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V. Gopalasamy, DMK MP

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DMK MP's Secret Mission to LTTE Leaders

- ★ **What will Karunanidhi do?**
- ★ ***Indian Media comments on N-E Elections***
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Dr. Colvin R de Silva, the LSSP leader who passed away at 82



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FOR A NATIONAL CONFERENCE

Following the surprise victory of the Eelavar Democratic Front (EROS/EDF) which secured thirteen seats in the North-East Province in last month's general elections, the idea of a National Convention of Tamil political groups has been introduced into the current political agenda. It is learnt that certain preliminary practical moves have already been taken to give effect to this welcome idea.

The idea is most welcome and opportune for more than one reason. That it would endeavour to constitute such a National Convention was one of the assurances that the candidates of the EDF gave the Tamil people. Besides the fact that the majority of the people have endorsed this idea, it has been evident for any discerning person that the people had long ago become exasperated and helpless with the tragic consequences flowing from the continuing infighting among various Tamil groups.

A substantial body of opinion, both within and outside Sri Lanka, has contended that the absence of the representatives of the Tamil people as co-partners in the formulation and eventual signing of the Indo-Sri Lanka Agreement constituted a fatal defect. It is argued from the Indian side that it was the lack of a unity of purpose and the then prevailing state of hostility among the Tamil groups that directly contributed to this deficiency. They also contend that, it was after having made strenuous and protracted efforts to bring the various Tamil groups together for the purpose of negotiating with the Sri Lankan government and failed repeatedly, the Indian government had to go ahead on its own in signing the Agreement. Whether this contention is true or not, right or wrong is presently irrelevant. The fact is that, had there been in existence a common Front, Forum or Alliance of Tamil political groups and parties at that time, it would have been virtually impossible for India and Sri Lanka to have ignored such an organisation and enter into the Agreement as they did in July 1987.

Several issues, covered and not covered by the Agreement, have been raised as matters of concern for the Tamil people and indeed some of them are matters of concern for the whole of Sri Lanka and its entire people.

First, the question of the extent of devolution of powers which is viewed as inadequate and on this issue there is almost total unanimity among all Tamil groups. In fact the recent statements made by the Chief Minister of the North-East Provincial Council amply demonstrate that there are many problems to be resolved in this regard.

Secondly, the temporary nature of the merger of the Northern and Eastern Provinces and the government's determination to hold a referendum on 5 July in the Eastern province alone are fraught with more dangers than one could imagine.

Thirdly is the question of the unnecessary obligation to take oaths under the 6th Amendment to the Constitution. A year ago, even the SLFP leader, Mrs. S. Bandaranaike, went on record expressing her consent to the repeal of this provision.

Fourthly is the present state of armed confrontation between the IPKF and the LTTE which has continued from 10 October 1987 to the present day. It must be

self-evident that without the participation of the LTTE, a lasting solution to the conflict is difficult to contemplate. The desire of the Tamil people for an immediate ceasefire must be given expression and a way must be found for the LTTE, to become a partner in evolving the eventual solution. Human rights violations, including arbitrary killings, disappearances, detention, torture and deaths in custody, have become part and parcel of the continuing conflict and these must be brought to an end.

Fifthly is the question of state-aided colonisation of Tamil areas. In fact the Manifesto under which Mrs. S. Bandaranaike contested the Presidential election proposed a freeze on such colonisation for the time being until the question is resolved by negotiation.

Sixthly, some representative Muslim organisations have raised the question of a separate Muslim unit to be created within a merged North-Eastern province. The people of Sri Lanka are today experiencing the perils of Sinhalese politicians having unreasonably, unwisely and often violently denied the powerful emergence of a Tamil consciousness to preserve its identity, language and culture. No one should make the same mistake of ignoring the present emergence of a strong feeling of a Muslim identity as a factor in contemporary Sri Lankan politics, and therefore due consideration, recognition and acceptance must be given to this factor.

Lastly is the continued presence of Indian troops in North-East Sri Lanka. While the arrival of the IPKF provided and continues to provide a feeling of security to the Tamil people who suffered years of unmitigated atrocities at the hands of the Sri Lankan security forces, the unforeseen confrontation that developed between the IPKF and the LTTE and the continuing military operations have resulted in no less suffering for the Tamil people. It must also be recognised that there is popular resentment among the Sinhalese population to the presence of the IPKF. This justifiable resentment is being maladroitly mobilised, mischievously manipulated, and menacingly misdirected by those chauvinist elements who have traditionally opposed the legitimate rights of the Tamil people. Employing such demagogic expressions like 'Eelam fifth columnists and terrorists being in league with Indian imperialists', these neo-fascist elements, while targeting for murder all those who recognise Tamil aspirations, are attempting to emerge as 'saviours of the motherland from foreign occupation'. In these circumstances, it is in the interests of everybody, Tamil speaking people, Sinhalese people, Sri Lanka and India, that conditions be created for the departure of the IPKF within a time frame.

The wisdom in the idea of a National Convention is that it can discuss and arrive at a framework of mutually agreeable formulae on outstanding issues of concern for the Tamil people, present a joint front in any negotiations with India, the Sri Lankan government and opposition parties, and above all bring an end to the self-destructive internecine armed conflicts by the acceptance of the fundamental premise of the right of each and every political group or party to exist and function on the basis of democratic pluralism.

COLOMBO NEWSLETTER

by Chithra

THE NEW PARLIAMENT

Unlike the previous 'long parliament' in which the UNP had enjoyed a four-fifths steam-roller majority, the present one has an opposition of one-hundred members to the government's 125. The 4 member Sri Lanka Muslim Congress led by its neo-fundamentalist leader, M.H.M. Ashroff (who has dutifully agreed with Ayotalah Khomeni's death sentence on Salman Rushdie), has been flirting with President Premadasa before the elections and therefore there is some speculation in political circles that this party may eventually join the government. Even if that were to happen, it will leave the parliamentary opposition basically strong, and the government is not expected to have an easy ride.

After eleven years of chaos, violence, corruption etc., the UNP was predestined for certain defeat, but it is still in power thanks to the incompetence of the SLFP and the machinations of the JVP which concentrated its campaign of violence and murder upon the opposition parties and ensured a low poll to give victory to the UNP. No wonder that, even after hundreds of his own party members and supporters, in addition to those of the opposition, have been brutally killed by the JVP/DJV, President Premadasa has so far been reluctant to name the JVP as the culprit.

The ceremonial opening of parliament took place on March 9 with all the usual pomp and pageantry with the President and his First Lady occupying centre stage in media coverage. However, there was another small group, hitherto unknown in parliamentary circles, which stole the political limelight and received much attention by not attending the opening of parliament and refusing to take their seats. EROS, which now prefers to call itself the Eelavar Democratic Front (EDF) and which won 13 out of 31 in the North-East Province, kept away from Parliament. Not that they had promised to keep away for good, but they want certain outstanding problems, like taking the oath under the 6th Amendment, to be resolved first.

The other Tamil MPs belonging to the EPRLF, TELO and TULF had no such qualms, took their oaths owing allegiance to the unitary constitution and promptly helped themselves to their allocated seats. Defeated in elections, but returning through the TULF's National List, A. Amirthalingam occupied a seat in the front row to which he was apparently entitled by

reason of seniority he acquired before he went into voluntary exile to South India in 1983. The EROS/EDF non-Parliamentary leader, Shankar Raji's acid comment was, "The TULF's disappearance without trace from Tamil representation in Parliament indicates that the people have lost all hope of achieving anything through TULF. For all practical purposes we thought that the TULF was dead. But it has been resurrected through some strange legal provision in the Sri Lankan electoral system".

The TULF-EPRLF-TELO-ENDLF alliance, which was formed for the purposes of the elections, was a coalition of convenience and it did not work from the start. MPs belonging to the EPRLF have decided to function as a separate group in Parliament and they will not accept the whip of the TULF. The two MPs belonging to TELO will, however, continue to function under the TULF.

The SLFP, which managed hard to 'snatch defeat from the jaws of victory' at the elections, has a 67 strong contingent of MPs among whom are the Bandaranaike mother-son duo. Son Anura was the Leader of the Opposition in the last parliament, but this time Mother Sirima was elected for the post.

It is reliably rumoured that Anura did not give up his claim for the post without his characteristic temper tantrums and prolonged sulking. The SLFP must be thankful to former President Jayawardene for introducing the system of proportional representation that enabled it to have in parliament 67 MPs. According to the actual voting in the various districts, the SLFP would have got only 5 seats if the previous first-past-the-post system had been in operation.

In addition to a 22-member Cabinet, President Premadasa has sworn-in 49 Ministers of State. He has retained for himself the Ministry of Policy Planning and Implementation, Ministry of Defence and the newly created Ministry of Buddha Sasana.

As far as representation of minorities in the Cabinet go, there are two Muslims, Mr. A.C.S. Hameed as Minister of Higher Education, Science and Technology and A.R. Munsur as Minister of Trade and Shipping, and one Tamil. Mr. S. Thondaman as Minister of Textiles and Rural Industrial Development. Among the 49 Ministers of State, there are two Tamils and two Muslims. The two Tamils, M. Sella-

samy, Ministry of Transport, and P. Devaraj, Ministry of State for Hindu Religious and Cultural Affairs, belong to the Ceylon Workers Congress.

The President engaged in a game of suspense and drama when he failed to name the Prime Minister at the time the Cabinet was announced. Most were speculating on Lalith Athulathmudali who no doubt worked hard for the UNP victory. Gamini Dissanayake was also in the running. Eventually, the person appointed as Prime Minister was a rank outsider, Mr. D.B. Wijetunga, who is regarded as an obedient Premadasa-loyalist and who will in no way pose a threat or a challenge to him. Ven that appointment is to be for a specified period of one year, according to Premadasa's edict.

In dismissing the claims of Lalith and Gamini for the moment, Premadasa said, 'It is a known fact that there are some members of the group who are aspiring to the office of Prime Minister. I am aware that they have the support of different sections of the Government Parliamentary Group. In exercising my prerogative, I do not desire to create a division by considering anyone in this instance. Some are known aspirants, whilst others have also indicated their claims to me'. If the aspirants want to be considered favourably by His Excellency in future years, let them conduct themselves in an acceptable manner!

NORTH EAST: THE NEW MPs JAFFNA DISTRICT

EDF/EROS

E. Ratnasabapathy *E. Pararajasingham*
S. Sivamaharasa *A.P. Selliah*
T. Loganathapillai *S. Edward*
K. Selvanayagam *J.G. Rajenthiram*

EPRLF

K. Navaratnam *K. Premachandran*
G. Yogasangari

TRICOMALEE DISTRICT

EDF/EROS

S. Ratnarajah *A.D.S. Gunawardene*
K. Mathavarajah *UNP*
M.E.H. Maharroof

VANNI DISTRICT

EPRLF

A.E. Silva *R.M. Pulendran*

R. Kuhaneswaran

EDF/EROS

I. Alfred *S.S.M. Abu Badr*

BATTICALOA DISTRICT

EPRLF

G. Karunakaran
P.G. Casinader
S.P.T. Thambimuthu

EDF/EROS

A. Gunaseelan *M.L.A.M. Hisbulla*

DIGAMADULLA DISTRICT

UNP

P. Dayaratne *M.H.M. Ashraff*

A.P.G. Chandradasa

N.Y. Bakmeewewa

TELO

J.T. Nadan *T.A.K. Thewarapperuma*

EROS/EDF MPs BOYCOTT OPENING OF PARLIAMENT

The 13 members of Parliament belonging to the Eelavar Democratic Front (EDF), a political party initiated by the Tamil militant group EROS, elected in the recently held general elections did not attend Parliament when it was ceremoniously opened on March 9.

Mr. Shankar Raji, a founder member of the Eelam Revolutionary Organisation told a news conference on March 7 at Hotel Lanka Oberoi in Colombo the hotel they are alleged to have bombed five years ago, that the right conditions should be created for them to enter Parliament.

He did not say whether they would boycott Parliament completely nor did he indicate when they would attend its sessions.

Mr. Raji who is also on the Central Committee of EROS (but not an elected MP) said they had held two hours of talks with President R. Premadasa on the evening of March 6, their first official meeting with him.

He also said an EROS Central Committee meeting would be held within a week in which their talks with the President and the Government's attitude would be reviewed.

An EROS delegation would leave for New Delhi shortly for talks with the Indian government on the situation in the island, he added.

Mr. Raji said that although they had come a long way in their struggle, there still was 'a lot of unfinished business' about which they were holding talks with the government to resolve.

It is the outcome of their talks, the attitude of the government and the desire to bring about the necessary conditions for them to enter Parliament that will decide their course of action, he said.

'I can assure you that our party will keep in mind the best interests of our people and would do everything possible to bring peace and normalcy to the north and east' he declared.

'We are here after several years of struggle' he said, 'There is a deep rooted mistrust and suspicion among both the Tamils as well as the Sinhalese. Are we looking to the future where this mistrust could be removed through institutional mechanisms for which we as a party would work along with others?'

This mistrust and suspicion should be removed and the Tamils treated as equals for peace to prevail in the north and east, he said.

