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ALL-OUT WAR IN NORTH-EAST SRI LANKA

Large Scale Casualties & Thousands Displaced
The Days of Negotiations Are Over



Before the outbreak of war – PFLT leader G. Mahendrarajah (Mahathaya), Yogaratnam Yogi, Anton Balasingam and his wife Adie having discussions with President Ranasinghe Premadasa and Justice Minister Sahul Hameed.

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A WAR ON THE PEOPLE

Again the Tamil people are at the receiving end. 'Thousands flee as war is declared in Sri Lanka' and 'Tamils burned out of old Tiger town' are two of the recent headlines in an English daily newspaper which reflect the plight of the civilian population in the north-east of Sri Lanka as a direct consequence of the war that has broken out between the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) and the government.

When the Tamil militant groups confronted the Sri Lankan security forces in the past or when the military confrontation between the Indian Peace Keeping Force and the LTTE broke out in October 1987, without doubt the main victims were the defenceless and unarmed civilians. Thousands were killed and tens of thousands were displaced, and in fact people emigrated to other countries in their thousands in search of physical safety. The present war that the government and the LTTE had declared on each other, we fear, offer a worse prospect than ever before. And the people don't deserve it.

And the war itself could and should have been avoided. The LTTE and the government have been engaged in negotiations for over a year. Both parties were united in their desire to ensure the departure of the Indian Peace Keeping Force. Even the influence and presence of other Tamil militant groups which were regarded as LTTE's rivals had been reduced to negligible proportions. The LTTE leadership had, not so long ago, been proclaiming their belief in the sincerity of President Premadasa. On the other hand, the government itself had invested so much on their negotiations with the LTTE to the exclusion of all others. Even though they had not gone through an electoral process to prove their representative status, the LTTE had achieved a dominant position in the north-east so much so it had virtual control of almost all affairs in the region. The government would appear to have conceded the three basic demands of the LTTE, namely the dissolution of the North-East Provincial Council, holding of fresh elections for this Council and the repeal of the Sixth Amendment. In regard to the first two demands, the approval as to the constitutional validity of Bills to enable the dissolution and holding of fresh elections had been obtained from the Supreme Court and are expected to be placed before parliament. As for the repeal of the Sixth Amendment, the government was in some difficulty in obtaining the required two-thirds majority and therefore has to rely on the support of some opposition MPs and was making serious efforts to seek their support. In this context, unless there are other more important reasons about which the people had not been made aware, the present war and its tragic consequences are a callous imposition upon a people whose agony and suffering

do not seem to matter very much in the minds of those who have launched this war.

The response of the security forces have been predictably indiscriminate, so much so within a few days of the outbreak of this war, the full panoply of the state's war machine has been mobilised and applied in the most ruthless manner. Already casualties among civilians are reaching four figures and tens of thousands have been displaced and become refugees. From the outset, bombardment from the air and sea ostensibly against LTTE positions, constitute the main thrust of the military response. That such a course would result in large scale civilian casualties does not seem to inhibit the security forces.

It must be stressed that this time round, the security forces are engaging in military operations in the Tamil areas having already gone through an experience of unmitigated brutality in the course of undertaking a campaign of unprecedented terror in the south of the country against the JVP and its alleged supporters. It was not long ago that beheaded bodies, burning bodies, floating bodies etc., in their fifties and sometimes in their hundreds at a time were part of the southern landscape. The security forces, including the dreaded Special Task Force, have now arrived in the Tamil areas fresh with that gruesome experience. A sample of what is in store for the people of these areas has already been demonstrated in the course of their operations in Trincomalee in the last few days. Nearly 2000 Tamil youths have been rounded up in Colombo and how many of them will 'disappear' is anybody's guess.

Another factor is that, in past years, the perception of substantial sections of the international community was favourable to the Tamil point of view particularly in the context of the then government's pursuit of a military solution to the ethnic conflict and the well documented catalogue of human rights violations, and their frequent interventions acted as a severe constraint on the then government of Sri Lanka. However, presently the atmosphere at best would appear to be subdued, non-responsive or muted.

As for the government, let it be warned that there is no guarantee of total victory against a determined guerrilla group, and experience throughout the world has shown that guerrilla wars have an inherent capacity to last for decades brutalising the people that are affected by it and bleeding the country and its economy.

For these reasons and many more, the urgent task for both warring parties is to immediately come to a ceasefire followed by an end to this unwarranted war upon the people and return to the negotiating table.

ALL-OUT WAR IN NORTH-EAST SRI LANKA

Heavy Civilian Casualties & Tens of Thousands Displaced

19 JUNE – Heavy civilian casualties and the displacement of tens of thousands of people are being reported as fierce fighting between the LTTE and the security forces intensified for the successive ninth day enveloping all parts of the North-East of Sri Lanka. Colombo has claimed that the security forces have brought the eastern port city of Trincomalee under their control, and while consolidating their position in the other eastern town of Batticaloa, they are engaged in a fierce battle in the Tiger stronghold of the Jaffna peninsula where two major army camps at Jaffna Fort and Palali Airport have come under intense artillery and rocket attack by the Tigers. The besieged garrisons in these two camps are being reinforced with supplies of food and weapons and ammunition by helicopters. If the Tiger attacks continued, it is feared that a full scale aerial bombardment of Tiger positions in Jaffna will be undertaken by the security forces with inevitably considerable civilian casualties. It is reported that the Tigers have already vacated their northern headquarters at Kondavil and many other buildings known to the security forces.

Following the breakdown of attempted ceasefire agreements on two occasions, the government declared 'all-out war' against the Tigers accusing them of 'unprovoked attacks' on police stations and army camps and the massacre of over 200 police and army personnel captured by the Tigers as they launched simultaneous attacks on several police stations and army camps in the east of the country. And the Tigers attributed the collapse of the ceasefire attempts to 'large scale troops deployment' in the North-East of the island.

'There is no question of a ceasefire now. The Tigers have broken it and we are going ahead trying to recapture our installations while defending our positions', a military officer said. The hawkish State Minister for Defence, Ranjan Wijeratne said, 'the ceasefire in the North-East has been abandoned. The north-east of the country is in a situation of all-out war and military commanders have been given authority to use any operational measures necessary to defeat the guerrillas'. Major General Denzil Kobbekaduwa, who led the 'Vadamardchi Operation' in May 1987, is heading the military offensive in the eastern province.

On the other hand, a statement from the LTTE said, 'Sri Lankan security forces began large-scale warlike troop movements and strengthened their positions in violation of the ceasefire which came into effect at 6pm on

Saturday (16 June)'. They also denied the allegation of the massacre of captured police and service personnel.

Previously the LTTE had claimed that over six hundred police and army personnel had surrendered in the course of the first few days of their offensive in the east of the island. Initially the Tigers would appear to have caught the security forces by surprise, and in all an estimated 1100 police and service personnel from the Amparai, Batticaloa and Trincomalee districts are said to be in Tiger captivity. Sri Lankan newspapers reported that a Sub-Inspector of Police, Pulhiri Ranaweera had said that all 115 policemen who had surrendered at his station on the assurance that they would not be harmed had been massacred. 'We were taken into the jungle after being blind-folded. Then we were stripped of our belongings and uniforms and made to lie down. Then they sprayed us with rifle shots. I pretended to be dead and though they shot at me the bullet just grazed at my head'.

Once the go-ahead had been given to the security forces, they launched massive aerial bombardments using attack aircraft and helicopter gunships in the eastern Batticaloa and Amparai districts against LTTE positions from where the Tigers were mounting relentless artillery and rocket attacks on army camps which had remained virtually besieged by the Tigers. The Navy fired shells from gunboats on eastern coastal towns. The inevitable result was massive civilian casualties. By 17 June, the government acknowledged losing only 40 soldiers and the LTTE admitted the loss of 72 of their men.

The LTTE offensive in Trincomalee district commenced on 13 June as they launched attacks on army camps and police stations at Uppuveli, Kinniya and Muthur. Police stations at Thir-

iyaya and Kinniya were vacated after they came under heavy attack. Kalmunai army camp also was abandoned. Trincomalee LTTE leader Ruben is reported to have been injured in an army counter-offensive operation. At Uppuveli, Lt. Meegoda of the Sri Lankan army was killed. In Trincomalee, five officers and 41 soldiers died in an LTTE ambush on 15 June. The Defence Ministry sources claimed that there were many casualties on the LTTE side.

The Army camps at Kiran, Kalawanchikudi, Mankulam and Muthur was under continuous attack on 15 June. Nine soldiers were killed and 15 injured in these battles. In the offensive directed at the Mankulam army camp 6 soldiers were killed with two more wounded. The Tigers were beaten back and suffered many casualties.

At Vavuniya, the fierce battle between the LTTE and the security forces have rendered nearly 30,000 people as refugees and there were many civilian casualties. Houses, shops and business houses had been gutted by the security forces.

Justice Minister and Government's chief negotiator with the LTTE, Mr A.C.S. Hameed, made another journey to Jaffna on 16 June to meet the LTTE delegation and after nearly six hours of talks, an announcement was made that a ceasefire had been agreed, but it was to prove abortive even before he left Jaffna and the fighting continued without interruption. The Tigers who were subjecting the Palaly airbase until Mr. Hameed disembarked from his plane resumed their rocket fire even before he got on to the plane after the talks. One shell which exploded near his plane hit an Air Force Officer standing nearby and was flown to Colombo for treatment on the same plane.

FROM NEGOTIATIONS TO ALL-OUT WAR

● The LTTE which was in armed confrontation with the Sri Lankan government for nearly a decade made a dramatic move in April 1989 and agreed to negotiate directly with the government. Before long, the LTTE and the government came to a ceasefire arrangement which had substantially held until 11 June this year.

● From May 1989, there have been continuous negotiations between the government and the LTTE. Both parties made joint endeavours to get rid of the IPKF at the earliest possible oppor-

tunity, and the IPKF effected a complete pullout before the end of March. With the departure of the IPKF, having effectively removed the presence of all its rival Tamil militant groups, the LTTE took virtual territorial control over the north-east where the security forces were mainly confined to the barracks.

● During the last few months, the LTTE has been insisting upon the government to repeal the Sixth Amendment to the Constitution (which prohibited advocacy of a sepa-

rate state), dissolution of the North-East Provincial Council and the holding of fresh elections to this Council. The government had genuine difficulties in this regard: firstly it did not have the two-thirds majority in parliament required to enact amendments to the Constitution; secondly, under the provisions of the Provincial Councils Act, there was no power to dissolve the North-East Provincial Council unless the Chief Minister advised the President to do so - the Chief Minister had left Sri Lanka and there was no possibility of getting him to formally advise the President to dissolve the Council. And thirdly, until the Council was dissolved, no fresh elections could be held.

● The EPRLF which had abandoned its control over the North-East Provincial Council by the end of March this year, requested the government for negotiations. A delegation of the EPRLF met government Ministers on 15 May. The LTTE 'strongly objected' to these negotiations. The LTTE regarded itself as the 'sole representative' of the Tamil people, and therefore did not like the government to talk to any other Tamil group.

● On May 18 Dr. Anton Balasingham, the accredited spokesman for the LTTE in the course of a much publicised speech said, 'The 6th Amendment deprived Tamils of representation in Parliament. However, because of Indian pressure some Tamil groups including the TULF took oaths in parliament accepting the 6th Amendment and the integrity of Sri Lanka thus giving up their Tamil Eelam struggle. . . When we met President Premadasa last, we emphasised two points: dissolve the Provincial Council and fix a date for PC elections and take steps to repeal the 6th Amendment. The President agreed. . . The Tamil people knew the EPRLF was backed by the Indian army. The leadership of this traitor group is hiding in Orissa and other capitals. Only a few MPs who came to parliament with Indian assistance are in Colombo. The government in its new approach called this group for talks thinking that they are also representatives of the Tamils and gave them wide publicity.

