacture mines, mortars and grenades as they were doing earlier, except in very small numbers. The IPKF strength is currently 29,633 men. Palaly is the headquarters of the 54th Infantry Division which is responsible for Jaffna city, under the control of the 41st Infantry Brigade while the 91st Infantry Division has been entrusted with protecting the lives of the civilian population. The 18th Infantry Division has been deployed at Navakulli and the 115th Infantry Brigade at Point Pedro. Under the 36th Infantry

The Indian Peace Keeping Force (IPKF) in Sri Lanka is the cutting edge of the boldest Indian diplomatic initiative undertaken in recent years. Senior diplomats and army strategists refer to it as the "turning point".



leave one unified Sri Lanka in which the Tamils are given their rightful status and Sri Lanka is not an adversary".

The short-term plan is, as the paper says, "to bend the LTTE without breaking it". The LTTE still has plenty of arms though they appear to be running short of ammunition. Intelligence sources revealed to INDIA TODAY that they are well funded by expatriate Tamils—the LTTE has recently bought a ship called the *Illyana* in Europe with the intention of loading it with arms and ammunition, sailing it to a port like Singapore and then transferring the cargo to smaller boats to try and slip through the naval blockade of the Palk Straits.

Division, headquartered at Trincomalee, is the 47th Infantry Brigade at Killinochchi, 72nd Infantry Brigade at Vavuniya, 340th (Independent) Infantry Brigade at Trincomalee and Muthur and 76th Infantry Brigade at Batticaloa. The IPKF also has one armoured regiment from 63rd Cavalry with T-72 tanks and air support from *Akbar*, the Indian name for Mi-24 helicopter gunships.

The troops involved have been deliberately chosen to represent as wide a cross-section of the Indian Army as possible and includes: the Brigade of Guards; Parachute Regiment; Para Commandos; Punjab Regiment; Grenadiers; Madras Regiment; Maratha Light Infantry; Raj-

putana Rifles; Rajput Regiment; Sikh Regiment; Sikh Light Infantry; Garhwal Rifles; Mahar Regiment and Gorkha Rifles.

ACCORDING to army intelligence assessments of the situation in Sri Lanka, the fly in the LTTE ointment is not so much Pirabhakaran as his number two, Mahattaya, the man who surfaced last fortnight to orchestrate the handing over of the 18 Indian Army prisoners held by the LTTE. "Mahattaya is now more of a hawk than Pirabhakaran who is perhaps still susceptible to influence from someone like (Tamil Nadu Chief Minister) M.G. Ramachandran. Mahattaya, and perhaps the more blood-thirsty of his followers, will still carry on the battle," says an army source, adding,

top sources, actually welcomed it. "Washington may value its strategic alliance with Islamabad but it is also in their interests to have stability in the region. Only India can ensure that," says the official.

That confidence is bolstered by the unspoken acceptance that the other superpower, the Soviet Union, will back New Delhi to the hilt. Soviet Premier N.T. Ryzhkov in fact, took a public stance last fortnight in "fully supporting" India's role in Sri Lanka. Obviously, it admirably suits Moscow to have India assert herself as the cock of the regional walk. The Indo-Sri Lankan agreement has also been supported at the recent Commonwealth summit, and by the European Economic Community (EEC).

PRAMOD PUSHKARNA



The loss of lives in Sri Lanka, the financial cost of the operation and the fact that the enemy is of Tamil origin are seen as a small sacrifice compared to the gains for India's overall, long-term strategic interests.

IPKF in Jaffna: consolidating its hold

"that means we may be there for some time in a situation comparable to Punjab today. We think India and the Indian Army is big enough to handle two Punjab. That is the basis of our motivation."

And of South Block's indirect game plan—to spread the message of the Rajiv Doctrine to the region. South Block points out that the military offensive has been matched by a diplomatic one. Rajiv's visit to the White House, they assert, was essentially to explain India's role in Sri Lanka, and its broader regional contours. The US Administration reportedly accepted that viewpoint and, according to

That New Delhi has begun to assert her regional authority diplomatically is increasingly in evidence. During the recent border talks between India and China, New Delhi made it abundantly clear that Beijing's claims to Arunachal Pradesh would have to be discarded before any progress was possible. Indian officials say that the army now has the Chinese Army pinned down in Wandung on the border and will continue to apply military pressure to convince Beijing that New Delhi cannot be trifled with. That message may have gone home. The Chinese side was more accommodating than at any of the earlier border talks. Rajiv has been invited to Beijing by the Chinese

leadership and a package border agreement could be on the anvil sooner than most people expect.

