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*"I do not agree with a word
of what you say, but I'll
defend to the death your
right to say it."*

-Voltaire

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Cover :
Remembering
Rev. Father Thani Nayagam
who died on 1 September 1980

Resuming Peace Talks

It is regrettable to note that one year has elapsed since the peace talks between the Government and the LTTE commenced, but for the last six months they have remained stalled and very little progress in the peace process has been made. However, the Ceasefire Agreement has continued to remain intact despite several infractions.

In the aftermath of the meeting in Parris of the LTTE's Constitutional Affairs Committee late last month where they deliberated to formulate a response to the Government's proposal for an interim administrative structure (IA) for the Northeast of Sri Lanka, the expectation has been that the LTTE will formally send its response to the Government via the Norwegian facilitators within a matter of weeks and negotiations will recommence soon thereafter.

In recent days Norwegian Deputy Foreign Minister Vida Helgessen and Special Envoy Eri c Solheim have been in Sri Lanka having discussions in Colombo with Government leaders and in Kilinochchi with LTTE top-rankers with the aim of urging the parties to resume peace talks. Just before the arrival of the Norwegians, the Japanese Special Envoy Mr Yasushi Akashi also made a six-day visit to Sri Lanka during which he urged the LTTE leadership to resume peace negotiations with the Government warning that no aid for the rehabilitation and reconstruction of the Northeast would be forthcoming from donor countries unless progress was made in the peace process.

Among the people there is a general feeling of optimism that peace talks between the Government and the LTTE are likely to be recommenced soon. But there has been some doubt as to whether in fact peace talks will restart shortly after the presentation of the LTTE's response to the Government proposal. Most people agree that there is bound to be material differences between the Government proposal and the anticipated LTTE's response that need to be ironed out in face-to-face talks between the parties, obviously with the assistance of the Norwegian facilitators. However comments from some leading figures of the LTTE indicated that "resumption of talks will depend entirely on the Government's response to the LTTE's counter-proposal," which in other words meant that there would be no face-to-face peace talks until the Government agreed to the IA as proposed in the LTTE's response. Such a stance would not have enabled early resumption of peace talks.

However, Mr Helgessen's press briefing following his meeting with the head of the political wing of the LTTE, S P Tamilselvan, would appear to have cleared the doubt. He said that LTTE's work on its response has reached final stages and it would be ready by mid-October when it would be presented to the Government via Norway. "We expect that the proposal previously prepared by the Sri Lankan Government and the proposal that will be forthcoming from the LTTE will together provide a basis for resuming the negotiations - hopefully not too late after mid October," Mr Helgessen said.

While the developments leading to the prospect of resumption of peace talks are most welcome, what is most distressing is the recent outbreak of a fresh bout of confrontation between the country's President and the Prime Minister. The acrimonious and vitriolic exchanges of missives between the incumbents flashed across the printed and electronic media demonstrate a high degree of mutual mistrust, loathing and even utter hostility. Recent actions on their part have revealed that they cannot conduct themselves appropriately even in matters concerning national security or relations with international bodies such as the United Nations.

The current political cohabitation between the President belonging to one political party and the Prime Minister belonging to another party, at the best of times, has been an uneasy one to put it in the most favourable light. But the people put them in the elevated positions they occupy to perform their functions duties in the national interest. Impossible as it may seem, it is in the national interest for both of them to reach a bipartisan consensus and strive for a negotiated political solution to the ethnic conflict that has bedeviled the country for over a quarter of a century.

LTTE's Paris Meeting

"This Paris conference is a victory for our liberation struggle. The Government proposal for an Interim Administration for the Northeast falls way short of the aspirations of Tamil people. This conference will define a response that reflects the just aspirations of our people," said Mr. S.P. Thamilselvan, head of the political wing of the LTTE, delivering the opening address at the meeting of the LTTE's Constitutional Affairs Committee in Paris which began on the 23rd August.

The meeting was organized by the LTTE to prepare its response to the Government's proposal for an Interim Administration for the Northeast.

Members of the LTTE's Constitutional Affairs Committee, who took part in the discussions: 1. Mr. S.P. Thamilselvan, Leader, Political Wing, LTTE, 2. Col. Karuna, LTTE's Special Commander for Batticaloa & Amparai districts, 3. Dr. Jay Maheswaran, Economic Advisor, LTTE's Planning and Development Unit, 4. Mr. Selvin Ireneuss, Director of Sub Committee on Immediate Humanitarian and Rehabilitation Needs - NE (SIHRN), 5. Prof. Sornarajah, Professor of Law- National University of Singapore, 6. Prof. P. Ramasamy, Professor of Political Science, National University of Malaysia ; 7. Dr. Emmanuelpillai Paul Dominic, Professor of Law, University of Sydney, 8. Mr. Shiva Pasupathi, P.C, Former Attorney General, Sri Lanka, 9. Mr. Visvendran LLB(Hons), Legal Advisor, Chartered Engineer, MIGEM, 10. Mr. V. Rudrakumar, LTTE's Constitutional Affairs Advisor.

The Paris discussions lasted from 23rd to 26th of August in Paris. Eric Solheim, Norwegian special peace envoy, Lisa Gold of the Royal Norwegian Government, Hon. Bob Rae, former premier of Ontario Canada and Prof. David Cameron of Canadian Forum of Federations joined the final day session of the discussions.

After the conclusion of the discussions, S.P. Thamilselvan, head of the political section of the LTTE, Col. Karuna, U.S-based advisor Mr. Rudrakumaran, and Head of the LTTE Peace Secretariat Mr. Pulithevan visited the Norwegian embassy in Paris on the invitation of Norwegian Deputy Ambassador in France Mr. Dag Werlo Holter.

Visuvanathan Rudrakumaran, US-based constitutional affairs advisor to the LTTE who returned to the USA refused to reveal the contents of the proposal but is quoted as saying that substantial work has been completed on the proposal which would be taken to Vanni for further review and approval from the leadership of the LTTE.

The draft proposal will then be handed over to the Norwegian Government that will submit the LTTE's response to the Government of Sri Lanka. This process is expected to take approximately four weeks according to informed sources.

It is learnt that the draft of the LTTE response to the government's proposal was prepared in English and later translated by specialists who came to Paris from Vanni into Tamil.

The Tigers have not disclosed the counter proposals, though it is more than likely that they will call for more powers in the proposed provisional Administrative Council in which the LTTE has already been offered a majority.

The question however is whether these new powers could be provided within the framework of the existing constitution. When the LTTE first came out with its demand for an Interim Administrative Council for the North-East, LTTE's chief negotiator, Mr Anton Balasingham insisted on "an innovative and radically new mechanism with adequate politico-administrative powers and predominant LTTE participation". Soon after

the suspension of negotiations in April, the LTTE appeared to demand an interim mechanism which went beyond the framework of the existing constitution, a demand which a government in a shaky cohabitation with a powerful Executive President might find impossible to deliver, even it wishes to do so.

Demands to withdraw security forces from the Northeast and a mechanism to oversee the resettlement and rehabilitation of displaced Tamils are sure to be among demands the Tamil Tigers will place before the UNF government when they respond to the latter's latest proposals for an Interim Administration.

A report in the LTTE's website gave a fore warning that these demands will be included. The report said its response would be placed before the Government before the end of September and made it clear that the future of the Ceasefire Agreement and its survival would depend on the Government's.

Pointing out that the ceasefire agreement declared about one and half years ago was aimed at seeking a peaceful solution to the racial and ethnic violence against the Tamils, the report said, "One of the aims of this agreement is to remove the Sri Lankan armed forces and their bases in the North East. Further it was hoped that the Tamils displaced from their homes by the army occupation would return to their homes, to lead a peaceful life, without any military atrocities and interference. However, this didn't materialize. Similarly, the organization created to oversee the resettlement and rehabilitation of displaced persons (SIHRN) has ceased to function before it started. In this situation the LTTE sought an Interim Administration with authority to administer the work in the North East. The Government of Sri Lanka responded by forwarding three proposals, one after another. The LTTE rejected the first two proposals as they did not contain adequate authority and facility to execute the functions. With the commitment to continue with the Ceasefire Agreement, the LTTE decided to consider the third proposal without rejecting it outright."

SLFP/JVP alliance talks collapse

Eight months of intensive talks between the Sri Lanka Freedom Party (SLFP) and the Janatha Vimukthi Peramuna (JVP) aimed at forging a political alliance have collapsed primarily because the JVP steadfastly refused to back President Chandrika Kumaratunga's call for permanent resolution of the north-east problem based on the devolution of power. The excessive demands by the JVP in regard to the sharing of cabinet and ministerial posts also contributed to the failure of the talks.

Reports also indicate that the talks collapsed mainly due to the disagreement by the JVP on a document submitted by the SLFP on the proposed electoral alliance. The last meeting between the SLFP and JVP on 5 September, which lasted more than two hours, also saw both parties unable to come to a consensus on issues of devolution of power as a resolution to the ethnic question and the role of Norway as a mediator in a future SLFP- JVP coalition government. It is also learnt that the SLFP's offer to the JVP only 26 seats to contest at the next general election was intended to undermine or ridicule the JVP.

Presidential spokesman Harim Peiris said that there was no worthwhile reason for dragging on the discussions as the two parties were unable to agree on devolution of power which was a sine-quo-non for both the President as well as the SLFP.

"Leaders of both parties agreed to terminate talks as they failed to reach consensus on several issues including finding a political solution to the northeast conflict," said JVP parlia-

mentary group leader Mr. Wimal Weerawansa.

"We will not accept devolution proposals as it would not end the north-east crisis. It would be ridiculous even to believe in such an outdated concept," he told a press conference in Colombo.

Fielding questions from journalists he said: "Devolution is a myth. It would be absurd to believe in devolution as President Kumaratunga has publicly acknowledged that LTTE leader Velupillai Prabhakaran wouldn't accept it." He said the SLFP was supporting the devolution of power to settle the northeast conflict because of the pressure from the international community, and that the SLFP's stand would take the country to disaster, he said.

JVP General Secretary Tilvin Silva said, "We could not agree with the SLFP's position on the national crisis and Norwegian role to bring a political solution to the ethnic conflict. The JVP wanted a political solution within the unitary form of government with equality to all communities. But the SLFP wanted devolution of power." He

emphasised that devolution as proposed by the SLFP "would only lead to a division of the country."

Claiming that a growing number of people continued to rally around the JVP, he pointed to 'the success' of the recent protest march from Galle to Colombo the JVP organised and vowed to continue with their campaign of similar protest marches in other parts of the country.

Dismissing government claims that the protest and a wave of public sector strikes were part of the JVP's strategy to topple the government through illegitimate means, Tilvin Silva said, "Our protests were against the move to divide the country on ethnic lines and sell all our assets and natural resources to multinationals and foreign governments on the pretext of securing foreign investment."

In an interview with a Colombo newspaper, Tilvin Silva said, "We wanted to get together to prevent a grave danger facing the country from the UNF Government. On one side, the country is being sold to transnational corporations through the Regaining Sri Lanka programme while on the other, a separate state is being given to the LTTE. We wanted to save the country from these and needed a powerful force to do it. That's why we started talks with the SLFP on basic issues - an alternative economic policy, new policy on the ethnic conflict, consolidating democracy and forging a new foreign policy.

One key and contentious issue was the devolution of power - the SLFP was for it but we were against. We wanted the facilitator Norway sent away but the SLFP did not agree. Those were the key questions on which the talks broke down though there were disputes about power-sharing with the proposed alliance also. Since we saw no possibility of a compromise, we told the President there was no purpose in talking. We hoped the SLFP would have understood the dire threat from the LTTE and changed its stand on the devolution of power."

President Chandrika Kumaratunga addressing SLFP MPs and organisers disclosed that the JVP had demanded forty parliamentary seats, four portfolios and four deputy ministerships including the important post of deputy minister of defence. The ministries the JVP wanted included Agriculture and Irrigation, Fisheries, Media and all education ministries- higher education and tertiary education.

Two LTTE suspects arrested

Sept 16 - Security officials claimed that they arrested two LTTE suspects at the Omanthai checkpoint on September 14 having in their possession a cyanide capsule, two forged iden-

tity cards, cash, and four hand-phones of which one had been modified and several suspicious documents.

Of the cellular phones one had been modified with an equipment similar to a small transmitter which officers suspect had either been fitted to experiment as a bomb when a message is passed or to upgrade the receiving capacity of the phone. The suspects had used two identity cards under two different names.

One person was identified as 29 year old Sinnathamby Suresh Kumar from Point Pedro Road, Irappalai. He had his official National Identity Card No: 743390275 V. He had in his possession three mobile telephones. A cyanide capsule and an LTTE "dog tag" or piece of aluminium with his identification number inscribed. In a false lining of his purse were code sheets and letters. He held another National Identity Card (found to be forged) and bearing No: 73564080 V under the name Pillayar Selvathurai. There was Rs 90,000 in cash.

The second person was identified as 23 year old Palai Thambi Meenachisunderam of Ganeshapuram, Mandoor. He had his official National Identity Card No 802793637 V. He also had in his possession LTTE code sheets. They were concealed in the flap of his shirt which held the buttons. They had been carefully stitched. He was in possession of Rs 2200 in cash. When he was about to be searched, Meenachisunderam took out a cyanide which was concealed in his shirt collar. But the men jumped on him and seized the capsule.

The two suspects had been handed over to the Vavunia police and later to the Criminal Investigations Department for further investigations.

The security officers concerned said that the motive of the suspects was still a mystery as they had entered the government area equipped with cyanide and weapons which are prohibited under the provisions of the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) signed between the Sri Lanka government and the LTTE on February 22 in 2002.

The police said that they had to adhere to the MOU which prohibited the use of the provisions of the Prevention of Terrorism Act (PTA) in dealing with these suspects. Hence the two suspects had to be interrogated under the normal laws of the land and remanded within 24 hours. According to the police, the two suspects have been remanded until September 29 after being produced in Hulftsdorp by the police on 15 September.

World Bank links aid With progress in talks

The World Bank (WB) has emphasised that it would have to "look very hard" at future programmes of assistance for Sri Lanka if peace talks did not recommence before the bank sat down to make decisions on aid packages.

"We hope and expect peace talks to resume. Otherwise, we would have to look very hard at future decisions we take," Country Director Peter Harrold said speaking to the press a day after his counterpart in the Japan Bank for International Co-operation (JBIC), Katsuhiko Okazaki, told Reuters news agency that aid from his country was directly tied to the resumption of talks.

"We are happy to support rehabilitation and reconstruction in the north and east but we need the LTTE to come back to the talks," Okazaki was quoted as saying.

Harrold said this applied particularly to funds for north-east reconstruction and rehabilitation. The bank has already approved a generous aid package for Sri Lanka but will naturally take into account the existing ground situation when passing more assistance adding that the international community

was justified in expecting progress in talks and in linking assistance to peace.

At present, World Bank moneys pledged at the International Aid Conference in Tokyo are already flowing into the country. However, none of the money intended for the north and east has started moving. The bank's new programme in support of the north and east is likely to be ready early next year, which is when decisions will be made. "If there is no progress in peace talks, it would be very difficult to move it forward," Harold reiterated, while adding that all donors and lending agencies remained "extremely optimistic".

"In planning new money, we are working on the assumption that peace talks will be back on track," he said. "Our support for the country as a whole and the government's programme is continuing."

Okazaki had also commented on future projects, saying JBIC would continue to back humanitarian and emergency projects in the north and east but that no new rebuilding projects would be started without renewed talks.

New SLMC/UNP MoU

The United National Party (UNP) and the Sri Lanka Muslim Congress (SLMC), constituents of the ruling United National Front government have decided to work out new political arrangement and to explore the possibilities of contesting provincial and general elections under one banner in the future.

At a meeting held at the Temple Trees residence of Mr. Ranil Wickremasinghe, the Prime Minister and leader of the UNP, it was further decided that the leaders of both parties should meet once every fortnight to discuss and find solutions to internal squabbles. Speculation in political circles in Colombo is that both parties would sign a new Memorandum of Understanding for the forthcoming provincial council elections to further strengthen their political alignment.

Interior Minister Mr. John Amaraturunge and UNP party chairman Mr. Malik Samarawickrema participated with the Prime Minister at the meeting. The SLMC delegation was led by Mr. Rauff Hakeem, its President and Mr. Hassan Ali, the general secretary.

The meeting was summoned by the PM following a decision by the politburo of the SLMC that it should contest alone in the forthcoming provincial council without forming an alliance with the UNP or any other parties. The SLMC leaders were of the view that continuing the present alliance with the UNP while some of the UNP parliamentarians adopted a hostile attitude towards SLMC politicians in the east and especially outside the Northeast province would not benefit the SLMC in the long run. The SLMC leaders further felt that even if the SLMC wanted to continue the present alliance with the UNP, it would be on a new arrangement between the two parties and not on the present MoU, which they considered was disadvantageous to the SLMC.

The SLMC signed a MoU with the UNP before the 2001 December general election after leaving the People Alliance government due to difference of opinion with the President Ms Chandrika Kumaratunge. Since then the SLMC played a leading role in bringing the UNP led political alliance UNF in December 2001 general election.

The political relationship between the UNP and SLMC has been strained as a result of the view within the SLMC that the Government was failing to adequately address the interests of the Muslim community in the peace process.

It is also said that the Prime Minister is very concerned by

moves of the main opposition Peoples Alliance in an attempt to woo the SLMC to join it in its attempt to form a new government without dissolving parliament and holding a new general election.

Muslims for separate representation

At a meeting on 17 September with Norwegian Deputy Foreign Minister Vidar Helgesen and the special envoy Eric Solheim, the Muslim leadership stressed the need for retaining a separate identity for the Muslim community and separate representation at any future peace talks between the Government and the LTTE.

According to SLMC sources, the "North East Muslim MPs Forum" led by the Ports and Shipping Minister and the SLMC leader Rauff Hakeem had a lengthy discussion with the peace envoys at the SLMC headquarters on the subjects such as Muslims' security, human rights violations and the political rights of the Muslims in the North-East.

Minister Hakeem has also been quoted as saying that unless a separate Muslim delegation is sent for the talks, there was a possibility that the Muslims leadership will boycott future talks.

Pointing a finger of accusation at the government of not giving them a proper representation at talks, Mr. Hakeem had insisted that Muslims also should be given a separate administrative structure in the Muslim majority areas in the North and the East, if the government "gave into" the LTTE's demand for an interim administration.

Minister Hakeem had pointed out that during his discussion with the LTTE chief negotiator Anton Balasingham in London in September last year prior to the commencement of peace talks, both sides agreed to have an independent Muslim delegation to participate in the talks, adding "The Norwegian Embassy in London issued a statement on that immediately afterwards and later during talks it was agreed by both parties to have a separate Muslim representation."

The meeting with the Norwegian facilitators came amidst reports that a group of Muslim MPs had held a special discussion in a move to represent them as a separate unit at future peace talks. Parliamentarian A.H.M. Fowzie, at whose residence the meeting had reportedly taken place, said in a statement Ministers Hakeem, M.H. Mohamed, Noordeen Mashoor and A.L.M. Athaulla attended the meeting.

According to PA Colombo District MP and former minister A H M Fowzie, the hope of a fair and just solution to the ethnic issue has begun to fade with the LTTE's repeated onslaughts on Muslims of the East. He lamented that he had got drawn into misunderstandings with certain quarters within his own party because he had expressed his unqualified support to the peace initiative. However, it was unfortunate that "right from the beginning we Muslims became voiceless in this process", adding that "all of us waited silently not because we were inactive or because we were insensitive to the issues facing the community but because we were fully committed to the peace process as none of us wanted it hindered."

He said: "Unfortunately the sacrifices made by the Muslims and their commitment for peace has so far not been appreciated by the parties involved in the talks. Despite many assurances the East has become a killing field where innocent Muslim blood is shed. The rulings and warnings by the Monitors have had no impact on the continued atrocities against Muslims."

"All of us including the SLMC have been clamouring for an independent representation at the talks. However, we have yet failed to get a positive response. There are basically a number of issues we have got to consider immediately. The immediate security of the Muslims of the North and East and their property takes priority among them. Unfortunately, the spirit of co-operation by the Muslims had no reciprocal response from any quarters," he said.

"I wish to reiterate that it is the crying need of the hour for us to unite and act as one group as otherwise we will be failing in our duty by the community. I, therefore, make an earnest appeal to all Muslim Parliamentarians, including those not present, to respond to the call of the hour. Let us shed all our differences. I, therefore, seek to invoke your wisdom to act fast and be cautious not allowing ourselves to be led into situations to compromise the honour and dignity of the community."

Measures against torture and deaths in custody

Sep 14 - The Sri Lanka's Inspector General of Police (IGP) Mr. T.E. Anandarajah in an attempt to curb human rights and fundamental rights abuses in the police service, announced that police officers who are found guilty by the Supreme Court for violating fundamental rights of citizens would be interdicted from service immediately and would be subjected to departmental disciplinary inquiry irrespective of their grade.

Human rights activists have complained in several forums held to mark Human Rights Day and seminars on protecting fundamental rights of the people that police officers who were found guilty by the Supreme Court of the country for the violation of the fundamental rights of citizens are still in service after paying fine.

The Police department has resisted from taking action to remove the violators from the service. The rights violators in the Police department are not even subjected to departmental disciplinary inquiry. This climate of impunity has encouraged errand police officers to continue to commit rights violations, human right sources said.

IGP's new measures against the errand officers are prompted by pressure by the Human Rights Commission of Sri Lanka (HRC) following the increase of deaths of suspects in the custody of the police, sources said. The HRC comprised of its Chairperson Radika Coomaraswamy, and members Dr. N. Selvakumaran, Dr. M.A. Zainudeen, Secretary Hema Siriwardene and Director of Inquiries Nimal Punchihewa.

The IGP has already issued instructions to his deputies (DIG) in provinces that officers-in-charge of police stations would be held responsible in future for the deaths of suspects in police custody.

HRC chairperson Radhika Coomaraswamy, said that at a meeting the police chief had agreed to take immediate action. She said the HRC would work with the Independent Police Commission to formulate guidelines to take disciplinary action against police officers who were found to be responsible for fundamental rights violations in cases before the Supreme Court. She said all police stations would display notices in all three languages outlining the rights of suspects.

Reports said that during the past three months there have been at least five deaths in police or prison custody, but the police deny any responsibility. In the latest incident a person identified as Okandahewage Jinadasa allegedly died at the Okkampitiya police check point on September 5 after he was arrested by two home guards for possessing illicit liquor.

Police claimed the victim had died of a fall but the post mortem report indicated there was assault with a dull weapon. In the most notorious headline-hitting case lottery winner Sunil Hemachandra (32), died recently at the Moragahahena police station amidst charges and counter claims of how he died and many a finger pointing to the police. Moragahahena police said the lottery winner died after he knocked his head during an epileptic fit. But the family debunked the police claim by saying Mr. Hemachandra had no epilepsy.

In another case, 25-year-old soldier G.K. Sanjeewa who was taken into custody by the Kadawatha police for allegedly robbing a shop died in the police cell a few days later with the police saying he had hanged himself with a belt. Even other officers in the police said the Kadawatha police had acted negligently by allowing the soldier to keep his belt.

R.M. Lokubanda (60) of Mathurata died on August 28 at the Mathurata police station after he was arrested over a quarrel with some villagers. Nuwara Eliya Police superintendent Wasantha Meegoda said the man had died of a heart attack but eye witnesses claimed they saw him being assaulted.

Another death was reported from the prison hospital in Kalutara where a person identified as Ranjith Perera who was taken into custody in connection with a heroin deal, reportedly hanged himself on September 5, using part of his clothing as a noose.

Furthermore the Independent Police Commission set up under the 17th Constitutional Amendment has been requested by the HRC to frame guidelines to take disciplinary action against police officers who were found guilty for fundamental rights violation cases by the country's Supreme Court.

EPDP distressed over Akashi

Sept 17 - The Eelam Peoples Democratic Party (EPDP) led by Douglas Devananda has written to the Japanese Ambassador in Colombo Seiichiro Otsuka on expressing distress over the Japanese special Envoy Yasushi Akashi's negative approach to meeting democratic Tamil parties.