'We want to tell the Sri Lankan government one thing clearly. This is the last opportunity that we give you. We are patient. We would tell them, dissolve the PC and hold elections. We are ready to face our people at elections. Let us give an opportunity for our people to form a government in the north-east. We have received information that they not only hold talks with the EPRLF but also give accommodation to hundreds of EPRLF members in Sinhala military camps and train them. If that is so, is the government trying to begin a war against the Tigers with the help of a fifth column? . . . This is a very dangerous

approach. Our leader Prabhakaran said recently that the Sri Lankan government should not commit the paramount mistake that the Indian government made. We will ask the Sinhalese government to do justice to us. If they fail to do justice to us and plan to seek a military solution, we will not hesitate to take up arms to protect our people and to carry on our aims'.

● In the subsequent meetings between the government and the LTTE, the government would appear to have, while promising to make early efforts to meet with LTTE's three demands, raised three main issues: firstly the problems faced by the security forces in the north-east; secondly the restoration of the law and order situation; thirdly the question of the freedom of other political parties 'to exercise their democratic rights without let or hindrance. The gun cannot be allowed to triumph over democratic and human freedom'; and the question of the 'laying aside weapons'. The government had stressed the all important question of 'creating an atmosphere conducive to the holding of a free and fair poll in the North-East. There should exist pluralism overriding any form of move towards establishing a monopolistic setup. . . No party or group could be allowed to move brandishing unauthorised weapons and intimidating people'.

● On 6 June, the State Minister for Defence announced that the government had decided to introduce legislation in parliament to enable the dissolution of the N-E Provincial Council and that the Bills would be submitted to the Supreme Court to ensure constitutional validity. Despite objections raised by certain parties, the Supreme Court subsequently held the Bills to be constitutionally valid clearing the way for parliament to enact legislation to dissolve the Provincial Council and hold fresh elections.

● On 7 June there was a clash between the LTTE and the army in the northern town of Vavuniya in the course of which an Army Corporal was killed and several other soldiers injured. The Tigers blamed the security forces for violating the ceasefire agreement reached between the LTTE and the government whereby prior permission had to be obtained before soldiers ventured out of their camps in the north-east.

● On 10 June, a Muslim youth who had an 'affair' with a married Sinhala woman had been assaulted by the husband of the woman in a refugee camp in Batticaloa. According to the government's version, the policeman on duty at the refugee camp handed over both men to the Batticaloa station; both had minor injuries and the police had asked them to go to the hospital. About 23.00 hours, LTTE cadres had arrived at the police station

and alleged that the Muslim youth, a tailor stitching uniforms for the LTTE, had been assaulted by the police. The LTTE cadres abducted two PCs (both Tamils). At 6am on 11 June the LTTE cadres had abducted another three policemen. Around 7am, about 250 LTTE cadres had surrounded the police station, then moved in and taken charge of the station, removing all the arms and ammunition.

A statement made by the PFLT (LTTE's political wing) said, 'The unprovoked gunfire by the Sri Lankan police on Tiger members who went to the police station on a complaint lodged by a Muslim civilian assaulted by a Sinhalese ignited and caused the eruption of the armed clashes on a major scale in the Batticaloa and Amparai districts in the eastern province. The clashes escalated into a full fledged war when Sri Lankan army confined in the barracks came out and engaged in armed confrontation with the Tigers.

● On 12 June, Plantation Industries Minister and State Minister for Defence, Ranjan Wijeratne told Parliament that he had pledged to get on the necks of the LTTE and flatten them. 'We are also going to use the power of the gun and sort out matters once and for all. I have given a pledge to catch them (the LTTE) by their necks and deal with them', he added.

EPRLF LEADER & 15 OTHERS KILLED IN MADRAS

K. Pathmanabha, Secretary General of the Eelam Peoples Revolutionary Liberation Front (EPRLF), and 14 others including Member of Parliament M. Yogasangari and P. Kirupakaran the Finance Minister in the now defunct North-East Provincial Council were assassinated in Madras on 19 June.

An unidentified gang armed with AK 47 Kalashnikovs and grenades carried out the attack at 7.15 pm on 19 June when the EPRLF leader was having discussions with his colleagues of the Front at his flat in Kodampakkam, Madras in Tamil Nadu.

The others killed in the incident are Tharuman and his wife, Lingam, Kavitha, Sucintha, Komalarajan, Ravi, Puvinathan, Kamalan, Ramanan, Muhunthan, and Aiya. Three Indian citizens were killed and about 25 others injured as the attackers shot their way to escape.

Although the LTTE has not accepted responsibility for the killings, and other rumours pointed to a dissident group of the EPRLF, the EPRLF and PLOTE have attributed the assassination to the LTTE.

The Tamil Nadu State Government has ordered a clampdown on all Tamil militant activity and as many as 700 Tamil militants belonging to all groups have been rounded up by the police and placed in detention.

T.N. CHIEF MINISTER WARNS MILITANTS

The Tamil Nadu Chief Minister issued a stern warning to Sri Lankan Tamil guerrillas, saying they would be deported if they indulged in violence on Indian soil.

The Press Trust of India (PTI) quoted Tamil Nadu state Chief Minister, Muthuvel Karunanidhi as saying that Sri Lankan Tamil groups should not let their members go about armed or 'overreach' themselves in his province.

'This is the final warning I am giving them', he told reporters in Tamil Nadu's capital Madras, PTI said.

Tamil Nadu state has previously provided sanctuary to Sri Lankan Tamil guerrillas fighting for a homeland in their island nation.

But Mr. Karunanidhi said his government would not tolerate 'any act of violence by the Tamil militants or their roaming about with weapons' in Tamil Nadu.

The Chief Minister said he was issuing the warning in the light of a shootout involving Sri Lankan Tamil rebels and Tamil Nadu police in February in which two men, including a police constable, were killed.

On Tuesday a jeep carrying some Tamil guerrillas overturned in Tamil Nadu's Thanjavur district, he added, without giving details.

Mr. Karunanidhi said in the last four or five years, various Sri Lankan Tamil rebel groups had set up offices in Madras and its suburbs. 'However, the government would be forced to evict them if they overreached themselves'.

PTI also quoted him as saying he had urged New Delhi to provide him with assistance to tackle the movement of Sri Lankan guerrillas by stepping up naval and coast guard patrols off the Tamil Nadu coast.

It was the toughest warning sounded to Sri Lankan guerrillas by Mr. Karunanidhi, who in the past has actively supported the Tamil homeland campaign in the island.

Today's warning followed widespread criticism in the media and parliament about the alleged free use of Tamil Nadu by LTTE cadres.

LTTE members have been accused of entering Tamil Nadu illegally, kidnapping Indian fishermen and smuggling.

Almost all Sri Lankan Tamil groups based in Tamil Nadu are known to possess weapons, including automatic rifles.

Earlier, Indian External Affairs Minister Inder Kumar Gujral told federal parliament here that there were about 93,000 Sri Lankan Tamil refugees still in India.

He said their return depended on the

'return of normalcy in Sri Lanka'. The Minister did not elaborate.

'A COURAGEOUS ADVOCATE OF HUMAN RIGHTS

'Mr. Sam Thambimuttu, one of the most courageous advocates of human rights in Sri Lanka, was gunned down in Colombo on 7th May 1990 by the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam. The massive turnout of people of all communities at his funeral to pay their last respects, as well as the almost universal condemnation of his murder, indicated not only Sam's popularity but also the extent to which people appreciated the service he rendered to the community', the London based Campaign for Democracy and Justice stated in a press release.

'In the period prior to the Indo-Lanka Peace Accord, Sam actively campaigned against the repressive actions of the Sri Lankan security forces. As the chairman of the Citizen's Committee of Batticaloa he spent a great deal of his time documenting cases of human rights violations and organising relief to families made destitute by the murder or incarceration of their breadwinners.

'Although he was elected to Parliament on the EPRLF/TULF list, he did not hesitate to criticize them, if he felt he could not endorse any particular action of theirs. In recent months Sam had been systematically documenting LTTE extortion and murders in the North and East and for this reason the LTTE was determined to eliminate him. While Sam was aware that he was an easy target he always went about unarmed and refused to be intimidated by gunmen.

'It is not only the LTTE that stands condemned for this murder. It was committed in broad daylight in the streets of Colombo. Since the newspapers had already alerted everyone that an LTTE death squad was operating in Colombo, the Sri Lankan government cannot plead ignorance. Moreover, with constant army road blocks and surveillance operations by the police and the army, how is it possible for LTTE killers with automatic weapons, to operate freely in the heart of Colombo? The collaboration of the government or at least their tacit co-operation, seems obvious'.

'Dastardly Crime' - Opposition

The opposition members of Parliament who met in the office of the Leader of the Opposition unanimously moved the following resolution on the passing away of Sam Thambimuttu, M.P., for Batticaloa District.

'The brutal assassination of Mr. Sam Thambimuttu has shocked us and

brought grief to us. We condemn this dastardly crime.

The crime has been committed in broad daylight in front of the Canadian High Commission, indicating that terror gangs are moving freely with impunity even in the metropolis of Colombo.

Further, the government had been warned that a hit squad was in Colombo a few days prior to this brutal assassination but the government had failed to protect the life of Mr. Thambimuttu thus making the government solely responsible for his death.

We, therefore, demand from the government to ensure that such brutal crimes are prevented in the future'.

Chief Opposition Whip Richard Pathirana MP has signed the resolution on behalf of all Opposition Members of Parliament.

LTTE DENIES INVOLVEMENT

The LTTE has categorically denied any involvement in the killing of Parliamentarian Sam Thambimuttu.

LTTE ideologue Anton Balasingham speaking to the press from his office at Kondavil, Jaffna, said they also condemned the attempt of a few leaders of EPRLF who blamed them in this connection.

President's condolence message

President R. Premadasa has issued the following message of condolence on the death of Mr. Sam Thambimuttu.

I was shocked and saddened by the brutal killing of Mr. Sam Thambimuttu, Member of Parliament of the TULF for Batticaloa District. Mr. Thambimuttu was a successful lawyer. He actively participated in Parliamentary debates.

His contribution to uphold democratic traditions will be long remembered.

Undoubtedly all peace loving people will condemn this dastardly act. It is unfortunate that such criminal acts are committed when honest endeavours are being made to resolve controversial issues through goodwill understanding and dialogue.

This brutality brings to mind the validity of the often repeated teaching of Lord Buddha that 'hatred does not cease by hatred but by love alone'. At a time when the country is rapidly returning to normalcy from a reign of terror it is the bounden duty of all who shun violence and terror to desist from promoting or provoking such crimes.

Mrs. Thambimuttu was seriously injured in this incident. We wish her speedy recovery.

Mrs. Premadasa and I extend our deepest sympathies to Mrs. Thambimuttu, their son and members of the bereaved family.

'If You Want Peace Prepare for War'

The inevitability of another war between the LTTE and the Sri Lankan forces is very much on the southern psyche. For them the northern war drums have never been stilled. Sometimes it has been the distant roar, very often close at hand.

The LTTE has in no way helped to diffuse the growing tensions. On the contrary they continue fuelling it with preparations for war. Moreover, incidents on the ground involving LTTE's rank and file, described by Sri Lankan security officials as 'high handed and provocative' have added to the war of nerves that could easily spark off a confrontation.

In spite of it all, at no time in the history of the conflict have we come so close to some kind of durable political solution, as we do now.

However much the rank and file strain at the leash, both sides know, that if there is a confrontation there is going to be no winning side.

