

People's mandate for Chandrika

CHANDRIKA KUMARANATUNGE became the first woman president of Sri Lanka winning the election on 9 November by a huge majority of nearly two million votes over United National Party (UNP) candidate Srma Dissanayake.

Chandrika gained 62.3% of the 7.7 million votes, a 13% increase over the votes her People's Alliance (PA) polled at the general elections in August. Minority support boosted PA performance. In the east Chandrika received 76% of the votes and secured 56.5% in seven Hill Country districts. She also gained 85.3% in the northern Vanni and 96.3% in Jaffna where only 2.9% of the 596,000 electorate was able to vote.

The UNP, campaigning on the slogan 'a vote for PA is a vote for the Tiger', fared dismally, winning only the polling division of southern Mahiyangana. The much talked about sympathy vote for Gamini Dissanayake's widow never materialized.

Chandrika chose her mother Sirimavo Bandaranaike, 78, as Prime Minister to ensure, observers say, a smooth handover when she returns to the post after PA's election promise to scrap the presidential system is fulfilled.

On assuming office on 12 November Chandrika declared that the people's mandate was an endorsement of her peace efforts. The PA government, she said, will safeguard and strengthen Sinhalese rights, while recognising the dignity, self respect and equality of treatment of all communities.

Clashes between rival parties, despite the deployment of 50,000 policemen backed by troops, continued. Four people were killed and 18 others injured in Kegalle in early November. Three more people died at Munthal in Chilaw on 11 November. The UNP says over 5,000 violent incidents against its supporters

have been recorded. Sri Lankan election watch groups say the campaign was far less violent than the parliamentary poll. The 32-member international monitoring team declared the election free and fair except in Jaffna where the majority of people were unable to vote and in "cleared areas" where voters were intimidated by the Eelam People's Democratic Party (EPDP).

In the run-up to LTTE's *Maveerar Varam* or Great Heroes Week, the annual commemoration of its martyred cadre, the Army intercepted Tiger leader V Prabhakaran's radio message to his field commanders announcing a week's ceasefire from 12 November. The unilateral declaration created initial confusion in the government and the military.

Senior Army officers, recalling the devastating November 1993 Tiger attack on the Pooneryn Army camp in which 1,000 troops died, say the military would take no chances. Cabinet spokesman Dharmasiri Senanayake told reporters in mid-November that the government had no official intimation from the LTTE.

Peace efforts were on hold after LTTE's intelligence wing deputy leader *Malli* was killed and beheaded by troops at Kokkuthoduvai in Mullaitivu District during the ceasefire. Angry LTTE leaders blamed Chandrika for failing to control the Army. Mr Prabhakaran in his Great Heroes Week message accused the Army of attempting to sabotage the peace process.

According to Colombo's *Sunday Times*, the Army is unhappy that a military officer has not been included in the government negotiating team while the LTTE has chosen senior military strategist *Karikalan*. Reports say the government has agreed after an exchange of letters through the ICRC to the LTTE demand for an inquiry into *Malli's* death. Mr Senanayake announced in late November that peace talks will resume before the year's end.

New Deputy Finance minister GL Peiris tabled new spending proposals in Parliament on 22

November before the February 1995 budget. The LTTE says the additional allocation of Rs 5.4 billion (\$108 million) for defence is a stumbling block to peace. The government has also revived a Rs 3.5 billion (\$70 million) Russian arms deal for the supply of naval vessels and planes which it suspended in August.

Military intelligence says a ship carrying arms for the LTTE left Ukraine on 25 August and a Tiger hit-squad is in Colombo to blow up Colombo airport. Defence authorities also maintain that the LTTE has set up an air wing and 20 cadre of the *Van Pulikal* (Air Tigers) have received training in assembling glider-type aircrafts. A Tiger airstrip is said to be under construction at Iranaimadu in the Vanni.

In a report released on 25 November the European Union called on the LTTE to respond positively to the peace efforts of the Sri Lankan government. The European Commission has proposed a new five-year agreement between Sri Lanka and the European Union on development and economic cooperation, underpinned by respect for democracy and human rights.