The EPDP's letter said: "The Ceasefire Agreement is ineffective in safeguarding the human rights of the people of the North-East Province, particularly Tamils and Muslims. It leaves no room for political pluralism and democracy among the Tamils of Sri Lanka.

Ever since the Ceasefire Agreement was signed, the EPDP has been spearheading the struggle to safeguard human rights, democracy and political pluralism among the people of the North-East Province. It was in keeping with that noble goal that we had sought meeting with visiting foreign dignitaries. You would recall that in my meetings with you and on other occasions in the past, I had explained this position of ours. The request made by the EPDP on 12th September 2003 for a meeting with Special Envoy Yasushi Akashi should be seen in that light".

Ambassador Akashi's visit to Kilinochchi on 14th September 2003, to meet with the second-rung LTTE leadership was followed by visits to Kalmunai and Ampara. At these meetings in the East, representatives of the EPDP, PLOTE and the EPRLF(V), the only democratic political parties which have the courage to stand up to the LTTE's terrorism were excluded. This has been done in spite of our letter dated 19th August 2003, captioned 'Assessment of Public Opinion in the North and East of Sri Lanka' (Requesting representatives of foreign governments visiting the North-East to meet with a cross section of the public and with organisations which do not accept the poli-

cies of the LTTE).

It appears that the current visit of Ambassador Akashi had been designed to appease the LTTE rather than to help in finding a durable solution to the ethnic problem of Sri Lanka.

Not only a request from us for a meeting in Colombo with Ambassador Yasushi Akashi has been refused, but also our party representatives were excluded from meeting in the East.

We are distressed that a county like Japan which has built up traditions of human rights, democracy and political pluralism should only pay lip service to the very same principles in the affairs of Sri Lanka."

Bribery Commission TISL recommends changes

Transparency International Sri Lanka (TISL) has recommended in its final report that in order to attract more committed professionals and other qualified officials to the Commission to investigate allegations of bribery or corruption, the requirement that the commission should be made up of largely retired judges should be changed.

The TISL also observed that the Commission's inability to recruit personnel and the inadequate training received by Police officers working at the Commission particularly in the area of scientific frauds were serious shortcomings of the Commission. "No attempt has been made by any authority to train the investigation staff in corruption related issues," it said.

Due to the existing legal structure the Commission tends to act with little enthusiasm. Although the decision-making ability of two retired judges perhaps may be far ahead, their inves-

tigation capacity and commitment to counter corruption may be negligible.

The non-availability of an Institutional Development Plan (IDP) or a strategy developed or introduced either by the Government or the Commission, is also perceived as a hindrance to their operations.

The Commission's dependence on the Treasury for its financial needs made the Commission subject to indirect control of its executive.

Albeit the public expects the Commission to investigate the "massive" allegations of corruption and frauds reported in the media and obviously hopes prosecutions against the "sharks", no serious attempts have been made to date either by the government or by the Commission to build a rapport with the public for active public participation, which would enhance their perception of the Commission's credibility which is at a low ebb now.

The law as interpreted by the Commission does not allow it to carry out an investigation on its own and therefore it is unable to act on media reports relating to fraud.

Corruption, which comes under the purview of other authorities, are ignored by the Commission such as the election related corruption. The Commission should be empowered to exercise its powers in respect of bribery or corruption, notwithstanding general powers exercised by any other authority. The Commission should be free to deal with corruption in all public activities including elections - related corruption, matters arising out of audits, Cabinet decisions and public appointments. Corruption in the Judicial Administration should also be within the ambit of corruption.

"Generally the Commission does not act with enthusiasm or which the legal structure is responsible. Two Commission-



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ers have to be retired judges whose decision making ability may be far ahead but commitment to counter corruption may be negligible," it said.

Making further recommendations the report said all anti-corruption laws should ensure that the Commission is entitled to exercise its powers on its own volition even without a complaint from another entity. It should be free to deal with corruption in all public services.

Definition of corruption should include corruption in judicial administration. The Commission should also be empowered to cover corporate frauds and private sector corruption, for which the Law should be changed accordingly. Vacancies should not obstruct its functioning, it said.

An administrative step that should be taken, the report said, was that Police officers should only be utilized if they have been completely released from the police force, or otherwise should not be included in any investigation team.

India donates State-of-the-Art hospital for plantation workers

Indian High Commissioner Nirupam Sen said, a State-of-the-Art hospital would be built at Dickoya and the Indian government would bear the full cost of the project. He said already a survey has been done by a group of Indians. The High Commissioner was speaking at a ceremony held at the auditorium of the Kandy General Hospital, where the Government of India donated Intra-ocular lenses for the benefit of plantation workers who are victims of cataract.

The High Commissioner said that the plantation workers had a long history in Sri Lanka. They had come for work and were victims of many diseases and other maladies. When the colonial rulers brought them and employed them to work at the railway construction sites, twenty-five per cent of them perished due to the long and hard work that they had to do. They were victims of colonialism. Indians had been taken to most parts of the world including Sri Lanka, first for coffee and then for tea cultivation.

Mr. Nirupam Sen further said that the donation was the end result of the Human Resources Development Agency, the Government of Sri Lanka, the Government of India and the Centre for Sight. He added that if this project was successful, more donations would follow for the benefit of the plantation workers. He said that the Ophthalmic Surgeons would operate on 40 patients per day and the Human Resources Project would look after the transport and other medical needs. He said that at the moment there were 1500 patients who needed this treatment. When they suffer from this disability their work and also economy would be affected.

The High Commissioner said India had come to help Sri Lanka in many fields including defence. He also spoke about the Indian credit line and other sectors where Indian aid was given. He said that the donation of Intra-ocular lenses was the first step and more would follow. The scholarships awarded to students, which began with five in 1946/47, now stands at fifty.

Regarding the citizenship for the plantation workers, he said there were discussions going on and that he had heard from Parliamentarians that a Bill for this purpose was in the offing and he added that this was a welcome move for a group of people whose ancestors too had given much of their life to Sri Lanka.

The gift of intra-ocular lenses were handed over to the Director General of the Kandy General and Teaching Hospital Dr. Sam Samarasinghe.

The Assistant High Commissioner Achal Malhotra, the Director General of the Human Resources Project Ranjith

Ellegala, Director General of the Kandy Teaching Hospital Dr. Sam Samarasinghe addressed the invitees.

Among those present were Parliamentarians and Provincial Council members, the Chairman of the Provincial Council D. Madiguvaraja, Provincial Education Minister Velluswamy Radhakrishnan, Dr. Reggie Seimen, Ophthalmic Surgeons Dr. Tissa Senaratne and Dr. Saman Senanayake.

Rise in foreign investment

Sept 6 - Sri Lanka's Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) inflows reached US\$ 242 million last year, a three-fold increase from the US\$ 82 million in 2001.

This 195 per cent increase in FDI inflows last was achieved in the backdrop of a decreasing global trend in FDI, stated the World Investment Report of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) which was launched on 5 September. This performance places Sri Lanka among the third in Asia-Pacific countries which defied the downturn. FDI inflows to the region decreased from US\$ 107 billion in 2001 to US\$ 95 billion in 2002.

However, FDI flows to South Asia including India and Pakistan increased from US\$ 4 billion in 2001 to 4.6 billion in 2002. The report said that global FDI inflows, already down by over 40 per cent in 2001, fell by another 21 per cent in 2002 to US\$651 billion.

"One hundred eight of 195 economies saw lower inflows in 2002 than in 2001," the report said.

The World Investment Report referring to Indo-Lanka Free Trade Agreement has said that although the FTA does not address investment, it has stimulated new FDI for rubber based products, ceramics, electrical and electronic items, wood-based products, agricultural commodities and consumer durables.

"Because of the agreement, 37 projects are now in operation with a total investment of US\$ 145 million," the report said. Dr. Nihal Samarappuli, Executive Director (Research), the Board of Investment (BOI) said at the launch of the report at the UN Compound Colombo, said that Sri Lanka is still categorised as an 'under performer' among most of other poor and unstable economies with regard to FDI performance and potential.

BOI Chairman, Arjuna Mahendra said that Sri Lanka's below average performance is due to a few reasons which discourage foreign investment and the Government is finding solutions to these issues.

"Among the key areas are labour related issues. Sri Lanka should amend the Termination of Employment Act which is a disincentive as far as foreign investment is concerned.

We should also have a more sophisticated approach towards grading incentives to the investors. Another important task is to restructure the BOI and make it a more effective investment promotion body," Mahendra said.

He said the Government has identified five areas to attract FDIs including Agro-based products, software, textiles, non-textiles industries and leisure sectors. The World Investment Report also said that although the prospects for a rise in FDI inflows to Asia and the Pacific this year are slim, the region will continue to be the largest FDI recipient among developing regions in 2003 and its long-term prospects remain good.

"The factors that have contributed to the FDI downturn including slow global economic recovery, weak global demand, shaken corporate confidence and adjustments in industries such as semiconductors/electronics are expected to improve in 2003-2004, helping usher in more FDI in the longer term. Overall, competition for FDI within Asia and with other regions will intensify," the report said.

Strengthening the peace process

Jehan Perera

The latest meeting of the Norwegian facilitators with the LTTE appears to have proceeded satisfactorily. On their return from the Wannu they expressed confidence that the LTTE would be presenting their proposals regarding an interim administration by mid October. Further they have indicated the possibility of a resumption of peace talks in November. The seriousness with which the Norwegian government took the meetings in Sri Lanka can be seen in them sending both Deputy Foreign Minister Vidar Helgesen and special envoy Erik Solheim to meet with the Sri Lankan parties to the conflict.

An important reason for the keen interest of the Norwegian facilitators in paving the way for a resumption of peace talks would be the mood among sections of the international community. There is a perception that the suspension of peace talks since April has effectively stalled, if not reversed, some of the gains of the peace process. Japan's peace envoy Yasushi Akashi even went to the extent of saying that the international community might lose its interest in Sri Lanka if the peace process remained stagnant for much longer as it had other international priorities that could take precedence.

At the Tokyo donor conference in June, the international community made its pledges of economic assistance, which were unprecedented in magnitude, conditional upon the satisfactory progress of the peace process. At the post Tokyo donor meeting in Colombo a fortnight ago, this same message was reiterated.

For a while, in a four-month period from April to last month, it seemed that the peace miracle might be in danger of breaking down. In April 2003, the LTTE suspended peace talks with the Sri Lankan Government. They also boycotted the important donor conference that took place in Tokyo that

month. For the first time, the LTTE also strongly criticised the Government led by Prime Minister Ranil Wickremesinghe of trying to deny the Tamil people their just rights.

However, more recently the LTTE appears to be reconsidering its strategy. There appears to be a serious effort being made on the part of the LTTE to reach an understanding with the Government. After the Paris meeting, there is a general belief that peace talks will recommence soon. The core of the LTTE's continuing partnership with the Government is its preference for dealing with Prime Minister Ranil Wickremesinghe rather than with the opposition political parties.

Constructive engagement

A policy of disengagement and ultimatum is likely to fail to change the mind of the LTTE, and is only likely to isolate them more to the detriment of the entire country. This was the bitter experience of the period of the last government when the effort to marginalise the LTTE locally and internationally resulted in an escalation of mutual destruction in the country. The continuous effort of the government and international agencies to engage with the LTTE can be counted as being at least partly responsible for the fact that it has not withdrawn from the peace process, even though it withdrew from peace talks.

The past experience of dealing with the LTTE suggests that the better way to deal with them would be through a policy of constructive engagement. This is what the government and most of the international community is doing in different ways. But there is more that UNICEF and other organisations and governments working with the LTTE need to do their utmost to rectify, in particular with regard to human rights violations.

Another positive example of con-

structive engagement would be the foreign exposure visits that numerous LTTE cadre are going on at the invitation of different members of the international community. These visits will undoubtedly show them new vistas and provide them with insights into governance and social life that they could never have obtained in the Wannu. The fact that the LTTE leadership is nevertheless permitting their middle and higher level cadre to go abroad in this manner is indicative that the top leadership too is prepared for the changes in consciousness that these exposure visits will necessarily bring with them.

Of course, reliance on purely voluntary transformation as a result of new learning and engagement with the outside world may be insufficient to propel the LTTE into rapid progress where respecting human rights is concerned. The incentive of international recognition and legitimacy would be a powerful agent for change in this regard. The LTTE should be made to realise that the longer they continue to assassinate their political opponents and recruit children, no amount of power on the ground is going to get them international recognition and legitimacy.

No visible breakthrough

The fact is that from about February this year, when the government and LTTE negotiating teams met for the last time in Hakone, Japan, there has been no visible breakthrough in the peace process. Joint government-LTTE mechanisms for utilising the aid provided remain in abeyance.

In the resolution of a protracted conflict, it may sometimes be necessary to have visible breakthroughs in order to keep morale high, both of the negotiators themselves and also the interested public. Virtually all rounds of the peace talks that commenced with the first one in Sattahip, Thailand exactly a year ago, had such moments of brilliance. These moments were accentuated by the flamboyance of the LTTE's chief negotiator at those talks, Dr Anton Balasingham, who had a sure grasp of the Tamil cause and the LTTE's history.

Whether it was the redefinition of the LTTE's concept of Tamil Eelam in Sattahip in September, the Oslo declaration on federalism in December, or

the acceptance of a human rights framework in Hakone in February, every round of the peace talks brought with it news of a positive breakthrough that the international media could carry to all parts of the world. But with the apparent withdrawal of Dr Balasingham from the scene, and his replacement by less autonomous negotiators, it is unlikely that visible breakthroughs of the same kind will take place at future talks.

Despite the outstanding issue of the LTTE camp in Trincomalee, the sense of crisis in the relationship between the Government and LTTE that seemed so acute in April, just prior to the Tokyo donor conference, and in the weeks that followed, appears to have receded. With the conclusion of the Paris meeting, the peace process has reached a new stage of consolidation. There appears to be a regaining of the Government-LTTE partnership in the peace process.

Strengthening the peace process

It is therefore important that those who are following the Sri Lankan peace process should draw a distinction between visible breakthroughs at peace talks and the overall strengthening of the peace process that is taking place. There is a need to bear in mind that peace talks are, by and large, a matter between the government and LTTE. But it is also important to bear in mind that the peace process is more than peace talks between the government and LTTE. The well being of the people of Sri Lanka, north and south, should not be held hostage to the agendas of either the government or LTTE, or both of them together.

The peace process includes the government and LTTE; but also includes the other political forces in the country, not to mention the 18 million people who constitute the population of the country. The peace process should not be limited or equated only to the presence or absence of peace talks. The difference between the peace process and peace talks can be seen most clearly in some of the events of these past five months. During this period there were no peace talks between the government and LTTE. But a strong case can be made that the peace process did not get weakened during this period, where there was a hiatus in the peace talks, but instead got strengthened from an overall perspective.

On the one hand it is true that in

addition to the absence of peace talks, there were other factors that cast a pall upon the peace process. Chief among these was, and remains, the LTTE's open defiance of the ruling of the Norwegian-led international monitors regarding the establishment of a military camp in the Trincomalee district. The refusal of the LTTE to respect their ruling has served to weaken the credibility of the international monitors as an effective referee of the ceasefire agreement. The other two major issues are the ongoing campaign of assassinations of members of Tamil parties that oppose the LTTE and child recruitment. On these three issues the LTTE have stood recalcitrant, although its new partnership with UNICEF promises movement on the last.

Constructive and positive work

On the other hand, in the past five months there has also been a great deal of constructive and positive work that has been done, both by the LTTE itself and also other parties, to take the peace process forward. A most valuable contribution in this regard was the LTTE's highly publicised deliberations in Paris on an interim administrative framework to govern the northeast. The LTTE's decision to include the diaspora community, and include leading academics and former senior government officials in a broad-based effort to come up with a concrete proposal, have served to strengthen confidence in their commitment to a negotiated settlement.

It is significant that the meeting of the LTTE's constitutional affairs committee in Paris was not used by the LTTE to attack or discredit the Government. There is no doubt that the LTTE's experts who met in Paris would have come up with a maximum demand for the envisaged Interim Administration.

The document has now been taken to the Wannai to be approved by the LTTE's top leadership. It may even be further strengthened and maximised there.

But the important question is not the quantum of powers demanded in the LTTE document that finally emerges. The important question is whether the LTTE will insist that the Government should accept its document right now, and make it a precondition for restarting the peace talks. There are mixed signals emanating from the LTTE with regard to this. What is desirable is that

the LTTE will publicise its position, and seek to rally longer term support among the Tamil people and international community for it.

A further strengthening of the peace process has taken place with the increased interaction taking place between the LTTE and international organisations. An example would be the action plan drawn up by UNICEF that the LTTE has endorsed. According to the action plan, which is in the process of being implemented, the LTTE has agreed to an awareness programme on child rights to be carried out in the northeast within the next few months. The LTTE has also agreed to the publication by UNICEF of a monthly child situation report which would cover such areas as child recruitment and rehabilitation and child labour.

The challenge for UNICEF would be to ensure by non-confrontational and problem-solving methods that the LTTE honours the terms of the action plan for a restoration of the lost rights of children in the northeast. UNICEF, for instance, should endeavour to obtain a written guarantee that the children in LTTE-controlled orphanages and rehabilitation centres will not be made use of for purposes of war. They should not merely hand over large sums of money and remain as passive partners, but ensure that there is active monitoring of both expenditures and outcomes. Constructive engagement here means active involvement. The LTTE would also be aware that an agreement with an internationally recognised organisation like UNICEF has to be taken seriously if it is not to suffer serious erosion of credibility.

In endorsing UNICEF's action plan, the LTTE have gone beyond the verbal assurances that they once gave to the UN's special envoy on child rights Olara Otunnu which they failed to honour. This shift of attitude on the part of the LTTE is evidence of how the peace process is continually being strengthened even in the absence of peace talks between the government and LTTE.

President's commitment

Yet another major contribution towards the strengthening of the peace process has been President Chandrika Kumaratunga's rejection of a political alliance with the JVP. This political alliance would certainly have strengthened the political opposition to the government, both at the electoral and ideo-

logical levels. The President's decision to forego this political advantage was due, in large measure, to her refusal to agree to the JVP's demand that the new alliance should oppose the devolution of power as a solution to the ethnic conflict, and Norwegian facilitation in the present peace process.

If the President had agreed to the JVP's terms, the peace process would undoubtedly have been seriously jeopardised. With the mass base of the PA behind it, the JVP would have organised mass events that had the potential of generating open confrontation with the government. In turn, the perception of a government on the defensive would have weakened the peace process.

But due to the fact that the President publicly, and courageously, upheld her commitment to a negotiated political solution through the devolution of power and with Norwegian facilitation, she helped to consolidate public support for the present peace process and thereby served to strengthen it.

Civil society contribution

A final factor that has contributed to the strengthening of the peace process should also be noted. This is the ceaseless work being done by a multitude of civil society organisations to build bridges between the ethnic communities and to make them feel more comfortable about the political compromises necessary for a negotiated peace. Organisations such as the Centre for Policy Alternatives are developing cutting edge thinking on issues of federal power sharing and human rights protection. Others such as the Anti War Coalition recalled the events of July 1983 and called on political leaders to apologise to the victims. Through such activities the thinking of people about the ethnic conflict is in the process of transformation.

Another example would be the island-wide poster competition carried out by the National Peace Council on the theme of women and peace to commemorate international peace day. Due to communication problems, the win-

ners in Jaffna were notified only at 10 am on the day before the awards ceremony. Nevertheless, schoolchildren though they were, they made it down to Colombo by the next morning along with their parents and teachers. They were able to witness the peace loving sentiments of the people in the south. This is the strengthening of the peace process, one that the suspension of peace talks has not stopped.

So long as a return to war is kept at bay, the natural resilience of Sri Lankan society and its facility for multi-ethnic coexistence, so easily visible on the streets of any big city, whether Colombo or Jaffna, will ensure that the peace process grows from strength to strength. Therefore, when assessing the situation in the country, it is only fair and proper that the entirety of the peace process be evaluated rather than only aspects of it, such as the suspension of peace talks.

But the peace talks that are currently suspended must restart. Direct engagement will continue to strengthen the peace process. □

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Resumption of peace talks, a precondition for aid

The Japanese special peace envoy to Sri Lanka, Mr. Yasushi Akashi, warned that the international community might be forced to divert its attention away from Sri Lanka and concentrate on other conflict-ridden countries, if the peace process remained at a standstill. "There's a danger that the international community's attention might shift to other areas," he told a media briefing in Colombo at the Hotel Galadari, at the conclusion of his 6-day visit to the country.

Mr Akashi arrived in Colombo on 10 September on a six-day visit. He stayed in Sri Lanka until September 16 and held discussions with several political leaders, including President Kumaratunga and Prime Minister Ranil Wickremasinghe, regarding the present stalled peace talks between the Government of Sri Lanka and the LTTE.

The main aim of his visit was to preside over a conference on 12 September in Colombo to decide the criteria for allocating funds pledged at the Tokyo donors conference held in June.

Mr. Yasushi Akashi said that the funds pledged at the Tokyo donor conference would be channeled for the reconstruction of the northeast only after the resumption of stalled peace talks. The international aid community and the World Bank are also of the same view, he said at the end of the discussion held at Colombo Hilton Hotel on 12 September to find ways and means to release the funds pledged to the national development of Sri Lanka, sources said.

Mr. Akashi further said the chances of resuming stalled peace talks between the Government and the LTTE were high. Another round of talks with the representatives of donor countries and international aid community would be held during the end of this year or first part of next year, he said.

Though invited to the conference, the LTTE did not attend. In a statement,

the LTTE's peace secretariat said that it had received an invitation from the Japanese Embassy in Colombo to attend the meeting with Mr. Akashi, but the LTTE expressed inability to attend, saying that it did not attend the Tokyo Conference, and the conditions that prevailed at the time of the Tokyo conference have not changed "in any manner enabling the organization to participate in the follow-up meeting."

"The lack of an effective structure to receive and disburse the funds meant for resettlement, reconstruction and development, was the sole reason for the organization to opt for an interim administrative structure, which alone," the LTTE said, "can effectively deal with the process."

Expressing disappointment over the LTTE's boycotting of the Mr Akashi said, "The International Community is getting frustrated by their non participation and the delay in the peace talks."

"It is entirely up to the LTTE to make up its mind," he told media personnel in Colombo after chairing the morning session of the follow-up meeting to the June Tokyo donor conference.

The countries and the international organisations participating at the meeting were the Commonwealth of Australia, Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Netherlands, Norway, Sweden, Swiss Confederation, United Kingdom, Northern Ireland, US, European Commission, Asian Development Bank (ADB), the International Monetary Fund (IMF), United Nations Development Program (UNDP), United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and the World Bank.

Describing the current peace process as "too fragile" he said the international community "with a mood of cautious optimism" was hopeful that it would "be built up" to greater stability. "The peace process has to be sup-

ported by all people in Sri Lanka," said Mr. Akashi shortly after a media statement by the participants expressed, "strong commitment to continue and intensify reconstruction and development assistance to the South." The participants from 12 donor countries and seven international organizations reaffirmed the Tokyo Declaration that "Assistance by the donor community must be linked to substantial and parallel progress in the peace process."

Mr. Akashi said, "we are concerned that development in the north and east was at snail's pace affecting the lives of so many ordinary people", but blamed it on the failure to resume talks stalled by the rebels since April 21.

The prepared media statement however played down the gravity of the situation saying the participants "welcomed the continued commitment of both parties to the peace process and their continued efforts to resume peace talks, with a view to achieving durable peace based on a federal structure".

Akashi had talks with Prime Minister Ranil Wickremesinghe at his official residence "Temple Trees", and also had discussions with Opposition Leader Mahinda Rajapakse and a delegation of the Tamil Nationalist Alliance. He also met President Chandrika Kumaratunga and held discussions with her lasting more than an hour.

The North East Muslim Parliamentarians' Association (NEMPA) told the Japanese special peace envoy Mr. Yasushi Akashi that it would not send its representatives to participate in the future peace talks until the Sri Lanka Government includes participation of Muslims as a separate group, its general secretary M.L.A.M. Hisbullah said.

