

SAAMA

சென்னை சிந்தனை

for peace, democracy, and justice in Sri Lanka.

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NEWS IN BRIEF

Woman writer detained by the LTTE wins PEN award

PEN (Poets, Essayists and Novelists) has made its award for Freedom of Writing, 1992 to Selvi, the young writer detained without any explanation by the LTTE for the past one year. It is understood that the decision to make this award was made by PEN a long time ago and was not announced in consideration of her personal safety while in detention. The decision to announce the award appears to have been made in view of the possibility that it may give international publicity to her detention and thereby expedite her release.



Selvi is one of several thousand people detained by the LTTE and her abduction on 30.8.1991 by the LTTE was denounced by human rights organisations and publications by overseas Tamils. *Saama* joins all those who defend the right of people to democracy and justice in their just demand for the release of all unlawfully detained persons.

Release of detained Tamil refugees in Hungary

Fifty-one Tamil refugees detained in Budapest, Hungary for over three months were released in September following intervention by the UN High Commission for Refugees, the International Red Cross and Amnesty International, among

several organisations. Thirteen of the detainees were women, and the detainees had repeatedly complained that they have been subject to cruelty and denied the most basic of facilities during their detention. Presently they are in the care of the Hungarian Red Cross.

Well-known cartoonist attacked

Yoonus, a brilliant cartoonist who has been associated with the Sri Lankan Communist Party newspaper, *Attha*, has been stabbed during an attack by thugs suspected to be acting at the instigation of important persons in the government party. The attack took place in Mr. Yoonus's residence and in the presence of his family. Mr. Yoonus was fortunate to survive the attack and has since recovered following treatment in hospital.

The day before the attack, a gunman who forcibly entered Mr. Yoonus's house had warned him to stop making cartoons critical of the President and ridiculing the government. The cartoon in this issue of *Saama* was drawn a few days before the attack. Four major unions of journalists in Sri Lanka have petitioned the government about this attack, which was one in a series of attacks on journalists in recent times. *Saama* commends Mr. Yoonus and all journalists who defend freedom of expression by exercising it and denounces those responsible for such cowardly attacks on unarmed individuals.

Opposition party leader attacked by gang

Lalith Athulathmudali, a former member of the cabinet who resigned to form the Democratic United National Front of which he is one of the three main leaders, was attacked by an armed gang dressed in military camouflage. Shots were fired and knives wielded in the attack on Mr. Athulathmudali and his supporters in Dehiwela, a suburb of Colombo. An attempt to stab Mr. Athulathmudali resulted in an injury to his leg and he received treatment in hospital.

The vehicle used by the attackers was identified and traced to a businessman who claimed that it was used without his authorisation by a relative whom he named. There is strong suspicion that a government party politician from Dehiwela had a hand in the attack, and police inquiries are continuing. This is the second time that Mr. Athulathmudali has been violently attacked in recent times. He was critically injured during a cabinet meeting in 1988 when a bomb planted by some opponents of the Indo-Sri Lankan accord of 1987 exploded.



Summer

the evening sky
eats up the redness.
large waves
embrace the shore.
the blackened tips
of the grass by the tank
brush the legs
when i walk.
to the west
fields open and empty
stare in silence at the sky.
the warm breeze
caresses the body

the red soil
newly spread on the road
hurts the eye
in the fruit-laden mango
a cuckoo sings
from time to time

the foot kicks a stone
on the street.
the sharp edge
tastes blood.
the stone steps aside
and grins in ridicule.
within the heart
thoughts surge
with acute pain.
the sweet moments
of the chill of the monsoon wind,
of the green shade of the 'koola' tree
at the edge of the field,
of the rushing water
from the sluice of the tank
dumbly
weigh heavily on the heart.

[Translation of a poem by Selvi]

Saama publishes articles and reproduces news and views of relevance to human rights, democracy, peace and social justice in Sri Lanka. The views expressed in the items reproduced from other sources and in signed articles are not necessarily the views of the organisation responsible for the publication of Saama.