British Foreign Office minister Tony Baldry told the British House of Commons on 29 November, after a two-day visit to Sri Lanka in mid-November, that Britain would help facilitate peace talks in Sri Lanka if the parties requested. Meanwhile Indian Foreign Secretary Krishnan Srinivasan has denied allegations that India is opposed to the peace negotiations.

Justice minister GL Peiris says Indian investigators will assist Sri Lankan police in the Gamini Dissanayake assassination probe. The police claim they have identified the woman suicide bomber as 25 year-old *Malar* from Jaffna. While Mr Peiris gave assurances that the Emergency, now in force only in the north-east and Colombo, will not be used to harass the Tamil community, another 35 Tamils were arrested in Ja-Ela and Negombo in police raids on hostels.

Developments in the Gamini assassination investigation and the continuing military buildup will strain the peace process to the limit.

Security sources say a new Tamil militant group, the Upcountry Liberation Front, has emerged in the Hill Country plantations with links to the LTTE. Nine youths were arrested in the Nuwara Eliya District in November. It is alleged that they were in possession of weapons and had received training in Jaffna.

THE NORTH

Monsoon

AS Sri Lanka prepared for presidential elections, *Sea Tigers* launched an attack on the naval vessel *Pabbatha* near Vetrilaikerni on the eastern coast of Jaffna peninsula on 8 November. Security sources say *Pabbatha* was damaged slightly, but two LTTE boats laden with explosives were destroyed. A day later the Tigers killed four soldiers and wounded five others in a dawn raid on an Army post north of Vetrilaikerni. The LTTE has destroyed several naval vessels in recent months. Amid reports that the Tigers are testing a submarine prototype in northern waters the Navy has deployed ten new naval craft.

Defence reports say four Tigers in a boat approaching Mandaitivu Island west of the Jaffna peninsula were shot dead on 10 November. Two more LTTE were killed in a search operation on the island. A *Sea Tiger* boat was destroyed west of Iranaitivu two days later.

The military continued operations despite the LTTE ceasefire. Kuttithamby Rajkumar, arrested in the Kurumbacity Amman temple near Palaly and released after a week, had been tortured, reports say. Shells from the Vetrilaikerni Army camp in late November seriously wounded K Thanabalasingham and B Sarojadevi in Uduthurai.

According to defence sources two LTTE camps were destroyed in Mullaitivu on 25 November. Further south at Maruthodai in Vavuniya District R Ketheeswaran and K Nagendran were injured in Army firing.

Heavy rains affected all parts of Jaffna. Seven fishermen went missing off Gurunagar in stormy seas on 9 November. Despite the arrival of 3,000 tonnes of wheat flour by ship, due to difficulties in distribution food shortages were reported. A Jaffna government officer says food stocks are low and dry rations to refugees may be delayed.

Malaria and diarrhoea are spreading. In October 32,196 persons received treatment in the Jaffna hospital. The Health Services Director promised sufficient medical supplies but shortages continue in northern hospitals.

Malnutrition among expectant mothers has resulted in underweight of children. Two incubators for premature children gifted to Jaffna hospital by Britain are under repair. According to the Regional Health Director, between January and September 271 children died in Jaffna hospital. The Kilinochchi hospital, extensively damaged by Airforce bombing in November 1993, is currently being repaired at a cost of Rs 5.6 million.

Hundreds of fishermen demonstrated in front of Mannar *Kachcheri* on 23 November against a three-month ban on fishing. Over 6,500 families are affected and some face starvation. The Defence Ministry has now relaxed the ban. Day time fishing is allowed within a two-mile radius. Nine Mannar fishermen from coastal Arippu village killed by the Navy in October were identified by relatives. Three more fishermen were shot dead off Arippu on 16 November.

Visit

Pope John Paul will arrive in Sri Lanka on 20 January on a two-day visit. Half a million people are expected to gather in Colombo for the beatification of Fr Joseph Vaz who came from Goa on the west coast of India in 1687 and preached in Sri Lanka for 25 years.