The delegation of the North East Muslim Parliamentarians' Association met Mr. Yasushi Akashi and held a three-hour discussion regarding the Muslims' stand on the present peace process. The delegation told Mr. Akashi that no useful purpose would be served unless Muslim representation at the peace talks is allowed as a separate group.

Currently Sri Lanka Muslim Congress (SLMC) leader and Minister Mr. Rauff Hakim has been participating in the peace talks as a representative of the Government of Sri Lanka.

The SLMC is a constituent of the United National Front (UNF) government.

NEMPA comprises Muslim parliamentarians of all political parties, Sri Lanka Muslim Congress, National Unity Alliance and the United National Party (UNP)..

The delegation submitted its views on the proposed interim administrative structure for the northeast province, and the problems confronting the Muslims in the east in the spheres of security, employment and business opportunities, sources said.

Mr. Akashi is reported to have assured the NEMPA delegation that he would talk to the leaders of the UNF government and the LTTE regarding their request.

The Ceylon Workers Congress (CWC), a key constituent of the United National Front (UNF) government made an appeal to Mr. Akashi to withdraw funding for the controversial Upper Kotmale electricity project to which the Cabinet had given approval despite opposition from the CWC. A CWC

delegation led by its leader and Minister in the UNF government Mr. Arumugam Thondaman met Mr. Akashi and brought to his notice the negative impacts of Upper Kotmale electricity project on the eco-system of the hill region and on social and economic spheres of the hill country Tamils especially in the upper Kotmale region.

The CWC delegation pointed out to Mr. Akashi that lands and houses belonging to thousands of hill country Tamils living in the area for several years would go under water if the Kotmale dam was constructed under the proposed Upper Kotmale Electricity project. It urged Mr. Akashi to convince the Japanese government to take positive steps to withdraw the funding. The CWC also handed a memorandum to Mr. Akashi describing the potential damages to social and economic lives of hill country Tamils if the proposed Upper Kotmale Electricity Project is implemented. The CWC claimed that 500 families would be affected by the project and the Government had not given them alternative land. It alleged

that environmental implications had been overlooked with the area likely to be prone to earth slips. It also stated there were 28 families who were yet to get compensation from the Lower Kotmale project. Mr. Akashi, it is learnt, assured the CWC delegation that he would bring this matter to the consideration of the Japanese government, sources said.

Mr. Akashi, also held talks with Muslim and Tamil delegations separately and jointly at Kalmunai in the eastern province. Mr. Akashi arrived at Kalmunai accompanied by Minister and Sri Lanka Muslim Congress leader Mr. Rauff Hakeem and SLMC parliamentarians Mr. H.M.M. Harris and Mr. Anwer Ismail.

Mr. Akashi met the Muslim delegation first at the Kalmunai Mahmud Girls College, which was attended by Minister Hakeem and parliamentarians Mr. Harris and Ismail. The Muslim delegation brought to the notice of Mr. Akashi the problems confronting Muslims in the sphere of security and development in their villages.

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Mr. Akashi thereafter met the peace committee, which comprised Tamils and Muslims, at the office of the Kalmunai Divisional Secretariat (Muslim Division). Tamils were represented by Amparai district Tamil National Alliance parliamentarian Mr. A.Chandra Nehru, Brother Stephen Mathew, Dr. S.I.A Mathew and Dr N.Muruganathan. Minister Mr.Rauff Hakeem, parliamentarians Mr. Harris and Mr.Anwer Ismail and two others represented Muslims.

The Tamil delegation pointed out the urgent need of developing Tamil villages in the Amparai district. The Muslim delegation told Mr. Akashi about alleged extortion and kidnapping of Mualims taking place even in the present peace environment.

Mr. Akashi during his tour to Amparai district met a Sinhalese delegation at the Amparai district secretariat. The Sinhala delegation comprised two representatives each from the United National Party (UNP) and Peoples Alliance (PA) and members of the clergy and civil leaders, sources said. The delegation told Mr. Akashi the aspirations of the Sinhalese living in the Amparai district. Later he met the Amparai district parliamentarian and a Minister in the UNF government Mr.P.Dayaratne, sources said.

The Japanese peace envoy told Mr.Dayaratne that he was able to obtain first hand information from the rural people of Amparai on the ground situation, sources said.

Akashi expressed happiness at meeting all three communities separately. Akashi said if real peace is to be achieved in Sri Lanka, the Sinhalese, Tamils and Muslims must trust each other, win confidence and live together. This is how the world community wanted Sri Lanka's ethnic problem solved in a manner that all communities' desires and aspirations are fulfilled, he said.

Mr.Yasushi Akashi had discussions with the Head of the Political Wing of the LTTE S.P. Thamilselvan at the LTTE's Peace Secretariat building in Killinochchi on 14 September.

It is understood that the discussion centered on reviewing the ground situation, ways to resume stalled peace talks and the concerns expressed by Muslims in east.

Akashi pointed out that the donor-community was disappointed by LTTE's non-participation in the Tokyo and the follow-up conferences in Colombo.

Thamilselvan explained to the envoy the lack of progress in bringing normalcy to day-to-day lives of the economically deprived sections of the Tamil people. He told the Japanese envoy that the proposals for the Interim Administration developed at the Paris conference with the help of expatriate Tamil experts and LTTE officials would contain LTTE's suggestions on mechanisms to receive, disburse and monitor utilization of development funds.

Japanese Ambassador in Colombo Mr. Soiehiro Otsuka, Director of the southwest Asia division Mr.Tako Yamada, Mr.Ryousuke Kamono from Japanese Ministry foreign affairs, Second Secretary Mr.K.Yagi and Second Secretary Mr.M.Yasuda accompanied Mr. Akashi to the discussions in Kilinochchi.

During his visit to Kilinochchi, Akashi also visited the site of the Kilinochchi hospital and the office of the Japanese Medical NGO AMDA in Kilinochchi.

Mr Akashi warned that the international community might be forced to divert its attention away from Sri Lanka and concentrate on other conflict-ridden countries, if the peace process remained at a standstill. "There's a danger that the international community's attention might shift to other areas," Mr. Akashi told a media briefing in Colombo at the Hotel Galadari, at the conclusion of his 6-day visit to the country.

Ambassador Akashi stressed that the international community, which was "fickle", expressed their "impatience" over the failure to move forward the peace process. However, he noted that right now the international community was closely following the progress of the peace process in Sri Lanka. The international community's attention towards Sri Lanka was clearly evident during the post-Tokyo conference held in Colombo. "We were able to identify the areas of interest and this shows the interests the other governments and agencies have in order to help the people of Sri Lanka," Akashi

noted. He also observed that in the first phase of the peace process, progress had been "positive and useful" whereas the situation currently "remains fragile and delicate."

On a hopeful note he said that there had been some areas of progress in the peace process with the achievement of a certain degree of mutual confidence established between the government and the LTTE.

Ambassador Akashi expressed concern over the political killings and recruitment of child soldiers by the LTTE. "We follow with interest the progress of discussions over the Kinniya camp and also follow with considerable concern the location of the Trincomalee camps," said Akashi adding that they hoped very much that these controversies could be resolved.

Commenting on the LTTE's setting up of a camp in Kinniya, Akashi said the Japanese government sided with the Sri Lanka Monitoring Mission (SLMM) although the LTTE had told them that the camp was in existence prior to the signing of the ceasefire agreement.

Speaking at the opening of the media briefing he said the main objectives of his visit were achieved with regard to the peace building and post conflict rehabilitation in Sri Lanka.

Ambassador Akashi held an hour and a half long meeting with President Chandrika Kumaratunga yesterday and on Sunday had

Mr Akashi said that it was a "very useful" discussion he had with the LTTE political wing leader S.P. Thamilselvan when he visited Kilinochchi.

During the discussion, he said, the LTTE political wing leader stressed that aid coming to the North East should be processed through the provisions of the administrative structure, which the LTTE had drawn up. Akashi said he had proposed to the LTTE the establishment of a North and East Rehabilitation Fund (NERF) for diverting funds and other alternatives put forward by certain international agencies and governments.

After the end of his visit to the island, Mr Akashi left for India today in a bid to brief the Indian government of the current status of the peace process in Sri Lanka. □

Civil War and Poverty

Muttukrishna Sarvananthan

B.A. (Hons) Economics (Delhi). M.Sc. (Econ) in Economic Development (Salford). M.Sc. in Development Planning and Administration. PhD in Development Economics (Wales)

Twenty years of civil war has left the Sri Lankan economy in general and the economy of the North&East Province (N&E) in particular in tatters. The civil war had its impact on poverty as well, *inter alia*. However the impact of the civil war on poverty differed in different regions of the country. Whilst the N&E Province and the adjacent areas experienced increased and acute poverty as a direct result of the war the rest of the country did not experience war-induced poverty.

According to available evidence the proportion of the poor in the total population of Sri Lanka actually declined between the early-1980s and the late-1990s. In 1980/1 half the total population was poor but in 1996/7 only 31% of the population was poor using a higher poverty line¹. That is, the income or consumption poverty seems to have dropped. However, we have to remember that post-1983 poverty data does not incorporate the N&E Province and therefore the decline in poverty in 1996/7 may have been overstated. Yet it would be reasonable to infer that the incidence of poverty declined between the early-1980s and the late-1990s though we cannot be sure of by how much.

Despite a protracted civil war the poverty level seemed to have dropped primarily because of the growth of the armed forces. The number of personnel in the armed forces and the police increased to nearly 300,000 in the late-1990s from less than 100,000 in the early-1980s. A vast majority of the personnel in the armed forces and the police were drawn from rural areas outside the N&E. Thus the rural employment creation effect of the civil war contributed to reduction in poverty in the country outside the N&E. In addition, the huge rise in labour exports to the Middle East and the export garments industry (which by and large drew labour from rural areas outside the

N&E) also contributed to the declining poverty levels in the country outside the N&E.

Though in the rest of the country the incidence of poverty seems to have declined during two decades of civil war it was the contrary in the N&E. To the author's learned judgement around 50% of the N&E population could be under the higher poverty line. This is because of massive displacement of rural farming communities, fishing communities, destruction of farming and fishing equipments and private properties resulting in loss of livelihoods to hundreds of thousands of people throughout the N&E and adjacent areas. The Northern Province is the poorest province in terms of per capita income and the Eastern Province is the next poorest². According to the Department of Census and Statistics, in the early-1980s Sabaragamuwa Province was the poorest in terms of per capita income and the Uva Province second poorest that is now being occupied by Northern and Eastern Provinces respectively. The per capita income of the Northern Province was LKR 37,206 in 2000 while the national per capita income was nearly LKR 63,000³.

According to a survey undertaken by the Council of NGOs Jaffna District in September 2002 the unemployment rate in the Jaffna district was 28% while at the national level (barring the N&E Province) it was only 8%. The unemployment rate among women was 32% whereas among men it was 23% in Jaffna. The underemployment rate of 37% in Jaffna was split into 60% among women and 8% among men. Although no data exists it is understandable that the unemployment and underemployment rates in the Vanni (encompassing Kilinochchi, Mannar, Mullaitivu and Vavuniya districts) would be considerably higher than that of Jaffna. The huge unemployment and underemployment problems as a result of the civil

war are a major cause of poverty in the N&E.

Agriculture (food and cash crops, livestock and fishery) has been the primary economic activity in the N&E Province, historically. It remained so even during the civil war in the past two decades. However the nature of the agriculture sector has undergone a change during the past 20 years. In pre-war times the N&E was a significant surplus producer of food (e.g. paddy) and cash crops (e.g. onion, chilli & tobacco) and fish products, which used to be transported to other parts of the country for marketing. However, due to massive displacement of populations, laying of landmines in agricultural lands, absorption of highly fertile agricultural lands cum coastal areas into high security zones, economic embargo on the N&E covering fuel, fertilisers & pesticides, restrictions on the transport of local produce to the rest of the country, lack of electricity and severe time and distance restrictions on fishing, a surplus agrarian economy has been transformed into a subsistence/survival economy.

For example, in 1980 the N&E Province produced almost one-third of the total production of paddy in the country, which dropped to a quarter in 2000. In 1980, nearly 40% of the onions produced in the country were in the N&E, which dropped to nearly 30% in 2000. Little more than a quarter of the total chilli production in the country in 1980 was in the N&E, which had dropped to just 8% in 2000. The Northern Province accounted for 13% of the total potato output in the country in 1980, which dropped to less than 1% in 2000. In 1980 N&E accounted for 56% of the total fish catches of the country, which dropped to just 16% in 2000⁴.

The backwardness and relative deprivation of the N&E economy is not only in terms of per capita income (i.e. in terms of income or consumption poverty) but also in terms of social indicators (i.e. in terms of human poverty). For example, the percentage of households with access to safe water in the country (as a whole) is 45% whereas in the N&E it is only 20% (less than half the national average). Nationally 73% of the total households do have sanitary facility whereas only 48% of

the households in the N&E do. While nationally 17% of babies are born underweight in the N&E 26% of the babies are born so. Similarly, while 30% of the children under-5 years are underweight nationally it is 46% in the N&E. Almost 50% of the pregnant women in the N&E are malnourished. Almost 20% of the births take place at home in the N&E whereas nationally only 4% do so (five times higher than the national average). As a corollary the maternal mortality ratio (i.e. death of mothers during every 1,000 live births) in the N&E is 81 while it is only 23 in the country as a whole⁵ (three and a half times the national average).

Furthermore, relative deprivation of basic economic infrastructures is another dimension of human poverty faced by the N&E populace. For example, whilst 56% of the total households in Sri Lanka have electricity only 30% of the households in the N&E do (little more than half the national average). Further, while on average there is 1 telephone for every 10 people in the country (as a whole) it is 1:29 in the N&E (almost one-third the national aver-

age)⁶. In the 21st century World electricity and telecommunications are necessities of human life.

In addition to higher levels of income/consumption poverty and human poverty (in comparison to the population outside the N&E) the N&E populace is faced with psychosocial deprivation as a result of displacement from their homes (resulting in loss of identity, self-esteem and cultural degradation), violence, torture, trauma, etc⁷.

The foregoing are many facets of absolute and relative poverty and deprivation faced by the population in the theatres of war. Having said that it is important to remember that despite untold hardships unleashed by the gruesome civil war the N&E population did not experience starvation or hunger as in some other internal war-torn regions such as Southern Sudan. The inflow of foreign remittances from kith and kin that fled abroad as refugees and assistance from international relief agencies and the Government of Sri Lanka mitigated the impact of the war on the people of N&E.

Since the indefinite ceasefire in effect from the beginning of 2002 the general economic, social and psychological conditions of the people of the N&E are improving slowly but surely. The evidence for this change is emerging gradually. For instance, according to the UNHCR, nearly half the internally displaced people (IDP) have voluntarily returned to their places of origin in the past 16 months. This is taking place spontaneously against the advice of the UNHCR. The UNHCR would not encourage resettlement of IDPs unless and until the land mines are com-

pletely cleared in suspected lands. Yet, the fact that the IDPs are spontaneously returning to their places of origin (vast majority to Jaffna) even before the clearance of landmines is complete is a testimony to the sense of confidence and security felt by the ordinary public.

Moreover, according to anecdotal evidence, the extent of crop agriculture cultivation in the N&E has increased significantly in the past 16 months. Since agricultural crops are seasonal the output data are still not available. However, fish catches in the N&E have tremendously improved during 2002. While the total fish catches in the N&E were 44,000 metric tons in 2000 it almost doubled to 85,000 metric tons in 2002.

The foregoing evidences indicate the enormous potential out there for economic revival and poverty alleviation in the N&E Province. However, un-cleared landmines, high security zones, remaining restrictions on fishing, arbitrary taxation and the general political and economic uncertainty appears to be some of the non-market institutional impediments for the full realisation of the peace dividend in the N&E⁸. The sooner these non-market institutional impediments are removed the better it would be for alleviation of war-induced poverty in the North&East Province.

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1 Ratnayake, R.M.K, (1998: 595), 'Poverty in Sri Lanka: Incidence and Poverty Reduction Strategies', Chapter 29 in A.D.V.de S.Indraratna (ed), *Fifty Year's of Sri Lanka's Independence: A Socio Economic Review*, Sri Lanka Institute of Social and Economic Studies, Colombo, and Central Bank of Sri Lanka, *Consumer Finances and Socio-Economic Survey 1996/7*.

2 Mutaliph, Wasantha and Bandaranaike cited in Sarvananthan, Muttukrishna, (2003a: 4), *An Introduction to the Conflict Time Economy of the North&East Province of Sri Lanka*, Working Paper 1, May, International Centre for Ethnic Studies, Colombo.

3 Sarvananthan (2003a: 4), *op cited*.

4 Sarvananthan (2003a: 6-14), *op cited*.

5 World Health Organisation cited in Sarvananthan (2003a: 19-20), *op cited*.

6 United Nations cited in Sarvananthan (2003a: 18-19), *op cited*.

7 Somasundaram, Daya, (1998), *Scarred Minds: The Psychological Impact of War on Sri Lankan Tamils*, Sage Publications India Ltd, New Delhi.

8 Sarvananthan, Muttukrishna, (2003b), *What Impede Economic Revival in the North&East Province of Sri Lanka?* Working Paper 2, June, International Centre for Ethnic Studies, Colombo.

● Conflict in Cohabitation

The domestic dispute as to who should address the UN General Assembly assumed international proportions in which even the Secretary General of the United Nations Kofi Annan became involved, though not of his own choosing. For some weeks as the dispute rumbled on, it appeared that President Chandrika Kumaratunga and Prime Minister Ranil Wickramasinghe might turn up at the General Assembly of the UN in New York and stake their respective claim to be heard by the Heads of States of the world presenting the world body with a serious problem.

Now it is known that Prime Minister Ranil Wickramasinghe will address the United Nations General Assembly in New York on September 26 on the current state of the peace process and the plan for the development of the island's economy worked out by the UNF Government.

From the outset it would seem that the Government had decided that it would be Prime Minister Ranil Wickramasinghe who would go to New York and address the General assembly and therefore the correspondence from the office of the UN Secretary General was withheld from the President for which she has found fault with Sri Lanka's Ambassador to the UN, Mr Charlie Mahendran.

It appears that the UN on the advice of the Sri Lankan Mission in New York sent a letter to the Premier inviting him and thereafter realizing its mistake on July 31 sent the same invitation to President Kumaratunga. However the July 31 invitation to the President had been faxed to the President's office only on August 16 leading to an unexplained three week delay.

If the PM wanted to address the UN, one wonders as to why his office did not in time directly indicate that to the President's office. If that was done, this rather bizarre public dispute could have been avoided.

In pulling out from the race to New York, the President added a new twist to the whole episode by saying she could not leave the country due to national security reasons.

In a letter to the UN Secretary General Kofi Annan, announcing she was pulling out of both the UN General Assembly and the AIDS Conference, the

People & Politics

President said the present political situation in Sri Lanka was not conducive for her to leave the country. "I now regret very much to inform you that I will not be able to attend this meeting, due to the situation at home which causes several issues of concern to the country and the government," it said.

Stating that the invitation dated July 23 had not been received by her, the President said the invitation of July 7, sent to her by the Sri Lanka Permanent Representative and the Foreign Ministry was received by her only on August 12. She said a positive response was sent to Mr. Annan's invitation earlier, hoping she would be able to attend.

Expressing her regret for the inconvenience caused, she said she was looking forward to welcoming Mr. Annan to Sri Lanka next month.

The question is as to why and how such a damaging dispute was allowed to emerge in the first place. The process followed on this occasion is said to be in sharp contrast to last year where the invitation to address the UN General Assembly was sent to President Chandrika Kumaratunga directly and later upon a request by the Prime Minister, he was permitted to address with the President's full concurrence.

However, on this occasion, according to Presidential Secretariat sources, the first information President Kumaratunga had that the Prime Minister had accepted the UN slot to address the UN General Assembly on Sri Lanka's behalf without even consulting the President, was from a newspaper report.

A statement from the President's office stated, "It is usual practice that the Head of State and/or Head of Government should receive priority over Ministers or Non-executive Prime Ministers with regard to matters such as addressing the UN General Assembly. Therefore, this office very properly re-

quested time for the Head of State and Head of Government of Sri Lanka to address the UN General Assembly. Our Minister of Foreign Affairs has been kept informed and also requested to follow-up with obtaining a slot for the President. The first intimation to the President's Office has had of the Prime Minister's desire to address the General Assembly is from the news item in 'The Island' of 02.09.2003." There has been no communication from the Prime Minister's Office to this office or from the Prime Minister to the President, of the Prime Minister's desire to address the UN General Assembly, the President's office said.

Diplomatic sources say the whole scenario was a violation of protocol of the UN and has tarnished Sri Lanka's image in the international arena. However, political analysts in Colombo view the whole episode as reflecting the crisis point that political cohabitation between the President and Prime Minister has reached.

● Political indisposition

Pakistan's top-most military personality, General Mohamed Aziz Khan, recently visiting Colombo, received what has been characterised in the local media as a snub when President Chandrika Kumaratunga called off an appointment given to him at the eleventh hour.

The explanation given for the cancellation of the appointment at 4 pm on 17 September to Gen. Khan, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, was that the President was 'indisposed'.

President Kumaratunga also cancelled a previously scheduled meeting at noon on 18 September with Prime Minister Ranil Wickremesinghe and another meeting the same evening with the Norwegian Peace Facilitators, Deputy Foreign Minister Vidar Helgesen and Special Envoy Erik Solheim.

However, it has been reported that President Kumaratunga chaired a meeting of SLFP MPs that same afternoon that had lasted well over five hours.

Presidential spokesman Harim Peiris, confirming that the appointment with the Pakistani General was called off because the President was indisposed, sought to explain away the meeting with the SLFP MPs by saying that "the President was unable to call off the SLFP parliamentarians meeting since

members came from all parts of the country. There was no way they could be turned away."

AND the President also did not fail to turn up at a meeting the same day to mark the issue of a commemorative stamp in memory of Sri Lanka Muslim Congress leader M.H.M. Ashraff, who died in a helicopter crash.

● No time for games

The LTTE has banned the government-sponsored National Peace Sports Festival scheduled for September 30 in Jaffna. The LTTE has conveyed its position to the organisers of the festival and wanted all the coaches sent by the Sports Ministry for training to leave the peninsula. Accordingly they have returned to Colombo. The previous week the LTTE had refused to allow gymnasts to practise for the opening ceremony.

The LTTE says such festivals can be held by the government only after peace talks are resumed. The LTTE notified seven coaches sent from Colombo for the festival to call off their programme and go back home. Leading netball, basketball and athletics coaches who were sent to Jaffna to train Jaffna sportsmen had held several training camps at schools.

The Government has already spent more than Rs. 15 million mainly for the renovation of the Alfred Duraiappah Stadium and to make preparations for the festival.

However, the sportsmen and women later refused to take part in the training, protesting against the government's failure to restore normalcy in the Jaffna peninsula. Some students from the Jaffna University students are reported to have gone to the Jaffna YMCA premises where the coaches were staying and informed them that the event should be called off.

The coaches had then left the Beach Inn Hotel in Jaffna and another group of students had called over and reiterated the LTTE position. They said that if the sports festival was allowed before peace talks were resumed it would give the impression to the international community that normalcy had returned.

Meanwhile, members of sports clubs in Jaffna have been called for a meeting with the LTTE. It is learnt that the LTTE is to make a formal request to the government asking that the event

be postponed.

However, renovation work on the Duraiappah stadium is continuing despite the uncertainty as to whether the sports festival will take place or not.

Meanwhile, Tamileelam Sports Coordinating Committee (TSCC) said in a statement that the decision of the Central Ministry of Sports to hold the 29th National Sports Festival in Jaffna was an act against the feelings of Tamil people.

"Organizing peace marches, providing assistance to restore temples, holding peace prayers and now attempting to hold national sports festival by the Sri Lanka Government authorities after the ceasefire agreement came into operation should be considered as ploys to infiltrate in our homeland," the TSCC statement said.

The Government of Sri Lanka (GoSL) is very keen to organize the 29th National Sports Festival to show the world that it is interested in the welfare of Tamils. The GoSL is able to mobilize all its resources to organize such cultural events in Jaffna, the statement further said.

"If the Government of Sri Lanka works genuinely towards easing the hardship of displaced Tamil people and to bring normality to the lives of people in Jaffna, then we would not oppose such events," the statement further said.

