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MAY 1989

'TIGERS' IN THE CAPITAL



Have we forgotten anything ... No, everything seems to be there.



Anton Balasingham in conversation with pressmen.



A video camera wielding Tiger prepares to capture a moment in history.



All the bags are packed.



Anton Balasingham & Dilip Yogi chat with the press minutes after they landed.

CONTENTS

Peace moves by Premadasa & LTTE . . .	3
Talks – The Chronology	4
Tigers arrive in Colombo	5
Premadasa-LTTE Dialogue	6
Will Tigers break bread with rivals	9
Human Rights violations	10

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CONTENTS

Letters	13
EROS welcomes talks	15
Non-functioning of Provincial Councils	17
Indian media reactions	19
People & Events	21
Classified Advertisements	22

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PROSPECTS FOR PEACE

The current negotiations between the LTTE and the Sri Lankan government are unique for more than one reason. Ever since the ethnic conflict escalated into an armed rebellion, India has been involved in one way or another in trying to bridge the gap between an unwilling and unyielding government and the Tamil speaking people whose actual and perceived discrimination and oppression led the Tamil militant groups to resort to armed struggle.

Initially India offered its 'good offices' and later acted 'as mediator' and brought the two parties together for the first time to negotiate at Thimphu in Bhutan in 1985. Subsequent to those illfated negotiations and until the Indo-Sri Lanka Agreement in July 1987, it was through and with the help of India that the Tamil groups raised their demands with the government of Sri Lanka. Whatever direct negotiations that have taken place since between the government and the EPRLF-led North-East Provincial administration or the EROS did occur within the framework of the Indo-Sri Lanka Agreement.

Although it is said that the Sri Lankan government is keeping New Delhi informed of all developments, the fact is that the LTTE is, for the first time, talking to the government directly. Previous attempted negotiations have been thwarted by the insistence of preconditions before the commencement of negotiations. Again for the first time, the present negotiations are taking place without any preconditions being set by either party thus enabling the discussion of all issues that both parties consider relevant and appropriate to raise. The LTTE has taken up the position that the provisions of the Indo-Sri Lanka Agreement did not meet the aspirations of the Tamil speaking people. Therefore, the assumption is that the LTTE delegation will be raising more fundamental matters that are not covered by the agreement.

Anyone who has been watching the continuing conflict and its tragic consequences for the entire people of Sri Lanka must welcome the present talks and would wish the negotiations to succeed and lead to the restoration of normalcy and peace. Only those individuals and sections of society, who have developed vested interests in the process of this

conflict would desire the continuation of the conflict to further such interests.

It is true that there has been a great deal of distrust not only between the parties to the present negotiations, but also between the government and the Tamil speaking people who have felt betrayed repeatedly in the past. There is also no doubt that there is a substantial degree of mistrust among the communities, mainly engineered by politicians. In this context, it is essential that the negotiating parties bring to bear a degree of honesty in dealing with each other if the eventual settlement is to bring lasting peace. If either party or both strike a deal for opportunistic reasons, for instance to get rid of the IPKF, and think that they can go back on what they have agreed, they will only bring about a resumption of hostilities and cause further misery to the people.

As the talks proceed, it is well not to ignore certain realities which militate against the possible achievement of peace. On the Tamil side there are those Tamil groups and parties which participated in the North-East Provincial Council elections and the subsequent parliamentary elections. Having kept out of the PC elections, EROS took part in the general elections and won 13 seats. These groups did so in defiance of the LTTE's call for a boycott of both elections. An EPRLF dominated provincial administration has come into existence in the North-East. The internecine armed conflicts, particularly between the EPRLF and the LTTE, have escalated since and many are being killed daily. Senior public servants have become helpless and defenceless victims in this senseless fratricidal conflict. If the Tamil people are to be spared this bloodletting, it is essential that, even as the LTTE-Govt. talks proceed, the LTTE and other Tamil militant groups talk to each other. After years of military conflict between the government and the LTTE resulting in hundreds of casualties on both sides, if both parties are presently negotiating, surely it is not too much for the ordinary Tamil people to expect Tamil groups to talk to each other with the view to bringing an end to fratricidal bloodletting.

COLOMBO NEWSLETTER

by Chithra

PEACE MOVES BY PREMADASA & LTTE

The very decision of the Sri Lankan government and the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) to directly talk to each other reflects a major shift of direction by both parties. Discerning political analysts would seem to conclude that the objective situation in which both parties find themselves has driven them to this rather unpredictable course of action. The interest of President Premadasa and the government which demand action to prevent further destabilisation of their hold on power on the one hand, and the political and organisational interests of the LTTE to regain its pre-existing dominance among the Tamil militant groups on the other would appear to have converged in the present context and the factor that has enabled this convergence possible is the presence of the Indian Peace Keeping Force in the island.

The government's expectation that, with the assistance of the IPKF, it could bring the recalcitrant LTTE to heel and make it accept the settlement on the basis of the Indo-Sri Lanka Agreement did not materialise. The IPKF has been in the country since August 1987 in their thousands. Although dislodged from their previously entrenched position in the north and driven into the Vanni jungles, the LTTE has not been subjugated in spite of the much publicised many military operations conducted by the IPKF.

From the beginning, there was a groundswell of Sinhala opinion against the presence of the Indian troops not merely because it represented foreign intervention in the island's affairs. Sinhala chauvinist sections have always regarded India as an ally of the Tamils and they felt that their failure to defeat the Tamil militants who had taken arms and keep the Tamils 'in their place' was because of Indian support. The presence of the IPKF, in their view, is a concrete manifestation of Indian support for the Tamils. If the Indian factor was removed, the natural strength of the Sinhala numerical majority could be reasserted. The popular resentment against the IPKF presence has been maladroitly exploited by the JVP which has continued with its ruthless and brutal campaign of terror and political assassinations to this day.

Premadasa won his Presidency on the promise that he would ensure the early departure of the IPKF. It was easy to make the promise but he found it difficult to deliver. In the Tamil areas, so long as the LTTE holds out

without being defeated, the presence of the IPKF is regarded as essential even by Sri Lankan security chiefs. Numerically the island's security forces are woefully inadequate to deal with the rebellious situation on both fronts - against the LTTE in the north and against the JVP in the south.

Premadasa's repeated pleas for talks were addressed to both the JVP and the LTTE. The JVP's response by its statement of 16 April was uncompromising and contained six demands (see box) and reflected its determination to continue its campaign unless its demands were met in full. There is no way that these demands can be met unless Premadasa and his government are willing to commit political harakiri.

However the LTTE responded positively. From the government point of view, a deal with the LTTE will facilitate the early withdrawal of the IPKF, and such a development would not only help to bolster the government's image of blunting the cutting edge of the emotional element in the JVP campaign. A deal with the LTTE will also enable the government to deploy the bulk of its armed forces to deal with the JVP if it continues with its armed rebellion.

As for the LTTE, its leadership would appear to have reached the conclusion that so long as the IPKF remained, it could not regain its hegemonic position it once enjoyed in the northern Tamil areas. With the passage of time, while the LTTE was being militarily confronted by the IPKF, its rival EPRLF could progressively entrench itself in the seats of the provincial government of the North-East and the LTTE's hold, both emotional and political, on the people might weaken. Presently, in the provincial arena, the EPRLF is the main player. In the parliamentary arena, EROS (although its MPs are not attending parliament) by winning 13 seats in the February general elections has enhanced its political standing. Even Mr. A. Amirthalingam of the TULF is playing a visible role in parliament. This is not a prospect that the LTTE which lays claim to 'sole representation' of the Tamil speaking people can afford to relish anymore. In this context, the departure of the IPKF has become a matter of primary concern for the LTTE.

Despite the fact that Premadasa's gambit has put New Delhi in a diplomatic and military dilemma, India has welcomed the talks. The two-day visit by the Indian Foreign Secretary

S.K. Singh and the Joint Secretary of the External Affairs Ministry dealing with Sri Lanka matters Kudlip Sahadev on the eve of the LTTE-government talks cannot be regarded as a mere coincidence. The visit emphasised the continued interest of India in any likely outcome of the talks and Colombo has made it public that it is keeping New Delhi informed of any progress made. On India's behalf it is said that its main aim is to enable the resolution of the conflict in Sri Lanka without negating the positive aspects of the Indo-Sri Lanka Agreement and will encourage the conceding of more Tamil demands that go beyond what the Agreement offered. But at the same time it will not want to be seen as letting down those Tamil groups which cooperated in the implementation of the Agreement, and therefore will seek to achieve an accommodation of all Tamil groups in any eventual settlement.

JVP DEMANDS

1. Totally abrogate the Jayewardene-Gandhi accord which buried the freedom of our nation and made the nation fall prey to Indian imperialism
2. Drive out the Indian invading forces from this country immediately.
3. Annul the Provincial Councils. They are a powerful threat to the unity of our country. their formation was undemocratic.
4. Disarm all paramilitary and auxiliary forces such as the STF, RDF, NAF, NAR and Homeguards. Disband all killer squads such as the Black Cats, Yellow Cats, PRRA and SRRA. They were formed to suppress and assassinate political opponents. Cancel all promotion given to murderers.
5. Cancel the results of the presidential and general elections.
6. Respecting the sovereignty of the people, appoint a Board of Caretakers and hold all elections again, under conditions in which everyone could participate freely and the masses can vote freely.

Despite assertions and misgivings to the contrary, reliable information indicates that India would like an end to the role of the IPKF in Sri Lanka sooner than later. Already it has pulled out several of its battalions comprising several thousand troops. Rajiv Gandhi has already given expression to this view in Parliament. He has also a political reason for pulling out the IPKF before its presence in the island with its continuing high casualty rate and the high cost of its maintenance becomes a major political issue in India itself. India has already spent more than 12 billion Indian rupees (\$800million) on maintaining the

Continued on page 5

THE PREMADASA-LTTE TALKS

THE CHRONOLOGY

2.4.89

President Premadasa's much publicised speech inviting the Janatha Vimukthi Peramuna (JVP) and the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam for talks.

The government announces a week-long unilateral cease-fire to commence on 12 April 1989.

11.4.89

LTTE rejects ceasefire. The LTTE statement in the form of an open letter to the President said, "You and your government, and the government of India have declared a unilateral ceasefire with effect from the morning of the 12th of April 1989. But you and your government cannot be unaware that so long as the Indian Army continues to occupy our land, a 'cease-fire' is a meaningless exercise... In so far as we are concerned, we view this unilateral one week 'cease fire' as an attempt by you and the Indian government to intimidate the Tamil people and the leaders of the Tamil national struggle, the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam, into submission... we wish to tell you straightforwardly that you may go ahead and mortgage the birth-right and freedom of the Sinhala people, but we will not mortgage the birth-right and freedom of the Tamil people to anybody... Until the Indian Army of oppression leaves our land, there will be no such thing as a cease-fire. And after they leave, you will come to recognise that in the island of Ceylon there are two nations. And after that, we will need neither war nor cease-fire".

13.4.89

The government made an open invitation to the LTTE for talks. The government said, "We are pleased to invite the leadership of the LTTE to have talks with the Government on the issues raised by the political wing of the LTTE along with leaders of other political parties if the LTTE so wishes... I hope the LTTE will realise that the desire of the Government of India and the Government of Sri Lanka is for the withdrawal of the IPKF from Sri Lanka... When a nation is wracked by internal conflicts, only outsiders will reap the benefits".

15.4.89

By a letter addressed to the President, the LTTE agreed to hold talks. "We welcome your invitation to talk to us following our letter to you dated 11.4.89. You have made comments that external forces have been able to secure their own interests because of the internal conflict between us. You will appreciate that we have been consistently opposed to the policy of bringing external forces into the country. We wish to inform you that we are

prepared to accept your open invitation to talk to us. We hope that you will make the necessary arrangements to facilitate a dialogue". This letter was delivered to the President around midnight at his Ambanpola residence by a special emissary. Senior security officials in Colombo had arranged this midnight rendezvous.

16.4.89

President responded to the LTTE's acceptance. The message sent by the President's Secretary, KHJ Wijedasa, to LTTE's Mr Anton Balasingham in London said, "Your message to have a dialogue with His Excellency the President of Sri Lanka is very much appreciated. His Excellency has instructed me to request you to nominate an accredited representative to discuss the necessary arrangements to facilitate a dialogue anywhere in Sri Lanka".

17.4.89

The LTTE in a communication sent to the President stated that Mr. Anton Balasingham had been appointed as their accredited representative to facilitate a direct dialogue between the LTTE and the Government.

26.4.89

Mr Anton Balasingham and his wife, Adele, arrived in Colombo aboard ULS 512 flight from London. On arrival at the airport, they were welcomed by government officials, escorted through the VIP lounge and flown to Colombo aboard a Sri Lanka Air Force Helicopter.