The North-East scenario changed dramatically following Indian troop withdrawal in March 1990 and the LTTE moving into the region. It was more relief than euphoria. But just six weeks later there was a visible change in perceptions. The relief had turned to one of fear and uncertainty as to what was going to happen next. The armed LTTE cadres in their battle fatigues, who were conspicuous by their absence a month earlier, had surfaced all over the place. Manning sentry points, driving heavy trucks, on motorbicycles and even on foot they had become very much a part of the scenario and people had begun to talk in hushed tones of a possible confrontation. Not only were bunkers being dug all over the peninsula but Eelanathan, the LTTE newspaper had begun to serialise extracts of a booklet on what precautions the civilian population should take in the event of a 'war'. A speech made by LTTE ideologue Dr. Anton Balasingham in Jaffna on May 19, and given wide coverage, in which he warned that the LTTE was losing patience and would give one last chance to the Sri Lankan government to honour the pledges made to the LTTE in the year-long dialogue, added to the already tense situation.

Political observers saw it more in terms of LTTE strategy to get the government to act on their demands of dissolving the North-East Council, repealing the Sixth Amendment, and holding fresh elections to facilitate their entry into mainstream politics rather than a direct threat of confrontation.

Despite all the war noises that are being made, the LTTE leadership has been impatient to have the North-East Council dissolved and fresh elections held.

Rita Sebastian From Colombo

They know that only through democratic elections will they be able to legitimise their de facto control of the North-East Region and have their claim of being the sole, if not exclusive representatives of the Tamil people, confirmed.

What was seen as a growing rift between the government and the LTTE has however just as suddenly been dispelled. Dr. Balasingham who led a delegation to Colombo last fortnight struck a very positive note when he said that at the discussions with the Colombo Government 'both sides were firmly committed to consolidate peace in the region and avoid conflict'.

Several rounds of discussions with the service chiefs and the decision for Tiger field commanders and the security forces to liaise at district level and avoid 'incidents' is another step forward. Close on its heels came the government decision to enact urgent legislation to dissolve the North-East Council and hold fresh elections. But there is still the hurdle of the Sixth Amendment to be got over and the crucial issue of creating conditions for the holding of an election where no group will be armed.

If the credibility of the IPKF supervised North-East Provincial election of 1988 was in question, so too will an election where arms are carried by any one group or groups. Political parties and groups refuse to participate in elections unless the LTTE lays down arms. State Minister for Defence Ranjan Wijeratne has spelt out the government position that no election will be held under conditions where one group will be able to intimidate other groups.

Balasingham reacting to Wijeratne says the LTTE will not lay down arms unless there is a durable political solution to the ethnic question but concedes that the LTTE will not display, or carry arms during the election. He has also invited an international commission to monitor the election. A suggestion the government is not averse to.

Vellupillai Balakumaran, General Secretary of the Eelavar Democratic Front (EDF), generally considered an ally of the LTTE, links the security of the Tamils with the armed LTTE cadres.

'Why do you think they are talking to the LTTE if not for the reason that they are armed'.

He points to the Bandaranaike-Chelvanayakam and the Dudley-Chelvanayakam pacts that envisaged devolution, 'being thrown out of the window simply because the Tamils were not strong enough to fight for

their rights... And for him that strength has now come out of the barrel of a gun.

Balakumaran who has been vigorously canvassing support for the repeal of the Sixth Amendment 'One of the reasons why we entered parliament and chose to sit in that alien environment' is bitterly critical of opposition parties whom he alleges are trying to use the Sixth Amendment as a bargaining point with the Tigers.

'It is not an LTTE demand. It is a basic Tamil demand' and he feels very strongly that there should be no need to canvass support to have it repealed. 'Any Tamil or Muslim group that votes against it in parliament will have to forget the North-East for good,' warns Balakumaran. 'They will be considered traitors'. The EDF ready with draft legislation to present the motion for the repeal of the Sixth Amendment as a Private Members Bill, have however temporarily stayed it, hoping that the government would decide to present the Bill.

The EDF has still not sorted out its own problems with the LTTE but Balakumaran is prepared to bide his time.

Give the LTTE a chance to prove their bonafides says Balakumaran. And that to him is where the answer lies.

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MP AND WIFE ASSASSINATED

Batticaloa District MP Sam Thambimuttu (58 years old) was shot outside the Canadian High Commission in Colombo at around 1.30 p.m. on 7 May by gunmen who rode away on a motorcycle. He was found dead on admission to hospital.

His wife, Mrs Kala Thambimuttu, who was critically injured succumbed and died on 16 May at the Colombo General Hospital.

The gunmen appeared to have been waiting for Mr. Thambimuttu's arrival at the Canadian High Commission, for just as his red BMW 316 drew up at the entrance gate and before he could get out of the car, they had come up to it and opened fire.

The weapons used are believed to have been two 9 mm revolvers. The shots were fired at Mr. Thambimuttu through the rear windscreen by one of the gunmen, while the other opened fire through the rear window on the driver's side.

Mr. Thambimuttu received one gunshot injury in the neck and three near the collar bone. Mrs. Thambimuttu was hit in the chest by two bullets. There were six shots in all, they said.

Mrs Thambimuttu had bullet injuries on the front and back of her chest which doctors said were entrance and exit wounds. Her condition had stabilised and doctors were hopeful she would survive although 'you can never be sure' as one source said.

After the attack, the assailants are reported to have ridden away in the direction of Cinnamon Gardens, from which side Mr. Thambimuttu's car had turned into Gregory Road.



Mr and Mrs Thambimuttu

Sam Thambimuttu was pronounced dead on admission to the Accident Service to which the driver of the car, himself unhurt, had driven. Mrs. Thambimuttu was reported to be in a critical condition.

Police, who have the number and the description of the motorbike on which the two assailants made their getaway are attempting to trace it, but said that it was likely that the number plates had been 'fudged'.

A Honda 250 cc motorcycle with number plates removed was found parked in a gravel by-road about 100 feet from the scene. Investigators thought this was a possible back-up getaway vehicle which had not been used.

The red BMW with a blood-soaked

rear seat is being held at the Cinnamon Gardens police for examination.

Mr. and Mrs Thambimuttu were due to leave Sri Lanka in a few days time on a US State Department sponsored International Visitor Program grant. They had told friends that they also wanted to visit Canada for a few days and some of them said that they were going to the Canadian High Commission for a visa at the time they were shot.

Police said that the MP's car had just pulled up at the entrance to the Canadian High Commission from the direction of St. Bridget's Convent and had stopped at the gate when the gunmen, coming up to the car, had opened fire. Mrs. Thambimuttu was sitting behind the driver, and the shots that hit her are believed to have been fired through the rear window.

The driver appeared to have run away when the shooting began. One witness had told police that one of the assailants opened the rear door of the car to shoot the MP. The driver returned to drive the car with Mr. Thambimuttu who was dead and his seriously wounded wife.

The rear window of the red BMW was shattered as was the side window by the back seat passenger behind the driving seat. All Mr. Thambimuttu's injuries were above the chest.

One bullet had pierced the metal sheet of a closed gate at the Canadian High Commission. Police had recovered a spent 9mm bullet and two cases.

According to one witness there had been three assailants and all three had left on one motorbike. At the Horton Place roundabout, a second motorbike had picked up one rider. The group had disappeared along Green Path.

Mr. and Mrs. Thambimuttu were expected to spend a few days in the United Kingdom before flying to Washington DC to begin his program.

A proctor by profession who had a practice in the Batticaloa courts, he was formerly a chairman of the Batticaloa Citizens' Committee. Mr. Thambimuttu was a long-standing member of the Tamil United Liberation Front, and his wife Kala Manickam, daughter of the former TULF Senator P. Manickam, was herself an active TULF campaigner and orator.

Mr. Thambimuttu contested last year's parliamentary elections on the TULF common list though nominated by the EPRLF, the group with which he stayed.

Mrs. Thambimuttu and their teenage son were abducted last December but were released on government intervention. Since then, the family had been living in Colombo.

Thambimuttu's widow in touching cemetery farewell

It was a moving scene at the Kanatte general cemetery when Mrs. Kala Thambimuttu on a stretcher strained to touch slain parliamentarian Sam Thambimuttu, her husband who lay in his coffin. Mrs. Thambimuttu was brought from her hospital bed to Kanatte in an ambulance to enable her to pay her last respects to him in deference to the wishes of family members.

The event took place at the cemetery when the last rites were being performed on Mr. Thambimuttu who was gunned down in front of the Canadian High Commission at Gregory's Road, Colombo by unidentified assassins. Mrs. Thambimuttu was also shot and seriously wounded in the incident.

Her son Arun said that he visited his mother the day before at the hospital.

She could not talk but gave him all the instructions regarding her husband's funeral in writing. Though they were Hindus Mr. Thambimuttu was a Methodist and therefore she wanted him to be given a Christian funeral.

At the funeral speakers referred to the fact that the late Mr. Thambimuttu was the grand nephew of the late Mr. E.R. Thambimuttu, Batticaloa's Member of the State Council and son-in-law of Senator Manikkam.

Before his election to Parliament he functioned as Secretary to the Citizens Committee in Batticaloa which looked after the problems of civilians and militants when the separatist struggle was in progress.

His death removes a giant in the political scene in Sri Lanka who fought for democracy.

SAM THAMBIMUTTU

'What's going on, Sam. . . can you hear me, Sam?

'Mr. Thambimuttu, any comments on yesterday's clashes. . . ?

'Sam, got any line on this Batticoloa killing. . . ?

Right through the 'war' in the east, before and after the arrival of the IPKF, Sam Thambimuttu was the reporter's first choice for what in the professional patois is called a 'check' and a 'double check'. Even if you had the story, you went through the routine of a 'double-check' just to be absolutely sure that you won't commit some bad mistake that'll ruin the reputation of your paper or organisation, beyond repair and redemption. Or, in these times of peril, cost lives. The radio reporter, with far more demanding 'deadlines' (in his case, tightly scheduled, programmes with a 3,2,1 you-are-on-the-air regimen) had to be doubly careful. But then there was the more exacting professional demand rooted in the very character of a highly competitive profession. Beat your rival. Get the story out first.

'For the foreign correspondent' (the foreign-foreign or the local stringer) the source is vital. So is ready access to the source. But

most of all, reliability. And credibility.

Since this is not a personal, but a professional's tribute to Sam Thambimuttu, I have had to break an old established rule not to reveal the source. In this case, however, Sam's assistance to the international press, particularly to the BBC, was hardly a secret. His name has been mentioned a hundred times.

Nothing reveals the man better than his role as a regular news source. And since there are no real secrets in this little island, Batticoloa or Colombo, certainly the English-educated Sinhala-Tamil-Muslim community, knew all about Sam's work as chairman of the Citizens Committee. In fact, Everyman's Mouthpiece, Lawyer, the Community's PR man, Batticoloa's link to the world.

And why Sam, not somebody else? He was independent. . . though he sported a party label. He was outspoken, perhaps too outspoken. He respected the press, and understood its role, recognised its role, recognised its needs and its importance. He realised that the best service to his 'own people' was to let the world know what was going on.

Mervyn de Silva
Editor, Lanka Guardian.

HONEYMOON ENDS AS 'WAR' BEGINS

The year-long honeymoon between the LTTE and the government seems finally over.

While southern sceptics predicted this 'inevitable end' there was a large section of the Tamil community who felt that the LTTE leadership had, after seventeen years of an armed struggle come to terms with the political realities and decided on resolving the Tamil question through the democratic processes.

Why then the armed aggression when everything seemed to be going for them. At this point, as to who fired the first shot seems irrelevant. What becomes sadly clear, in spite of government efforts even now with the battle raging, to agree to a ceasefire and get back to the negotiating table, is that no isolated incident sparked off this violence.

In the last several weeks incidents on the ground involving security personnel and LTTE cadres, were being reported, and despite a cosmetic cover-up nobody seemed to have doubts that it would finally end this way.

Rita Sebastian From Colombo

In a fire and thunder speech in Parliament on June 13, two days after the battle began, State Minister for Defence, Ranjan Wijeratne spelt out the government position. No person, he said would be allowed to challenge the authority of the government in any part of the country and warned that LTTE supremo Vellupillai Prabhakaran would perhaps have to go the way of his rival North-East Council Chief Minister Varatharajah Perumal.