● Police Commission in crisis

The newly established Independent Police Commission has run into a crisis just within three months it started functioning after one of its members tendered his resignation alleging 'dishonourable conduct' on the part of another member of the Commission.

Speaker Joseph Michael Perera, who is the head of the 10-member Constitutional Council that recommends nominees for membership of the Police Commission for appointment, confirmed that Commission member B.N. Wijeweera had sent in his resignation. He said the Council had asked the other member of the Commission to step down pending investigations as the Council had no power to remove a member.

The other member involved in this saga has been identified as Mrs. S N Ebert, a former Assistant Secretary at the Defence Ministry who was a UNP

nominee for the seven member Police Commission which was established in November last year, but which came into operation about three months ago. It is learnt that Mrs Ebert had made representations on behalf of a relative police officer to be promoted when the Commission had one of its sittings recently. Dr. Wijeweera is reported to have protested about her conduct.

Denying the allegations made against, Mrs Ebert has told the press that she was in consultation with her lawyers before responding to the allegations made by Dr. Wijeweera which she attributed to what she described as 'professional jealousy'.

In a strongly worded letter to Speaker Joseph Michael Perera, President Kumaratunga said, "The reasons given by Dr. Wijeweera for his resignation are most distressing. He has referred to the improper and dishonourable behaviour of a Member of the Commission in contravention of the Code of Conduct, pledged to by all members of the Police Commission.

This deplorable incident at the Police Commission viz the dishonourable behaviour of a member of the Commission, is confirmation that the Constitutional Council has failed to discharge its duties and responsibilities in selecting and recommending well qualified, politically neutral and independent persons endowed with qualities of integrity and impartiality for appointment to these Commissions."

Reminding the Chairman of earlier occasions when she has had to bring to the notice of the Council the unsuitability of certain candidates recommended to her for appointment, the President said in her letter, "I have emphasized in my earlier correspondence with you, only distinguished and eminent persons with an impeccable background should be considered for appointment to the Independent Commissions set up under the 17th Amendment to the Constitution." She has also directed the Constitutional Council to investigate the allegations made by Dr. Wijeweera in his resignation letter.

The Independent Police Commission was established under the 17th amendment to the Constitution with the aim of freeing the police force from political influences and to deal with the police service, including promotion of

officers, independent of extraneous considerations.

The members of the Commission are: Ranjith Abeyasuriya (Chairman), Prof. M.T.A.Furkhan, Mrs. S.N.Ebert, Ven Dr. T. Seelakkhandha Thera, Mr. Ashoka de Z. Gunasekara, Mr. Ranjit Abeyasuriya and Dr. K. Steven.

Already the Permanent Commission to Investigate Bribery and Corruption has run into crisis as they cannot function properly following the demise of one of its members in February this year and so far the Constitutional Council has failed to agree on a suitable replacement.

The Independent Election Commission also has not been established yet due to political wrangling that seems to affect the proper functioning of the Constitutional Council.

● **Rewriting Tamil History**

The Thamilleelam Education Development Board (TEDB) is to introduce a new textbook to teach the history of Tamils in Sri Lanka to students in the Jaffna district from January next year, and in preparation to the implementation of the project, the TEDB is now engaged in holding a workshop on "Thamilleelam social education and history" for teachers who teach Grade 6 and Grade 7 students in the peninsula, according to a report dated 13 September in TamilNet.

The Jaffna District Education Board of the TEDB jointly with the respective zonal education offices are conducting these workshops. Such workshops have already been held for teachers serving in the islets off Jaffna at the Vembadi Girls High School in Jafna and for Valigamam teachers at Chunnakam Ramanathan College. Workshops are being held in other education zones in the peninsula, the report said.

Lectures given by leading Tamil academicians serving in universities and schools in the north and Vanni districts, cover various topics such as Tamil homeland and Sinhala colonization, Vanni Tamil Kingdoms, Tamil rule in

Sri Lanka, Political relationship between Sri Lanka and South India, National Flag and Thamilleelam Liberation Struggle, Maha Vamsam, Jaffna Tamil Kingdoms and Water and Land resources of Thamilleelam education, the report said.

Several Tamil academics have said that the Tamil medium textbooks prepared by the National Institute of Education contain distortions of the history of Tamils in the country, and the textbooks are mere translation of Sinhala textbooks prepared by Sinhala educationists to suit their chauvinistic thinking. The report said that the Ceylon Tamil Teachers Union (CTTU) some time back took up this issue and demanded that a separate NIE should be established for the northeast province to write Tamil medium textbooks to avoid distortion of the history of Tamils in Sri Lanka. The government has not taken any positive steps regarding this demand, education sources said.

The TEDB has now decided to introduce the new textbook to Tamil students without affecting the public examinations, which are now conducted by the Sri Lankan government, the report added quoting education sources said.

● **125th Anniversary of "The Hindu"**

Chennai Sept. 13. The cream of Chennai and guests from other cities attended a reception hosted by The Hindu to celebrate its 125th anniversary this evening. The Prime Minister, Atal Bihari Vajpayee, attended the reception and spent about half-an-hour at the informal get-together at the Taj Coromandel Hotel. Many of the guests were introduced to the Prime Minister.

Prominent among those who attended the reception were: Lakshman Kadirgamar, the former Sri Lankan Foreign Minister and now Senior Adviser to the President, Soli Sorabjee, Attorney-General, R.K. Raghavan, former CBI Director, leading industrialists, in-

cluding A. Sivasailam, M.V. Subbaiah and Venu Srinivasan, K.M. Mammen and some of the State's top political leaders, including G.K. Vasam and S. Ramadoss. The Law and Electricity Minister, D. Jayakumar, represented the State Government as the Minister-in-waiting.

The Hindu, Editor-in-Chief, N. Ram, welcomed the Prime Minister and thanked him for sparing so much of time for the Hindu's 125th anniversary celebrations. A 20-page special supplement to mark the inauguration of the 125th Anniversary celebrations was included in the Saturday's Hindu newspapers.

Started by six young Indians as a voice of Indian nationalism on September 20, 1878, with 80 copies, today it has grown into a major newspaper with a circulation of 9,33,000 copies. It is being printed at eleven centres, including its home base Chennai, and has an employee strength of 3,200. Plans are being formulated for having these celebrations in some other centres over the next twelve months. The publication of thematic compilations from the treasure trove of archives is also contemplated.

On the eve of the inauguration of its 125th Anniversary Celebrations, re-dedicating itself to the following set of core principles of journalism that it proclaimed editorially recently: truth telling, freed independence, justice, humaneness, and contributing to the social good. *Courtesy - The Hindu*

● **Prabhakaran's profile**

The much awaited, first ever profile on LTTE leader Velupillai Prabhakaran has been released to the public.

M.R. Narayan Swamy, who is also the author of "Tigers of Sri Lanka" (published 1994), in this latest book, "Inside an elusive man, Prabhakaran" follows the journey of the Tiger leader in the evolution of the ice cream loving small boy from Velvettiturai to the 'most ruthless guerrilla leader in the world'.

"His favourite hobby used to be kite



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flying. When he did not have a kite, he would catch a dragonfly, tie a thin thread to it and see it fly," writes the author about the young Prabhakaran, the third and the last child of Singapore-born Tiruvenkatam Velupillai.

He was also, according to Swamy, very much into reading comics, especially about Lee Falk's Phantom, a hooded character who fought evil doers single-handedly. So readers learn about the formative years of the man who can now change the destiny of Sri Lanka.

The profile is divided into three parts for easier digestion. The initial ten chapters deal with the history of Sinhalese/Tamil relationships and their effect on the maturing Prabhakaran, while part two sets the stage for the twenty-year 'ethnic bloodletting' that followed the July 1983 massacre.

In the final section, Swamy throws into sharp relief the actions of the LTTE as it grew more and more ruthless. Readers will be intrigued by this easy-to-read exposition.

In the concluding chapters Swamy analyses the ongoing peace process and why the country today is at a decisive turning point. Leaders will have to take politically-mature, even if popularly unpalatable decisions towards a practical, workable solution to resolving the larger issues of ethnic divide and economic development.

Swamy writes, "If it (the peace process) were to fail, for whatever reason, the destiny of Sri Lanka with its 20 million people would still be in the hands of one man - Velupillai Prabhakaran".

The book is available at all Vijitha Yapa bookshops in Colombo.

● Expensive Ministers/MPs

Though the Government claims that it trying to cut down the expenditure incurred in various sectors, the expenditure on parliamentary affairs and its members have gone up to dizzying heights, according to a report in *The Sunday Times*.

According to the report, the monthly salary of a Minister and MP is Rs. 22,100. They also receive a fuel allowance and entertainment allowance of Rs. 7,500 and Rs. 1,000 respectively. Rs. 2,000 is granted to each MP to cover the cost of their mobile phone bills.

The Government also pays for two

personal telephones of MPs. Some of these phone bills run up to around Rs. 50,000 per month. Added to this, Rs. 500 per day is paid for meetings and committee-stage meetings attended by parliamentarians. Normally parliament meets eight days a month and about ten committee meetings are held. This adds up to an average of another Rs. 6,000 per month.

The Government is required to allocate additional funds while parliamentary meetings are held, as the food is supplied at a subsidised rate. A breakfast of a parliamentarian, consisting of string hoppers, noodles, bread, rathu kekulu rice and kiri buth, fish, chicken, potatoes, dhal, coconut sambol, chilly sambol, onion sambol, fried egg, omelette, scrambled eggs, half-boiled egg, full-boiled egg, bacon, sausages, jam (3 varieties), butter, Marmite, tea, coffee and fresh milk, costs only Rs. 6.00.

The lunch is Rs. 15, with a spread like Samba, Basmati or Kekulu rice along with fish, beef, chicken, five types of vegetables, vegetable salad, fried fish, courses, soup, bread, butter, mushroom and baby corn, with banana, pineapple, papaw, pudding, ice cream for dessert and also coffee.

On days parliamentary meetings are held, 250 kgs. of rice, 20 kgs. of Basmati rice, 50 kgs. of Seer fish, 200 kgs. of Paraw fish, 20 kgs. of prawns, 150 kgs. of chicken, 100 kgs. of mutton (for two days), 110 loaves of bread, 10 loaves of brown bread, vegetable worth around Rs. 13,500 and fruits worth about Rs. 21,200, 3 kgs. of sausages, 2 kgs. of bacon and 25 kgs. of Gila fish are prepared in the parliamentary kitchen.

The amount of money spent on meat and fish per day during meetings is about rupees one lakh. Food for birthdays and other parties held in the House are also funded by the parliament. The monthly electricity bill is about Rs. 3 to 4 million, while the telephone bill is about 6 to 6.5 million rupees.

The personal staff of a Minister consists of six, including a Private Secretary, Secretary - Parliamentary Affairs, Public Relations Officer, Assistant Secretary (Media), clerk and a driver, while the staff of an MP consists of four and their salaries and allowances exceed Rs. 10,000.

Meanwhile, a Provincial Council member receives half the salary and al-

lowances as that of an MP. The salaries and allowances of the Chief Ministers, Ministers, and members of Provincial Councils are borne by the respective Provincial Council Funds.

● More women become sex targets

Sexual harassment, defined as "unwelcome, unsolicited, unacceptable, unreasonable and offensive to the recipient, of an overtly or covertly sexual nature," has become a serious problem in the workplace, according to the International Labour Organisation (ILO).

The risk of sexual harassment at work continues to increase as more women join the workforce. As is the case with all Asian countries the problems of sexual harassment in Sri Lanka is wrapped around taboos and confidentiality.

However as there has been growing awareness of the problem, the Employers' Federation of Ceylon (EFC) reports an increase in the number of reported cases in recent years. Kamalini Wijathilake and Faizun Zackariya, in a study done for the International Labour Organisation (ILO), concluded that sexual harassment is prevalent, that awareness raising has become essential and creative ways of addressing the problem have been required.

A guideline which is a voluntary instrument for a code of conduct soon to be launched defines sexual harassment as behaviour that is "unwelcome, unsolicited, unacceptable, unreasonable and offensive to the recipient, of an overtly or covertly sexual nature" and lays down the responsibilities of the company in combating incidents of such offensive behaviour.

Surveys done in the Asia and Pacific regions indicate that a substantial percentage of victims are women and a small minority are men. Most vulnerable are young women, persons under precarious employment contracts, migrants, domestic workers and workers in sex-segregated or single sex dominated occupations and sectors. According to trade union reports, plantations and FTZ's are especially exposed in Sri Lanka.

Perceptions on sexual harassment vary between, but especially within societies. Women often have different views than men, also depending on age and position in the job hierarchy. Com-

mon initial attitudes are that sexual harassment is 'harmless flirting.' A key characteristic of sexual harassment is that it is unwelcome and unwanted behaviour as determined by the victim. Sexual harassment is not about sex, it is about power," Director, ILO Sri Lanka, Claudia Coenjaerts said.

Apart from being a human rights issue, it is also a productivity issue. Victims suffer varying degrees of emotional stress and this affects their work efficiency, the ILO said.

● **SLMC's late leader remembered**

Sep 16 - The third death anniversary of the founder leader of the Sri Lanka Muslim Congress and National Unity Alliance, Mr.M.H.M.Ashraff, was observed in the country by the rank and file of his party and its breakaway groups.

The late Mr. Ashraff, one time Cabinet minister in President Kumarathuga's cabinet, Member of Parliament and founder leader of the Sri Lanka Muslim Congress and the National Unity Alliance, died on September 16, 2000 while on his way to his home district, Amparai, in a Sri Lanka Air Force special helicopter, which crashed in Aranayake in the Sabragamuwa province. Even today, the mystery behind the helicopter crash is not yet known and the report of the Presidential Commission appointed to unravel the mystery has not yet been published.

Twenty-two years ago, Mr. Ashraff founded the Sri Lanka Muslim Congress and before this Muslims politicians aligned themselves with either of the two major Sinhala-dominated political parties, the United National party and the Sri Lanka Freedom Party.

Born in eastern Sri Lanka, he had his primary education at Wesley College, Kalmunai. In 1970 he joined the Law College in Colombo. Later, he became a State Counsel in the Attorney general's department. He practised in Kalmunai for some time. He was later conferred with the title of President's Counsel (PC).

After his untimely demise, the Sri Lanka Muslim Congress and National Unity Alliance broke into three groups. Mr.Rauff Hakeem rose to the leadership of the SLMC. Mr.Ashraff's wife, Ms. Ferial Ashraff, brought the NUA under her command. Later, the SLMC under

the leadership of Mr.Rauff Hakeem broke into two groups. The breakaway group led by Minister Mr. A.L.M.Athaulah has been named as Ashraff Congress.

The rank and file of the three groups organized several events in the country mainly in the eastern province in remembrance of their late leader whose main aim was to bring all Muslims in the country under one banner to achieve their political aspirations.

The declaration of the SLMC as a national political party on 19th November, 1986, and later the launch of the National Unity Alliance by Mr. Ashraff were considered as milestones in the history of Sri Lanka's Muslim politics.

● **Julius Fucik Remembered**

September 8, 1943 presaged the victory over fascism. It was the day of a decisive victory over the German fascists in the battle at Kursk and the day when fascist Italy capitulated. But it was also a day of sorrow: the Nazi executioners dragged Julius Fucik to the guillotine and cut off his head.

They knew what they were doing. It was clear to them that Julius Fucik who even in prison did not cease fighting proved able to use the word as a weapon, was an irreconcilable fighter against fascism and for a new world. That was why he had to die. And so it has remained our duty to study his life, his teachings, his legacy and not to forget a single sentence. What he fought for so passionately, why he went with head high to his death is what millions of people are continuing to fight for today.

Julius Fucik became the greatest teacher of many generations of journalists. One of his most important teachings was, there is no such animal as a neutral journalist, a journalist who stands above things. Anyone who has chosen this profession must exercise it as a vital calling, must choose the side on which he stands, must learn to seek and recognise the new.

Julius Fucik, the Czechoslovak journalist and anti-fascist fighter, whose famous "Report from the gallows" has so far been translated into ninety languages and been published in some three hundred editions. This was the book that Fidel Castro called a beautiful report "that shook our world and inspired revo-

lutionaries, that inspired us Cuban fighters, all of us who had read his report and taken it as our model, to strengthen our spirits when faced with the risks of the fight."

And in this book, which may rightly be considered one of the most emotional literary testimonies, Fucik sent his message to all the living, to all those as yet unborn, his fiery call: People, be on your guard! He gave this message in foreboding of death, but in the name of life, so that Man, whatever language of this planet he may speak, might never allow a repetition of such a monstrous thing as Hitler's fascism.

It is a message charged with tragic experience and it is topical who was Julius Fucik?

He was born on 23rd February 1903 in Prague. As a twelve year-old schoolboy, he wrote in manuscript for his parents and sisters the first magazine of his life called "The Slav", in which he reacted to the horrors of the First World War. At seventeen he was already contributing to a real newspaper Rude Pravo. He was brutally murdered in the execution hall of the Nazi prison in Plotzensee, Berlin. The executioner ended his life at the age of forty and more than twenty of these years had been fully devoted to Fucik's hobby and passion: Journalism. Pablo Neruda, that giant of world poetry born in Latin America dedicated an enchanting poem of the Czechoslovak journalist in 1952. He saw Fucik as a hero who belonged not only to his own country. He saw in him "the architecture of a man of tomorrow."

(Courtesy: Union of Journalists of Sri Lanka)

● **In defence of Justice Mark Fernando**

Representatives of some 20 key public interest groups have signed a letter to Prime Minister Ranil Wickremesinghe requesting him to look into the circumstances leading to the sudden and unprecedented decision by Justice Mark D.H. Fernando to prematurely relinquish judicial office.

Signatories to this letter include representatives from the Asian Human Rights Commission, PAFFREL, Marga Institute, Centre for Policy Alternatives, Avadhi Lanka Movement, Habitat for Humanity, Families of the Disappeared,

Niveka, People Against Torture, The Ecumenical Institute and Janasansadaya.

Presidents Counsel R.K.W. Goonesekere, Desmond Fernando and Nehru Gunetilleke initiated the letter to the Prime Minister requesting that the Premier appoint an ad-hoc Parliamentary Select Committee to inquire into the constitution of benches in the Supreme Court, in particular in matters of constitutional determinations and divisional benches and the listing of cases before court.

The letter to the Prime Minister states that the sudden decision of Justice Mark Fernando, PC, and senior most judge of the Supreme Court, "who has served as a worthy member of that court for over 15 years, to give notice of early retirement, has caused grave concern to the members of the legal and other professional bodies, academics, civil society and the general public."

The letter requests the Prime Minister to consider the appointment of a Parliamentary Select Committee to look into the circumstances leading to the decision of Justice Fernando to prematurely retire.

The signatories have drawn attention in particular to the constitution of benches in the Supreme Court in matters of constitutional determination and divisional benches, the listing of cases before the Supreme Court, and appointment of the members to the Judicial Services Commission. It additionally raises queries regarding nomination of judges to international conferences, meetings, study tours and the development of judicial infrastructure with foreign funds.

It is learnt that despite the fact that over 40 petitions challenging bills of high public importance had been brought before the Supreme Court in recent years, including a new Constitution for Sri Lanka, Justice Fernando, despite being the senior most judge in the court, had not been nominated by Chief Justice Sarath N. Silva to preside over any of the benches hearing constitutional matters.

The signatories to this letter have also requested Justice Fernando to reconsider his decision to retire pre-

ma-
turely, pointing out that this will have a further negative effect on the rule of law in Sri Lanka and result in a further deterioration of the citizens' trust in public institutions.

Meanwhile, more than 150 lawyers from Colombo and outstations have signed an Expression of Appreciation for Justice Fernando, being one of Sri Lanka's most respected judges, while noting the "unfortunate circumstances" which may have compelled Justice Fernando to prematurely retire from the Supreme Court two and a half years prior to his due date of retirement.

The list is headed by the most eminent legal names in the country, namely Presidents' Counsel, H.L. de Silva, Nehru Gunetilleke, E.D. Wickremenayake, Ranjith Abeyesuriya, Shibley Aziz, R.K.W. Goonesekere who is chairman, Civil Rights Movement, Desmond Fernando, former Speaker Stanley Tillekeratne, former President of the Bar, N.R.M. Daluwatte and Attorneys S.L. Gunesekera, Dr. Jayantha de Almeida Guneratne, Ranjan Gooneratne, S.C.B. Walgampaya, A.R. Mathew, D.G. de Saram and Sunil Cooray.

Other signatories include Elmo Perera, J.C. Weliamuna, Kishali Pinto-Jayawardena, M.A. Sumanthiran, V.K. Choksy, Ruana Rajepakse, Suranjith Hewamanne, and Basil Fernando.

The list also includes Anglican Bishop of Colombo Duleep Chickera, Roman Catholic Bishop for Kandy, Rt. Rev. Vianny Fernando, 40 Buddhist priests including the Mahanayake of the Ramanna Nikaya, Dr. P.R. Anthonis, Commissioner of Elections Dayananda Dissanayake, Professor Kingsley de Silva, Professor G.H. Peiris as well as legal academics, Professor Savitri Goonesekere, Suriya Wickremesinghe, Associate Professor Sharya Scharenquivel, Dr. Radhika Coomaraswamy, Dr. Deepika Udugama and Rohan Edrisinha.

Signatories also include Sunila Abeysekera, Kumudini Samuel, Professor Amal Jayawardene, Professor M.O.A. de Zoysa, Stanley Jayaweera, Susil Siriwardene, Dr. Nalin Swaris, Gerry de Silva, Dr. Lalith Mendis, Dr. Gamini Gunetilleke, Neville Ladduwa-hetty, former Prisons Commissioner

C.T. Jansz, Marshall Fernando, Tassie Seneviratne and Jayantha Sumana-sekera.

● Monk gets MBE

Chief Incumbent of the Sri Saddhatissa Buddhist Centre in London the Ven. Galayaye Piyadassi Thera has been honoured with the prestigious Membership of the British Empire (MBE).

The Ven. Piyadassi Thera is the first Buddhist prelate to receive this award. A ceremony to award the MBE to the prelate was held at Buckingham Palace in London. Queen Elizabeth the second presented the award to the Ven. Piyadassi Thera for the great social and religious services rendered to the people of England.

The prelate is the president of the World Buddhist Foundation in England and the cultural and social welfare foundation.

● WIN Smile of The Year

Mrs. Prashanthi Perimpanyagam won the WIN Smile of The Year award at the Mrs. Globe International Pageant held recently at Palmspring, California USA.

Forty persons from around the globe representing their countries took part at this international show. Mrs. Globe is a celebrating of beauty, culture and charity and it is celebrating its 7th anniversary of cultural exchange. The pageant was telecast in over 30 countries around the world.

The pageant is a fund-raiser for the Women in Need Foundation. Mrs. Perimpanyagam was unanimously selected by the judges as Mrs. Sri Lanka 2003 at the national pageant conducted by studio 9, Colombo.

Mrs. Perimpanyagam at present is representing Mrs. Sri Lanka at the Mrs. International 2003 pageant in Tennessee USA, where 51 participants from around the world are participating.

She is an English teacher at the Colombo Hindu Ladies College, Wellawatte and a past pupil of the Daham Pasala at Vajiraramaya Temple Bambalapitiya, Sirimavo Bandaranaike Maha Vidyalaya, Colombo and Holy Family Convent Bambalapitiya and the daughter of Mr. and Mrs. T. Perimpanyagam, a former DIG.

Threat to Trinco: Chandrika-Ranil Clash

A major controversy between the between President Chandrika Kumaratunga and Prime Minister Ranil Wickramasinghe has been triggered off by the alleged military build-up by the LTTE in eastern Sri Lanka, especially around the port district of Trincomalee, where it has been alleged that the Tigers have set up over a dozen new camps within government controlled areas after the signing of the Ceasefire Agreement. The LTTE has dismissed the allegation of setting up new military camps as groundless.

In view of the serious nature of the conflict that has arisen between the President and the Prime Minister, we reproduce here the two latest letters exchanged between them.