A joint press release by the government and the LTTE stated, "Mr. Anton Balasingham, accredited representative of LTTE and his wife arrived in Colombo this morning. A delegation of senior government officials nominated by Excellency the President of Sri Lanka consisting of Mr. KHJ Wijedasa, Secretary to the President, General DS Attygalle, Secretary to the Ministry of Defence, and Mr Felix Dias Abeysinghe had frank and cordial discussions with Mr. Balasingham this evening. The discussions were of a preparatory nature for the talks and will be continued when other leading members of the LTTE join Mr. Balasingham".

3.5.89

LTTE delegation consisting of 9 members headed by Mr Dilip Yogi arrived in Colombo to join Mr Anton Balasingham for talks with the government. Two helicopters of the Sri Lankan Air Force with journalists along with Mr and Mrs Balasingham were flown to a designated spot in Nedunkerni in the Vavuniya district from where Mr Yogi and others were picked up and flown to Colombo. The LTTE delegation included five men in

jungle camouflaged uniforms armed with AK-47 rifles and a video cameraman.

Besides Mr Yogi, the delegation included Mr Moorthy, Mr Lawrence, Mr Lalith, Mr Jude, Mr Uthayan, Mr Deepth, Mr Ducky and Mr Thas.

4.5.89

A joint press statement issued by the government and the LTTE stated: "The LTTE delegation comprising Mr A S Balasingham, Mr Yogartnam Yogi, Mr Paramu Moorthy, Mr Panchadcharam Lawrence and Mrs Adele Balasingham made a courtesy call on His Excellency the President at his residence at Sucharitha Mawatha in Colombo at 5.00 pm today. His Excellency said that the first stage of the talks will be with the officials nominated by him to decide on the modalities and identify the issues. Thereafter, he will nominate a team to discuss all the issues.

The President also stressed the need to know the truthfulness of all issues in order to arrive at meaningful solutions. He added that his mandate from the people of Sri Lanka was to restore peace through a process of consultation, compromise and consensus. This was the reason that he extended an open invitation to the LTTE.

The LTTE delegation conveyed to His Excellency the President and the government their appreciation for affording them the opportunity to talk to the President and the government direct without any preconditions. The delegation informed His Excellency the President that they have with them all the information regarding the plight and the predicament of Tamil people and that the sufferings of their people should be brought to light. It is only by understanding the fundamental problems of the Tamil people that durable solutions can be found. They emphasised the need for the restoration of peace and normalcy before such solutions could be worked out".

5.5.89

The first round of formal talks commenced at the luxury Hilton International Hotel between a LTTE delegation of four headed by Mr Anton Balasingham and government officials numbering seven. It was reported that President Premadasa quietly slipped into the Hotel and spent a few minutes as the talks began.

A joint press release stated they discussed wide-ranging issues and problems faced by people of the North and East and identified particular issues for further discussions. It was agreed that both sides would only be responsible for what would appear in the official communiques issued by them, and the public and the media

Continued on page 5

'TIGERS' ARRIVE IN COLOMBO

If the speed with which the sudden turn of events leading up to the ongoing Premadasa-LTTE talks left many political analysts dazed, the manner in which the 'Tigers' delegation landed in Colombo was sheer unbelievable drama.

First to arrive on the scene was the LTTE's ideological mentor and personal-political advisor to Prabhakaran himself. When Balasingham and his wife landed at Katunayake on 26 April, he was met by senior officials of the government of Sri Lanka, escorted through the VIP lounge and flown by Air Force helicopter to the five star luxury hotel, Hilton International in Colombo.

Following preliminary talks with government officials, two floors of the Hotel were reserved for the exclusive use by the LTTE delegation. Speculation was rife as to how other LTTE negotiators could emerge from their hideouts in the jungles in Vavuniya and join Mr Balasingham in Colombo for the talks to proceed.

Two Air Force helicopters, one carrying Balasingham and his wife, Assistant Superintendent of Police Eric Perera of the much dreaded National Intelligence Bureau and four correspondents from the local newspapers took off from Army headquarters in Colombo around 2pm on 3 May. It could seem that the LTTE had insisted that journalists should also be brought along.

Having engaged the IPKF and kept them busy in some diversionary encounters in Vavuniya, a contingent of Tigers estimated to be numbering around 80 had walked through the jungles and reached Nedunkerni. Using a communication equipment provided by ASP Perera, Mr. Balasingham established contact and was given details and clearance by those on the ground to land in a demarcated spot at Nedunkerni.

As the helicopters landed, LTTE video cameramen and other photographers were there to film and photograph the unfolding events including the two helicopters from all angles and

all those who arrived in them. The local journalists had no such luck as they were prohibited from taking any photographic equipment.

Having enjoyed the chocolates and young-coconut drinks provided by the Tigers, the helicopters took off with nine LTTE members, three negotiators, five armed bodyguards and one cameraman who was busy filming all the way to Colombo.

As the helicopter landed in Colombo, the five LTTE bodyguards jumped off with their AK-47 rifles raised and surrounded it revealing the distrust they had of the Sri Lankan security forces. During the preparatory talks, the LTTE had insisted that its armed bodyguards should accompany their negotiators to provide security in spite of the fact that the government has assured 'safe conduct'.

The LTTE team is staying at the Hilton International amidst tight security provided by their own men and the Sri Lankan security forces are guarding the entire hotel complex round the clock.

Continued from page 3

IPKF, and the current rate of spending is estimated to be Rs.20 million a day. The total casualty figure is in the region of 3950 - 857 killed and 3093 injured. Rajiv Gandhi is to face a general election within the next 12 to 15 months and it is said that he wants the IPKF to return well before the elections.

Neither the LTTE nor the government have given any indication about the details of the matters that have come up for discussion. The Minister of Defence and Foreign Affairs, Ranjan Wijeratne, has stoutly denied speculative reports that the LTTE had in advance placed three conditions, namely the departure of the IPKF, dissolution of the North-East Provincial Council and postponement of the proposed referendum on the merger of the northern and eastern provinces, for commencement of talks. He asserted that both the invitation by the government and the acceptance by the LTTE for talks were open and without preconditions.

However, reports circulating in the capital indicate that the LTTE has listed 15 issues for discussion which include the withdrawal of the IPKF, freeze on the state-aided Sinhala colonisation in the Tamil areas, abandonment of the proposed referendum and permanent merger of north and east, dissolution of the North-East Provincial Council, granting of a Quebec-model autonomy for the Tamil areas, and the setting up of an interim administrative council, as provided in the Dixit-LTTE agreement of September 1987.

The bottom line for any settlement with the LTTE is that President Premadasa should offer something more substantial than what was offered under the Indo-Sri Lanka Agreement which the LTTE had denounced as 'a charter for servility'. Although political imperatives dictate that a deal with the LTTE will be beneficial to Premadasa, he has to contend with two almost insurmountable obstacles. Firstly, the probability of a violent campaign mobilised by the JVP and extremist Sinhala chauvinist sections denouncing such a deal as a 'sell out of the Sinhalese'. Secondly, the constraints placed by the present constitution which requires a mandate at a referendum for substantial devolution of executive and legislative powers. Unless Premadasa succeeds in obtaining the support of almost all Sinhala opposition parties, the outcome of such a referendum will not be a favourable one.

Continued from page 4

were requested to be guided only by such official communiques.

11.5.89

Talks between a four-member ministerial level delegation of the government and the three LTTE delegation headed by Mr. Anton Balasingham began in Colombo. The four ministers were Defence and Foreign Affairs Minister Mr. Ranjan Wijeratne, Industries Minister Mr. Ranil Wickremasinghe, Higher Education Minister Mr. Sahul Hameed and the Housing Minister Mr. Sirisena Cooray.

It was reported that the LTTE delegation criticised the role played by the IPKF and contended that it did not function as a peace-keeping force, and submitted details of atrocities committed by the IPKF.

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THE PREMADASA-LTTE DIALOGUE

by S. Sivanayagam

Preliminary talks between the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam and the Premadasa government have begun, as I write this. The surprisingly sharp reactions that the very announcement of the talks evoked on both sides of the Palk Strait, ranging from nervous knee-jerk reactions, to carefully guarded responses by official sources in Delhi, showed that the significance of the development was not lost on anybody. But the fact that the reactions have been mostly either sneering or sceptical points to the heavy odds against which the talks have been initiated. It is whispered in political circles in Colombo that even sections of the Premadasa government might try to undermine the process.

UNI reporting from Colombo said that the sudden willingness of the LTTE for talks with the Sri Lanka government is seen as a ploy to get the Indian forces out of the island. Two Colombo newspapers, THE SUN and THE ISLAND, whose journalistic contribution to the widening of the gulf between the Sinhala and Tamil peoples is well known, saw in it 'a trap' laid by the LTTE. Indian journalist Arur Chacko writing to the SUNDAY EXPRESS (23 April) quoted an unknown 'knowledgeable observer of the Sri Lankan scene' as saying: 'What on earth are they going to talk about? This is a complete about-turn. They simply have no meeting ground.' The EPRLF held out the theory that the LTTE had agreed to talks 'because it was weak'. The Eelam People's Democratic Party (in Madras), an offshoot of the EPRLF questioned the motives of Mr Premadasa and the wisdom of the LTTE. The TELO faction in India questioned the exclusive right of the LTTE and the Sri Lankan government to determine the fate of the Tamils of Eelam. But the most negative and abrasive reaction came from THE HINDU which in its editorial (21 April) charged the Sri Lankan government with being involved in 'some kind of confused, adventurous exercise', accused the LTTE of a 'very strange turn-around in its well-known intransigent course', and saw 'no rationality at all in the drama of uncompromising fighters for Tamil Eelam' repairing to the abode of their 'national enemy'. THE HINDU also admonished the 'top policy makers in New Delhi' for not giving 'their concentrated attention' to this 'new twist in Sri Lanka', warned the Sri Lankan government that it 'would do well to play straight with India', and called upon the LTTE to make peace, (not with Mr. Premadasa, but) with the Indo-Sri Lanka Agreement! In short, THE HINDU was

betraying a sense of agitation that was uncharacteristic of the paper's century-old stoic, staid, Brahminical upbringing.

This medley of reactions has brought home two truths: all negative reactions have been born out of the need to preserve the vested interests of the respective opinion-givers. None of them obviously share the enduring agony of the Tamil people nor their desire that peace should be given a chance. THE HINDU was concerned only about its vested interest in the Indo-Sri Lanka Agreement. Indian commentators are worried about the Indian stake in Sri Lankan affairs. The Colombo newspapers were merely reflecting the habitual Sinhala chauvinism. The EPRLF has a life interest in the continued presence of the IPKF in the northeast; without that, it will have no leg to stand on. Other Tamil militant groups (with the happy exception of EROS) are seized with the fear of a closed future should the LTTE arrive at an understanding with the Sri Lankan government (and who knows, with the possible approval of the Indian government?)

The second home truth is that not many political observers, both in India and Sri Lanka, were either able, or even prepared, to recognise the qualitative difference in the political approaches and temperaments of ex-President Jayewardene and the new man at the helm. It is to the credit of the political maturity of the LTTE that, irrespective of whether it hopes to gain anything out of these talks or not, that it was able to recognise this qualitative difference: and to know with whom it was worth 'doing business' and at what point of time. The waves of surprise that followed the announcement of these talks would have been quite unnecessary had there been sufficient appreciation of these political determinants. Four months ago, writing in the TAMIL TIMES of January, I commented:-

"Those who believe that Mr. Premadasa's election as President has only brought about a continuity of the prevailing UNP administration (and hence welcome, as many Indian commentators fondly hope) may find surprises in store as the months go by provided of course that the new President manages to survive, politically or otherwise."

And in conclusion I said:

"While it would be presumptuous to predict at this stage what the future holds for Sri Lanka, the exit of Jayewardene from the centre of the stage has certainly made a sea change to the power equation in the country. For the first time we see the three hitherto contending forces, the JVP in the south, the

LTTE in the northeast, and the president at the centre sharing a common outlook on fundamental issues - the Indo-Sri Lanka Accord and the continued presence of the IPKF. Difficult as it may seem for all three to get together, given their mutual antagonisms, such a scenario cannot be ruled out, with an unconventional leader like Mr. Premadasa at the helm. Should that happen - improbable things have happened during the past 18 months - Indian policy makers may be compelled to take a second look at their existing attitude towards Prabaharan and the LTTE ..."

Some part of the above-mentioned scenario is already evolving. Speaking at an Army Commanders' conference on 24 April, Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi said that India had to think seriously of getting back the bulk of the Indian Peace Keeping Force as soon as practicable. He said any pull-out would be done in a manner that the 'gains' achieved by its presence so far would be preserved. This itself is a departure from the fairly aggressive positions taken by Delhi official circles in the past. Mr Gandhi went further to say that 'India had to consider the process of handing over the role of maintaining law and order to the elected local government so that they could protect themselves against any destabilisation that may arise' - which in plain language could mean throwing Perumal to the wolves (or the Tigers!)