As part of this, the 6th Amendment to the Constitution disavowing separatism should be repealed, he said.

The existence of the 6th Amendment he added meant that the Tamils were not trusted, he said.

'I don't think we could continue indefinitely under such circumstances where you do not trust us' Mr Raji said.

Removing the 6th Amendment amounts to treating us as equal citizens of this country. We should feel free. We should feel equal' he said

'It was this attitude over several years that made us take up arms' he also said

He said EROS was in contact with all organisations including the LTTE and the JVP (not necessarily at an official or organisational level). 'If you want a durable peace in the north and east and a solution to the ethnic problem, leaving the LTTE out will never bring that about' he said.

'By the LTTE's actions we find that they haven't given up hope of achieving their objectives through armed struggle', he said.

He said he believed EROS could act as a go-between to help bring the LTTE into the political mainstream.

Before they talk to the LTTE, he said they must be sure that the right conditions for their entry to the democratic process are created.

EROS wants a phased withdrawal of the IPKF and a complete demilitarisation of the north and east. However, he added, the entry of the Indian troops brought a feeling that there was security for the Tamil people. 'As it is,' he remarked, 'I think the IPKF is required. But it is up to the Tamil leadership as well as the Sri Lankan government to see that the conditions necessary for the IPKF's presence are removed and we could live in this country in peace as equals.'

He said EROS was driven to take up arms when there were no democratic means to remove the injustices against the Tamils. 'We hope we can resolve this without going back to the way we were. We would resort to all possible means of expressing our dissatisfaction. I don't exclude the armed struggle,' he also said.

EROS, he said was not under threat from anybody either to attend or not to attend Parliament.

They did not take part in the provincial council elections since they felt nothing would be achieved by it, he said, adding that this was borne out by the statement made by the chief Minister of North East Province.

He said that in their talks with the President they had raised the issue of the continued imprisonment of 140 Tamil political prisoners, including 45 EROS members, in spite of the general amnesty granted under the Peace Accord and their laying down of arms.

The President had said he was unaware of the situation and that he would consider it and take necessary action, Mr. Raji said.

The others who were at the news conference were Ilayathamby Ratnasabapathy MP, for Jaffna and Central Committee member, Sivapragasam Ratnaraja, MP for Trincomalee and S. Darwood Basheer, an MP for Batticaloa from the national list.

COLVIN DE SILVA DIES AT 82

One of Sri Lanka's most charismatic politicians, Dr. Colvin R. de Silva, passed away on 27 February, following a brief illness, only a few days after he celebrated his 82nd birthday. The founder President of the oldest political party in the island, Lanka Sama Samaja Party, Dr. de Silva was nominated by the United Socialist Alliance as its MP from the National List a week before he died. His body was cremated on 2 March at the Independence Square in the presence of a vast crowd.

parts and dominated public life in Sri Lanka for nearly 55 years. An acknowledged historian, his doctoral thesis, 'Ceylon Under British Occupation' continues to remain the classic work for the period. Described as the Marshall Hall of Sri Lanka, he was by far the most

eminent of criminal lawyers and strode the halls of justice like a giant respected by colleagues and judges alike. Both in Parliament and public platforms, he kept his audience spell-bound and enraptured by his brilliant and powerful oratory. His best two contributions during parliamentary debates are the speeches he made on the attempt by the then government to deprive the plantation Tamils of their citizenship in 1948 and on the Bill to make Sinhala the only official language of the country in 1956 during which he prophetically declared, 'Two languages, one nation. One language, two nations'.

A prolific pamphleteer, Dr. de Silva displayed his vast knowledge and grasp of Marxist theory during the days before the LSSP succumbed to coalition politics.

MADRAS NEWSLETTER:

by Arjuna

WHAT WILL KARUNANIDHI DO?

Ever since the DMK stormed back into power in Tamil Nadu in the third week of January, Karunanidhi-watching has become a major political pursuit among not only the Indian media, but also among Eelam Tamils, among Tamil expatriates in several countries in the world, and why, among Sinhalese in Sri Lanka as well. What will Karunanidhi do, or not do, on the Sri Lankan Tamil question? – that has been the question on the lips of thousands of people. The range of emotions on his return to power varies from triumphant euphoria to cautious optimism, from disturbed feelings to one of positive fear, depending on each person's political conditioning, each person's capacity for mature assessment, and of course each one's self-interest. When it comes to public personalities, how fascinating it is to see that while the person is one, the differing external images of him add up to a hundred and one! Let us document whatever has happened in the one month since the DMK's return to power, the various perceptions by various people, as well as the DMK leader's own visible thinking and actions on the problems of the Eelam Tamils.

On assuming office, Mr. Karunanidhi's first comments on the Sri Lankan Tamil question were guarded, but positive and encouraging, from the Tamil point of view. He used the expression 'the people of Tamil Eelam', not Sri Lankan Tamils – a semantic difference but nevertheless significant. He made specific reference to LTTE leader Prabhakaran, and he assured Eelam Tamils that his party, in office or out of it, would never let them down. He was guarded when he said that he would discuss the issue with the Central government and try to bring about 'complete peace' in the Tamil areas. Talking to reporters, he said that the peace achieved was not complete, as the LTTE was still holding out. He would try to find out what reservations the LTTE leader Mr Prabhakaran had about the provincial elections held recently in the Tamil areas and on the now installed Tamil administration. Mr. Karunanidhi said that because he was not in power all these years, he could not keep track of the Centre's moves and had no opportunity to know the nature of the talks the Centre had with the LTTE, the Sri Lanka government and various other organisations at different stages. 'Now that the opportunity has come to me, I will realise it', he said. Asked whether he

still supported the 'separatist Eelam demand', he circumvented the question but said that the LTTE continued to have it as its goal. There was also a view favouring an arrangement which would bring all the benefits of a Tamil Eelam, he said. 'For achieving a permanent solution both sides should talk without any reservations'. In reply to a question by senior editor Prabhu Chawla of INDIA TODAY – 'Will you provide financial aid to the Tamil Tigers as MGR did?', he replied: 'Money cannot buy peace, only more arms and bloodshed. A solution can come only through negotiations' – the wisdom in which statement no one will contest.

Now how does one interpret all that he has said? Firstly, and most importantly, whatever he said reflected an action-oriented thinking. It was not a case of giving conventional responses to questions, loaded or otherwise, that pressmen are habitually accustomed to. In short, he gives the impression of a man fully seized with the problem, and that he intends to act, but act with a sense of responsibility. Secondly he kept the LTTE and its leader Prabhakaran in the centre of the picture all the time. There was no attempt to get behind the actuality that the attitude of the LTTE was central to any solution that had to be found, even if it be not Tamil Eelam. Thirdly, he was not prepared to hug the illusion that peace had returned to the north-east as projected by the Indian government and the Indian official media.

While the LTTE did not publicly react to the DMK election victory or to the statements made by Karunanidhi, others volunteered their comments. Mr. Amirthalingam (now the ex-) Secretary General of the TULF told UNI in Colombo: 'I think he will be more careful in power than in opposition. He knows that one could not upset what has been achieved by the Tamils under the accord and will not do anything to undo it'. The EPRLF said; 'DMK's victory is our victory' and sent a message congratulating Mr. Karunanidhi. Mr. Thondaman said: 'He will have enough problems of his own. They will not be concerned about what is happening here unless there is a spill-over to Tamil Nadu'. A Colombo correspondent Sugeeswara Senadhira writing to the DECCAN HERALD (Jan.26) reported: 'The DMK's victory has sent shock waves here and many Sinhalese think that with M. Karunanidhi in the saddle, the Liberation

Tigers of Tamil Eelam might get their sanctuary back in Tamil Nadu to train militants and wage 'war' on Sri Lanka. He quoted an unnamed SLFP member as saying: 'Karunanidhi's statement that the DMK government would not disappoint LTTE leader Prabhakaran and the people of Tamil Eelam has confirmed our fears'. The largest circulated English daily, THE ISLAND, took up the war cry and urged strengthening the security forces 'to combat the threat the country may have to face in the future'. The newspaper reminded its readers 'when Prabhakaran forsook his godfather's (MGR's) patronage refusing to accept the dictates of New Delhi, Mr. Karunanidhi extended his support to the LTTE'. The SUN sounded less dismal. It said the people of Sri Lanka expect Mr. Karunanidhi to be decidedly different from his predecessor MGR, who it said was the 'godfather of terrorism'. A senior member of the ruling UNP was on the other hand quite sure that the DMK will not interfere. 'They do not care for Sri Lankan Tamils. Now that he is Chief Minister he will change his line. when in power he told the then Sri Lankan Tamil leader Chelvanayakam not to ask for his support, and advised him to settle the Tamil problem with the Sri Lankan leaders in Colombo; not only that, as the Chief Minister, Mr. Karunanidhi did not hesitate to hand over the topmost Tamil militant leaders Kuttimani and Thangadurai to Sri Lanka'.

That being the spectrum of assessments (some of them sounding like whistling in the dark), based on assumptions and reactions to whatever statements made by Karunanidhi, let us see what initiatives had been taken on the part of the DMK leadership. One of the first requests in this connection came from Mr. Amirthalingam. Flying down to Madras in the midst of his election 'campaign', Mr. Amirthalingam met Mr. Karunanidhi on February 4, and requested him to appeal to the LTTE to give up violence and return to the mainstream of politics. Much play was given to this meeting in the columns of THE HINDU, but other reports indicate that Mr. Karunanidhi was not impressed. On the following day when he met newsmen at Anna Arivalayam (a few days before his departure to Delhi) he made his position clear "It was not correct to say the LTTE was indulging in violence, he said, when asked about TULF secretary-general A. Amirthalingam's appeal to him for steps to end the Tiger violence. **The IPKF should stop its operations resulting in violence and confrontation with the LTTE**" (INDIAN EXPRESS: Feb 6). After meeting the Indian Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi, Mr. Karunanidhi made his party's position more explicit in a briefing to New Delhi pressmen on February 8. Here are extracts of a report in the INDIAN EXPRESS of

February 10. "At his press conference, news men asked him a number of questions on the Sri Lankan Tamil issue. Mr. Karunanidhi explained the stand of the DMK: the Sri Lankan Tamils believed that Tamil Eelam would be the remedy for their suffering, and if the problem could be solved without recourse to that remedy he and his party would be very happy. To a specific question, Mr. Karunanidhi replied; "Tamil Eelam is the ideal of Mr. V. Prabhakaran and if he gets that, all concerned will be happy. At the same time the DMK would not like the present situation of violence to continue. It wants the Lankan Tamils issue settled through negotiations involving all groups, including the LTTE". Asked about the withdrawal of the IPKF from Sri Lanka . . . Mr. Karunanidhi told another questioner: "It is wrong to say that the LTTE alone is responsible for the violence in Sri Lanka. The war between the LTTE and the IPKF is the main reason for violence and this war should be stopped".

It was very clear that the Indian Prime Minister had gone out of the way to accommodate Mr. Karunanidhi during the latter's stay in the capital. Apart from two successive days' meetings, the second lasting 40 minutes without aides, Mr. Rajiv Gandhi had deputed Minister of State for External Affairs Natwar Singh to brief Mr. Karunanidhi on the various steps taken by the Centre in respect of the Sri Lankan Tamil issue, which briefing had lasted one and a half hours. Although Mr. Karunanidhi had remained tight-lipped about the outcome of all the three meetings, there has been considerable speculation about the nature of the dialogue between the Prime Minister and the Chief Minister. While Mr. Karunanidhi had advocated talks with the LTTE, Mr. Rajiv Gandhi is believed to have said that any new initiative had to wait till the Sri Lankan Parliamentary elections were over and nothing should be done to disturb that process. Mr. Karunanidhi had apparently accepted that position, which it was probably that made him say he would resume his discussions with the PM after February 15. A New Delhi correspondent P.P. Balachandran writing to the Bombay weekly, THE SUNDAY OBSERVER said: ". . . During his recent talks with the central leaders on the Sri Lankan issue, one of the assurances chief minister Karunanidhi sought, in return for soft-peddling the Tamil Eelam issue, and which New Delhi agreed to, that any IPKF offensive should see to it that the LTTE chief is not eliminated. In other words, New Delhi assured the Tamil Nadu chief minister that the IPKF would only play hide-and-seek with the LTTE leader but would never kill him even if the hide-and-seek game were to take a few hundred more lives on the Indian

side. The IPKF can, however, make an attempt to capture him alive. But as a senior army commander points out, "It is naive to expect that a guerilla leader of Prabhakaran's motivation and tenacity will surrender meekly and not take his own life instead".

On the question of the resumption of talks there has been no word about it, although at the time of my writing this, nearly ten days have passed since the Sri Lankan elections. There is now, a new hesitation on the part of both; on the Prime Minister's side, possibly because the New Delhi calculations on the electoral outcome in north-east have gone haywire. The confident expectation, having done all the spadework, that the TULF-EPRLF alliance would carry most of the seats with them has been belied; which only makes Mr. Karunanidhi's contention on that the LTTE should be invited for talks more plausible. As for hesitation on the part of Mr. Karunanidhi, that is another story altogether.