'We are not fighting the LTTE' said Wijeratne 'but a bunch of criminals'. Although the ceasefire agreed on between Chief Government Negotiator, Minister A.C.S. Hameed and the LTTE leadership in Jaffna was to take effect on the afternoon of the 13th it was ignored as the fighting escalated.

The government rushed reinforcements by air and sea to beleaguered army camps, said to have been unprepared for the LTTE onslaught. With the approach roads to the troubled areas reported to be heavily mined, the

government forces have resorted to aerial operations. According to official sources over 20 police stations in the North, East and the Wannai have been taken over by the LTTE and around 800 police personnel held in their custody.

The LTTE has denied an allegation by a policeman that between 125-150 policemen from the Kalmunai police station, forced to surrender by armed LTTE cadres were driven to a jungle area off Thirukovil on Tuesday and slaughtered.

Although heavy civilian casualties are reported, a body count has not been possible because the fighting continues and there has been a breakdown in communication.

Minister Wijeratne addressing the post-cabinet press briefing on Thursday 14 did not rule out the military option. 'They will have to return the police stations they captured, the money, weapons, ammunition and vehicles they removed from the police stations. If they don't, we will have to force them'.

With the fighting having spread to Northern Killinochi Minister Hameed's visit to Jaffna today, June 15 to bring about the expected ceasefire, seems most unlikely.

As Tamil fears that there could be a repeat of 1983 heightened Minister Wijeratne appealed to the Sinhalese to act 'with restraint and responsibility and not let their better judgement override their emotions'.

The government policy in resolving conflict through discussion remained unchanged, Wijeratne told newsmen dismissing suggestions that the LTTE while talking peace was preparing for war.

'We had implicit faith in them. Otherwise do you think we would have put them in 5 star hotels and spent millions of Rupees on them', asked Wijeratne.

With the Referendum to decide the future of the temporarily merged North-East Provinces put off for January 1991, and the Supreme Court holding that the two bills to amend the Provincial Councils act to dissolve the North-East Council and hold fresh elections in the region constitutionally valid, it would be tragic if the LTTE should let the opportunity of entering mainstream politics slip out of their hands.

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SAM THAMBIMUTTU

- a Profile

By Suresh Mohamed

The Brutal slaying of EPRLF MP, Sam Thambimuttu on 7th May was a tragic testament to how much human freedom and political independence has eroded in Sri Lanka.

Mr. Thambimuttu faced the assassins' bullets valiantly and paid with his life to focus attention on the frightening reality of the gunmen at the door. Mr. Thambimuttu's assassination was a stark pointer to the terrifying 'gun culture' that had apparently eclipsed human values and wider human sympathies.

Sam, as he was popularly known was a controversial political figure. His gruesome killing clearly manifests the threat posed to democratic freedom by those who had placed faith in the bullet. As one senior Opposition Parliamentarian told me, 'Sam fought until he was cruelly felled'. The bullets snuffed out the life of Samuel Thavarasa Thambimuttu, but his vision could never be 'killed'. Sam battled for a cause in which there was no turning back. As an eminent figure in troubled Batticaloa, he sacrificed so much for his people that he never expected a bullet in return.

Having associated with Sam for years, I had never known him to say 'I give up'. He was bitter about certain current happenings, but he chose to grin and bear even the personal losses he sustained in the rampage by those who brandished arms.

Sam never hesitated to condemn the conscription of youths by the EPRLF to raise the 'Tamil National Army'. As a father of a teenage son, he decried the forced enlistment of young men and rightly described it as 'counter productive'. Fifty-seven-year-old Mr. Thambimuttu was never an EPRLF stalwart. True he was nominated to contest the 1989 Parliamentary election on the EPRLF ticket. Even after he was elected, he was not in the politbureau of the party. Of course, he may have been grossly misunderstood for the role he played to restore sense and order in North-East politics. That is not at all surprising at a time when even journalists who do independent reporting purely on professional interests are cruelly branded by some as pro this group or that group. Sam, like a good journalist, was a friend of everybody.

Says Education and Higher Education Minister, Lalith Athulathmudali: 'Mr. Sam Thambimuttu was a great man. He did a great deal for his people. Many were the times when he had fought with me when I was National Security Minister, but he was never angry. I regret his death the way I regret the demise of any human being'.

For Sam life had never been easy. He was wealthy and famous, but his profound commitment and dedication to serve his people placed many an obstacle in his path. They misunderstood his intention and on three previous occasions they tried to kill him in his home town of Batticaloa. As the Minister of Plantation Industries and State Minister for Defence, Ranjan Wijeratne observed on one instance Mr. Thambimuttu had grabbed the revolver that was pointed at him and narrowly escaped death.

In December last year the 'Tigers' raided his Lake Road residence and abducted his wife and son. (He was in Colombo at that time). After three days, they were set free, after which they came to Colombo to live with him at 'Sravasti' (MPs hostel). Shortly after that incident, they removed all the household goods and other valuables from his 9-roomed house in Batticaloa. In sheer desperation he complained to the government, but his belongings were never returned.

I remember him telling me when I bumped into him along a Parliament corridor that he did not mind losing his belongings (worth around Rs. 3 million) but what pained him was the loss of a large number of valuable books which he had preserved from his youthful days. 'I have sacrificed much more for my people, but when I learnt what they had done to my invaluable books, it broke my heart', he recalled.

Sam never imagined anyone would try to kill him for he had not wronged anybody. There were five security personnel assigned to him, but he felt quite uncomfortable with them tailing him. He was advised both by the government as well as his friends and colleagues to ensure the presence of his security men at all times, but he never took the threat that loomed large too seriously. He found it difficult to arrive at the conclusion that anybody would harm him for all he had done for his people. During the last General Election, he polled 19,431 votes, which clearly indicated his public acceptance in the Batticaloa district, which he represented.

Wife

His wife Kala, who was the daughter of Federal Party Senator, M. Manikkam was also fatally injured in the attack which took place close to the Canadian High Commission along Gregory's Road in Cinnamon Gardens. According to IGP Ernest Perera, two 9 mm automatic pistols had been used in the killing which took place in broad

daylight. There were two witnesses who claimed that they would be able to identify the killers, but Police had so far failed to make any arrests in that connection. Defence Secretary, Gen. Cyril Ranatunge says that special Police squads had been deployed to raid chummeries, lodgings and boarding houses and take into custody all persons who could not account for their presence in the City. Specific instructions had been issued to the Police to search for arms that may be concealed.

Opposition political parties have condemned the killing of Mr. Thambimuttu and declared that the government should be held responsible for the loss of his life. It is quite tragic that Sam Thambimuttu's cremation had to take place on the day (May 11) he was planning to leave on a two-month tour of the United States, Canada and the United Kingdom as an International Visitor.

Mr. Thambimuttu was a brilliant lawyer who gave up a lucrative practice to work on a full time basis in the Batticaloa Citizen's Committee of which he was the President during the height of the violence. He never hesitated to intervene and speak on behalf of youths arrested by the Special Task Force (STF) which handled the security of that area prior to the signing of the Indo-Lanka Peace Accord. Many were the times we met in Batticaloa and I vividly remember how distraught parents flocked to the Thambimuttu residence to seek his assistance to secure the release of their children taken into custody by the security authorities.

A few hours before Sam was shot dead his wife Kala telephoned me to say that her husband was trying to contact me in the morning in connection with his scheduled visit overseas under the USA International Visitors Programme. Later I was informed by a Parliamentarian that two unidentified youths had fired at the 16 Sri BMW car carrying Sam and his wife to the Canadian High Commission. Mr. Thambimuttu was killed on the spot. Mrs. Kala Thambimuttu who was fatally injured in the attack was removed to the Intensive Care Unit. Later she was brought in an ambulance to 'Sravasti' where the bullet-riddled body of her husband was placed for the people to pay their last respects, and the grief-stricken Mrs. Thambimuttu had insisted on touching his face.

The savage killing of Sam Thambimuttu is perhaps a final salute to independent political thinking and political freedom in trouble-stricken North-East.

AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL ON DETENTION & EXECUTIONS

Amnesty International is appealing for an immediate halt to incommunicado detention and extrajudicial executions in northeastern Sri Lanka by forces of the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE).

The organization is recommending that the International Committee of the Red Cross, which has been active in southern Sri Lanka since last October, be granted access to all places of detention in the northeast.

LTTE members have reportedly seized dozens of young people, including many former members of the Tamil National Army (TNA), an unofficial force recruited by Tamil groups which opposed the LTTE. The TNA was backed by the Indian Peace Keeping Force (IPKF) and fought the LTTE before the IPKF's withdrawal from Sri Lanka in March.

The LTTE reportedly screened former TNA members to establish whether they had volunteered for the TNA or were forcibly recruited. According to reports, those who were forcibly recruited are released, but those who cannot prove this are kept in detention centres in private houses or in LTTE bunkers and camps in the jungle area of Mullaitivu District. Others have reportedly been detained because they were candidates in the February 1989 parliamentary elections, which the LTTE boycotted. The LTTE does not permit relatives to visit detainees but has set up a central office in Jaffna to register inquiries.

Hundreds of deaths resulted from heavy fighting between the LTTE and Tamil groups allied with the IPKF following the IPKF's withdrawal. There were also reports of deliberate killings by the LTTE, outside the context of armed combat, of defenceless members or sympathizers of Tamil groups allied with the IPKF. In January, a member of the North-Eastern Provincial Council for the Sri Lanka Muslim Congress was killed by gunmen who stormed his house at Samanthurai, Amparai District. The gunmen were reportedly LTTE members. A few days later, several other defenceless civilians were reportedly killed by LTTE members, including five Muslim patients in Kalmunai hospital.

The LTTE has claimed responsibility for some killings and has denied others. It appears to condone, and threaten, the extrajudicial execution of those it considers 'traitors'. On 7 May a member of parliament for the Eelam People's Revolutionary Liberation Front was killed outside the Canadian High Commission in Colombo. The LTTE's telephone newswire service in

England attributed the killing to 'unknown gunmen' and said: 'this shows that the traitors of Eelam will be killed not only in the Tamil areas, but also in the Sinhalese areas (of Sri Lanka)'.

The LTTE is also reportedly carrying out summary executions of purported common criminals and holding its own tribunals to adjudicate disputes. The Colombo press reported that a man arrested in connection with an attempted rape was hanged by 'militants' presumed to be LTTE members on 5 April. Amnesty International is urging that no sentences be passed by any body other than a regularly constituted court which provides internationally recognized judicial guarantees for fair trial.

'MP's Letters Seized At Airport

The incident in which three letters sent by the Secretary to the Committee of Parliamentarians for Human and Fundamental Rights, Mr. Mahinda Rajapakse MP, two of which were addressed to the London based Amnesty International and Mr. P. Rajanayagam, Editor of Tamil Times, through one Mr. S. Athuraliyage which were seized by officials at the Katunayake International Airport was raised in Parliament by the Acting Leader of the Opposition Mr. Anura Bandaranaike on 18 May.

Mr. Bandaranaike observed that this action by the customs violated the right of a citizen to communicate with another in an outside country.

In reply Mr. Ranil Wickremasinghe, Minister of Industries, Science and Technology and Leader of the House, while objecting to the use of the term 'Parliamentarians' to an organisation not officially recognised by the Speaker, said that the letters Mr. Rajapakse had sent indicate that they were to be used in the campaign of vilification of Sri Lanka leading to the cutting of foreign aid to Sri Lanka.

The Minister added that Mr. Rajanayagam, the Editor of the 'Tamil Times' had for a period of several years been carrying on a propaganda campaign against Sri Lanka. It was 'interesting to find out the strange link up between Mr. Rajanayagam, the JVP and the Sri Lanka Freedom Party'. He had been appearing at Geneva before the UN Human Rights Commission and supplying information to them and he was prepared to continue to do so.

