

NORTH & EAST

“The value of a man
should be in what he gives -
and not in what he is able
to receive”

Albert Einstein

NEWS AND VIEWS IN MASS MEDIA

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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.

JAN - FEB. 1988

BACK COVER: The sources utilised to prepare this issue.

CURRENT EVENTS

TAMIL NADU

Reluctant to Return

Efforts to repatriate Sri Lankan Tamil refugees falter



ONE of the key provisions of the Indo-Sri Lankan accord—the repatriation of Sri Lankan Tamil refugees—is proving just about impossible to implement.

According to the agreement, some 90,000 Tamil refugees who had taken shelter in India were to be sent home and about two lakh Indian Tamils, mostly plantation labourers in Sri Lanka who had opted for Indian citizenship, were to be repatriated to India before the end of the year.

But as 1987 drew to a close last fortnight, efforts to repatriate the first batch of refugees suffered repeated setbacks. Most of them, settled in Tamil Nadu, simply didn't want to return to their island.

The repatriation machine went into gear three months ago. About 700 refugees, belonging to eastern Sri Lanka and

then living in refugee camps in Thanjavur district, were transported to the port town of Tuticorin in southern Tamil Nadu for being shipped to Trincomalee.

But even as the reluctant would-be repatriates awaited their ship, the battle between the Indian Peace Keeping Force (IPKF) and the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) in northern and eastern Sri Lanka broke out. The refugees launched a protest against their deportation, and their return was postponed indefinitely.

Last fortnight, in concert with the Centre, Ramanathapuram district officials in Tamil Nadu listed 250 refugees living in the coastal Mandapam camp—the largest in the state, accommodating 8,000 persons—for deportation. These

refugees, who had earlier fled from the north-western district of Mannar in Sri Lanka, were to be transported back by a naval frigate.

Said Ganapathy Sodalimuthu, 60, a retired class IV Sri Lankan government employee who came from Mannar to Mandapam about two years ago: "My signature was taken on a piece of paper on which something was written. But I couldn't read it as I am illiterate. I was given two months' cash dole as advance and warned by officials to keep my belongings absolutely ready to leave at short notice." But the trip has been postponed twice.

According to the latest schedule, a ship is expected to ferry refugees to and from Sri Lanka—between Rameswaram and Talaimannar—from the first week of January. But considering the record of the past, the fate of that programme remains to be seen. The official reason cited for the most recent postponements was that the sea was rough. But even Indian officials admit in private that this was just an excuse.

The truth is that most of the refugees are not keen on returning. And they are spreading word among the Tamils in India that the Indian Government is throwing them

The Mandapam camp—the largest in the state—accommodates 8,000 refugees. Plans to deport 250 of the camp's inmates have been postponed twice.



out and exposing them to a brutal future. And the public is sympathetic to them. As 32-year-old Muniaya Devi, wife of a Talaimannar trader who had fled to Tamil Nadu three years ago, said: "Right now, the situation in Sri Lanka is not peaceful. It is worse than it was when we fled. Then we had to bother only about the Sri Lankan Army, now we have to also worry about the Indian Army, and the different Tamil militant groups fighting each other."

In India, the refugees are relatively comfortable. Each one gets a cash dole of Rs 50 per fortnight besides subsidised rice and firewood. New Delhi spends over Rs 100 on every Sri Lankan Tamil refugee in a month.

Many of them have found daily wage jobs or have set up small stalls and have settled down. Janardanam Gopalakrishnan, 30, who once worked in a rice mill and came to Mandapam with his wife and three children three years ago, sells lottery tickets outside the refugee camp. He says: "I make at least Rs 10 a day selling these tickets. Now if I am hustled back, not only will I be returning to an uncertain livelihood, I will be forced to contribute money to all the militant groups."

Laments 19-year-old Austin Quentras, son of a Mannar fisherman, who has just completed his training as an electrician in Mandapam: "I'm being kicked out just when I am in a position to earn some money and supplement the meagre dole my parents get."

There are also the pro-LTTE hard-liners in the refugee camps who just do not want to return as a mark of protest against the IPKF's attempts to militarily tame the Tigers. Manickam Karthiligam, 34, a former Jaffna businessman now in Mandapam for the last year-and-a-half, fumes: "We will return only if the Indian Army vacates Jaffna. The IPKF came in as the saviour of the Tamils but it is now acting as their suppressor."

The unwillingness of the refugees to return is not the only reason for the postponement of their departure. The Sri Lankan Government has indicated that it will not take care of the refugees unless



"Because of the IPKF, the situation in Sri Lanka is worse than when we fled."

MUNIAYA DEVI

India fulfils its part of the bargain—repatriation, aboard the same ships on their return journey, of Sri Lankan Tamils who had opted for Indian citizenship. The Indian side had made no plans for this counter-repatriation.

So, Tamil Nadu is still stuck with the 35,000 refugees in the camps, another estimated 55,000 outside, besides the nearly 2,000 Tamil militants belonging to PLOTE (People's Liberation Organisation of Tamil Eelam) and TELO (Tamil

"If I am forced to go back now, I will be returning to an uncertain livelihood."

AUSTIN QUENTRAS



Eelam Liberation Organisation). The PLOTE and TELO cadres are still too terrified of the LTTE to go back. And the Tamil Nadu Government's repeated exhortation to register themselves as refugees and be ready to return, has been to little avail.

The M.G. Ramachandran Government's differing perception of the Sri Lankan situation is another fly in the repatriation ointment. While New Delhi was getting increasingly hostile to the Ti-

gers, MGR, according to senior state ministers, was suggesting a Christmas truce between the IPKF and the LTTE to Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi last fortnight. Rajiv politely insisted that a truce would be meaningful only if the Tigers agreed to unconditionally surrender all their arms. But the Tamil Nadu chief minister could not guarantee that. And before his recent visit to New Delhi, MGR orally asked the AIADMK party newspapers Anna and Manramurasu to desist from publishing reports critical of LTTE.

There were several other indications of the late chief minister's differences with the Central Government over the Tamil problem. For example, when the Tigers charged the IPKF with aiding, arming and abetting groups like the PLOTE, TELO and ENDLF (Eelam National Democratic Liberation Front), the Tamil Nadu Police—which had hitherto winked at the misdeeds of PLOTE and TELO militants on the outskirts of Madras during the last three years—suddenly pulled up its socks last month and came down heavily on their violations of law. In one fell swoop, Chingleput East police detained 122 PLOTE and TELO militants for interrogation in the vicinity of Madras, and arrested 26 of them in connection with dacoities and robberies.

The refugee scenario in Tamil Nadu continued to be depressing as the year drew to a close. Nearly a lakh of Tamil refugees, in no mood to leave, continued to live there at an exorbitant cost to the Indian treasury. And gun-toting PLOTE and TELO militants continued to create law and order havoc in the state. With no solution in sight, the Indo-Sri Lankan accord seemed to be taking an all-round battering.

—S.H. VENKATRAMANI

An Indo-Lanka Treaty?

The President's impending visit to India will naturally focus attention on the proposed Indo-Sri Lanka Treaty which Mr. Jayewardene himself announced in an address to the Bandaranaike Centre for International Studies. Needless to say such an agreement between Sri Lanka and her closest neighbour, who has now become enmeshed in the country's principal domestic political issue, will be of the most vital significance to Sri Lanka and deserves wide discussion and debate.

Since India will be a party to this agreement it is natural that comparisons will be made with the Indo-Soviet Friendship Treaty. In fact already there has been speculation as to whether the proposed Indo-Sri Lanka Treaty will not be on the same lines. Of course when one takes into account the various physical dimensions of Sri Lanka, India and the Soviet Union and the political realities at the back of the two sets of relationships between Sri Lanka and India and India and the Soviet Union such comparisons will appear untenable. But yet it is well for us to remember that after several years there is still a debate in India about the nature and scope of her treaty with the Soviet Union. While some contend that it is in the nature of a defence treaty there are others who argue that this is not so.

In the case of India it has looked to the Soviet Union as a counter weight to the People's Republic of China against which she has gone to war and with which India has a prickly border problem. Another factor worth bearing in mind is that for almost the entirety of the post-independence period India has been subjected to the monolithic rule of a single political party so that in the case of the Indo-Soviet Treaty there has been consensus and commitment to it. In the case of any proposed Indo-Sri Lanka Treaty there must be consensus about its necessity and acceptability among Sri Lanka's major political parties. This is particularly necessary in the context of the altered relationship between Sri Lanka and India in the light of the signing of the Indo-Sri Lanka agreement and the letters exchanged between the two countries.

It is hardly necessary to say here that these events have generated a considerable degree of controversy in the country. Therefore any future moves in the direction of a treaty will have to be preceded by the keenest discussion possible. It will be recalled that Britain's decision to enter the European Common Market was the result of one of the most wide-ranging and intense debates in recent memory. Likewise every opportunity must be provided for debate, discussion and even controversy before any decision is taken to sign an Indo-Sri Lanka Treaty.

A national debate and consensus is necessary in the light of the peculiar circumstances attending on the proposed treaty. It has become fashionable in recent years to say that India has become part of the Sri Lankan problem. No doubt the Indo-Sri Lanka Accord envisaged the possibility of India becoming a part of the solution. Whether these fond hopes have been realised is, of course, a moot point. It has now become part of the obligatory noises in support of the accord to say that Sri Lanka cannot ignore the reality of India as the major power of the South Asian region. It is however also worth remembering that India is preening herself before the mirror in the role of the paramount regional power. Whether such a doctrine of Indian hegemonism is acceptable or not will itself be a subject of debate. This is another reason why any formalised relationship of Sri Lanka with India should be subjected to the most open and deep-going debate possible.

President Jayewardene's State visit to Delhi

DISCUSS TREATY

Sri Lanka and India will discuss next week the signing of a mutual assistance treaty between them based on the letters of exchange that formed part of the Peace Accord concluded last July.

President Jayewardene is to take up the subject of such a treaty on his State visit to India beginning January 25 during which he will hold talks with Indian leaders, particularly Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi.

It is not immediately certain whether President Jayewardene who visits India as Chief Guest at the Republic Day celebrations will take a copy of the draft treaty with him.

The draft treaty now being licked into shape contains a mutuality clause which is considered important from Sri Lanka's standpoint.

This clause commits India not to allow any of its ports to be used for military purposes by another country in a manner prejudicial to Sri Lanka's interests.

In the 'Letters of exchange' between Prime Minister Gandhi and President Jayewardene which formed an annexure to the Peace Accord Sri Lanka undertook not to allow Trincomalee or any other ports here to be used for military purposes by a third country if it was prejudicial to Indian interests.

Signals from New Delhi indicate that Mr. Gandhi is ready to discuss the treaty on which he has an "open mind". It is possible that India would even go ahead with such a mutual assistance agreement if it is seen as cementing relations with Sri Lanka, well informed diplomatic sources said.

Reward money enhanced

The government has enhanced the reward money that will be paid to any information leading to the recovery of weapons and explosives.

Cash rewards as indicated below will be paid to any person.

Automatic & semi automatic weapons - Rs.30000/-,
Sub machine guns - Rs.30000/-, Automatic Shot guns - Rs.15000/-, Repeater Shot guns Rs.10000/-, 303 rifles - Rs.10000/-, Pistols and revolvers - Rs.5000/-, Single or double barrel Shot guns - Rs.5000/-, Hand grenades of any make - Rs.1000/-

Information can be given in person or by telephone or by letter;

a. to any police station or to any Police officer in your area or personally known to you.

b. Duty Officer, Police Headquarters, Tele. 24980, 24978,

c. Director-CID 20141 to 20145.

Any person giving information can do so by a code name without disclosing his identity. Weapons and explosives recovered on information will be announced in the newspapers and the radio.

The person who gives the information can then claim the reward by mentioning his code name to the person or the Institution to which he provided the information. The government will also consider giving priority in employment to unemployed persons giving information.

SRI LANKA

Attacking the Accord

Anti-IPKF sentiment scales a new high



THERE could have been no greater irony than Sri Lankan President J.R. Jayewardene's presence as chief guest at India's Republic Day parade last fortnight. With internal opposition to the Indo-Sri Lankan accord snowballing alarmingly in recent weeks, New Delhi now has the added worry of the political survival of the ageing leader.

The contretemps plaguing the accord has regenerated the anti-accord lobby in Sri Lanka. Now, as Jayewardene enters the final year of his presidency, the pastiche of forces ranged against him is pushing him to the penumbra of isolation. As the venerable pro-accord, leftist leader of Sri Lanka, Dr Colvin de Silva remarked: "Jayewardene now stands more isolated than he ever was since he came to power 10 years ago."