President's Letter to PM

The following is the text of the letter dated 12 September sent by the President to the Prime Minister to Prime Minister:

"A great deal of discussion has taken place on the above subject during the last three months. I have watched this in silence, while keeping myself briefed by the relevant authorities and instructing them to adopt necessary precautions and plans. Finally, I have decided to write to you, as statements made by you and your media spokesman, Minister G. L. Peiris, have surprised me by their lack of statesmanship and perspicacity with regard to a most crucial matter of State.

I shall attempt to set out briefly the facts regarding this issue.

I was in receipt of numerous reports of the deteriorating security situation around the Trincomalee Naval Base and Harbour, since several months. About two months ago I requested the Commanders of the Army and the Navy (who have the responsibility of ensuring the security of Trincomalee), to make a presentation to me on the security situation there, with special reference to the LTTE's armed presence, in the form of camps etc.

This was duly done. The facts elucidated thereon were as follows:

- At the time there were 13 camps set up by the LTTE after signing of the MoU including the much talked of Manirasakulam camp.

- The camps were set up in such a manner as to encircle the Trincomalee harbour. They were situated in a manner to facilitate the deployment of long-range artillery weapons that are known

to be in the possession of the LTTE.

- The LTTE, as all who wish to know the truth are aware, has also established a major Sea Tiger base at Illankanthai, within range of the Southern rim of the harbour. At a time of attack, LTTE suicide boats can be brought into this base, for the purpose of attacking naval craft of the Sri Lanka Navy.

Many Sri Lankans are asking why the LTTE is launching continued attacks on the Muslims living in the Muttur area exclusively, and not on those Muslims living in any other area in the Trincomalee district? Muttur is the most strategically situated habitation in the curve of the Trincomalee harbour, possessing various buildings and other facilities, which would be suitable for the establishment of a terrorist naval base. Muttur also obstructs the near contiguous ring of camps around Trincomalee, established by the LTTE, in the post MoU period.

I refer here to two important reports, among several others, which have clearly warned the Government regarding the security situation in Trincomalee.

1. You once informed me that the Government invited a US Pacific Command Assessment Team to study and report on the security situation of the North and East, last year. The team arrived in Sri Lanka in September/October 2002 and provided a report to you in November 2002. I quote from an important section of the report dealing with the 'Issue of the Trincomalee Harbour Defense':

"Currently the LTTE controls the southern portion of the harbour. From

this area the LTTE have effectively monitored all ship movements in and out of the harbour and can launch suicide and artillery attacks against the naval base and could potentially destroy any vessel coming in and out of harbour

"The Sri Lankan Army is responsible for this area but they have been unable to completely secure it. The Sri Lanka defence force must secure this land area. The vulnerable position that currently exists could essentially level the majority of the Sri Lanka Navy fleet. The result would be the only re-supply capability for the Jaffna peninsula would have to come from Colombo, more than four times the distance to Jaffna. Without control of this area the defence of Trincomalee harbour will always be a losing battle. Without Trincomalee harbour the ability to prosecute a war would be detrimentally affected."

Nothing, absolutely nothing has been done by you "to secure this land area", as recommended by the PACOM Advisory Team.

2. I wish to draw your attention to the recent report of the Commander of the Sri Lanka Army given to the Minister of Defence and also to me. It states clearly that the LTTE has set up twelve (12) new camps after the MoU. Additionally, five (5) temporary LTTE camps which existed before the MoU have now been converted into permanent camps. How can you say that no camps have been set up by the LTTE since the signing of the MoU?

The facts provided to me by the Commanders of the Forces clearly contradict the statements purportedly made by you, and carried in the 'Lankadeepa' of Friday 5th September 2003. You are reported to have stated that:-

1. There is no danger to Trincomalee Naval Base and Harbour from the LTTE.

2. No camps have been set up by the LTTE after the ceasefire Agreement.

3. The Government wants to investigate the conduct of the Naval Commander/Northern Command, for reporting the so called dangers to Trincomalee.

3. It is completely false to state that neither you nor your Minister of Defence were informed of the situation. The naval spokesman has stated that in April 2003 you, Ministers Marapona and Moragoda, were briefed, in the presence of about 200 officers, when you visited Trincomalee, of the dete-

riorating security situation and the setting up of LTTE camps. Subsequently, you and the Minister of Defence were once again briefed at Temple Trees, in great detail, on the same issue, a couple of weeks ago. The Minister of Defence was also briefed when he visited Trincomalee in August, by a large number of security forces officers in the presence of the Tri-forces Commanders. I am therefore shocked to learn that you are denying all these facts.

4. In addition, I have also raised this issue of the security of Trincomalee at several National Security Council meetings attended by the Minister of Defence, his Secretary, the three Forces Commanders, the IGP, my Secretary, etc. In fact at a recent National Security Council meeting, I gave a serious warning to the Minister of Defence about the situation in Trincomalee and proceeded to advise him to discuss the matter seriously with you and decide to take positive action to have these camps removed, under the circumstances in which the SLMM has completely failed in its attempt to have the LTTE dismantle the camps.

I also raised this issue in my letter to you of 21st August 2003, stating, 'The SLMM had admitted its incapacity to enforce their decision. Beyond persuasion, the SLMM also does not seem to have any other mechanism of enforcement of a decision.... It is therefore suggested that the authority of the Government be exercised immediately to have this camp withdrawn'.

Further when I questioned the Defence Minister at a recent National Security Council meeting on the re-arming and strategic re-deployment of the LTTE, I was shocked and surprised when Minister Marapone stated that we should understand the necessity for the LTTE to re-arm, since the security Forces are doing the same. Do you and some Ministers place the legal army of the Sovereign State of Sri Lanka and an illegal armed force of a terrorist organization on a footing of legal and moral parity? This is only one among several shockingly irresponsible statements made by Minister Marapone at previous National Security Council meetings.

On several occasions, I have had discussions with you, the Defence Minister, Service Commanders and relevant public servants and issued instructions regarding several matters, and also written to you and the Defence Minister on

the following matters:

- high security zones,
- the need to ensure the safety of Muslims in the East, who have been subjected to 13 attacks by the LTTE since the ceasefire,
- the killing of democratic Tamil politicians,
- the setting up of a judicial system of Thamil Eelam,
- the setting up of the Eelam Police Force, Eelam Banking system, Tax Collection system,
- child conscription,
- the killing of Sri Lanka Army personnel,
- the smuggling in of weapons by the LTTE.

No corrective action has been taken so far.

In the meantime, in the absence of action on your part, I have had to deal directly with the Security Forces Commanders to rectify the situation.

You seem to try to make believe that the responsibility of ensuring the security of the State and the people is your exclusive business and that I have no part in such an important matter.

To quote your letter to me of 26th August 2003, 'It has always been my position that the people of this country have mandated the Government with this responsibility of proceeding to pursue peace, while maintaining the fullest security and I am, determined to fulfil this confidence, which the people have placed in us. At a time like this, acting on the basis of political expediency is, in my view, not the correct approach.'

Is it 'a matter of political expediency' to insist that the Government ensures the sovereignty and security of the State? If in fact you truly believe in your statement, I regret deeply to have to say that the country is in a sorry state to have a Prime Minister who takes the country's most prime issue so lightly!

I wish also to recommend to you, Prime Minister, a close look at the Constitution - enacted in 1978 by the Government of the UNP, of which you were a Cabinet Minister.

The sole reason for my standing by and watching the situation, while only offering advice, was your repeated appeals to me to permit you to exercise the executive powers of Government, which under our Constitution, are exclusively assigned to the President, who is the Executive Head of State, Government and Cabinet. I agreed to do so

to allow you the space to solve the country's problems within the "first hundred days" of arriving in power, as promised by you to the country during the 2001 elections. But I have never for a moment forgotten the sacred duty entrusted to me by our peoples, on two consecutive occasions with massive mandates, despite the LTTE's assassination attempt on my life, during the 1999 election campaign. At the latter election you were the defeated candidate.

You would agree that I have made numerous attempts in vain, to advise you and some of your Ministers in the hope of turning the country away from impending disaster. This was done as a final attempt at cohabitational governance.

I believe now it is time to inform the people who are my only masters of these facts.

I wish to state that you have permitted a serious situation to arise in the country by:

- firstly, not ensuring the safety of the State and the people,
- secondly, by deliberately misrepresenting facts regarding the dangerous security situation in Trincomalee and elsewhere, to the people and the Cabinet of Ministers, as per media reports,
- thirdly, conducting the peace process in an unplanned and unprofessional manner, thus permitting the LTTE, an armed group threatening the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the State of Sri Lanka, to organise itself in direct violation of even the flawed MoU formulated and signed by you and the LTTE.

Various irresponsible statements by you regarding the Security Forces Commanders are not only unfair by the Commanders who are attempting to do their duty with great courage and loyalty to the State, under difficult circumstances, but also serve to demoralize the entire Security Forces.

Accordingly I hereby request you to:

1. Refrain from concealing and distorting the truth regarding the security situation in Trincomalee,
2. Refrain from slandering and harassing the Security Forces commanders, thus preventing them from carrying out their duties,
3. Ensure you attend all National Security Council meetings chaired by me,
4. Avoid all further acts of omission and commission that would compromise the

security and sovereignty of Sri Lanka.”

Prime Minister's letter to President

The following is the reply dated 18 September from the Prime Minister to the President:

“I have your letter of 12th September 2003 on the above subject. I must state at the outset that I personally have no wish to discuss security issues publicly through the media which is the method you have adopted recently.

Such an approach could seriously affect national security and jeopardise counter measures which our armed forces might be considering to meet potential threats. I would urge therefore that you desist from this frankly irresponsible attempt to gain political mileage on issues which should be treated with the greatest circumspection and confidentiality.

There are well established modes of communication regarding the discussion of security issues on which there could be differences of view in a democratic polity and I for one wish to observe those time honoured norms of behaviour.

The National Security Council is one such institution where security issues can be discussed objectively by technically competent officials. You and I, who are both non-technical persons are members of the Council. However I must point out that while you chair the Council, in recent times, I have not been informed of these meetings. Sometimes even the Minister of Defence or his Secretary are not informed of your meetings where security issues are taken up. I would like you to note that whenever I have been informed I have always made it a point to participate or have asked that my absence be excused.

There are several incorrect statements in your letter. Take for example your assertion on page 3 of your letter about the remarks attributed to me in the Lankadeepa of Friday, 5th September 2003.

A careful reading of the Lankadeepa news report would indicate that the Lankadeepa does not say this at all. I am annexing for your information an extract of the news report appearing in the Lankadeepa of 5th September.

With regard to your statements about the threat to the Trincomalee Naval Base and Harbour and overall

national security, we need to place all these in the correct perspective. As Minister of Defence and Finance you were in complete charge of the subjects of Security and Finance and enjoyed unchallenged power and authority as regards security and the finances to ensure security until the end of 2001.

But what a sorry pass we had come to by then. We had lost the whole of the Wanni, after ‘Jaya Sikuru’ along the A9, had been repulsed and turned back. Mankulam, Kilinochchi, Pooneryn and Mullaitivu had fallen. By 1995 you had withdrawn all the troop detachments stationed in the Sampur area overlooking Trincomalee Harbour. The heavy weaponry of the LTTE in the Trincomalee area was also brought in during this period. You even lost Elephant Pass, our major fortress in the North which had never been breached in the 20 years of war, and at the end of your tenure as Minister of Defence your government was asking India to evacuate our troops from Jaffna. Finally you permitted an armed infiltration into the Katunayake air base which destroyed almost half our air fleet and deprived the nation of the one strike force in which we had undoubted supremacy.

It is a well known fact that the successive defeats that our gallant security forces suffered were as a result of decisions taken based on Party political expediency as opposed to considered strategic decision making. You are also well aware that in order to conceal the number of casualties of these debacles, the then Government deliberately refused to accept the bodies of hundreds, if not thousands, of brave sons and daughters who had laid down their lives to protect the integrity of our nation. As a result the LTTE were compelled to dispose of these bodies by burning them. With this sorry track record of failure in implementing national security the people of our country are hardly likely to welcome being propelled to war on the basis of what has been mentioned in your letter.

In national security we should be looking at the state of our intelligence capacity and armed preparedness to meet any security threat anywhere on a countrywide basis. You will undoubtedly appreciate that the Government has been taking all necessary steps to ensure that the armed forces have been improving their preparedness to meet any security threat. We have continued to strengthen our relations with friendly

countries who could assist speedily and effectively if the need arises. An example of the value of such endeavours has been the recent gift of a ship to strengthen our maritime patrolling. There have been many measures taken by our Government to restructure and strengthen our security forces in order to ensure that we are in a position to meet any hostile threat to the sovereign territorial integrity of Sri Lanka. Separate programmes have been worked out for the Army, Navy and Air Force and Special Forces. This is being achieved in a systematic manner using both our own expertise and resources as well as the support of countries like India and the United States. I would think that considering the larger picture we are better trained today than we were in 2001 when our armed forces had to suffer serious and ignominious reversals.

You have cited the threat perception in a section of the report made by the US Pacific Command Assessment Team (PACOM). For your information, this Mission to study and report on the security situation was the result of a request made by me when I met with the US President, George W Bush in July 2002. The PACOM visited Sri Lanka in September 2002. Thereafter arrangements were made for the Commander of the Navy to visit the Commander in Chief Pacific in Hawaii and later to meet his counterpart in Washington. But you refused to grant permission for the Navy Commander to visit Washington.

The PACOM Report had identified the security threats and possible counter measures. Its recommendations have been carefully considered and are presently being followed up in consultation with the US authorities. It would definitely not be appropriate to reveal details of the measures being adopted in this letter. In fact, long before my visit to the US on my assuming office as the Prime Minister, I visited India and met with Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee. Following on this consultation, we set in motion a series of steps in the sphere of defence cooperation between our two countries. These initiatives have strengthened our national security posture.

I would like to state that I have discussed with the Security Force Commanders the security situation in Trincomalee and the measures to be

(continued on next page)

TNA wants ethnic ratio in police: Aug 21 - The Tamil National Alliance (TNA) has demanded that the new recruits to the police service should be appointed on the ethnic ratio in the eastern province. The TNA's demand came in the wake of the Government's decision to recruit and deploy 500 more policemen in the eastern province where incidents of violence, including killings, have produced climate of fear and insecurity and the prospect of Tamil-Muslim clashes.

The TNA informed Prime Minister Mr. Wickremasinghe that already more Muslims are serving in the police force in the eastern province than Tamils. Recruiting more Muslims now in the name of Tamil speaking people will not be accepted under the present circumstances, TNA had said..

The TNA also pointed that not only Muslims but Tamils also had been murdered, abducted and harassed in the eastern province during the recent violence.

Lanka PM calls for Indo-SL integration: Aug 24 - Sri Lankan Prime Minister Ranil Wickremesinghe wrapped up a weekend trip to India with an appeal for the two countries to integrate their economies so the region can catch up with the rest of Asia. "Look at the economic map of our region and you will see why Sri Lanka and India, working as an integrated marketplace, offer strong opportunities for potential investors," Wickremesinghe told a banquet Saturday night. Together, we have the potential to emerge as one of the most dynamic regional markets in Asia and the world," he said. Wickremesinghe mentioned shipping, textiles, tourism and his country's famed tea industry as areas in which India and Sri Lanka could gain through close cooperation.

"If India's and Sri Lanka's tea industries were to join forces and build on our combined strengths, there could be huge returns," he said. Wickremesinghe noted that the two countries, ravaged by decades of ethnic insurgency and chaotic politics, had slipped in world-wide esteem in the half-century since independence from Britain.

"In the 1950s, we in Sri Lanka were at the top of the Asian economic league. Today we are near the bottom. Once places like Singapore and Malaysia looked to us as a model but not anymore," he said.

The premier said a joint group between India and Sri Lanka had been working since last year to draft an "economic partnership agreement" which once in place "will mark the beginning of a new closer economic relationship, a true partnership, between our two countries."

Wickremesinghe on the two-day visit to southern India also

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visited a temple and inaugurated a "virtual academy" aimed at bringing scientific know-how to villagers

JVP protest march:

Aug 25 - The Janatha Vimukthi Peramuna (JVP), started a four day 116 kilometres demonstration march against handing over the Northeast Interim Administration (IA) to the LTTE. The march that took off in front of Galle fort was also a protest against what the JVP said were attempts by the United National Front (UNF) government to bring foreign forces into the country.

The protest march, which commenced from Galle, around seven in the morning was expected to arrive at Ambalangoda town the same day evening. The march would resume from Ambalangoda the following morning and arrive at Aluthgama the same day evening. On the third day, the foot march would start from Aluthgama and would reach Panadura. The final day would start from Panadura and expected to reach Lipton's Square in Colomb the same day evening where a mass rally would be held.

JVP parliamentarians, Buddhist monks and over five thousand party men and women cadres participated in the march. Demonstrators carried placards, red and black banners and shouted slogans condemning the UNF government, the LTTE and the Norwegian facilitators role.

Hartal paralyzes Trinco: Aug 25 - A general shutdown (hartal) today completely disrupted normal life in the Trincomalee district, especially in the Trincomalee town. The general shut down was called by the Trincomalee Resurgence Tamil Community (TRTC) to show its opposition to the 'opportunist' elements that are "bent on derailing the peace process."

Shops belonging to Tamils and Muslims were closed. In some places Sinhalese traders also closed their business establishments. All Tamil and Muslim schools were closed as student's boycotted classes. State and private banks were closed for business. Government departments that come under central government and North East Provincial Council and post offices did not function, as officials and employees did not report for work. Law courts did not function as litigants and lawyers failed to report.

Bus services to and from Trincomalee came to a standstill because of poor presence of commuters at the bus stand. Some long distance buses were seen in the bus stand but the buses left without enough commuters, transport sector sources said

According to the organizers, the one-day general shutdown in the Trincomalee district was held demanding that an interim administrative structure as demanded by the LTTE be set up, to

(Continued from page 26)

taken on a contingency basis, if it becomes necessary to do so. I have similarly discussed with the Service Commanders the overall security situation and the resources required to meet these needs.

It is a philosophy of this Government that the best prospects for the peace process lie in our ability to combine an effective national security strategy with a commitment to political negotiations with the support of the international community. Since assuming office as the Prime Minister I have from time to time communicated this idea to

you during our meetings. Unfortunately from your letter, I cannot be blamed for forming the impression, that you deliberately sought to play politics with security issues and hence in my view, with the lives of the young men and women who are defending Sri Lanka's territorial integrity. I hope this is not the case.

I would like you to appreciate what the people have overwhelmingly accepted. That is that we have come out of a situation of war and are enjoying a period of peace - now 19 months continuously - in which people in all parts of the country are picking up the threads of their lives and going about their daily

business without fear. Numerous economic indices point to this and anyone who looks around the country can see for herself or himself what peace has brought about. This is a huge difference from the state which we were in at the end of 2001.

Finally, Madam President even at this stage, let us both pledge to stop parochial political debates on issues connected with defence of our nation. We owe it to the people of this country and the future generations to at least isolate this critical aspect of government from the shallow politics we appear to indulge in on a regular basis."

condemn the opportunist elements that were bent on adopting a divide and rule policy among Tamil speaking people with the backing of international imperialists thereby sabotaging the present peace process, and to condemn the new recruitment of police personnel by the government for the eastern province.

Thileepan memorial: Aug 25 - The reconstructed memorial of the late senior leader of the LTTE, Lt.Col. Thileepan, was declared open today in Nallur, Jaffna town. The memorial was destroyed by Sri Lanka Army troops in 1996 when the SLA captured the peninsula. Now after seven years, the memorial has been reconstructed at the same site. The memorial is located in front of the Jaffna Hindu Rest along Jaffna-Point Pedro road close to the historic Nallur Kandasamy temple.

Bhikku Front against IA: Aug 26 - The second national convention of the National Bhikku Front (NBF) was held at the Bandaranaike Memorial International Conference Hall (BMICH) in Colombo today. The NBF is opposed to the establishment of an Interim Administration (IA) for the northeast province and had threatened to campaign in Colombo and 50 other cities in the South through the nearly 1500 Buddhist Vihares in the island.

Speakers addressing the second convention of the NBF said the proposed interim administrative council would become a threat to the unity of the country in the long run. The LTTE would use the interim administrative council as a foundation to achieve its goal Tamil Eelam in the country, NBF leaders reiterated at the convention.

"It is our responsibility to create a stable future for the country without giving room for government leaders who in the name of peace process are engaged in undermining the territorial integrity and security of their motherland," said an NBF leader said at the convention.

At the commencement of the convention about one thousand members of the NBF marched to the BMICH hall from the office of the All Ceylon Buddhist Congress about two hundred meters away from the venue. They observed two-minute silence in memory of the Buddhist monks who died in the war and offered floral tributes before the proceeding commenced. In its pamphlet, the NBF outlined what it said were dangers in handing over the interim administrative structure to the hands of the LTTE.

EU condemns LTTE killings: Aug 27 - Envoys from European Union nations expressed concern today that political slayings blamed on the LTTE were undermining the island's peace bid and asked the them to resume talks. The heads of mission representing European Union member states said international aid pledged to the island was linked to parallel progress in the island's Norwegian-backed peace process.

They said they expected LTTE discussions at an ongoing meeting in Paris to lead to the resumption of peace talks suspended April 21 by the LTTE.

International rights groups as well as the United States have condemned the LTTE over the killings of more than 40 rivals and military informants despite a truce since February last year. "The victims have included Tamil politicians, Muslim private individuals and people connected with the security forces," the EU heads of mission said in a statement.

"Such atrocities are morally indefensible, jeopardise the ceasefire agreement between the government of Sri Lanka and the LTTE, and threaten to undermine international and domestic confidence in the peace process."

Hartal in Ampara: Aug 27 - General shutdown was observed in Amparai today and an organization called 'Committee to Safeguard East' led a protest march through Amparai town. Several hundred people, mainly Muslims, participated in the march that started at Brown Road junction and proceeded to the clock tower.

Schools and offices were closed but vehicular traffic continued as normal throughout the day. Placards calling the public not to allow handing over the interim administration to the LTTE, not to allow segmenting the country and to de-merge the north-east province were carried by the protesters.

Mrs. Ferial Ashraff, leader of the National Unity Alliance (NUA) and wife of the late Mr.M.H.M.Ashraff, who founded the Sri Lanka Muslim Congress, and several key members of the United National Front participated in the march.

"The North and East should be separate provinces and the administration of the provinces should be handed over to the people. All three ethnic groups in the country should have equal rights and proper authority to exercise their rights. Only then can the ethnic problems in the country be solved," said Mrs. Ferial Ashraff. "The Muslim people in the Northeast have no security today," Ms. Ashraff said in her speech. "They live in fear and under oppression. The legitimate rights of the Muslim people should be safeguarded. The Northeast belongs to all three ethnic groups. We cannot allow one community to administer the entire Northeast," she said.

TNA opposes NE split: Aug 28 - "The Tamil National Alliance (TNA) desires to place on record that the de-merger of the north-east province which has existed for the past fifteen years by the President would be a calamity to the whole Sri Lanka, and urges the President to desist from taking this perilous course," TNA said in a press statement issued in Colombo.

The leaders of Tamil United Liberation Front (TULF), Tamil Eelam Liberation Organization (TELO), All Ceylon Tamil Congress (ACTC) and Eelam Peoples Revolutionary Liberation Front (EPRLF Suresh wing) in a joint press statement said, "Statements made by media spokespersons on behalf of the President of Sri Lanka, and the Peoples' Alliance, to the effect that de-merger of the northeast province is under serious consideration by the President have caused most serious concern to the Tamil people, since any such step would strike fatally at the very roots of the current peace process rendering the whole process, meaningless and redundant.

The Tamil National Alliance emphatically state that a Tamil linguistic region in the areas of historical habitation of the Tamil speaking people-the North east- constitutes the very foundation of any negotiated solution, and that any attempt to subvert this foundation will inevitably lead to the nullification of all prospects of a negotiated peaceful political solution to the Tamil question."

UN grant for mine clearance: Aug 28 - The United Nations granted 3.2 million dollars to strengthen Sri Lanka's de-mining efforts even though the war-torn island has not ratified the Ottawa convention banning land mines. UN resident representative Miguel Bermeo and two top government officials signed the agreement granting the money to be spent over 16 months from September.

