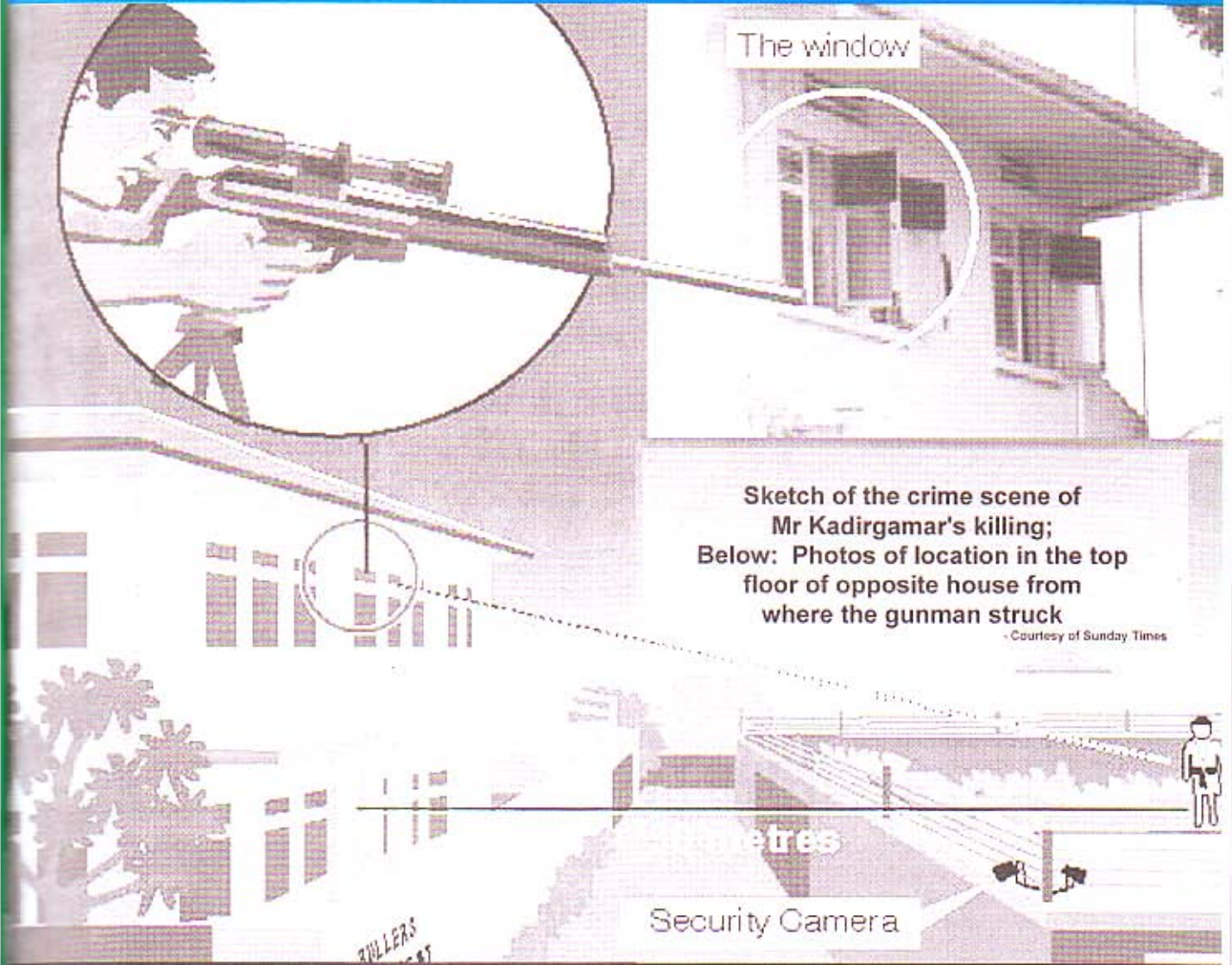


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The window

Sketch of the crime scene of
 Mr Kadirgamar's killing;
 Below: Photos of location in the top
 floor of opposite house from
 where the gunman struck

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right to say it"*

- Voltaire



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Assassination and after

Sri Lanka has experienced hundreds of killings in spite of a so-called ceasefire which has been in existence since February 2002. However, Foreign Minister Kadirgamar who was gunned down on 12 August has been the most prominent political figure to be assassinated since the ceasefire came into being. Though he was reputed to have been on top of the LTTE's hit-list earmarked for elimination, there was universal shock and revulsion when it really happened.

The Government and its investigators have blamed the LTTE for Kadirgamar's assassination, but the LTTE has denied any involvement. However, many analysts take the view that the LTTE, having characterized Kadirgamar as a "traitor" for the role he played in campaigning for the proscription of the LTTE in western countries, including the USA and UK, most probably has dealt with him in the way the LTTE always deal with those whom it deems "traitors" to its cause.

There has been widespread condemnation of the assassination of the Foreign Minister both internationally and within Sri Lanka. India expressed its "deep shock and profound grief" calling it a "heinous act". The United Nations Security Council condemned it as a "senseless act of terrorism", and the UN Secretary General Kofi Annan termed it a "criminal and senseless act". To the US Secretary of State, Dr Condoleezza Rice, this "senseless murder was a vicious act of terror". While the European Union described it as "a vicious terrorist act", the Head of the Sri Lanka Monitoring Mission Hargrup Haukland said "the brutal assassination" was "a barbaric act". To Germany it "was a senseless and cowardly act of terrorists".

In the immediate aftermath of the Minister's murder, there was the fear that the ceasefire was about to break down and that Sri Lanka was inexorably moving fast towards resumption of war. Many felt that the murder of the country's Foreign Minister was tantamount to a declaration of war and armed hostilities were inevitable.

Even before the Minister's murder, the situation was becoming out of control with the Ceasefire being routinely violated as violent incidents were being deliberately orchestrated as if the aim was to provoke another war.

Scores of deliberate and targeted killings and grenade attacks on a daily basis involving LTTE cadres, Karuna loyalists, other non-LTTE Tamil groups and security service personnel were becoming common place particularly in the northeast of the country, and some occurring even in Colombo and its suburbs. A week earlier, a Superintendent of Police in northern Jaffna was abducted and hacked to death when he went to defuse a tense situation that had arisen following the death of a civilian after a soldier's gun went off accidentally. In the heart of Colombo in the afternoon of the same day the Foreign Minister was killed, gunmen walked into the residence of a popular Tamil TV broadcaster and presenter, Mrs Relangi Selvarajah and her husband and shot both of them dead at point blank range.

Quite unexpectedly, the situation appears to have been reversed from the brink of an outbreak of war towards talks between the Government and the LTTE. It is learnt that President Chandrika Kumaratunga had written to Norway's Prime Minister Kjell Magne Bondevik requesting an urgent meeting between the Government and the LTTE, in the presence of the facilitator and the SLMM, to review the practical functioning of the ceasefire with a view to preventing further killings and other violations. Many were surprised that the President sought talks with the LTTE so soon after she herself had believed and accused that the LTTE was guilty of assassinating her most capable Minister and trusted confidant.

Following the President's request, it emerged that both Norwegian Foreign Minister Jan Peterson and Deputy Foreign Minister Vidar Helgessen, after attending the Kadirgamar's funeral in Colombo, flew to London and met with LTTE's chief negotiator Anton Balasingham to discuss the President's proposal. Following this meeting it was announced that the LTTE had agreed to meet with the Government and to have face-to-face talks on the practical implementation of the Ceasefire Agreement.

That the LTTE had consented to the Sri Lankan President's request for direct talks was another unexpected development, given that just two weeks earlier the LTTE had dismissed a similar request from the President made to the LTTE through the Norwegian facilitators. From the time it pulled out of the peace talks in April 2003, the LTTE has been uncompromising in its refusal to get back to the negotiating table until some of its preconditions have been satisfied and the agenda being to discuss the government's response to its Interim Self Governing Authority (ISGA) proposal.

Though the country has been spared of the horrors of open warfare between Government forces and the LTTE since the ceasefire in February 2002, it has been an intolerable three-and-a-half-years during which many thousands of blatant ceasefire violations, including killings, abductions, child recruitment, restrictions on civil society activities and gross abuses of basic human rights of the people have occurred and which must be ended if the Norwegian-facilitated peace process is to have any meaningful chance of success in the future. Any proposed talks between these parties must be aimed at guaranteeing that these violations and abuses do not recur.

Govt-LTTE talks on ceasefire

August 19 - Direct talks between the government and the LTTE to review the full implementation of the ceasefire agreement between the two parties will be held soon. Norway said it was arranging a face-to-face meeting between Sri Lanka's warring parties in a bid to save a truce that was threatened following the assassination of the foreign minister.

The LTTE had told Norway's peace envoys it agreed to a request from the Sri Lankan government to review the faltering ceasefire, Norwegian embassy spokesman Tom Knappskog said. "This is going to be a discussion on the implementation of the ceasefire," Mr. Knappskog said. "It is not the resumption of peace talks, only a review of the ceasefire. When and where and the other details are yet to be worked out."

Mr. Knappskog said the Norwegians were in contact with the government and the Tamil Tigers to arrange the meeting "as soon as possible."

President Chandrika Kumaratunga had written to Norway's Prime Minister Kjell Magne Bondevik calling for talks with the LTTE to review the truce after Friday's assassination of Lakshman Kadirgamar and to prevent further political killings, her office said in a statement on Thursday (18).

While the LTTE's chief negotiator Anton Balasingham said that LTTE had "agreed to send a high level delegation to participate in the talks with the Sri Lanka government" and expected that the talks "would be held in Oslo within the next couple of weeks", it is learnt that the Government would prefer the talks to be at "officer ad technical level" and that they should take place in Colombo.

In the aftermath of the assassination of her Foreign Minister, President Chandrika Kumaratunga wrote to the

Norwegian Prime Minister, Kjell Magne Bondevik "requesting an urgent meeting between the Government of Sri Lanka and the LTTE, in the presence of the facilitator and the SLMM, to review the Cease Fire Agreement." She emphasized the need for a review to prevent "further killings and other violations."

The President's request was seen as her immediate response of to the assassination of the Foreign Minister, Lakshman Kadirgamar which the Government has attributed to the LTTE.

The President requested "an urgent meeting between the Government and the LTTE...to review the practical functioning of the ceasefire with a view to preventing further killings and other violations," the Presidential Secretariat said.

It has been pointed out that the Cease Fire Agreement has been violated 3126 times by the LTTE since it was signed in February 2002. The Presidential Secretariat said that on the direction of President Kumaratunga, the Government had, before the assassination of the Minister Kadirgamar, requested the SLMM to arrange a meeting between senior military personnel and senior LTTE cadres in order to devise ways and means of ending the political killings that had taking place recently, in contravention of the CFA.

Cabinet Spokesman Minister Nimal Siripala de Silva said that the Government did not want to amend the CFA but insisted that some procedure should be agreed upon for its enforcement. Addressing the media at the weekly Cabinet briefing, the Minister noted that what was really necessary was an honest and genuine commitment to preserve the CFA.

"As far as the Government is concerned, we are honest, genuine and we abide by the CFA," he said. "If the

LTTE engages in Ceasefire violations anymore, it could pose a severe danger to the peace process," the Minister said. "The Government is acting under a lot of constraints. We have categorically stated that we don't want war and respect the CFA. The LTTE while saying that they don't want go to war is engaged in a killing spree and also puts forward conditions. The LTTE should refrain from creating conditions against the Peace Process. This is the Government's appeal even at this moment."