A manifestation of this alienation was the resignation of the high-profile finance minister, Ronnie de Mel, from the Cabinet on January 18. De Mel was both a loyal lieutenant of Jayewardene and an ardent supporter of the accord. Yet, he deliberately invited presidential penal action with his outcry in Parliament: "We must hold elections before the people get up and say, 'in God's name, go'." Leader of the Opposition Anura

Bandaranaike said: "Ronnie is the most intelligent weathercock in the politics of Sri Lanka. He knows which way the wind is blowing." Significantly, in 1976, de Mel quit the ruling Sri Lanka Freedom Party (SLFP) to join Jayewardene's United National Party (UNP). The elections that followed immediately after saw the routing of the SLFP.

Said de Mel after his resignation: "The faltering of the accord since September brought about a loss of face for those of us who supported the accord and provided grist to those who were opposed to it." Indeed, in the last few months, despite Jayewardene's absolute control over the party, cabinet ministers have become

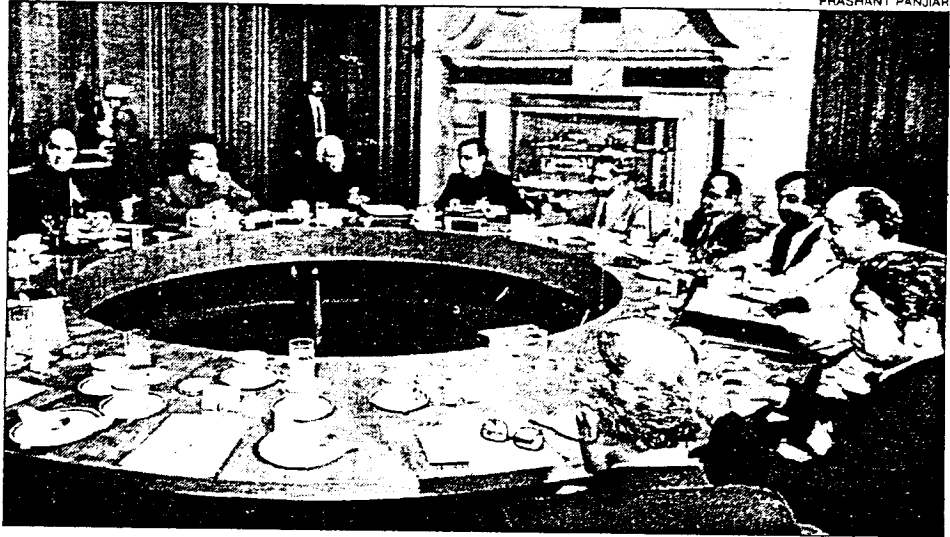
increasingly strident in their criticism. On December 31, in a public speech riddled with anti-Jayewardene innuendo, Prime Minister R. Premadasa asked: "Why should the neighbour be brought to scold our quarrelling children?" And, in Parliament, National Security Minister Lalith Athulathmudali declared: "The people want the IPKF (the Indian Peace Keeping Force) to go."

The swelling numbers of the IPKF and its prolonged stay have created a grave

cial, and economic barriers. Said Premadasa: "From Jaffna to Sangamanthuduwa, people want the IPKF to leave."

But despite the sudden change in the scenario, there is no immediate danger of the Jayewardene Government collapsing. Gamini Jayasuriya, who resigned from the Cabinet on the issue of the accord observed: "Ninety-five per cent of the MPs are unhappy. But they will stay with Jayewardene because they shrink out of power."

There is also no denying Jayewardene's alarming alienation from the public. The general feeling is one of betrayal and the President is blamed for the feeling of insecurity that exists. The accord now serves as a catalyst for the people's desire for change—they want elections. Sensing this mood, many ministers have chosen to



FRASHANT PANJIAR

The leitmotiv of Jayewardene's visit was to assuage Sinhala fears by negotiating for the IPKF's withdrawal and for a treaty to ensure reciprocal relations between the two nations.

psychosis in Sri Lanka. Nobody buys the line that India came to protect the Tamils. Said the ebullient Athulathmudali: "Let's face it. The experience all over the world is that external forces come to a country to pursue their own ends." This view was endorsed by the Tamils and Sinhalese alike. Cocktail and diplomatic circles in Colombo are abuzz with rumours of the IPKF's intended five-year stay—fuelled by reports that the IPKF has been leasing houses in Jaffna for five years.

Ironically, the presence of the IPKF has brought a new unity in Sri Lankan society, cutting through political, ethnic, so-

go with the public. In fact, resentment over the accord, corruption, and the overdue elections have triggered off a realignment of forces in Sri Lankan politics. The most visible manifestation of this is the attempt by such diverse elements as the SLFP, Ronnie de Mel, and Premadasa to win over the outlawed Janatha Vimukthi Peramuna (JVP) that has created a wave of terror in the south. So strong is public opinion against the President, that a senior minister admitted: "If elections are held now, the UNP would undoubtedly be defeated."

Jayewardene's only chance of sur-

vival is to make the accord work. Like Rajiv Gandhi, he has a personal stake in the accord: it is the only way he can hope to salvage his credibility and defuse public hostility. Rajiv and Jayewardene need each other's cooperation more than ever before. The *leitmotiv* of Jayewardene's six-day sojourn in New Delhi last week was to assuage Sinhala fears on two scores: one, to evolve a time frame for the early return of the IPKF—an obsession with all Sri Lankans; the second issue was to arrive closer to a treaty so that Sri Lankans feel there is reciprocity in the relations between the two countries.

The President has come in for sharp criticism due to the public perception that while he is committed to Sri Lankan ports not being used for anti-Indian activity, he has not succeeded in getting India to

of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) in Jaffna has been broken, the IPKF has a long way to go to de-claw the Tigers in the northern and eastern provinces.

The east in fact, now increasingly holds the key to the future of the accord—and Sri Lanka. Says Dew Gunasekhara, a communist MP: "The real hot-spot is the eastern province and not Jaffna." Adds Athulathudali: "My fear is that the accord will leave the east in a shambles."

Unlike the north which is Tamil-dominated, the east is far more complex—in terms of area, terrain and demographic composition—it is inhabited by Tamils, Muslims and Sinhalese. Admits Dr Nissanka Wijeyeratna, minister for justice: "It will take a long time to complete the work of peace and restore normalcy in the east." Already there are Tamil, Sinhalese

persuade Jayewardene to postpone the referendum indefinitely.

Such assurances may seem ingenious but they rarely work. Jayewardene, whose political acumen and cunning are legendary, is unlikely to remain content as a pawn in India's hands. He would like to hold the referendum and wrap up the ethnic problem before he leaves the political stage.

As far as long-term peace is concerned, it is a no-win situation, even if a referendum is held. If it goes against a merger, the LTTE will continue its armed struggle to regain "lost territory". If it is for a merger, the Muslims and Sinhalese will agitate, as most of them do not want to be ruled by the Jaffna Tamils. Already a Sinhala riot group is active in Trincomalee. And the Muslims of the east—who

form 30 per cent of the Muslim population in the entire country—have formed a congress that projects an eastern outlook. According to a senior minister in the Cabinet: "This new Muslim organisation is establishing contacts with Libya and Iran for support." As Anura Bandaranaike said: "You bring the north and east together with the accord. Then you separate them with a referendum. This is going to bring about total chaos."

Since mid-January, civil administration in the northern and eastern provinces has come to a standstill. Public servants have been killed (M.M. Maqbul, the government agent of Mannar, was shot dead on January 22 while he was going to Talaimannar to make arrangements for the resettlement of refugees arriving from Rameshwaram). The LTTE is holding Tamil civilians hostage to terror. The secretariat, courts and administration offices have no attendance.



The resignation of high-profile finance minister Ronnie de Mel, an ardent supporter of the accord, has exposed Jayewardene's growing isolation from his cabinet and the public.

reciprocate. This is seen as an unpardonable presidential lapse in view of the fact that Tamil Nadu has in the past been used as a training ground and supply base for the Tamil militants.

But even the signing of a treaty will not obfuscate the fact that the accord is in trouble. The peace process was to have been crowned with elections to the provincial councils, slated to be held before December 1987. The ground reality is that the IPKF is yet to disarm the Tigers who have regrouped themselves effectively in the east, particularly in Batticaloa. While the stranglehold of the Liberation Tigers

and, in the post-accord phase, Muslim refugees in the east.

The Tamils consider the east as part of their homeland. However, due to Sinhala colonisation by successive governments, it is likely that the proposed referendum in the east will go against a merger as the Sinhalese view it as the first step to Eelam. On the eve of signing the accord, the Tamils' fears about a referendum were allayed by Indian officials who referred to another clause in the accord wherein the referendum could be postponed at the discretion of the President. The behind-the-scenes assurance was that India could

Threats are issued on handbills, posters and often personally.

Meanwhile, Jayewardene has kept his part of the agreement by passing the Provincial Councils' Election Bill in Parliament. As a South Block official admitted: "At the risk of his life, Jayewardene stuck to his end of the bargain. It is India that has failed to deliver."

Surreptitious moves for direct talks between the Sri Lankan Government and the LTTE are now being made. Said G.G. Ponnambalam, leader of the All-Ceylon Tamil Congress who tried to arrange a meeting between the LTTE and Gamini

JAFFNA REVISITED

By Qadri Ismail

"They only control the town and the Jaffna-Navatkuli sector," said the Sri Lankan military officer. "In the rest of the peninsula they are at any time in danger of snipers."

The statement was accurate but, understandably, not quite the whole picture. Understandably, because the officer in question, yearning for a bit of action, has to content himself with cooling his heels inside barracks while the IPKF performs active military functions. Couple this with a dislike anyway of the presence of the Indian army in Sri Lanka and you know why the officer was not willing to be completely correct in describing the military situation in the northern peninsula last week.

One of the Sri Lankan's superiors did. "You cannot totally eliminate an enemy that uses guerilla tactics," said he. "But as far as that is possible the IPKF has done it. The only thing is they had to use more than a division of troops to achieve that. The question we now ask is whether they will do the same in the east. Whether they will finish the job and go."

Whether the Indians will "finish the job" would depend more on a political than a military decision. It is clear from his comments that Rajiv Gandhi would like to see this happen. But the Foreign, Defence and Intelligence establishments apparently have a different perspective. There are two reasons adduced for this. One if they "finish" the Tigers, the IPKF would have no publicly acceptable reason to remain here. Two, they would lose an important pressure point on the Sri Lankan government if they do so.

The other question that arises here is regards the feasibility of such a programme. Both the small size and geographical character (lagoon plus heavily built up area) of the peninsula made it relatively easy for the IPKF to achieve what they did, provided they were willing to take heavy casualties and were not very concerned about the damage to civilian life and property they would cause. Nevertheless, the bulk of the Tiger cadre managed to escape. In a press statement issued from London last week, they admit to losing only "martyrs" since the 10th of October. Assuming the figure is understated, it would include some casualties outside the peninsula, thus making the final toll not very high.

As long as these boys are alive they will be around to fight. It will not be enough just to kill or to capture the leadership (assuming that to be possible). Jaffna was a very difficult battle; the scrub jungle, lack of roads and larger area of the mainland, from Mannar to Batticaloa, would make a Jaffna look like a bar-room brawl in comparison with a campaign there. Despite which, the Indians have started deploying afresh division of troops, mainly in the east, from last week. That they may launch 'Operation Pawan' Part Two sometime in the next few days cannot be ruled out.

It is not within reason to believe that a miracle can be achieved in the east in the one week before President Jayewardene, in an act unimaginable a few months ago, is chief guest at the Indian Republic Day celebrations. (Where, according to a press report, he will stay for the "beating of the retreat" — no, not the return of the IPKF, but the concluding ceremony of the celebrations!) But, keeping in mind that the tempo of Tiger operations had drastically reduced this year (they have killed just 5 Indian soldiers and three times that many Sinhala civilians), the IPKF may decide that the LTTE should be dealt a breaking blow before they can reorganise.

As said before, though the Tigers are low on supplies, the Indians may not be able to defeat a guerilla foe — assuming they want to. It was probably a combination of this, together with mounting public pressure on the Sri Lankan government to get the IPKF out, that led to the secret talks with the Tigers. Both the Ministers involved, and now the Tigers in a press statement, have denied that these talks ever took place.