With a new Foreign Secretary in Delhi, now making his maiden visit to Colombo, and with the not so popular Dixit giving place to a hitherto unknown moustached Lal Menrotra as High Commissioner in Colombo, with the experienced Delhi war-horse Bernard Tilekeratne now presiding over the Colombo Foreign Office, the stage has already been set for fresh moves, fresh initiatives, and hopefully fresh thinking. On Delhi's part, this being election year, there is also a quick need to see a way out of the Sri Lanka stalemate. It is also a vital need because the Congress-I government cannot afford to run into any domestic embarrassment as a result of any more surprise moves by Mr. Premadasa. While making some appropriate soothing noises to placate Delhi, Mr Premadasa has at the same time been doggedly pursuing his twin objectives - a speedy withdrawal of the IPKF, and the proposed Treaty of Peace and Friendship between the two countries, a proposal initiated by Mr. Premadasa and submitted by the Jayewardene government, but cold shouldered by the Indian government at that time. In fact, Indian Foreign Secretary S.K. Singh was scheduled to have talks on the subject in Colombo. All these developments point to one actuality - the

dominoes are beginning to fall. The LTTE-Premadasa dialogue, even before it has got underway is triggering off a chain-effect that could presumably bring changes in India's Sri Lankan policy. Call it by any word, brash, bold, or brazen the very unexpectedness of the LTTE move has shown up in contrast the staleness and sterility that characterised the Jayewardena-Rajiv Gandhi diplomacy during the post-Accord period.

But what chances are there of the LTTE-Premadasa talks yielding any tangible benefits to the Tamil people? — this is a question that every Tamil will naturally want to ask. Before that, one must disabuse oneself of exaggerated notions about the ambit of the talks. Because the political objective of the LTTE is an independent Tamil homeland, it does not follow that the motive and the nature of the talks will centre around fundamental objectives. It cannot, and it would be naive on anyone's part to expect it. If it were that easy a proposition — to win Tamil Eelam across the table — there cannot be any sense or rationale in waging an armed struggle at tremendous sacrifice of lives. For example, when HINDU correspondent Thomas Abraham reporting from Colombo says (28 April): 'Yesterday's talks apparently went off well, and one of the positive indications has been that Mr. Balasingham did not mention the demand for a separate state. . .', he was being either naive, or mischievous, or merely articulating his paper's obsession against Tamil Eelam.

What then could be the justification or explanation for the talks from the Tamil point of view? To answer that question one has to take cognisance of an unhappy reality: the momentum of the Eelam struggle had been pushed back by at least two years as a result of the Indo-Sri Lanka Accord and Indian military intervention on Eelam soil. To carry forward the Eelam struggle, the ground has to be controlled by forces which stand for that political objective. Two years ago that control existed, but today it is no longer so. We have a powerful, alien military force which has taken physical control of the ground, involved in crushing the Eelam struggle, aided by other indigenous forces which have taken up the Eelam objective in exchange for perks of office and an opportunity for revenge. This situation has to be reversed; and this is well within the parameters of the talks the LTTE was prepared to hold with the Premadasa government. From the Tamil point of view, the land under alien occupation belongs to the future Tamil Eelam, or at least the traditional Tamil homeland. From Mr. Premadasa's angle, it belongs to Sri Lanka. True. That is a matter that has to be sorted out later with the Premadasa government or any other government that rules Col-

ombo. But the immediate, salient fact that has to be understood is that Tamils have a common cause with Mr. Premadasa (unlike with ex-President Jayewardene) — that the alien presence should not be there, even if they be dictated by different reasons. Mr. Premadasa thinks the alien presence is a slur on the sovereignty of the country of which he is head; and you cannot blame him. The Tamil grievance against the IPKF is something different. What they first imagined was a friendly presence (remember how they received the jawans with garlands?) turned out to be an oppressive one. The blame for this cannot be turned on the LTTE, as the Indian government has been doing; it rests squarely on its own clumsy policy-making and gross insensitivity it has displayed towards the only friendly people it had in the entire SAARC region!

There is another important issue which has a chance of being resolved — or at least freed — by talking to President Premadasa, that of continuing State-aided colonisation in the Tamil homeland. Whether intended or otherwise, the Indo-Sri Lanka accord has betrayed the interests of the Tamils on practically every matter that affect their lives and their future. The worst blow has been in the area of colonisation. In the immediate presence of 100,000 Indian troops (or shall we say with diplomatic grace — 50,000) saturating the entire length and breadth of the northeast, how did it happen that a whole district with the Sinhala name of Welioya is being carved out of areas exclusively inhabited by Tamils for centuries — Manal Aru, Nayaru, Kokkilai, Thennamaravadi, Kokkuthoduvai. . . ? Tamil families driven away by Sinhala forces four years ago continue to be refused resettlement by the same forces (according to the Accord who should be in barracks) under the indifferent eyes of the IPKF? The tactical mistake that Tamils have been making these past two years was to fix the responsibility of preventing such happenings on the Indian Government, the Indo-Sri Lanka Accord and on the Indian Peace Keeping (?) Force. That responsibility has to be fixed on President Premadasa. Why should the Indian Government be expected to preserve Tamil territory? The Accord is only a piece of paper. The IPKF is composed of semi-illiterate jawans who do not even know why they are there! The affected party, whether as a beneficiary or as a loser, is the Sri Lanka government. The entire issue of colonisation has to be lifted out of the deceptive backdrop of the Accord, which both Mr. Premadasa and the Tamils oppose, and has to be treated as a direct bi-lateral issue between the Sri Lanka government and the Tamils, as represented by the LTTE, with no apologies being made for violent resistance if necessary to

any Sinhala colonisation that itself is perpetrated with violence. And who is better qualified to talk toughly with Mr. Premadasa on this issue than the LTTE, which is the only Tamil force that has at least effectively minimised the continuous robbery of the Tamil people's land?

A stage comes even in the midst of an armed struggle, when the real enemies may want to talk to each other, and that stage is now. India, as a country, and the Indian people, have never been enemies of the Tamil people. LTTE leader Prabaharan was echoing the sentiments of every Tamil man, woman and child when he said — 'We love India, we love the Indian people'. But if the Rajiv Gandhi government, through its confused approaches, managed to don the robes of an enemy of the Tamils, it certainly has nothing to do with how Tamils yet look upon India. In as much Mahatma Gandhi taught the Indian people to distinguish between British imperialism, Britain as a country, and the British people, it is only the Eelam Tamils who instinctively knew these distinctions, and preserved them when it came to Indian involvement in their affairs. If this clarity of thinking, if these emotional impulses, have brought the LTTE to face the Premadasa government across a table, why should one question motives, pinpoint the chasm between the parties, or pooh-pooh the possible consequences of such talks? The very exercise has logic, wisdom, and courage, on its side. To the Tamil people, it even offers HOPE; and any offer of hope has to be welcomed.

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WILL THE TIGERS BREAK BREAD WITH RIVALS OR ATTEMPT TO PUT THE CLOCK BACK?

By Rita Sebastian

The Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) are back at the negotiating table. Significantly it will be the first time since the signing of the much disputed July 1987 Indo-Lanka peace accord that the LTTE will be talking to the Sri Lankan government.

President Ranasinghe Premadasa's repeated appeals to the militants, both the Janatha Vimukti Peramuna (JVP) and the LTTE, seem to have struck a responsive chord in the LTTE psyche.

But how optimistic can one be about the proposed dialogue given the reality of the island's political scenario. The Provincial council elections, one of the main provisions of the Indo-Lanka accord held in 1988 has changed the whole structure of governance in the country. Although the fledgling councils have yet to become functional semi-autonomous bodies, they cannot be wished away by either the LTTE or the JVP. Given that political fact any discussion of the north-east region will have to acknowledge the presence of the Eelam Peoples Revolutionary Liberation Front (EPRLF) controlled North-East Council.

Two elections after, the north-east election in November 1988 and the Parliamentary poll in February 1989, four Tamil groups, former militants turned democrats have through the electoral process become the representatives of the Tamils. A loose alliance of the EPRLF/TELO and the ENDLF not only control the seventy-one member north-east council but also have seven of their members in Parliament. And there is the Eelam Revolutionary Organisation of Students (EROS) who contested as independents but style themselves as the Eelavar Democratic Front (EDF) who won thirteen seats in Parliament but have yet to take their seats.

EROS General Secretary, Velupillai Balakumar, euphoric over their spectacular win in the February poll voiced the hope that they could play the role of mediator and create the necessary climate for the LTTE to agree to discussions.

EROS's efforts, if any, didn't get off the ground and with intensified IPKF operations in March specially in the Mullaitivu district, you found EROS moving away from its earlier position of mediator. Besides, by now it had met with President Premadasa and expressed what it described as its main concerns in diffusing the tensions and creating an atmosphere of mutual trust between the Sinhalese and the Tamils. Two of its main demands was the release of all Tamil political prison-

ers and the repeal of the sixth amendment. The EPRLF however, given the occasional 'going their separate ways' mentality of their fraternal allies the TELO and the ENDLF, and the foot-dragging of the Centre in devolving substantial power on the north-east council have dug themselves in. And in fairness to them it must be said that a start has been made however small, in provincial administration. And quite wisely, men of proven ability, with long years of administrative experience head the various Ministries.

If the LTTE now decides to enter mainstream politics one of its first demands will be the dissolving of the North-East Council. How will the EPRLF react to such a demand? Although in their public posturings all the groups except the LTTE articulate the need for all of them to come together to forge a consensus on Tamil demands, privately some of the groups know only too well that bitter and bloody feuding between them have made it the impossible dream.

Then of course there is the Indian factor. The LTTE wants the IPKF out. So do the other groups but not before an effective law and order machinery takes over in the north and east and the region is returned to peace and normalcy. President Premadasa himself would like the IPKF out to honour his election pledge that when he assumed office of President if the IPKF was still in the country he would see that they left. Unfortunately for him JVP militancy in the south has tied his hands.

Sri Lankan forces now deployed in the south cannot be withdrawn to fill the vacuum in the north and east if the IPKF were to leave now and the LTTE still remains outside mainstream politics. For today the LTTE believes that it is the IPKF that stands in the way of their dominating the north-east region and reaching their ultimate goal of securing a Tamil Eelam. However critical India is of what it calls LTTE 'intransigence' it has at no time since its military offensive against the LTTE began in October 1987, been single-minded in capturing the LTTE leadership.

Its offensives have been limited in scope, a 'this far and no further' strategy which it has mistakenly believed would pressurise the LTTE to drop their arms and enter the democratic processes. The LTTE on the other hand is on record that they would fight to the last man rather than meet India's demand that they lay down arms as a precondition to talks.

And while the antagonists to the conflict fight it out with guns and words, it is the civilian population that faces the greatest hardships and at tremendous cost to themselves and their families.

'We want peace' is the anguished cry of the Tamils, specially in the north, where trapped between the IPKF and the militants they are often the victims of the 'crossfire syndrome.'

Normal life is constantly being disrupted with sudden cordon and search operations and the continuing clashes between the IPKF and the LTTE making it impossible for any significant economic activity.

According to Rehabilitation Ministry sources in Colombo since 1983 over a hundred thousand houses have been destroyed and damaged. In September 1987 a World Bank survey put the infrastructural damage down to 700 million US dollars.

90,000 farming and fishing families have been displaced and their houses destroyed, and 11,000 business establishments damaged or destroyed as well.

A package of assistance to the two categories of persons, those affected and those displaced, was worked out by the Rehabilitation Ministry in Colombo last July. According to Ministry figures an estimated 400,000 families have been affected as a result of the conflict.

And there still seems no end in sight. It is into this seemingly unresolvable situation that the Sri Lankan government has now moved in for talks with the LTTE.

What the LTTE will have to take into account is that events have overtaken them. The political equation that held good during the signing of the accord is no longer relevant. The LTTE cannot lay claim to being the only representatives of the Tamils. They could have easily put it to the test at the provincial and parliamentary elections but they chose not to.

EPRLF's K. Padmanabha disputes the LTTE claim labelling it an LTTE illusion they have been trying to foist on the Tamil People.

Whatever role the LTTE would like to assign themselves the clock cannot be put back.

Will the LTTE therefore agree to break bread with their rivals, or will the talks go the way of talks held so many times before.

Where does all this leave the Tamil people?