When the Norwegian Foreign Minister Jan Petersen called on the President early this week, the President expressed her great concern over ceasefire violations by the LTTE. The President categorically stressed the reciprocal obligations of both parties. Both parties should comply with the CFA. It was the President's view that the enforcement mechanism in the CFA should be revived. "The enforcement mechanism of the CFA seems to be very weak now," the Minister said.

"The Government is committed to continuing with the CFA and it has no intention of going back to war. But the LTTE should not drag any party to war. At the same time our concerns have to be addressed and strongly taken note of and complied in terms of the CFA."

The Government categorically states that the LTTE should be honest in their intentions not only merely by word when they say they don't want to go to war. They must not create conditions where the Government will be forced to pursue another direction. The Government is acting with lot of restraint, he said.

The Government expects the situation to improve. "It is keeping in touch with the international community. We hope they will exert pressure on the LTTE. If the international community is really interested in genuine peace for Sri Lanka, they should take note on this present situation. They should act firmly. There can be many forms of actions the international community can take. It is up to them. Because they closely observe the situation in Sri Lanka they know for themselves the best thing they could do."

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LTTE agrees for direct talks

The Tamil Tigers have announced their consent to hold direct talks with the Government on a review of the current Cease Fire Agreement (CFA) which has been under threat of breaking down.

If talks place, they will be the first high-level meeting between the parties in two-and-a-half years. The Norwegian Deputy Foreign Minister, Vidar Helgesen, described move as a significant step forward for the peace process against the backdrop of the killing of Mr Kadirgamar.

He said the Tigers had agreed to discuss the implementation of the ceasefire agreement after what has been a serious downward slide in the truce. The announcement followed a meeting between the Norwegians and the LTTE's chief political negotiator, Anton Balasingham, in London on Wednesday, 17 August.

Mr. Jan Petersen, the Norwegian Foreign Minister, along with his

deputy Mr. Vidar Helgesen met Mr Balasingham in London and handed over proposals to the LTTE leader Mr. Pirapaharan calling for urgent talks on problems relating to the implementation of the truce.

The LTTE's TamilNet website quoting Mr Balasingham said that the LTTE leadership had accepted the Norwegian invitation to "participate in a review of the implementation of the Ceasefire Agreement in order to find practical ways of ensuring full compliance by both parties." He further revealed that the talks, facilitated by the Norwegians, would be held in Oslo within the next couple of weeks. The discussions would also focus on the escalating violence in the North-east and other related issues, he said.

The proposed direct talks are expected to revolve around continued violations of the CFA and the way in which it is implemented in practice. The Government is likely to raise the issue of continued assassination of government personnel and other po-

litical killings allegedly carried out by the LTTE. The LTTE will probably raise the alleged government support for Karuna, the LTTE renegade, who is reportedly engaged the killing LTTE cadres in Eastern Sri Lanka. The Tigers are also likely to raise a long standing dispute between the parties - the provision of military security for LTTE leaders and cadres being transported through government controlled areas between northern Vanni and eastern Batticaloa. The Government is also likely raise the reported continued forcible recruitment of child soldiers by the Tigers.

Opposition for the proposed talks so soon after the assassination of the Foreign Minister is already evident. The Janatha Vimukthi Peramuna (JVP), has described the LTTE's willingness to talk as a "trap" into which the government should not get caught.. The Buddhist monks' party, Jathika Hela Urumaya (JHU), has opposed the talks. □

Lakshman Kadirgamar Assassinated

Sri Lanka's Foreign Minister Lakshman Kadirgamar was assassinated on Friday 12 August by a gunman after emerging from the swimming pool at his private residence in Bullers Lane in Colombo 7. Kadirgamar was fatally wounded as the assassin, having positioned himself in the room in an upper floor of house located opposite the Minister's residence, struck firing several shots from a rifle with night-vision capability at about 11 pm.

The Government and the police have accused the Tamil Tigers for the Minister's murder. The Tamil Tigers, who have been waging a three-decade campaign for a separate Tamil state, have denied any involvement in the killing.

President in an address to the nation after the assassination said, "Initial indications of the investigations seem to reveal the responsibility of the LTTE in his brutal murder. It is unacceptable that a group that talks endlessly about being committed to a ceasefire would so blatantly violate it. This violation of the ceasefire is the latest in a continuous series of violations by the LTTE. The LTTE has denied involvement in the murder. Their denial contradicts the facts and our knowledge of their long held desire and repeated attempts to murder both my Tamil Cabinet Colleagues."

Lakshman Kadirgamar, who was reputed to have been on top of the LTTE's hit-list for targeted killing was the most tightly guarded Minister in the cabinet after President Chandrika Kumaratunga. The Minister had over 100 bodyguards assigned from the military as well as the elite Ministerial Security Division. They were backed up by intelligence units of the police and the army.

It was no secret that Minister Kadirgamar by pursuing a relentless campaign to get the LTTE banned as a terrorist organisation had earned the wrath of Tamil Tigers. Many supporters of the LTTE in the Tamil community had branded him "traitor" for his role in securing the proscription of the LTTE in some western countries including the UK and the USA. "His acts were considered to be treacherous towards the Tamils

from the very beginning," said M.K. Sivajilingam, a MP for the Tiger-backed Tamil National Alliance after the Minister's assassination.

President breaks down

As doctors battled to save her Foreign Minister Lakshman Kadirgamar after he was shot, President Chandrika Kumaratunga who rushed to the accident ward of the National Hospital is reported to have wept uncontrollably upon seeing his lifeless body.

The President is reported to have recounted the yeoman service Kadirgamar rendered the government with tears streaking down her face and said she hoped the people would at least now appreciate the importance of a lasting solution to the ethnic problem through peaceful negotiations. Premier Mahinda Rajapakse who too arrived at the hospital appeared visibly shaken.

Minister's prophecy

Soon after he moved into the house at Bullers Lane a few weeks ago, Lakshman Kadirgamar is reported to have had a small get together for a few close friends. While they were moving close to the pool, Kadirgamar had pointed at a house close by and said that anyone who wanted to shoot him could easily do so from the second floor of the house. Little did he know that assassins would use the same location to shoot him dead.

Foreign Minister Lakshman Kadirgamar was aware that his life was under serious threat. In fact, he mentioned this just the day prior to his assassination to Chief Opposition Whip, Mahinda Samarasinghe when invited to place his signature on the official report of the Parliamentary Committee on Disaster Preparedness. Kadirgamar was an active member of the said committee and served it with much interest.

When invited to endorse the final report, Kadirgamar had confided in Samarasinghe that government intelligence had warned him of grave security threats explaining his inability to attend parliament on Thursday (11), the day before was murdered. He requested that

the report be sent to his residence for his signature which was promptly done.

Kadirgamar, a former athlete, a champion hurdler in his day who captained Trinity College at cricket and had won his rugby colours, reportedly had told a journalist that despite his 73 years, he liked to swim 1,000 meters every day. There had been intelligence that there would be an attempt on Kadirgamar's life in August. A fortnight earlier three persons with suspected LTTE links were arrested by police when they were caught videoing Minister Kadirgamar's official residence at Wijerama Mawatha. They were arrested by the Ministerial Security Division while videoing the residence and the surrounding area. His advisors had tried to stop him from going to his Bullers Lane residence because of its vulnerability. It was felt that it was easier to protect him at the highly fortified government bungalow that was his official residence at Wijerama Mawatha. But reportedly he had been adamant about his swim even at that late hour of the night.

Emergency declared

Soon after the shooting of the Foreign Minister, President Kumaratunga, who narrowly escaped assassination in a suicide bombing blamed on the Tamil Tigers in December 1999, declared a state of emergency giving sweeping powers to security forces to arrest and detain suspects and calling upon the people to remain calm. In Colombo, soldiers started door-to-door searches for the snipers, while police set up road blocks and air force helicopters circled the night sky.

Following the assassination of the Foreign Minister, Sri Lankan security authorities admitted a security lapse. The Inspector General of Police, Chandra Fernando, said the killers, believed to be two, shot the Minister at his home from the upstairs bathroom of a neighbouring house which had not been adequately checked out by the authorities.

"We are not able to cover all angles," Fernando said adding that Kadirgamar had rejected police advice that he should leave his home for security reasons. He said he had surveyed the area recently and felt it was unsafe and also had received intelligence information that it was insecure. Kadirgamar had told the police not to search the neighbouring properties as that would annoy the occupants. "We also had the problem with this VVIP (Very, Very Important Person) because

he did not want us to search his neighbours," the IGP said.

"I myself told him a few days ago it wasn't safe for him to stay in this house, but he insisted because he wanted to go there for a swim and he had his library there," Fernando said.

Earlier, a senior police officer said the shooting raised questions about intelligence gathering and the screening of the ministers' neighbours as the snipers were said to have shot Kadirgamar from a house located opposite the Minister's residence.

"Security was mainly focused on protecting the minister when he was travelling," said the police officer, who asked to remain anonymous. "Three days ago there was a move to increase the number of vehicles in his motorcade."

Details of the attack

On Friday (12) a few hours before he was shot, Mr. Kadirgamar participated in a public function to launch the first journal of the Bandaranaike Centre for International Studies, titled "International Relations in a Globalised World" which he edited. The event was attended by many dignitaries including the Indian High Commissioner Ms Nerupama Rao. Mr. Kadirgamar had returned to his private residence for a swim.

The gunman had struck as the Minister finished his swim and emerged out of the water to change clothes. The bullets pierced his chest and struck his head and leg. He was rushed to the National Hospital shortly past 11.15 pm. Specialists including a cardiologist, neurologist, orthopaedic surgeon and anaesthetist were called in for the emergency operation. Top surgeons had battled for more than one hour to save the Minister's life, but he was pronounced dead around 12.15 am.

The autopsy later carried out attributed the cause of Kadirgamar's death to hemorrhagic shock following necessarily fatal bullet injuries of the heart lacerating the aorta. There were multiple bullet injuries on Minister Kadirgamar's chest and abdomen. A penetrating gun shot wound to the right side of the chest was the fatal injury, according to doctors.

It would seem that the assassins had carried out a meticulous surveillance operation on the Minister's movements for days and weeks. At least two of them had taken up position on the top floor of a neighbouring house owned by a Tamil couple later identified as Mr Lakshman

Thalayasingham and his wife.

The assassins could not have chosen a better spot. The distance between the spot from which the gunmen fired the shots and the swimming pool in Kadirgamar's house was just 82 feet (25meters)

"They had a clear shot. It was the perfect spot and the only place in the whole neighbourhood where they could have hid and seen him inside the compound," said Fadhil Bakeermakar, 20, whose family lives across the street from Kadirgamar's house.

Sixteen feet (5.0 meters) stone walls topped by steel-mesh fence and heavy steel doors enclosed Kadirgamar's residence located at a street junction in a relatively wealthy neighbourhood. Kadirgamar's house on Buller Crescent at the intersection of Buller Lane was guarded by scores of special security forces.

An alleyway runs along the left side from the approach on Buller Lane to separate Kadirgamar's house from the Thalayasinghams' house from where the two assassins and reportedly at least two servants had planned the killing.

A branch of a tree that had obstructed the view of the swimming pool in Kadirgamar's house from the toilet window in the top floor of the Thalayasinghams' house had been cut down.

The window itself had been covered with cardboard leaving uncovered an opening in the glass fanlight sufficient enough for a Chinese-built sniper's rifle to be aimed in the direction of the Kadirgamar's swimming pool.

It was a team of Special Task Force personnel - the commando arm of the Police - who broke into the house opposite from which the assassins struck. When they entered, they first found two large bags normally used for carrying cricket gear, one bearing the names of Lalith Athulathmudali Vidyalaya, Ratnalana and the well known Sri Lankan cricketer, Russel Arnold. The police speculated that the assailants would have used the sports bag to transport some of the ammunition.