It is now clear why they fell through. It was an attempt initiated by the LTTE to get the IPKF out by making a deal with the Sri Lankan government directly — where the Tigers were even willing to hand over the administration of the east to the government provided they got the north. President Jayewardene would have none of it. Thus, the chances of a fresh Indian assault on the Tigers in the east looks more likely.

In all this, the ordinary Tamil continues to suffer. The Indians arranged a three-hour conducted tour of Jaffna town and Nallur last week to get across the impression that everything was normal but in the few minutes available to those who broke away from the itinerary and managed small conversations with ordinary people, it was very clear that things were far from "normal" — whatever the Indians may mean by that.

Brigadier R.I.S. Kahlon, the Town Commandant, took great pains to detail what they were upto and why things were almost tickety-boo. When questioned, however, he said that he did not foresee the curfew being lifted in the immediate future. This night curfew has been in continuous operation for almost three months. Normal? Not quite. And the Brigadier, who in the course of the interview said he "believed any society is judged by how they treat women," said also, in an unfortunate choice of words, that "every soldier's initial entry is feared."

Therefore it came as no surprise to us, even though we met up with no one who had been raped, to be told by the Indians that four soldiers had been punished for just that offence. The number of rapes is surely greatly exaggerated (the Tiger figure is 600 plus) but the many stories have definitely unnerved Jaffna women.

"I haven't met anyone who was raped," said a woman teacher at Chundikulji Girls College, "But we have only 70% attendance in school. This is because girls from outside town are scared to come in due to the checking." Normal? Doesn't look like it, does it?

That very morning, a hospital employee from out of town had his three teenage girls taken from home to a camp two and a half miles away and questioned. Nothing happened to them, but this didn't make the father any the more happier with the IPKF. "If they do things in a genuine way and work, we will be happy," he said. "But when we are harassed at our homes even, how can we be?"

Or, take this comment from a government employee at the bazaar. "Don't be misled by the crowd here today," he said. "This is because people are shopping for Pongal tomorrow. We all come here only because we have to. If someone throws a grenade at a soldier they will shoot back and many ordinary people will get killed. We are always frightened. I can only say things are normal if the IPKF goes from the town."

It is not at all possible from the brief tour we got to gauge the temper of the Jaffna public. (Just as we began talking to two priests at the Nallur kovil, for instance, we were called back to our jeeps. And, though requested, we were not taken to the university or to see a battle ravaged town. One thing, though, was extremely clear: the schools may be open, electricity and water resupp-

(Continued on page 13)

80,000 fled E. P since December

Violence in the Batticaloa District from December 2 had forced about 80,000 persons to flee their homes, Government Agent, Batticaloa, K. Selvaratnam said yesterday.

In an interview over the telephone, the GA said about 30,000 of that number were those who had fled their homes after clashes between the Tigers and Muslims following the killing of Kattankudy tiger leader, Naseer, and one of his colleagues by an unidentified person on December 24.

"Approximately 80,000 persons, consisting of some 20,000 families, are in 40 refugee camps in the district," he said.

Six of these major camps are at Kattankudy, four at Ottamavedi, three at Araimpattai, two at Morakotanchenai and two at Pethalai. The rest are located in various places in the district.

"Some people," he said, "are refusing to go back to their homes despite my assuring them that they will not face any problems if they return to their homes."

There were five categories of refugees. They were the affected refugees, 'fear' refugees, displaced refugees, incidental refugees and professional refugees.

"Even if the first four categories wish to return to their homes, the fifth category of refugees would not like to do so," he said.

Lankan police commence investigations

The IPKF and Sri Lankan police based in Trincomalee have begun investigations into certain incidents where houses vacated by Sinhala families after the recent LTTE attacks have been systematically destroyed by a separatist group.

In the latest incident reported from Trincomalee two quite large houses belonging to two Sinhala families have been set on fire. The incident is said to have occurred after the chief occupants of these houses had paid a visit in a bus to get back to Trincomalee and settle down once again.

It was also reported that the EPRLF was mainly responsible for these acts of arson.

Earlier reports said local thugs had removed valuable furniture and other items including door and window frames from Sinhala houses left vacant after the violence.

In another incident two Tamils and a Sinhala youth who were travelling to Trincomalee from Morawewa have been abducted by the EPRLF. The Sinhala youth has managed to escape and reported the incident to the Police.

The whereabouts of the two Tamil youths are still unknown.

IPKF Commander

NEW DELHI, Jan. 9 — India has replaced the commander of its 35,000-man peacekeeping force in Sri Lanka. A Defence Ministry spokesman said on Saturday.

Major General S. C. Sirdeshpande replaced Major General Harkirat Singh as Commander on Friday, the spokesman said. He gave no reason for the change.

Safeguard our democratic rights

By Sirima Bandaranaike

The SLFP is issuing this statement to apprise the people of a device adopted by the government of monkeying with the electoral system as a prelude to introducing a Martial Law system of administration. This will deprive the people of their right to vote at an election. We warn the President that if such an attempt is made — overtly or covertly the consequences would be serious both for the Government and the people. The SLFP will vehemently oppose it with all its might, and invite the Opposition forces to join them.

What stalks the land today is plain murder; brutal killings everywhere accelerated by the introduction of the Green Tigers (currently parading as Black Tigers). The elin nation of our citizens — especially the youth — with official blessings, the indiscriminate arrest and detention of people (mainly supporters of the SLFP) without the slightest regard to the process of law has made people live in fear, suspicion and insecurity in addition to their daily economic hardships.

The failure of the President to check the unbridled abuse and misuse of power by an irresponsible government plunging a whole nation of Sinhalese, Tamils, Muslims down a precipice of blood, tears and shame would appear to be a calamity. And so, terror and counter-terror, killings and counter-killings have become the order of the day. In fact, today the killings, the sudden disappearances of young people and bread-winners of families, the atrocities committed on our people, be they Sinhala, Tamil or Muslim in the name of so called law and order or peace-keeping are reaching levels of callousness which can only go back to the days of the Gestapo and the odious apparatus of Nazi rule.

Grievance of a nation

But, inside the country, to whom can we complain? To whom can we address this grievance of a nation? And political life is so organized here, that victims can complain only to the wrongdoer and his minions.

There is another aspect to this dissidence and turmoil. That is the virtual take-over of our government by the Government of India, under the guise of an 'Accord' — never placed before the people for their approval. The Government of India has throughout the negotiations with Sri Lanka insisted that the proposals that emerge in the discussions shall not be placed before the people at a Referendum, to which our Government happily acceded. No wonder, a dissatisfied people who realise what is happening to their country without remedy, go on a spree of disorder and violence. We do not approve or condone all that; but a nation's self-respect is injured; and to expect people to grovel and obey at the feet of what they see as a sell-out must be sheer hallucination. I must say.

Then comes the Indian Peace-Keeping Force; the IPKF. Its position is most anomalous to put it mildly; and its status, role and conduct would seriously deserve to be investigated by the highest international authority. We Sri Lankans are a people who reverently think of some of the greatest sons of India from Lord Buddha and Emperor Asoka to Mahatma Gandhi and the Nehru family. But the way that nearly 35,000 of the IPKF are asserting their presence, with many of them conducting themselves in such a stance of immorality, plunder, insolence and terror against the very Tamil people — men, women and children they have allegedly come to protect, as well as against the Sinhalese and the Muslims, might take a few decades to be forgotten.

Trespass on morals

If the IPKF has come here on invitation quite apart from the legitimacy of such an invitation, they must at least conduct themselves, without trespassing on our laws, morals, family life and the humble expectations of the ordinary Tamil people, at least. If they are not here on invitation, but as an invading force, just about to annex Sri Lanka with a puppet UNP Government, then the IPKF must drop its mask and proclaim that fact; because then the international community will take due notice of that position; and our people will also decide how to respond.

Amidst all this confusion, the tragi-comic aspect is that the Government is still continuing the process of tinkering with the electoral system which commenced from the time they took office; and the whole outlook in all their electoral engineering is plainly to ensure that they are permanently in office even if they have to face the grim prospect of a General Election in spite of all the constitutional manoeuvres which may be harnessed to prevent such a catastrophe for them.

Legislation is ready to change even the electoral system that has been already planted in the Constitution by this Government, not for the sake of the people, but for the benefit of a single party — the party that is holding the reins of power.

The manipulations are to keep the ruling Government in power; but we are confident, irrespective of all these manoeuvres, the people, if given the opportunity will give the Government the proper response.

Diversion of power

It is most saddening to observe that in this Government's play with the electoral system, all kinds of concoctions like nominating MP's from a national list of candidates in addition to electoral candidates, bonus seats, zonal systems, etc. — all rolled into one complex amalgam of lunacy to complicate the electoral process and confuse the people in their exercise of the franchise which the Constitution says "shall be free, equal and by secret ballot."

But the Constitution itself has become worthless paper today. It is called the Supreme Law of the country; but it has thirteen (13) Amendments made in its first nine years; and one has only to examine the rationale behind each Amendment to realise that in Sri Lanka, there is nothing called a Supreme Law. There are laws on paper in this country, but there is no Rule of Law. This is in addition to the fact that the sovereign status has been seriously impaired by the alarming Indian presence on our soil.

We are credibly informed that the Government is contemplating extending its life-time by the creation of a 'Martial Law' administration under the guise of constitutional and legislative modifications diverting power and functions gradually away from the civil administration. The present Government has reached the stage when it fears to face the people and has to seek refuge away from the democratic process. As an initial measure, the Government is seeking to grant an amnesty to all service personnel for acts of wrong-doing.

As a preventive measure, we issue this warning to the President and the Government not to seek undemocratic avenues, and call upon the people to safeguard their cherished democratic right to elect and defeat Governments which they always enjoyed under previous SLFP and UNP administrations.



Mr. E. M. Gopalaratnam - Editor of 'Eelamurusu'. He is now being detained by the IPKF in the Kankesanturai hospital in a room meant for hard core terrorists

Mr.S.M. Gopalaratnam, Editor of one of the leading Tamil dailies published from Jaffna, the "Eelamurusu", continues to be under the detention of the Indian Peace Keeping Force since December 25, despite appeals for his release to the Sri Lanka Government, the Indian High Commissioner, Mr.J.N. Dixit and the IPKF.

The presses of the "Eelamurusu" and the "Murusoli", another Tamil daily, were destroyed by the IPKF on October 10, on the ground that these were giving publicity to the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Ealam and criticising the activities of the IPKF

Mr. Gopalaratnam is one of the oldest and best known Tamil journalists in Sri Lanka. Starting his journalistic career at the "Virakesari", he later became Editor of the long standing Jaffna Tamil daily, the "Eelanadu". He moved over to the "Eelamurusu" two years ago.

According to Mr. G. G. Navaratne, Editor of the Jaffna based "Saturday Review" (which too has suspended publication since October 17 owing to what he says are the "impossible conditions" in Jaffna), Mr. Gopalaratnam is kept in the premises of the abandoned Kankesanturai hospital in a room marked "D" which is meant for hard core terrorists.

A number of other Tamil journalists and press workers are also under detention at the KKS hospital premises.

NCMC - Medical Students' Committee explains

The following is a statement issued by the Medical Students Committee on the NCNC issue.

A problem which has a history of more than seven years came to a crisis in July 1987. The struggle against NCMC gained sufficient momentum to precipitate collective action.

Ours is a struggle against a grave injustice. An injustice which was forced upon medical education in Sri Lanka.

This struggle is against the NCMC, which is trying to obtain a state medical degree for a group of private medical students. Due to the recent public outcry many facts which were long hidden from the people have been uncovered. But still there seem to be rather shameless attempts to distort the facts and mislead the general public.

Q. What do the Colombo medical students want?

A. We want a severance of all links between the University of Colombo and the NCMC.

Priority in employment, for graduates from the state medical faculties, in the government health service.

Q. Does that mean the Colombo medical students want MBBS Colombo, not to be granted to the students of the NCMC.

A. Yes. We think MBBS Colombo should not be given to the students of the NCMC.

Q. But they have been admitted with a promise of MBBS Colombo. Haven't they?

A. The law does not contemplate the University, conferring its existing degrees on students from a recognised institute. At no stage, was any such promise made to the students of the NCMC by anybody who has legal authority to do so. If anybody has indeed made such a promise it is a very serious misuse of authority.

If the NCMC students produce proof that such a promise has been made to them we are prepared to assist them in taking legal action against the culprits.

Q. Isn't that unfair from the view point of the NCMC students who have toiled hard for six years towards this destination?