Deficit

World Bank South Asia Director Paul Isenman, on a two-day visit to Sri Lanka urged the government to cut the budget deficit which is currently 10% of GDP. The World Bank's Sri Lanka Paris Aid Group meeting is now scheduled for May 1995.

Deaths

SLMP leader Ossi Abeygoonesekera, 43, injured in the Grandpass bomb which killed presidential candidate Gamini Dissanayake in October, died in a Colombo hospital on 9 November. People's Alliance MP Godfrey Fernando was killed in a motor accident the following day.

Commissions

Justice minister GL Peiris announced on 24 November that three commissions of enquiry will be appointed to probe disappearances after 1 January 1988. A special presidential commission will investigate the assassinations of political leaders including Vijaya Kumaranatunge. The permanent commission on corruption will begin sessions on 15 December.

Presidential election results 9 November 1994

	Votes	%
Chandrika Kumaranatunge People's Alliance	4,709,205	62.28
Srima Dissanayake United National Party	2,715,283	35.91
Hudson Samarasinghe Independent Z	58,886	0.78
Harischandra Wijayatunge SMBP	32,651	0.43
A J Ranasinghe Independent I	22,752	0.30
Galappaththi Nihal Sri Lanka Progressive Party	22,749	0.30
Registered voters	10,937,279	
Percentage polled	70.52	

Cabinet changes

President Kumaranatunge:
Defence, Finance and Planning,
Ethnic Affairs and National
Integration.

Sirimavo Bandaranaike: Prime
Minister.

S Thondaman: Livestock
Development and Rural Industries.

Dharmasiri Senanayake:
Information, Tourism and Aviation.

Srimani Athulathmudali: Transport,
Environment and Women's Affairs.

AHM Fowzie: Health, Highways and
Social Services.

■ Ashraff orders probe into German aid

Floods in the east

TORRENTIAL rains have devastated the east displacing nearly 100,000 families. Villages are isolated by floods and transport disrupted. Over 18,000 houses are damaged and people seeking refuge in public buildings. While boats were used to provide food to some villages, refugees in a number of camps have been evacuated to escape rising waters. The government has allocated Rs 5 million (\$100,000) for flood relief.

According to Batticaloa Government Agent AK Pathmanathan 65,000 families are displaced in the district. Reports say floods prevented around 5,000 people from voting at the presidential election. Over 25,000 acres of planted paddy lands are submerged. Three people died of snakebite and 12 others hospitalised.

Military operations have continued. On 3 November security forces arrested two Tigers who were laying landmines at Karadipual. Villages between Sithandy and Vantharumoolai in north Batticaloa were searched on 5 November and eight people arrested. Three days earlier the body of A Arunkumar was found in Valaichenai. A note nearby said, "Police spy".

The Defence ministry says two LTTE cadre were killed at Panilankulam on 9 November. Another Tiger was shot dead during search operations on 12 November. On the same day troops ambushed a LTTE unit at Murungantivu. Some cadre swam across Batticaloa lagoon to Pirambaditivu where the Army arrested 61 people and detained nine.

Reports say they were taken to the Paper Corporation Army camp and brutally assaulted. A woman was shot and wounded.

Two Tigers were shot dead during search operations in Samanthiaru and Pavatkodichchenai on 16 November. Five days later four LTTE were killed in Army ambushes at Kaluvankerni and Kinnaiyady. Defence Ministry says Tigers *Ramu* and *Vigna* were killed at Keluthimadu on 21 November. Two more Tigers died in Army attacks at Thihiliwatte in late November.

The Rehabilitation Ministry has allocated Rs 160 million (\$3.2 million) for resettlement and compensation for death and injury in Batticaloa District. A further Rs 1.19 billion (\$23.8 million) is needed. Mr Pathmanathan says 324,855 persons belonging to 108,000 families in the district have been affected by violence after June 1990.

Other reports meanwhile say Rehabilitation Minister MHM Ashraff has ordered an inquiry into the Rs 288 million (\$5.8 million) German aid granted to 25 NGOs by the government to be spent on rehabilitation and training in the north-east.