They also found an improvised tripod stand with a seat fitted on to it with a built in arm rest facing the window. Three empty .450 sniper cartridge casings, a pack of 40 mm grenade cartridges, several chocolate bars, cheese, fruit cake, packets of "murrukku" were also found in the room. There was also evidence that the assassins had used 'sili sili' shopping

bags to dump their excreta and urine in a bid not to use the toilets and give away the fact of their occupancy.

Reportedly, Mrs. Kadirgamar had seen her husband being shot as he stood a little distance away from the pool in the flood-lit garden. As she ran towards the fallen minister his bodyguards had warned her off as at least two other shots hit the nearby wall.

When members of the STF arrived at the scene within 15 minutes of the shooting, their immediate attention was drawn towards the second floor window of the house opposite the slain Minister's residence, according to STF Chief, DIG Nimal Lewke.

Finding the gates locked, the STF officers had climbed over the wall and woken up the occupants - cricket captain of the 1965 Royal College team, Lakshman Thalayasingam (58) and his wife, Vipiyan Selvalogini Thalayasingam (42) who is partially paralysed after suffering a stroke.

Inside the house, the officers found nothing suspicious on the ground floor. However, officers retrieved an empty 40 mm grenade cartridge from the corridor on the upper floor of the house.

However, a further search of the premises on the following morning led the officers to six packs of 40 mm grenade packs and a grenade launcher abandoned in the back garden. Police also later recovered the alleged sniper rifle from a shrub near the residence.

Lewke said that investigators felt the assailants had jumped over the back wall of the house and run towards Narahepita after the shooting. Lewke added that it was hard to believe that the occupants of the house were unaware of the events that took place Friday night as the house had only one entrance and anyone would have to enter through that entrance, especially to go to the toilet upstairs. "Even if they did not know of anyone entering their house, the noise during the shoot out would have been hard to miss," he said.

The Thalayasinghams had insisted that they were not aware of anything going on upstairs. The husband had claimed that he returned from the Otters Aquatic club and did not hear anything. They had told police that they had no idea who came and went from the servant quarters. Both were subsequently taken into custody for questioning.

Police said that no one could have entered the top floor without going

through the ground floor. In fact the door to the top floor had been closed with the key in place at the time the commandos entered the house.

LTTE denies involvement

The LTTE denied any involvement in the assassination of Foreign Minister Kadirgamar and laid the blame on other south-based forces opposed to the ceasefire agreement. In a statement issued on the TamilNet website, political wing leader S P Tamilselvan condemned the government for "hastily blaming the Liberation Tigers for the killing".

TamilNet quoted him as saying that there were several forces opposed to the ceasefire agreement in the south. "We also know that there are sections within the Sri Lankan Armed forces operating with a hidden agenda to sabotage the ceasefire agreement," he asserted. He urged the government to "conduct a thorough investigation to identify the assassins."

Tamilselvan said that the government, ridden with internal rifts and power struggles, should look inwards for culprits of the assassination. There is a growing trend in the south to blame the LTTE for all killings, he affirmed.

No doubt, it's the Tigers

The Sri Lanka's police have claimed that there was not even a shadow of doubt that the Tamil Tigers were behind the assassination of the island's Foreign Minister. Even as the evidence was now piling up against the LTTE, the police claimed that it had conclusive proof that the Tamil Tigers were behind Kadirgamar's killing.

A sequence of events pieced together show that Kadirgamar's attackers had been hiding in an adjoining house overlooking his swimming pool for at least two days. A 7.62 mm rifle was used to shoot the minister at least three times. The weapon has not been traced, though investigators found cyanide capsules and bullet casings from the crime scene. The police have now nabbed dozens of suspects and are matching the DNA and fingerprint samples picked up from the tripod and bathroom window. The police say there is conclusive enough evidence that it was the LTTE.

Govt rejects Tiger denial

However, Government Spokesman, Minister Nimal Siripala de Silva said at a news conference in Colombo that the government did not accept the denial of

by the LTTE.

"The LTTE has denied any involvement in the killing but the government finds it difficult to accept it," he said accusing the LTTE of committing a serious violation of the ceasefire. De Silva pointed out that the LTTE had made contradictory statements on the murder. "While denying any involvement in the killing, the organisation on the other hand had said in another story in the pro-LTTE Nidaranam website that with "the term of the government coming to an end, Kadirgamar too comes to an end."

Military Spokesman Brigadier Daya Ratnayake declared, "there seems

to be no doubt there is LTTE involvement." He said the assassination had "all the hallmarks of a LTTE assassination plot." He said early this month two persons were arrested outside Mr. Kadirgamar's official residence at Wijerama Mawatha. "They were filming and taking photographs of his residence. We questioned them and have confirmed that they are members of the LTTE," he said.

Police Chief Chandra Fernando backed Minister de Silva's claim that the LTTE was involved. He said from the weapons used for the killing, a 7.62 telescopic sniper gun and the grenade launcher found later, it is obvious the LTTE was behind the killing. He explained that the 7.62 gun, the telescopic sniper weapon and 40 mm grenades were used only by the LTTE. "No one has such weapons. Even the photographic and video evidence we uncovered by arresting two persons near the Buller's Lane residence two weeks earlier and the intelligence received for the last five years points the finger at the LTTE" he said.

Military spokesman Brig Daya Ratnayake also maintained that the killing was an act of the LTTE. "Minister Kadirgamar has been on their hit list for years. They had been trying for the last ten to twelve years to eliminate him, he was a prime target," he said.

Asked as to why the LTTE would risk international censure by killing Kadirgamar, Brig Ratnayake said: "What has happened to the LTTE after condemnation by the international community? Nothing at all. The international community must take physical action to penalise them and not just make statements." He added, "The LTTE are not worried about condemnation because they think they can regain support after some time. That's what happened after Indian Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi's killing. They only suffer temporary losses. Their mechanisms and lobbying networks are functioning well."

"The LTTE used similar tactics when they killed someone called Robert (Subathiran, an EPRLF leader) in Jaffna two years ago. We have collected all the DNA samples and now have dozens in our custody. It's only a matter of time before we narrow down the culprits," said Chandra Fernando, IGP, Colombo.

Magisterial Inquiry

During the magisterial inquiry subsequently held, a witness to testify was the main occupant of the house that the assassins used to carry out their deadly



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mission. He identified himself as Mr Luxmanan Thalayasingham. In his evidence, he informed the Chief Magistrate that the house in question belonged to his brother, Jayendran, currently residing in England and that he and his wife had been living in this house for the past 10 years. He confirmed that the house in question consisted of two rooms downstairs and three rooms upstairs.

He informed court that they have had twelve servants over a period and that the last to be employed was there for only five days. He also said that he got the servants from his wife's contacts and friends and that the last one, who was there for five days, was introduced to them by his neighbour, Dev, whom he had got to know only a year ago.

Mr. Thalayasingham also confirmed that he was not aware of, either the whereabouts or, of any information about

any relatives of the servants they employed.

When asked who occupied the upstairs rooms, Mr Thalayasingham replied that no one used them and that they were used only to store clothes. He further said that the upstairs rooms had not been visited for more than a year by anyone and that he didn't have any evidence to back up a suspicion of trespassing.

On further questioning, Mr. Thalayasingham said that on the day of the incident, he had gone to a friend's house at 11 a.m. and had returned at 3 p.m. He found all locks and doors intact, ruling out any foul play. He further said that he went to sleep that day at around 9.45 p.m. and got to know of the incident only when Army personnel came to search his house around 1 a.m. the same night the shooting occurred.

"It is quite evident that from the top of my house there is quite a clear view of the pool of the former Minister's house. The security personnel should have made it a point to inspect it, if they suspected a threat to the Minister when he was there. Also, as far as I know, the shootings took place around 11 p.m. But the security personnel arrived at my place around 1 a.m." Mr. Thalayasingham stated.

Further investigations seem to have revealed that two sons of retired SP Thalayasingham living in the UK had asked their brother living in the Thalayasingham residence to go to the UK some days before the assassination of Kadirgamar. The two brothers living in the UK had asked their brother to sell the property and leave the country for the UK a short time earlier, according to sources said. □

Diplomatic offensive by Government

Colombo launched a diplomatic offensive following Lakshman Kadirgamar's assassination for which the Government blamed the LTTE. President Kumaratunga herself led the way when in an address to the nation said, "The community of nations represented by the United Nations Organization and its Security Council has now united to oppose terrorism practically and effectively. We know that the international community will be strengthened in their resolve to stand with me and my freely elected, democratic Government against the terror and violence of the LTTE."

As the first step in this diplomatic offensive, Foreign Secretary H.M.G. S. Palihakkara and the Secretary General of the government's Peace Secretariat, Jayantha Dhanapala briefed the diplomats on the danger of terrorism faced by Sri Lanka and urged the international community to take practical and effective measures to suppress and prevent terrorism. Colombo based Ambassadors and High Commissioners and a large number of concurrently accredited envoys based in New Delhi and other Asian capitals and heads of international agencies attended the briefing.

The recommencement of any dialogue with the LTTE has been seriously undermined by the murder of former Foreign Minister Lakshman Kadirgamar, said Head, Government Peace Secretariat Jayantha Dhanapala in a briefing to the diplomatic community in Colombo.

Dhanapala observed that the assassination would be a grave setback to the peace process. However, he pointed out that since the process had been in abeyance since April 2003, there would be no such disruption to the peace talks. "Although there has been no breakthrough in talks, the restarting of the peace process has seriously been undermined due to this development," Dhanapala said.

In the light of the assassination, there had to be a serious review of certain policies and procedures in the peace process. "At the same time, notwithstanding this act of grave provoca-

tion, the Government will continue to adhere to the ceasefire," said Mr. Dhanapala and added that he hoped the international community, including the co-chairs of the 2003 Tokyo Donor Conference, would recognize their responsibility to take action.

Foreign Secretary Palihakkara called upon the international community to take anti-terrorism measures such as sanctions and internationally isolating the responsible entities and individuals, and engaging in international law enforcement cooperation against their terrorist activities. He stressed that the need of the hour was to follow up on the recognition of the nature of the act, by taking practical and effective measures for the prevention and suppression of terrorism.

He said that on the basis of the investigations, the assassination of Foreign Minister Lakshman Kadirgamar clearly carried the hallmarks of the LTTE. In this context Mr. Palihakkara went on to welcome the accurate characterization of the assassination as a "truly vicious terrorist act" by many international statesmen, in their messages of condolence.

The island's Ambassador in the United States Bernard Goonetilleke said that he had emphasized to the United States Government the need to send a strong message to the LTTE and had urged that the US Government examines what options were available to it, in view of the rapid escalation of provocative terrorist activities by Sri Lanka's Tamil Tigers.

Goonetilleke made these observations when he spoke to media personnel, who attended the signing of the Condolence Book opened at the Sri Lanka Embassy in Washington by the United States Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice on Tuesday 16.

The ambassador appreciating the accurate characterization of the assassination of Foreign Minister Lakshman Kadirgamar as a "terrorist act" by many distinguished international leaders in their messages of condolence, he emphasized "the need of the hour is now to follow up on the recognition of the nature of the terrorist act, by taking practical and effective measures as required by international law, for the prevention and suppression of terrorism."

Earlier, the United States Secretary of State Dr. Rice, after signing the Condolence Book at the Sri Lanka Embassy in Washington, D.C., remarked, "there can be no cause that is justified

by terrorism and by violence. And I want to say to the (Sri Lankan) President that we have been impressed with her vision and with the people of Sri Lanka, and how they have responded to this tragedy. We call upon all parties to try and find a way to peace."