A. Although many students of NCMC don't have the necessary qualifications to enter a University we have thought about the few who might have minimum qualifications. That is why we aren't asking that the NCMC be closed down. We are only demanding that they should not be camouflaged in our degree. If they want a medical degree they can certainly be awarded a degree distinctly different from ours. If the Sri Lanka medical council thinks that they are fit to treat patients they can practise as doctors in Sri Lanka.

Q. Is there any legal provision to make the NCMC an independent degree awarding institute?

A. Although it is not a matter relevant to us we have sought legal opinion. By making a few amendments to the present University act this can be done with retrospective effect without violating the constitution.

Q. Is it possible to do this immediately.

A. If they have a genuine interest in solving this problem this is not a difficult task for them. How quickly they can get parliamentary amendments passed is very clearly seen by the manner in which they used their political influence to get the necessary legislation ready to start the NCMC in 1980.

Dr. Walter Gooneratne who is a member of the board of governors of the NCMC writing an article to "Sri Lankan Family Physician" volume five September 1982 says, "The papers were carried by us to and from Attorney General's Department to Government Press and Parliament how many times I cannot remember but ultimately it was passed in all its three readings and that too during the budget debate".

Q. Why do state medical students oppose granting of MBBS Colombo to NCMC students?

A. Two major reasons can be given for this protest. Firstly they are a totally different group of students who have been selected on com-

(Continued on page 16)

Reopening of varsities: no decision yet

The prospects of Colombo and Kelaniya universities reopening in the near future appear to be bleak. The two universities were closed last month after students' agitation and incidents leading to the robbing of question papers.

The Vice Chancellors of the two universities Prof. Stanley Wijesundera and Dr. M. J. Marasinghe respectively, contacted by the "Sunday Observer". Prof. Wijesundera said that the University Council was meeting regularly but no solution has been worked out yet.

The Colombo University was closed on December 21, when students with the aim of stopping the First in Laws, Commerce and Arts examinations grabbed the bags containing the question papers and intimidated the supervisors. The exams were postponed indefinitely and the university was closed.

Meanwhile, in the Kelaniya University, where the students clashed with the police after a search of the University premises by the latter, the authorities are equally helpless. Dr. Marasinghe said that the university was ready to open any time but as long as the

students carry on their agitations without due consideration towards their studies, the possibility of reopening was poor.

Out of the sixty-six days that the university was open during the last two terms lectures were held only on thirty-three days due to strikes. "The quality of the degree will definitely fall if we rush through the syllabus" he said.

Meanwhile, at the Moratuwa Campus, by far the most peaceful of the four universities in Colombo, the authorities are still discussing the demands made by the first year engineering students. The university has already settled two demands - one for longer study leave periods and the other for methods of examination, but the staff seems disappointed with the attitude of the students who mobbed the Vice Chancellor's office last month.

The Sri Jayewardenepura University which was closed on December 10, after the Dons resigned their academic posts, is still closed and the Medical Faculty of the Colombo University closed due to the NCMC issue is yet to open after a prolonged closure.

SRI LANKA

The Opposition Within

The JVP unleashes a reign of terror on the UNP

"WE will start the fight tomorrow itself. Of course this will be by bullet, not by the ballot."



A mere two days after he spoke out so bravely at a public meeting at Matara in southern Sri Lanka, President Junius Richard Jayewardene found himself pitched once again in the middle of a new battle field. But, unfortunately for him, the bullets that started the war in right earnest, all 20 of them, did not come from the UZI sub-machine guns of his troops. They came instead from the barrel of a single Chinese-made T-56 rifle. And just five seconds later, as four bodies lay crumpled in the spanking white upholstery of a Hyundai Stellar sedan in Colombo's bustling Wellawatte area, the Jayewardene Government was left in a state of demoralisation that it will take a long time recovering from. "This was the worst of all blows, worse than even the bombing of the Parliament. This is the last thing the President needed or was prepared for," confided a senior member of the Jayewardene Cabinet.

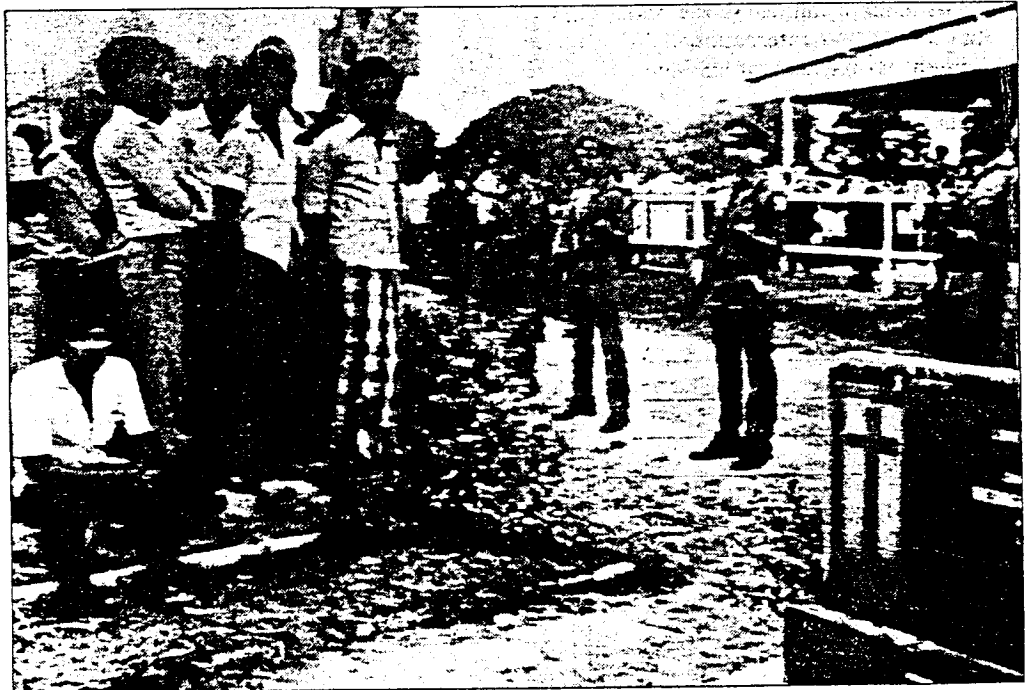
Thirty seven-year-old Harsha Abheywardene, killed instantly in the ambush, was more than just the president of the ruling United National Party (UNP). For Jayewardene, Harsha was one of his most trusted confidantes and a key figure among the small bunch of younger leaders that he had been planning to use as political storm-troopers to counter the challenge of the Sinhala chauvinist groups in southern Sri Lanka. Said a cabinet member who did not want to be identified: "In party matters the President had always kept the signing power with himself. But Harsha had the power and trust to draw the dotted line for the President to

sign. By killing him the extremists have hit the old man where it hurts him most."

In both intelligence and political circles there was not much doubt that the killers in this case belonged to the extreme right wing Janatha Vimukthi Peramuna (JVP) (see box), which has so far carried out nearly 60 assassinations with the sole intention of destroying UNP morale and terrorising politicians who support the Indo-Sri Lanka accord. Said a senior police officer in Colombo: "Harsha's death would absolutely terrify the rank and file of the UNP which hasn't been in great shape anyway since the signing of the accord. This could hasten the pace of defections at lower levels."

The warning is hardly exaggerated as with the reign of terror spread by the JVP against the UNP, hundreds of grass roots workers have already been deserting the party. Deep inside the rural areas of southern Sri Lanka, placards announcing their "severance" of relations with the UNP are a common sight outside houses of the ruling party functionaries. Some UNP

Jayewardene at Abheywardene's funeral; and (below) police restraining crowds



Photographs by UNI



contest Parliament elections. I know the JVP very well," he said.

But on the whole the mood in the ruling party circles was not so generous. Diplomatic sources in Colombo said the assassination, which came along with the stabbing of another middle-level UNP leader has, if anything, firmed Jayewardene's mind on launching a paramilitary offensive against the JVP. The mood was evident all along last fortnight as in one rambling speech after another, the ageing President threatened to liquidate the terrorists whom he often identifies as the southern separatists. "They think and act as brutes," he said referring to them, adding in the same vein: "We cannot treat them as humans. We have to be tough if we have to free the country from the calamity they represent." Just how tough he planned to be was apparent as the police and intelligence officials talked of an "active offensive of the 1971 kind" against the JVP, referring to the major insurrection years ago that consumed at least 20,000 lives before it was subdued. Ominously, the Government had also despatched large contingents of the Paramilitary Special Task Force (PSTF) trained by the Israeli and British mercenary experts.

But experts say that this time even a better equipped and trained police would find it harder to control the JVP as it is unlikely to make the old mistake of launching frontal, self-destructive attacks at police stations, military camps and other well-guarded installations such

While many members of the ruling UNP privately endorse the JVP's anti-accord campaign, its backing from the opposition SLFP is substantial.

as airports. Intelligence officers say the Sinhala extremists' strategy clearly is to paralyse the Government by breaking the morale of the UNP and police forces. "They neither have the manpower nor the ammunition to bring down a government directly. But they have plenty of motivation and expertise to keep us on tenterhooks," says a senior intelligence officer.

That is the strategy also revealed by the JVP in numerous posters and audio cassettes that clandestinely circulate in Sri Lankan universities and colleges. The killings have coincided with a flurry of death threats to UNP and police officials and with attacks on vans carrying government newspapers to rural areas. "We do not have many weapons, but unlike the Sri Lankan Army or the IPKF we use them sensibly. If we have five rifles we will use them to kill 5,000 people," a prominent JVP sympathiser said, asserting that his group was much too highly motivated to be cowed down by the Government's threats of armed action: "These speeches are Jayewardene's swan song. At the moment he is the most frightened man in Sri Lanka. He can't survive long after giving India a permanent caveat on our claims to sovereignty," he said.

More than anything else it is this interpretation of the accord that has provided the JVP campaigners with their most lethal ammunition. The anti-accord campaign has already won over a substantial percentage of the student community to the JVP's side, which is responsible for the indefinite closure of the major universities at Colombo, Kelaniya and Sri Jayawardhanpura. In and around Colombo, walls in educational institutions are plastered with the increasingly familiar slogan of 'Hinsakari bandurusenava palaharinu' (drive out the violent army of apes)—using for the IPKF the ubiquitous Ramayan allusion.

The JVP thrives on the fact that the opposition to the presence of the IPKF cuts across political, ethnic and ideological lines. While many members of even the ruling party, opposed to the accord, privately endorse the JVP campaign, its backing in the main opposition party, Sri Lanka Freedom Party (SLFP) is substantial. While Sirimavo Bandarnaike's son Anura is believed to be leaning increasingly towards the JVP, even a moderate SLFP leader like Lakshman Jayakody, a prominent member of Parliament is critical of the accord signed behind their backs.

Following the logic of, your enemy's enemy being your friend, the accord has thus brought close, enemies as bitter as the JVP and SLFP which had crushed the 1971 uprising so ruthlessly. On an entirely different plane, say well-placed diplomats and Sri Lankan intelligence officials, the same logic has also achieved something even more incredible: at least the beginning of a link between the extreme right wing Sinhala chauvinists and Tamil militants in the north who are

leaders have even put in advertisements in regional newspapers to announce their desertion of the party. Senior party leaders in Colombo admit it is becoming more difficult for them to reassure their partymen in distant places to hang on to the party, and more vitally, to the accord which is being increasingly opposed.

While in the North and the East the Indian Peace Keeping Force (IPKF) continued to wrestle with the lingering resistance from the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) it was the new challenge from the South that seemed to endanger the accord and its Sri Lankan backers most of all. "We still cannot say for sure who did this, but we know there are people who want to sabotage the accord with violence," said a rueful Finance Minister Ronnie De Mel who also happens to be one of the main backers of the theory that the only way to neutralise the JVP challenge is to lift the ban on the party and let its leaders be absorbed by national mainstream politics. "I would bring them into the political process and let them

believed to have given weapons to the jvp. Intelligence sources say some guns were gifted but most were sold by groups other than the LTTE who preferred to make some quick money rather than surrender their guns to the IPKF. With some weapons also captured from the armed forces, the jvp is estimated to have about 50 automatic weapons besides

cruder guns and home-made bombs.