"It is estimated that there are approximately 1.5 million mines which were laid during the conflict," the government said in a statement. "It is the government's intention to have all such mines cleared before the end of 2006."

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The statement said 12 million dollars has been spent by non-governmental agencies to survey about 8.5 million square meters (10.2 million square yards) and remove 150,000 mines.

Last week, the US government agreed to provide de-mining training to the Sri Lanka military at a cost of 2.2 million dollars, and the Dutch government in February granted nearly half a million dollars to help a mine-clearing project on the island being carried out by the British charity Halo Trust. The Dutch embassy said it would normally not support mine clearance programs in countries that have not signed the 1997 Ottawa treaty banning landmines. "However, an exception has been made for Sri Lanka since the thousands of citizens returning to their homes in north Sri Lanka shouldn't fall victim to mines," the embassy had said in a statement, expressing hope Colombo would soon sign the Ottawa convention.

SLMM head meets non-LTTE groups: Aug 28 - The Norwegian head of the Sri Lanka Monitoring Mission (SLMM) Major General Triggve Teleffsen held discussions with district representatives of other ex-militant groups at the SLMM office in Batticaloa in connection with the reported killings of several members of these groups. Paraneetharan Pratheepan and Sivanantharajah Siva of Eelam Peoples Democratic Party (EPDP), E. Paheerathan and Nimalan of Peoples Liberation Organization of Tamil Eelam (PLOTE), and Pakiarajah Paskaran and Kandiah Pathmanathan of Eelam Peoples Revolutionary Liberation Front (EPRLF - Varathar faction) participated, ex-militant sources said.

Ex-militant participants complained to the SLMM head of the difficulty they are facing in engaging in political activities and the increasing number of killing of their cadres allegedly by the LTTE. They also requested Mr. Teleffsen to investigate into the disappearances of several of their members and to take action to release them.

The ex-militants told the SLMM head to apply pressure on the LTTE to stop the abductions, forced recruitment and extortion of money from the public. They also complained of the reluctance of the Sri Lanka police to arrest those suspected of the recent murders.

Mr. Teleffsen told the ex-militants that their security concerns are the responsibility of the SLA and Sri Lanka Police and that the issue has been discussed in the earlier meeting with them. He also said that SLMM would ensure that all parties respect human rights.

The SLMM head also told the ex-militants that he would further discuss these matters with Commander Ramesh, and with Col. Karuna of the LTTE. He also promised to raise these issues with the Sri Lanka's Prime Minister and the President.

Probe sought on arms deal: Aug 29 - Sri Lanka's main opposition Peoples Alliance Friday requested the ruling United National Front government to appoint a panel of Supreme Court judges to conduct an investigation into the alleged fraud related to the purchase of weaponry to high-speed attack crafts of the Sri Lanka Navy.

PA media spokesman and parliamentarian, Dr. Sarath Amunugama, addressing a press conference at the office of the Leader of the Opposition, said that the corruption in other sectors has now crept into the defence sector of the country.

The Defence Minister, Mr. Tilak Marapone, and the Commander of the Sri Lanka Navy, Rear Admiral Daya Sandagiri, had gone to Israel and signed an agreement to purchase weaponry to high-speed attack crafts. The deal with Israel had created opposition in the UNF cabinet and some ministers had vehemently objected to this purchase from Israel, Dr. Amunugama said.

The Defence Ministry could have purchased the weaponry directly from the United States of America. The U.S. government had earlier shown much interest in the supply of weaponry to the Sri Lanka Army, but later it disassociated itself after Sri Lanka's deal with Israel, the PA spokesman said.

40,000 maids from Lanka to Malaysia: Aug 29 - Sri Lanka signed an agreement with Malaysia to supply between 40,000 and 50,000 trained maids and plantation workers, the official

Bernama news agency Malaysia reported.

Sri Lanka's visiting Minister of Employment and Labour, Mahinda Samarasinghe, signed the memorandum of understanding at a meeting with Malaysia's Human Resources Minister Fong Chan Onn. Fong said Malaysia planned to sign similar agreements with Thailand, China, Indonesia, Vietnam and several other countries. "This memorandum ensures a more systematic and efficient recruitment of workers as well as better trained workers who can speak good English," he told reporters.

Fong said there were now just 4,000 Sri Lankan workers employed in the two sectors in the country. The government was looking into a request from Sri Lanka to extend the deal to the manufacturing and construction sectors.

CTTU gives strike warning: Aug 31 - The Ceylon Tamil Teachers' Union (CTTU) has given one-month notice to the Human Resources Development, Education and Cultural Affairs Ministry to fulfill its demands that the Sri Lanka Army (SLA) withdraw from its camps in all Tamil medium schools in the northeast province and that Tamil teachers are not racially discriminated when appointments are granted to Principal Grade service.

As a first step the CTTU would call on its members to stage a one-day token strike if the United National Front government failed to accede to their demands within one month, said Mr. T. Mahasivam, General Secretary of the CTTU in a press release issued today.

Additional demands of the CTTU are: (a) To increase the salary structure of teachers according to the Tissa Devendra Salary Commission report, which had been submitted during the previous regime; (b) To grant permanency to about six hundred part time English teachers serving in the northeast Tamil medium schools since 1992; and (c) To take immediate action to fill more than five thousand vacancies exist in NE schools for Tamil medium teachers.

Tamil leader blames India: Sept 1 - A leading Sri Lankan Tamil parliamentarian has accused India of fomenting anti-LTTE feelings within the Tamil United Liberation Front (TUFL). The All Ceylon Tamil Congress (ACTC) leader and MP, A. Vinayagamoorthy, said in Jaffna that some TULF leaders had started attacking the LTTE at the instance of India.

The pro-LTTE Tamil daily, *Sudar Oli* quoted him as saying that the leaders, who had won the last parliamentary elections using the LTTE's name, were now arguing that the LTTE was not the sole representative of the Tamil people. "It is on the instigation of India that such things are being said. The children of TULF leaders are studying in India. They are receiving other benefits too. It is out of selfishness that these leaders are dancing to India's tune," the ACTC leader said.

Reiterating that his party would continue to function "independently", Vinayagamoorthy warned that if the TULF continued with its anti-LTTE line, his party might opt out of the four-party Tamil National Alliance of which the TULF is also a part.

SLMM, SLA escort LTTE women: Sept 1 - One hundred fifty women cadres of the LTTE led by the Special Commander of the LTTE Batticaloa-Amparai district Ms Nilavini left Batticaloa this morning to Vanni region in two buses escorted by members of the Sri Lanka Monitoring Mission (SLMM) and officials of the Sri Lanka Army (SLA), according to LTTE sources. They are to attend the Thamileelam Women Resurgence day celebration scheduled to be held on September 10 and the sixteenth remembrance day of Second Lieutenant Malathi at LTTE held Vanni region. They left LTTE headquarters "Thenaham" in LTTE held area Karadianaru and were received by the monitors of the SLMM in Batticaloa and commanders of the Sri Lanka Army at Karuththapalam in Chenkaladi, SLMM sources said. Batticaloa LTTE leaders Ram and Varathan joined others assembled in Chenkaladi to give send-off to the LTTE women group.

The two buses taking LTTE women cadres were given es-

cort by SLA armored vehicles upto Habarana junction on the Colomb-Trincomalee trunk road. The head of the Batticaloa SLMM handed them over to the Vavuniya SLMM monitors who were waiting with army escort at Habarana to taken them to Vanni, sources said.

Mother buries son's body in garden: Sept 1 - A mother who alleges her son was tortured to death in a police station, has buried him in her garden, fearing that officers would otherwise steal the corpse to cover up the case, a human rights group said.

Garlin Kankaname Sanjeeva, 25, was arrested in Kadawatta, a Colombo suburb, accused of involvement in a robbery. Sanjeeva, a Sri Lankan army soldier on leave, was found hanging in a police lockup the following day, said Chitral Perera, secretary of Janasansadaya, a human rights group.

"Police have claimed he hanged himself in the police cell with his trouser belt. But there is no evidence of how such hanging could have taken place," Perera said. "There is widespread suspicion that victim's death is due to torture and that hanging was done after the death to cover up murder," he said.

Police in Kadawatta denied the charge. "This was a case of suicide," said S. Skandakumar, a police officer. "Our officers held a detailed investigation and found that Mr. Sanjeeva had killed himself," he said.

Sanjeeva's family buried his body in their garden. "They do not trust the police version and want proper inquiry and second inquest," Perera said. "If we buried the body in the cemetery, the police might steal it. So, we want to protect the body until proper inquiries are made."

Sanjeeva's mother, Dorin Athukorala, told the human rights group that she had seen blood flowing from the lower part of her son's body and wounded arm. "My son did not commit suicide. He was killed," Athukorala said. "I will not give this up."

Perera called for the death to be investigated officially by an independent committee of forensic experts and police officers from outside the area.

LTTE meets Swiss officials: Sept 2 - A delegation of the LTTE, led by its political wing leader, Mr. S.P. Thamichelvan and comprising Batticaloa-Ampara Special commander, Col. Karuna, and Director of the LTTE's Peace Secretariat, Mr. Puleedevan, met with Swiss government officials in Bern, Switzerland, today, according to LTTE sources.

The discussions centered on the Sri Lankan government's Interim Administration proposal for resettlement, rehabilitation and development for the Northeast, the sources said.

The LTTE leaders explained to the Swiss officials the importance of an interim administration with adequate powers for the effective implementation of the rehabilitation and reconstruction plans in the war-devastated Northeast, the sources said.

The Swiss team comprised Mr. Peter Maurer, the Head of Political Department IV of the Federal Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA), the South Asia division chief of the DFA, and the Swiss Ambassador to Sri Lanka, Mr. Bernardino Regazzoni.

School meals for North-East children: Sept 6 - The United Nations World Food Programme is continuing its reconstruction efforts for Sri Lanka with the launch of a meals-in-school programme for 33,000 children in former war zones.

Under the WFP's first school feeding programme in Sri Lanka, the children, who are in grades one to nine, get a nutritious mid-morning meal of rice and lentil porridge or corn-soya cakes, both supplemented with vegetables. The food, distributed with the start of the new school term, both motivates their daily attendance and enhances their ability to learn, the WFP said.

The programme targets children who were most affected by the displacement, poverty and food deficits of the 20-year conflict. Tens of thousands of children in the North and East suffered a prolonged educational drought - in the Vanni alone. It is estimated that one-quarter of the 100,000 school-age children stopped going to school for several years at a time.

"The war robbed children of education," said WFP Country Director Jeff Taft-Dick. "But a school feeding programme can help restore the lost years. And in this difficult post-war period in Sri Lanka, the programme gives people a ray of hope for a better future."

Complaints pile up at Bribery commission: Sept 7 - An estimated 1000 complaints from the public on bribery or corruption have not been attended to by the commission to Investigate Allegations of Bribery or Corruption following the void created by the demise of one of the commissioners.

The commission became a 'white elephant' after justice T.N. Abeweera passed away in February this year. Since then the vacancy has not been filled.

According to Director General of the Commission, Piyasena Ranasinghe, nearly 35 indictments that also include charge sheets have also not been filed in courts due to this lacuna. Ranasinghe says the failure to file action in courts against those who have already been interdicted from their places of employment is unfair by them and added that the government should take serious note of this.

He also said on a daily basis the commission receives five to six complaints from various places but added that the commission is unable to take any serious action against the offenders. "We are still carrying out the old cases. New cases are untouched. We get a lot of complaints about the accumulation of wealth and other acts of corruption involving public figures. But we cannot do anything about it," he said. He said public officials take advantage of this lacuna in the commission and continue to engage in bribery. "This is bad for the country. This paves the way for more and more corruption," he pointed out.

Tamil Eelam Police HQ opened: Sept 7 - Speaking during the opening ceremony of the Tamil Eelam Police Head quarters complex today, Sunday 7th September 2003, at 06.40 am in Kilinochchi, Leader of Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) V. Pirpaharan congratulated the Chief of Police, the young men and women of the police service and the liberation fighters who contributed to the growth of the Tamil Eelam police force, Voice of Tigers (VoT) radio said this morning.

Head of Heros Affairs, Pon Thiyagam and Commander of Sea Tigers Col. Soosai lit the ceremonial lamps, LTTE's Head of Intelligence Pottu Amman hoisted the Tamil Eelam flag, and Chief of Tamil Eelam Police P. Nadesan raised the official flag of Tamil Eelam Police.

Mr. SP Tamilselvan, Head of the Political wing of the LTTE,

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Pottu amman, Col.Theepan, Col.Balraj, Col.Sornam, Sea tiger commander Col.Soosai, Col.Banu, Col. Jeyam, Col.Vithusha, Col.Thurga and Director of Sencholai, Janani also participated in the opening ceremony presided by P.Nadesan.

'Informant' killed: Sept 8 - Suspected LTTE cadres allegedly killed another army informant on 7 September near the Ariyampathi Kovil, Police said. The victim, a former member of TELO was identified as 22 year-old T. Chandramohan. According to initial investigations two suspected LTTE cadres had stabbed the victim who was near the Kovil and fled the scene.

Shortage of English teachers in NE: Sept 8 - The Tamil National Alliance (TNA) has requested Sri Lanka's Prime Minister, Mr. Ranil Wickremesinghe, to take steps to fill the vacancies that exist for English language teachers in Northeast schools by granting permanent appointments to part time English teachers who have been working in the region for several years.

The TNA delegation, at its meeting with Mr. Wickremesinghe at his Temple Trees residence, brought to his notice the fasting protest by the North-East Part Time English Teachers, who have demanded permanency, and said their demand was just as there was a dearth of English teachers in the Northeast provincial schools. The delegation said that in particular, there is an acute shortage for English teachers in schools in Kilinochchi, Mullaitivu, Thunukkai and Mutur.

The North East Part Time English Teachers Union suspended its four-day-old fasting campaign on the assurance by TNA parliamentarians and provincial education ministry secretary that they would take up the matter with the Prime Minister.

Fishermen freed minus catch, gear: Sept 8 - A suspected group of LTTE cadres have allegedly abducted 26 fishermen along with their day's catch of about 2000 kilograms of fish on 7 September morning in the sea off Pulmoddai in eastern Sri Lanka.

Military sources said that ten armed LTTE cadres had allegedly abducted these fishermen in eight fishing boats and taken them to the Nayaru area. They said that after retaining four boats, four engines, four fishing nets, seventeen lanterns and the day's catch, the LTTE had freed the abducted fishermen after they had been more than six hours in custody. These fishermen have complained to the Pulmoddai police.

Rs. 1 billion for English education: Sept 9 - The Government has decided to allocate a sum of Rs. 1 billion for the development of English education in schools, a senior official of the Education Ministry said.

The Ministry said that teaching in the English medium commenced in Government schools from last year. This programme is being successfully implemented in 168 schools in the island. Information Technology is as necessary as English. Therefore, 870, computer centres were set up in schools at a cost of Rs. 8,000 million. The number of centres will be increased to 1,400 in the future.

Meanwhile, the awarding of Mahapola technical education and computer scholarships took place at the BMICH in Colombo recently. It was organized by the Mahapola Scholarship Foundation. Five hundred scholarships were awarded for higher studies. The foundation says the primary objective of the programme is to propagate practical knowledge along with technology.

Emergency plan to control HIV, AIDS in NE: Sept 9 - The Sri Lanka Health Ministry is to formulate an emergency action plan to control and prevent the Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV) and Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome (AIDS) in the northeast province. A high level conference to work out a comprehensive plan is to be held on Friday morning at the North East Provincial Health Ministry auditorium, which is to be attended by high officials from the central health ministry, health authorities said.

Deputy Directors of Department of Health Services in all eight districts in the province, the district medical officers of health

and other related officials have been invited to attend the conference, health officials said.

About 12 persons have contracted AIDS in the northeast province, the second highest in the island. The highest incidence of AIDS is in the western province, with 13 AIDS patients. Most of those who have contracted AIDS are returnees from abroad, provincial health officials said.

In the northeast province, 6 persons contracted AIDS have been detected in the Jaffna district, 4 in the Batticaloa district and 2 in Trincomalee district upto now, health officials said.

Meanwhile, Indian health officials have informed their counterparts in Sri Lanka that upto now about 10 Sri Lankan Tamils staying in the refugee camps in Tamilnadu have been detected suffering from the HIV virus, health officials said.

Provincial health officials have, meantime, started screening all returnees from abroad, especially from Tamilnadu, to the northeast province to see whether they carry the HIV virus, a health official said.

Economy records a significant progress: Sept. 9 - The Central Bank of Sri Lanka in its monetary policy review for this month says the country's economy recorded a considerable progress in the first six months of the year. An improvement is seen in many sectors in the economy. According to the report, the paddy production during the 2002/2003 Maha season reached a new peak output. The tea production, which suffered a temporary setback due to floods, is recovering, while the coconut production has also increased. The Bank further says the inflation has been reduced under the prevailing situation. The Colombo District Consumer Price Index decreased further from 3.9 percent in July to 3.5 percent in August. The Colombo Consumers Price Index also declined from 8.3 percent to 7.9 percent in August. The external sector performance has improved further. Cumulative exports for the current year recorded a growth of 18 percent in US dollar terms in the first six months, while cumulative imports grew by seven percent. The Tourism Industry also showed considerable improvement. The bank report also points out that Sri Lanka's gross official reserves have increased to around 1.939 million US dollars by end of July, equivalent to over three months of imports.

Unemployed graduates protest: Sept 9 - The Alliance of the Associations of Unemployed Graduates (AAUG) staged a protest opposite the Fort Railway Station demanding gainful employment, which suited their qualifications, and an immediate end to politically inspired appointments.

Convener Chandana Sooriyarachchi told a media briefing at Colombo that they decided to launch this protest as a climax to their island wide sathaygraha in which their parents too have been participating.

"We made representations to the Prime Minister and the Cabinet last year. Thereafter members of provincial unions of unemployed graduates staged a fast in various parts in the country. All our protests so far do not appear to have had the desired effect. Therefore we propose to continue with our struggle," he said.

He said that though the government had registered the unemployed under various projects like Rekiya Piyasa and Tharuna Aruna there is no proper long-term plan to address the unemployment problem of graduates. "The government misleads the public by issuing statements to media regarding pleads to provide employment to graduates. There are about 80 000 vacancies in the state sector establishments. Therefore, they cannot sidestep the unique saying that there are no vacancies," he said.

Formalizing of a national policy on employment of graduates and stopping recruitment to the government service on political grounds are among their key demands. "Currently there are about 40 000 unemployed graduates in the country. Every year 13000 graduates pass out from the universities," he said.

Tiger taxes scare away hawkers: Sept 10 - The LTTE cadres

are alleged to have driven away more than 70 Muslim pavement hawkers from the Chikkalady shopping bazaar in Batticaloa in eastern Sri Lanka because they refused to pay the amount of taxes stipulated by the LTTE, according to local Muslim leaders.

They said some of the hawkers earned only about Rs. 150 a day but LTTE cadres were demanding as much as Rs. 250 a day as taxes from September 1. They said the hawkers had earlier paid Rs. 25 as tax to the Batticaloa Pradeshiya sabha and Rs. 50 to the LTTE. The hawkers said that when they told the LTTE cadres that they could not pay Rs. 250 a day they were told to take their goods and get out.

Meanwhile SLMM spokesperson Agnes Bragadottir said that the imposition of taxes by the LTTE was "questionable" under the terms of the Ceasefire Agreement. Bragadottir said that since there was no formal complaint made to the SLMM against the taxation policy of the LTTE, a ruling on the subject had not been made before. On the other hand, complaints regarding extortions, abductions, and stolen goods were the more common issues brought before them.

JVP's second anti-peace march: Sept 11 - The Janatha Vimukthi Peramuna (JVP) announced that its second five-day march from Kandy to Colombo, protesting against the present peace talks between the government of Sri Lanka and the LTTE, would commence on September 27.

The march would reach Colombo's Lipton's Square on October 1 and conclude with a mass rally demanding the United National Front government to abandon the present peace process, as "it would cause immense and irreparable harm to the sovereignty and integrity of the country," the JVP said.

LTTE cadres arrested and released: Sept 11 - A tense situation prevailed, when the Special Task Force personnel tried to arrest Akkaraipattuwa LTTE area leader 'Reagan' for transporting timber from the government held area on 9 September evening

at Akkaraipattu in eastern Sri Lanka.

Military sources said that around 5 pm on the day at Akkaraipattu, STF personnel tried to inspect a lorry carrying timber by five LTTE cadres including Reagan. When the STF personnel tried to inspect the lorry, the LTTE leader strongly protested and entered into an argument with the STF personnel, who then called the SLMM officials.

However, the STF personnel arrested the LTTE cadres and handed them over to Akkaraipattu police. But a few hours later, the five LTTE cadres along with the lorry were released on the advice of the SLMM officials.

Passport officers interdicted: Sept 12 - Six officers of the Immigration department were interdicted for allegedly helping to forge passports for suspected criminals to go abroad, the Controller Mervin Wijesekara said. He said these alleged frauds had taken place before the introduction of the N-series passports with high security features where forgery is hardly possible. The officers have been handed over to the CID for further investigations.

Petition against Interim Admin: Sept 15 - Sri Lanka Court of Appeal directed the Attorney General (AG) to submit written submission in respect of the petition filed by a group of persons including the Chief Incumbent of the Seruvila Raja Maha Vihare, Venerable Saranakeerthi Thera, against the establishment of an interim administrative council for the northeast province without holding a referendum.

The petitioners sought the Court of Appeal to order the Government of Sri Lanka (GoSL) to hold a referendum before establishing an interim administrative council for the northeast. They argued in court when the petition was taken up for inquiry Friday that views of the people of the two provinces should be sought before setting up the interim administrative structure.

The Attorney General in his preliminary objection told the court that the President has the power to call the referendum. The AG further moved that the petition should be rejected, as the Court of Appeal has no jurisdiction to hear this petition. However the Court of Appeal instructed the Attorney General to submit his written submission on the petition on or before November 3 this year, legal sources said.

De-mined village ready for resettlement: Sept 15 - The Swiss Foundation for Mine Action (FSD) said that the Mallavarayankattu Adampan village in the Mannar district had been cleared of mines and is fit for resettlement of the displaced persons, and it ceremonially handed over the village to the Mannar Government Agent, Mr. V. Visuvalingam, at a function held at the Adampan Matha Church.

Mallavarayankattu Adampan is the first mine-free village in the Mannar district. The FSD said an area of about 4,32,635 square meters was cleared.

Mannar Bishop, the Rt. Rev Rayappu Joseph, the LTTE's Mannar district political head, Mr. C. Amirthab, Sri Lanka Army and Police officials and representatives of various organizations attended the event.

All 97 Tamil families in the village fled in 1997 during the Sri Lanka Army's military operation code-named "Edibala" and sought refuge at the Jeevothayam centre in Murunkan. The displaced families have been pressing the civil authorities for resettlement in the village since the signing of the ceasefire agreement between the Sri Lankan government and the LTTE in February last year. The Mannar GA has taken steps to resettle the displaced in stages following the handing over of the village by the FSD.

Twenty-one families would be resettled in the village within the next two weeks in the first stage, district secretariat sources said.

Two EPRLF members killed: Sept 16 - Two EPRLF members were killed and a former Army informant was shot and

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injured in Batticaloa by suspected LTTE cadres in eastern Sri Lanka, police said.

Batticaloa police Inspector Harischandra Bandara said the former EPRLF Razik Group member who had taken to fishing was hacked to death on September 14 night at Muhatuaram in Batticaloa. He said the group of unidentified persons had attacked 23-year-old Neelan Suhendran while he was on his way to sea. Fishermen who had seen his body lying on the road last morning had informed the police. His body is now lying at the Batticaloa mortuary.

Another EPRLF member, Kamal Nitthiyathan, was shot dead on 15 September allegedly by a member of the LLTE pistol gang near the Ceylon Petroleum Corp. branch in Batticaloa, police said.

Inspector Bandara said two men on a motorcycle had followed the victim Nitthiyathan who was also riding a motorcycle when one of them opened fire killing the victim on the spot. 30-year-old Nitthiyathan, who is an executive of the EPRLF Batticaloa branch was known to be an active member of the party.