That has everything to do with the ebullient DMK MP, Mr. V. Gopalaswamy. A known Tiger backer, a political firebrand and a constant embarrassment not only to Mr. Rajiv Gandhi in Delhi but at times even to his own leader in Tamil Nadu. Mr. Gopalaswamy was suddenly discovered to have landed in "Tamil Eelam". The first hint of his secret visit came from a Tamil periodical. While political circles were buzzing with rumours about the nature and intention of his visit, DMK general secretary K. Anbazhagan made a statement on February 19 that Mr. Gopalaswamy who had reportedly gone to Sri Lanka, had not obtained the party's permission for the visit. Mr. Anbazhagan said Mr. Gopalaswamy had not consulted him or the party's president, but had undertaken the trip on his own accord. It was in no way connected with the DMK, nor had his visit anything to do with the talks that Mr. Karunanidhi had been holding on the Sri Lankan issue. Coincidentally or otherwise, on the same day the IPKF overall commander Lt. Gen. Kalkat had called on Mr. Karunanidhi at his residence. It could have been a routine courtesy call, but the popular belief is that there was more to it than that. Two days later, responding to a question from Congress-I deputy leader Kumari Anandan in the Tamil Nadu Assembly, the Chief Minister reiterated what Anbazhagan had said earlier, adding that Mr. Gopalaswamy had neither sought his permission, nor had he sent him with any message. The INDIAN EXPRESS while reporting this, also reported that no visa had been granted by the Sri Lankan High Commission in Madras. For good measure, the reporter concluded with the unnecessary padding-up that "previously an LTTE member Johnny was sent unofficially by the Tigers from Madras with the Centre's help to meet

leader Prabhakaran in Sri Lanka, but he was killed under mysterious circumstances enroute on the island". Before the public statements came from the DMK hierarchy, the belief is held that it was "Kalaingar" himself who had secretly sent Mr. Gopalaswamy with a message for Mr. Prabhakaran. While puzzled observers are now wondering what to make out of all these, a friend of this writer who knows Mr. Gopalaswamy well, asserts that a firebrand he may be, but Mr. Gopalaswamy is a disciplined party functionary, and that he would never place himself in any state of confrontation with his own leader. Whatever that may be, Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi cannot be expected to be pleased about the whole affair. At this stage, one does not know when the resumption of talks between him and the Chief Minister would take place, but there is no doubting the possibility that Mr. Gopalaswamy would be Item No.1 on the agenda!

IPKF OFFENSIVE AGAINST LTTE

The Indian Peace Keeping Force, after months of low level operations mounted intensive military operations against what it describes as LTTE fortifications, bunkers and hideouts in the Vavuniya and Mullaitivu areas.

The LTTE has alleged that the IPKF was using aircraft and helicopters to bomb the areas indiscriminately setting the villages aflame and causing heavy civilian casualties. The statement said that over one hundred civilians had been killed and several hundreds of families have evacuated the areas as refugees.

The statement added that thousands of Indian and Sri Lankan troops in combined operations backed by artillery and tanks had been putting up fierce resistance. In one incident alone at least 10 IPKF men were killed following an explosion of a landmine planted by the LTTE.

Although Indian authorities denied reports of civilian casualties and claimed to have killed about 50 to 60 LTTE men for the loss of 8 IPKF men, civilian sources from the areas affected confirm that several Tamil civilians including women have been killed in the operations. Reports also indicated that the IPKF blocked all access roads to Nithiyakaikulam to prevent any fresh supplies reaching the LTTE and to ensure that LTTE men did not slip out into other areas, and conducted house to house searches of houses in the area.

The IPKF offensive against the LTTE began on March 2 after pressure from the Sri Lankan government following several violent incidents in the course of which several Sinhalese civilians had been killed in the North Central Province during previous weeks.

EROS/EDF SEEKS RENEGOTIATION OF INDO-SRI LANKA ACCORD

The candidates who contested as an Independent Block in north-east Sri Lanka won thirteen seats in the recently held general elections and they belonged to the Eelam Revolutionary Organisation of Students (EROS), a Tamil militant group which has suspended armed struggle since the signing of the Indo-Sri Lanka Agreement in July 1987.

Generally internecine armed conflicts have dogged the relationship among Tamil militant groups, but EROS has successfully avoided such conflicts with the LTTE and their relations have been reported to be cordial. The LTTE called upon the Tamils to boycott the elections, while the EROS, which could not register itself in time as a political party fielded candidates in the elections. In this interview, the official representative of EROS in London, Ravi Suntharalingam, covers a wide range of subjects including their position on the Indo-Sri Lanka Agreement, relationship with the LTTE, success of their candidates at the elections and their proposals for a National Conference of all Tamil groups as a means of creating unity.

Q: EROS was reported to have formed itself into a political party called the Eelavar Democratic Front (EDF) sometime ago. What was the reason to put up candidates in the recent elections as independents?

A: Before we could register the EDF as a political party with the Commissioner of Elections, nominations for the elections were called and therefore our candidates had to contest as an independent bloc. If we had the chance to register it in time, they would have contested under the EDF banner.

EDF was conceived as a political front in the hope that one day all or most of the Tamil political groups could be part of it. It is neither the political wing of nor a cover for EROS. It is meant to be a genuine forum of all Tamil groups on the basis of certain agreed principles and positions in regard to the Indo-Sri Lanka Agreement (ISLA) and other issues affecting the Tamil people. Because of different approaches among Tamil militant groups about the ISLA, some are referred to as pro-Indian and others anti-Indian. We do not accept this categorisation.

Not anti-Indian

Q: You may not agree. But the view that some of them are pro-Indian and others anti-Indian is widely held. Eros has long been known to have had close liaison with India on most matters. Has that relationship become somewhat strained due to recent developments?

A: No. It is an important question. At no time have we regarded India as our enemy. We are clear in our view that the interests and security of the Tamil speaking people are very much tied with the security interests of India and the Indian Ocean region. The considerations which apply to the security interests of India cannot be regarded as contradictory to those of the Tamil people. However, they have got their own internal affairs, for which purpose they might want, for instance, to develop friendly relations with socialist countries. That is not to say that we will become anti-Indian. In fact, in a security sense, we can be regarded as pro-Indian. But that does not mean that India can, through its various institutions, intimidate us to accept everything they think is right for the Tamil people in respect of their internal affairs.

Q: By participating in the recent elections, has EROS/EDF accepted the ISLA as a basis for settling the ethnic conflict?

A: Not at all. When the ISLA was conceived, it was thought of as providing an interim solution and we accept that thinking. The Tamil speaking people have a right to an interim solution within the unitary state of Sri Lanka. In the exercise of that right, the people should decide that. No single group can decide that. That is why we participated in the elections. It is in accord with our accepted theory – one country but two nations. We are not seeking separation by barb-wire fencing. However, our position is that the ISLA requires fundamental rectification before it is accepted as forming the basis of even as an interim solution.

Issues for negotiation

Q: In what matters should the ISLA be rectified.

A: Firstly, the issue of the merger of the northern and eastern provinces. The present arrangements for the merger are temporary and not satisfactory. Even the Chief Minister of the North-East Provincial Council said recently that these arrangements and the institutions now in place would collapse the moment India pulled out of Sri Lanka.

Secondly, colonisation of Tamil areas which is still continuing. Even the areas from which the Tamil people had been displaced during the last few years have been and are being colonised. The oppression of the Tamil people was sought to be perpetrated through colonisation. A proper answer to this vital issue has to be found.

Thirdly, the rights of plantation Tamils. Although recent legislation affords citizenship rights to the so-called stateless persons, there are thousands of plantation Tamils who applied for Indian citizenship some 15 or 20 years ago under the terms of the Srima-Shastri Pact which was entered into over the heads of the affected people. Though their applications were not even acknowledged, they are supposed to be pending and these people are presumed to be Indian citizens and hence to be repatriated against their will. In fact the ISLA provides for their repatriation. We cannot forget the circumstances in which these people were forced to make their applications. At that time they were facing attacks by gangs of hoodlums instigated by Sinhala chauvinists. The so-called leader of these people, Mr. Thondaman, too was going around saying that India was a safer place. Now he seems to have changed his mind. Sensing our increasing support among plantation Tamils, he has also begun to act as if he is supporting the claims of these people for citizenship.

Q: What is the number of people falling into this category?

A: Approximately 240,000 in all which include all those who applied some 15 or 20 years ago together with their natural increase. In addition to this there is another category. Those who have already been repatriated to India in past years and who are undergoing great hardship. They also should be given the option to return to Sri Lanka and be granted all their rights.

Fourthly, the package for the devolution of powers does not represent an adequate response to the aspirations of the Tamil speaking people and therefore has to be rectified.

Muslim unit

Q: You talk about fundamental renegotiation of the ISLA. How did you think that legislation including constitutional amendments providing for what you

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ask for can be enacted by the present parliament where the ruling party does not possess the required majority?

A: It is not a question only for the ruling party. All those who think that the Tamil speaking people are part and parcel of Sri Lanka should support whatever legislation is required for the purpose. The left parties have already indicated their support to the ISLA and devolution of powers and we hope to get their support. The manifesto under which the SLFP leader Mrs. S. Bandaranaike contested the presidential election had some positive elements in regard to the question of devolution of powers. The SLFP also should be drawn into the negotiating process. We also have to take into account the concerns expressed by the Muslims. Although they are Tamil speaking, they want to be identified as Muslims and we must recognise that.

Q: The question of the need to constitute a distinct Muslim Unit in the eastern province has been raised. What is your position?

A: We respect the views of the Muslim people, but we hold the view that the Muslims are Eelavar too. When we formulated the concept of Eelavar (all Tamil Speaking people living in Eelam), instead of Tamils, which sounded chauvinistic, we foresaw these problems. The negotiations and agreements of Muslim political organisations have had with Tamil groups including us, and the manner in which the Muslim people had voted manifest a clear expression that the future of the Muslim people is bound up with that of the Tamil people.

Surprise victory

Q: EROS/EDF won 13 seats in the recent elections. It surprised many and upset several predictions. What is the secret of this success?

A: The surprise is that those who contested against us also won a number of seats. In fact we should have won many more seats if not for the acts of foul play by our so-called opponents. But we do not regard them as our real opponents except for the fact that they were involved in contests in these elections.

Those who are surprised at our success did not have any idea of the work we have done amongst the people to win their hearts and minds; they are those who are prone to making shallow judgements on bits of information they receive from here and there without understanding the realities of the situation. Obviously, the degree of xenophobia which afflicted the minds of Tamils who live abroad, particularly evident in their glorification of violence, suffered from a lack of insight into the real problems faced by the people and the way they were thinking and feeling. They thought that guns and grenades were the determining factor obviously misunderstanding the meaning and context of Mao's much publicised quote – political power flows from the barrel of the gun.

Q: How come that even independent commentators expressed surprise at your success?

A: Obviously, all along there has been an underestimation of the support EROS had among the people until the elections proved otherwise. No body, including analysts and commentators, had the means of testing the popular wish. The daily propaganda of the many Tamil groups did not help in properly reflecting the people's thoughts and feelings. Even the people in Eelam itself were not in a position to assess the situation correctly because the media was not free, and in fact was not allowed to be free. The news media was pre-occupied with the phenomenon of violence – the incidents of violence and the parties or groups involved in such incidents and the tragic consequences resulting from such violence – and therefore did not reflect the true feelings of the people. Those who relied for

information on media reports also suffered from this distorted picture.

Even among Tamil militant groups there was a misconception about the use of violence. They do not understand that there is another way. That is, you do not use the gun all the time. It is there to be used at a specific time to achieve a specified purpose. It is that extra bit that may be needed. But it is not the total way.

Our position is that the people should have the central role in our struggle. If they are cowards let them be so; if they are not let them come forward. But they alone must decide for themselves in terms of their own interests – how far and how fast they want to go, when they want to stop and rest, and when they want to go further. As leaders of an organisation, what we must do is to guide them and tell them, 'Look, this is the time you have to be aware, this is the time we must move, this is the opportune time to achieve some success, and therefore come forward.' That is our role. We should not be like shepherds to go behind the people and chase them with guns and bullets and force them forward. Genuine support of the people and real success in politics cannot be achieved that way.

We regard the EROS victory at the elections as a victory of the people. We are the only group which really understood the mood of the people at different levels and at different times. During these elections it has been tested and we have been proved right.

LTTE's boycott call

Q: Is it true that the LTTE wanted your candidates to withdraw before the elections in support of their boycott call?

A: It is a delicate question and I have to answer it carefully. We had talks with all the groups before the elections. We informed them about what we were going to do. It was necessary for us to do so since we had handed over all our weapons to India. Other groups still possessed large quantities of weapons. Our leaders and members have been walking around among the people without weapons. They were not seeking or carrying weapons. We did so to keep our undertaking to India as the guarantor that we would not hinder the process of democratisation of the society. That did not mean that EROS could ignore any violent threat to itself from the EPRLF, LTTE, IPKF or any other group or faction. We made it clear that we would put up candidates through the EDF. WE decided to discuss it with all the groups including representatives of citizens committees, trade unions etc. who understood the problems facing the people and to decide on candidates to contest the elections by accepting the basic principles of the EDF.