But more than the number of guns or bullets, the jvp's strength lies in the Government's failure to convince the Sinhala population, particularly the youth, of the real meaning of the accord. As a Colombo University professor notes, that would never be easy considering that Jayewardene has fed the

people on a dose of anti-Indianism for a whole decade. "After all this, how do you convince a simple student that India has suddenly begun to smell like roses," says he, underlining the painful reality that the anti-accord whirlwind is no more than a logical consequence of what Jayewardene and his party had been sowing for a decade. —SHEKHAR GUPTA

JVP

Radical Cult

If the popular Sinhala distrust of the Indo-Sri Lanka accord is a product of the rabid anti-Indianism propagated by the current UNP Government, the rise of the jvp was a direct consequence of Colombo's racist policy in the 1960s. The policy created a massive flotsam of educated Sinhala youth with not enough white collar jobs to satisfy their newly aroused aspirations. The Sinhala-only laws churned out fresh graduates in the heartland of southern Sri Lanka and as frustrations grew they increasingly looked leftwards for solace.

Firing the imagination of these youths was Rohana Wijeweera, son of an old communist activist, who had got a scholarship to study medicine at Moscow's Patrice Lumumba University but returned three years later, disillusioned with medicine and Soviet communism. He joined the radical, pro-Beijing youth front group and, disillusioned with that as well, formed his own "revolutionary" outfit, the jvp which, he claimed, was going to tackle the problem of the left turning right.

Soon enough, however, Wijeweera himself turned to violence. He recruited thousands of youths all over the Sinhala areas and indoctrinated them through his famous five lessons on economic disparities, colonial economic domination, Indian expansionism, destruction of the traditional left and, finally the path of subversion. By early 1971 he had put enough followers through the fifth lesson to launch a massive uprising which began with simultaneous attacks on 43 police stations and on Colombo city. But Sirimavo's government fought back with massive international help. Both India and Pakistan flew in military hardware and Indian troops also flew in to guard Colombo's Katunayake

airport. The revolution was soon over, taking a toll of at least 20,000 people. Wijeweera was caught, tried, sentenced to life imprisonment and consigned to Jaffna jail. But in 1977 the new Jayewardene Government decided to be soft, lifted the ban on the jvp and released Wijeweera.

And after six years of dabbling in democracy—he contested the presi-

roundings Wijeweera was in his elements. Quietly—the Sri Lankan Government was busy fighting the Tamil militants in the North and the East—the jvp swelled its cadres, collected weapons and made a complete ideological turn around from extreme left to extreme right, taking under its new umbrella the more radical Buddhist bhikkhus.

By 1986 as tripartite negotiations on the Tamil problem gathered momentum, the jvp had emerged as the most rabid opponent of any concession to the Tamils. And as soon as the agreement was signed this year, the jvp hit out with selective attacks on the UNP and very nearly annihilated its entire leadership with the grenade attack in the Parliament.

Today a harried Sri Lankan police force and intelligence machinery wants Wijeweera as desperately as the IPKF wants Pirabhakaran in the North. But, having learnt from his disastrous experience in 1971, Wijeweera is unlikely to repeat the blunder of coming out in to the open. Following in the footsteps of other fanatical leaders like Khomeini and Bhindranwale he too propagates his ideology through clandestinely circulated cassettes, and is increasingly winning a following among the Sinhala youth. Says a Colombo University professor: "There is no denying the fact that the opposition to the accord, which Sinhala chauvinists consider a sellout of their national pride, is the most popular political line in Sri Lanka today. How can you blame the jvp for taking it when even the SLFP and other groups are trimming their sails to suit the new winds?"

Significantly, Wijeweera's recent cassettes have hailed Prime Minister Premadasa as a "patriotic friend". That leaves Jayewardene in an unenviable spot, where it is becoming increasingly difficult to tell friend from foe within his own bastion.

—SHEKHAR GUPTA



Rohana Wijeweera: violent ways

dential election and even polled 2.7 lakh votes, more than twice as much as the traditional left—Wijeweera returned in 1983 to what he knew best. He was named as the mastermind in the widespread anti-Tamil riots in Colombo in July 1983. Jayewardene again banned the jvp. "This," says Reggie Siriwardena, an analyst at the Colombo-based International Centre for Ethnic Studies, "was a major blunder. The jvp should have been allowed to stay in mainstream politics. The ban made it go underground yet again." And back once again in familiar sur-



Tamil Nadu tail must not wag the Indian dog

Dr. Ralph Bultjens, Professor of Social Sciences, New York University

Foreign policy would be extremely important for us in the coming decades since it can decisively influence domestic policy. Since independence there has been a benign neglect of foreign policy and the instruments that determine policy with disastrous consequences. We must regard foreign affairs as our shield and our spear in a metaphorical sense.

Sri Lankans must realise that foreign policy is a multi-layered activity that embraces three levels. There is a policy as defined by political leaders; execution of that policy as carried out by diplomats and other government officials; public opinion as expressed by citizens, pressure groups and the press. The fact that we did not have a separate foreign ministry until 1978 is evidence of the neglect of our foreign policy apparatus since 1948.

A whole series of new issues are going to shape our foreign policy over the coming years. The

(Continued from Page 7)

lied, women officers brought into frisk women civilians and there may be food in abundance in the shops — but the ordinary person in the streets, which are crawling with Indian soldiers is just not at ease.

No, an accurate portrait of Jaffna can only come from an individual visit of the Sri Lankan government restores telephone communication. But there are some things the IPKF would admit to if asked. Like their continuing to detain 380 people, including nine women. Some of these people are there from October, but, the Brigadier said, may not have been interrogated yet. (Not where have we heard that before!) Among them, in what the Brigadier interestingly enough called a “rehabilitation camp” is the editor of the ‘Eelamurasu’ — the Tiger newspaper which was blown up by the IPKF.

The ‘Eelanadu’, by the way, has been allowed to resume publication. Without irony, its publisher told us that he would only be carrying news “useful” to the

The Jaffna papers gave as one sided a representation of events as some Sinhala language ones did, all this indicates that things are certainly not “normal” in Jaffna. And, with notables in sight, are likely to remain that miserable way for some time.

To conclude, a personal incident that illustrates well just how the IPKF is handling things. I told its PRO that, since I had been shot by an MI-24 helicopter, I would very much like to pose for a photograph next to one that was lying on the tarmac at Palali. It would make a nice memento. Not only did Major Gill refuse me permission, he even denied that a helicopter called the MI-24 existed in the first place! Now maybe the Major, being in the army, is ignorant of what the air force possesses, but that one incident revealed clearly as did the forces of the citizenry why Indian “public relations” in Jaffna were a disaster. No amount of doling sweets to little children can change that.

tensions between East and West is steadily diminishing while the North-South gap continues to grow. Non-alignment itself is undergoing change with the emergence of new leaders and groups of nations such as SAARC and ASEAN.

Of course the India Factor will loom largest in our foreign policy and national security concerns. We have to take into account India's dominating presence in the Indian Ocean region. This does not mean however that we succumb to Indian dominance. To be aware that the great powers including the Soviet Union and the United States consider South Asia as India's sphere of influence is crucial.

Our relationship with India must be developed at three levels. The Sri Lankan political leaders and intelligentsia must have links with political leaders of India from all shades of opinion. Trade and cultural ties with Tamil Nadu must be expanded to lessen tension with them. We must assiduously cultivate major Asian nations like China, Japan, Pakistan and Bangladesh while developing ties with India.

However unlike in the recent past we must not let the Tamil Nadu tail to wag the Indian dog. Nobody is happy about the presence of the Indian Peace Keeping Force here. When this phase of Indian military intervention in Sri Lanka is over we must ensure that it does not happen again and again.

This was the case with Cyprus and Cuba which had repeated Turkish and American military interventions. To achieve this we must strive to establish a balance of power in the region and cultivate all major world powers.

Grand alliance for PC elections

Progressive forces in the country are planning a grand alliance of opposition political parties to contest the Provincial Council elections, a spokesman said yesterday.

The Communist Party and the Sri Lanka Mahajana Pakshya have drawn up a joint program to bring together the progressive forces including the Northern militant groups PLOTE, EPRLF and other Tamil organisations in the grand alliance.

The Lanka Sama Samaja Party and the Nava Sama Samaja Party are joining the C.P. and SLMP in their program.

Secretary to the SLMP Mr. Y.P. Silva told the Sunday Times that they were looking forward to all progressive groups of all communities joining their program, if they agreed with the contents in principle.

The program envisages an alternative system of government with different policies which would grant greater sharing of power and wealth. It also envisages the devolution of power accepting the democratic rights of the minorities, so that citizens of Sri Lanka can live again as equal citizens of one country.

Though they have had no contact with the LTTE so far they have distributed their program to all other parties on the basis that individual terrorism stems from and is the result of state terrorism. Though the EPRLF and PLOTE in particular have sought recognition as political parties in their own right there is a strong possibility that they might join the grand alliance too.

IPKF to publish paper in Jaffna?

by M. Ismeth

The IPKF will shortly begin publication of a Tamil newspaper in Jaffna for free distribution among Jaffna residents states a Madras based Tamil language Magazine.

According to this magazine “Rani” in its edition of December 20, 1987 the IPKF newspaper will publish news that comes over All India Radio and the Doordarshan.

The two Tamil publications the “Eela Murasu” and “Muraloli” which were in circulation in Jaffna before the IPKF went to Jaffna were banned and their offices destroyed three months ago by the IPKF, the Magazine states.

India to train more military men

More Sri Lankan military officers are likely to be sent for training in India as a result of the new relationship between Colombo and New Delhi brought about by the Indo-Lanka peace accord, security sources said.

They said the defence establishments of both countries had discussed the possibility of more placements of Sri Lankan officers in staff colleges in India.

India has continued to provide a limited training for Sri Lankan military officers even though the ethnic conflict soured relations between the two neighbours, as a result of which Colombo went in for large scale training of officers in Pakistan, they said.

Indian Ocean – a Militarised Zone

by Gamini Weerakoon

Despite the calls for the Indian Ocean to be declared a Zone of Peace for the past decade recent events indicate that this region with a population of 1.5 billion people is about to enter a phase of rapid militarisation.

Last week the Indian Navy acquired its first nuclear submarine. It was 'leased' by the Soviet Union to its friend and ally. There were no comments from Indian leader Rajiv Gandhi or top Indian officials about this. It would indeed, need the best of convoluted Indian diplomatic rhetoric to square up the acquisition of nuclear powered submarines with four decades of passionate pleas for disarmament. Nevertheless the Indian acquisition did receive blessings from unexpected quarters: British Defence Secretary Mr. George Younger.

As reported in "The Island", Mr. Younger has said on the submarine acquisition: "We Britain regard it as an absolutely legitimate decision to be taken by the Indians to defend themselves in whatever way they choose... We are absolutely relaxed about it".

While this is the official position of the British Government it has also to be pointed out that Mr. Younger made this statement in New Delhi, and as the Reuter report said: Mr. Younger is in India to pave way for British arms sales and Britain and India is expected to sign a memorandum of understanding on the transfer of technology next month.

The report added that Britain was reluctant to give its military secrets to Soviet Union's best friend in the region but all that had been overcome. Mr. Younger had also been talking with Indian officials on matters such as sales of tank turrets to update India's main tank the 'Vijayantha', Hawk trainer and radar equipment in addition to the sale of British Aero space Hawk to replace India's aged Hunter and Mig 21. The Reuter report noted there could be joint manufacture, assembly and servicing and back up services if India chose the

Hawk over its rival, the Franco German Alpha jet.

Britain, we are constantly reminded, is a nation of shopkeepers and with the Defence Secretary himself cast in the role of an arms salesman in New Delhi, his options other than to agree that it was "an absolute legitimate decision" was limited.

Yet, this statement of the Foreign Secretary is in consonance with the strategy of the United States too, of improving relations with India by helping India to enhance its autonomy in weapons production and reducing the leverage that the Soviet Union presently has as India's dominant arms supplier. The United States too signed a memorandum of understanding with India in October 1984 on the sale of high technology, especially high technology which Mr. Rajiv Gandhi needs in his attempt to accelerate India's progress to be among world powers.

The West's gift, of high tech to India is not altogether altruistic. It is an attempt to wean away India from Soviet influence or at best prevent it from increasing its tilt to Moscow. This accommodation by the West especially since Mr. Gandhi's emergence is bound to alter the balance of power in the Indian Ocean region although Mr. Younger may say otherwise.

For example how would China and Pakistan react to India's militarisation of the Indian Ocean? Even though the West may decline a request by President Zia for nuclear submarines it could be quite possible that China too may "lease" a nuclear submarine to Pakistan. Besides India's geopolitical horizons are stretching from Cape Comorin to the South Pole (there are Indian scientific teams now on the South Pole) and also towards the Straits of Malacca and the Red Sea in the East and West.