Ambassador Goonetilleke further briefing the Washington press corps said he appreciated the important role played by the international community in the face of terrorism, and particularly naming of the Tiger outfit as a Foreign Terrorist Organization by the US Government as early as in 1997, which had forced the LTTE to enter into a ceasefire agreement in February 2002 and subsequently to the negotiating table. However, it was clear that the LTTE had only done so only in order to 'buy time' in the international climate that they faced in the aftermath of 9/11. "Regrettably the international response has not been adequate for the LTTE to change its unacceptable behaviour," Goonetilleke said.

He called for concerted international action that was immediate and tangible against the LTTE, to include not only those that have a bearing on the LTTE, but also its numerous front organizations in many countries through which the organization continues its reign of terror in Sri Lanka. "These measures could include sanctions and internationally isolating responsible entities and individuals, and engaging in international law enforcement cooperation, against terrorist activities."

Bernard Goonetilleke presenting factual data to the Washington press corps said, "according to the Scandinavian truce monitors, up to May 2005, the LTTE had committed 2903 ceasefire violations, including assassination of members of the democratic political parties, government officials, civilians and

members of the armed forces and the police; abductions for ransom, forcible recruitment of young boys and girls in their early teens and a host of other criminal activities. In contrast, the Sri Lanka Government has violated the ceasefire 131 times, which has largely been instances of harassment. The LTTE also does not permit democratic dissent in the areas dominated by them and has systematically eliminated all political opponents through assassinations."

"War is not an option" - LTTE

Aug 17 - Sri Lanka's Tamil Tigers for the first time said that they would not resume their two-decade old war against the island state in the aftermath of being accused of assassinating the country's foreign minister. But they would face it "if it is thrust upon the Tamil people."

In an exclusive interview with Reuters, in contrast to recent warnings of an imminent return to war, they said abiding by an ongoing truce was the only way to resurrect a stalled peace process.

"We want to maintain the ceasefire momentum, the peace ... and ensure that we walk back into the peace process again," S.P. Thamilselvan, head of the Tigers' political wing, told Reuters in the rebel stronghold of Kilinochchi late on Tuesday (16).

"War is not an option," "But if war is thrust upon the Tamil people, we will have no option but to face it." "So it's in the hands of the government," he said.

The Tigers have said repeatedly in recent weeks the truce, in place since 2002, could collapse because of a rash of killings in the restive east that the military and rebels each blame on the other.

He toned down his recent threats that the ceasefire could collapse unless the military disarmed a renegade rebel faction attacking Tiger cadres in the east, saying the group's leadership "may have to sit down and think about it" if the killings continued.

But the rebels still demand that the government stick to the terms of the ceasefire and disarm the renegade faction - which it has refused to do.

"The most simple way to get the peace process back on track is by sincerely and effectively giving implementation status to the ceasefire agreement," Thamilselvan said. "That alone is sufficient to get the peace process back on track for the parties to sit down and talk."

The Tamil Tigers have denied involvement in the Foreign Minister's murder, but few in Colombo believe the Tigers' denial of any role in his killing. Though credited with scores of killings over the years, the LTTE has never officially claimed any one of them, analysts in Colombo say.

Kadirgamar, a Tamil, is seen by many of his community as a traitor to their cause after campaigning to have the LTTE banned internationally as a terrorist group, and defending the Sri Lankan armed forces against international criticism of human rights violations. However, Mr. Thamilselvan said that although his organisation had little regard for Mr. Kadirgamar, a close confidante of President Kumaratunga, it did not mean the LTTE killed him.

"The collective Tamil thinking and the judgment ... of the man is that he is a traitor," Thamilselvan said. "This does not necessarily mean he has earned his death, because it is not just Mr. Kadirgamar who did this. "An eye-for-an-eye and a tooth-

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for-a-tooth is not the concern at the moment when we are strongly committed to the ceasefire agreement," he added. "We are seriously interested in the ceasefire agreement."

The Tigers say Kadirgamar's killing by snipers late on Friday (12) was probably an inside job by elements opposed to the peace process. But Thamilselvan stopped short of accusing anyone directly, saying it was up to the police to investigate and find the culprits and for the courts to try them. Kadirgamar "had 24-hour security," he said. "So if in the end someone had been able to infiltrate into that set up and meticulously carry out a killing, definitely there is an inside element in this matter." (Source: Reuters)

"Hero of our times" - President

August 14 - The following is the text of the address to the nation made by President Chandrika Kumaratunga two days after the assassination of Foreign Minister Lakshman Kadirgamar:

"I address you today at a time of profound sorrow. The nation has lost a leader, a great humanist and I have lost a dear friend and colleague. Minister Kadirgamar was the one Minister, who worked most closely with me in the critical area of the fight against terrorism and the attempt to bring about a negotiated political solution to the Tamil people's problem.

Initial indications of the investigations seem to reveal the responsibility of the LTTE in his brutal murder. It is unacceptable that a group that talks endlessly about being committed to a ceasefire would so blatantly violate it. This violation of the ceasefire is the latest in a continuous series of violations by the LTTE. The LTTE has denied involvement in the murder. Their denial contradicts the facts and our knowledge of their long held desire and repeated attempts to murder both my Tamil Cabinet Colleagues.

Lakshman Kadirgamar was a hero of our times. He was a true patriot who paid the ultimate price in the service of his motherland. Minister Kadirgamar was a Sri Lankan nationalist, who believed passionately in a united and democratic Sri Lanka, in which all peoples would live with dignity and freedom. He envisioned a negotiated political settlement of the ethnic problem that combined devolution of political power with pluralism and democracy. He strived hard for the democratic rights of the Tamil people. He constantly grieved the subjugation of the Tamil people to LTTE authoritarianism.

Minister Kadirgamar was an idealist. Long before 9/11 and the London bombings, long before terrorism became anathema to the Western World, he spoke out against terrorism in Sri Lanka and abroad and explained and convinced the international community that terrorism is no freedom struggle and in fact destroys the very freedom it claims to achieve. During my first government, he was instrumental in having the LTTE recognized internationally for what they are, an armed terrorist group. Consequently they were proscribed in the leading nations of the World. The USA, the UK, Australia followed India. He was an ardent promoter of ethnic harmony and Peace through a negotiated settlement of the conflict and played a crucial role in assisting me to create the conditions that persuaded the LTTE to come to the negotiating table.

Lakshman Kadirgamar was a great human being. An extremely successful sportsman in his youth, he gave up a lucrative and eminently successful legal practice to join with me in 1994 to pursue the dream I hold for a united, peaceful and prosperous

Sri Lanka. He was a rare combination of intellectual brilliance, political wisdom and personal courage and integrity. The entire nation will miss him. His brutal murder creates a vacuum that will be well nigh impossible to fill.

The assassination of Minister Kadirgamar was a horrendously barbaric act of terrorism against an unarmed civilian, perpetrated by those who opposed all the noble values that he stood for freedom, harmony, brotherhood and peace. Lakshman Kadirgamar joins a long list of distinguished Tamil leaders such as Alfred Duraiappa, Amirthalingam, Neelan Thiruchelvam, Sam Thambimuttu, Sarojini Thirunagama and Kandasamy who were murdered by the LTTE in an attempt to subjugate the Tamil people through violence and terror.

Terrorism has become today, the single most dominant global phenomenon. From New York to London, the western world has begun to experience the terrorism which we have for long suffered in Sri Lanka. Terrorism has been condemned globally while its true nature is recognized and rejected. The community of nations represented by the United Nations Organization and its Security Council has now united to oppose terrorism practically and effectively. We know that the international community will be strengthened in their resolve to stand with me and my freely elected, democratic Government against the terror and violence of the LTTE.

We shall never bow down to terror, nor allow it to succeed neither will we compromise the security of our peoples. Yesterday I declared a state of emergency to ensure the security of the nation and also to assist in the search for the assassins of the Minister, and other terrorist operatives. After an emergency National Security Council meeting, several measures have been adopted to ensure tightened security throughout the country.

I have been a victim of terrorism many times, the attempt on my life in 1999, the assassination of my father, my husband and several political associates, and now my Foreign Minister. However we cannot let terror and hatred overcome us. As long as the ethnic problem remains unresolved, violence and terror will always be with us. The terrorist challenge, we face today which claimed the life of Minister Kadirgamar requires adequate security measures to ensure that terror cannot act with impunity.

But this deals only with the manifestation of terrorism. This will not suffice. If we are to achieve lasting Peace, we need to deal with the root causes of the politics of violence and terror. For this we need an enlightened vision and policy that will seek out the true causes of ethnic conflict in our land and redress it objectively and effectively. Passion and subjectivity can have no place in this process. Those extremist forces who oppose even minimal concessions toward peace, must know that they are responsible for the perpetuation of the terrorist cause, in as much as the LTTE is responsible for generating it.

We must prevail to ensure that Lakshman Kadirgamar's sacrifice has not been in vain. I will redouble my efforts and the commitment of my government to implement the task of devolution of power based on a democratic and pluralistic society, through dialogue with all the communities inhabiting our land. To achieve this, I and my Government need the continued support and encouragement of our peoples as well as that of Sri Lanka's friends in the international community.

I appeal to all Sri Lankans not to be provoked by this wanton terrorist attack and to act with utmost restraint at this moment.

May the blessings of the Triple Gem God Almighty and the Devas be with you always."

Top Tamil broadcaster, husband shot dead

August 13 - A well-known popular Tamil newscaster and presenter of Rupavahini and her husband were brutally shot and killed Friday 12 August by unidentified gunmen at their Bambalapitiya residence adjoining Kinross Communications and Travel Centre run by them.

The victims 44-year-old Mrs Relangi Selvarajah and her husband Sinnadurai Selvarajah (47) were reportedly gunned down inside their house adjoining the communications centre at St. Peters Lane opposite St. Peters College. The news of couple's murder in broad daylight in Colombo receded into the background and did not receive the usual publicity it would have attracted because of the assassination of Lakshman Kadirgamar a few hours later on the same day which began to dominate the media scene..

Relangi Selvarajah was a well-known news presenter for state television Rupavahini and the Sri Lanka Broadcasting Corporation. She also produced the SLBC's Ithaya Veenai programme which was on occasions critical of the LTTE. Relangi was also well known for her TV talk shows and was the Tamil announcer for major events shown live on TV.

Mrs. Selvarajah started her broadcasting career as an announcer of the Jaffna "Manikkural" local broadcasting service from 1979 to 1983. She joined the SLBC in 1987 and became a senior announcer in 2000. A popular face on the Channel Eye Tamil programmes and newscasts of the Sri Lanka Rupavahini

Corporation (SLRC), Selvarajah anchored the Uthaya Darisanam programme every Sunday from 9 a.m. to 10.30 a.m. She also played an award-winning role in the 1978 Tamil film Theivam Thantha Veedu. Relangi, a mother of one, was also an exponent of Barathanatyam. She hailed from Kurumbachitty, Jaffna.

Four employees had been working at the communications centre and three of them had gone for lunch while the other had gone to the bank at the time of the slaying.

The assailants who had stormed into the communication centre around 1.00 p.m. had entered the victim's house and fired several shots repeatedly at the couple killing them on the spot.

Bambalapitiya police who are conducting investigations said they found ten rounds of ammunition which had been fired from a 9 mm pistol at the crime scene. According to police, so far no clue of the killers has been established but there is some suspicion as to whether it could be the work of an LTTE pistol gang because of Relangi Selvarajah's artistic and journalist work. Relangi's husband is said to have been a PLOTE supporter which also might have had a bearing on them being targeted by the LTTE. Democratic People's Liberation Front (DPLF), the political wing of PLOTE said Mr. Selvarajah, was one of their supporters. "We have no doubt that this is the work of the LTTE," DPLF leader Dharmalingam Sitharthan was quoted by the AFP news agency as saying.