Continued on page 16

UNIVERSITY TEACHERS FOR HUMAN RIGHTS (Jaffna)

HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATIONS BY STATE & NON-STATE ORGANISATIONS

The University Teachers for Human Rights (Jaffna) formed during the latter part of 1988 has published two comprehensive reports relating to incidents involving human rights violations. The Reports, besides documenting a number of individual cases, in its preface and appendices breaks new ground in raising the question of violations not only by the State, but also by non-state entities particularly in the context of contemporary Tamil political realities. Report No.1 (40 pages) released in January 1989 covers the period from July to December 1988, and Report No.2 comprising 66 pages covers the period from January to March 1989.

While dealing comprehensively with the violations by the security forces (IPKF), in their preface to Report No.1, the

The University Teachers for Human Rights (UTHR) was formed during the middle of 1988 in response to a growing need felt throughout the country. Its membership comprises university teachers from all universities. The need for such an organisation was thrust upon the university teachers in the course of views and problems aired at meetings of the Federation of University Teachers' Associations (FUTA). In time it was decided to form the UTHR as an organisation affiliated to FUTA, but independent of it.

It was natural that several leading figures in the UTHR turned out to be long term activists in the FUTA. It was universally admitted that the role of university teachers in this country in upholding human rights was inadequate, if not unheroic. As much as university teachers in the South could be blamed for their unconcern in the face of the militarisation of the state (in response to a political problem in the Tamil areas which developed into an insurgency), the university teachers in the North could equally be blamed for their silence on internal developments which culminated in internecine killings.

It was recognised by the generality of teachers in the South that the meteoric rise of gross human rights violations in the South was a spill-over from the militarisation of the Sri Lankan state (in response to a problem that should have been dealt with politically), and the resulting debasement of human psyche (see Appendix 2 for statements issued by the UTHR).

Long history

Violations of human rights in the Tamil areas have a long history going back to the 1970s. The problem simmered for some time and came to the boil after the racial violence of 1983. Although university teachers in Jaffna had been familiar with organisations

UTHR(Jaffna) poses the fundamental question facing the Tamil community in the following terms:

'The premise that one must not criticise those who had come forward to give their lives in protecting the population against the Sri Lankan state, brought in further confusion when internecine killings resulted in the course of militant groups vying for dominance. Large numbers of young men who had come forward to give their lives for us had become fugitives in our own community, and were being hunted and killed without knowing why, or what had hit them. Had we nothing to say?'. In answering this question, the UTHR(Jaffna) has displayed remarkable intellectual integrity and moral courage in compiling the two reports, particularly in 'a situation where the gun-approach to problems has become the rule...'

campaigning for human rights, left to themselves it is unlikely that they would have gone back into this work at this point of time.

The coming together of university teachers in this country and the effect it had in loosening inhibitions, fears and misconceptions was a key event in forming the UTHR, and the UTHR(Jaffna) as an organisation within the UTHR. That the UTHR(Jaffna) derives its strength and inspiration from being part of the national organisation is gratefully acknowledged.

The enthusiasm shown by the university teachers in Jaffna towards the UTHR was phenomenal, once the idea was explained and had caught on. Because of our long experience, questions that are still unresolved in the South were quickly disposed of here in what was a broad consensus. Some of these questions are: Whether we should confine ourselves to persons related to the university or whether we should go into the difficulties of the community at large? Whether we should only deal with violations by the state(s) or whether we should deal with violations independently of their source?

State violations

It had been generally held by human rights organisations which have been active in this region in the past that it is mainly violations by the state that are significant. The argument given for this stand is that the state represents the internationally acknowledged law-enforcing authority with resources, material and non-material, far exceeding that of any other group. It is thus the failure by the state to deal with problems justly and wisely that is the principal source of all the resulting violations. This view, which has much merit in it, is reflected in the practice of many international human rights organisations. In many parts of

the world with which these organisations were initially concerned, the state exercised a virtual monopoly in the violation of human rights. This was true in Eastern Europe and in parts of the world where there were no armed rebel movements. We have no doubt that the work done in this part of the world by human rights organisations the past has brought relief and hope to countless numbers.

In our own context, this approach had some unintended effects. It came to be thought adequate in many quarters to expose the actions of the Sri Lankan state internationally, while little was done to build our own strength as people who stood by certain ideals and standards. In the course of the resulting passivity, the people lost the will and the ability to check both undemocratic and homicidal tendencies in militant groups which became increasingly hard to ignore.

As terror by the Sri Lankan state claimed thousands of lives, people became increasingly passive, finding some relief in the growing military prowess of militant groups and in international campaigns on their behalf. The logic of accepting that people were helpless was that it came to be thought wrong, if not risky, to criticise any action undertaken by militant groups. In time there were those who advocated human rights campaigns, directed against the state, as part of the militant struggle. In observance of human rights day, speakers stressed national rights - namely the demand for the Tamil separate state of Eelam - saying little or nothing of violations against individuals.

Universal values

The premise that one must not criticise those who had come forward to give their lives in protecting the population against the Sri Lankan state, brought in further confusion

when internecine killings resulted in the course of militant groups vying for dominance. Large numbers of our young men who had come forward to give their lives for us had become fugitives in our own community, and were being hunted and killed without knowing why, or what had hit them. Had we nothing to say?

The stated premise meant that one must observe silence and pay homage to the victorious group of the moment, now the 'sole protector' against the Sri Lankan state. Thankfully, such a premise was not universally accepted, and many unarmed civilians gave refuge to fugitives, placing humanity above ideology. The acceptance of such a premise would also have entailed that one must throw away all universal values and pledge oneself to the power of the moment. Thus, when gunpowder changed hands and the new victors asked 'What were you doing when we were attacked?', the question, together with the feelings it reflected, had a note of legitimacy.

Again, the more one looks at the problem, one can hardly ignore the fact that the panorama of human misery comprises all shades of people: Tamil, Sinhalese, Indian; guerilla and soldier. Even those who represent states responsible for some detestable acts raise questions which must be listened to with sympathy. Can one shrug away the killings of policemen who were performing a civil function such as transporting cash between banks, or of soldiers trying to enable passenger trains to run? One cannot but feel some sympathy for a Gurkha or a Sikh soldier who complains that he was told he was coming here to protect the Tamils, and that he has no quarrel with anyone; whereas many people do not seem to like him, while others are shooting at him.

State's principal responsibility

Daily, young lives are being snuffed

out. The departed person may have been a friend to some, a fiend to others and does certainly leave behind a void that cannot be filled. The young life may be that of a civilian, a militant or of a soldier.

We do certainly hold that states, as internationally accountable law-enforcing agencies, are principally responsible for an anarchic state of affairs which devalues life. While we can sympathise with some of their resentments, we would also ask them to go beyond these. do their subsequent actions make life pleasanter for themselves or for others? No resentment can excuse a resort to depravity.

Behind the impossible tasks faced by the Indian soldier is a history of unprincipled cynicism that governed mutual relations between the Indian and Sri Lankan states and the militant groups. There is also a history of conflicting expectations, which when disappointed led to greater instability. The logic of the Sri Lankan state's military approach to the Tamil problem was that in the end all Tamils were classed with armed rebels, whose extermination was desired. There is little doubt that, but for international concern, the Sri Lankan government showed few inhibitions against practicing genocide.

We have documented a number of instances where the IPKF has shown a blind preference for a military approach in dealing with day to day problems at the cost of debasing politics. Even if one justifies inhumane practices on pragmatic grounds, the course of events suggests a heavy political price being paid for meagre military gains. One must ask if having discredited and displaced the Sri Lankan forces, the same methods are still being applied with much the same effects.

Violations by non-state bodies

Our experience has also taught us

that the community must develop its ability to stand up for values it holds dear, which alone can guarantee its dignity. This raises certain matters specific to our own situation, consequent to the marginalising of all civilian political groups. We have a situation where the gun approach to problems has become the rule rather than the exception and there is no political impetus to question it. Thus anyone who wishes to question this tendency stands in isolation and cannot reason why university teachers have been cast into the role of questioning violations by non-state organisations. Perhaps in our context, it is only a human rights group that can question this tendency which has now assumed the proportions of an institution.

In presenting this report, we have avoided emphasis on numbers and have tried to show the human significance of each event. We have presented reports of violations which came to our attention, without bias. These reports were compiled by people within the university and by others associated with the university. Accuracy has been ensured, within reasonable limits.

Primarily, we hope that by trying to understand what is happening to this society and to themselves in turn, those responsible for these violations will change their methods and themselves for the better. In addition with the world so interlinked, no event is an isolated event. What happens in this society has a close relation with its interaction with the outside world. By trying to hide what our society really is, we can only deceive ourselves. While exposing what is being done to us, we are also giving an airing to the truth about ourselves. This, we hope, will challenge us to change for the better.

(This is the text of the Preface to Report 1)

The Snares of Violence

The recent spate of human rights violations cannot be understood without some knowledge of the motivations and mutual relations of the various factions that bear arms. India's sponsorship of Tamil militant groups in 1983 and the manner in which the latter were militarised at the expense of political vision has been written about elsewhere. Help given to Tamil militant groups received widespread approval. In consequence of the 1983 racial violence and the subsequent military action by the Sri Lankan state, the Tamil minority was seen as defenceless. This militarisation reflected itself in the ruthless manner in which internal dissent within militant groups was dealt with.

In early 1985 the Indian press came out with sensational revelations about how the PLOTE had killed several of its own cadres on Indian soil. Dissident sources have given figures varying from several tens upwards. Less well known, but well authenticated, are several internal killings within other militant groups.

By the middle of 1986, the LTTE had eliminated the TELO from the militant scene and its bid for sole dominance became evident. The number of TELO cadres killed by the LTTE is put at 90 upwards. Leading EPRLF men in Jaffna told a senior Citizens' Committee figure that its leadership in Madras had asked the LTTE leadership for its

terms of cooperation. But no answer had been forthcoming.

Scenes of outrage

It was generally assumed that the LTTE would take on the EPRLF at an opportune moment. In November 1986 the EPRLF confronted the LTTE politically by backing the outcry over the disappeared student Vijithiran. Knowing that the LTTE would respond militarily, the EPRLF was singularly unprepared. By 14th December 1986, the LTTE had taken on the EPRLF. In Jaffna, the EPRLF vacated its camps leaving behind large quantities of weapons. Outside Jaffna, particularly in the Eastern province, fighting between the LTTE and the EPRLF continued sporadically. Perhaps out of

deference to a feeling of public horror that events during the LTTE-TELO clash of May, scenes of public outrage were not repeated. But several EPRLF cadres were killed. A number were tortured, particularly for information on hidden weapons.

It is notable that a large number of members of the public, particularly from the lower classes, took great risks in providing shelter and succour for Telo and EPRLF cadres on the run. Many of them are the very same persons who did likewise for LTTE supporters, when they felt hunted after October 1988. The EPRLF, which was then not known for notoriety in dealing with dissent, failed to settle the costly breach between its leader Padmanabha, and the leader of its military wing, Douglas Devananda. This provided the LTTE its opportunity. It was widely felt that the LTTE's actions had seriously weakened the militants. This received confirmation when the Sri Lankan armed forces made rapid gains in early 1987. The EPRLF had been becoming increasingly effective in the East in the few months before its disbandment.

At the end of March 1987 the LTTE's Jaffna leader, Kittu, lost a leg in a bomb attack. The attackers were not identified. Widespread speculation remains that the attack was prompted by internal differences. On the following evening, 18 EPRLF prisoners held at the Brown Road LTTE camp were killed. The LTTE described the incident as an escape attempt. The 'Saturday Review', quoting LTTE sources, said that in the few days following Kittu's incident, about 50 prisoners held in LTTE camps were killed. The BBC reported a higher figure.

Feeling of relief

From March 1987 the fighting between the Sri Lankan army and the LTTE became increasingly vicious. A large number of Tamil civilians fell victim to aerial bombing and shelling by Sri Lankan forces. Over 200 Sinhalese civilians fell victim to two attacks during the course of the week commencing with the Sinhala/Tamil New Year of April 1987. One was a massacre in Kituluttuwa, near Trincomalee. The other was the car-bomb attack in Colombo.

The feeling of relief with which the IPKF was welcomed by Tamil civilians in July 1987 and the subsequent events have been described elsewhere.

In the face of an increasingly unfavourable balance of forces, the LTTE chose to shore up its position by making rhetorical claims of exclusiveness. Other militants were branded as traitors, who had in addition become agents of India. The last must be viewed in the light of the LTTE itself having received arms and training from India. Its leader was resident in India until early 1987. Also, facilities in India were crucial for the war

against the Sri Lankan state. However, while the LTTE opposed the physical presence of Indian forces, in part because of the threat to its claims of exclusiveness, it kept asking for additional (and more sophisticated) arms from India.