In Batticaloa another Army informant was admitted to hospital after being shot by suspected LTTE cadres on 13 September night. Police said the victim Pushparasa had owned a pharmacy in Batticaloa town. They said the victim's wife had assaulted one of the gunmen who had fallen off the motorcycle after the shooting. The gunmen had followed the victim and his wife who were also travelling on a motorcycle. Police said the LTTE had tried to kill the victim two years ago.

Batticaloa ASP Nalaka de Silva said a demonstration was held outside the police station protesting against the killings, but police were unable to make much headway in the investigations as eye witnesses were afraid to give evidence. An EPRLF spokesman said some 38 party members had been killed after the signing of the ceasefire agreement with as many as 17 being gunned down in Batticaloa.

SLA bars Halo Trust from de-mining: Sept 16 - The Sri Lanka Army has said that it would not allow demining groups to demine the released paddy fields for cultivation in the high security zones in Thenmaradchi south division in Jaffna district, and instead would use its own soldiers for the de-mining operations.

The SLA earlier released about one fifth of the 5000 acres of paddy fields that come under the high security zones in Thenmaradchi south division for paddy cultivation by the internally displaced persons. It was also decided at a conference the SLA held earlier with civil authorities to allow the Halo Trust demining group to demine the released paddy fields. Hence the Government Agent of Jaffna district sought the permission from the SLA northern commander to deploy the Halo Trust group to demine the paddy fields enabling the farmers to sow in time. However, the SLA has now disallowed the request and has now deployed its soldiers to do the de-mining, district secretariat sources said.

Meanwhile, agricultural organizations in the area have complained to the civil authorities that SLA officials located in Thenmaradchi division are not allowing farmers to enter the paddy fields that have been released for cultivation, thus causing delay in sowing their paddy fields with the coming of northeast monsoon which is expected at any time, sources said.

Ordered not to join police: Sept 17 - The LTTE is preventing Tamil youth from the East joining the National Police Force, police sources have revealed. The Tamil youths who attended interviews held recently to recruit to the police in the East have been ordered not to join, the police claim.

The Government recently decided to recruit about 500 policemen to serve in the eastern province in view of the frequent incidents of violence leading to ethnic tension between the Tamil and Muslim communities. About 25% of the youth who attended interviews from Trincomalee district were Tamils.

A senior police officer said that the LTTE had requested the applicants to join the LTTE if they wish to serve in the police force. The LTTE has visited houses of these youths and warned them not to join the police, the officer alleged.

Bhikku Front protests against IA: Sept 17 - Sri Lanka's National Bhikku Front (NBF), an organization of Sinhalese Buddhist monks, held a Satyagraha (non-violent demonstration) campaign in thirty major towns, protesting against the establishment of an interim administrative structure for the northeast province, which the NBF said would pave way for the division of the country.

In Colombo, hundreds of Buddhist monks participated in the demonstration for about an hour opposite the Pettah Bodhirajarama Maha Vihare, led by the NBF's President, Ven. Kalawelgala Chandraloka Thera. Buddhist monks carried white flags and lotus flowers and sat down opposite the Bodhi tree for about an hour from 4 p.m. to 5 p.m.

The Janatha Vimukthi Peramuna parliamentarian, Mr. Wimal Weerawansa, Mahajana Eksath Peramuna parliamentarian Mr. Dinesh Gunawardene and members of other Sinhala nationalist organizations also participated in the Satyagraha campaign. **US asks LTTE to end terrorism:** Sept 17 - The United States marked the first anniversary of Sri Lanka's stalled peace talks by asking Tamil Tigers to abandon "terrorism" and make realistic proposals to allow the negotiations to resume, the US embassy here said in Colombo.

On the occasion of the first anniversary of the start of peace negotiations between the Sri Lankan government and the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam, the U.S. Department of State's spokesman issued the following statement:

"Today marks the first anniversary of the beginning of negotiations between the Government of Sri Lanka and the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam, to end nearly 20 years of conflict. We continue our strong support for this process and for the efforts of Norway to keep it moving forward.

"It is unfortunate that this anniversary finds the talks in suspension. We also remain concerned about continuing political assassinations by the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam and call on the Tigers to abandon terrorism, including political assassination, and to comply with the terms of the ceasefire agreement they signed.

"We hope that the Tamil Tigers' response to the July 17 Government proposal for an interim administration will be realistic and will allow the two sides to return to the table at an early date. With a constructive approach to talks and willingness to compromise, negotiated solution to the conflict is possible."

Suicide to escape LTTE: Sept 18 - A Tamil youth from Batticaloa had attempted to commit suicide, by taking poison, to prevent the LTTE from abducting him. He has been admitted to Batticaloa hospital. The youth has been identified as T. Mahendran, a resident of Kovilporathive Batticaloa, army spokesman, Col. Sumedha Perera said. *He has been handed over to Batticaloa police.*

Investigations revealed that on several occasions earlier the LTTE had attempted to abduct him. But he had escaped. Sunday (14 September), when the LTTE had attempted to abduct him he had escaped and had taken poison. Batticaloa police have brought this incident to the notice of the SLMM.

Jaffna HSZ to remain - Marapone: Sept 19 - Sri Lanka's Defense Minister, Mr. Tilak Marapone, said today that until a permanent solution to the ethnic conflict is found, no concrete decision could be taken regarding the removal of high security zones in the Jaffna district.

"No permanent peace has been reached. Only a temporary ceasefire is currently in force in the country. Hence the govern-

(continued on page 36)

Father Thani Nayagam

(1913-1980)

A Sage Among Scholars

Prof. K. Kailasapathy

(This tribute by the late Professor K. Kailasapathy is published to commemorate the 90th birth anniversary of Father Thani Nayagam on 2 August 2003. Prof. Kailasapathy wrote this in 1980, soon after Thani Nayagam's death on 1 September 1980. Kailasapathy passed away two years later, in December 1982.)

Among the band of Tamil scholars who have endeavoured to explain and interpret the culture and civilization of the Tamils to the Westerners, Rev. Thani Nayagam occupies a unique place. Since the birth of oriental studies and especially Indology, a few European savants have done yeoman's service in introducing Tamil language and literature to western scholars. One of the earliest was G.U. Pope (1820-1907) who has endeared himself by his effusive love for Tamil language and literature and by his many translations of Tamil works into English. As has been aptly remarked, Pope contributed much "to the elevation of Tamil studies and Tamil religion as legitimate subjects of study for Oriental scholars". A few other European scholars have likewise by dint of their earnestness of purpose and their life long devotion to the cause of Tamil and Dravidian scholarship have earned for themselves an imperishable place in the annals of Indological research. From G.U. Pope to Kamil Zvelebil (the foremost 20th century European scholar of Tamil, from the Czech Republic) there is a galaxy of distinguished and respectable names that are inseparable from international Tamil studies.

While the European scholars have done their part in unveiling the literary heritage of Tamils, Tamil scholars themselves have lagged behind in this matter. There was no doubt a few isolated attempts by Tamil scholars to translate into English some of the classical works and expatiate on them. P. Arunachalam, T. Isaac Tambyah, J.V. Chelliah, P. Sundaram Pillai, V.V.S. Aiyar, V.R.R. Dikshitar, and M.S. Purnalingam Pillai are some of the names that linger in our memory. Pioneering and prodigious as

their works are, they were the result of occasional excursions into the world of letters. Broadly speaking, the Europeans were inclined towards philological pursuits and the Tamilians were drawn towards literary matters.

Father Thani Nayagam was perhaps the first Tamil scholar to realize and react to this compartmentalized nature of Tamil studies and strove to evolve an integrated approach towards them. Steeped, as he was, in European humanist studies, he formulated a cultural approach that would not only encompass language and literature but also the arts and other accomplishments of the Tamils. On that basis he made a sustained and systematic endeavour to interpret Tamil culture in its totality to the world at large. To him culture was at once specific and universal whereas Tamil scholars before him had largely confined themselves to certain fields like literature philosophy, history and religion, Father Thani Nayagam worked towards a unified view.

He understood culture in its broadest and best sense as an accomplishment of a particular race or nation. The arts and sciences and other achievements of the Tamils were shown by him to be integral to the Tamil way of life. In his own words, they were the "result of the *Weltanschauung*, the world outlook of the Tamil speaking people". His was essentially a humanist approach to culture moulded by a harmonious blend of Tamil ethos and English critical sensibility. Time and again he took up the task of defining and elucidating the fundamentals of Tamil culture. In that sense much of his writing were notes towards the definition of his culture.

He would have readily concurred

with the statement that, culture "reaches into our capacity to take in thoughts, ideas, beliefs and mannerisms, it is expressed in styles, conversational tones, modes of personal intercourse in the way we eat what, with what, and when and what we call we have eaten". In his lecture on the "Characteristics of Tamil Culture" he echoed similar ideas. To him culture was indeed a conscious achievement of society. In "Tamil Culture-Its Past, Present, and Its Future" a lecture he delivered in 1955 he said:

While it is true that a culture may not be created artificially, it is equally true that it is in the power of men to contribute to the causes and work at those conditions necessary for a flowering of culture, and it is also in the power of men to combat those intellectual errors and the emotional prejudices which stand in the way of such conditions. The survival and the continued growth of Tamil culture is, therefore, in our hands.

This quotation provides the key to an understanding and appreciation of Father Thani Nayagam.

While conceding the fundamental fact that culture operates unconsciously he is quick to add that it is the power of men to create the necessary condition conducive to the flowering of culture. Here we clearly see his sense of volition, a scholar who was not merely content with education and exposition but intent on doing his best to a noble success. To quote him again:

It is selfless and noble to dedicate one's time and energies under god to one's Culture and one's Country. The Tamil sage implied that Tamil Culture is the dearest possession of the Tamil people for the preservation of which no sacrifice would be great enough, not even life itself.

The gentle scholar who spoke of the "sweetness" of Tamil language and the greatness of life altruistic love was at the same time capable of defending a cause and if need be fighting intolerance and injustice. He was not one of those proverbial scholars living in their secluded ivory towers. It is the deep concern for the people who create and perpetuate cultural ideals that inevitably led

him to study contemporary Tamil groups in many parts of the world. He pioneered studies in this area and wrote a number of original papers that focussed attention on the geographical distribution and demographic statistics of Tamil speakers or groups of Tamil descent in nearly twenty countries. In fact his idea for an International Association for Tamil Research was itself a logical outcome for his abiding interest in the Tamil 'diaspora'.

However, Father Thani Nayagam's espousal of the Tamil cause should not be confused with the sort of cultural chauvinism that is rampant in the Tamil socio-political scene. He arrived in the field of Tamil cultural studies after a prolonged period of study in Europe, as a result of which he was able to apply the comparative method in his inquiry into classical Tamil Literature and Philosophy: his researches were characterized by comparisons that transcended national boundaries. While writing with eloquence and passion on Tamil culture what he cherished most was the sense of universality that abound in Tamil literature. The lines of an ancient Tamil bard that Father Thani Nayagam popularised through his innumerable lectures in the countries he visited and which he made central to his thesis is the well known epigram of Kaniyan Poonkunran:

**Every country is my country
Every man is my kinsman**

As a comparativist Thani Nayagam had very few peers. His brilliant lecture, *Indian Thought and Roman Stoicism*, delivered at the University of Malaya in 1962, on his assumption of duties as Professor of Indian Studies, testifies to his mastery of the comparative method. In a memorable passage he made the observation that has since then become an academic credo:

Today, it should be hardly considered scholarship to compile the history of University education and ignore Takasila, Nalanda and Kanchipuram; to discuss the nature of epic poetry and ignore the Mahabharata, the Ramayana, and the Silappatikaram; to write on the history of the scientific study of politics beginning with Machiavelli and yet not to mention the older Arthasastra; to analyse mysticism

and forget the Tamil bhakti poets; to explain methods of Scholasticism and fail to mention altogether Samkara and Ramanuja; to teach of architecture and by pass the Moghuls; to teach the history of sculpture and ignore the Nataraja bronze which in spite of its four arms, pace Ruskin, or was it because of them, Auguste Rodin and Ananda Coomaraswamy were convinced, synthesised the highest achievement and total exploitation of sculptural possibilities.

Nor was his interest entirely limited to high culture. Although he was at times prone to view culture as a conscious process of perpetuating, enshrining, and valuing certain aspects of it. As a sober scholar he was sensitive enough to respond to popular or mass culture. In his plea for the systematic study of Tamil groups scattered all over the world, he said:

A comparative study of the retention of folkways and folk literature among older generation of Tamil migrants in the various countries to which Tamils have migrated would be a most interesting study.

In adopting the comparative method and in pursuing the humanistic cultural ideal and in viewing culture as an aspect of total social coherence, Father Thani Nayagam was acting not only in the best traditions of humanistic scholarship but also on the basis of modern tenets of scientific inquiry. In that sense he fulfilled the urgent needs of the world of Tamil studies. Max Muller's dictum on pioneers and path-finders seems apposite here:

Great men, depend upon it, do not come down from the sky like shooting stars. They come in the fullness of time, and if we want to understand their true character, we must try to understand that fullness of time, that is the time that lay behind them and the time that lay before them.

Father Thani Nayagam's contributions to Tamilology have now become part of our intellectual history and scholars and researchers in time to come will no doubt see them in different perspectives. What their evaluation and conclusions will be, is a matter for conjecture. But to those who had the pleasure of

knowing him personally both as an individual and as a scholar, the memory of him will always be fresh and fascinating. His attachment and affection towards friends, his abiding and agile enthusiasm for matters intellectual and aesthetic, his instinctive fervour for all social and liberal movements in the cause of humanity and, above all, his selfless generosity, were experienced by all who came into contact with him. His fondness for literary and poetical expression was matched by his fondness for flowers. And both were symbolic of his gentle and humane nature that made Father a sage among scholars. Thani Nayagam Adigal, as many Tamils were wont to call him, will always be remembered as an extraordinary sage who lived and moved in the world of Tamilian thought and culture. □

(Continued from page 33)

ment has been forced to strengthen the security of the country and as such there is no room for any compromise regarding the removal of HSZ," said Mr. Marapone, according to press reports from Colombo.

Mr. Marapone presided over a high level conference held at the office of the defense ministry at the request of the Hindu Affairs Minister, Mr. T. Maheswaran, regarding the resettlement of thousands of internally displaced families.

Defense Ministry Secretary Mr. Austin Fernando, Minister Mr. T. Maheswaran, heads of three armed services, Jaffna district army commander Major General Sarath Fonseka, Jaffna government agent and divisional secretaries concerned participated at the conference.

Minister Maheswaran brought to the notice of the conference the difficulties of the IDP families as they have been prevented from resettling in the lands and houses now being occupied by the security forces in the name of high security zones in the Jaffna district, sources said. Mr. Maheswaran submitted several proposals to enable resettlement in HSZ.

While the SLA rejected the proposal to resettle IDPs within HSZs, they agreed to allow the re-opening of a government hospital in Adampan in Vadamarachchi east division, which is in an SLA-controlled area, sources said.

Canadian HC meets Thamichelvan: Sept 19 - The Canadian High Commissioner in Sri Lanka, Ms. Valerie Raymond, met with the Political head of the LTTE, Mr. S. P. Thamichelvan, at the LTTE's Peace Secretariat in Kilinochchi

(continued on next page)

The roving Ambassador of Tamil

Amudhan Adigal

Today, Tamil is one of the few Indian languages taught in many universities of the world. Scholars, who are not of Tamil origin, have undertaken Tamil research.

International conferences on Tamil studies are conducted frequently in many countries. Tamil festivals are celebrated in many parts. All this was possible, thanks to the strenuous efforts by one individual: Xavier S. Thaninayagam, a catholic priest from Jaffna, who was professor and head of Indian Studies, University of Malaysia, from 1961 to 1969.

When Oriental scholars met in Delhi in January 1964, Fr. Thaninayagam, Prof. Kamil Zvelebil, a Czechoslovakian scholar of Tamil studies, and Prof. V.I. Subramaniam, former Vice-Chancellor, Tamil University, and the present Pro-Chancellor, Dravidian University, convened a meeting of the Tamil scholars (Indian, Sri Lankan and from other countries). The International Association for Tamil Research was born then and there. The IATR organised the first International Tamil conference-cum-seminar in 1966 in Kuala Lumpur. Successive conferences were conducted in Chennai, Paris, Jaffna, Mauritius, Madurai, and Thanjavur.

Fr. Thaninayagam, hailed as the 'Roving Ambassador par excellence of Tamil' even during his lifetime, started learning Tamil only when he was 32.

Though a Tamil by birth, he was more interested in learning

European languages and became fluent in English, Latin, Italian, French, German, Spanish and Portuguese.

Thaninayagam, born on August 12, 1913, became a student of Tamil at the Annamalai University in 1945.

His M. Litt. thesis on 'Nature in ancient Tamil Poetry' was praised as an excellent introduction to Sangam literature. Immediately after his studies, he undertook a world tour to give lectures on Tamil language and culture.

He visited Japan, the U.S., Brazil, Peru, Mexico, Ecuador, Chile and Italy. In U.S. alone, he gave 200 lectures in one year.

Fr. Thaninayagam founded 'Tamil Culture' in 1952, a quarterly journal. Tamil culture reached American and European universities and attracted scholars, who started contributing well-researched.

Zvelebil, Filliozat, Andronov, Emeneau, Kuipper, Knowlton, Marr, Boxer and Burrow are some of the scholars worth mentioning.

When the publication was stopped in 1966, he started 'Journal of Tamil Studies'.

During his world tours, Fr. Thaninayagam spent time in libraries where he identified some rare manuscripts as well as some first printed books in Tamil: *Cartilha* (1556), *Tambiran Vanakkam* (1578), *Kirisitiani Vanakkam* (1579) and the first printed Tamil-Portuguese Dictionary, compiled by Antam de Proenca.

Fr. Thaninayagam reprinted Proenca's dictionary during the first International Tamil Conference in Kuala Lumpur, with an erudite introduction by him.

His research topics included architecture, education in ancient Tamil Nadu, Tamil trade with foreign countries, Tamils' emigration to Martinique and Gaudalupe and landscape in ancient Tamil poetry.

His worldwide contacts were instrumental in getting generous funds from the UNESCO for IITS.

Today, both the IATR and the IITTS are living monuments to this great Tamil scholar. *(The Hindu)*

(continued from page 35)

today, and encouraged the LTTE "to move forward steadfastly [in finding a negotiated political settlement to the ethnic conflict] in spite of any obstacles that are usually expected in such protracted conflict resolutions," sources said.

The High Commissioner and her team arrived in Kilinochchi by land from Jaffna. Ms Elizabeth Baldwin-Jones, Political/Economic Counselor at the Canadian High Commission in Colombo, and Mr. Joe William, Senior Development Officer of the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA), were associated with Ms. Raymond at the meeting.

It is reported that Mr. Thamichelvan explained the 'realistic' nature of the LTTE's counter proposals to the Sri Lankan government's proposals for an Interim Administration for the Northeast to be presented next month, and specifically thanked her for the input from the Canadian Forum of Federation (CFF). On behalf of the CFF, Mr. Bob

Rae, the former premier of the Ontario province in Canada, and Mr. David Cameron participated at the LTTE's Paris meeting to provide their input based on Canadian Federalism.

Speaking to journalists after the meeting, Ms. Raymond said, "I had a constructive discussion with Mr. Thamichelvan. On behalf of the Government of Canada, I have urged him to return to face-to-face talks as soon as possible. Once the LTTE has returned to talks, we urge them to stay the course until a final political settlement is achieved."

"We feel that," Ms. Raymond said, "the development work can continue on a parallel track to improve the lives of the people at the same time as the political negotiations are continuing."

UK ready to support peace process

Sept 19 - The UK Secretary for International Development, Valerie Amos has said that the UK and the international community continue to stand ready to offer po-

litical and practical support to Sri Lanka.

A press release issued by the British High Commission stated that Amos and Minister of State at the Foreign Office, Mike O'Brien had held separate meetings in London last Wednesday with Sri Lanka's chief government negotiator in the peace process, Constitutional Affairs Minister, Prof. G.L. Peiris.

Prof Peiris also met with Lord Chancellor, Lord Falconer.

Speaking about the current stage of the peace process, Mike O'Brian had reportedly said: "We know that the LTTE is considering its response to proposals presented by the Sri Lankan Government for the operation of an interim administration in the north and east of Sri Lanka."

He added: "We very much hope that all parties to the peace talks will work to facilitate their progress, and to support the upholding of the rights of each of Sri Lanka's communities, we strongly support the peace process." □

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Contact George: 020-8689 0236 or 07931 587 168 (UK)

About People and Events

OBITUARIES



Balachandran Thuraiatnam (Balan), son of the late Mr. & Mrs. I. P. Thuraiatnam of Tellipalai; beloved husband of Vimala; loving father of Prashanth (Ian), Devashanth (Harry) and Premshanth (Brian); dear grandfather of Rebecca, Benjamin, Sobini, Shaun and Sarina; brother of the late Dr. T. Harichandran, Sarojini Paramanathan (N.Z), Dr. Manoharan (Cyprus), Sakuntala Kunanayagam (S.L) and Dr. (Mrs.) Mithrathevi Niranjanan (U.K) passed away on the 13th of August '03 in Zambia.

The funeral took place amongst family members and a large gathering of friends at Cathedral of the Holy Cross, Lusaka on the 18th of August

'03. A service of thanksgiving was held at the same time in Sri Lanka.

We take this opportunity to convey our sincere thanks to all our relatives and friends who supported us in so many different ways during this time

of great loss and sadness. – Mr. & Dr. (Mrs.) K. K. Niranjanan, 5, Barrie Pavement, Wickford, Essex SS12 9DR Tel: 01268 472 113; Mr. & Mrs. H. D. Thuraiatnam, 15, Harbo-rough Road, Streatham, London SW16 2XP. Tel: 0208 516 8485.

IN MEMORIAM

In Ever loving Memory of
Our Dearly Beloved Daddy
T. J. Rajaratnam (Retired High Court Judge)



Called to rest 15-9-81

*Those we love don't go away
They walk beside us everyday
Unseen, unheard, yet very near
Still loved, still missed*

And very dear
Fondly remembered and sadly missed by your loving wife Arul, children Rohini, Renuka, Rajiv; sons-in-law Vijayan, Sriharan; grandchildren Vasi, Ravi, Prathi, Jayanthi and Ajit.

Third Year Death Anniversary



Mrs Pathmavathy Selvanayagam
-of Jaffna-
Born: 12.08.1916
Died: 24.09.2000

"அன்பிலார் எல்லாம் நமக்குரியர்
அன்புடையார் எங்கும் உரியர் பிறர்க்கு"
*"The loveless are
only to themselves
The loving are
cherished by all"*

Fondly remembered, greatly loved and sadly missed by her loving children, in-laws, grandchildren and a whole host of relatives and friends, not only in Sri Lanka but also across the seas.

May her soul rest in peace
Manning Place, Colombo
Sri-Lanka

Second Anniversary Remembrance



In ever loving memory of Mr.
Kanapathypillai Sitsape-

san on the second anniversary of his passing away on 5th September 2001.

Remembered with love and affection by his children Manoharan and Savithri; daughter-in-law Rebecca; son-in-law Varathan; grandchildren Holly, Daniel and Luxmmi and brother K. Yogeshwaran (Sri Lanka) – N. Varathan Flat 15, Girtin House, 44 Brighton Road, Sutton, Surrey SM2 5JQ. Tel: 020 8404 6541.

Mr PONNUDURAI NARENDRANATHAN

Mr PONNUDURAI NARENDRANATHAN, most dearly beloved and adoring husband of Gnanambal; dearest loving and proud Appa to your children, Dr Thrinayani Jegathambal, Prof. Mrs Sowmya Wijayambal, Mrs Sobhana Meenambal, Dr Mrs Priyadarsani Brahathambal, Adhithya Thrilochanan, Mrs Vasutharini Girijambal, Agasthya Ponnambalam and Ambika Dhakshayani; father-in-law of Dr P Arulampalam, S Raveendran, T Ilangoan and R Srikanthan and Dr Meera Narendranathan; darling dearest Thaththa to your grandchildren, Abhirami Janani Raveendran, Amarnath Thirumadhavan Raveendran, Nirmala Arulampalam, Janaki Saruhasini Srikanthan, Janarathanan Ragavan Ilangoan, Dhivya Saraswathy Ilangoan, and Divani Kruthika Narendranathan.