One reason why the British Foreign Secretary may have spoken of the nuclear submarine not

affecting the balance of power in the Indian Ocean region is because it was a "leased" out submarine of the Soviet Union and projection of Soviet Power rather than the introduction of a new power factor. The Soviet Union according to reports of defence analysts has now about 35 vessels including Submarines plying the Indian Ocean and the addition of one submarine over which the Soviet Union would have a effective degree of control may not radically alter the balance of power in the Indian Ocean region in the immediate future. However if this trend continues the Soviet Union may project its Naval power through its South Asian ally into the Indian Ocean. The super power influence in the region keeps mounting and despite a decade of ringing calls of a Peace Zone of the Indian Ocean, it is now as distant as ever, with a regional power attempting to build a blue water navy.

US-USSR

The United States has now moved its armada of ships to the Gulf and today this is the World's hottest spot where a violent conflagration may erupt at any given moment.

Further South there is

the US base of Diego Garcia which is now being claimed by Mauritius and its Prime Minister Anerood Jugnauth who proclaims his commitment to non-alignment and despite his opposition to Diego Garcia, has resumed providing labour supplies and is conducting a useful trade with the American base according to a recent report of the New York Times Service.

The Soviet Union's position has been that it has no bases in the Indian Ocean but the facilities it enjoys in many ports is well known. Reports indicate that its latest manoeuvre is to establish a military base in the Seychelles.

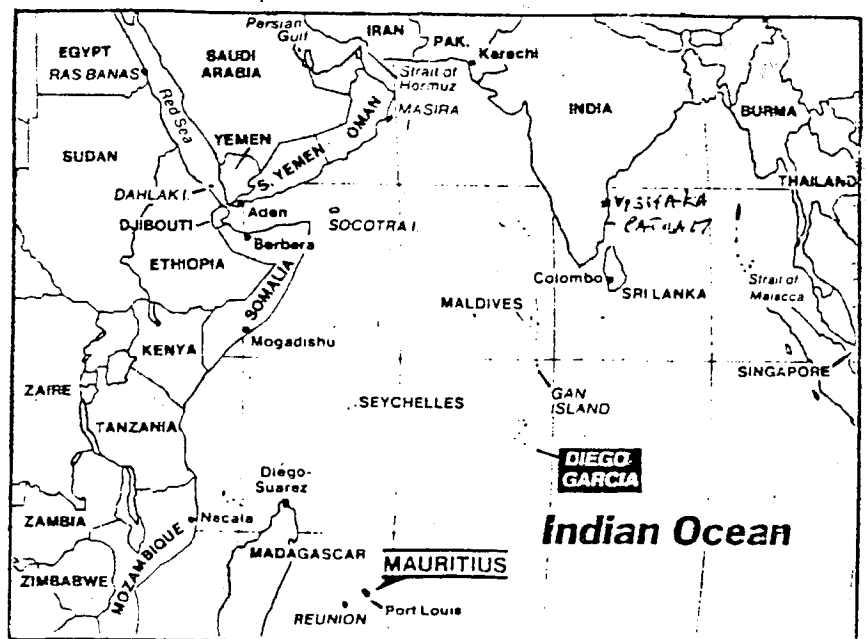
The Soviet Union has however been looking out for bases in the Indian Ocean from the early seventies.

In the seventies it was reported that the Maldivian Government was offered a colossal sum of money for the Gan Island base which was once held by the British but the Maldivians had not obliged. Earlier the Soviet Union had been having naval facilities in Somalia at Berbera but a reversal of political for-

tunes had resulted in their evictions. Now Western analysts claim that the Soviet Union has been enjoying facilities both in Dahlak Island of Ethiopia and the Island of Socotra of Aden for many years now.

The move towards the Seychelles was made as far back as in 1977 when President Albert Rene seized power and established a one Party State. This was followed by visits of Soviet naval vessels as a show of "solidarity" and when a coup was staged in 1982, the Soviet vessels had called in as a gesture of support. Today, Soviet Union vessels enjoy refuelling facilities in the Seychelles and there is a permanent naval detachment of the Soviet Union stationed in the Seychelles after another attempted coup against President Rene Seychelles placed close to Diego Garcia and also strategically placed on the major sea lanes around southern Africa and the Cape of Good Hope is causing serious concern to Western analysts.

While Socotra and Dahlak Islands are important bases in the Red Sea and the Arabian sea region, the Seychelles is



considered to be very important for further projection of Soviet power southwards.

Statistics on super power presence in the Indian Ocean are not readily available but Western analysts have claimed that the Soviet Navy in the Indian and Pacific Oceans have three times the tonnage of the US Seventh Fleet and that about 25 to 30 warships of the Soviet Union prowl the Indian and Pacific Oceans.

In the Far East the Soviet Union, western analysts claim has built up the Cam Ranh Bay to match the US Subic and Clark bases in the Philippines. The Soviet Union has strongly denied the existence of a military base in Vietnam but according to the prestigious International Institute for Strategic Studies there were at least 7000 Soviet troops stationed in Vietnam in 1986 and more than half stationed in Cam Ranh Bay. The Institute states that there are 20 to 25 Soviet vessels on detachment to the base including at least three submarines.

These bases stretching from Aden, Dahlak to facilities in the Seychelles and then stretching out to Cam Ranh Bay in Vietnam gives the Soviet Union wide coverage of most regions of the Indian Ocean.

In addition the bases established in Afghanistan gives it direct air access to the Gulf region.

With all this comes the build up of India's naval base of Vishakapatnam on the East Coast where the new nuclear powered submarine would be based.

Thus super power rivalry in the Indian Ocean continues despite the backing of the Indian Ocean Peace Zone proposal by the Soviet Union and India, and even at times by the United States.

With the Iran-Iraq war raging in the Gulf, instability in southern Africa, occupation of Afghanistan, turmoil in the sub continent and even in the narrow Palk Strait in addition to instability and establishment of new military bases in Indo-China how close are we to an Indian Ocean Peace Zone?

Sri Lankan troops

Earlier Sri Lanka and India agreed that Sri Lankan troops should be deployed in villages to provide them with protection. The decision was taken during talks in Colombo between Indian and Sri Lankan officials following demands by substantial numbers of Eastern Province residents that they would only return if Sri Lankan troops and not the IPKF provided them with security.

Indian authorities claim that though the decision was taken, Sri Lankan troops have still not been deployed to protect villages.

However, there are several grey areas and this is why Sri Lanka authorities have still not sent their troops into the villages, informed sources said.

For instance, when the villagers leave their homes to go to town or market, who provides them with security? Is it the IPKF or the local troops?

These are some of the issues that are expected to be thrashed out at official level, while President Jayewardene and Premier Gandhi deal with the larger subjects connected with effecting the Peace Accord.

Laws to raise land ceiling

The President has said that the 50-acre land ceiling will be lifted to improve production and ensure better management, but when the SLFP government of 1972 passed the land take-over Bill the UNP said the land ceiling should be reduced to five acres.

Without doing what they promised to do, the UNP, after coming into power, systematically destroyed the Land Ceiling Act.

The land take-over was the most progressive legislation and the most revolutionary action taken in recent decades. It realsed from the grip of the "Estate Raj" the hold that the imperialists had on the lands of the sons of the soil.

The UNP leadership - the darlings of the estate-owning class since the party started - tried its utmost to scuttle the Land Reform Act from the day it was enacted. According to JR's latest plan, when ownership is allowed up to 100 acres per person, a family of five will hold 500 acres. This is a last-minute effort by the UNP to bolster the lot of the local land-owning class.

It is a crime to rob the fruits of the aspirations of the people ushered in with too much fanfare and mighty hopes. The UNP stands guilty of diverting to the pockets of a few, the fruits of the labours of millions.

PC elections

Voting on zonal basis

- Committee decides on voting system
- 196 members on district and 29 on national basis

A proportional representation election system on a district and zonal basis with a 12½ per cent cut off point has been decided upon for future general elections.

Informed sources said the legislation will be brought before Parliament around March.

The new system of elections was finalised on Tuesday at a committee meeting chaired by Prime Minister R. Premadasa.

Under the new system, there will be 196 members elected on a district or zonal basis while 29 members will be elected on a national basis.

The districts too will be sub-divided into zones, sources said.

At present there are 25 electoral districts.

However, sources said where a district comprises less than eight seats, there will be no zones in that district.

Sources said an example would be the Colombo District which will have 21 elected members.

This district will be divided into three zones while the Mullaitivu district which will have less than eight elected members will function as a district.

A Delimitation Commission will decide on the division of the districts into zones.

The elector under the new system will also have a choice of voting for a party and three candidates from that party.

Further, there will be a reserve list of only three nominees for each zone or district. The earlier system provided for a reserve list of 1/3rd the number of members to be elected.

With the introduction the system of voting for the party and candidate, sources said, the candidates in the ballot paper will be placed on an alphabetical order and not on a priority basis.

815,000 refugees: the breakdown

815,000 Sinhala, Tamil and Muslim refugees are now housed in welfare centres and refugee camps in various parts of the island. Of these, 154,000 live in 114 welfare centres run by the Rehabilitation Ministry, outside the North and the East, official sources said.

In addition, there are 661,000 refugees, mainly Tamils and Muslims in refugee camps, schools, churches and other places of refuge in the North and East. These people are being looked after by the IPKF and the GAs of the respective areas. The resettlement of displaced

persons in the Trincomalee district is expected to begin after the National Security Minister returns from his visit to New Delhi, these sources said.

Of the 154,000 persons housed in welfare centres run by the Rehabilitation Ministry, 74,000 are Muslims, 26,000 Tamils and

54,000 Sinhalese. Many of the refugees are from the Eastern province.

Most of them fled their homes during the violence that occurred after the signing of the Indo-Lanka peace accord on the 29th July 1987, the sources said.

NCMC-

(Continued from Page 9)

pletely different criteria and have been trained at a totally different institute by teachers of their own. If they are granted the same MBBS as the students of the Colombo Medical Faculty it would be unfair by us.

Secondly, on moral grounds if the newly started Jaffna and Ruhunu Universities, whose students were selected on purely objective criteria approved by the government, can award their own degrees, why should these NCMC students who could not enter a medical faculty on the A.L. results be allowed to hide behind the Colombo degree? They should prove their ability and win recognition for their degree rather than bask in reflected glory.

Q. How do the admission criteria of the NCMC students differ from that of state medical students?

A. The students are selected to state medical faculties only if they have passed A/Levels in the appropriate year and have sat for the appropriate subjects. They should have scored adequate marks and then they are selected according to a system of merit which is very clearly defined.

The criteria for the selection of the NCMC students are not so clearcut. The only clearcut criterion for admission to NCMC is the ability to pay the required amount of money. They have admitted students who have done A. Levels several years back, although students are selected to the state faculties only from the exams prior to the year of admission.

Moreover they consider extra curricular activities which are very subjective. Ultimately the students are selected after an interview whereas state medical faculties have given up this interview system long ago as a selection criterion since it is purely a subjective way of assessing the students.

Perhaps the best summation of NCMC's admission policy is in the very words of Dr. G. M. Heennilame who in radio interview which was broadcast on 17th July, 1987, stated that a student who has scored 231 marks might get selected to the NCMC whereas a student who has scored 279 may not be.

Q. How does the training given at the NCMC differ from that given at the Colombo medical faculty?

A. First it must be stressed that the clinical training is the most important aspect of medical education. It has been widely accepted that for a proper training to be given the number and the quality of teachers of the institution and the variety of patients seen must be adequate. The Colombo General Hospital is one of the largest hospitals in the world if judged by the number of the hospital beds and patient turnover. The Lady Ridgeway hospital is the only children's hospital in Sri Lanka.

These are the institutions where students of the faculty of medicine receive their training. The Ragama Hospital lacks patient turnover and clinical as well as laboratory equipment. This is the hospital where at least the first batch of NCMC students who are now seeking to sit the final exam with faculty students had their entire third year and most of their fourth year of clinical training. Moreover several inspection teams from the faculty of medicine who inspected Ragama hospital have pointed out various shortcomings during the past years.

Rs 14m damage to Jaffna campus

By Jude L. Fernando

As a result of the operations of the IPKF in the Jaffna Peninsula in October last year, the Jaffna University which had been functioning smoothly up to that time, suffered heavy losses in both human and material terms.

Since the Head Office of the LTTE was situated just opposite the university, the IPKF found the university grounds a suitable place for the dropping of paratroops. But with the shooting of paratroopers by the LTTE, the campus and the surrounding area turned into a bloody battlefield. 29 civilians were killed while heavy damage was caused to university property.