At another level, the LTTE quite successfully carved out an image for itself through extraordinary displays of military prowess and some sensational acts of violence. This was underlined by the suicidal valour of the Black Tigers; the attack on Kankesanur harbour (22nd April 1987); Miller's suicide attack on Nelliady camp (5th July 1987) and the surprise assault of 12th September 1987 in the Eastern province, which left a reported 70 militants from other groups dead. The last took place in the relatively relaxed atmosphere soon after the Accord. Many of the dead were unprepared and unarmed. While the LTTE acquired an image, its political objectives in the face of ground realities became more nebulous. Nevertheless, it also exposed the political weakness of other forces, particularly the Indian and Sri Lankan states. The LTTE could keep up its reputation only at great cost to the civilian population. It too lost the ability to deal diplomatically, particularly with other militant groups.

Traitor & Anti-social elements

For the other militant groups, given their past political and military failures, an Indian presence provided an expeditious means of re-establishing themselves. People generally acknowledged the crucial role played by other militant groups in keeping back the Sri Lankan forces. After the arrival of the IPKF, the other militant groups began to be redeployed, often in close proximity to IPKF camps. Within a month internecine killings had started. Instead of making a political approach to win over the people, the message people usually got in dealings with other militant groups was that the people were being blamed for the fate they suffered at the hands of the LTTE. The hatred and thirst for revenge they felt towards the LTTE thus seemed to extend to the people who were classed with the LTTE. This view came to be reflected in the attitudes of the IPKF after the October offensive. All this went towards reinforcing the LTTE's propaganda claim, that the other militants were traitors and anti-social elements, once rejected by the people and now making their appearance under IPKF patronage.

Such a view of the civilians persisted even after the EPRLF became the major party representing the Tamils in the North-East provincial government in November 1988. In day-to-day dealings with EPRLF cadres, ordinary people were accused of being pro-LTTE, or of having stood by idly while the LTTE

decimated them in the past. The killing of a large number of LTTE supporters and sympathisers left the feeling that a very crude military approach was being tried, with the complicity of the IPKF.

Perhaps far more serious than blunders of other parties have been the blunders of India, earlier seen as lacking in principle and now seen to be lacking in objective as well. The readiness of India to descend to forms of expediency with apparently no political or moral scruples has left the IPKF with an unenviable task. One must remember that the IPKF was welcomed in July 1987 with almost universal approbation. When Indian officials say that several hundred Indian soldiers died for the Tamils of Ceylon, it undoubtedly makes sense to Indian ears. But given the enormity of civilian suffering in the face of Indian military action, this would sound an insult to the average Tamil, adding salt to the wound.

True, a number of Indian soldiers died trying to maintain services. The life of an Indian soldier here is as tense, unpleasant and hazardous as it is for many ordinary civilians. But seen from here, the reverses suffered by the Indian army were largely a consequence of a lack of moral and political vision. One does know that many Indian soldiers and officers are often courteous, obliging and do not relish the reputation of their organisation. But faced with a situation, gut instincts seem to take over.

Inhumane practices

India has consistently and indignantly denied allegations of torture and inhumane practices by its forces from international organisations, within and outside the country. The existence of such practices are so well known here, that privately many Indian officials would defend them on the grounds of expediency. That is at least a sure sign that they are aware that what they are doing is wrong - something for which India has rightly taken the Sri Lankan government to task in international fora earlier. India would never dare to argue before the world the need for inhumane practices, nor would it defend its use of such practices. Perhaps the fundamental error is that of trying to accomplish a political task without respect for people. Screams and groans from victims, heard by residents near IPKF camps, remain part of our day-to-day reality.

Even if one grants that the IPKF is faced with an incorrigible adversary the question remains: Could a country such as India, with enormous intellectual, material and spiritual resources, make a plea to be judged at the same level as that of youngsters, whose experience from their early teens has taught them to rely on little else

Continued on page 13

LETTERS

AN OPEN LETTER TO THE IPKF

"In a matter of weeks, it will be two years since you landed on the shores of our Island. You came with gifts to our people. You came to establish Peace and Justice in this land.

But during these months, you have destroyed hundreds of our homes, decimated the flower of our youth and made thousands widows and orphans. All this you have done to force down the throat of our people 'an agreement' in which they had no part. You want to coerce our people into a 'democratic process'. It is for this democratic process our people fought for more than thirty years by every democratic means open to them. They were humiliated, beaten up, gunned down. Our people had no other choice but to resist violence by violence. You came to see justice done to our people; you have become instruments of oppression in the hands of designing politicians.

Yours is a great country, a superpower in the East. Your military resources are vast. Your bombers, rockets, gun-ships are deadly. You have a soldier for every home in the North- besides their gun? Would India defend

East Province of the island. We have suffered much from your hands. You do not understand our people. Neither do we understand you. It is not ironic that you are killing us for having the same aspirations as your fathers had sixty years ago? Is it not tragic that the violence unleashed on our people comes from the cradle of non-violence?

We are a handful of people. We cannot resist your military might. We cannot make our voices heard against a barrage of an orchestrated mass media. We are the victims of injustice, oppression, treachery and deceit. But when the history of these years is written, time will record what it has

recorded for centuries, that the power of arms however deadly cannot quench the determined will of a people to die, rather than be deprived of the rights that are the birth right of human beings.

Our goal is nothing but what your great patriots and poets bequeathed to you, and the rest of humanity:

*"Where the mind is without fear
And the head held high
Into that haven of Freedom, my Father,
Let my country awake"* - Rabindranath Tagore.

A Anandan,

PO Box 15645

Al Ain, UAE.

INDIAN BLOCKADE OF NEPAL

The Government of Nepal must be congratulated on the courageous stand taken in the face of India's intimidating action to bring Nepal to her knees by depriving her of the fundamental rights of a land locked country and subjecting her to the possibly drastic and tragic consequences thereof.

Nepal's glowing example in not giving into India's blatant acts of International thuggery would no doubt be a

shining example to India's other neighbours who have unfortunately been falling hopeless victims of the overt and covert operations carried out by India to gain economic, political and strategic control over the entire South Asian Region.

India's ruthless action in Nepal would also hopefully help open the eyes of a large section of the outside world who have unfortunately been viewing India's policies in the region as having 'peaceful and protective intentions' in the same way they had initially thought were Hitler's intentions earlier in the century.

In this connection one could recall how the Munich agreement related to Czechoslovakia was erroneously hailed as being the treaty that would lead to 'peace in our time', in the same way that the Gandhi-Jayawardhene agreement was believed to have brought about peace and harmony in the South Asian region as opposed to the defacto annexation and increased deaths and destruction that it has actually generated.

Let us hope that the knowledge of the history of German expansionism and the untold deaths and misery resulting therefrom, and of the almost similar situations that has been developing in the Indian sub-continent would hopefully prompt the peaceloving people and anti-hegemonistic countries of the world to help Nepal to withstand pressure to enter into any more unequal treaties with India as her other neighbours have unfortunately been pushed into.

The unequivocal support extended to Nepal in her hour of need by her traditional and other allies would no doubt be appreciated and well remembered by South Asian countries who have been or would soon be subjected to the hegemonistic thrust of the growing Indian Reich.

Bernard Wijedoru

HK ID XC 433386

Continued from page 12

the practices of some of the worst regimes of the world?

A poignant comment on the current situation comes in a leaflet bearing the title 'We ask forgiveness from the people', signed 'Those who left the EPRLF'. It is addressed to their former comrades. Such crudely stencilled leaflets from the underground remain the only form of free expression. Some excerpts are quoted below in translation:

"...Because conflicts within our organisation could not be settled in a regular manner, many responsible comrades like Davidson, Chelian, Evandan and Das left with broken hearts. It is because of the resulting weak state of our organisation that the Tigers attacked us, and not because the People instigated the Tigers".

"But today you are using your armed might to take revenge on the people who only want peace and democracy. This will only push them once again to the state of accepting that the politics of the Tigers was right. It is not just the former supporters of the Tigers, but even thousands who supported us will be driven by your present conduct to the side of the Tigers".

"Instead of trying to show that you

are more democratic than the Tigers, you are trying to articulate your politics by showing that you are more brutish than the Tigers. We are greatly distressed by this".

"Dear leader Comrade Padmanabha. In your thirst for a rational form of politics and in your desire to build up the EPRLF as an organisation to articulate it, you used to roam Tamil Nadu, suitcase in hand, sleeping on the streets. What are you doing when the very people for whose benefit you built up this organisation, spit upon it? Have you accepted this line, or is it that you have no authority to speak?"

"Comrades. Posters with beautiful slogans, red flags and sporting of beards cannot alone run a liberation movement. On the contrary, every comrade who bears arms must possess the discipline of loving the people".

"Your confounding 'red flag and revenge politics' with 'liberation politics' has belittled and devalued the noble sentiments you uttered in bygone days"

"We appeal to you comrades within the EPRLF who love the people, think even at this eleventh hour. The arms of the foreigner which you bear in your hands will one day be taken away. What then will be your state?"

[Text of Appendix 1 in Report 1 by the University of Teachers for Human Rights (Jaffna)]

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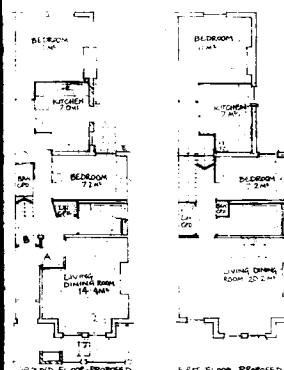
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EROS WELCOMES GOVT-LTTE TALKS

In what he described as one of his last public attempts to explain Tamil aspirations to the Sinhala people, Balakumar leader of EROS appealed to the Sinhalese masses, political parties and groups like the JVP to give the LTTE-Government talks a chance to succeed without setting out too many conditions and driving the Tigers away.

The failure of the talks would only result in the battle for a separatist state continuing and for other Tamil groups with no alternative but to follow suit, he said in this interview. Excerpts:

Q: How do you view the talks?

A: I see it as an opportunity to be grasped with both hands by the Sri Lankan government and the Sinhala people including those in the Opposition. In the first place I must say that our group had no involvement in the Tigers' decision to come for talks, as claimed in some newspapers.

The Tigers' move came as a complete surprise to us too, but we welcome it. We believe the offer was made seriously and what we want now is for the Indian and Sri Lankan governments and the Sinhala people to realize this. I feel this is a meeting point for a viable alternative to Eelam and what is urgently needed now is to listen to what the LTTE has to say without raising various objections and so on.

Not all of us agree with everything the LTTE does but they are a factor we cannot ignore in any settlement of this crisis. There is no military solution and all Tamil groups were told by the Indian Premier, Rajiv Gandhi, during the time of the Accord that India would not tolerate a separate state in Sri Lanka.

We appeal to everyone, including the JVP to first start to find out what the LTTE wants, what they are asking. Whatever these conditions are, there should be no criticism that this is only a first step to Eelam, as argued before. Such fears and doubts on the contrary would only lead to Eelam if no thought is given to the reason for our struggle, why we resorted to arms in the first place.

The JVP is asking for the removal of the IPKF, so does the LTTE. These goals can be achieved only if there is better understanding among the Sinhalese of the fears of our people. We have been oppressed for generations, so how can you ask us to show goodwill first!

Q: What kind of compromise would satisfy the LTTE and the Tamil people?

A: Something more than what the present Provincial Councils envisage, a viable alternative to Eelam which will

include the protection of basic rights, a frame-work for human and social development and an adequate security set-up which will ensure our protection.

Q: Among the great fears of the Sinhala people is your concept of traditional homelands. How would you react to this?

A: Traditional homelands means areas where we have lived for generations, but we do not say this means every other person is excluded from them.

In the normal course of events we would welcome planned settlement of all people, in keeping with the economic and social development of these areas. What we object to is the forced colonisation which still continues, with criminals and IRCs being settled forcibly. This is an attempt to carve out new areas forcibly and naturally we object to this. I have explained this to many Sinhala politicians and we would

like the Sinhala people, too, to be aware of this. Sinhala, Tamil, Muslims we are all human beings, we have no animosity or hatred towards anyone.

Q: What steps should be taken for peace in the North and East? Shouldn't the other Tamil groups, too, be involved in the process?

A: Of course, the other groups and the Indians should be involved. But first let us listen to the Tigers. There must be room for groups such as the EPRLF to join the process, for various reasons they opted to lay faith in the Provincial Councils, but their functioning has led to a big credibility gap where the Tamil people are concerned. There is also a lot of emotion over their involvement with the IPKF and the calibre of some of their cadres. There is bound to be some bloodshed because of these enmities even if the Tigers enter the political process, but these can be resolved and a consensus arrived at. But the immediate priority is to include the LTTE in the democratic process and then to work out our differences at a later stage.