We approached the LTTE to see whether they would be interested in making the election a success. Obviously they chose to interpret the electoral process differently. They had the right to do so. LTTE may have informally tried to persuade us that it that it would not be right to participate in the elections as it would be rigged etc., but as far as I know there was no such official request. Whether there were threats or not is not the question. But the fact is that we did not succumb to any threats from any group. We contested on the basis of our own principles as much as other groups like the EPRLF, TELO, ENDLF or LTTE had the right to do what they wanted to do on the basis of their politics.

I also must say that the candidates we put up were not necessarily all members of EROS. Among those who contested and won there were only 4 or 5 who could be regarded as active members of EROS. The others were selected on the basis that those who had been with and worked among the people all these years must be given a chance. Whether the LTTE threatened us or not has now become irrelevant because, after the elections it was the EPRLF which mounted attacks on

our members. We look at the LTTE much more positively than the EPRLF at the moment. However, objectively we do not regard any group as our enemy.

Victory for the people

It is alleged that EROS got the votes on the claim that its candidates had the support of the LTTE and to that extent the people were deceived. Is that true?

A: Let me make it clear that genuine LTTE members and those who truly understand the LTTE's position will not make such irresponsible statements. I do not like to comment in uninformed propaganda because we wish to look at the future in a much more positive and constructive manner rather than indulging in petty squabbles. The LTTE and EROS may not be agreed on all fundamental questions, but we do not look at each other as enemies but as friends. EROS does not monopolise this election victory for itself. It is a victory for all those who believed that the elections would mean something to the people. The elections represented a stage at which people had the opportunity to express themselves. Only petty men begin to analyse as what vote belonged to whom and it is rather unfortunate.

The fact is that the LTTE called for a boycott. The people who are strictly members or supporters of the LTTE would have obviously obeyed this call. A lot of people did not vote and it is possible that there were supporters of the LTTE among those who did not vote. It is also possible that some of the LTTE supporters voted for the EDF candidates not because we deceived them, but perhaps they understood that it was the only way to express the acceptance of the principles of the EDF, and these are (a) The Tamil speaking people constitute a nation; (b) Withdrawal of the IPKF and the Sri Lankan security forces from the north and east within a time frame; and (c) Setting up a National Conference to resolve the question of inter-group rivalries and unnecessary shedding of blood among Tamils. I must add that it is a substantial victory for EROS because we withstood the pressure from various quarters who expected that we should not participate in the elections.

IPKF withdrawal

Q: Does EROS subscribe to the view that the IPKF should withdraw immediately?

A: No, not at all. We are seeing a situation in which one faction is being armed by the IPKF in order to achieve certain political ends, and we do not think this is the right way of going about things. However, the Tamil speaking people have not developed their strength in regard to their own security to withstand any attack or pressure from some quarters, may be from the Sri Lankan government or other organised groups from south Sri Lanka. Presently, therefore, we are not in a position to see the IPKF go, but India and IPKF should positively think towards their withdrawal within a time frame so that Tamil society becomes more democratic under which the people can elect their own representatives freely and without pressure and feel free in every sense. The unfortunate role played by the IPKF should be replaced with others like a force from the SAARC countries or a Commonwealth force, one should be alive to the security situation. In the interests of the Tamil speaking people and those of India and the region, we do not see the need to replace IPKF with some other force, but we would like the IPKF to leave withing a time frame.

For Tamil speaking people to reach the next stage in their goal, the groups must come together preferably through a National Conference where they can iron out their differences, reach an understanding and accept a framework for further work and thereby bring an end to their feuds and if this were to happen, the need for the continued presence of the IPKF or the Sri Lanka security forces would not be there.

Q: Some people allege that India is engaged in genocide against the Tamils of Sri Lanka. Do you agree?

A: Genocide is an over used word which means many things to many people and very often misleads them. Using the word in the present context is to underestimate and give a wrong picture of the plight and suffering of the people under the Sri Lankan security forces. But, India's, no not India's, because India is using several of its institutions in regard to the solution of our problems, and one such institution is the IPKF, and I think your question concerns the IPKF, and we cannot say that the IPKF is committing genocide, but it has committed several excesses and atrocities against many people. By claiming that these be part of a campaign of genocide is to unwittingly fall into the trap concealing or mitigating the enormous crimes the Tamil people had to suffer under the Sri Lankan security forces.

Attending parliament?

Q: Will your elected MPs attend Parliament?

A: Attending Parliament is not a big question for us. Although we are not separatists, we cannot accept the requirements of the Sixth Amendment and take the Oath of Allegiance forswearing separatism. The question of separatism rests with the Tamil speaking people and not the government. However, in the present context, it would seem that Parliament is the only place we could find to raise, for instance, the problem that confronted us immediately after the elections when EPRLF men began attacking the members of our organisation. Personally, I would not want to take an entrenched position on the question of the EDF MPs attending Parliament. People have given us a mandate to speak on their behalf. We must seek the best way to air the people's grievances and sufferings. If the best way to do so is by attending Parliament, then our MPs will do so. In any event, the question of attending Parliament in the context of the Sixth Amendment has to be examined closely.

One of the main tasks is to create a situation in which the people are truly represented through the democratic means. Today we feel the LTTE is unfairly treated by the IPKF in some respects. Some of the political positions of the LTTE very much correspond to our positions. Without LTTE's participation, there could not be even an interim solution. Today their lives are being wasted. They do not have the opportunity to sit down and consider what they have to do in the future. We have to bring the LTTE back into the responsible democratic mainstream. This is one of the reasons why the EDF was formed. Now as elected representatives of the people, it will be the task of the EDF MPs to raise in Parliament the problems presently faced by the LTTE, and for this reason too it may perhaps be necessary for them to attend Parliament.

Q: How can the present confrontation between the IPKF and LTTE be brought to an end?

A: Firstly, India should cause a ceasefire between the IPKF and LTTE and create the conditions suitable for negotiations. India must accept the fact that the LTTE has a role to play in the whole process. It has shown that it has support among the people many of whom did not vote at the elections. India and other groups should accept and respect that fact.

Secondly, the Indo-Sri Lanka Agreement has to be renegotiated. Such renegotiation cannot be between Sri Lanka and India, or for that matter India and any one particular group. We must bring all groups together on the platform of a National Conference where they could agree on a common framework and then a tripartite conference of representatives of India, Sri Lanka and

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LETTERS

PUBLISHER KILLED

The body of M. Amirthalingam, founder of EELAMURASU, Tamil journal was found near Perumal temple in Jaffna on 14 Feb. Earlier on the same day about 6pm seven unidentified gunmen entered his Navalur Road residence, and took him for questioning. It is widely believed that this group was responsible for his murder near the temple.

He was the managing director of Thamiler Nithiyem, a privately owned bank, and during his last years he managed a factory run by a group of widows of pogrom victims. In 1977 he unsuccessfully contested as the United National Party candidate for Kayts constituency.

Founded in 1982 Eelamurasu soon established itself as a highly circulated Tamil daily newspaper in Northern part of Sri Lanka under the editorship of Mr.S. Thiruchelvem (Esthey), a prominent Tamil journalist in Sri Lanka.

The Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) brought the publication under their direct control and in 1987 when conflict broke out between the IPKF-LTTE, Indians blazed the press as their first operation against Tigers.

His last years were spent as the assistant land commissioner for Jaffna/Kilinochi districts. It was ironic that the announcement of the revival of Eelamurasu publication was made on the day after his death.

He will be remembered by all journalists and writers who have entered the profession through Eelamurasu.

T.G. CONSTANTINE
London E.6.

P.C. for Plantation Tamils

I am writing to point out one of the major omissions in the current Indo-Sri Lankan Pact. It makes no mention of any provisions to guarantee safety and justice for the Tamils of Indian origin, who have been toiling in the tea plantations since the British took them to Sri Lanka over 150 to 200 years ago.

At the time of independence in 1948 the Tamils of Indian origin were the second largest group in Sri Lanka. The indigenous Tamils were, in fact, the third largest group, after the Sinhalese and the Indian Tamils!

The Gurukhas in Bengal, who arrived there during the last few decades, have been granted a Provincial Council to protect their rights. Instead of aiming for a similar set-up for the Indian Tamils in Sri-Lankan tea plantations, the Indian government seems to have ignored these Indians!

Even now it is not too late to return all those Indian Tamils who have been

deported to India under successive pacts between the Indian and Sri Lankan governments which never bothered to consult these victims before sealing their fate, and let those Indian Tamils live in dignity under a Provincial Council set up as granted to the Gurukhas in Bengal.

The Indian Government should realise by now that they cannot forever please the Sinhalese by selling out their own Indian Tamils.

An independent homeland for the indigenous Tamils and a Provincial Council for the Indian Tamils will go a long way towards ensuring security for India in its soft under belly.

Sutton P. Varothayasingham
Surrey

Tigers: Key to peace in Sri Lanka

The Indian Army came into Sri Lanka saying that they were here to protect the Tamils in the North & East. Later they said they were here to unarm the Tigers on the orders of President J.R. Jayewardene and mounted operations with high sounding Hindi names all of which were blown sky high by the Tigers.

Enraged, they tried their hands at the Provincial Council elections, trumpeting that they came here to bring democracy as if we had not had democracy in our land.

After the Provincial Council election fiasco, the pro-Indian cliques were installed in power. But the Tamils did not recognise the cliques. During the last general election, the Indians tried to paint some respectability to the cliques by involving the election maniacs TULF into the picture. The Tamils have given a clear verdict and the garb of respectability has been stripped and the TULF cliques' nakedness is exposed by the infighting that is taking place there now.

On the other hand, the chief minister 'Lion Flag' Perumal is lamenting over the Indian Radio that so far nothing has happened to activate the Provincial Councils, and looks dismayed. Events are proving that the prophecy of Prabhakaran is coming true, regarding the accord. In the last general election, the Tamils have proved that nothing good could happen to the country without the Tigers. It is not late even now to persuade the Tigers into the main stream as Prabhakaran is the key to peace in Sri Lanka.

Point Pedro. M. Sukumar

An End to Statelessness

I am a faithful reader of the Tamil Times but I was a little amused and really angry at an article with the above caption in your January, 1989, issue.

The author states 'Minister S. Thondaman must be congratulated for persuading the Government to adopt the new law to end statelessness'. This is far from the truth.

As a Minister for ten years under Jayawardene, Thondaman was unable to get the UNP to agree to end statelessness despite his pledge to the plantation workers in 1978 on accepting a port-folio that he would get the UNP to agree to end statelessness within a year. How was it then possible to get the UNP to agree to accept it now, after 10 (ten) years just before the Presidential and General Elections?

The UNP's options were limited. The Indian vote bank will join the Tamil militants! Thondaman is really the recipient of the fallout of the Tamil Militant struggle in the North and East of Sri Lanka, any sensible political observer will accept this. Let there be no illusion, that there has been a change of heart among the predominant UNP racialists or that Thondaman's struggle has resulted in the end of the stigma of the stateless. Pity that in the land of Buddhists and Hindus it was the barrel of the gun of the Northerner that brought justice to the plantation Tamils. I am one of them, and I am not ashamed to be grateful to the BOYS.

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V. RAJAN

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[PART 1]

Brian Senewiratne

The damage that ex-President Jayawardene has done to Sri Lanka is both serious and long lasting. It will probably not be reversed for half a century, if ever. He has dismantled democracy, done lasting damage to the electoral system, reduced parliament to a farce, damaged a much respected legal system, created economic chaos, made the solving of the ethnic conflict almost impossible, precipitated a major civil war in the country and put India in a very difficult position. Above all, he has legitimised and institutionalised violence and made violence the only possible method of political protest, replacing the rule of law by the rule of the armed thug. At the last cabinet meeting over which he presided he rightly observed, 'Whether we like it or not, terrorism in Sri Lanka has come to stay and we will have to live with it for the rest of our lives.' What should have been pointed out to him is that much of this is of his own making.

Institutionalisation of violence

When in 1977 Jayawardene allowed his Industries Minister, Cyril Mathew, to get together a band of hoodlums, the Jatika Sevaka Sangamaya (JSS), and encouraged them to intimidate all those who opposed, or indeed did not actively support, the UNP, he institutionalised violence. In the succeeding years, JSS hoodlums with direct access to Minister Mathew, Minister Mohamed and Prime Minister (now President) Premadasa, ran amok in Colombo. They called themselves the 'Trade Union wing of the UNP' although it is doubtful whether these hoodlums knew what trade unionism was all about. Their numbers grew rapidly as members of other trade unions were intimidated into joining this 'Trade Union'. As their numbers grew so did their power as more and more of these hoodlums found a place in Jayawardene's administration and in government corporations. Senior government officials and even those in the private sector were intimidated and insulted by these hoodlums. The Head of State took no action to stop this deliberate flouting of the law. The police, law officers and even Supreme Court judges were not immune. The rule of law was, with presidential acquiescence, replaced by the rule of the political hoodlum.