Dear Appa, you were one of the threads that held together our family Garland of varying colours and fragrances. Your physical presence may not be here anymore to hold together the flowers, but the legacy you left behind is, and will be there always guiding us through this life. Forever remembered with love and pride, especially on this the ninth anniversary of your passing away on the 24 September 1994.

God Bless.

(Address: 53 Crossways, South Croydon, Surrey, CR2 8JQ).

எல்லாப்படியாலும் எண்ணினால் இவ்வுடம்பு பொல்லாப் புழுமலினோய் பன்குரம்பை - நல்லார் அறிந்திருப்பார் ஆதலினால் ஆம்கமல நீர்போல் பிறிந்திருப்பார் பேசார் பிறர்க்கு.

ஆண்டாண்டு தோறும் அமுது புரண்டாலும் மாண்டார் வருவரோ மாநிலத்தீர் - வேண்டா! நமக்கும் அதுவழியே! நாம்போம் அளவும் எமக்கென்? என்(று) இட்டு, உண்டு, இரும்.

வினைப்பயனை வெல்வதற்கு வேதம் முதலாம் அனைத்தாய நூலகத்தும் இல்லை - நினைப்பதெனக் கண்ணுறுவ தல்லால் கவலைப் படேல் நெஞ்சே விண்ணுறுவார்க் கில்லை விதி.

சிவாய நம என்று சிந்தித் திருப்போர்க்கு அபாயம் ஒருநாளும் இல்லை - உபாயம் இதுவே(;)மதியாகும் அல்லாத எல்லாம் விதியே மதியாய் விடும்.

Auvalyar 800 AD

FORTHCOMINGS EVENTS

Oct 1 Feast of St. Theresa of the child Jesus
Oct 2 Saraswathi Pooja starts; Feast of the Guardian Angels
3 Mahanavami
4 Vijaya Thasamy; Puraddasi Sani 3; Feast of St. Francis
5 Sukkala Ekaathasi
7 Pirathosam; Feast of the Queen of the Holy Rosary - Madhu Feast
8 Feast of St. Dennis
9 Full Moon
11 Puraddasi Sani 4
13 Kaarthihai; Sankadakara Chathurthi; Feast of St. Edward
14 Feast of St. Callisus
17 Iypasi Velli 1 ; Feast of St. Ignatius
21 Krishna Ekaathasi

23 Pirathosam
24 Deepavali
25 Amavasai
26 Skanthatasasti starts
28 Chathurthi
30 Shashti; Soora Samkaram
31 Thirukalyanam; Iypasi Velli
At the Bhavan Centre, 4A Castletown Road, London W14 9HG. Tel: 0207381 3086/4608
Oct 3 7.30 p.m. The Bhavan Teachers and their students celebrate **Sri Durgashtami Puja** - Puja, Cultural Programme and Prasad
- All welcome.
Oct 4 Karnatic Violin by Balu Raguraman (Violin), M. Balachandhar (Mridangam) & Bangalore Prakash (Ghattam)

WEDDING BELLS

We congratulate the following couples on their recent wedding.

Gajaruban, son of Mr. & Mrs. Ragunathan, 'Guruji Vihar', 51 Arundel Road, Kingston, KT1 3RY and **Kathambari**, daughter of Mr. & Mrs. Sundaralingam of 32 Alfred Place, Colombo 3 on 24th August 2003 at Ceylon Continental Hotel, Colombo 1.

Preshanthi, daughter of Mr. & Mrs. Sri Ratnam of 2, Nandana Gardens, Colombo 4 and **Raguo** son of Mr. & Mrs. Ramakrishnan of 'Dwaraka', 34B Temple Road, Chundukuli, Jaffna on 24th August 2003 at Kathiresan Hall, Galle Roadn, Colombo 4.

Gajan, son of Mr. & Mrs. Sritaran of 62 Templecombe Way, Raynes Park, Surrey and **Sukanya**, niece of Mr. & Mrs. Mahathevan of Shaggy Calf Lane, Slough, Berkshire on 24th August 2003 at The Manor of Groves Hotel, High Wych, Herts.

Sutharshni, daughter of Mr. & Mrs. Balachandra of 73 Freemont Street, Concord, ON L4K 5H8 and **Chinthaka** son of Mrs. Loganayaki Somaratna and late Mr. A.P. Somaratna of 10 Tulle Avenue, Woodbridge, ON L4H 2X7 on 29th August 2003 at Wedding Hall, Clai-report Place, 65 Claireport Crescent, Etobicoke, ON.

Sale of Paintings by Sri Lankan Artists

Eleven paintings, details below, by the Sri Lankan artists George Keyt and Ivan Peries are to be sold at Sotherby's sale rooms in Bond Street, London on 14th October 2003. The vendor is Martin Russell from whom further information can be obtained by contacting him on 01258 830990 or by e-mailing martin.russell1@which.net

By George Keyt (1901-1999), all oil on canvas

1. Nayika - 60 by 47 cm.
2. Vasantha raga- 69 by 47cm
3. Russell's soul in the guise of a Kandyen peasant -29 by 44 cm.
4. Landscape with house - 66 by 74 cm By Ivan Peries (1921 - 1988)
5. Self portrait - Oil on canvas - 60 by 51 cm.
6. Girl in white blouse - Oil on wooden panel - 40 by 28 cm
7. Two standing figures by a tree - Oil on canvas - 100 by 76 cm.
8. Nude reclining on one arm - Oil on canvas - 36 by 46 cm.
9. Nude figure standing in water, moonlit - Oil on canvas - 52 by 41 cm.
10. Standing nude woman by a tree - Oil on canvas - 44 by 54 cm
11. Figure by sea - Tempera oil on gasso panel - 62 by 86cm.

Gopiha's Veena Arangetram



The veena arangetram/debut of Gopiha, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Nanda gopal of Rayners Lane, Harrow took place on Sunday 31st August at the Beck Theatre, Hayes. She was presented by Srimathy Suthamathy Sri Satkunam, Director of Mathangy Fine Arts, under whose tutelage she studied from the age of twelve.

In the opening composition 'Viriboni' the Bhairavi varnam - Gopiha brought out the special characteristics of the raga whilst establishing rapport with the audience described in Tamil as 'kachcheri kalai kattuthal'. She showed great skill in handling the gamakas/adornments of this composition. 'Maha Ganapathim' in Nat tai was well rendered continuing the momentum gained in the introductory piece, followed by the Pancharatnakrithi 'Entha romahanubava' in Sri Ragam. These three compositions were played with precision in rhythm to the delight of the accompanists.

The keerthanam 'Suthamayee' in Amirthavarshini based on Roopaka thaalam provided Gopiha with an opportunity to bring out the nuances of raagam, thanam, niravel and svaram. She played the 'kalpana svaram' with ease, keeping to the Sruthi and Layam as is expected of a performer of 'manotharma sangeetham' (extemporisation, the hallmark of Karnatic Music). 'Phahimam', the chowkaka kriti in Janaranjani encapsulates the Tamil word 'ranjakam' which describes the pleasant nature of this piece which Gopiha justified with her characteristic sensitivity. The pinnacle of the first half of the program was reached in Ragam, Thanam, Pallavi. The 'pallavi' using just one line or stanza describing the Lord of the Dance - Siva in 'aananda nadanam aadinaar' was set to Kamboji - a raga of devotional music. Thanam lends itself to the veena. The debutante's embellishment of this and every other aspect that the pallavi offered her attested to her musical skill and maturity.

The accompanying ensemble was an asset to the performer throughout the

arangetram. The excellence of the accompanists - 'pakkavaaththiyam' was evident in the 'thani aavarthanam' when they came into their own. K.S Bhavani Shankar first renowned as a Bhavan artist and tutor, accompanied on the mirthangam. Bangalore R.N.Prakash adorned the stage as an accompanist on the gadam. The third of the trio - Sri Ampalavanar Srinivasan provided accompaniment on the moresing. Gopiha was indeed privileged to have these accomplished accompanists who motivated her in fulfilling her potential. Mrs. Rathika Rajaloganathan an experienced and eminent compere co-ordinated the items very well and contributed towards the success of to the Arangetram.

'Raguvamsa' in Katahnakuthookalam never fails to bring joy - 'Kuthookalam' to many of us with memories of orchestral performances. Gopiha felt more relaxed with this composition and shared her enjoyment by rendering it appropriately. 'Aarabeemanam', the Ragamalikai as a garland of ten Ragas mentions the name of the Mother Goddess - Amman /Durga through each Raga. Gopiha managed to justify the characteristics of each raga as she moved through them smoothly, with confidence. The final light compositions - 'Kartrinilay' made popular by M S. Subbalakshmi, and 'Thaamarai Pootha' - were both familiar, and enjoyed by the audience. When an instrumentalist renders pieces as though they are being sung as Gopiha did, it shows true talent. The performance was brought to a grand finish with the Thillana. The selection of compositions by a variety of composers lent themselves to a successful arangetram which was brought to a close with the traditional mangalam.

Gopiha who is versatile, chose to concentrate on mastering the veena out of her previous musical options. Her dedication to this instrument is obvious in her poem printed at the back of the programme:

'I cradle this piece of ancient history in my arms. So precious, so pure, so divine...'

Gopiha was congratulated for her performance by the Chief Guest - The Mayor of Harrow Councillor Manoharan Dharmaraja, and the Guests of Honour. Srimathy Suthamathy Sri Satkunam was complimented for training her student so thoroughly and diligently. The guru presented a shield to Gopiha Nandagopal from Mathangi Fine Arts Academy naming her 'Isaith Thendral'. Gopiha was wished every success for her future career as she enters University College, London to progress academically. The parents can justly be very proud of their daughter's achievements.

Punitham Perinparaja
(Kala Anjali Arts Circle, Harrow).

Professor S. Muthulingam as I knew him



(1927 - 2003)

It was with great sadness that I received a telephone message on 24th August from my brother in Toronto, informing me that Professor Muthulingam had passed away. He was not in good health for some time and when he telephoned me a few weeks back he told me that he was under medication and observing the recommended routine. After our telephone conversation I recorded some audio tapes and sent to him. The news of his death came as a great shock because I was going to telephone him to discuss the tapes. Sadly he missed his 76th birthday by a day.

After graduating from the University of Ceylon in the early fifties, Professor Muthulingam taught Physics and Chemistry for a short time at Jaffna Central College and then at Jaffna Hindu College. Then he joined the Faculty of Education at the University of Ceylon as a Lecturer. He came to London in the early sixties for post-graduate studies at the Institute of Education, University of London. On receiving his PhD he returned to the University of Ceylon, rising to the position of Professor of Educational Psychology, first at the University of Peradeniya and then in 1975 at the University of Colombo from where he retired in 1987. During his period at the University he trained numerous teachers who are now in or have retired from senior positions.

Professor Muthulingam's interest in music prompted him to name his son Sarangan and his daughter Kalyani. I always felt he was a man who had more than his share of misfortune; his wife fell ill and passed away when the children were small and he had to bring up the children under difficult circumstances. In the ethnic attack of 1983 his house was seriously damaged

and its contents were completely destroyed. He and his children managed to escape with their lives, taking nothing with them. Then in 1987 he was detained in Colombo on suspicion of accommodating suspected militants. On finding the "militants" innocent, the authorities released Professor Muthulingam without charge after a month of detention in harsh conditions along with hardened criminals. The experience made him decide to leave Sri Lanka permanently and he settled with his children in Toronto, Canada. In our last telephone conversation Professor Muthulingam expressed his satisfaction about his children being happily married and about the professional success of Sarangan as an academic at Dayton University, Ohio, USA.

At Jaffna Central College Professor Muthulingam taught my brother and I knew about him then because of the interest in music that my brother and I shared with him. I got to know him only in 1961 in London. When I left Ceylon, as it then was called, I missed not only my family and friends but also the music and musical activities I was involved in. During my first

2 weeks in England, though I stayed with some other friends in London before proceeding to the Midlands, I spent most of this time with Professor Muthulingam. He showed me how to get around in London, took me to some places of interest and entertained me at his bed-sit. We listened to a lot of recorded music and discussed music all the time. He made it very homely for me and I have always been grateful for this. I made frequent weekend trips to London, sometimes staying with him.

Professor Muthulingam was a trained Karnatic singer who gave performances over Radio Ceylon and SLBC. In the sixties cultural events in Indian music and dance were very rare in London. Professor Muthulingam participated in some of these and some of my weekend visits to London were in this connection. In 1997 he spent a short time in London on his way to India and Sri Lanka. In India he went to attend the music festival in Chennai, which he enjoyed thoroughly. In London he gave a recital at the East Ham Murugan temple which I was fortunate to attend. It was appropriate too that I was at his last performance in London.

I did not have any professional connection with Professor Muthulingam. Our friendship was based mainly on our interest in music, from the beginning to the very end. We have seen each other from time to time in England, Sri Lanka and Canada but throughout we have been in contact directly or through my brother. He was a very unassuming man and his unconditional help to many former students and friends for more than 40 years was recognised by the latter who kept in contact with him, visited him whenever possible and held him in high regard. I was reminded of his kindness when I visited Jaffna early this year and met the Principal of a school. When I learnt that he had a Masters degree in Education from the university of Colombo, I asked him whether he knew Professor Muthulingam. He replied that Professor Muthulingam not only had taught him but also helped him very much, even giving accommodation and hospitality in Colombo. We who knew Professor Muthulingam shall miss him very much. May his soul rest in peace.

Dr. S. Sriharan

Book Review

MEDIEVAL TAMILS IN LANKA = ILANKAI

Authored by N. Parameswaran

This book, a sequel to the author's "Early Tamils of Lanka=Ilankai", continues the history of the Tamils from the Chola occupation of the island to the end of the 18th century over a period of 900 years from a Tamil perspective.

The Chola invasions from 944 AD led to further significant growth in Tamil influences and settlements in the island. More importantly, it was followed by the establishment of the Tamil Kingdom of Jaffna in c. 1210. Though it came to be known as the Kingdom of Jaffna, because the centre of its power was the Jaffna Peninsula, it generally embraced the limits occupied by the Tamil-speaking people. The Tamil Kingdom of Jaffna is the centre piece of this book.

With the arrival of the Portuguese in 1505, followed by the Dutch, for a period of almost 300 years (1505-1796), new influences impacted on the Tamil and Sinhala polities. Both powers, however, recognised the distinctiveness of the two peoples who had come to occupy the island and administered them as separate entities. During this time, the Tamils and the Sinhalese, faced with the foreign colonisers, became friends in adversity and sought each other's help to expel the outsider.

Over the entire period surveyed, as far as the Tamils were concerned, it saw the culmination of expanding Tamil interests

Australian Newsletter

The Centenary of Rukmini Devi Arundale, a leading exponent of Indian Performing Arts and founder of Kalakshetra was commemorated in Melbourne under the auspicious of Centre for Contemporary Culture, New Delhi. Dr Avanthi Medhuri, a scholar and an accomplished Kuchipudi and Bharathanatyam dancer delivered Rukmini Devi Memorial Lectures at Monash University and University of Melbourne. Photographic exhibition depicting Rukmini Devi's life and work and astute dance performances of Dr Avanthi Medhuri formed part of the celebrations. No doubt, Dr Medhuri's lectures and performances received grand welcome in the local art circles. Tamil Australian Friendship Society organised a Tamil Cultural

and elements in Lankan society. It led to the consolidation of their political power with the establishment of the Tamil Kingdom of Jaffna. It was over this period too that the Tamils developed an unified social organisation and forged some customs of common usage which found expression in the Thesavalamai or Customary Laws of the Land. This development came to sharply distinguish the Tamils of Ilankai from the Tamils of Tamil Nadu with institutions and social habits different from those of the mother country, notwithstanding their continued cultural links.

For a copy, priced at Pounds15.00 inclusive of postage, please call the following:

Tel: 020 8520 5442 (UK)

evening at Ashwood College to celebrate the National Youth Week in conjunction with Monash Arts Council. It was an event coordinated by Tamil youngsters under the able guidance of elders and it is certainly commendable that the time management was just right to the extent that the event concluded on time.

Dr Raja Mohan of The Hindu Publishing Group was in Sydney, Canberra and Perth under the Special Visits Program of Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade participating in various defence and strategic sessions and delivered a lecture in Sydney on India's Foreign Policy.

Tamil Eelam Women's Organization (TEWO) launched a book titled "The Recipes of Jaffna Tamils" at an impressive gathering in Melbourne. As the title indicates the book is a rich collection of food preparation practices of the peninsula, not only of present times but that of yesteryears. This book would easily be one of the few of its kind in English and the overwhelming response from various parts across the globe comes as no surprise.

One of Chennai's young and talented vocal artists Sowmiya gave a spectacular performance during Saravanan Senthoooran's Miruthanga Arangetram in Melbourne. Saravanan, a disciple of leading Miruthangam exponent Shri Ravi Ravichandira captivated the audience with his scintillating maiden performance and has done proud to Senthoooran family. Eelam Tamil Association (formerly known as Ceylon Tamil Association), one of the pioneering Tamil grouping in Melbourne is celebrating its silver jubilee this year and is gearing to observe the momentous event in a grand scale in Melbourne.

S. Sitsabesan, Melbourne

Appeal for Haemofiltration Unit for Teaching Hospital, Jaffna

One of the serious problems encountered in the Teaching Hospital, Jaffna is the large number of patients admitted with septicaemia, a serious infection that affects the whole body. Many patients have to be cared for in the Intensive Care Unit (ITU). A significant number die from the illness and this includes young men and women and children. One of the reasons why patients succumb is due to the fact that the kidneys fail (acute kidney failure). We do not have the facilities to always treat this problem effectively.

This could be overcome by the purchase of a "haemofiltration unit", which cleans the blood of toxins and waste products that the kidney cannot clear and thus helps to preserve the kidneys and save the patient. (This is different from a dialysis unit which is used for long term kidney failure). This can also be used for acute kidney failure due to other causes such as poisoning (a common method of suicide)

The equipment can be bought in Sri Lanka (which is the best option) and costs approximately Rs. 2 million (£ 13,400). The company that supplies it will provide the technical training and back up services needed. A senior Tamil anaesthetist from England is prepared to train our doctors in its use when he is in Jaffna.

Your help in raising the funds for this would be greatly appreciated. Contributions could be made in one of the following ways:

1. By Post. Cheques made in favour of "Jaffna General Hospital Development Association and sent to The President, Jaffna General Hospital Development Association, Teaching Hospital, Jaffna, Sri Lanka.
2. Direct Bank Transfer to the Association's Account No. 1420483201 in Commercial Bank, Foreign Branch, Commercial House, 21 Bristol Street, Colombo 1, Sri Lanka. Please notify us if money is directly transferred.
3. Contributions could also be made through 'The Friends of Jaffna Hospital' in England. Please contact Dr. S. Navaratnam (President) Tel: 01277 223 981 or Mr. Victor Cherubim (Secretary) Tel: 07958 522 888.

All contributions will be acknowledged as early as possible and once the equipment is purchased, details will be sent as well.

Your generous contribution and those of friends would go a long way in saving lives of many people in the North of Sri Lanka.

Dr.D.C.Ambalavanar
President.

Jaffna General Hospital Development Association,
General Hospital (Teaching), Jaffna, Sri Lanka.
Tel- Hospital 021 - 2260/ Fax: 021 - 3180
e-mail: thayalanca@hotmail.com

Jaffna College Alumni Association of UK

Annual Dinner & Dance on 25.10. 03

We are pleased to inform members that the Annual Dinner & Dance will be held at C&L County Club (Junction of West End Road & A40), Northolt, Middx UB5 6RD at 7 p.m. till late.

Souvenir: In reflection of the success (internationally) of the Alumni, for the first time we are introducing the new idea of publishing member's achievements and progress in the UK consisting of fifty words in writing, together with a passport size photo. The photograph and a cheque for

£ 25.00 should be sent a.s.a.p. to avoid disappointment. We are operating on a first come first served basis. Please keep the date free as we are giving you ample time. Closing date is 7 October 2003 for the photograph and write up. The souvenir will be distributed at the function.

All financing proceeds will be used to help and promote today's education at Jaffna College.

R. Anantha Nathan, President, 16 Charterhouse, Avenue, Sudbury, Middx. HA0 3DB, Tel: 020 8795 2532; **G. J. Gunasekaram**, Secretary, 53 Dangan Road, London E11 2RF, Tel: 020 8530 2450; **R. Chandrakumar**, Treasurer, 47 Wordsworth Avenue, Southwood Ford, London E18 2HD, Tel: 020 8530 3362.

50th Wedding Anniversary of Mr. & Mrs. R. J. Gunaratnam



A service of thanksgiving and blessing celebrating the 50th wedding anniversary of Mr. & Mrs Gunaratnam was held at the South Harrow Methodist Church on 28th June 2003. Bishop S. Jebanesan officiated and preached the sermon. Lessons were read and singing rendered by their children and members of the family. A large gathering of friends and family were present. Mr. R.S. Thambiah paid the following tribute to their life.

Fifty years of life together of Gunam and Ranees is a remarkable achievement in Sri Lanka and more so particularly in Jaffna during the most turbulent period of Sri Lanka's history, when the joy and exuberance of independence and the hopes of an emerging nation was lost in confusion and violence of chauvinism and militance. Finally to leave one's home in ruins, an industry closed down and a factory abandoned must indeed be a painful and horrendous experience.

We are glad we are able to meet together on this occasion, not only to celebrate a life of fifty years together, but also

to express to Gunam and Ranees how much their work is appreciated and how much more their work is appreciated and how much more they are loved.. I see present here their children Shanthy, Roshan and Niranjana, their in-laws and grandchildren, relatives from Sri Lanka, the US, Canada and Kuwait and several of their friends, which is an evidence of how close they are in our hearts.

Gunam is an entrepreneur with a vision, who invested in people. A Rotarian and twice president of the Jaffna Rotary Club and a recipient of the Paul Harris Fellowship, he is a social worker, a wonderful husband and father and a reliable and dependable friend, warm hearted with a genuine desire to help others. Ranees with her CSI background, her education at Uduvil Girls' School is a patient, quiet and thoughtful person who took care of the home and was a sobering influence on the life of Gunam and the children.

It was in Jaffna in the 1960's that Gunam's entrepreneurial skills found expression and fulfilment. In 1965 a handloom industry was started in Jaffna, soon followed by Ceyma silk industry employing over a hundred persons and providing training facilities. Plans for the expansion of the industry had to be abandoned and the tragic events of the past two decades finally led to the closure of the factory and their coming to the United Kingdom.

I would like to look at the life of Gunam and Ranees as a symphony. There have been discordant chords, sad and difficult, but they have come through it all, kept their faith, their warmth and love for each other and the community intact. Their life is indeed a symphony lived in praise of God and in service to the community.

On behalf of everyone present, as well as the many friends and loved ones who are unable to be present, I wish you both many more years of life together in faith and in service. May God bless you both.

We welcome you to our spacious New Branch

Jewellery Shop and Silk Palace

At Ealing Road, Wembley

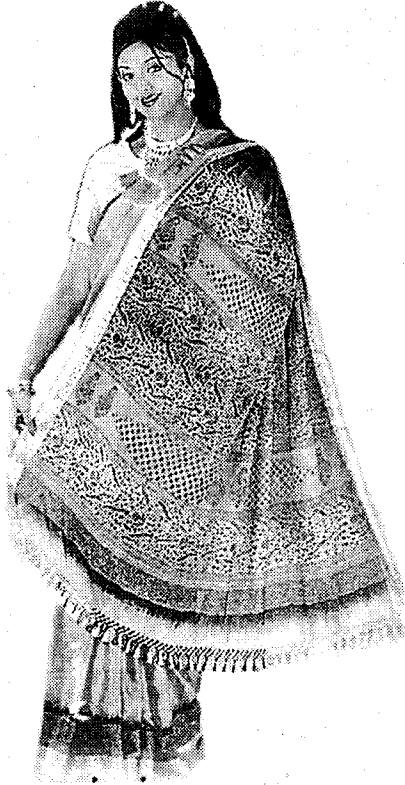
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