'LTTE'S MAIN AIM IS TO SEND THE IPKF OUT' - EPRLF

At their office on Clocktower Road, Jaffna an EPRLF spokesman, Rajan expressed grave doubts about the LTTE's sincerity in coming forward for the talks with the Government. He said it was a move to 'manipulate the contradictions between the Sri Lankan and Indian Governments'

Excerpts from the interview:

Q: Why do you think the LTTE suddenly decided on the talks?

A: Their main aim is to send the IPKF out and to do away with the Provincial Councils system. I think the Sri Lankan Government also wants this and that is why the talks have been summoned so suddenly.

Q: Do you think the Tigers are sincere in trying for a negotiated settlement?

A: If they want peace, they should talk to the Indian Government, too as they are also part of the Indo-Lanka accord. They should also have discussed with all Tamil groups, which is the only way to bring real peace. It is only then that we can ask the IPKF to go away.

Q: So how does the EPRLF view the current talks?

A: We think it is just for show, so we don't give much importance to them. We know the current IPKF offensive has made the Tigers very weak. To satisfy their cadres that their leaders are taking other steps also they have called for these talks. Otherwise the morale of their members would have gone down if they realized that the Tigers only wanted to continue fighting and dying in their search for

Eelam. The constant living in the jungles, the continued fighting have all contributed to this drop in morale. Their leaders want to show that something else is being done.

They are manipulating the contradictions between the Sri Lankan and Indian Governments on this issue but they should realize they cannot do this at the international level on agreements already signed between countries.

Q: But do you welcome this move for negotiations?

A: If they come forward democratically by laying down their arms we would welcome it. But we know the Tigers want a dictatorship among the Tamil people; they want sole authority in administration and this we cannot allow. They also can't face the Tamil people. They have put fear into the people and that is how they want to rule.

Q: Is it through fear that they have succeeded in crippling civil administration?

A: Yes, this had badly affected development work and caused suffering among the people which we have tried to alleviate through the Provincial Council. But here again the powers of the Council have yet to be devolved properly and once this is worked out we can provide a better future for all people. We must first enjoy the fruits of what we have achieved by the establishment of the Councils without continuing to fight.

PEOPLE

MAHARAJAPURAM SANTHANAM, the well known Carnatic vocalist gave a benefit concert at Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia on 10th April in aid of the Sangeetha Abivrudhi Sabha. The concert took place under the patronage of the Prime Minister of Malaysia, Dr. Mahathir Bin Mohamad.

☆☆☆

SHRIMATHI D.K. PATTAMMAL, the celebrated singer of Tamil Nadu who turned seventy in April, maintained her reputation for classical purity when she rendered five 'kriti's' of the Carnatic musical shrine at Sastry Hall in Madras on April 7.

☆☆☆

ARCHANA, the Tamil actress who won the best actress award for her role in Ceylon-born Balu Mahendra's film 'Veedu' last year, won the coveted honour for the second time this year in a Telugu film 'Dasi'.

☆☆☆

MR. V.K. RAMAMURTHY, M.P. has taken over as the Tamil Nadu Congress-I chief from Mr. G.K. Moopanar. Mr. Ramamurthy has been a known critic of Mr. Moopanar and a staunch advocate of a Congress-I alliance with the AIADMK led by Ms. Jayalalitha.

☆☆☆

SANMUGAM KUGATHASAN, of Triyayai, Trincomalee and joint Secretary of the Organisation of Eelam Refugees Rehabilitation (OfERR), Egmore, Madras, was married to Padma Kothandaraman of Thanjavur district, India, at a civil registration in Madras on 10th April. A felicitation lunch was held the same day at Matsya Restaurant, Egmore.

Continued from page 15

We are for all people, Tamil, Sinhala and Muslims, they are all human beings and we want to bring peace to all of them.

Q: So why can't you get the civil administration working again without disruption?

A: For this the public servants, too, are to be blamed. They seem to enjoy these enforced holidays and the excuse they usually give is that they do not know whether they are working for the Central Government or the Provincial Council. But once the present devolution problems are sorted out we will be in a position to clearly lay down their duties and get them to work for the people.

We also need a strong counterforce to stop the current indiscriminate killing by the LTTE. The police do not co-operate enough in this work, in restoring law and order.

They don't appear to be interested enough, even if their seniors are. We can't expect the IPKF to do these duties, either, so we have to have the Civilian Volunteer Force. They should be able to contain the terror tactics adopted by the LTTE.

Q: How weak do you think the LTTE is?

Miruthangam Arangetram



Gopinathan son of Sri & Smt Ranganathan of 261 Bedwell Crescent, Stevenage, Herts had his Miruthangam Arangetram on 22.4.89 at the London Sri Murugan Temple, London E12. The temple was packed to capacity and the recital was under the patronage of Dr John Marr.

Gobi on the Miruthangam was accompanied to the famous singer Smt Sivasakthi Sivanesan. The other accompanists were Gobi's Guru Sri Rasiyah Balasri - a miruthangist of repute - on the Gadam, Sri Sivarajah on Morsing, Gobi's grandfather Sri P. Shanmugam, who had travelled all the way from Singapore for this function, on the Ganjira and Sri Baluji Srivastava on the Sitar. The programme started with Varnam and went through various pieces which provided Gobi with ample opportunity to display his skill in the superb renderings that night. Above all, he was quite at ease with his instrument and gave the impression of a full fledged miruthangist. The parents who are talented musicians in their own right, should be congratulated on the interest they had taken to promote another artiste blossom in their family.

The Institute of Tamil Culture



The Institute of Tamil Culture based in Surbiton, UK, celebrated its Third Birthday on 23rd April '89 at the Surbiton Assembly Rooms. attended by well over 450 people. The programme included singing, dancing, instrumental music (Veena) and a play performed by children and adult pupils of the Institute.

The Chief Guest of the function was Mr. A.T.S. Ratnasingham, Chief Co-ordinator of the Shree Ghanapathy temple, Wimbledon. He spoke of the importance of Mother-Tongue teaching and the preservation of cultural identity while integrating with the host community.

Classes are conducted every Saturday between 9am and 1pm at the Knollmead Primary School, Tolworth, Surrey. About 60 pupils, children and adults are attending classes in Tamil Language, Vocal music. Veena and Miruthangam and Bharatha Natyam.

For further information please contact:
K.Jegatheeswaran, Headmaster- Tel: 01-949 3012
W.Thayalan, Administrator- Tel: 01-399 7848

International Tamil Organisation



The above organisation was inaugurated on 17.3.89 and Mr Anton Jones Singarayar, the proprietor of Antons was elected president at a meeting held at its headquarters at 15A St.Johns Road, Wembley, Middx, U.K. It has plans to (a) publish a monthly magazine named 'Oli' in Tamil and English. The first release will be on 22.7.89 followed by a concert at Copland Community School, Cecil Avenue, Wembley, Middx. (b) open a library for the exclusive use of Tamils living in U.K. (c) hold four concerts a year to promote Tamil culture (d) open branches in India, Sri Lanka, Canada, Norway and other places where Tamils reside in large numbers. Those interested are requested to get in touch with the Headquarters Tel:01-903 3249

Continued from page 9

If as they profess, the people are their main concern, then the groups have to come together to forge a common leadership get down to the priority issue of rehabilitation and reconstruction of the war-ravaged North-East region, and get a normal civilian administration functioning. That is what the people need as of now.

ELEMENTS OF IGNORANCE AND PRETENCE — NON-FUNCTIONING OF PROVINCIAL COUNCILS

by Prof. C. Suriyakumaran

While there is some publicity given to the difficulty faced by Provincial Councils, the general impression is that they are functioning. In a very formal sense, they are. There were elections; Chief Ministers and others have been appointed; and periodic pronouncements are made of their intended activities.

In actual fact, perhaps none of the Provincial Councils are really functioning. One almost got the impression of a cosmetic process in the setting up of the 'Southern' Councils with emphasis on the fact that they were a political commitment and must be willy nilly set up. Even the North-East Provincial Council, for whose sake the whole idea, in recent political background, started is struggling to work.

No money, no offices

From the beginning, when the first elections to the Southern Councils were held, the Councils found themselves meeting in hotels, Town Halls, other public places and anywhere else except at the Kachcheris where they should have. They were looking for staff when such staff were already there under the Government Agents and those local Heads of Ministries which had provincial offices. They had no finances worth speaking of provided for them beforehand, when all the provincial finances were already flowing through the Kachcheries and Regional Officers of the Ministries concerned. Even their functions set out in List I of the Schedule to the Thirteenth Amendment to the Constitution were not available to them along with their installation, for they were with the G.As and Regional Heads of Offices. The more so in the case of the shared functions under List III. Meanwhile, conferences continued to be held at the Centre to identify these functions.

In a sense all this was due to the fact that neither the Government beginning from 1987, nor the other participants really had a clear idea of what Devolution was (as distinct from decentralisation or de-concentration), having in fact, up to that year, not gone much beyond the idea of District Councils in their thinking.

In other words, when the decision to accept the Provincial Council system was made, there was little intellectual understanding or political awareness of what Regional or Provincial Councils really were. In an article entitled 'The National Question - District Councils, Development Councils & All That' published in a leading local journal on 1 March 1984, this writer had strongly emphasised the difference between Local Government (Decentralisation) and Devolution, and spelt out

clearly the scope and content of Regional Councils in such a context.

Strangely, for an answer to our present problem of non-functioning Provincial Councils, we must go back to the ideas of S.W.R.D. Bandaranaike, not of the time of seeking solutions to political exigencies, but to the pre-Bandaranaike-Chelvanaykum Pact days and the 'pre-Communal' phase of solution finding.

As early as the early-1940's Bandaranaike had spelt out a scheme for replacement of the (colonial) Kachcheries and government Agents by elected Regional Councils with the G.As becoming their Secretaries.

Meaningful Devolution

The Councils would take over the administration of the Regions; and such central functions as Excise, Customs etc. would simply function - as in other countries - in different offices to be in charge of officials appointed by the concerned Ministries at the Centre. The Scheme was conceived in the name of 'effective' decentralisation (devolution), establishment of a meaningful democracy and promotion of stronger economic and social development at the periphery. His ideas were too early for their day, by years if not decades, as later events began to show, and we found ourselves coming up with 'too little too late' until we now have non-functioning Provincial Councils.

What the Provincial Councils need in order to start functioning are implicit in what we have said so far. The Provincial Councils structure depends on four pillars, namely,

- (a) Secretariat;
- (b) Staff;
- (c) Functions; and
- (d) Finance.

What should have been done along with the very first Provincial Council Elections - and should at least be done now - was to provide for the Councils to take over their area Kachcheries; convert the Government Agents (while keeping their 'service' conditions in tact) into Secretaries/Additional Secretaries of the Councils; absorb similarly all staff of the Kachcheries and Regional Offices of Ministries (except those in charge of Central functions like Customs, Excise etc.); Identify the List I and List III functions of the Councils against functions already being performed by the Kachcheries and Regional Offices of Ministries; and designate the funds already being deployed to those two types of offices as Provincial Council funds.

Necessary refinements, or further elaboration on future expansion of any of the above can then wait and follow

conveniently, in the light of experience and needs. Immediately, the foregoing steps would have set the Councils not only going but moving smoothly into taking over Provincial responsibilities. After all, Provincial functions are precisely those performed in the provinces; and these are already there in the Kachcheries and Regional Offices of the Ministries.

One must hope that the above approach will be implemented even at this stage. Else, the Provincial Councils, especially the North-East Council, may cease to provide the answers to the issues for which they were created.

And then, it may once more be 'too late'. It is as if there have been elements of ignorance or pretence, or both, in what has happened so far.

JAFFNA GOVT. AGENT SHOT DEAD

M. Panchalingam, Government Agent for the Jaffna District in northern Sri Lanka, was shot dead by a youth wielding an AK-47 rifle on 1 May at his brother's residence at Nallur. He had 23 bullets pumped into him, 8 in the head.

Mr Panchalingam, accompanied by his family, had been visiting his brother. Three persons had called at the brother's house apparently to make sure he was there and left. Shortly thereafter, a young person entered the house carrying a parcel in his hand. When he was asked to leave the parcel outside before entering the house, the youth pulled out the weapon. Mr Panchalingam fearing that he was going to be the target, jumped out and attempted to run. The gunman chased and shot him several times as the victim ran.

Mr. Panchalingam, aged 55, joined the civil service in 1957. He served in Mannar, Kandy and Vavuniya districts before he was posted as Additional Government Agent, Jaffna in 1979. He was appointed Government Agent in 1984 and served in the Jaffna district during very difficult and troubled times until his murder. Four months ago, he was offered a transfer to Colombo as Additional Secretary to the Ministry of Rehabilitation, but he declined the offer preferring to serve in Jaffna.

The LTTE has claimed responsibility for the killing of Mr. Panchalingam. Although he was reputed to have had cordial relations with the LTTE in the past, he had fallen foul of the LTTE in having, as Government Agent, helped in organising the February general elections and for attempting to make his offices function for five days a week.