In July 1983, JSS hoodlums under the direction of their masters in Jayawardene's cabinet, went about in a completely organised manner killing innocent Tamils in Colombo and destroying their property. For four days the President was silent. There was no call on the security forces to restore

law and order. When he finally did appear on national television, there was not a word of condemnation of the hooligans or the atrocities they had committed. Not a single hoodlum has been brought to book for this heinous crime. Not only were they not punished but not even an attempt was made to investigate this blot on Sri Lanka's history. Jayawardene must carry the full responsibility for this. Furthermore, there are obvious questions as to the reason for Jayawardene's reluctance to bring these hoodlums to book. At issue is Jayawardene's own complicity in this mass murder.

In an incredible act of irresponsibility, Jayawardene then distributed arms to Sinhalese hoodlums (the 'Home Guard') and sent them to the Tamil areas to kill and intimidate the Tamils. These undisciplined government-armed hoodlums were set above the law of the land.

When the murderous Sinhalese extremists of the Janatha Vimukthi Peramuna (JVP) reappeared, Jayawardene banned the JVP. Then for dramatic effect, he challenged the JVP leader to a duel! The duel having failed to materialise, he pardoned these ruthless murderers, restored their group to the status of a political party and allowed them to operate quite openly.

The institutionalisation of violence for which Jayawardene is directly responsible is something which may not be reversible for half a century. It has ironically not only threatened his own regime but will threaten the regimes to follow.

Jayawardene proceeded to whip up anti-Tamil hatred in the South and generated a war of hysteria among the Sinhala people, portraying the Tamils whose President he also was, as foreigners who had to be destroyed militarily. He thus took a Buddhist culture which was self consciously non-violent, and turned it on its head so that the apostles of non-violence now became the instigators of violence.

This is indeed a crime. By his active encouragement of Sinhalese hooliganism against innocent Tamils, Jayawardene has done tremendous damage to the good name of the Sinhala people. By his failure to take action against racist bigots like the Rev. Sobitha and his 'Front for the Protection of the Motherland', he has in fact condoned their murderous activity and encouraged the formation of even more extreme Sinhalese groups.

He has done similar damage to the Sri Lankan armed forces and the

police. By active encouragement of their indiscipline and irresponsible behaviour, he has brought international contempt on the Sri Lankan security forces which will take years to undo.

Violence – a tool of political protest

Jayawardene has enshrined violence as the only available tool of political protest. In December 1983, he sacked the elected representatives of the Northern Tamils from parliament. With the removal of the democratic methods of protest, the only available method was violence.

He did the same in the South. When he cancelled the general election due in 1983 and replaced it with a rigged referendum, he denied the Sinhalese (and Tamil) people the democratic method of lodging their protest. The result was a massive uprising, allegedly JVP, but with major contributions from large numbers of dissatisfied people who had no other method of protest.

Damage done to the legal system

Jayawardene, himself a lawyer and the son of a Supreme Court judge, has insulted the Supreme Court and degraded the judiciary to an extent unknown in the long history of this proud and well-established judicial system. His 1978 Constitution dealt a severe blow to the independence of the judiciary. The Courts were put in a subordinate position without the power of the judicial review of executive action. Thus when the 6th Constitutional Amendment which seriously violated the civil rights of the Tamils was challenged in Court, the Supreme Court held that under the new Constitution it had no power to review this legislation.

Following the promulgation of the 1978 Constitution, Jayawardene locked out the Supreme Court judges from their chambers until they came to him on bended knees and took an oath of allegiance. It was an insult to the Supreme Court which is without parallel in any civilised country.

Over the next decade, judges of the Supreme Court were insulted to an extent that seriously undermined their authority. Hooligans transported in government vehicles intimidated and insulted judges whose judgements were not what the government wanted. Fines imposed by the Supreme Court on errant junior police officers were, on Jayawardene's instructions, paid by the government and disciplinary action replaced by promotions.

Setting himself up as a dictator.

Jayawardene did not merely appoint himself the Head of State, but he gave

himself the powers of a dictator. He was the Head of the Executive and of the Government and the Commander in Chief of the Armed Forces. He could dissolve Parliament. He appointed, and could remove, the Prime Minister and all the Ministers, the Head of the Army, the Navy, the Air Force and the Police. He appointed all public officers required by the Constitution and written laws. He appointed the Attorney General, the Chief Justice, the President of the Court of Appeal, all judges of the Supreme Court, the Court of Appeal and the High Court. He conferred on himself immunity from legal action for anything done or committed to be done by him both in his official or private capacity. In 1983, at the 25th annual session of his party, he could boast that he was above parliament and the judiciary and that the Prime Minister and the Cabinet were at his command. By 1985, he had taken over the Ministries of Defence, Plan Implementation, Janatha Estates Development, State Plantations, Higher Education, Power and Energy! What more was needed to make him a dictator is unclear.

Violating the Constitution of Sri Lanka

Jayawardene violated his own constitution to satisfy his ego and personal ambitions. Article 30 of the 1978 Constitution stated that the President 'shall hold office for a term of six years'. This meant that there was a constitutional restraint on the President's power to renew his term before the expiry of six years (ie February 1984). In practical terms it meant that Jayawardene could not pick an advantageous time to have himself re-elected as President. In July 1982, he 'fixed' this by amending the Constitution (the Third Amendment) which enabled the President 'at any time after the expiration of four years after the commencement of the first term of office by Proclamation declare his intention of appealing to the people for a mandate to hold office by election for a further term'. The Amendment obtained the necessary two-third majority from Jayawardene's docile parliament and became law on 27th April 1982. The same day, Jayawardene issued a proclamation that he intended to obtain a mandate for a further term. Significantly, his major political opponent, Mrs. Sirima Bandaranaike, was prevented from running for the Presidency because Jayawardene had deprived her of her civic rights. Not only could she not campaign and hold public office but she could not even support any one else who did.

The 1982 Presidential election was conducted with the entire government apparatus (government vehicles, manpower and the State-controlled media) instructed to support the incumbent President. This and other serious irre-

gularities made the Presidential election a farce.

In October 1982, Jayawardene amended the Constitution yet again (the Fourth Amendment) without any concern for the damage done to Sri Lanka. The 4th Amendment enabled the life of parliament to be doubled by a Referendum without the need for a General Election. The Referendum that followed was conducted under Emergency Laws with a degree of rigging which put the overall result in doubt. Only 38% of the country voted for the continuation of the government. 32% voted against and some 2.4 million people (30%) could not even get to the polls because of the intimidation by government-backed hoodlums. Even Jayawardene's own Commissioner of Elections, has been critical of the conduct of the Referendum.

Intimidating the Opposition

In 1977 soon after Jayawardene took over the country from Mrs Bandaranaike, he set about removing her from the political scene. He set up a 'Court' bypassing the Supreme Court and the Court of Appeal to 'try' Mrs Bandaranaike for alleged abuses of power. When the Court of Appeal issued a Writ of Prohibition against Jayawardene's 'Court', he amended the Constitution (the First Amendment) to restrict the right of Appeal court to issue writs. To make doubly sure that there was no escape for Mrs Bandaranaike, Jayawardene passed further legislation which in effect annulled the findings of the Appeal Court. With a newly bestowed legality, Jayawardene accepted the findings of his 'Court' and in 1980 stripped Mrs Bandaranaike of her civic rights for seven years. This removed her from parliament and also from the political scene.

The only opposition in parliament now came from the Tamil party. He soon fixed this by amending the Constitution (the Second Amendment) to make it impossible for the main Tamil party which had received a mandate from the people of the North to pursue the establishment of a separate state, to continue. This totally unacceptable Constitutional amendment removed the entire TULF and the leader of the opposition from parliament. Opposition even outside parliament was not tolerated. Legitimate Opposition meetings were regularly broken up and the participants assaulted by government-directed hoodlums.

Castrating the Sri Lankan Parliament

Jayawardene has not only dismantled democracy in Sri Lanka but has reduced parliament to a rubber stamp. Jayawardene's 1978 Constitution replaced the authority of parliament by that of the Executive President - a position to which he quickly promoted himself. The political rights of people, both Sinhalese and Tamils, who had

opted to be governed by a parliament were seriously violated.

As has been mentioned, he removed the leader of the Opposition in parliament, the leader of the main Sinhalese Opposition party and the entire Tamil Opposition from parliament. He even silenced the members of parliament of his own party by obtaining undated letters of resignation from them on the dubious grounds that he should be in a position to reconstitute the government party. He thus reduced parliament to a rubber stamp. Parliamentarians were now mere spectators as the affairs of the State were run according to the whims and fancies of a single individual.

Part 2 next issue

Dr. Ratnam - a versatile genius

"The late Dr. James T. Ratnam was an educationist who was the live-wire of research activities. Though he did not graduate himself from any recognised university, he emerged as a versatile genius."

This tribute was paid by Bishop Ambalavanar when he unveiled a portrait of the late Dr. James T. Ratnam at the Evelyn Institute, Thirunelvely at a memorial meeting in honour of Dr. Ratnam.

Continuing the Bishop said that he lived his life based on certain high principles which were worthy of emulation by our countrymen. He dedicated all his wealth to the educational progress of the succeeding generations. Unlike most of the educationists of Sri Lanka, who sought greener pastures with self-interest, Dr. Ratnam stuck to the land of his birth and spent his life on research works.

Professor S. Chittampalam of the Jaffna University said that the late Dr. Ratnam was a man of perfection. He saw to it that any work he undertook was completed with satisfaction and perfection. Though he could have lived the life of a Zamindar, he donated all his wealth to the cause of education.

Mr. Rajan Kadiragamar, Principal Emeritus, Jaffna College, said that Dr. Ratnam should be remembered with gratitude for the large number of books he donated to the Jaffna library. The donation is now a part of the property of the community. He loved Jaffna, the Jaffna College and the Church.

The following were elected to the Council of Management of the Evelyn Ratnam Institute for Inter Cultural Studies:- Prof. A. Pathmanathan - Director, Rt. Rev D.J. Ambalavanar, Dr. S. Jebanesan, Mr. A. Kadiragamar, Mr. V. Sivasamy, Dr. K. Sittampalam, Mr. A. Rajasingham, Dr. (Mrs) M. Arudchelvam, Mr. K. Gunaratnam, and Mr. Leslie Bartlett.

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NEW TAMIL WEEKLY IN JAFFNA

A new Tamil weekly – "Thisai" has made its appearance in Jaffna and is published by New Era Publications Ltd., the publishers of SATURDAY REVIEW, the English weekly which is now temporarily out of publication.

LTTE DENIES ARMS SUPPLY CHARGE

The LTTE has denied the charge made by the former Andhra Pradesh Home Minister that it had supplied weapons to Naxalites in the State. An LTTE statement issued in London said: "It was only the members of those movements fostered by the Rajiv government for the purpose of liquidating the Tigers used weapons like AK 47 on Indian soil, and indulged in anti-social activities. Some of them sold weapons. The LTTE is short of arms. It is forced to face the fourth biggest army in the world and in such a situation, the Tigers value their weapons more than their lives. It is ready to buy weapons, not to sell them."

Continued from Page 10

Tamil groups should take place where the negotiations can be carried out.

Thirdly, the LTTE and EPRLF and other Tamil groups must understand and accept the people's wish – they do not want armed confrontation to continue. They must stop the fighting and feuding and also give up certain entrenched positions they have hitherto held unreasonably and participate in the National Conference we are proposing.

Media censorship

Q: Earlier you referred to control and censorship of newspapers circulated in Tamil areas.

A: Yes. The situation is not different now. Whether it was done before the Agreement or is done now makes no difference. If the people have no credible means of knowing what is actually happening, obviously people will not come forward. People are not stupid to believe the mere propaganda of any group or groups which have developed their own vested interests and in pursuit of such interests try to ensure that news reports are suppressed or distorted or exaggerated.

Once we accept that the people and their views are the most important factor, there are certain principles that go with it, and one such basic principle is the freedom of the press. We believe that the media should always be genuinely free. Even if the media is against us they should remain free. They should have the right to write what they like. But what we would seek is a chance to say that they are wrong about us and put our own views across to the people. The fact of the matter is that papers published in Eelam had been controlled and censored by one group or the other depending on who dominated the area at a given time.

Some groups believe that by purely controlling, censoring or manipulating the news media, they could somehow dominate society and cause a conscious change. That is a mistake. First of all, we must trust the people, respect them as individuals and as well as social animals. Otherwise we would not know whether

BRIEFS

DIPLOMATIC STATUS FOR PLO

The Sri Lankan government has granted full diplomatic representation to the Palestinian Liberation Organisation in Colombo.

IAF AIR BASE FOR TIRUCHI

The Indian Air Force has decided to set up a major air base in Tiruchi adjoining the Tiruchi airport, involving a capital outlay of several crores of rupees.

ELEPHANT GIVEN VIP RECEPTION

The 13-year old tusker elephant, re-named Indiraja, gifted by India to Sri Lanka as a possible successor to Sri Lanka's most revered elephant Raja which died last year, arrived in Colombo to a high-level reception after spending 39 hours at sea.