Mr. Bandaranaike, expressing surprise at the 'evasive and perverse answer' given by the Minister, said that Mr. Rajapakse was entitled to write to anybody whom he wanted. The government was well aware of its human rights record and the matter had been discussed in every forum in the world, and in fact the Japanese

Prime Minister who visited Sri Lanka recently had raised the issue of human rights in the country. He demanded an inquiry into the confiscation of the letters and action taken against the officers who had acted in a highhanded manner.

The Minister promised an inquiry into the incident.

GOVT. - EPRLF TALKS LTTE PROTESTS

The EPRLF delegation which met Plantations Industries Minister and State Minister for Defence Ranjan Wijeratne on 15 May had indicated that their group was prepared to sit with the LTTE 'anywhere at any time', to sort out the issues confronting the North-East and bring lasting peace to the troubled region. It was the duty of the government to persuade the LTTE to participate at a common meeting and iron out problems.

EPRLF MP, K. Premachandran who led the delegation described talks with the government as 'friendly, cordial, and accommodating'.

The discussions which lasted for over 1½ hours were held at Committee Room 2 of Parliament. In the EPRLF delegation were Messrs. K. Premachandran (leader), G. Yogasangari (EPRLF, MP), Periyathambi Kirubakaran (Minister of Finance, in the North-East PC) and Abu Yusuf (Minister of Transport in the N.E. PC).

Associated with Minister Ranjan Wijeratne at the meeting was the advisor on International Affairs to the President, Mr. Bradman Weerakoon.

Mr. Premachandran said that it was a good beginning and the response on the part of the government for certain proposals made by the EPRLF was positive. The MP said that the EPRLF was satisfied with the outcome of the first round of talks with the government and a date for the next meeting would be fixed shortly.

Mr. Premachandran added that the EPRLF had indicated to the Minister that they would co-operate with the government in all efforts to find a lasting solution to the crisis in the NE.

'We explained to the minister the situation that had arisen in the North East and drew his attention to the killings, abductions and extortion that were taking place in the region. The people were undergoing immense suffering and mental agony as a result of those actions. There was fear and uncertainty in the region' he said.

He noted that the 19 proposals of the EPRLF were formally submitted to the minister at the meeting and they would be discussed in full at the next round of talks.

Meanwhile a joint communique issued by the Government of Sri Lanka and the EPRLF said:

The delegation expressed its appreciation at the opportunity provided by the Government to initiate a dialogue with the EPRLF. The delegation placed before the Minister of State for Defence their concern regarding (a) the law and order situation in the North East, (b) the status of the North East Provincial Administration, and (c) their readiness to co-operate in establishing peace and democracy in the North East of Sri Lanka.

The delegation took the opportunity to explain the circumstances that had regretfully compelled them to make a declaration regarding the establishment of a Democratic Republic of Eelam in 1991 and reiterated their commitment to resolving the problems of the Tamil people within a united Sri Lanka.

The Minister of State for Defence pointed out that the appropriate forum for discussion and consensus on the issues submitted including the 19 point programme of EPRLF was the All-Party Conference.

The delegation agreed to consider seriously and positively, without any prejudice, in participating in All-Party Conference process as part of a continuing dialogue with the Government.

LTTE Protests

Meanwhile, the LTTE has protested against the government having talks with the EPRLF. A statement issued by its political wing, PFLT, said that it had strongly objected to the government-EPRLF talks. That Colombo should be 'talking to an organisation that has been rejected by the people and has collaborated with the Indians is an insult to the Tamil and Sinhala people. . . The Indians tried to prop up groups that had no support among the people but they failed. It seems that the Sinhala government is also making the same mistake. The Sri Lankan government has to bear responsibility for the serious consequences of this course of action.

The Premadasa government has been talking to the LTTE for the past one year. None of the fundamental problems of the Tamil people have been resolved through these talks that have been dragging on for a long time. They have been putting aside and neglecting our reasonable requests to dissolve the N.E. Provincial Council and to hold elections and to repeal the 6th Amendment, but at the same time they hold official talks with those who assisted the Indian aggression and were rejected by the people', the PFLT statement added.

Protest Over Forced Repatriation of Plantation Tamils

North-East Sri Lanka came to a standstill on 21 May as the People's Front of

the Liberation Tigers (PFLT) called a *hartal* (general strike) to protest against plans to repatriate 100,000 Plantation Tamils, granted Indian citizenship under the Indo Ceylon Agreement of 1964.

The strike, which was the first civil action called by the Tigers since talks began with the Government a year ago, shut down shops offices and transport in and out of the North-East. The repatriation issue was rekindled after talks between the Indian and Sri Lankan Prime Minister in early May.

As the political sniping got underway, new Plantations Minister Ranjan Wijeratne said Indian passport holders had to go and if necessary would be given free air tickets to India because Sri Lankan workers were 'knocking on the door for employment'. Tamil Nadu Chief Minister Karunanidhi told the State Legislative Assembly, a few days later, that no Plantation Tamil could be repatriated while Sri Lankan refugees remained in south India.

Plantation Trade Unions have consistently opposed the repatriation of those who fall under the 1964 agreement. Many of the original applicants for Indian citizenship, they say, are now dead and few of their children still wish to return to the sub-continent. National Union of Workers President T Aiyadurai, says the Indo Ceylon agreement lapsed in 1985 and the Joint Committee of Plantation Trade Unions (JCPTU) called for a humane approach to the problem.

After assiduous lobbying by Ceylon Workers' Congress (CWC) President S Thondaman, State Information Minister and CWC General Secretary MS Sellasamy announced on 14 May, that Sri Lanka would send a delegation to New Delhi to reopen discussions which would include a CWC representative.

A series of reports in south Indian newspapers last year, drew attention to the plight of 80,000 of the 460,000 Plantation Tamils repatriated since the 1964 agreement and settled in the Ootacamund hill tracts. Only 10,000 had received proper rehabilitation assistance and others were now virtually destitute.

Former CWC official P. Chandrasekaran, now leader of the Upcountry People's Front (UPF) was arrested at Talawakelle on 15 May accused of militant activities. Local sources say his arrest followed attempts to launch protests against Government repatriation plans.

Around 10,000 Plantation workers on 14 estates began a strike on 16 May, demanding his release as hunger strikes began in temples in the Hatton and Talawakelle areas. After four days of mounting tension, Mr. Chandrasekaran was released on 21 May on Rs. 10,000 (\$200) bail to join a UPF delegation to meet Minister Ranjan Wijeratne. He assured them no Planta-

tion Tamil would be forcibly repatriated.

'PUT ASIDE GUNS TO ENSURE FAIR POLLS - Ranjan Wijeratne

The government has told the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) that they would have to 'put aside their guns' if a free and fair election is to be held in the North-East. 'We cannot hold elections with people brandishing arms and creating a fear psychosis. There can never be a peaceful and fair poll if people were allowed to move about with guns threatening and intimidating others. In Sri Lanka there exists a multiparty system. Otherwise, why should we waste time and money holding elections. We can gazette the names of some persons and go without a poll', Plantation Industries Minister and State Minister for Defence, Ranjan Wijeratne said last week.

Addressing the weekly Cabinet news briefing the Minister noted that the government had from time to time sounded the LTTE on the question of creating a gun-free climate if a free and fair election was to be held in the North-East. The LTTE should understand that it was not the only Tamil group in the North-East Province.

There were in fact seven other political parties and they had their own aspirations for their people. The LTTE's claim that it was the sole representative of the Tamil people should be manifested and proved through an election. Then the entire country would accept their assertion, he said.

Mr. Wijeratne explained that the government was making every endeavour to bring all Tamil groups and their aspirations together. Everybody should be treated equally and squarely and fairly, he added.

He noted that the LTTE had at last week's meeting with Minister A.C.S. Hameed expressed their 'displeasure' at the talks the government was holding with the EPRLF. The LTTE should realise that the government cannot 'write off any citizen of Sri Lanka'.

The government had a duty cast upon it to talk to all sections of the people and resolve their grievances. Despite the 'likes' and 'dislikes' of anybody including the LTTE, the government had to do its duty.

Q: How would you describe the last round of government-LTTE talks?

A: It was a healthy discussion. Mr. Hameed brought to the notice of the LTTE leadership the 'violations' that had taken place on their side (by their cadres). The LTTE openly opposed the talks the government was having with the EPRLF. They called for a *hartal*

Continued On Page 19

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The Murder of Richard de Zoysa

ARREST WARRANT ON SENIOR POLICE OFFICER

Mother & Lawyer Under Threat

The preliminary proceedings into the murder of the popular journalist, Richard de Zoysa took a new turn when the Magistrate conducting the inquiry order issued a warrant of arrest against Senior Superintendent of Police, Mr. Ronnie Gunesinghe on 1 June.

The arrest warrant followed the filing of an affidavit by the mother of the murdered journalist, Dr. Mrs. Manorani Saravanamuttu identifying Mr. Gunesinghe as one of a group of men who abducted her son on 18 February whose bullet riddled body was found floating off the south-western coast of the island. Mr. Gunesinghe was standing with a revolver among other persons who she believed were police officers before her son was taken away from her house.

In the meantime both Mrs. Saravanamuttu and her lawyer, Mr. Batty Weerakoon have received death threats from an organisation calling itself the Organisation for the Protection of the Motherland. On 30 May Batty Weerakoon received a telephone call warning him not to appear in court on June 1. The next day a letter arrived telling him that his effort to win human rights 'for people who have been traitorous to the country is itself traitorous' and that his life depended on his silence and non-involvement in the Zoysa case.

Mrs. Saravanamuttu, who is persistent in her efforts to see that justice is meted out to those responsible for her son's killing, has been similarly threatened and is living in hiding.

The Bar Association of Sri Lanka, Civil Rights Movement, Movement for Inter Racial Justice and Equality and other human rights organisations have called upon the government to investigate into the threats and the probable involvement of the security forces in these threats and to provide adequate protection to the lawyer Mr. Weerakoon and Mrs. Saravanamuttu.

Meanwhile, ASIA WATCH, a human rights group based in the USA which briefs State Department officials and Congressmen on human rights issues, has called upon the government of Sri Lanka to inquire into the possible involvement of police personnel in making these threats and to prosecute those found responsible.

The government of Sri Lanka has consistently attempted to absolve itself of responsibility for Richard de Zoysa's murder, despite credible evidence of police involvement. If the government does not identify and prosecute those responsible for these threats, and ensure the protection of Weerakoon and

Saravanamuttu, it will become party to another egregious crime', Executive Director of Asia Watch Mr. Sidney Jones said.

Mother's Testimony

Dr. Mrs. Saravanamuttu, mother of Richard de Zoysa in her testimony in the form of an affidavit stated:

This is the fourth affidavit I am tendering to court in respect of the investigation into the death of my son Richard Manic de Zoysa.

I have been able to remember the appearances of the persons I saw from amongst those who entered my house on the 18th of February 1990, and took away my son Richard.

I have now succeeded in personally identifying one of them as Mr. Ronnie Gunesinghe, Senior Superintendent of Police, Colombo.

From information I have gathered on my description of some of those persons who accompanied Mr. Ronnie Gunesinghe to my house, I have reason to believe that they are police officers stationed in Colombo. I shall name them if I succeed in personally identifying them.

I have refrained from divulging any of this information to the police, because I am concerned about my own safety, and because, in any event, I have no faith in the investigations which the police claim they are conducting. I have come to this conclusion about the police, for the following reasons:-

The persons involved in the matter under investigation are police officers, and their high-handed act can be understood only as one done in connivance with persons in high authority.

Lankapuwath, which is a government owned newspaper published, and the State owned Sri Lanka Broadcasting Corporation broadcast on the 2nd of March 1990, wholly false information about my son in order to vilify him and justify his killing. Lankapuwath claimed that this information had been given to it by the police as matters revealed in the investigations that were being conducted into the death of my son.