At a special meeting of the council of the university of Jaffna, held on December 12, it was revealed that eight people including a Professor, one staff member and six students had been killed.

Professor Chandrasegaram killed who had rendered very valuable service in the field of Education. He had been a lecturer at the Universities of Colombo and Peradeniya and a visiting lecturer at the Universities of London, and Kerala.

According to the Report submitted to the Secretary of the University Grants Commission by Prof. S. Vithianathan, Vice-Chancellor of the University of Jaffna, the total loss amounts to Rs. 14 million. Damage caused was mainly in respect of University

New Ministry for Lalith

Minister of National Security Lalith Athulathmudali has been offered the portfolio of Reconstruction and Rehabilitation of the Eastern province, according to in-

formed sources.

A decision is expected to be taken after the Minister, who will accompany President Jayewardene on his visit to India, returns.

New Ministry

Replacing a new Finance Minister for the man who quit is understandable, but why was another Ministry of Information created under the existing Minister of State?

All state media including SLBC, Rupavahini and Information are to date under Mr. Anandatissa de Alwis as Minister of State. But people were on the verge of believing that the Radio was under PM because he is active and powerful there.

Most of the employees and artistes at the SLBC are Premadasa loyalists. The creation of a new Information Ministry appears to be a concerted effort to scuttle PM's hold on the SLBC. We do not know whether it is an attempt to take over all state media by one group and turn it into a "Goebbels" like Conglomerate to launch propaganda for a particular group.

Whatever it may be, this is like a person having acute diarrhoea wearing a 'spancloth' to contain the disease.

'Lightening Boats' to combat arms smuggling

COLOMBO, Jan 16 —

The Indian Coast Guard has introduced a fleet of high-powered boats equipped with automatic weapons and powerful communication apparatus to combat alleged smuggling of arms and ammunition from India to Sri Lanka by the LTTE terrorists.

These boats which cost one million in Indian money are known as Lightening Boats.

Inaugurating the patrolling by these new and speedy boats the Commander of the Eastern Regional Command of the Indian Coast Guards

Mohan Verghese said that the new boats could enter shallow waters in Mannar Bay in pursuit of LTTE boats which was not possible with the heavier patrol vessels used earlier.

Each boat had automatic weapons and was equipped with powerful communications equipment.

A coast guard station was nearing completion at Juticorin and would start functioning from March. Plans were underway to set up a coast guard aerodrome in it. —

buildings, teaching equipment, lecture and student notes, library material and laboratory

equipment.

The Jaffna University is expected to reopen next month

VCs to meet President on Tuesday

The Vice Chancellors of the eight universities will meet President J. R. Jayewardene on January 12 to find ways and means to re-open the universities and allay students' fears which mainly centre around the detention of several students by the security forces under the emergency regulations.

They will tell President Jayewardene, who is also Minister of Higher Education, that the students held in custody be either released or bailed out. Some university sources feel that they should be at least produced in court.

A spokesman for the Vice Chancellors said that it was almost useless reopening the universities because the boycott of lectures will resume, clashes occur and the universities will be closed once again.

Mannar GA shot dead

Jan. 23.

A 24-hour curfew was imposed on Sri Lanka's north-western district town of Mannar this morning after the Government Agent (district magistrate), M.M. Maqbul, was killed reportedly by Tamil militants.

Maqbul was shot dead last evening, while on his way back from Talaimannar. He was pulled out of his car and gunned down.

The Sri Lankan police and the Indian Peace-keeping Force stepped up patrolling and tightened security, as tension gripped Mannar following the killing.

Residents in Mannar contacted by telephone said there was tension in the area after the shooting. Some people with curfew permits paid respects to the body at the local secretariat building, they added.

The Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam had warned government officials not to report for work, in a campaign to back its demand for a halt to the Indian military offensive against them.

Interim Cabinet after dissolution?

The Sri Lankan President, Mr. J. R. Jayewardene, is inclined to dissolve parliament before the general elections and set up a joint caretaker Government of political parties and "militant groups" if the ruling United National Party approves the step.

The President's views were contained in a reply he had sent to an Opposition member of the Sri Lankan Freedom Party, Mr. S. D. Bandaranaike, in response to some proposals made by the MP.

LTTE's plan

The LTTE now under extreme pressure from the IPKF appears to be in search of a strange bed-fellow in Sri Lanka's National Security Minister, Mr. Lalith Athulathmudali, for its rescue.

Mr. Athulathmudali, who was considered in the LTTE circles during the days of Sri Lankan Army operation against them as enemy number one, has suddenly been discovered by the Tamil militants as the "only person in the Sri Lankan Government, who understands the true position".

The State-owned 'Daily News' in story titled "LTTE ready to discuss interim administration with Lalith", said the LTTE's Eastern Province commander, who met the citizens' committee of Velvetithurai yesterday "is reported to have stated that his group is prepared to talk about establishing an interim administration".

810 Lankan refugees return by ferry

It is estimated that there are over 125,000 such persons in South India, of whom 30,000 live in camps.

The UNHCR has initiated a two-phase programme to help them resume their normal lives.

Under Phase 1, they are afforded a reception at the Talaimannar pier, where their immigration documents are scrutinised and they are given a medical check-up. They are also given a package of food. The Swiss government has donated 150,000 tents

Nearly 810 persons of Sri Lankan origin living in South Indian refugee camps have returned to Sri Lanka aboard an Indian ferry.

The first boatload of 256 arrived at Talaimannar pier on December 24.

According to sources at the office of the United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR), the ferry service will operate once every ten days to bring back those who had left Sri Lanka since 1983 and have since lived in South India.

Eelanadu back in circulation

The Tamil provincial newspaper the Eelanadu began publishing again on Thai Pongal day (15th January). The Eelanadu is Sri Lanka's first provincial daily. The Eelanadu had to terminate its operations following damage to its office in Jaffna.

Massive U.N. aid for Sri Lankan refugees

The United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR), Geneva, has launched a \$13.5-million (Rs. 17.55 crores) special programme of limited assistance to Sri Lankan refugees and asylum-seekers returning to that Island nation.

Talking to presspersons at the Mandapam refugees transit camp on Friday, Mr. R. Sampath Kumar, UNHCR director for Asia and Oceania, said the programme was planned to benefit 75,000 refugees or asylum-seekers returning for the most part from India spontaneously or through organised repatriation by December 1988.

"The financial requirement is currently projected as \$13.5 million (Rs. 40 crores — Sri Lanka) not including the food needs, which will be covered by the World Food Programme," he said.

Mr. Sampath Kumar arrived here on Friday, along with Mr. V. Palanichamy, Director of Rehabilitation, to see 336 refugees leaving for Sri Lanka by ship from Rameswaram port on Saturday.

As security conditions improved in Sri Lanka, refugees and asylum-seekers in other countries too might wish to repatriate voluntarily. Thus an expansion of this special programme might be warranted.

Refugees arriving at Talaimannar were met by an U.N. official. After a medical check up, they were taken to the UNHCR transit camp from where they were despatched to their native places the third day.

The UNHCR has placed orders with India for 30 buses and eight trucks for transportation of the refugees from Talaimannar.

Mr. Sampath Kumar said that he had spoken to the first batch of refugees that arrived at Talaimannar on December 24 and found the refugees to be happy to return home. They only feared about their security, which had now been allayed by the peace keeping force's presence.

Mr. Palanichamy, said that each returning family was being given Rs. 20,000 as assistance at Talaimannar. Of this, Rs. 15,000 was for housing, Rs. 2,000 for immediate expenses like purchase of clothes and utensils and Rs. 2,000 for starting some economic activity besides dry ration for six months.

He said 39,000 destitute refugees had arrived in Tamil Nadu in July 1983 and they were registered with various camps. Also 17,000 non-destitute refugees had arrived and of them 13,000 had left the camp on their own.

With the departure of the fourth batch of refugees on Saturday, as many as 1,139 had returned to Sri Lanka. The fifth batch of 900 refugees would leave from Rameswaram by a chartered vessel on January 30.

Mr. Palanichamy said that the Centre had ordered the release of the 69 boats by which the refugees had come to India, four years back. These boats, in the Fisheries Department custody, would be handed over to their owners at Talaimannar with the assistance of the Coast Guard.

Mr. A. Ponnusamy, District Revenue Officer (Rehabilitation), said the final cash dole paid to the refugees leaving for Sri Lanka on Saturday was Rs. 49,000. As many as 1,288 children were born to the refugees in the State and 306 were born in the Mandapam Camp. The number of deaths since July 1983 was 392.

TULF wants devolution package made acceptable

The TULF Secretary-General, Mr. A. Amirthalingam, today said if the Government of India wanted to implement the promises it held out to the Tamils in Sri Lanka, it should see to it that the package of devolution of power to the provincial councils was made acceptable to them. Necessary changes should be made in the Provincial Councils Act before elections are held to the Northern and Eastern Provincial Councils, he said.

Mr. Amirthalingam made this observation while speaking at a symposium on the "Indo-Sri Lankan Accord" organised by the Academy of Sciences for Tamils in Ceylon and the Eelam Research Organisers.

"The advisors of the Government of India will be well advised to tell them (Sri Lankan Government) that if they want a political solution, the devolution package must be made acceptable to the Tamils. After the heroic struggle our people put up, the least India can do for us is to implement what the Prime Minister, Mr. Rajiv Gandhi promised on Marina beach on August 2, 1987," he said. Mr. Gandhi had promised on that day that the Tamils in Sri Lanka would be assured of the degree of autonomy that the States in the Indian Union enjoyed and that a political solution was sought to be achieved through the Indo-Sri Lankan Agreement, he added.

"Can anyone who understands Constitutional law say that the degree of autonomy (given to the Tamils) is what the States in the Indian Union enjoy? The devolution of executive and legislative powers is not comparable to what is in the Indian Union. The powers over Land are totally inadequate to meet the Tamils' aspirations. The Emergency powers far exceed than those enjoyed by the Government of India over its States. The Government of India tells us that the President, Mr. J. R. Jayewardene, has given firm assurances that these defects will be remedied."

"Apart from our bitter experience of Mr. Jayewardene's firm assurances, not even the Government of India is in a position to say when these assurances will be given effect to and when the shortcomings will be remedied. If somebody says it will be done after the elections, you may as well forget about it," he said. The TULF had given in writing to Mr. Rajiv Gandhi on October 28, 1987 the main points on which the devolution package fell far short of the Tamils' aspirations. "Currency has been given to the wrong idea that what the Tamils had been given under the Indo-Sri Lankan Agreement is more than what even the Tamils demanded. This is a total misleading of the whole history of the Tamil struggle, he added.

"We are not unmindful of the security concerns of India and the geopolitical questions involved. That is why we have agreed to implement the Agreement. But it does not mean that any shoddy political solution should be accepted by the Tamils... The evolution of a correct and acceptable political solution is a must for the Tamils' aspirations." If such a political solution emerged, a united Tamil leadership should be forged and then elections could be held. The Tamils were friends of India and successive Sri Lankan Governments had adopted a suspicious, hostile attitude towards India. "Even then, the Government of India, at every stage leaned backwards to adopt their interests and concerns." The least the Tamils expected was what Mr. Rajiv Gandhi promised on August 2 that a political solution that would emerge from the Agreement would be fulfilled and implemented. Mr. Amirthalingam said.

The TULF Politburo member, Mr. R. Sampanthan, said if the Agreement pertained to the solution of the Tamil ethnic problem, then it should result in a political solution acceptable to both India and the Tamils. "Is the Government of India satisfied in its conscience? Are the Indian experts satisfied in their own conscience that the Sri Lankan Government has played fair in the resolution of the residual matters contemplated in the Agreement which will lead to a political solution that India can stand up and recommend to the Tamil people?" he asked.

"If you (India) are engaged in the process of disarming the militants as an obligation, I wish to ask you how can you justify it unless the Tamils are given a political settlement that is acceptable to them," Mr. Sampanthan queried. An External Affairs Ministry spokesman had said in Madras recently that Mr. Jayewardene would announce a merger of the Northern and Eastern provinces before the end of 1987 and that elections would be held on the basis of 1982 register. "1987 is gone. There is no proclamation from Mr. Jayewardene on the merger. Now the Sri Lankan Government says the elections will be held on the basis of the 1987 register, which is a fabricated register," he said. "It is the Tamils who can protect India's interests in Sri Lanka and you (India) shall in turn, be fair to us," Mr. Sampanthan said.