JAYEWARDENE: A Political Biography

The first of two volumes of a political biography of ex-President Jayewardene, titled "J.R. Jayewardene of Sri Lanka" has been released for sale in Colombo. The biography is co-authored by historian Prof. K.M. de Silva and a former U.S. ambassador to Sri Lanka, Howard Wriggins. Priced at Rs.750/- in Sri Lanka, the first volume deals with the first 50 years of the life of Mr. Jayewardene.

NEW FACES IN FOREIGN RELATIONS

Replacing A.C.S. Hameed who held the office of Foreign Minister for over 10 years in the Jayewardene cabinet, is Mr. Ranjan Wijeratne, the UNP general secretary. Mr. Bernard Tillekeratne who has been Sri Lanka's High Commissioner in New Delhi for six years has moved to Colombo as Foreign Secretary. In India, Mr.S.K. Singh who has been India's ambassador in Pakistan, has taken over as Foreign Secretary from K.P.S. Menon at the latter's retirement.

they are placing any trust in us or not. Unless they have the opportunity to raise their doubts about us or our policies and clear them, we would not be able to take them forward or even represent them properly. Therefore, as far as we are concerned, a free press is essential even after EROS/EDF has achieved power. There should be full freedom of the press and genuine pluralist democracy.

Pluralism

Q: You refer to pluralist democracy. What is your view on the claim by any militant group to its right to sole representation of the Tamil People?

A: As much as we like to function freely, say what we like to the people and represent them, we respect the same right to all other groups irrespective of their size or shape, big or small, militant or otherwise. They have the right to exist, function, and propagate their views. Our view on this issue is based on our theoretical premise that Tamil society is a fragmented society riven by cast, religious and class differences. From the beginning, EROS has taken up the position that it cannot represent all the people all the time because it is a class oriented organisation. So, in a place where national liberation is not even half way through, to say that we with our policies represent all sections of the people would be a fallacy. If EROS were to even talk in that way, that would be the beginning of the end of the success we have had thus far. In short, whether we are in power or not, we believe in genuine political pluralism.

Q: What have you got to say about the defeat of all the traditional leaders of the Tamil United Liberation Front?

A: The Tamil speaking people have voted to break away from the past and I salute the people for having done so emphatically by defeating the TULF leaders. The people also have shown to the world that they are not worried about supporting those involved in left politics. The defeated TULF leaders must gracefully accept the people's verdict, bid goodbye and disappear from the political arena.

Indian Media Comments on N-E Elections

THE HINDU

"... In the recently merged North-Eastern province, the Indian Peace Keeping Force's sphere of direct responsibility, the three rounds of elections have been conducted peacefully, credibly and with an encouraging voter turn-out in the face of the LTTE threat. The provincial council election, which was contested only in the three eastern districts of the North-Eastern province, installed a government dominated by the EPRLF, the militant organisation that has come forward boldly to co-operate with India on the implementation of the Indo-Sri Lanka Agreement. Some of the legislative and other technical steps have been taken, but in essence the devolution package promised in the Agreement remains to be implemented on the ground. The conduct of the presidential election with a creditable level of voter participation in the Tamil areas boosted the confidence of the political process in the security environment created by the IPKF. The triumph of EROS, a small but well-knit militant organisation and now a registered political party, in the parliamentary election held on February 15 enhanced the credibility of the whole exercise. In the first place, this outcome demonstrates that the Tamil people back overwhelmingly the restoration of the peaceful democratic process. Secondly, the IPKF has been able to deliver handsomely on its promise to create a security environment where large numbers of people could come out over an extensive area and defy extremists threats to cast their ballot. Thirdly, the surprisingly strong popular endorsement of EROS, the creditable performance of the EPRLF (and even TELO) and the blotting out of the TULF suggest (as The Hindu's Colombo Correspondent puts it) that 'the leadership of the region has passed on to a new generation of politicians who had their baptism of fire in the Tamil militant movements' and 'the TULF's style of politics might have become irrelevant'. When given the opportunity, the Tamil people have expressed their emphatic disapproval of the TULF's political strategy and tactics of staying away from the arena between mid-1983 and now and coming over so late in the day to ask for votes. EROS - which has pursued some kind of middle (or relatively independent) path vis-a-vis the role of the LTTE and the question of cooperation with the IPKF - reflects, in a sense, the dilemmas of many people in the Tamil areas, and especially the Jaffna Peninsula, where the fight the LTTE put up in the pre-Agreement period in defence of the Tamil people is remembered and

appreciated. A little known fact is that the EROS leader, Mr A. Balakumaran, is on record with India reiterating his organisation's 'firm commitment to the Indo-Sri Lankan Accord and ... the democratic process' and has pledged his desire to 'continue the struggle for socio-economic emancipation of our people within the prevailing legal framework.' The electoral verdict will increase respect for the organisation's independent line, which, includes several criticisms relating to the devolution exercise, and it also suggests that the time has come to concentrate on the political challenge of broadening the base of Tamil political participation. The IPKF, through its tremendous endeavours on foreign soil, through its sacrifices and through the principled and honourable course adhered to (for all the criticisms it has had to face), has achieved a great deal in the direction of enabling Sri Lankans of different ethnic backgrounds to live and work together in a region of crisis ..."

THE TIMES OF INDIA

"... In the Tamil areas of the north and the east, the picture is more mixed. The moderate TULF and its allies have been left behind by EROS, a group of militants because TULF leaders sat it out in Madras while battles raged at home. But this will not necessarily benefit the hard-liners, the Tamil Tigers. For one thing, they were unable to keep people away from the polls. For another, EROS has tried to distance itself from them by spelling out a stand which takes into account both tamil resentments of India's present military role as well as the need for the restoration of peace. With EROS now in Parliament, Mr Premadasa should find it easier to open a dialogue with the Tamils."

INDIAN EXPRESS

"... As an index of the north-eastern Tamil's attitudes, the poll outcome in that region is less clear. Of the 31 seats at stake there, the pro Indo-Sri Lanka accord parties like EPRLF have won only seven. EROS which has not spelt out its stand on the devolution scheme has with 13 seats, emerged as a stronger force. There have been some indications of close ties between EROS and LTTE. It is, however, premature to infer from EROS's participation in the election - the LTTE boycotted it - that some within the LTTE may reconcile themselves to the democratic process. This is why it cannot yet be assumed that a new phase of enduring peace has opened in this region."

DECCAN HERALD

"... In fact, only two political groups were able to organise some kind of campaign - the UNP in the Sinhala-majority areas and the Tamil United Liberation Front and its allies in the North-Eastern Province, where the decisive voice today is that of the Indian army. The defeat of the TULF's leaders like Mr A. Amirthalingam and Mr M. Sivasithamparam confirms the political demise of the Tamil moderates. All 10 seats won by the TULF have gone to members of the Eelam People's Revolutionary Liberation Front (EPRLF) and smaller groups aligned with it who fought on the TULF symbol. These are the former extremist groups now in power in the Tamil-majority province under New Delhi's patronage. The Eelam Revolutionary Organisation (EROS), making its electoral debut, has walked away with 13 seats, including eight from the Jaffna region. Since EROS did not conduct any campaign, its remarkable showing must be attributed to the popular upsurge in its favour. It is interesting to speculate whether the EPRLF and other favourites of New Delhi could have come to power in the Tamil province if the EROS, which is known to maintain fraternal links with the LTTE, had been in the fray during the provincial assembly elections."

The Indian Post

"... The vote in the North-Eastern Province is most unexpected and signifies a major change in public attitudes and mood. The turnout suggests defiance of the LTTE and all it stands for today without going to the other extreme of endorsing the TULF's middle-of-the-road policies. It remains to be seen what Eelam Revolutionary Organisation of Students (EROS), once an ally of the LTTE, will make of the electoral message, whether they will participate in parliament and risk elimination by the LTTE or capitalise on its current popularity (it has won 12 out of 23 seats that went to Tamil candidates) in violent and extra-parliamentary directions. There is no mistaking the meaning of the vote for the TULF. Not only did party veterans bite the dust (Mr Amirthalingam, general secretary, and Mr Sivasithamparam, party president, suffered humiliating defeats) but Jaffna made an overwhelming decision in favour of EROS and secondly, the militants in the TULF alliance, the EPRLF and ENDLF candidates, have walked away with most of the other crucial Tamil prizes. All this should not necessarily be understood as a vote for greater militancy but a mandate for younger leaders whose commitment to the Tamil self-determination is clear and unequivocal."

THE HINDUSTAN TIMES

“... The fact that the elections took place in the North and East is in itself significant but what has come as a bigger surprise is the creditable performance of the Eelam Revolutionary Organisation of Students (EROS) at the cost of TULF which was expected to fare better. The poll results in Tamil areas are a clear indication of the support which the LTTE still retains there. The defeat of the TULF secretary-general, Mr A. Amirthalingam, speaks of the waning popularity of the party. Not that the Tamils are for violence and terrorism but they are not inclined to back the leaders and parties which were not with them during the worst period of their agony and suffering. If the TULF has lost its hold on the Tamils, both Colombo and New Delhi should not hesitate to deal with the EROS while tackling the ethnic problem. In Jaffna, the EROS has won eight out of eleven seats whereas TULF has won only three. To the extent EROS echoed the LTTE's strident opposition to the presence of the IPKF during the campaign, the poll results in the north-east should induce some rethinking on how long the Indian troops have to stay in Sri Lanka.”

Free Press Journal

“... While there is as yet no indication what President Premadasa proposes to do about the Tamil secessionist threat over the long run, for the moment the partial autonomy under the provincial councils system appears to be paying small dividends. The victory of EROS, an ally of the proscribed LTTE, in the North suggests the possibility, even if only the slightest one, of the Tamil militants re-entering the political mainstream. The July referendum on the merger of the North and East could undo all that but for the moment, Sri Lanka has reason for optimism.”

FINANCIAL EXPRESS

“The bloody strife that has ruined the island paradise of Sri Lanka is going to continue unabated. That is the sad lesson that emanates from the election that has swept Mr. Premadasa's United National Party back to power. Large majorities do not mean popularity or peace in Sri Lanka. The overwhelming majority enjoyed by Mr. Junius Jayawardene did not prevent the Tamil problem from exploding in 1983 and the Tamil problem looks as bad as ever after the latest election. The moderate old-timers of TULF, led by Mr. Amirthalingam, have been wiped out. Mr. V. Prabhakaran's Tigers did not contest the election, but their revolutionary friends of the Eelam Revolutionary Organisation

won 12 seats in the north-east to emerge as the single largest party. Two other parties which fared well in the earlier district elections – EPRLF and TELO – won no more than 10 seats. And the Sri Lanka Muslim Congress won four seats. The result strongly suggests two things. First, the current EPRLF Government in the north-east does not enjoy popular support, only Mr. Rajiv Gandhi's sup-

port. Second the Muslims of the north-eastern province are conscious of their separate identity and are unlikely to vote for Amparai remaining in the province when – in accordance with the Gandhi-Jayawardene pact – a referendum is held to decide that issue. In other words, neither the Tamils nor Muslims are happy with the Gandhi-Jayawardene solution. Nor are the Sinhals of JVP...”

“LTTE WANTS IPKF TO LEAVE”

– V. GOPALASAMY, MP

Mr. V. Gopalasamy MP, who returned to Madras after a 24-day clandestine trip to Sri Lanka's Tamil province during which he held 'secret parleys' with the LTTE leader, Mr. V. Prabhakaran, said that the LTTE stand had hardened on the Tamil Eelam issue.

He told reporters at the DMK headquarters shortly after meeting the Tamil Nadu chief minister and party leader, Mr. M. Karunanidhi, that his 'impulsive' act of a secret visit to Sri Lanka to explore the possibility of a solution to the Tamils' problem had been forgiven by the party.

Mr. Gopalasamy said the Tamil Eelam goal of LTTE did not appear to be negotiable and neither would there be any immediate prospect of any negotiation unless India withdrew its troops from Sri Lanka, released LTTE detainees and created a conducive situation for talks.

Mr. Gopalasamy said he had stayed with Mr. Prabhakaran for a few days in a jungle in Sri Lanka's north eastern area and had moved from one LTTE camp to another to evade the IPKF soldiers who fired mortar shells at LTTE camps.

The LTTE men wanted Indian troops to leave Sri Lanka and the former would take on itself the task to 'win freedom', he said.

Mr. Gopalasamy said the LTTE men provided him protection from constant shelling by IPKF soldiers who threw a cordon around the jungle to nab him.

The MP said he had 'violated' party discipline by not informing Mr. Karunanidhi of his mission, which he described as 'successful'. He had gained an insight into the LTTE's way of thinking and the 'whole-hearted' support of the Tamil people to their struggle, he said.

He said Mr. Prabhakaran appeared to be pained by the detention of 147 LTTE men, including Kittu, former LTTE Jaffna commander, in IPKF camps and the killing of Johny, an LTTE militant, by the IPKF though he was authorised to negotiate with the LTTE.

Mr. Gopalasamy said the treatment

meted out to negotiators in the LTTE had disillusioned the Tamil group about the credibility of an approach for further talks. Also, All India Radio's systematic campaign to denigrate the LTTE had been intensified, he said.

The LTTE leaders had clarified that they respected India and hoped it would bring about an end to fighting in the Tamil areas. 'They do not hate India', he added.