In the inquiry notes filed by the police in court on the last day, there is the admission by Mr. Henry Perera, the then A.S.P. Nugegoda, that on 18.2.1990, he had advance information from Mr. Arjuna Ranawana, about possible danger to my son because that same night some persons had threatened Mr. Honter of Nawala, and had obtained through him, the address of my son. In spite of this warning, the

police were unable to give any protection to my household although the Welikade police station is almost within sight of my home.

In the notes filed in court, the police state that General Sepala Attygalle, the then Secretary to the Ministry of Defence, had on 18.2.1990, inquired from the Inspector-General of Police about the whereabouts of my son, and that the latter had assured him that my son was in safe hands. It is to me an unfathomable mystery as to how the Inspector-General of Police could have given that assurance to a person of General Attygalle's position without he himself being satisfied about the circumstances in which my son came to be in the said safe hands, and whose hands these were. The notes filed in court do not reveal that the investigators have paid any attention to this aspect of the case.

I have the greatest respect for court and the process of justice, but I have every reason to believe that the police, in whose hands the investigations are, have suppressed the truth from court and are trying to mislead all concerned about the death of my son.

Richard de Zoysa Award

The Inter Press Service (IPS) and the Inter Press Institute have unanimously proposed to present the 1990 award of outstanding performance to the memory of the late Richard de Zoysa.

The selection was made by an eminent panel headed by the Director of the Inter Press Institute, Peter Galliner. The IPS and the IPI have a way of recognising outstanding contributions towards the exposure of human rights violations in Third World countries.

The award to be given this year is a small tribute to the courageous journalistic struggle Mr. Zoysa waged against human rights violations in Sri Lanka.

Dr. (Mrs.) Manoranee Saravanamuttu, mother of the late Mr. Zoysa has been informed by the Director General of IPS that the presentation of the award would take place on September 18 at the United Nations Headquarters in New York.

Meanwhile, the United Nations Secretary-General has given instructions to the United Nations Human Rights Centre in Geneva to examine the case of the abduction, torture and brutal killing of Richard de Zoysa, according to another letter received by Mrs. Saravanamuttu.

We apologise to our readers for the late publication of this issue which is due to the inclusion of the latest reports received from Sri Lanka and India.

NEWS ROUND-UP

- **MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT** S. Sivamaharajah belonging to the Tamil Militant group, EROS has resigned from Parliament. In his letter of resignation addressed to the Speaker, he had cited 'personal reasons' as grounds for his resignation.
- **LAMP POST KILLINGS**, which had been practised in past years by some Tamil militant groups would appear to have been reintroduced. On 17 May a man from Telliapalai in northern Jaffna, identified as Kanthasamy who was alleged to have committed the offence of murder, was tied to a lamp post and shot in public.
- **UMA MAHESWARAN**, former leader of the Tamil militant group PLOTE was killed definitely not by the LTTE. 'We know the parties who were responsible', said Mr. Karavai Kandasamy, one of the present leaders of PLOTE/DPLF.
- **A.L. SEYLABDEEN** of Akkaraipattu was shot dead by a group of unidentified youths on May 14. Although the body was first handed over to the brother of the victim, the gunmen returned shortly thereafter and removed the body for disposal.
- **M. SADAMBAWA (46)**, the Kalmunai local leader of the PFLT (political wing of the LTTE) was shot dead by an armed gang on 21 May. Following the incident, the PFLT called for a 'hartal' in the area and all activity came to a halt from the following day with shops remaining closed and transport services off the road and LTTE members carried out 'search operations' in the area in an attempt to apprehend the assailants.
- **JUSTICE MINISTER** and government's chief negotiator with the LTTE, Mr. A.C.S. Hameed, after two meetings with the LTTE delegation said that there was a need to create an environment conducive to democratic political action in the North-East as impressed by other political parties. In the event of a dissolution of the N.E. Provincial Council, there should exist pluralism with facility for effective political activity to overcome any form of monopolistic set-up in the creation of the new Provincial Council.
- **THE LTTE** has directed that owners of all four-wheeled vehicles should obtain certificates of roadworthiness from them. Only vehicles that have been so certified by a selected team of examiners and mechanics will be allowed to run on the road.
- **THE REPATRIATION** of Tamil plantation workers entitled to Indian citizenship should take place concurrently with the moving out of the large number of Sri Lanka refugees now on Indian soil, Deputy Indian High Commissioner in Colombo Mr. P. Rath said.
- **THE CEYLON WORKERS CONGRESS** has urged the

government to initiate a fresh dialogue with the Indian government on the proposal to repatriate nearly 100,000 Tamil plantation workers. 'There should be a fresh look at this human problem. This had been a longstanding problem and has to be viewed in a human and sympathetic manner', said the General Secretary of the CWC, Mr. M.S. Sellasamy. Previously, Plantation Industries Minister, Ranjan Wijeratne told a press conference in Colombo that the government was proposing to undertake the repatriation of the plantation workers who had been given Indian citizenship but had remained in Sri Lanka and that it was even prepared to offer free air tickets to expedite the repatriation of the 100,000 plantation Tamils.

- **A REST HOUSE** known as 'Running Bungalow' meant for railway guards and drivers at Talaimannar in north-west Sri Lanka was taken over by LTTE cadres and turned into a LTTE camp and bunkers have been constructed around it.
- **MEDICAL EQUIPMENT** valued at Rs.120 million donated to the Jaffna and Kilinochchi districts by the government of the United Kingdom are expected to be received in September this year.
- **A GOVERNMENT COMMUNIQUE** alleged that the 16 elephants found killed recently in the Kumana jungles was the work of the LTTE and this was done to protect those involved in the felling of trees for timber. It said that approximately 200 bullock carts were being used for transporting timber from the jungle. Three bulldozers brought from Colombo were being operated in the area. LTTE cadres had killed wild buffaloes and deer and transported the meat to Thirukovil in Batticaloa district. Replying to a question in Parliament, Lands Irrigation and Mahaweli Minister P.Dayaratne said that the LTTE had been felling trees in the west of Akkaraipattu-Pottuvil area. They had hired contractors and were felling trees and transporting to Thirukovil where they have set up a timber depot.
- **ACCORDING** to the Defence Ministry, of the 6117 weapons issued for the purposes of personal protection during the Provincial, Presidential and Parliamentary elections, only 1671 weapons have been returned. The UNP had returned 607 and the SLFP 438 weapons. Some politicians have stated that they would not hand over the weapons until the LTTE surrenders its weapons.
- **FORMER MAYOR** of Batticaloa, Mr. R. Ambalavanar, died of a heart attack on May 24. It is reported that he was depressed after his abduction in March by the LTTE demanding a ransom of Rs.3 million and his subsequent release following the payment of a sum of Rs.500,000
- **SOUTH INDIAN** Tamil magazines Kumudam, Thulak, Pomma and other similar magazines have been banned by the LTTE allegedly on the grounds of protecting public morals and encouraging local publications.

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Book Review

Published by the Sri Lanka Studies Institute, Claremont, CA; April 1990, pages 481. Library of Congress Catalog Card No.90 - 61314

The Broken Palmyra, authored by four dons from the University of Jaffna, is an inside account of the Tamil crisis in Sri Lanka, which also touches on the general Sri Lankan predicament to which this crisis is inextricably linked. The bulk of the book was written in the immediate aftermath of the October 1987 Indian offensive, and makes available in a frank and impartial manner the inside developments that have not been available in print before. Unlike most books which concentrate on moves by and exchanges between the powerful, this book exposes the agony of the Tamil people, the cynicism of the Indian and Sri Lankan states and the hypocrisy of the Tamil leadership, both past and present.

This book is divided into two parts, Volumes I and II. Volume I gives the historical background to the present crisis, concentrating specifically on the 1980s. It deals with the anatomy of the Tamil militant movements and ends with an inside account of how the

Indo-Sri Lanka Accord of July 1987 fell apart.

The second part, Volume II, gives an account of the Indian military operation of October 1987, the conduct of the Indian army as seen from inside and ends with a series of analytical chapters presenting the ongoing crisis in Sri Lanka as well as a wider sub-continental setting.

This book presents for the first time the gruesome events at Jaffna hospital during the Indian assault to capture Jaffna.

The chapter on the medical aspects of stress and suffering under conditions of war, makes a contribution to studies spurred by the malignant effects of twentieth century warfare.

One chapter deals specifically with women's issues.

Another sets Sri Lankan and Tamil politics in the context of economic and ideological developments.

Non-violence is looked at in another chapter, which argues that apart from moral considerations, non-violence would have been cost effective as a means.

The Epilogue looks at general developments in Sri Lanka and India

concludes that the way forward for the people of Sri Lanka lies in both Tamils and Sinhalese joining hands to create movements and institutions so that universal human values will be upheld and the politics of narrow nationalism, now ascendent on both sides, will be marginalised.

The Postscript sketches out the developments over 1988 and 1989 and places them in the context of those dealt with in the main book. Appendix I gives an impressionistic sketch of the fates of the various actors in the ongoing drama.

The book shows how an oppressed minority responding by eschewing principles and universal values, for opportunism and brutality, finished up in a state of utter weakness and hopelessness. For doing what she felt was right by the community, one of the authors, Dr. Rajani Thiranagama paid the ultimate price of being murdered.

The book would make highly recommended reading to scholars who wish to hear an account of Sri Lanka that comes from the heart, as much as to Sri Lankans who may wish to explore a new and refreshing description of developments there.



THE BROKEN PALMYRA

The Tamil Crisis in Sri Lanka – An Inside Account

By

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Sri Lanka

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Mariampillai Philomin, LL.B, MBIM

Continued From Page 13

last week to protest against that. The EPRLF made certain demands and we asked them to forward them to the All Party Conference (APC) where a consensus was reached on issues. They attended the APC last week. We told the EPRLF there was no point in sending letters or declaring UDI. We have to discuss matters at the APC. The LTTE dislikes us talking to the EPRLF. The LTTE should accept reality. As a government we cannot refuse to talk to our people. What, if all the other parties ask us not to talk to the LTTE? It's simply not practical.

Mr. Wijeratne said that the government was giving serious consideration to the LTTE proposal to repeal the Sixth Amendment to the Constitution. A two-thirds majority would be required if we decide to repeal it. Cabinet would take a decision on that in due course.

JVP Switches Stance on India

COLOMBO, May 13 (UNI)

The Janatha Vimukthi Peramuna (JVP), known for its anti-Indian tirade in the past, has paid a left-handed compliment to New Delhi for prompt withdrawal of the Indian Peace-Keeping Force (IPKF) from the island.

In the first public statement in months, published in *The Island* newspaper here today, the JVP said Indian had 'intelligently and with great foresight' withdrawn the IPKF in the face of the campaign launched by it and other patriotic organisations against the 'Indian occupation'.

The statement was signed by Mr. Somawansa Amarasinghe, one of the few survivors of the JVP's central committee who described himself as the 'acting president' of the group.

Other members of the central committee, including the JVP supremo, Mr. Rohana Wijeweera, were killed in a series of successful security operations since November last.

The JVP statement criticised the treatment of the Tamils in the island and said they were 'second class citizens and victims of racial and sectarian policies' followed by successive governments.

Communal Line

At the same time, the statement condemned the Tamil leadership for following a communal line themselves.

It said Mr. Wijeweera had predicted that India, by allegedly supporting Tamil separatism for 'tactical reasons' of security, would be doing great damage to herself strategically in the long run.

India must realise that it had made a mistake by supporting Tamil separ-

atism', which was serving the cause of western imperialism and was opposed to India's interests.

The statement said 'Indian occupation' had only helped prop up the Sri Lankan government and done 'great damage' to India's interests.

The latest statement could thus mark the beginning of a significant shift in the JVP's attitude to India under the new leadership.