Three forces at work: Mr. H. N. Fernando, General Secretary, Ceylon Teachers Union, who dealt with the situation in southern Sri Lanka, said three forces were at work there. They included the ruling United National Party, which was a divided house; the Opposition Sri Lankan Freedom Party, which was marking time to come to power; and Janata Vimukthi Peramuna, whose ranks had been swelled by a new generation of youths. Besides, the Buddhist clergy was not prepared to allow any scheme of devolution to the Tamils.

Mr. L. Ketheeswaran of the Eelam People's Revolutionary Liberation Front said the manner in which the Agreement was implemented was so "biased and skewed" that it was advantageous to Colombo. He called the LTTE an "unpatriotic force," and held it responsible for the present state of affairs.

Mr. Sundar of Eelam Revolutionary Organisation said the Agreement was signed without getting the Tamils' consent.

Prof. Urmila Phadnis wanted public opinion to be generated among the Tamils for the restoration of peace and also resurrection of political democracy, leading to free electoral process at all levels in Sri Lanka.

Dr. V. Suryanarayanan of the Centre for South Asian and South-East Asian Studies, Madras University, said it was time that New Delhi applied the healing touch by ensuring that no action took place in the East, built bridges with the Sinhalese and sent non-governmental organisations and political parties to talk to the Tamils.

Dr. Sreedhar of the Institute for Defence Studies and Analyses said in the Sri Lankan context, holding of elections would throw up a leadership for the Tamils. The Agreement aimed at stopping the annihilation of an ethnic minority, restoring their rights and looking after the security concerns of India.

Dr. Parmanand of Delhi University said it was incumbent on all involved in the present impasse to create an atmosphere of peace so that they could sit together and discuss the issues.

Tamil strike a success

Tamil separatist rebels in the north and east of Sri Lanka yesterday demonstrated their contempt for the 40,000 Indian troops in their midst, and their continuing hold over the local population, by organising an almost completely successful hartal, or total strike, in protest against the Indian presence.

The protest was inevitably marked by violent clashes between the Tamil Tiger rebels and the so-called Indian Peace Keeping Force.

At least two Indian soldiers and up to 10 Tiger guerrillas were reported killed. The main fighting was in and near the eastern coastal town of Batticaloa, where the Indian forces are awaiting reinforcements.

The day's events dismally underlined the tenuous nature of Indian control of Tamil areas. Although vastly outnumbered, the Tigers were able to terrorise the population of the north and east into a highly effective protest marking India's Republic Day.

In Batticaloa and other Tamil areas, the faint semblance of normality restored by the arrival of Indian troops last summer was swept aside by the hartal. Government offices, shops, and other businesses closed and transport services ground to a halt.

Local sources in Batticaloa reported a quiet morning. Then, in the early afternoon, there was an eruption of small arms and mortar fire.

Attacks repulsed

The LTTE launched three abortive attacks on the IPKF and Sri Lankan police yesterday which were repulsed. The IPKF camp and police station in Kutchaveli, the Valachenai police station and an IPKF sentry post at Kurumbukudy were the places that came under LTTE attack. No casualties were reported on both sides. The IPKF also arrested 13 LTTE cadres in Jaffna yesterday.

INTERVIEW

J.R. JAYEWARDENE

"India is not our enemy"

SRI Lanka's 81-year-old President, J.R. Jayewardene, has come up the hard way, rising from the post of a municipal corporator to the head of state. Not surprisingly then, he is adept at converting political adversities to his advantage. Till six months ago, Jayewardene was the target of attacks by the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE), an aggressive opposition and even his own ministers. And when he signed the Indo-Sri Lanka accord on July 29, 1987, he was accused of surrendering Sri Lanka's sovereignty to India.

But the shrewd politician is nobody's fool. He has got the Indian Peace Keeping Force (IPKF) to do what the Sri Lankan Army could not accomplish in four years—crush the LTTE. As one prominent minister put it: "JRJ has silenced his critics by involving Rajiv Gandhi in his fight against the terrorists. We have saved money and manpower."

Jayewardene does not try to hide his satisfaction at having got India to do his work for him. At a meeting last fortnight he said: "But for the IPKF we would have had to fight this war and that would have cost in monetary terms." He pointed out that in the last four years, the Sri Lankan Army had lost an average of one soldier a day, but since the IPKF took over, "not a Sinhala, Tamil or Muslim soldier has died. Their place has been taken by the Indians. I want to stop that also."

But some controversial statements made by few Indian Army generals—where they hint at a permanent stay in Sri Lanka—have troubled Jayewardene. As a result of this, he has now adopted a defiant stance on the implementation of the accord, and has started promoting an Indo-Sri Lankan Peace Treaty, with which he hopes to limit India's influence over Sri Lanka. In his first exclusive interview after the commencement of the IPKF operations, Jayewardene spoke to Senior Editor PRABHU CHAWLA at his residence. Excerpts:

Q. You have been invited as chief guest to India's Republic Day parade. But a section of the Opposition in India has opposed it. How do you react to this?

A. Rajiv has invited me. Now it seems he will be in difficulty if I come. I will be the last one to embarrass him by coming there. Probably some of them are trying to work out their feelings because I criticised M.G. Ramachandran (Tamil Nadu chief minister) in my press conference in New Delhi. I did not say any untruth.

Q. Do you have the same opinion about MGR after the IPKF operations?

A. Now Rajiv has told me that MGR is working with him in the implementation of the accord. If he is working with us and not helping the terrorists, I admire him and I am also grateful to him. My main criticism against MGR was that he was entertaining a self-confessed murderer, Pirabhakaran, who is the LTTE chief. Pirabhakaran openly admitted that he killed the mayor of Jaffna. But I meant only what MGR did in the past.

Q. Do you think that the Indo-Sri Lanka accord is being implemented successfully?

A. As far as we are concerned, we have done everything mentioned in the accord. The only thing left is the election in the provinces. We will do this also. I have to pass the law. After that I have to hold elections. But I can do that only when there is peace in the north and the east.

Q. Till the elections take place, will you revive the proposal of an Interim Administrative Council?

A. Not necessarily. If I can have elected people then where is the need for an interim council?

Q. But earlier you had promised to appoint an Interim Council.

A. These chaps (the LTTE) are not allowing us to do so.

Q. Can't you nominate representatives of other Tamil groups to the council?

A. Why should I do that if I can hold elections? I am willing to hold provincial elections in January or February. I want to choose people who I can talk with. How can I talk with these fellows? Who do they represent? If they surrender arms, let them come forward and fight elections.

Q. So you will not talk to them now.

A. No. Let them get elected. We will also fight elections as a political party.

Q. Do you think the LTTE will be finished before the elections?

A. Yes. As a terrorist force they will be liquidated. They are withering away.

Q. If the accord is working well, then why do you want a new Indo-Sri Lanka Peace Treaty? Are you under pressure to delete some provisions of the accord?

A. That treaty is in connection with annexures attached with the accord. If India wants us to do certain things, we also want India to reciprocate by doing

something for us. I am not under any pressure. I want to make it reciprocal.

Q. What are the provisions in the annexures?

A. Letters exchanged between Rajiv and me deal with the foreign trainers, use of Trincomalee port and the Voice of America broadcasts from Sri Lanka. We want India to assure us that she will not do anything against our interests.

Q. But what do you want from India?

A. If India wants anything to do with our harbour, broadcasting corporations and training facilities, I also want the same thing from them.

Q. Foreign trainers, like Keeney

"If India wants us to do certain things, we also want India to reciprocate.... We want India to assure us that she will not do anything against our interests."

"The IPKF must stay here in Sri Lanka only till the LTTE gives up. They will not be required after that.... They are here for restoring peace."

Meeney and some Israeli security advisors, have not been sent back yet, though this was part of the understanding.

A. They won't go even now. Somebody must train our people here or abroad. We never said that they will go. We only promised that we will consider it.

Q. If LTTE cadres surrender arms, will you grant them amnesty?

A. I have already announced that all those who surrender arms and join democratic forces will be let off. Even Pirabhakaran.

Q. Don't you think that India could train the Sri Lankan Army for you?

A. India can't train both terrorists and the army. I told Rajiv that. But that is not the situation now. We will consider India's offer of training our forces.

Q. Rajiv wants your assurance that Trincomalee port will not be used in any

way against India's security interests. What do you want from Rajiv?

A. We want him to ensure that no harbour in India is used against Sri Lanka. Why should our ports be used against India? She is not our enemy.

Q. Are you saying that foreign trainers and other irritants to India will remain in Sri Lanka till a reciprocal arrangement is worked out?

A. Yes, certainly. We have started discussions and are preparing a draft treaty.

Q. Rajiv Gandhi and the IPKF have paid a heavy price in implementing the accord. How do you propose to reciprocate this?

ment. But they have been refuted. The IPKF must stay here only till the LTTE gives up.

Q. Once the LTTE is eliminated and peace is restored, will you ask the IPKF to pack up?

A. Yes, they will not be required after that.

Q. But under the accord, the IPKF has to stay on to ensure implementation of other clauses like holding the elections.

A. No. They are here for restoring peace. There are different conditions for holding elections.

Q. Will you ask India to help you crush Janata Vimukthi Peramuna's (JVP) terrorism in the south?

PRAMOD PUSHKARNA



A. We will fulfil our part of the accord totally. That is the only way.

Q. Don't you think that Rajiv Gandhi has suffered a lot in the process?

A. So have our people. Look at the refugees in Trincomalee. There were none earlier. There are a few thousand now.

Q. Have they become refugees after the IPKF operations?

A. Yes. They are blaming the Indian troops. They are saying that IPKF personnel are the ones who harass them.

Q. Do you believe that?

A. That is another matter. But they are saying that they left their homes due to the Indians only.

Q. Do you also believe the rumours that the IPKF will stay for a longer period than you had in mind?

A. Statements of some of the Indian Army officials have been quoted in Parlia-

A. No. We are capable of handling them. They will be finished in a month.

Q. But they accuse the Government of not withdrawing the Prevention of Terrorism Act and arresting innocent people who raise a voice of dissent.

A. I will withdraw the Act after the violence is over. They are killing elected people. People who take up arms are not entitled to normal laws in any democracy.

Q. Has the opposition from within your Government made it difficult for you to handle serious problems decisively?

A. There is no opposition to me. The party has fully supported the accord. It is due to this that I have been able to implement our side of the accord. Only two members of Parliament opposed it and they have been expelled. Now the prime minister has moved legislation for

conducting the elections.

Q. Under the accord, you were supposed to release all Tamils in Sri Lankan jails.

A. I released 3,000 to 4,000 of them and they went and joined the terrorists.

Q. Now that the IPKF has been forced to fight the LTTE, where do you think things went wrong?

A. Nothing went wrong except that they trusted the LTTE too much. The IPKF thought the LTTE cadres would give in. Instead of putting the blame on others, they should completely eliminate those fellows (the LTTE). Because of them, innocent people are dying.

Q. Rajiv Gandhi is being accused of doing your dirty work for you.

A. We are just implementing an accord and nothing else.

Q. Why have some clauses like the return of Tamil refugees from Tamil Nadu not been implemented?

A. I have not stopped any one. They are not returning because they are frightened. Jaffna is in turmoil now. There is also a problem of sending both Sinhalese and Muslim refugees back to the north and the east. They don't trust some members of the IPKF.

Q. What exactly do you want from the IPKF?

A. They should complete their part of the deal. They have not yet taken away arms from the terrorists. They have to disarm the terrorists.

Q. The IPKF is killing them instead of disarming them.

A. But they are not finished yet. Their primary job is to liquidate the terrorists in the north and the east.

Q. Do you perceive any role for the IPKF in the reconstruction and rehabilitation of Sri Lanka?

A. We are capable of doing that ourselves. It can offer us grants.

Q. Is the IPKF working under your directions?

A. Yes, they have to work under my charge. But I don't go into the details of their operations on a daily basis. That is left to their commanders.

Q. Do you subscribe to the Opposition belief that the IPKF's presence in Sri Lanka is largely determined by India's designs in the region and that Rajiv Gandhi will not withdraw the IPKF in a hurry?

A. No. I asked them to come here and I will ask them to go as well.

Q. Do you foresee them refusing to leave your country in the near future?

A. I can't dream of this. I have full trust in Rajiv Gandhi and our ability to look after ourselves.

A list of the active Tamil militant groups:

LTTE	(LIBERATION TIGERS OF TAMIL EELAM)
PLOTE	(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 OF STUDENTS)
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)



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