The LTTE men merely resented India being used by the Sri Lankan government to deploy its army and waste the money of the Indian people to try and crush the 'freedom struggle', Mr. Gopalasamy said, adding that the latest move for joint Indo-Sri Lankan operations against the LTTE had caused anguish in Tamil areas.

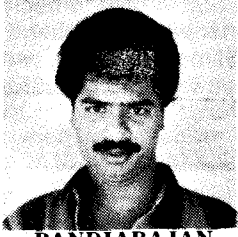
A large number of Tamils whom he had met had told him that the IPKF attacks were more devastating than Sri Lankan army rampages in the past, with Indian services using Soviet Union-made helicopter-gunships to attack 'Tamils'. A large number of innocent Tamils had been killed in IPKF attacks he said.

Mr. Gopalasamy said Mr. Prabhakaran had explained to him the factors which led to the clashes with the IPKF. The 'turning point' was the death of 12 LTTE men who consumed cyanide when the IPKF handed them over to Sri Lankan soldiers nearly two years ago. 'These youths would never have died on the battle-field but they died as a result of IPKF betrayal', Mr. Prabhakaran had told him, he said.

When Mr. Prabhakaran saw the youths' decomposed bodies, he quietly strapped on the holster which he had earlier removed as a gesture of laying down arms and placed his pistol in it. Other LTTE militants followed suit. The fighting with IPKF then began on a regular basis, Mr. Gopalasamy said.

On steps for a negotiated settlement, he said it was for Mr. Karunanidhi to discuss ways, including further talks with the Centre. Mr. Karunanidhi had merely told him he should not have undertaken his trip prior to Mr. Karunanidhi's meeting with the Prime Minister, Mr. Rajiv Gandhi.

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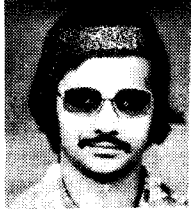
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NEWS IN BRIEF NEWS IN BRIEF NEWS IN BRIEF NEWS IN BRIEF NEWS

- The controversial book 'Satanic Verses' by Salman Rushdie was banned in Sri Lanka when the Minister concerned issued a directive on 3 March to the Controller of Imports not to permit any copies of the book into the country.
- The former Prime Minister and leader of the Sri Lanka Freedom Party, Mrs. Srimavo Bandaranaike, has been elected Leader of the Opposition in Parliament.
- The former Secretary General of the Tamil United Liberation Front, A. Amirthalingam, who was one of the defeated candidates in last month's general elections, has been nominated as MP from the National List.
- The petition challenging the validity of the presidential election held in December last year filed by defeated candidate, Mrs. S. Bandaranaike, is to be heard before a bench of five Supreme Court Judges.
- A gang, allegedly belonging to a Tamil militant group, stormed into the Sindhupura Tract 13 Colony in Anuradhapura on 22 February and killed six villagers including a woman and three children and later set fire to their homes. Ten others were injured.
- Fifty-two year old S. Sambantha-moorthy, who was one of the members included in the TULF's National List for the purposes of last month's general election was shot dead outside his home at Chenkaladi in eastern Batticaloa on 7 March. The victim was a former chairman of the Batticaloa District Development Council.
- Mylvaganam Amirthalingam, the publisher of the Tamil language daily 'Eelamurasu', was kidnapped by six armed young men from his residence in Jaffna and later shot dead on 18 February.
- Nearly 25,000 Tamil speaking youths are to be engaged in rehabilitation and reconstruction work in the North-East province, according to a statement by the Provincial Chief Minister, A. Varatharaja Perumal.
- The Trincomalee Urban Council Offices are to be shifted to a new location leaving the entire building to be used by the N-E Provincial Council Secretariat.
- A high proportion of Sri Lankan children lose their eye sight as a result of Vitamin A deficiency, according to a recent survey by the World Health Organisation.
- At least 25 Tamil persons died due to infighting among Tamil militant groups during the week ending 25 February.
- Four IPKF personnel were injured in a bomb explosion near Kondavil bus depot in Jaffna on 22 February. At Nelliady, an IPKF soldier was killed in a clash with the LTTE.
- Eight Sinhala settlers, including three women and a twelve year old child, were hacked to death and ten others seriously injured in a settlement in the Weli Oya area on 22 February by a gang allegedly belonging to a Tamil militant group. On 12 February, 37 Sinhalese peasants, including 22 children, were similarly massacred at Dutuwewa in the North Central Province.
- Over 700 prisoners escaped from Sri Lanka's prisons during 1988 - 219 from Welikade and Magazine prisons in Colombo and 186 from Anuradhapura and Pelawatte prisons - according to statistics furnished by the Prisons Department.
- At least five persons, including two IPKF men and a civilian, were killed in clashes between the IPKF and LTTE at Kinniya on 24 February. Following the incident, the IPKF mounted a massive search operation during which a number of civilians were harassed.
- Police Inspector Rohana Athudawa and Reserve Police Constable Ratnayake were killed and three other policemen were injured when gunmen, allegedly belonging to the JVP, in a Delica van opened fire at Ankumbara on 25 February.
- The security forces rounded up over 15 youths in the course of a house search operation in Deniyaya in south Sri Lanka on 25 February.
- Army officers in certain districts are reported to have informed the Operational Head Quarters of the Defence Ministry concerning the activities of a group of anti-subversives (anti-JVP) gunmen involved in a series of killings in the North Central Province and the people of the area are seeking refuge in jungles after nightfall due to fear.
- Seven people were killed when a bomb exploded outside a hotel along Dalada Vidiya in Kandy town on 26 February. A school boy who is believed to have carried the bomb was also injured.
- The UNP Provincial Council Member in Matale, B. Ekanayake and two of his supporters were injured and his bodyguard killed in an ambush when gunmen, allegedly belonging to the JVP, fired at the jeep in which the victims were travelling. The incident occurred on 26 February about three miles off Matale town.
- K. Perinbam (25), M. Rajendran (23) and V. Pathmanathan (22), who were members of the Tamil militant group TELO were killed allegedly by a rival group at Thambiluvil in Akkaraipathu on 24 February.
- Two persons were killed when a vehicle in which the newly elected EDF/EROS MP S. Edward and some of his supporters were travelling was attacked at Meesalai allegedly by a rival militant group. Mr. Edward escaped injuries. A. Anton belonging to the EROS was attacked and kidnapped at Myliddy allegedly by men belonging to the EPRLF and he was released after three days.
- 38 Sinhala villagers were shot and hacked to death, and about a dozen more seriously injured at Borawewa in the North Central Province on 27 February by a gang allegedly belonging to a militant Tamil group. The victims included 19 men, 9 women and 10 children. The attackers armed with guns, swords and knives had reportedly attacked the victims in their homes and pursued those who ran into the nearby jungle.
- India has spent Rs.1.74 billion on the IPKF deployed in Sri Lanka over and above the troops' salaries and allowances from July 1987 to 31 January this year, the Defence Minister K. Pant announced in the Indian Parliament on 28 February.
- Japan has provided Rs.47 million debt relief grant for the eleventh time to Sri Lanka to facilitate adjustments to past bilateral aid from Japan. The grant is aimed at relieving the island's likely debt repayment difficulties.
- Sub-inspector of police, Chandrasena, was killed and four other policemen were injured in Amparai when gunmen attacked a police patrol on duty on 28 February.

- The brother-in-law of the newly elected EPRLF MP Mr. G. Yogasankari was shot dead at his residence by gunmen allegedly belonging to a rival militant group on 26 February.
- D.M. Jayaratne and Y.B. Tennekoon, two newly elected SLFP MPs for Kandy have been charged and served with indictments before the High Court of Colombo under the Emergency Regulations and the Penal Code with rioting and causing damage to CTB busus by throwing stones and setting fire to them on 29 July 1987, the day on which the Indo-Sri Lanka Agreement was signed.
- Two Tamil speaking lecturers have been obtained from India on a contract basis, with the consent of the N-E Provincial Council, to meet the acute shortage of lecturers at the Nurses Training School in Jaffna. In addition, steps are being taken to train some senior nurses as lecturers in India and on their return they will be posted to the Training College for nurses in the North-East Province.
- Rail tracks between Chettikulam and Madu Road were blasted on the morning of 1 March allegedly by a group of LTTE men. Following this incident, through railway services from Colombo to Talaimannar Pier have been suspended until further notice.
- Tamil public servants who lost their jobs as a consequence of the Sinhala only language policy are to be re-employed in North-East Provincial government services. In addition, a motion moved by the Chief Minister, A. Varatharaja Perumal, requesting the central government to re-employ these government servants was unanimously adopted by the Provincial Council.
- An army officer was killed when a gang numbering 20, allegedly from the JVP, ambushed a joint army-police mobile patrol at Gampola in Kandy on 1 March. Details of casualties among the attackers when the security forces returned fire are not known.
- On 2 March, the Sri Lankan Cabinet decided that the private North Colombo Medical College should be vested in the government although it was to continue as an independent medical college awarding its own degrees without being affiliated to any university. Henceforth, students seeking admission should satisfy the same criteria applicable to state medical colleges.
- A draft of a proposed Indo-Sri Lanka Friendship Treaty has been sent to the Indian government for its consideration, according to Sri Lanka's Foreign Minister Ranjan Wijeratne.
- On 27 February several persons were killed in the Anaradapura area in incidents associated with a 'hartal' called by the JVP. At Gemunupura Tract 12 within the Nochchiyagama police area, A.G. Somasiri (28), Chaminda Kumara (16) and Nimal Prematilake (28) were shot dead by unidentified gunmen. At Horawapothana, a gang clad in army-type uniforms shot dead a Grama Sevaka, S.K.B. Herath at his home and set his household goods on fire. The driver of a SLTB bus travelling along the Vavuniya-Kebithigolewa road was set on fire at the 6th mile post. A lorry travelling along Mihintale-Rambawewa road was set on fire. A.M. Bandara of Tract 12, Rajangane was gunned down and his tractor and motor cycle set ablaze. The security forces are reported to have taken into custody several alleged suspects. In a separate incident three persons including a police constable were killed at Bulathsinhala.
- A police constable, Piyasena of south Kalutara police station was shot dead in his residence at Pyagala and a Buddhist monk, Ven K. Seelaratana Thero was shot and critically injured, allegedly by JVP gunmen, in two separate incidents on 28 February.
- Five persons, four of them belonging to one family, were kidnapped by a gang of men who arrived in a van and shot them dead a short distance away from their home on 1 March at Amunutenna in Ratnapura. The victims are Wasantha Hettiarachchi, Hemantha Hettiarachchi, Sisira Hettiarachchi, Sanath Hettiarachchi and A.M. Ariyapala.
- A gang comprising of 30 men stormed the Gampaha Base Hospital during the early hours on 2 March, threatened the hospital staff into silence and shot dead a prisoner who was warded in the hospital. The victim, Meril Kinson alias Babi was previously shot at and injured while he was being produced for a case in the Gampaha Magistrates Court on 27 February.
- Two bodyguards of a UNP MP were shot and killed by two men at Badukumbara on 3 March.
- All seventeen members belonging to the Sri Lanka Muslim Congress who were elected to the North-East Provincial Council, and who had so far refused to take their oaths handed in their letters of resignation on 6 March to the Commissioner of Elections. The SLMC had decided to appoint members to the N-E PC exclusively from the eastern province and hence the resignations. The new list of members would be submitted to the Elections Commissioner shortly, the leader of the SLMC Mr.M.H.M. Ashroff said.
- Six youths were killed on 5 March in a gun-battle when security forces advanced on an alleged JVP training camp at Dorape in the Habaraduwa police area. Two suspects were taken in for questioning and weapons and ammunition were captured from the scene of the clash.
- Several hundreds of youths, alleged to have connections with the JVP, were rounded up on 5 and 6 March during a cordon and search operation by the security forces in the southern Matara district. After intensive questioning, about 150 suspects have been detained.
- J.P. Piyadasa, a grama sevaka and the brother of a UNP Minister of State was shot dead at his residence by gunmen on 6 March at Laggala in the Matara district. In the same area another person identified as W. Rajapakse was shot dead near a busstand on the same day. B. Wickremasinghe, an ex-police officer was shot dead by a lone gunman at Kotugodalla Vidiya in Kandy.
- A Sinhala trader named Ranatunga Puchihewa from Ambalangodalla was kidnapped on 4 March allegedly by a group of Tamil men who had demanded a ransom of Rs.3 lakhs for his release. The victim's dead body was found later with several gunshot wounds.
- A youth was hacked to death and burnt at Dambagalle in the Monaragala district on 6 March allegedly by an anti-JVP organisation called the Peoples Revolutionary Red Army (PRRA) which had been created to mount revenge attacks upon JVP members and their supporters. On the same day, Jayantha Herath and another person, both members of the United Socialist Alliance were shot dead at Waligodapola in Hatharaliya area allegedly by a JVP gang.
- The Indian government has donated an ambulance and a mini-bus to the Jaffna Teaching Hospital under the Rehabilitation scheme of N-E Province. Ambulances were previously donated to the Mullaitivu, Mallavi and Thunnalai hospitals.
- Mr. Desmond Fernando has been elected President of the Bar Association of Sri Lanka. He has long served as the Secretary of the Civil Rights Movement and is a member of the International Commission of Jurists.
- The Sri Lanka Freedom Party has written to the Commissioner of Elections asking him to declare the election of Members of Parliament from the Colombo District null and void on the grounds that the malpractices on the day of the election and during the run-up to the poll were such that it was 'anything but free and fair'.