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LTTE-PREMADASA TALKS: INDIAN MEDIA REACTIONS

DECCAN HERALD

April 26, 1989

A Happy Augury

The Chasm that divides the Sri Lankan Government and the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam is so wide that the talks between them, expected to begin this week, cannot yield quick results. But the mere fact that the two sides whose known positions offer little common ground have agreed to enter into negotiations is a happy augury. President Ranasinghe Premadasa's administration is deeply committed to the preservation of Sri Lanka's unity as any before it. The LTTE still swears by the concept of a separate Tamil State of Eelam. What has brought them together is their common – and legitimate – desire to end the Indian military presence in the North-Eastern Province. After nearly two years of warfare by the Indian army units, inducted as a peace-keeping force, peace still eludes the island. What is more, apprehensions of an Indian Vietnam, voiced by critics, are beginning to acquire an air of reality as our jawans, deployed to liquidate the LTTE cadres, are bogged down in a jungle war with an invisible enemy.

Evidently New Delhi has no clue as to how it can pull out the troops without losing face. In his address to army commanders on Monday, the Prime Minister, Mr. Rajiv Gandhi, spoke of the task of 'thinking seriously of getting back the bulk of the Indian Peace-Keeping Force from Sri Lanka as soon as possible while preserving the gains that have been achieved'. This statement raises two questions. Firstly, has the Government come to the conclusion that a total withdrawal is out of question? Secondly, what are the gains which have been achieved and are worth protecting? The basic objective behind the India-Sri Lanka accord was devolution of powers to provincial councils as a means of meeting the political aspirations of the Tamils. Amidst the preoccupation with the military campaign against the LTTE, which at one stage, it was willing to project as the sole representative of the island's Tamils, the Indian establishment neglected to exert itself fully to secure this objective. Now, on Mr. Gandhi's own admission, the quality of devolution remains unsatisfactory. The Tamils of the island may not see the installation in Trincomalee of a provincial government which enjoys New Delhi's patronage as a gain worth protecting.

While the Government of India has formally voiced support for the dialogue between the Sri Lankan Government and the LTTE, it has not done anything to help the cause. It did not even order a cease-fire to coincide with the one ordered by Colombo as a goodwill gesture on the occasion of the Sinhala and Tamil new years. It must adopt a more positive approach to be able to secure legitimate Indian interests.

The Tamils are the lesser of the problems facing Mr. Premadasa. The Sinhala extremists under the banner of the Janatha Vimukti Peramuna have not responded to his offer of talks. While the JVP persists in its present course, peace must remain a distant prospect.

INDIAN EXPRESS

April 26, 1989

AT LAST

The Prime Minister has at last acknowledged the need to withdraw the bulk of the IPKF from Sri Lanka as soon as possible. This marks a welcome departure from official thinking so far on this issue. The fact that under the Indo-Sri Lanka peace agreement the Indian troops were to

remain in that country as long as its government desired did not mean that New Delhi had renounced the right to take a decision in this regard on its own. Yet, manner in which the IPKF has so far been deployed and the political provisions envisaged in the agreement have been implemented suggested that the Indian government was virtually proceeding on precisely such an assumption. In fact even the new announcement made by Mr. Rajiv Gandhi may not have been prompted entirely by a thorough reassessment of the earlier policy on which the bilateral pact was based. It is more than likely that pressure from President Premadasa in one form or other has played no small role in the decision to hasten the withdrawal of the IPKF.

As is well known, Mr. Premadasa had viewed with misgivings his predecessor, Mr. Jayewardene's reliance on the IPKF to tame the Tamil Tigers. Even if he had not displayed a striking antipathy towards India, it would have been prudent for New Delhi to plan, right from the outset, a total withdrawal of the IPKF at the earliest possible opportunity. For the IPKF did not go to the Tamil-dominated northern and eastern provinces of Sri Lanka to establish idyllic peace and harmony there. It's severely limited task of overcoming the armed resistance of the Tamil militants to being disarmed under the Indo-Sri Lankan peace pact was soon forgotten. This indeed is why it has found itself in an anomalous situation following the new twist which Mr. Premadasa has now given to the Sri Lankan ethnic conflict. He clearly wants to strike a deal with the LTTE. Both he and the LTTE leaders apparently give the highest priority to the withdrawal of the IPKF. Speculation is rife in Colombo that the two sides may even try to reach some understanding on the future set-up in the north and the east.

All this has revived long-standing feuds between the Jaffna Tamils. The LTTE has mainly drawn its support from them and the other Tamils in the east, and between the Tamils and the Muslims in these areas. The seriousness of the resultant tension should not be minimised. From New Delhi's point of view, the worst part of this situation is that the IPKF is being increasingly drawn into clashes between rival groups. It, for instance, had to enforce a curfew in Kalmunai, the scene of a communal clash, for four days. And the Sri Lankan Foreign Minister and Minister of State for Defence, Mr. Wijeratne had no compunction in calling upon the IPKF to close the local offices of the EPRLF, ENDLF and TELO. This should be none of the IPKF's business. It is not a police force to be used by the Sri Lankan authorities as they please. If the Indian jawans and officers are not to be the helpless victims of an ethnic free-for-all in Sri Lanka any longer, all of them must be withdrawn without further dithering.

THE HINDU

21 April 1989

A new twist in Sri Lanka

The political reality must be faced that the Premadasa administration in Sri Lanka is engaged in some kind of confused, but active and even adventurous exercise of wriggling out of the core political commitments that are laid down by the Indo-Sri Lanka Agreement signed by Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi and the then Sri Lankan President, Mr. J.R. Jayewardene, on July 29, 1987. Responding to vague overtures from Colombo, the LTTE has publicly suggested that the two antagonistic Sri Lankan political players – one chauvinistic Sinhala, the

other extremist Tamil – have a common interest today in moving India, and its interests and role, out of the arena. This is a very strange turnaround in the LTTE well-known intransigent course and it makes no sense at all except as an indicator or expression of a significantly weakened politico-military position imposed on it by the IPKF's operations over them. Otherwise, there would be no rationality at all in the drama of uncompromising fighters for 'Tamil Eelam' repairing to the abode of the 'national enemy' in the openly expressed hope of doing a deal at the expense of India and its perfectly legal and legitimate role ensured by a bilateral Agreement which cannot be changed or altered unilaterally. (The slippery slope that the Tigers have travelled in their hunt for 'Eelam' can be indicated with reference to two dramatically different political signposts. On August 4, 1987, Mr. V. Prabhakaran, the LTTE chief, told his people: 'I do have faith in the straightforwardness of the Indian Prime Minister and I do have faith in his assurances . . . We love India. We love the people of India. There is no question of our deploying our arms against Indian soldiers. The soldiers of the Indian Army are taking up the responsibility of safe-guarding and protecting us against our enemy . . . However, I do not think that as a result of this Agreement, there will be a permanent solution to the problem of the Tamils. The time is not very far off when the monster of Sinhala racism will devour this Agreement'. On April 11, 1989, the LTTE's Political Committee said in an 'open letter' to Mr Premadasa: 'You may go ahead and mortgage the birthright of the Sinhala people. But we will not mortgage the rights of the Tamil people to anybody . . . Until the oppressive Indian Army leaves our land, there will be no such thing as a ceasefire. And after they leave, you will come to recognise that in the island of Ceylon there are two nations. And after that, we will need neither war nor ceasefire.' The concluding note must be recognised as one of the more bizarre policy statements of recent months.

Official India has correctly made it clear that it has no objection to any talking exercise, and indeed wishes it well – provided the aims, objectives and content are in keeping with the Indo-Sri Lanka Agreement, which must be seen essentially as an instrument for helping the process of ending armed ethnic strife in the island and healing the deep wounds, for providing a decent measure of autonomy or devolution of power to the historically oppressed Tamils within the framework of Sri Lankan unity, and for taking care of India's legitimate and democratic foreign policy interests in the region. But what official India must tell its own people clearly is that it has not been consulted fairly and constructively by Colombo and its concurrence cannot be taken for granted. India's interests certainly call for a reduction of the heavy military burden and for the disengagement of the IPKF on a phased and deliberate basis (within a realistic time frame) but this doesn't mean that the positive result of a yet-to-be completed process can be undone or messed up in the bargain. What New Delhi must make clear to Colombo at this tricky juncture is that the devolution package must be seriously and honestly implemented, that there must be no cheating or short-changing on the exercise, that the elected Provincial Government led by the EPRLF and defended by the IPKF must be respected and strengthened in the enormous task it faces; that the possibility of any future ethnic strife targeting the Tamils must be credibly ruled out; and that India's strategic concerns relating to the status and future of Trincomalee, the induction of mercenaries and so on in the island must be taken care of, as promised in the Agreement. Part of the challenge is bringing politico-military groups like the LTTE into the democratic mainstream and this must be understood to mean, especially in the light of the experience, that there are usually no easy options in historically mishandled situations. The Sri Lankan Government would do well to play straight with India, and the LTTE must realise that, even at this stage, it can come into the democratic mainstream – provided it

decides strategically to give up arms and the desperate armed struggle, abandons the extremist goal of 'Eelam' and makes peace with the civilised objectives of the Indo-Sri Lanka Agreement'.

THE STATESMAN

April 28, 1989

Colombo scores a point

An unfortunate feature of India's neighbourhood diplomacy is the tendency to underestimate the intelligence and ability of others. If Mr Narasimha Rao's speech to the Lok Sabha on Wednesday suggested that New Delhi may be willing to reconsider its belligerence towards Nepal, the Prime Minister's address to a conference of defence personnel last Monday and the announcement of the Foreign Secretary's visit to Sri Lanka to negotiate the treaty of peace and friendship may be pointers to the fact that President Premadasa has managed to put himself in a favourable bargaining position. Ever since he assumed power last November, President Premadasa has been sounding out New Delhi on the need to reassess bilateral relations. First, Colombo has made it quite clear that it regards the presence of the IPKF as an obstacle to the process of normalization. Secondly, the Sri Lankan President has never gone back on his belief that the Indo-Sri Lanka accord of 1987 is an unequal treaty and ought to be replaced by an agreement that ensures greater 'reciprocity'.

Unfortunately, neither of the two proposals have met with a favourable Indian response. Against President Premadasa's election pledge that the IPKF ought to return home, New Delhi has replied tersely that there is no question of that happening. Although there has been a token withdrawal of the IPKF since last February's parliamentary election, India's real motives have become apparent with the inspired statement by the Chief Minister of the North-eastern province, Mr. Varadaraja Perumal, that the presence of Indian troops is necessary for the protection of Tamils. That Mr. Perumal's real concern is to ensure that his unrepresentative Government remains in power and is not exposed to LTTTE retaliation is another matter altogether. As for the proposed new treaty that was forwarded to New Delhi earlier this year, it has been gathering dust, and the visit by Mr. S.K. Singh marks a belated bid to assure Colombo that it has not been forgotten. The suggestion that the proposed treaty need not be at the cost of the existing accord is also an indication that New Delhi is looking for ways to inveigle itself out of a difficult predicament.

That the problems have arisen out of the LTTE's unexpected decision to open direct negotiations with Colombo is obvious. Ever since India began utilizing its 'good offices' to resolve the ethnic conflict in Sri Lanka, it has been wary of all direct negotiations between the Government in Colombo and the Tamil militants. It may be recalled that India has put inordinate pressure on Mr. V. Pirabhakaran, then in Madras, to rebuff the overtures from Mr. Lalith Athuylathmudali to settle directly in late-1986. Obviously, the LTTE does not suffer from any such inhibitions at present, for there is a growing awareness throughout Sri Lanka that unless the IPKF is sent back promptly, the Indian presence on the island might become permanent. Perhaps this is what Mr. Rajiv Gandhi meant when he spoke of 'preserving' the gains of the accord, a possible hint that the EPRLF-run administration will be propped up to act on New Delhi's bidding. Unfortunately, such machinations cannot distract attention from the fact that yet one more of Mr. Gandhi's accords has gone awry. And all because India is loath to recognize the principles of sovereignty and non-interference in the internal affairs of others.

PEOPLE & EVENTS

A DEBUT FOR TWO - TO REMEMBER...



She is only a little girl of ten, Selvi ANUSHA VARATHALINGAM is, but she occupied the stage effortlessly for 2½ hours and kept the audience enthralled. As if this were not special enough, the occasion was her arangetram as a Bharatanatyam dancer.

In addition to this, it was also a debut for her Guru Smt. PADMINI GUNASEELAN, who has successfully trained her first student for her first public solo performance

East London has now seen an extremely capable Bharatanatyam teacher and a dedicated student. Anusha's arangetram took place on Sunday the 30th of April at Stratford's majestic civic hall, which was packed to full capacity.