India has also let it be known to Nepal that it will no longer tolerate Kathmandu playing sides and has warned Nepal of the consequences of its recent intention to buy anti-aircraft guns from China. Bangladesh leader Ershad's capitulation on the Chakma refugee issue is another indicator. The Indian director-general of military operations recently informed his Pakistani counterpart that the presence of 30,000 Indian troops in Sri Lanka should not tempt Islamabad into any aggressive moves as India was quite capable of handling any military threat from across the border. Says a senior diplomat: "We want to maintain good relations with all our neighbours and respect their unity and territorial integrity. But our size and the legacy of geography has given us a responsibility and a role that we cannot shirk."

In Sri Lanka itself, the Indian Government has launched a new diplomatic offensive to win over, or at least convince of India's good intentions, the most aggressive critics of the accord. High Commissioner J.N. Dixit has, in the past fortnight, met with Sri Lankan Prime Minister Premadasa, the most rabid India-baiter in the Sri Lankan Cabinet. The meeting between the two—the first in almost 18 months—is seen in New Delhi as a major breakthrough. Dixit also met with anti-accord opposition leader and former prime minister Sirimavo Bandaranaike with much more visible success. Bandaranaike's statements after the meeting show a greater appreciation for India's role in the island than at any previous time.

In the eastern part of the island, the IPKF, under a plan called Operation Cachet, is quickly consolidating its hold in the knowledge that the LTTE's writ does not run here as in the north. IPKF sources also say that they have a plan to prevent colonisation by the Sinhalese in the eastern province—one of the main fears of the Tamils. "We are looking at the long-term implications of our involvement. Whichever way the dice falls, we have a contingency plan for it. Every move by the IPKF is approved in New Delhi. Only if there is a 50 per cent chance of success is the green signal given," says one of the officials in charge of monitoring the Sri Lankan situation.

That is perhaps the most credible sign of South Block's intentions to see the accord through to the end—and ensure that India does not suffer in the process. In

South Block, a core group of senior officers from the External Affairs Ministry and the army has been set up to monitor the situation virtually minute-by-minute. "This is a serious issue and we cannot afford to be casual about it. There is pressure on us, there is tremendous pressure on the Sri Lankan Government. But we have the expertise to handle it so that our interests, those of the Sri Lankan Government and of the Tamils in Sri Lanka are met. That is the bottom line," insists Natwar Singh.

Clearly, New Delhi has its sights set on a major diplomatic triumph and is pulling out all the stops to ensure that it is successful. But much will depend on the Sri Lankan Government and Jayewardene himself—and the unwritten

Delhi's new aggressiveness is also obviously correlated to the timing and the new rapport that Sundarji has established with the political high command. Not since the days of Sam Maneckshaw have the armed forces wielded the kind of clout they now do in South Block. The main reason for that is Sundarji himself.

Sundarji wears his flamboyance as a badge of honour, and his powers of persuasion and oratory are legend. The office of the chief of army staff would be unrecognisable to its previous occupants. It bristles with high-tech gadgetry including laser projectors and disks that superimpose images on maps and charts to help plan military strategy and offer alternatives in different operational situations. On major exercises like Brass-

ick, General Patton-like character, his critics paint him to be. Before taking over as chief, Sundarji locked himself away in Goa to compile his personal strategic bible for the Indian Army. His briefs to the prime minister and the Cabinet are military masterpieces, brilliantly written. But there is also no denying that he could be prone to over-confidence. In looking at the regional woods, New Delhi may have missed the trees.

New Delhi's desire to flex muscle is all very well, but to accomplish that effectively also requires widespread public support. India's efforts in Sri Lanka can hardly be said to have that—only because New Delhi's explanations have not been convincing enough. And the reason for that is a crucial one—credibil-

BHAWAN SINGH



Sundarji's command of the language and his strategic thinking have obviously impressed the political leadership and given the military a major role in the foreign policy of the country.

agreements that have been hammered out since the accord was signed last July. The LTTE may be on the run and in disarray, but it will take a lot of convincing before the majority Sinhalese cease viewing the Indian Army as an occupation force. For Indian diplomacy, Sri Lanka represents perhaps the biggest challenge since 1971. Success will ensure that its regional status is commensurate with its size and geographical legacy. Failure will circumscribe India's diplomatic and military role for decades to come.