Jitney Pooneshkumar sister of the slain broadcaster, said all four employees of the Communication Centre had unusually gone out together and this left room for suspicion. "Usually at least one employee remains in the centre while others go out, but today all of them had gone out together and this is suspicious" she said. She said the slain couple had a one-year-old baby.



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UN protest over flag incident

August 15 - The UN office in Colombo strongly condemned the LTTE for bringing down the UN flags at UN Office in Killinochchi flown half mast in honour of the Late Mr. Lakshman Kadirgamar.

A group of pro-LTTE activists on Monday (15) stormed the UN agencies compound in LTTE-held Kilinochchi and brought down UN flags flying at half-mast on the day of national mourning and funeral of the assassinated Sri Lankan Foreign Minister Lakshman Kadirgamar. "The raid would not have taken place without the LTTE's express orders," an army spokesman said.

Brennon Jones, the spokesman for the UN Humanitarian and Resident Coordinator in Sri Lanka, Miguel Bermeo told the BBC that the United Nations was disturbed and saddened by the incidents that took place in Kilinochchi.

"As a sign of respect and solidarity, the UN flags were flying at half-mast during a day of national mourning and of the funeral of Sri Lanka's Foreign Minister who had been tragically assassinated on 12 August," he said.

Describing the incident, the spokesman Brennon Jones said a group of some 60 persons forcibly entered the UN agency compound in Kilinochchi and proceeded to bring down the UN flags.

The compounds included UNHCR, UNDP and UNICEF. These regrettable incidents took place after UN staff refused to comply with the group's demand that the flag not be flown at half-mast.

"The United Nations condemns these kinds of incidents in the strongest possible terms. We are here to serve the needs of all the people of Sri Lanka and we expect that UN staff and property should be respected and protected if we are able to fulfil our mission," the statement further said.

In the wake of these incidents, the UN Humanitarian and Resident Coordinator in Sri Lanka has issued a protest to the LTTE, as the incident took place in a LTTE-controlled area. He has also requested that the LTTE ensure such incidents do not occur again. The Government of Sri Lanka has been informed accordingly, he said.

A media release issued by the Sri Lankan presidential secretariat said, "The international community has condemned the murder of the late Foreign Minister. Having noted, the statement of the President of the United Nation's Security Council, President Kumaratunga has condemned the violation of the UN offices in Killinochchi by the LTTE and regrets that this incident has taken place, besmirching cordial relations between Sri Lanka and the United Nations, in the 50th year of Sri Lanka's membership in that organization."

Human Rights Watch on Murder of Foreign Minister

New York, August 16, 2005 - The assassination of Foreign Minister Lakshman Kadirgamar in Colombo on Friday (12 August) highlights Sri Lanka's spiralling crisis of political killings, Human Rights Watch said.

Kadirgamar is the latest and most prominent victim of political violence that has continued in Sri Lanka since the 2002 ceasefire between the government and the separatist Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE). Since the ceasefire, more than

200 people, mostly Tamils, have been killed for political reasons. Most of the murders have been attributed to the LTTE. The rate of attacks has escalated since April 2005, with credible reports estimating the rate of killings at one a day by June 2005.

"The murder of Lakshman Kadirgamar is the latest act of political brutality in Sri Lanka. Sadly, it is unlikely to be the last," said Sam Zarifi, deputy director of Human Rights Watch's Asia Division. "Real action is needed by all sides to get the killings to stop."

Responsibility for the murder of Kadirgamar, a Tamil politician who had long been critical of the LTTE, has not been determined. As Sri Lanka's Foreign Minister from 1994 to 2001, and again since 2004, he was instrumental in having the LTTE declared a terrorist organization in several countries, including the United States and the United Kingdom. Sri Lankan authorities have blamed the LTTE for the murder, but the investigation is continuing. The LTTE denied any role in the murder, blaming forces opposed to the cease-fire agreement. The LTTE has issued similar denials even in other cases of political assassinations where they were clearly involved.

In addition to Kadirgamar, Friday night marked the murder of Relanghai Selvarajah, a Tamil producer of a popular radio program that was very critical of the LTTE.

Human Rights Watch expressed concern about possible reprisals against Tamils living in government-controlled areas. The police have deployed 1,000 officers to find Kadirgamar's assassins. The government also declared a state of emergency nationwide, giving security forces sweeping powers to deploy troops, arrest persons without charge, and search and demolish buildings.

Human Rights Watch reminded the government that even under a state of emergency it cannot violate basic international human rights such as the right to life; freedom from torture or cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment; and freedom of thought, conscience, and religion. Arbitrary deprivations of liberty or deviations from the fundamental principles of a fair trial, including the presumption of innocence, are not permitted. Human Rights Watch urged the Sri Lankan government to publicly issue instructions to the army, police, intelligence services and other state institutions to this effect.

"At this critical hour, the government needs to exercise restraint, and make sure the security and investigative forces follow internationally accepted norms," said Zarifi. "Many innocent Tamils have suffered unjustly in the past when the government has ignored their basic rights. The government must vigilantly safeguard the rights of the minority communities."

Human Rights Watch also called on the Sri Lanka Monitoring Mission, the Norwegian-led body responsible for enforcing the terms of the Cease Fire Agreement, to inquire into and hold accountable those responsible for the growing crisis of political killings."

Tamilselvan condemns "the knee jerk accusation"

August 14 - LTTE has strongly condemned the knee jerk reaction of the government in accusing LTTE for the murder of Foreign Minister Kadirgamar. The Leader of the Political wing of LTTE, Mr S P Tamilselvan said,

"It has become the habit of the government and the security forces of blaming LTTE for all murders committed in the south.

In the current ceasefire environment, within the highly pro-

tected zones in Colombo, it is impossible for the LTTE to carry out any such attacks. We totally reject the accusation levelled against the LTTE.

The view being expressed that this attack resembles past LTTE attacks is very suspicious. Kadirgamar was given very high security. There were news reports that more than 100 security personnel were giving him protection. The chances of an outsider carrying out such a well planned and precise attack within such a high security area are minimal. Watching the news reports that are coming out our suspicions fall on the security forces and those who were providing him the protection.

Kadirgamar had the opportunity to carry out a false propaganda on a worldwide scale against the Tamil people's struggle and the LTTE. However, in the present context LTTE has direct contact and relationship with the international community. This environment permits us to have direct line of communication immediately.

Kadirgamar's past actions have been weakened in today's context. Therefore this murder is intended to create a wrong impression about the LTTE and the Tamil people in the world stage. We are examining the situation. We will state our position only after finding out the reasons behind this murder. We condemn the instant accusation of LTTE.

As far as we are concerned we view this to be an outcome of the weaknesses and contradictions within the government and in the security situation. We do not think that this incident will worsen the contradictions between the two sides. We are very clear about this.

The security forces and the armed paramilitaries are together carrying out many murders and activities that are causing confusion. We have pointed out this worsening situation in the past. It

is this that has pushed the ceasefire situation into serious state." said Tamilselvan (Source: LTTE Peace Secretariat, Kilinochchi)

Rescuing the CFA from wreckage

Aug 19 - Former United States Ambassador to Sri Lanka Teresita Schaffer told the media in a special statement on Foreign Minister Kadirgamar assassination that the Government of Sri Lanka had shown courage and statesmanship in trying to rescue the ceasefire (with the LTTE) from wreckage in which it stood, and strongly advocated to both warring sections "before one can talk seriously about a peace process again, I think it will be necessary for both sides to clarify what they mean by ceasefire." "Both the Government of Sri Lanka and the LTTE should re-commit to the goals they expressed in Oslo over two years ago" she further noted.

Schaffer was the United States envoy to Sri Lanka from 1992 through 1996, and is presently the Program Director for South Asia in Center for International and Strategic Studies, an influential think tank in Washington.

Noting that she had last met Minister Kadirgamar only a month ago (July) when she was in Colombo, the former US Ambassador said, "What horrifying news. I knew Kadirgamar well during his first time as foreign minister. I feel it very personally, having worked closely with him during my tenure as ambassador" she said.

"Perhaps the most devastating loss Sri Lanka has suffered in over two decades of civil war is the death of so many of its most promising leaders. Kadirgamar's assassination is one more in that already over-long list. With each additional killing, it becomes more difficult to make peace.

"This is not just because this type of murder is precisely what the ceasefire was supposed to prevent; it is not just because it quite understandably devastates whatever beginnings of trust had been created during the period since peace talks began. It is also because Sri Lanka needs leaders in order to move ahead, and it especially needs strong leaders in order to make peace. So killing Kadirgamar is a life-threatening wound to Sri Lanka's future."

LTTE, SLMM discuss deteriorating situation

Aug 18 - Head of Sri Lanka Monitoring Mission Mr. Hagrup Haukland and the LTTE's Political Head Mr. S.P. Thamilselvan met in Kilinochchi and discussed the deteriorating situation in the NorthEast. Mr. Thamilselvan, talking to press after meeting the truce monitors, said that he had conveyed in "clear terms" to Government that abiding by the Ceasefire Agreement on which the whole process had been based for more than three and a half years was the "immediate need of the moment." Mr. Thamilselvan accused the Sri Lankan armed forces in Jaffna for violating CFA by "abducting" a disabled LTTE cadre who was on vacation for medical treatment with his parents. This abduction was a serious violation of the CFA, he said.

Acknowledging that the Norwegian Foreign Minister Mr. Jan Petersen, had sent a message to the LTTE leader Mr. V. Pirapaharan, Mr. Thamilselvan told reporters that the Norwegian FM had invited both the parties to engage in discussions to take forward the Cease Fire Agreement. The LTTE leadership will soon send a reply to the specific invitation made by the Norwegian FM, Mr. Thamilselvan told the reporters. Talking briefly to the reporters after the meeting, SLMM Head Mr.

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Hagrup Haukland welcomed the continuous commitment expressed by the parties to the February 2002 CFA agreement.

There is a serious responsibility on the part of the Sri Lanka Monitoring Mission to ensure the terms of the agreement are implemented in full, Mr. Thamichelvan told the press after the meeting with the truce monitors at the LTTE's Peace Secretariat in Kilinochchi.

The situation in the East was also discussed in the meeting, according to the website of the LTTE Peace Secretariat. Colombo should prohibit the paramilitary groups operating in the SLA held territories, Mr. Thamichelvan had told the Head of Mission, who was concerned over the recent spate of killings in the east. The website further said that the Head of SLMM had made reference to a formal complaint made by the Sri Lankan government, accusing the LTTE of committing the assassination of the Sri Lankan Foreign Minister Mr. Lakshman Kadirgamar.

"Rejecting the allegation as totally unfounded, unsubstantiated and aimed at a malicious political agenda of discrediting the LTTE," Mr. Thamichelvan had told SLMM chief that it was "very unfortunate that those responsible for crime investigation too jump on to the political bandwagon and pass verdicts well before investigations proper commence, enabling the offenders to go scot-free," the website reported.

Jaffna SP hacked to death

A senior police officer was abducted and hacked to death following the death of man who was killed when a soldier's gun accidentally discharged on Thursday, 4 August in northern Jaffna. The slain police officer was Superintendent of Police (SP), Jaffna, W.D. Charlie Wijewardene whose severely mutilated dead body was later recovered with multiple cuts and stab wounds from a wooded area in Suthumalai about 4 km away from where he was abducted by his captors. The body was found stripped of his uniform and was clad in a sarong.