There is an acute shortage of fertiliser in Batticaloa District. Reports say following a military ban on the use of urea, the government store at Polonnaruwa has stopped issuing fertiliser to Batticaloa farmers. Residents say there is no anti-rabies programmes for the district. A number of people have been bitten by rabid dogs in recent months.

PA meets the press

HARDLY three months have elapsed since the People's Alliance gained power. An assault on freedom of expression has already begun. In its election manifesto the PA pledged to free the media from political control and end the 'abhorrent practice of intimidation' of journalists while a media policy statement issued in October promised that state media would not be used for political propaganda.

The Movement for Free and Fair Elections (MFFE) says that the PA government manipulated the SLBC radio, *Rupawahini* television and Lake House newspapers to boost its presidential election campaign. MFFE says that editors were ordered by politicians to remove a front page story suggesting LTTE involvement in the Grandpass bomb explosion that killed Gamini Dissanayake. The Free Media Movement (FMM) alleges that after 17,000 copies of the *Daily News* and 25,000 copies of *Dinamina* were printed, the PA government ordered Lake House to stop printing and lead stories were rewritten by outsiders. *Rupawahini's* new chairman Vasantha Raja ensures that news coverage is in favour of the PA.

Tilak Wehella, publisher of the tabloid *Trishule* was arrested by police on 7 November for alleged incitement of racial discord. The Colombo Magistrate Court has ruled that his arrest was unlawful.

Information minister Dharmasiri Senanayake addressing the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) journalists conference in Colombo on 23 November pledged to remove all constraints and obstacles in the way of a free press in Sri Lanka. A day earlier Mr Senanayake admitted that there were mistakes by the PA but maintained they were trifling compared to the treatment of the media by the UNP regime. Press watchers say the PA has started as it means to go on.

Doctors strike

TWENTY doctors in Amparai hospital staged a strike on 16 November after an attempt by hospital staff to hang a picture of President Kumaranatunge in the out-patients department. The police declined to intervene. Patients needing urgent treatment were sent to Badulla and Kandy hospitals. The doctors have demanded disciplinary action against staff members.

Security in Amparai remains tight. In Akkaraipatru many people were taken to military camps after search operations and released. Tractor driver Nagamani Theivendran was shot and seriously injured after being allowed to pass a checkpoint on 21 November. TULF MP Neelan Tiruchelvam has lodged a complaint to the Human Rights Task Force.

Wind and rain lashed Amparai's

coastal areas in November displacing 15,000 families. Many houses and large tracts of paddy lands were submerged. After visiting flood-affected areas Amparai MP Muhaideen said refugees were forced to leave camps. Reports say disease is spreading and food prices have risen because of lack of transport.

In Trincomalee 18,000 people were displaced by the flood. Turbulent seas led to cancellation of the ICRC ship service between Trincomalee and Kankasanturai in late November. President Kumaranatunge has ordered an additional Rs 5 million (\$100,000) to be paid from the presidential fund for relief work in Trincomalee and Batticaloa.

The LTTE attacked a police post in Pulmoddai on 2 December killing two policemen and injuring another.

Chandrasekaran plans estate villages

CWC-UNP showdown

Ceylon Workers Congress (CWC) leader S Thondaman and his party's eight MPs voted with the People's Alliance government in Parliament on 22 November.

The CWC MPs were elected on the UNP ticket, but a pre-parliamentary election agreement allows the parties independent action. Last month Parliament Speaker KB Ratnayake recognised the CWC MPs as a separate group. After demands from angry UNP Working Committee members, new leader Ranil Wickremasinghe directed party heavyweight KN Choksy on 2 December to study the agreement. Observers say a protracted legal wrangle is on the cards.

The CWC refrained from open campaigning, but just days before the presidential elections Mr Thondaman called on the plantation workers to vote for Chandrika. Mr Thondaman contends he supports the PA in the interests of the workers and to ensure a stable government. Further discussions are scheduled with the government, he says, on the CWC's six demands.

Mr Thondaman lost his Tourism ministry in the cabinet reshuffle. He is now

Minister of Livestock Development and Rural Industries. Reports allege that Mr Thondaman's family businesses in India owe Air Lanka Rs 45 million (\$900,000). Mr Thondaman argues that the affair is private, but Tourism Minister Dharmasiri Senanayake says issues involving public money are in the public domain.