The statement also shows that the JVP is unwilling to give credit to the president, Mr. Ranasinghe Premadasa, for forcing the withdrawal of the IPKF, as the government would like everyone to believe, indicating that its attitude to the government remains unchanged, observers here said.

BRITISH AIRWAYS 'KIDNAPS' ASYLUM SEEKERS

British Airways (BA) has been accused of 'kidnapping' three Tamil asylum-seekers on arrival at Heathrow and forcibly deporting them to avoid punitive fines for passengers travelling with illegal documents.

The three men arrived on 9 April and were detained by BA after questions about their documents in Rome. After two hours, despite pleas to be allowed access to immigration authorities and to claim political asylum, they were returned to Rome. Italian police put them on a flight to Bombay where two of the three were badly beaten by Indian officials and returned to Colombo.

One of the three, Vasudeva Krishnan, managed to alert relatives by phone before he left London. Refugee authorities say their removal was clearly illegal and plan to mount a campaign to protect the rights of asylum seekers arriving in Britain. The Home Office has refused to condemn the incident.

Since the Carriers Liability Act of 1987, airlines are fined £1,000 for every passenger travelling on illegal documents even if it is subsequently proved that false papers were a refugee's only means of escape. BA has been fined £3.5 million - £379,000 in the last three months - and has petitioned the Home Office for an amnesty over their failure to pay.

Some 564 Sri Lankan asylum-seekers arrived in Britain in the first three months of this year. Only three cases have been examined and there is a backlog of 1,812. Observers say immigration authorities are postponing decisions in the hope of improving conditions in Sri Lanka.

In Holland, three Tamil asylum-seekers were deported on 25 May after losing a legal appeal. There are three others in detention at Schiphol airport

who may be deported in the next month. Over 400 Sri Lankan asylum-seekers arrived in Holland in January and February and legal sources say a return to a hard-line deportation policy is imminent. Of 8,000 asylum-seekers who arrived in Switzerland in the first four months of this year, over 1,000 are Sri Lankan and Swiss authorities will introduce a tough new asylum law in June.

Detained Refugees Released After Protest Fast

Over 100 Sri Lankan Tamil refugees who escaped with their families from camps in Orissa were released from Madras Central prison in mid May after they began a hunger strike, demanding they be relocated in refugee camps in Tamil Nadu.

The refugees, former militants with EPRLF and other Indian-backed groups, had petitioned Tamil Nadu Chief Minister Karunanidhi over inadequate medical provisions in the Orissa camps after a 12-year-old boy and a 22-year-old woman died from heatstroke. The escapees and their families have been sent to the Mandapam and Kottapattu camps south of Madras.

Mr. Karunanidhi has reiterated his demand that all Tamil militants who fled Sri Lanka as part of the IPKF withdrawal be sent to the Andaman Islands - a penal settlement in colonial times.

There is still concern in Tamil Nadu over the undercover activities of feuding Sri Lankan militants. Over 70 members of the Eelam People's Democratic Party, a little-known militant splinter group were arrested in a Madras suburb in early May with weapons and ammunition. Further south in Vellore, five members of PLOTE were arrested without identity papers. Opposition MP, P.R. Kumaramangalam accused the Tamil Nadu government in late May, of colluding with the LTTE and actively encouraging sedition in the south Indian state.

KANTHASAMY REMEMBERED

It was on 19 June 1988 that Kandiah Kanthasamy, one of the most committed human rights and relief and rehabilitation workers, was kidnapped by a gang of Tamil 'militants' from his residence in Jaffna and his whereabouts are still not known. However, he is now presumed dead having been killed by his kidnapers within a few days of his abduction.

Kanthasamy will be remembered by his friends and colleagues who had worked with him and by those who benefited by his devoted and dedicated service.

READERS FORUM

WHO KILLED SAM?

THE LTTE has denied responsibility for the assassination of Member of Parliament Mr. Sam Thambimuttu and his wife. Can anyone accept this denial?

When TULF leaders A.A. Amirthalingam and V. Yogeswaran were killed in July last year by three gunmen who had gone to their residence claiming to be from the LTTE, the leadership of the LTTE denied responsibility. In fact they did not claim and even abandoned the dead bodies of their erstwhile comrades to dissociate themselves from this crime.

However, in a recent interview, the Deputy Leader of the LTTE and the Leader of the PFLT, Mr. Mahendrarajah (Mahathaya) publicly admitted that the TULF leaders were killed by the LTTE as they were 'Indian agents and traitors'.

In this connection I quote below a revealing extract from 'Men and Matters by Kautilya' in 'Sunday Island' of 13.5.90:

'The mind of Mr. Prabhakaran, a militarist pure and simple. Don't talk to the traitors and the quislings while we are talking to you. Is that the message? May be a message to his cadres and commanders too. Don't get soft with all this talk of peace...there's a long way to go...the war is not over. Keep your powder dry. Jaw-Jaw, war-war. And so, Black Monday, the Day of the Tiger, its long claws over Colombo.

The LTTE denial has been published.

But what was Colombo's reaction?

Using the journalistic network for opinion-sampling, I tested the Sinhala response. Nearly 90% believe that the LTTE was responsible. Only ten percent was doubtful or offered other, somewhat exotic theories. Public opinion is political reality and that's what matters most to President Premadasa, his government and its strategy planners, including its negotiators. If Colombo opinion is correct, I conclude:

- The LTTE does NOT want the government talking to any other parties because that undermines the LTTE position that it is the SOLE authentic voice of the Tamil people. The implications of that assumption should be examined in terms of what sort of society will emerge in Jaffna under LTTE control. Regimentation? Authoritarian or some degree of political pluralism? The first casualty would be intellectual and academic life.
- The LTTE will have 'Eelam' or

something as close to that as possible but its actual writ will run beyond the borders of that 'Eelam'. For instance, any Tamil, even outside its own borders, the North-East, will be subject to its 'law-enforcement' if he commits a crime as heinous as 'treachery' i.e. the Indian quisling line of thinking.

These are personal speculations, and I sincerely hope that I am proved wrong.

But if I am correct then there is a fundamental change here - the concept of a nation. The Tamil 'state' and its citizens answerable to its writ, are not necessarily those who live within the territory of North-East Council or quasi-Eelam, or are registered there as citizens-voters. Its reach is much greater - up to Gregory's Road'.

S. Anthonipillai

STANDING UP TO PRESSURE

I DO NOT write to you as often as I would like, to express my sincere thanks for your efforts in continuing publication of Tamil Times. Despite tremendous pressures, you continue to publish various shades of opinion found among Tamils the world over.

It is so easy to fall into line with the dominant point of view, and lose objectivity in the process. Not long ago you published some correspondence threatening and/or blackmailing you into submission in this regard. Thank you for publishing them and thereby standing up to those pressures.

We have seen many publications come and go, and I can't think of any other publication which can provide space for the writings of Messrs. Sivanayagam, Sachi Srikantha, Dr. Selbourne, Sivasegaram, Rita Sebastian, Reggie Sriwardena, Tehan Perera etc.

Keep up the good work.

N. Karan

7 Berrigan Drive,
Southlake
Australia 6164

ROLE OF 'EXPATRIATE TAMILS'

SACHI SRI KANTHA's lament on 'expatriate Tamils' (Readers Forum, Tamil Times February 1990) was perhaps an attempt by an expatriate Tamil to salve his own conscience.

His attack on the 'dinner and dance' events organised by and for Tamils abroad have little moral foundation. Most of these events have a charitable motive, the proceeds going to academic institutions in Sri Lanka and often Tamil charities in the West.

The Tamils who fled Sri Lanka in the aftermath of the 1983 riots are not strictly speaking 'expatriates' but refugees and political exiles. It is generally they who organize these events and to whom I presume Sachi Sri Kantha's diatribe was directed. They

have not had the advantage of years in a host country to establish a home, a life and a future. As they painfully go through that process in a White, Western world alien to them and hostile towards their culture, Community functions such as a 'dinner and dance' with Sri Lankan music and food are much appreciated occasions.

The social intercourse of Sri Lankan Tamils, conversing in our mother tongue, exchanging news from Sri Lanka of our relatives, mutual friends and of our progress and aspirations is invaluable. It is a psychological boost for the first generation Tamils to face the trials of tomorrow and a moral boost for younger generations to recognize the qualities in our culture and to derive vigour from our roots in Sri Lanka.

Sachi Sri Kantha's suggestions on useful roles for Tamils abroad are noteworthy but at this stage in the socio-economic development of the Tamil diaspora, I fear only intellectuals like Sachi Sri Kantha will be in a position to provide and utilize those services.

Mr. B. Skanthakumar

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Tamil Orphans' Trust

A variety performance in aid of the Tamil Orphans' Trust was held on 28.4.90 at the Brent Town Hall. The Mayor of Brent, Councillor Len Williams was the Chief Guest, and the large gathering present was an indication of the wide support, the Trust's worthy cause had gained.

The Bharatha Natyam items were performed by students of three dance teachers, Mrs Vanitha Joachim, Mrs. Rajani Shureshkumar and Adayar Shri Ramarao and the dancers were Srisha Sreetharan, Navasha Joseph, Suki Balendra, Prema Parameshwaran and Vasuki Sriskandarajah.

There were two instrumental programmes, one a violin solo by Mr. Sivashankar and the other an ensemble of Vocal, Veena, Violin, Mirdangam and Ghatam by the pupils of Mrs. Sivasakthi Sivanesan, Dr. Jayan and Mr Balasri. The climax of the evening's programme was a Carnatic Vocal Recital by Mr. M. Yogeswaran.

Mr. Wimal Sockanathan, the Chairman of the Tamil Orphans' Trust in his address described the Trust's activities since its inception, assistance rendered and briefly outlined its projects and plans for the future. For more details, please contact, The Secretary, TOT, 42 Arundel Drive, Harrow, Middx., U.K. Tel: 081-422 0012.

Veena Virtuoso S. Balachander – An Appreciation

The 13th April 1990 was a dark day for the music world as one of its greatest musicians S. Balachander passed away. Veena Vidwan S. Balachander was unique in many ways. Although the name of Balachander is synonymous with veena, he displayed and excelled in varied artistic pursuits during his life.

He learnt to play the 'Kanjira', a percussion instrument all by himself when he was about six. At 10 he was accompanying on stage his elder brother Rajam, a vocalist, on the Tabla, which instrument he learnt to play without a master. It was while he was accompanying Rajam at a concert in Karachi, way back in 1938 that a woman was so impressed with the young boy artist on the Tabla that she took him to her home and presented him with a sitar. That present marked a significant turn in his life. He trained himself without a tutor to play Carnatic music on the 'sitar and later discarded it for the veena. He adopted the veena. He cared for it more than he would for his body.

Born in a well-to-do artistic family in Mylapore, Madras, Balachander had the ideal upbringing and environment for his pursuit of art and music. His father was a lawyer but, the family's love for art was evident in 1933 when Balachander was merely six, the whole family acted in a film called 'Sita Kalyanam'. Later Balachander interested himself in directing film music and in acting too.

In the late forties and early fifties he interested himself in directing film and particularly film music and his outstanding contributions were 'Kaidhi', 'Yedhi Nijam?', 'Bomma', 'Devaki', 'Andha Naal', to name a few films that he directed. Andha Naal was considered to have created history in the Tamil film world by the fact that the entire film did not have a single song or a dance which were vital ingredients of any Tamil film of those days.

Many who have met Balachander casually got the impression that he was egoistic and arrogant. Those of us who had the pleasure of knowing him closely saw the nicer, affectionate side of him. He loved art in any form. He would give credit to anything good. He would



enjoy good Hindustani music and even Western classical music like Beethoven. He would politely say that he is a life long student of western music.