The slain SP is the senior-most police officer to be killed since Colombo and the LTTE signed a ceasefire agreement in February 2002.

The SP had rushed to the scene of an earlier incident in which a Tamil civilian, Jeyaseelan Santharuban, 24, was killed in an accident inside a barber saloon. Santharuban was killed when an army soldier's gun accidentally discharged. The accident occurred when one of the soldiers who were inside the saloon for a hair cut had handed over his weapon to another soldier. The incident took place at Innuvil junction located on KKS Road, 4 km from Jaffna town.

Subsequent to the incident, a group of individuals alleged by the army to have been instigated by LTTE operatives went on a rampage, burning tires and throwing stones at army positions and setting fire to military vehicles. The police had rushed to the scene to calm the situation and in order to restore order.

SP Wijewardene also had gone to the scene to defuse the situation. At the time he was unarmed and without his usual security. The SP was moving with the crowds trying to ease the tensions. Reportedly, a few from the crowd had invited him into another premises to negotiate with the agitated people. They had allegedly kept him inside saying that he would be released only after the LTTE's Jaffna district political head Mr. Ilamparithy who was said to be on his way to the scene arrived and after the LTTE head had talked to the SP. When the army was informed of the detention of the SP, the shop was cordoned off by the security forces. However, the SP's abductors had blindfolded him, bundled him into a van and slipped out through the backstreets until they found a safe place where the SP was

tortured and hacked to death.

Innuvil area was tense after the incident and riot police were called in to disperse the protestors. Police also fired tear gas to keep the crowd away. Large number of soldiers and police were deployed at Maruthanamadam junction and other areas in the close proximity of the site. Sri Lanka Army (SLA) controlled areas in the Jaffna district were brought under police curfew with effect from Thursday night 8.30 p.m. till Saturday 5 am.

According to news reports Jaffna parliamentarian, Senathiraja, was "the first to inform the incident at 2 p.m. on Thursday to SLMM officials in Jaffna urging them to rush to the scene to control the situation." "However the SLMM officials were not there in time to deal with the situation. They came rather late - after around one and a half hours when the agitation had gone beyond control," he said. "If they had reached the spot immediately they could have brought the situation under control. The SLMM office is only four kilometres away from Innuvil where the incident occurred," Senathiraja said.

Defence Spokesman of the Sri Lanka Army, Brigadier Daya Ratnayake speaking to the BBC, reiterated that the incident that took place in a saloon in the Innuvil area of Jaffna was a genuine accident. Brigadier Ratnayake stressed that the LTTE was carrying out a mud slinging campaign to discredit security forces in the wake of this accident and pointed out that the army is in a position to produce photographic evidence to prove that the incident was unintended.

Further explaining as to what happened at the barber saloon, Brigadier Ratnayaka said "As some LTTE sources say the soldiers did not deliberately shoot at the barber. There were five soldiers who were present at the scene. Two of them went inside to take a haircut, handing over their weapons to the others who were outside. The gun misfired and wounded the barber. It was an accident and we are dealing with the soldiers accordingly." He said that the two SLA soldiers allegedly involved in the shooting incident were being handed over to the Police for further inquiries, and the Magistrate had remanded them in custody.

Meanwhile, Mr. Chandra Fernando, Sri Lanka's Inspector General of Police (IGP), has appointed a twelve-member team headed by Mr. Mahinda Balasuriya, senior police officer to conduct inquiry into the killing of Mr. Charles Wijewardene, Jaffna.

As the authorities blamed LTTE cadres for the murder of the SP, denying any involvement in the murder the LTTE attributed the killing to an angry crowd of people who had been provoked by the killing of the barber by the soldier.

SP's murder suspect arrested: Aug 18 - In a joint operation conducted by the military and the police, an LTTE cadre, Gopalan Weerapandian (Gopi) alleged to be involved in the killing of Jaffna SP Charles Wijewardena (posthumously promoted SSP), was arrested near the Jaffna University at 10.05 a.m. on 17 August.

Security squads had rushed to the scene after receiving a tip off. The LTTE cadres had reportedly fired at government personnel seriously wounding Sgt. Tillakaratne of the Jaffna Police and a police constable attached to the CID. They had managed to apprehend one suspect but several had fled.

The wounded had been admitted to the Jaffna Hospital. The condition of Sgt Tillakaratne, who had been shot in the chest, was reported to be serious and arrangements were being made to airlift him to Colombo.

According to the police, LTTE had abducted and killed Wijewardena two weeks earlier after he intervened to restore law and order in Jaffna and its suburbs after the accidental death of a barber in the Jaffna town.

The LTTE claimed that the arrested suspect was an innocent person and demanded his immediate release at meeting between SLMM chief Hagrup Haukland and LTTE political wing leader S.P. Thamilselvan, SLMM. □

A tearful farewell

Sri Lanka cremated its slain Foreign Minister at a state funeral on Monday 15 August.

Several thousands of people attended the funeral of slain Foreign Minister Lakshman Kadirgamar which was held with full state honours at the country's Independence Square in the capital, Colombo. Late Kadirgamar's son Ravi lit the funeral pyre after sunset.

Several thousands paid their last respects as the remains of Kadirgamar were taken in procession to the Independence Square from his official residence at Wijerama Mawatha in Colombo 7.

The military parade accompanied the cortege from the beginning of the drive of the Independence square to the venue where the funeral orations were made by religious leaders and the Prime minister on behalf of the Sri Lanka government.

A visibly emotional President Chandrika Bandaranaike Kumaratunge dressed in white was present at the Independence Square and was seen consoling the wife of late Kadirgamar, Suganthi Kadirgamar who was sitting next to her. Kadir, as the Minister was known to his friends, was one of the President's closest confidants and advisers.

The respect Kadirgamar had won from the international community was marked by the presence of representatives from 12 nations.

It was notable that a high-level Indian delegation including Defence Minister Pranab Mukherjee, External Affairs Minister Natwar Singh and Foreign Secretary Shyam Saran, were among delegations from 12 countries which included India, Pakistan, Nepal, Norway, Japan, the Maldives and others. On their arrival they drove straight to the official residence of Kadirgamar and laid a wreath on his body. The Indian delegation offered condolences to Kadirgamar's wife and Singh handed over to her a letter from Congress President Sonia Gandhi, the widow of Rajive Gandhi whose assassination was also blamed on the Tigers.

Among the visiting mourners were Norwegian Foreign Minister Jan Petersen and his deputy, Vidar Helgesen, both key players in the island's peace process

aimed at ending the long drawn out civil war.

Many parliamentarians belonging to all political parties including the leader of the Opposition Ranil Wickremesinghe were present at the Independence square.

Earlier during the day, thousands of people were seen standing in queues to pay their last respects to the remains of Kadirgamar at his official residence situated at the highly residential Wijerama Mawatha in Colombo. Foreign dignitaries and Buddhist monks in saffron robes were among the long line of people who filed past Kadirgamar's open coffin at his official residence before gathering for the funeral in Independence Square.

Soldiers with semi-automatic rifles and sniffer dogs formed a cordon around the square and lined streets trimmed with white flags of mourning as Buddhist, Christian, Muslim and Hindu priests led the ceremony.

The Government had declared a national day of mourning. Schools were closed and shops and cinemas were shut out of respect for the charming, fatherly politician who had made himself a target by standing by his convictions. The national flag was lowered to half-mast as a mark of respect for the slain Minister and the city wore a funereal look with white flags and condolence banners dotting the city's public spaces.

The outpouring of grief was very much in evidence. Hundreds of people, from mothers carrying babies to politicians, followed a bier carrying Kadirgamar's coffin draped in the yellow, orange, green and maroon flag of Sri Lanka to bid him a tearful farewell. "The greatest statesman of our time: we salute you," read a banner held up by a citizens' group near the Independence Square. Many openly cried saying that they had never felt like this before when a politician was assassinated. The little tropical island had witnessed too many politicians being assassinated during its two-decade long civil war.

A military band playing patriotic tunes filed past about 4,000 people in a nearby park, which was cordoned off by an iron fence and armed policeman. Some

people broke down in tears.

As the decorated hearse wound its way to the cremation site, followed by over a 1,000 people, the tri-services and the police marched to a funeral beat. The school flag of Trinity College, Kandy - from where Kadirgamar won the best all-round student medal - was also carried at the procession. At the Independence Square, Kadirgamar's coffin, draped in the national flag, was carried by leading dignitaries. Buddhist, Christian, Muslim and Hindu clergy leaders spoke on the need for peace and prayed for the departed soul.

Speaking on behalf of the government at yesterday's funeral Prime Minister Rajapakse compared the 9/11 New York attacks, the London bombings and the assassinations of Rajiv Gandhi, President Premadasa, Presidential candidate Gamini Dissanayake and of Lakshman Kadirgamar as events of the same magnitude. While Al Qaeda was responsible for the first two, the LTTE carried out all the listed assassinations.

"The LTTE wants to divide Sri Lanka and destroy its democratic way of life and I urge all countries of the civilized world to join together to fight terrorism," Rajapakse said.

"In our moment of grief, we stand committed and united, irrespective of any differences there may be among us. We have no doubt, that all countries of the civilized world will join us, in as much as we join them, in the common struggle against terror, in every form and manifestation".

Pointing out that Sri Lanka was a multi-racial, multi linguistic and multi religious country, he said that we shared a common heritage and a common way of relating to the world and Lakshman Kadirgamar represented that reality and projected it effectively to the outside world. He said the LTTE sought to destroy this ground reality and their aim was to divide the country and destroy its democratic way of life. "The evil hand of terrorism, which threatens the very fabric of civilized society, has taken away yet another champion of peace - Lakshman Kadirgamar", Rajapakse said.

Though born a Tamil Christian by birth he was cremated amidst multi-faith prayers. After Buddhist, Hindu, Christian and Muslim religious sermons, white plumes of smoke rose into the sky as Kadirgamar's son Sri Rathana Kadirgamar and nephew Kevin Jayawardana, lit the pyre with torches while the crowd looked solemnly on. □

Lakshman Kadirgamar: A Profile

Lakshman Kadirgamar was born on April 12th 1932. He hailed from a distinguished Tamil protestant family with deep roots in Jaffna. He was the youngest son of Sam J.C.Kadirgamar (Senior). S.J.C.Kadirgamar QC.(junior) was Lakshman's eldest brother. Lakshman's other older brothers were Col. Bai Kadirgamar of the Ceylon Army, Rear Admiral Rajan Kadirgamar of the Ceylon Navy. The only surviving member of the family is Mrs. Isawari Richards, wife of the late Dr.A.M.D.Richards. Lakshman's mother is the older sister of the late Rev.B.C.D.Mather, grand-father of Sri Lankan Test cricketer Russel Arnold. Jaffna College ex-principal Rajan Kadirgamar was a first cousin of Lakshman.

Lakshman K was a distinguished product of Trinity College, Kandy where he was widely acclaimed for his all round excellence. He won Trinity's coveted Dr. Andreas Nell Memorial Prize for Ceylon History and the Napier Clavering Prize for English. He was the Editor of the College Magazine and captained the Cricket team.

An outstanding sportsman in his youth, he was also a rugby colours man and athletics Lion breaking many records in hurdles. He culminated his trail blazing school career being appointed as the Senior Prefect in 1949 and winner of the much coveted Ryde Gold Medal for the best all round student in 1950. Mr. Kadirgamar was offered the captaincy of the Sri Lanka contingent to the 1956 Melbourne Olympics but he declined to accept it due to pressure of his law examinations.