Upcountry People's Front (UPF) leader P Chandrasekaran is now Deputy Minister for Plantation Housing. The position will directly involve him in the plantations. Mr Chandrasekaran, who is said to be demanding a cabinet portfolio, says he intends to create "estate villages" with proper housing and infrastructure. He concedes that his project requires massive finances and is destined to be fraught with difficulties.

Former CWC General Secretary MS Sellasamy, now President of the break-away Ceylon National Workers Congress (CNWC), has been appointed Chairman of the Silk Development Authority. Mr Sellasamy has recruited a number of CWC dissidents and is establishing CNWC offices in the Hill Country.

Observers say Mr Sellasamy and Mr Chandrasekaran will have to labour hard to break CWC's grip on the plantations.

Plantation workers complain that violence against them has become regular, particularly during elections. Owella estate in Matale was attacked by knife-wielding PA supporters after the presidential election. Balakrishnan was seriously wounded and over 50 workers fled into the jungle. In Panwila plantation worker V Ponniah was burned to death. Over 1,200 workers on High Forest estate in Nuwara Eliya staged a strike on 19 November after thugs, instigated by politicians, attacked the workers injuring many and robbed several shops. The police arrested 12 youths on the estate instead of apprehending the offenders.

Living and working conditions on plantations remain marginal. Health, education and housing facilities are among the poorest in the country. There is a new opportunity to improve the lives of Hill Country workers, while the government is willing and by a quirk of fate most plantation trade unions are in the same PA camp.

Election Commissioner under fire

INDIAN Deputy Home Minister Rajesh Pilot says his government continues to urge vigilance over the possibility of the LTTE rearing its head again in the southern state of Tamil Nadu. According to Mr Pilot LTTE is among the groups involved in smuggling Rs 450 million (\$18 million) worth of narcotics into India recently.

Jaffna youths Jeevamurali and Sriharan were arrested in Madras government hospital on 19 November. Police say MS Kanagasabapathy, 74, an accused in the Rajiv Gandhi murder case, is receiving treatment in the hospital. A 70 year-old Batticaloa man was taken to Madras by Sri Lankan police in mid-November to give evidence in the Rajiv case.

While the case continues before a special court, two commissions are probing the Rajiv assassination - one headed by Supreme Court Judge JS Varma to inquire into the security provided to Rajiv Gandhi and the other by former Delhi High Court Judge MC Jain to investigate conspiracies behind the murder. Mr Jain has criticised the appointment of two commissions and says the

terms of reference are overlapping. India's Election Commissioner TN Seshan has been summoned to give evidence before the Jain Commission.

Tamil Nadu's Dravidian parties are up in arms over a statement attributed to Mr Seshan in his biography describing for-

mer Chief Minister and revered DMK leader CN Annadurai as a CIA agent during the anti-Hindi demonstrations in the 1960s. Two court injunctions issued on applications by the ruling AIADMK and the opposition DMK prevented the sale and distribution of the book. Reports say a second edition has been released without the reference to Mr Annadurai.

The AIADMK is again accused of corruption and misuse of power. Tamil Nadu Congress (I) says a petition signed by 10 million people will be sent to Indian Prime Minister Narasimha Rao demanding a commission of enquiry. DMK has scheduled a demonstration for 15 December accusing the Jayalalitha government of attempting to postpone local elections by a year.

Cyclonic storms have killed over 200 people in the southern states this month. In Tamil Nadu 33,000 huts, 10 buildings and 12 bridges were destroyed. Dilapidated huts in Sri Lankan refugee camps in coastal areas collapsed.

The refugee repatriation programme suspended in September after reports of pneumonic plague in India is expected to recommence in February 1995.

THE SRI LANKA MONITOR is part of an information processing service set up by the British Refugee Council to keep Sri Lankan refugees in Britain, Europe and elsewhere, informed about the current situation in their home areas.

If you have any information you wish to share, or any enquiries you wish to make regarding developments in Sri Lanka, contact

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