The programme started with obeissance to Lord Ganesh, remover of all obstacles and Lord Nataraja - the Lord of Dance and proceeded onto the more elaborate items including a complete Varnam in Telugu. Although Anusha is very young, her maturity and the rapport with the content and the meaning of the dance was quite remarkable. Her abhinaya was very expressive and full of emotion. This climaxed in the Padams, where she was totally relaxed and clearly enjoyed the art of performing. By continuing to learn and love this art, there is no doubt that this young debutante dancer will become one of the promoters of our cultural heritage here.

Of course, Anusha owes it all to her Guru, Smt. Gunaseelan, who is unique in the UK as one of the few qualified Carnatic musicians and a Bharatanatyam dancer. She gained her Sangeetha Vidwan title from the prestigious Tamil Nadu College of Carnatic Music and obtained her Diploma in Dancing and Nattuvangam from Bharata Choodamani, the dance Institute of Padmasri Adyar. K. Lakshman, who himself was a prodigy of Kalakshetra. Smt. Gunaseelan's vocal rendering and Nattuvangam were noteworthy. The enunciation of Jathis in a firm and commanding voice with timing to match on the cymbals, was almost as strong and powerful as the rendering of the traditional Nattuvanars.

The musical ensemble comprising of Smt. Renuka Shriananda as vocalist, Adyar Balu on the Mridangam, Smt. Kalaivani Indrakumar on the violin and Dr Nimalraj on the flute no doubt contributed to the success of the evening's debut.

Dr (Smt) Manjubhashini Sivanathan.

IN MEMORIUM



G.V. Balasingam J.P.U.M., Vice President, Bar Association of Sri Lanka, President Lions Club.

*His helping hands were always first
To render any aid he could
His voice was always raised in praise
His words were wise and good
Dear Appa, since you went away
The ones you loved so true
Try hard to carry on the way
We knew you would want us to.*

Fondly loved and missed on your birthday May 14th by Premala, Kumar, Renuka; sons-in-law Dr. P. Gopalakrishnan, Dr. S. Sivanesan; grand children Dharshi, Sashi, Kaartiga and Sanjay - 4 Rose Hill Gardens, Greenford, Middx, U.K.



Dr. P. Nadarajah, Medical Officer-in-Charge, Zambia Consolidated Copper Mines, Lusaka, born 27.7.1924, passed away 18.5.1988

*He was our friend, philosopher and guide
Urging us to do what was right
Never ruffled by problems big or small
In his stride he took them all
He gave us direction as we needed
With a smile and a pat and never a shout
Bhagwan's teachings he did follow
Compassion, love and patience throughout
We never lose the ones we love
Even though they are gone
Within the hearts of those who care
Their cherished memory lives on
You were a man so noble and great
Whom we all miss and will never forget.*

Your everloving wife Saras, children Mano, Daya, Vasuhi, Vanaja and Vathsala, daughter-in-law Shamistra, son-in-law Subhas and grand daughter Anouska. - 7 Clavering Avenue, Barnes, London SW13 9DX, Tel: 01-748 5884.

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June 18 7.30 pm Trinity Arts Centre, Trinity Street, Gainsborough.

June 25 7.30 pm Spring Street Theatre, Hull
for details Tel: 01-543 2126/672 0603

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

June 9 7.30 pm Musical concert by Pandit Bhimsen Joshi with musicians from India
June 19 8.00pm Whole night concert of North Indian Classical Music

June 24 6.30 pm Tamil Orphans Trust presents Children's Variety Performance at the Copland Community School, Cecil Avenue, Wembley, Middx, U.K. For further information Tel: 01-422 0012/908 6221/550 7439

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MATRIMONIAL

Hindu sister seeks partner resident in U.K. for doctor sister, 27, fair, working in Sri Lanka. Horoscope and details to M 293, c/o Tamil Times.

Jaffna Hindu brother seeks tall, personable, educated bride under 29 for brother engineer/lecturer in States. Details to M 294, c/o Tamil Times.

Brother seeks suitable partner for fair complexioned Tamil, Hindu, computer technologist, sister, aged 27 living in Canada. Reply M 295, c/o Tamil Times.

Jaffna Hindu sister seeks partner for brother, 28, electronic engineering graduate student in Norway. Horoscope and details to M 296, c/o Tamil Times.

Jaffna Hindu parents seek educated partner for AL qualified daughter, 27, living in Norway with brothers. Please send chart, details to M 297, c/o Tamil Times.

Jaffna Hindu sister settled in U.K. seeks suitable partner for brother, 32, Australian citizen with permanent employment. Details with horoscope to M 298, c/o Tamil Times.

Jaffna Hindu Tamil parents seek accomplished bride under 27 for son, 31, professional engineer settled in California. write in confidence to PO Box 125, Edgware, Middx, HA8 9NR, UK.

Jaffna Hindu parents seek professionally qualified partner for their UK qualified computer professional son, 29 years, working in New Zealand, permanent resident status. Horoscope and details to No.12 Simpang 472, Jalan Muara, BSB, Brunei.

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WEDDING BELLS

We congratulate the following couples on their recent marriage.

Amaranath son of Mr. and Mrs. V.R. Amarasingham, Ibadan Grammar School, Ibadan, Nigeria and Chandrini daughter of Mr. and Mrs. L.B. Tambyrajah, 85 Rakka Road, Chundikul, Jaffna, Sri Lanka on 22.3.89 at Bible Life Holiness Ministry, Ibadan, Nigeria.

Buvanendran son of Mr. and Mrs. Sivapalan, 348 Strucewood Court, Scarborough, Ontario, Canada and Ushanandhi daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Yogarajah, 37 Eastcote Road, South Harrow, Middx., U.K. on 1.5.89 at Highgate Murugan Temple, London N6.

Rajasingham son of Mr. and Mrs. Rajavallaban, Vidanai Valavoo, Manipay, Sri Lanka and Nirmala daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Samyathan, 30/4 Dharmalingam Avenue, Kod-dady, Jaffna, Sri Lanka on 6.5.89 at Sri Ghanapathy Temple, London SW19.

Harindran son of Mr. and Mrs. P. Nadarajah of 64 Temple Road, Kokuvil East, Sri Lanka and Jeyahini daughter of Mr. and Mrs. K. Gnanasoorian, 72 King Edward Road, London E17 on 14.5.89 at Highgate Murugan Temple, London N6.

Thavendrarajah son of Mr & Mrs A Murugesu, Irupalai, Kopay, Sri Lanka and Janani daughter of Dr & Mrs S Sanmuganathan, 34 Pamankade Lane, Colombo 6 on 15.4.89 at Hotel Inter Continental, Colombo, Sri Lanka.

FUNERAL

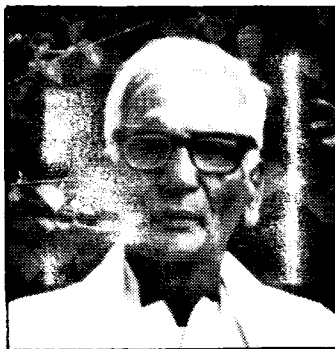
S. Sabapathipillai (78), Chairman, Britania Hindu Temple Trust passed away on 17.5.89. Cremation at Golders Green Crematorium, Hoop Lane, London NW11 on Sunday, 28.5.89 at 12 noon.

OBITUARY

Mrs Rosebelle Raneer Ratnasingham nee Niles beloved wife of Mr. C.R. Ratnasingham (former Supervisor, Jaffna College Lower School), mother of Suganthi Virasinghe Rajini, Suvendrini & Lakshman passed away in Jaffna on 13.4.89.



Arumugam Rajapadcham (70) of Chulipuram, Sri Lanka, retired Director of Works, beloved husband of Rajeswari, dearest father of Vamanadevi, Silojanadevi, Easwarapadcham, Visvapadcham, Yarinidevi, Srirangapadcham, Rajinidevi and Rudrapadcham; father in law of Paskaran, Gopalan, Kathirgamanathan, Ganesakumar, Nanthini and Pushpa; loving grandfather of Bobby, Theepan, Sinthuja, Jeyanthi, Visakan & Hari passed away on 31.3.89 - Sri R. Padcham Tel: 01-646 5432.



S. Sabapathy (80) Retired Inspector of Schools, beloved husband of Sivapackiam, father of Sabanadesan (Canada), Sabanathan (W. Germany), Sushilawathy, Sabanesan (both of Sri Lanka), Sabanayagam, Sabaratnam (both of U.K.), Sivaganawathy (Sri Lanka) Sabendran (U.K.) and Sangarapillai (Sri Lanka), father-in-law of Thanaluxmi, Saraswathy, Vinayagamoorthy (Jaffna Hospital), Sakunthaladevi, Vimaladevi, Mangayarkkarasi, Thuraisamy (Karainagar Hindu College), Yasodhara and Sivamalar passed away peacefully on 12.5.89 at Karainagar, Sri Lanka. - 9 Newton Way, Edmonton, London N18 1 JB.

Murugesapillai Somasundaram (Retired Deputy Director, General Treasury, Sri Lanka), beloved husband of Parasakthy, loving father of Sarojini (Holy Family Convent, Colombo), late Sivakumar, Dr. Sakthikumar (France), Srikumar (State Plantations, Sri Lanka), Skandakumar (George Steuarts, Sri Lanka), Sivasakthy (U.S.A.), Shivani and Subodhini; father-in-law of Brigadier Balaretnarajah, Christine (France), Rohini, S. Kanagaratnam (Hong Kong), S.M. Ramnathan (U.S.A.) and G.R. Pathmaraj (Universal Marketing, Sri Lanka); grandfather of Anusha, Arjuna, Brahman, Sabine, Ajanta, Asita, Shivanthi, Mehala, Yuthistran and Prithiviraj expired on 22.4.89 in his residence, 26, Castle Lane, Colombo 4, Sri Lanka.

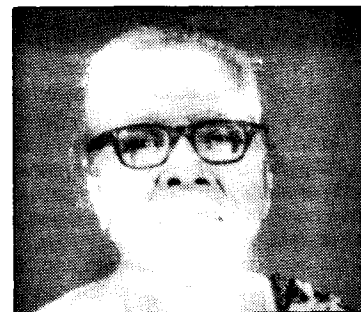
Dr Nadarajah Vijendran (45) J.P. Ayurvedic Hospital, Kaithady, Sri Lanka; Human Rights Activist, popularly known as Puspalingam, son of the late Dr Arasapillai Nadarajah J.P., former Deputy Mayor, Jaffna and the late Mrs E. Nadarajah, former Registrar of Marriages, beloved husband of Vimala, father of Janakan, Jeyanthan, and Jananee; brother of Ganendran (Burton-on-Trent, U.K.) and Mrs Chandra Shanmugalingam (Sri Lanka); son-in-law of Mr. S. Kanagaratnam J.P.U.M. Chairman, S.L.T.B. Northern Region, passed away on 18.4.89 under tragic circumstances in Jaffna - 6 Tideswell Green, New Hall, Burton-on-Trent, U.K. Tel: 0283 223626.

IN MEMORIUM

Mrs Ratnadevi Mandalanayagam Chunnakam, Sri Lanka.

Born 11.1.1918. Passed away 17.5.89.

Your love and affection we shall ever cherish. Sadly missed and fondly remembered by her children, grandchildren, sons-in-law and daughters-in-law.



Mrs. Grace David Aseervatham
Born: 29.8.1911

Called to rest: 10.5.89

"BLESSED ARE THE DEAD, WHICH DIE IN THE LORD"

Rev.14:13

Sadly missed and fondly remembered by children, Rev. Arulnathan, SriNathan, Kirubaimalar, Thavamalar, Amirthamalar, Devamalar, and Thiviamalar; sons in law: Joseph, Truman, and Tony; daughters in law: Victoria and Esther; grandchildren; Samuel, Malathy, Kalamohan, Christine, Marcus, Karen, Michelle, Jonathan and Joanna.

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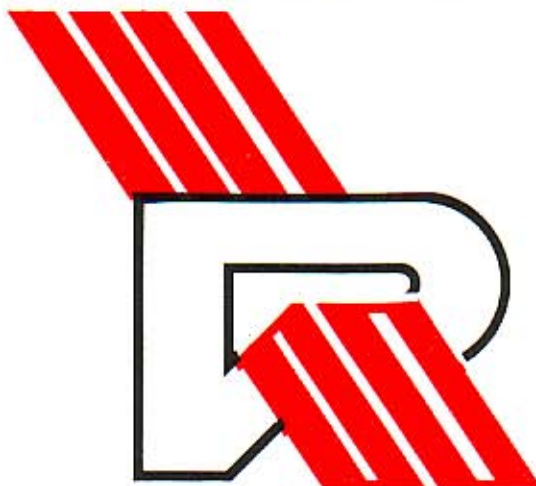
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