Mr. Kadirgamar read for his LLB degree at the University of Colombo. He obtained a Bachelor of Laws (Honours) degree from the University of Ceylon in 1953. He was placed first in the First Class at the Advocates Intermediate Examination the same year. The following year, he was placed first in the First Class at the Advocates Final Examination of the Ceylon Law College and was admitted to the Ceylon Bar in 1955. He later proceeded to Balliol College, University of Oxford where he read for a degree in Letters. In 1958 Mr. Kadirgamar

was admitted to the United Kingdom Bar as a Barrister at Law, Inner Temple. On completion of his studies at Balliol College, Oxford, he was awarded a B.Lit. by the University of Oxford in 1960. He was elected to the coveted post of the President of the Oxford Union in 1959.

Recently, he was honoured by the Oxford Union when his portrait was unveiled by the Vice Chancellor, Chris Patten, of this prestigious university.

An all round sportsman, he also held the All India Hurdles Record both at Ahmedabad and Allahabad. The crowning glory of his legal career was when he was elected as an Honorary Bencher of Inner Temple, one of the four ancient Courts of England and Wales in its 496 year history, being only the second Asian to do so after former Malaysian Prime Minister Tunku Abdul Rahman in 1974.

He headed a United Nations Intellectual Property Organisation as its Director where he was responsible for the drafting of legislation of nineteen governments.

Mr. Kadirgamar practised law at the Ceylon Bar from 1960 to 1971 and before the Privy Council, London, in the years 1955 to 1960 and 1971 to 1974, practising among the eminent barristers of the time. He functioned as a Consultant to the International Labour organization (ILO) in Geneva in 1974. He was also the one-man Commissioner appointed by Amnesty International to investigate the Catholic-Buddhist crisis in Vietnam in 1963.

On resumption of practice at the Sri Lanka Bar, he specialized in Commercial, Administrative, Intellectual Property, Industrial and Labour, Constitutional and International Law. He was appointed President's Counsel in 1991.

Mr. Kadirgamar served as a member of the Advisory Committee on Intellectual Property for the Government of Sri Lanka and the Foreign Affairs Study Group appointed by the President of Sri Lanka. He chaired the Committee for Upgrading Consultancy Services in the Construction Industry of Sri Lanka.

He was a member of the Panel of Consultants on Law Reform in Sri Lanka appointed by the Minister of Justice. He

is the author of a number of articles published in international legal journals such as the Modern Law Review, The South African Law Journal, The Conveyancer, property law.

He entered politics due to the efforts of Dr. Neelan Tiruchelvam. He was appointed national list MP for consecutively for 4 times in 1994, 2000, 2001 and 2004.

He functioned efficiently as Sri Lanka's Foreign Minister from 1994 to 2001 and from 2004 until his assassination on 12 August this year. He brought to his post the rich international experience he had gained. By any yardstick Kadirgamar was an outstanding Foreign Minister. "One of the best in the world," as former Indian High Commissioner Gopal Gandhi put it. "The best chairperson for international conferences," said External Affairs Minister K Natwar Singh.

Kadirgamar became a trusted confidante of President Kumaratunga and played an active part in her government and in the peace process. He was primarily responsible for inviting the Norwegians to become facilitators in Sri Lanka's peace process. As Foreign Minister, he campaigned to secure the proscriptio of the LTTE in western countries like the UK and USA for which he earned the eternal wrath of the LTTE which denounced him as a "traitor". While stressing the justifiability of the Tamil cause, he deprecated separatism, fascism and the crass militarism which had come to characterize the Tamil struggle for rights since the mid eighties. "Separatism is a kind of tribalism and I am not a tribalist," he is reported to have once said.

Interviewed on the BBC's "Hard Talk" programme Lakshman Kadirgamar was questioned: "By your own admission, you are at the top of the Tamil Tigers' hit list. How do you feel as an ethnic Tamil yourself to be reviled by the group?" in his reply Mr. Kadirgamar said "At birth I was given a label, the LTTE wants me to accept and approve everything that they do, the suicide bombers, the child soldiers, the political assassinations, the extortion of ordinary people. If being opposed to all that makes me a traitor which is what they call me sometimes. I am absolutely delighted to accept that appellation. I do it with pleasure."

In another interview on the Japanese NHK programme, he was asked, "You

(continued on next page)

Reactions to Kadigamar's murder

International

India shocked and pledges support: Pledging its full support to Sri Lanka in its hour of need, India has condemned unreservedly the assassination of Foreign Minister Lakshman Kadigamar.

A Government statement issued in New Delhi said: "We have learnt with deep shock and profound grief of the brutal assassination of Sri Lanka's distinguished Foreign Minister and long-standing friend of India, Lakshman Kadigamar. This has been a heinous act and we condemn it unreservedly. We hope that the perpetrators of this terrorist crime will be brought to justice.

"We have every confidence that Government and friendly people of Sri Lanka will rise to the challenge and defeat the forces which seek to undermine Sri Lanka's unity and political stability. India will, as always, extend its full support to our friendly neighbour in its hour of need.

The Government of India's support for the unity and territorial integrity of Sri Lanka remains constant and undiluted. "We convey the sincere condolences of the Government and people of India to Mrs Kadigamar and the entire Kadigamar family on their irreparable

loss. Our prayers are with them in their moment of sorrow."

Meanwhile Indian External Affairs Minister Natwar Singh in a condolence message said Mr. Kadigamar's tragic departure from the Sri Lankan political scene had "created a void that will be difficult, if not impossible to fill".

"Mr. Kadigamar's untimely demise is not only an immeasurable loss for the Government and people of Sri Lanka, but also for our region and for the cause of democracy all over the world.

The Government and people of India have lost a trusted and valued friend, who at all times, upheld the interests and cause of partnership and multi-faceted interaction between Sri Lanka and India with deep and passionate sincerity commitment," he said.

Congress Leader and Chairperson National Advisory Council Sonia Gandhi in message to Mrs. Kadigamar said, "My thoughts and prayers have been with you and your family ever since I heard of the tragic and shocking death of your beloved husband. Mr Lakshman Kadigamar was a person of rare brilliance and dynamism. He worked tirelessly for peace and to achieve his vision of a com-

posite Sri Lanka, free of barriers of the barriers of hatred, prejudice and misunderstanding that divide people and communities. I have warm memories of my meetings with you and your husband. He was a true and greatly valued friend of India, who significantly strengthened the ties of cooperation and understanding between our two countries. We deeply mourn his loss and will always honour his memory. I understand your unbearable anguish and share your grief with all my heart. May your and your family find the strength to bear your loss."

Jayalalithaa expresses shock: Expressing shock at the assassination of the Sri Lankan Foreign Minister the Tamil Nadu Chief Minister, Jayalalithaa, said "Yet another towering Statesman of Sri Lanka has fallen to the cowardly bullets of a terrorist. This dastardly act must be condemned by the entire international community in the strongest terms and action taken to bring the guilty to book." She said Kadigamar was known for his firm and principled opposition to terrorism and for his critical role in getting the LTTE banned internationally.

His death, coming as it did in the wake of reports of renewed violence in eastern Sri Lanka, would be an 'irreparable loss' to the democratic leadership of Sri Lanka and the ongoing peace process, she said in a statement. Jayalalithaa said she had written to Sri Lankan President Chandrika Kumaratunga conveying the deepest condolences at the loss of "this distinguished son of Sri Lanka," requesting her to convey the condolences to the bereaved family.

UN Security Council in a statement said, "The members of the Security Council strongly condemn this senseless act of terrorism.

They expect that the case will be speedily investigated and the perpetrators, organizers and their sponsors brought to justice. The members of the Security Council call on the parties concerned to implement fully the provisions of the ceasefire agreement and to continue their dialogue, in order to attain sustainable peace and stability in the country."

UN Secretary General in a statement said, "I am shocked and saddened to learn few hours ago about the assassination of Sri Lankan Foreign Minister. I deplore in the strongest of terms this criminal and senseless act and hopes that the perpetrators will be found and brought to justice. I express condolences to his family of the deceased and his sympathy with all Sri Lankans in this hour of sorrow. Sri Lanka has lost a deeply respected states-

(continued from page 17)

are from the Tamil community. You try to re-build the friendship between both peoples. So could you tell me your intention? What is it going to be?

In reply Kadigamar said, "I am first and foremost a citizen of Sri Lanka. I don't carry labels of race or religion, or any other label. I would say quite simply that I have grown up with the philosophy that I am probably, kind of a citizen of the world. I don't subscribe to any particular philosophy. I have no fanaticism, I have no communism. I am not impressed by anybody's claim to the race. All right you are born into a certain family, you are given a label but that label does not determine in my case, what my outlook on life is, I believe there should be a united Sri Lanka. I believe that all our peoples can live together. They did live together. I think they must in

future live together after this trauma is over. We have our four major religions in the country, Buddhism, Islamism Hinduism and Christianity. All these religions exist very peacefully. They get on very well. I see no reason why the major races in the country, the Tamils and Sinhalese cannot again build a relationship of confidence and trust. That is my belief. That is what I wish for and in working for that I will not be deterred by having some labels pinned on me."

A passionate "Sri Lankan" to the core, he refused to be overawed by the weight and pressure that bigger countries brought to bear upon the little island of Sri Lanka. "A small nation should not, and need not, cringe and crawl in the presence of bigger and stronger countries," he felt. He took the view that a small country could negotiate successfully with bigger and more powerful countries by presenting its case with self assurance and dignity." □

man dedicated to peace and unity. I hope that this tragedy will not weaken the commitment of the people of Sri Lanka to achieve a durable peace in the country."

USA: In Crawford, Texas, where President Bush is vacationing, White House spokeswoman Dana Perino said, "We condemn this outrageous and barbaric act" and offered condolences to the Sri Lanka government and Kadirgamar's family.

US Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice "I am shocked and saddened by the assassination of Sri Lankan Foreign Minister Lakshman Kadirgamar. This senseless murder was a vicious act of terror, which the United States strongly condemns. Those responsible must be brought to justice," I offer my deepest sympathies and condolences to Mr. Kadirgamar's family and to his friends and colleagues in Sri Lanka who will miss him greatly. I last met Foreign Minister Kadirgamar this June. He was a man of dignity, honour and integrity, who devoted his life to bringing peace to Sri Lanka. Together, we must honour his memory by re-dedicating ourselves to peace and ensuring that cease-fire remains in force," she added.

Singing the condolence book at the Sri Lankan Embassy in US, Dr Rice said, "I want to say to the people of Sri Lanka, that we mourn him, we mourn your loss, we mourn the loss for his family, and they will be remembered in our thoughts. I also want to note that it is the great hope of the United States that out of this tragedy people will once again commit themselves to a path to peace.

There can be no cause that is justified by terrorism and by violence. And I want to say to the President, with whom I spoke just a couple of days ago, that we have been impressed with her vision and with the people of Sri Lanka - and how they have responded to this tragedy. But we call upon all parties to try and find a way to peace."

Commonwealth Secretary-General Don McKinnon said, "I am deeply shocked and saddened by the assassination of Lakshman Kadirgamar. I strongly condemn this cruel and senseless act of terrorism. The Commonwealth has always believed that terrorism serves no purpose. Those who perpetuate violence in this way will never win a real peace."

Norwegian Foreign Minister, Jan Petersen said, "The assassination of the Foreign Minister Kadirgamar is a gruesome deed, which is deeply tragic for Sri Lanka. I condemn this killing of a significant politician and a respected representative for his country. I would like to ex-

press my condolences to his family, to the President of Sri Lanka, the Government and to the people. The killing puts the peace process in Sri Lanka to a serious test. It is now of great importance that both parties to the conflict do their utmost to fully fulfil their obligations according to the ceasefire agreement."