PEOPLE & EVENTS



MIRUTHANGAM ARANGETRAM

YASASKARAN – Son of Brahmasri Poorna Siva Satchithanatha Kurukkal – High Priest of Britannia Hindu (Shiva) Temple Trust had his Arangetram (musical debut) on Miruthangam on Saturday 25th February at the Highgate Murugan Hall. The Hall situated in the basement was packed with invitees and a closed circuit television facility was set up – very thoughtfully – by the organizers, on the upper floor hall to cope with the overflow of latecomers.

Miruthangam is a percussion instrument played by Nandhi in Lord Shiva's Court (a point emphasised by His Holiness Sri Sankara Acharyar in his message to Yasaskaran's performance.)

Yasi on his Miruthangam was accompanied to Srimathy Sivasakthi Sivanesan. Other accompanists were Dr Laskhmi Jayan and Sri Bharathan Ponnambalam. Yasi's great occasion started with Varnam and climaxed through various pieces during which ample opportunity was provided to him by the singer and the accompanying artistes.

Yasi was trained under Sri Muthu Sivarajah, an exponent in Miruthangam in the United Kingdom. Sri. Sivarajah has also been on the stage on several occasions providing accompaniment to other artistes on various other instruments too. Credit should go to the organizers of the numerous Tamil Schools and the dedicated teachers of music and dance at such schools. More or less every Borough in Greater London has a Tamil School with music and dance lessons, all of which are conducted over weekends, and it is a pity that many parents are unaware of their existence. These schools make very talented classical artistes out of youngsters like Yasaskaran who are brought up in a Western environment with little or no contact with their language or rich cultural traditions.

May we hope for many more debuts of young classical talents home grown in Britain.

WIMAL SOCKANATHAN

THANKSGIVING SERVICE

A service of Thanksgiving for the life, work and witness of Mrs Pushpamany Nesiya, the late wife of the veteran Jaffna Educationalist Mr. K. Nesiya, who passed away on 13.11.87, was held at St John the Baptist's Church, Chundikuli on 28.12.88. The service was conducted by the Vicar of the parish, Rev J. Sarvanantham and the sermon was preached by the Archdeacon of Jaffna, Ven. Canon. J. Kanagaratnam. It closed with a prayer led by Bishop D.J. Ambalavanar.

South London Tamil Welfare Group

The A.G.M. of the S.L.T.W.G. was held on 4.3.89. The following were elected to the Committee of Management. Chairman: Mr. S.D. Balarajah, Vice Chairman: Mr. John Armit, Secretary: Mr. S.J. Joseph, Treasurer: Mr. S. Sivagnanam, Asst Secy/Treasurer: Mr. S. Stanislaus and 9 committee members.



Vijayambigai & Tchaikovsky's 'Sleeping Beauty'

Vijayambigai Indra Kumar's recent adaptation of Tchaikovsky's 'Sleeping Beauty' at the Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan was another milestone in the contemporary Indian creative dance scene.

Once again, she lived up to her reputation as a creative and daring choreographer in her amazing composition – using Indian dance forms to Tchaikovsky's music. She delighted the audience, dancing the lead role of Princess Aurora, the sleeping beauty.

Equally astonishing, was her effort at training her co-dancers (her students – still attending school) successfully to spot Indian dance units in the rhythms of Tchaikovsky. It is a unique privilege for students of dance to participate in such historic events and Vijayambigai deserves a big bouquet not only for her creative masterpiece but also for making it possible for students to participate in such feats.

In 1981, when she pioneered such creative experiments, choreographing Tchaikovsky's 'Swan Lake' in similar style, Dr. Kalaingar Karunanidhi had conferred on her the title of 'Nadana Chudaroli' (Dancing Luminary).

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(ASK FOR
WIMAL SOCKANATHAN)

VEMBADI OLD GIRLS' ASSOCIATION (U.K.)

The Annual General Meeting of the association was held on 29.10.88 at the Putney Methodist Church Hall. The following are the names, addresses and telephone numbers of the main office bearers elected.

President: Dr. Meena Mahendra, 4 Teesdale Gardens, Isleworth, Middx TW7 6AT Tel: 01-560 1569

Secretary: Mrs Padma Perinpanayagam, 76c Whitehall Road, Gravesend, Kent DA12 5PH Tel: 0474 361600

Treasurer: Mrs. Umayal Sooriakumaran, 56 Malden Hill, New Malden, Surrey KT3 4DR Tel: 01-949 4234.

Co-Opted to Race Relations Committee

The Race Relations Committee of the Borough of Lewisham has coopted a Sri Lankan Tamil, (Mr. Sivagurunatha Pillai) onto the committee.

Mr. Pillai serves as the academic Head of the Tamil Academy of Language and Arts (TALA), a voluntary organisation based at Lewisham.

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Tamil parents seek a partner for their daughter; 25 years of age; educated in England; British citizen and a keen Jehovah's witness. Prospective partner has to be JW or willing to follow JW. No other bar in respect of race, age, etc. US and Canada residents welcome. Recent comers to UK will be considered. Write to M 280, c/o Tamil Times.

Jaffna Hindu brother seeks qualified partner for sister, 37, height 5'3" fair. Reply with horoscope to M 281, c/o Tamil Times

Jaffna Hindu parents settled in U.K. seek suitable professional/graduate working partner under 32 for their fair, pretty, graduate daughter, British citizen, 26 years, employed in London, Mars in eighth. Please send chart and details to M 282, c/o Tamil Times.

Uncle seeks suitable partner for his 28 year old graduate niece, fair, pretty, and resident in Australia with permanent visa. Professionals preferred. Horoscope and details to M 283, c/o Tamil Times.

Jaffna Tamil Hindu parents seek bridegroom for daughter, 34 years, in employment and British citizen. Horoscope and details to M 284, c/o Tamil Times.

Jaffna Hindu parents seek educated, good looking, partner in mid-twenties for son, 32, engineer, employed in Middle East. M 285, c/o Tamil Times

Hindu brother seeks educated partner for 39 year old lawyer sister employed in Colombo. M 286, c/o Tamil Times.

Jaffna Hindu brother, resident in New Zealand, seeks partner for AL qualified, 37 year old sister, does sewing and typewriting. Reply to M 287, c/o Tamil Times.

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Cook required for new South Indian restaurant in Blackpool, Lancs. Must prepare all South Indian dishes. Accommodation provided. Please contact Pal-Mal Restaurants Ltd., 198 Central Drive, Blackpool, Lancs with C.V. and 2 referees.

WEDDING BELLS

We congratulate the following couples on their recent marriage

Ratnakumar (Ragu) son of Dr. & Mrs R. Thirunavukarasu, 101 Middle Leeford, Stechford, Birmingham B34 6HA, U.K. and **Vasuki** daughter of Mr. & Mrs. K.K. Subramaniam, 22 Balmoral Way, Belmont, Sutton, Surrey, U.K. on 18.3.89 at Stanley Hall, South Norwood Hill, London SE25

Shanthikumar son of Mr & Mrs J.S. Ariaratnam, Temple Road, Jaffna, and **Ruth Jebaranjini** daughter of Rev. S.P.K. Solomon, Vicar of the Church of the Holy Spirit, Vavuniya and Mrs Solomon on 18.1.89 at St John's Church, Chundikuli, Sri Lanka.

Dr. David Vairavanathan son of the late G.R. Vairavanathan and Mrs Vairavanathan, Erlalai North, Sri Lanka and **Kirubamalar** daughter of the late P. Aiyathurai and Mrs Aiyathurai, Chavakachcheri, Sri Lanka on 27.1.89. at J.D.C.S.I. Chavakachcheri Church.

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

April 1, 6.30 p.m. London Veena Group present their Annual Cultural Evening - Carnatic Vocal, Sitar, Piano, Bharatha Natyam and Grand Veena Orchestra Recitals at Lola Jones Hall, Greaves Place off Garratt Lane, London SW17. For tickets and information telephone 01-543 2126

April 5 9.30am Prize Giving 1989, Jaffna College, Vaddukodai, Sri Lanka. Chief Guests: Prof. A. Thuraiarajah, Vice Chancellor, University of Jaffna & Mrs A. Thuraiarajah.

April 14, London Meikandaar Adheenam, British Saiva Siddhanta Centre, 10th Anniversary celebrations, Saiva Thirumurai Musical Recitals by Sangeetha Bhushanam, Thevara Pan Issai Thilagam Othuvaa - Moorthy Siva Sri Samy Thandapani Tesikar at Sri Ghanapathy Temple, London SW19 12.30-1.00pm; Highgate Sri Murugan Temple, London N6. 6.30-7.00 p.m. and London Sri Murugan Temple, London E12. 8.00-9.00 p.m.

April 15, Saiva Siddhanta Seminar at Sri Murugan Temple, 78 Church Road, London E12 from 2 to 5 p.m. Participants: Siva Sri Loganatha Mutturayan, London University; Dr. Lydia P. Dronkers (Holland); Dr. Lars Kjaerholm (Denmark); Sri Deva Koumarane (France); Dr. Maria Herrmann (Germany). For information telephone 01-531 6435.

April 22, 7 p.m. Music Academy of Dance, Rhythms and Songs (M.A.D.R.A.S.) presents London Trio Vanathi Nithiananthan, Lakshmi Ganeson & Chithra Satkunanathan in a spectacular spectrum of Bharatha Natyam at Acton Town Hall, London W3 for tickets and information telephone 01-845 7900.

April 23 4.30 to 7.30pm Cultural Evening including items of Bharatha Natyam, Vocal Music and Instrumental Music presented by the Institute of Tamil Culture at Surbiton Assembly Rooms, Maple Road, Surbiton, Surrey, U.K. For tickets and information telephone 01-399 7848 & 01-949 7848.

April 30 Asian Chaplaincy presents Thanksgiving Festival of our Patron Saints at Westminster Cathedral, London SW1 at 1.30pm Chief Celebrant: His Eminence Cardinal Basil Hume. Asian Bazaar: Noon to 6.30pm. For information telephone Fr. A.T. Moraes at 01-222 2895

At Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, 4A Castletown Road, London W14 9HQ. Tel 01-381 3036/4608

April 1, 7.30 p.m. Violin Solo by Dr. Lakshmi Jayan

April 8, 7.30 p.m. Sitar Recital by Baluji Srivastava

April 21, 7.30 p.m. Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru Centenary Lecture by Dr. Karan Singh, MP, India.

OBITUARIES

Elizabeth Packiam Robert wife of the late Selvadurai Robert; mother of Esther Emmanuel (U.K.), Wesley (Melbourne), Neville (Colombo), Maureen Wigneswaran (Los Angeles), Pearl Chanmugam (Sydney) and George passed away on 21.1.89 in London - 43 Ellerby Street, London SW6 6EU.

S.P.L. Thaventhiran (45) beloved husband of Anne Sarojini nee Selvadurai, father of James and Jude; brother of Sothy Mariasegarampillai (U.A.E.), S.E.B. Thanenthiran (Melbourne), S.C.F. Jittanthiran (Norway), and Puranam Mazenod (Kayts) passed away on 21.1.89 - 3 Horwood Gardens, Harrow Way, Basingstoke, Hants RG21 3NR



Kasippillai Nalliah (72) Retired Malaysian Telecommunication Engineer and President Kuppilan Katkarai Katpaka Vinayagar Temple Society, beloved husband of Kanagambikai, father of Gnanalakshmi Sriskandarajah (Sri Lanka), Gangadevi Sivasubramaniam (Canada), grandfather of Balanthuja and Sinthuja passed away on 6.2.89 in Kuppilan, Sri Lanka.



Sarojini Visvendran, born 8.9.41, beloved wife of T. Visvendran (British Gas-Eastern, Potters Bar, U.K.); mother of Shankar and Latha; daughter of K. Kanagasabai (Retired Chief Accountant, Police & Excise Departments, Sri Lanka) and the late Mrs. Yogam Kanagasabai; sister of Chandramohan (Sri Lanka), Dr. Indramohan (Zambia), and Surendramohan (U.K.) passed away on 2.3.89 at Stevenage - 27 Cromwell Road, Stevenage, Herts, U.K. Tel: 0438 356533



A.T. Sinnadurai (82) Proprietor, ATS Wattagama & Matala and Jothi Stores, Alvai, Sri Lanka; husband of the late Pasupathy, father of A.T.S. Ratnasingham, Velautham, Navarathnam, Nadarajah, Mrs. Rajaluxmi Karunanatham, Mrs. Puvaneswary Hyland all of Wimbledon, U.K.; Sinnathambay (Holland); Kandasamy, Kanagalingam and Magayakarasi of Alvai, Sri Lanka passed away in Colombo on 8.2.89 - 104 Dora Road, London SW19 Tel: 01-946 1140.

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