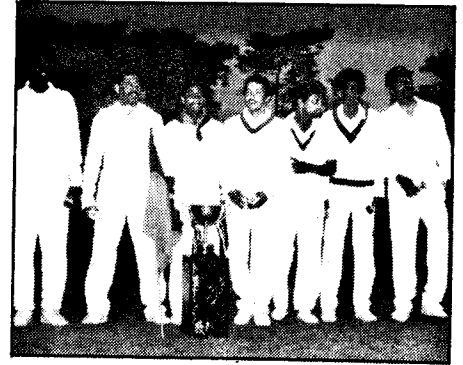
He loved children and enjoyed being in their company. It was a treat to see him play with his grand children Bharatwaj and Tara when he himself became one of them.

He enjoyed natural beauty. He had a special affection for the Lake District in England. Once when we drove around in Cumbria in 1983 he asked me to stop the car in the lay-by, and got out and stood speechlessly for nearly 15 minutes and then said 'Doctor do you see the beauty of the long meadows, the distant trees and the rolling hills which appear as the merging of different ragas in a melody!'

He believed in excellence and never failed to praise anything good and in the same tone he would not hesitate to speak out the truth when things do not match up to his expectations.

He had an extremely high intellect endowed with an analytical mind. His musical

Jaffna Old Centralites Champions at Festival of Cricket



L to R Muralitharan, Thomas, Thamialagan, Anurudran, Paul Prahalathan, Manodamaraj, & Prabaker.

The Maori Club, Worcester Park, Surrey, U.K. was the venue of a grand festival of cricket in which teams representing the O.B.A.s of some of Sri Lanka's leading colleges took part in a 7-a-side tournament on Bank Holiday Monday, 28th May 1990.

It was a sunny, clear, bright day and over 1000 cars, vans etc clogging the surrounding parks and their precincts brought a festive crowd that could be counted in five figures. Sri Lankan delicacies – buriyani, string hoppers, egg hoppers, watalappam, you name it, it was available. Everyone had an enjoyable time.

Cricket teams representing the U.K. O.B.A.s of Ananda, St Peter's, St Thomas, Royal, St Anthony's Trinity, Jaffna Central, Mahinda, St Joseph's and Zahira took part in the tournament. In the finals, Jaffna Old Centralites defeated the old Royalists by a margin of 3 runs.

The organisers who had worked very hard to make this event a success deserve the support of more teams taking part in future tournaments.

skills were beyond dispute. His musical scholarship and redoubtable creative energies, which manifested themselves in feats like elaboration of all the 72 Master Scales of carnatic music (presented in 12 long play records) bore testimony to his genius.

Balachander has been close to the Tamil community in Sri Lanka, in London and elsewhere. He has been hailed as manasika guru by several students and teachers of veena music. He gave the first recital in London in aid of the Highgate Murugan Temple in London.

Balachander was just 63 at the time of his demise. Let us cherish the memory of Padma Bhushan, Veena Vidwan Dr. S. Balachander multifaceted genius, his creativity, virtuosity, warmth and above all unshaken integrity and reverence for the truth in music and in life. Let us draw inspiration from his bold example and cherish those ideals he strove so tirelessly to propagate in the interest of prosperity.

Our sincere words of comfort should go to the widow Mrs. Shanta Balachander, son S.B.S. Raman (an Advocate) and daughter-in-law Mrs. Dharma Raman.

Dr. S. Navaratnam

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MATRIMONIAL

Jaffna Tamil seeks professional partner for her sister, 31, Ph.D., working in United States, M 390 c/o Tamil Times.

Mother seeks professionally qualified partner for daughter, 28, accountancy finalist, permanently resident Australia. Reply with horoscope. M 391 c/o Tamil Times.

Prospective bridegroom invited to correspond regarding Hindu Tamil, 31, educated, good appearance, UK permanent residence, employed, excellent character. M 392 c/o Tamil Times.

Mother seeks partner for qualified engineer son, 49, British citizen about to emigrate to Australia. Reply with photo, details. M 393 c/o Tamil Times.

Jaffna Hindu seeks qualified partner for qualified accountant brother, 27, employed U.K. Write with horoscope, photograph. confidentiality assured. M 394 c/o Tamil Times.

Brothers seek Hindu Tamil bride professionally qualified or science graduate in U.K. for civil engineer with master's degree, age 41, in permanent employment in London. Reply with horoscope, photograph. M 395 c/o Tamil Times.

Jaffna Hindu parents seek educated good looking partner for son, business administration graduate, green card holder in states, 31, 5'10". M 396 c/o Tamil Times.

Jaffna Hindu parents seek professionally qualified groom for daughter, electronic engineer with residency rights in Canada, 26, medium height, Mars seventh, M 396 c/o Tamil Times.

Jaffna parents in USA seek eligible, educated partner/single parent with children for pretty, elegant, young daughter, a student with four year old son in U.S.A. M 397 c/o Tamil Times.

Jaffna Tamil mother seeks very pretty, fair bride for teetotaler, non-smoker, handsome son, 35, looks much younger, former lecturer in Engineering, Peradeniya; with postgraduate degree, currently project engineer, Sydney; Australian citizen. Reply with full details to M 398 c/o Tamil Times.

Jaffna Tamil parents seek educated bride for Medical Registrar, 34, tall, U.K. permanent resident. Write with horoscope, details, photograph. M 399 c/o Tamil Times.

Jaffna Hindu parents seek professionally qualified partner, 32-36 for Doctor daughter in U.K. reply with details to M 400 c/o Tamil Times.

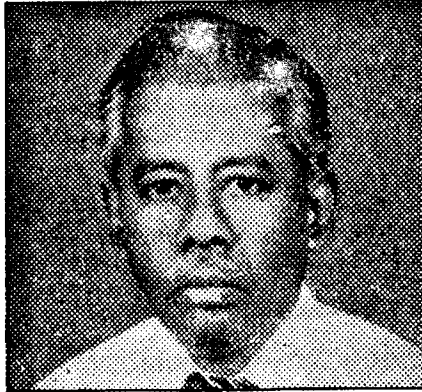
WEDDING BELLS

We congratulate the following couples on their recent marriage.

Kugendran son of Dr. V & Dr. (Mrs) S. Karthigesu of Uduvil, Sri Lanka and **Shiyamalangi** daughter of Mr & Mrs Kathirkamathamby of 49 Sidmouth Avenue, Isleworth, Middx., U.K. at Hounslow Manor Assembly Hall, Middx. on 27.1.90.

Raveendran son of the late Subramaniam and Mrs Rajeswary Subramaniam of 'Thiruvavur', Temple Road, Anaicoddai, Sri Lanka and **Sobhana (Meena)** daughter of Mr & Mrs P. Narendanathan, 53 Crossways, South Croydon, U.K. on 3.6.90 at Selsdon Hall, South Croydon, U.K.

Sivapalasingam son of the late A.S. Nadarajah and Mrs Nadarajah of Karampon East, Kayts, Sri Lanka and **Geethanjali** daughter of Mr. V. Paramalingam, Postmaster Emeritus, formerly of Tamil Information Centre, London and Madras and Mrs Punitham Paramalingam, Teacher, Velanai, Sri Lanka on 11.4.90 at 2210 Lawrence Ave. East, Scarborough Ontario.

OBITUARIES

V.T. Ratnam (61) News Editor, Dinapathy and Journalist, Lake House, Sri Lanka; beloved husband of Maheswari; father of Shantikumar (Bahrain), Rajkumar, Sentilkumar (both of Toronto), and Suganthy (New Delhi); father-in-law of Jeya, Vasanthi and Asokan; beloved son of the late Thambiappah and Mrs Thambiappah of Kanderamadam, Sri Lanka; brother of Maheswari, Thanaluxumy (Kokuvil Hindu), Sarathadevi (St. Anthony's, Colombo), Balasingam (Al Ain), Vijeyakumar (Sheraton), Krishnakumar (ROP, Oman) and Shanthakumar (Toronto) passed away on 20.1.90 at 5 Oilman Street, Colombo 12, Sri Lanka.

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

July 1 3.30 p.m. Novena at Asian Chaplaincy, 48 Gt. Peter Street, London SW1P 2HA Tel: 071-222 2895.

July 7 6.30 p.m. Henricans U.K. O.B.A. St. Henry's College, Illavalai, Sri Lanka, A.G.M. & Dinner at Merton Hall, Kingston Road, London SW19 Tel: 081-441 1713/399 7932.

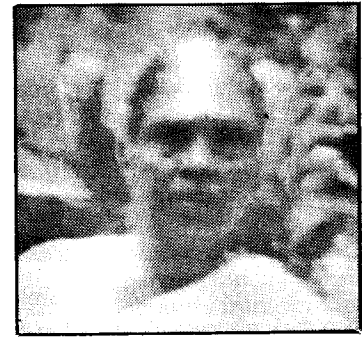
July 14 6.00 p.m. Annual Prize-giving & Variety Entertainment of West London Tamil School at Greenford Town Hall, Ruislip Road, Greenford, Middx. All Welcome.

July 14 6.30 p.m. Cultural Evening presented by South London Tamil Welfare Group at Merton Hall, Kingston Road, London SW19. For details Tel: 081-879 7716.

July 21 7.00 p.m. Brittanian Hindu (Shiva) Temple Trust commemorates the memory of **Veena Virtuoso S. Balachander** at Highgate Murugan Temple, 200A Archway Road, London N6, with speeches and musical tributes. All welcome. (Meeting fixed for 14.7.90 cancelled).

July 27 7.45 p.m. Mandolin Recital by U. Srinivas with six musicians from India at The Purcell Room, South Bank, London SE1 8XX.

July 29 Annual Pilgrimage to Aylesford, The Shrine of Our Lady of Carmel organised by Asian Chaplaincy. For details Tel: 071-222 2895.

IN MEMORIAM

Mrs. Ratnadevi Mandalanayagam Chunnakam, Sri Lanka.

Born: 11.1.1918 Died: 17.5.88

Your love and affection we shall ever cherish. Sadly missed and fondly remembered on the second anniversary of her passing away by her children, grandchildren, sons-in-law and daughters-in-law - 'Greenacres', 63 Sandown Park, Tunbridge Wells, Kent TN2 4RT.



Second Anniversary of the passing away of **Mr. S.S. Bastiampillai** on 14th June 1988.

You were a great man
So noble and great
Whom we all miss
And will never forget.

Sadly missed and fondly remembered by his loving wife Ruby; children Vinothini, Pathmini and Rajan; grandchildren Tilan, Arosha, Sumithra and Suthashini - 81 Windsor Road, Harrow Weald, Middx. HA3 5PT, U.K.

July 29 6.30 p.m. Bharatanatyam Recital by **Srikala Narasimhan** at Highgate Murugan Temple Hall, 200A Archway Road, London N6. For tickets Tel: 081-348 9835.

August 4 6.30 p.m. London Meikandar Aadeenam presents Karnatic Vocal Recital by **Maharajapuram Santanam** at Conway Hall, 25 Red Lion Square, Holborn, London WC1R 4RL in aid of Chair for Saiva Sithantha in Jaffna University. For tickets Tel: 081-660 3604.

At Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, 4A Castletown Road, London W14 9HQ Tel: 071-381 3036/4608.

June 29 7.45 p.m. Karnatic Vocal by The Bhavan's students trained by Vidwan M.R. Shankaramurthi. All welcome.

July 5 7.30 p.m. Manipuri Dance & Martial Arts by Artistes of Ranganiketan, Manipur.

July 6 7.45 p.m. An Evening of Music and Dance by Bhavan's students at Mill Hill, Wembley, Milton Keynes and Letchworth. All Welcome.

July 7 7.00 p.m. Music Programme by Mrs Sivasakthi Sivanesan and Students.

July 15 6.30 p.m. Mandolin by U. Srinivas with six musicians from India.

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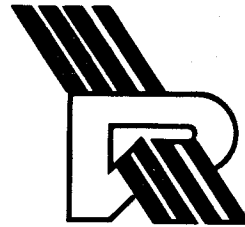
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