Considering the daunting odds, is India's regional game plan workable? Obviously, like the green signal given in New Delhi for IPKF operations, the strategy, at the present moment, seems to have a 50 per cent success ratio. But New

tacks, similar equipment stored in a special air-conditioned trailer is taken along. His aides in adjoining offices operate on computers and word processors.

The overall effect is spellbinding and Sundarji's command of the language and his strategic thinking have obviously impressed the political leadership and given the military a major say in foreign policy. His critics, and there are many even within the army, see his ambition as a flaw and have branded him a "death and glory boy", determined to secure his place in military history.

However, the army brass views him with something akin to awe and there is no denying that the man has tremendous charisma. Neither is he the maver-

ity, or the lack of it. If New Delhi is prepared to face the collective suspicion of the neighbours, handle domestic problems and public opinion, it cannot do so effectively without that vital ingredient. More important perhaps is the need for the image of a strong Indian leadership in the international context. Mrs Gandhi was respected by international leaders for precisely that and there was consequently less resistance to her regional policies. Without a strong leadership, domestic stability and public support, New Delhi will be seriously hampered in its regional efforts. The stakes in Sri Lanka may be high but so is the risk of failure. As one general soberly admits: "If we fail, it will not be Rajiv's Waterloo but India's Waterloo."

—DILIP BOBB

A list of the active Tamil militant groups:

LTTE	(LIBERATION TIGERS OF TAMIL EELAM)
PLOT	(PEOPLE'S LIBERATION ORGANISATION OF TAMIL EELAM)
TELO	(TAMIL EELAM LIBERATION ORGANIZATION)
TELA	(TAMIL EELAM LIBERATION ARMY)
TEA	(TAMIL EELAM ARMY)
EROS	(EELAM REVOLUTIONARY ORGANIZATION)
EPRLF	(EELAM PEOPLE'S REVOLUTIONARY LIBERATION FRONT)
TELE	(TAMIL EELAM LIBERATION EXTREMISTS)
TERO	(TAMIL EELAM REVOLUTIONARY ORGANIZATION)
TERPLA	(TAMIL EELAM REVOLUTIONARY PEOPLE'S LIBERATION ARMY)
RFTE	(RED FRONT OF TAMIL EELAMISTS)
TELG	(TAMIL EELAM LIBERATION GUERRILLAS)
NLFT	(NATIONAL LIBERATION FRONT OF TAMIL EELAM)
PLFT	(PEOPLE'S LIBERATION FRONT OF TAMIL EELAM)
IFTA	(ILANKAI FREEDOM TAMIL ARMY)
TEDF	(TAMIL EELAM DEFENCE FRONT)
TENA	(TAMIL EELAM NATIONAL ARMY)
TPSO	(TAMIL PEOPLE'S SECURITY ORGANIZATION)
TPSF	(TAMIL PEOPLE'S SECURITY FRONT)
TEC	(TAMIL EELAM COMMANDO)
TELF	(TAMIL EELAM LIBERATION FRONT)
TEEF	(TAMIL EELAM EAGLES FRONT)
GATE	(GUERRILLA ARMY OF TAMIL EELAM)
RCG	(RED CRESCENT GUERRILLAS)
EM	(EAGLE MOVEMENT)
SRSL	(SOCIALIST REVOLUTIONARY SOCIAL LIBERATION)
TEBM	(TAMIL EELAM BLOOD MOVEMENT)
TPCU	(TAMIL PEOPLE'S COMMAND UNIT)
ELT	(EELAM LIBERATION TIGERS)
TLDF	(TAMIL LIBERATION DEFENCE FRONT)
RELO	(REVOLUTIONARY EELAM LIBERATION ORGANIZATION)
TESS	(TAMIL EELAM SECURITY SERVICE)
PLP	(PEOPLE'S LIBERATION PARTY)
TPDF	(TAMIL PEOPLE'S DEMOCRATIC FRONT)
TELC	(TAMIL EELAM LIBERATION COBRAS)
TS	(THREE STARS)
ENDLF	(EELAM NATIONAL DEMOCRATIC LIBERATION FRONT)