Head of the Sri Lanka Monitoring Mission, Hagrup Haukland, in a press statement regarding the assassination said: "SLMM strongly condemns the brutal assassination of Foreign Minister Kadirgamar. This barbaric act is a huge blow to the peace process as a whole. Such brutal violence creates fear, distrust and insecurity within society, and therefore represents a serious threat to the ceasefire. I sincerely hope that the Government of Sri Lanka and the LTTE will continue in their efforts to maintain the ceasefire and to implement confidence building measures at this fragile moment. SLMM will continue to do its utmost to assist the Parties to the Ceasefire Agreement."

European Union commissioner, Benita Ferrero-Waldner said in a statement said the assassination of Sri Lankan Foreign Minister was a brutal and senseless terrorist act "This was truly a vicious terrorist act and its perpetrators must be brought to justice. This senseless murder robs Sri Lanka of a man of great stature and dignity who had dedicated himself to finding a peaceful and democratic solution to his country's ills. I am particularly saddened because I see the clear intention of the killers is to restart conflict and to rob the worthy people of Sri Lanka of the peace, reconciliation and prosperity they so clearly deserve after decades of civil war and the devastating tsunami of December 2004."

Australian Foreign Minister, Alexander Downer said: This "Heinous act of terrorism" should not be allowed to derail the peace process. Saying that he was deeply saddened and disturbed to learn of Kadirgamar's death and describing him as an eminent statesman, colleague and friend, Downer said, "He was a man of moderation who sought the path of peace and worked tirelessly for his country. This heinous act of terrorism must not be allowed to derail efforts to bring peace to Sri Lanka. It is Australia's strong hope that, despite this terrorist act, the Sri Lankan peace process will continue, including through early implementation of the Post-Tsunami Operational Management Structure (P-TOMS).

British Foreign Secretary, Jack Straw, said, "I strongly condemn the brutal killing of Mr. Kadirgamar yesterday. Mr.

Kadirgamar served with distinction as Sri Lanka's Foreign Minister for several years and had close personal ties to the UK. I always found my meetings with him very useful. His death will be a great loss to Sri Lanka, the region and the international community."

British High Commission in its capacity as local presidency of the European Union: Heads of Mission based in Colombo issuing a statement condemning the assassination expressed condolence to his family.

Canadian Foreign Minister, Pierre Pettigrew said that Canada condemned the assassination. "I am shocked and saddened to learn of the assassination of Foreign Minister Kadirgamar. This is an unconscionable act committed against a member of the Sri Lankan government. On behalf of all Canadians, I extend my deepest sympathy to his family and all Sri Canada urges restraint by all parties. The perpetrators of this terrible act must be brought to justice."

Thailand Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra said. "I am shocked to have learnt the sad news about the assassination and passing away of Mr Lakshman Kadirgamar." Thaksin said in a statement. "Thailand strongly condemns this criminal and barbaric act of violence, but this would not deter our readiness to continue to support Sri Lanka's tireless efforts to bring about peace and unity to her country. Our thoughts and prayers are with Sri Lanka in this time of grief," he said.

"Sri Lanka has lost a national hero. His devotion to peace in Sri Lanka will always be cherished and remembered by all of us," Thaksin said in a separate letter to President Chandrika Kumaratunga. **Bangladesh's Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia** told BSS News that late Foreign Minister Kadirgama was an "outstanding statesman and with his untimely death, the world and South Asia in particular, has lost a leader and a man of peace." In a condolence message she called the killing a "dastardly act" and said she hoped the assailants would be brought to justice.

Japanese Prime Minister, Junichiro Koizumi: "I am greatly shocked and saddened at the tragic news that Foreign Minister Lakshman Kadirgamar was assassinated. I strongly condemn that act of violence and would like to offer my deepest condolences to his family and the people of Sri Lanka on behalf of the Government and the people of Japan."

French Foreign Minister, Philippe Douste-Blazy said, "France firmly condemns the murder of the foreign Minister Lakshman Kadirgamar and no cause

can justify such an act, French Foreign Minister Philippe Douste-Blazy said. French authorities offer their condolences to the family of Mr. Kadirgamar and express their sympathy and solidarity to the authorities and the People of Sri Lanka."

Russian Foreign Ministry in a statement said, "Russia strongly denounces this barbaric terrorist act in which the outstanding politician who had done much for strengthening national unity of Sri Lanka was assassinated."

The Foreign office of Switzerland said in a statement, "It is with consternation that the Federal Department of Foreign Affairs has learned of the assassination of Lakshman Kadirgamar, Foreign Minister of Sri Lanka. It condemns this unjustifiable criminal act and offers its deepest sympathies to the families. The DFA hopes that those responsible for this killing will be found without delay and brought to justice."

The DFA wishes the peace process in Sri Lanka to continue despite this act of crime. It exhorts the parties concerned to by all means avoid any escalation of tension and to respect the cease-fire."

Foreign Minister of Germany, Joschka Fisher, said in a statement: The killing of Lakshman Kadirgamar, Foreign Minister of Sri Lanka, was a senseless and cowardice act of the terrorists and those responsible has to be arrested and brought before the justice.

Joschka Fisher has learnt with horror the killing of Lakshman Kadirgamar and conveyed his sorrow and deepest sympathy to the Government, people of Sri Lanka and the members of the family of Lakshman Kadirgamar.

Lakshman Kadirgamar was internationally a highly respected and outstanding person and always remained a good friend of Germany. German foreign minister also said that Lakshman Kadirgamar was one of the most prominent participants in the peace process in Sri Lanka and the heinous murder was directed against the peace process.

Nepal King King Gyanendra: Nepal's King paid tribute to assassinated Sri Lankan Foreign Minister Lakshman Kadirgamar, hailing him as a man of vision who worked tirelessly to bring peace to the troubled island, state-run news agency RSS said.

In a message of condolence to President Chandrika Kumaratunga, the King said, "We believe that terrorism is the number one scourge of our times and we in the civilized world need to strengthen our common efforts to defeat it. As Minister for Foreign Affairs of Sri Lanka, he

has also made invaluable contribution for the promotion and maintenance of international peace and harmony."

The King also noted that Kadirgamar was a great friend and well-wisher of Nepal and praised his contribution to make the seven-nation South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) a viable regional organisation. **Li Zhaoxing, Foreign Minister of the People's Republic of China**: "I was shocked to know with deep sorrow that His Excellent Lakshman Kadirgamar, Foreign Minister of the Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka unfortunately passed away. H.E. Kadirgamar is an old friend of the Chinese people, who has made great contribution to the cause of China-Sri Lanka friendship. H.E. Kadirgamar paid a visit to China last December, during which we held a very friendly meeting. I wish to extend my deep condolence and sincere sympathy to Your Honourable and through Your Honourable to the family of H. E. Kadirgamar."

Peoples Republic of China: The Chinese government strongly condemns the assassination of Foreign Minister Lakshman Kadirgamar as an act of terror. "The Chinese government was shocked and saddened by the assassination of Sri Lankan Foreign Minister Lakshman Kadirgamar" Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesman Kong Quan said in Beijing. He also said that the Chinese government offers profound condolences and sincere sympathy to the late Foreign Minister's family.

"The Chinese government strongly condemns this act of terror and will, as always, support the Sri Lankan government's efforts in seeking national reconciliation, restoring economic development and safeguarding national sovereignty and territorial integrity" he also stated. **Erik Solheim, Norwegian Special Envoy**: "It's completely insane, it is a major setback for the peace process."

Reactions within Sri Lanka

United National Party: "The United National Party condemns in the strongest terms the assassination last night of Mr. Lakshman Kadirgamar, Minister of Foreign Affairs.

The perpetrators of this criminal act have not been identified as yet and the investigations are still on. It is necessary that the investigations be concluded speedily and the perpetrators brought to justice.

Security sources have already gone on record to the media that the LTTE is responsible for this killing. Mr.

Kadirgamar has been long identified as being under LTTE threat. Unless the perpetrators are quickly identified it will have a serious impact on the already fragile Ceasefire Agreement....

As a politician he made a valuable contribution to the nation at a crucial time and his loss cannot be replaced....

Although he was a strong critic of the manner in which the ceasefire was being implemented, he was for peace and stood for the resolution of our national problem through political negotiations. He was responsible for bringing in the Norwegian Government as facilitators and initiating the dialogue on the ceasefire which enabled the UNP Government to continue what he started, using the services of the same facilitator, to achieve the ceasefire.

"The United National Party therefore while acknowledging that this murder is a blow to the ceasefire, trusts that a negotiated peace which is so vital for our people will be ensured by the government, the ceasefire maintained and all steps taken to prevent a return to war.

The UNP joins the President and the Government in sharing the deep sense of grief the people of Sri Lanka feel at this tragic loss of a leader of great achievement and promise. The party conveys its deepest condolences to Mrs. Kadirgamar and the children at this time of personal sorrow."

Prime Minister Mahinda Rajapakse: Kadirgamar was one of the best and most successful Foreign Ministers that Sri Lanka has had since independence. He was mainly responsible for building Sri Lanka's image abroad which was badly tarnished at the time he first assumed office in 1994.

Kadirgamar was a national leader who was respected by all communities in the country for his stance on the national question. He was in the forefront of the country's peace process. He played a major role in the national and international war against terrorism which has threatened the very fabric of the civilised world and its cardinal values of freedom and democracy. He worked tirelessly to protect the sovereignty and territorial integrity of our country and also stood firmly for an undivided Sri Lanka.

It is a great tragedy that this apostle of peace and ethnic harmony should have been brutally gunned down when the country needed him most. At this moment of tragedy we strongly condemn this brutal act of terrorism which, according to security sources, has been perpetrated by the LTTE.

In this hour of grief, let us remind ourselves that assassination did not destroy Mahatma Gandhi or Abraham Lincoln or S. W. R. D. Bandaranaike or Martin Luther King and Rajiv Gandhi, as the ideals for which they sacrificed their lives continue to live and nourish their countries - paradoxically strengthened by the fact of their assassination.

We deeply mourn Mr. Kadirgamar's loss and extend our sympathy to Mrs. Kadirgamar and the members of the family."

Janatha Vimukthi Peramuna (JVP): A true son of Sri Lanka has fallen. The LTTE bullet aimed at Lakshman Kadirgamar was a bullet aimed at all those who reject racism and believe in democracy and human rights. It is very temporary victory for a bloodthirsty racist fascist hiding in the Vanni who has modelled himself after Hitler. This horrific crime instead of cowering us, strengthens the will of the people to resist dictatorship, and fight for true equality, multiculturalism and multi-ethnicity.

Kadirgamar was a descent man without the guile, the double-speak and the political treachery of the average main stream Sri Lanka politician. The JVP and he came from different histories and different backgrounds. But we developed a strong bond based on his transparent decency and love of the country. Born as a Tamil he was at ease with all in Sri Lanka, except with those who believe in racial hatred. It is no secret that as the United Peoples Freedom Alliance government was formed, we in the JVP wanted him to have very high office. In the many meetings with him, our assessment of him as a decent man continued to grow. We of the JVP have lost a friend; the country has lost a true patriot.

Friend and patriot, you died as you lived. You died for our common ideals. Your death however will not be in vain. As we mourn your death, we of the JVP double our resoluteness in fighting for the honest values you stood for.... Farewell friend, in death your ideas will become still stronger!"

Lanka Sama Samaja Party (LSSP): "The Lanka Samasamaja Party is deeply shocked by the assassination of the Foreign Minister, Lakshman Kadirgamar, by a suspected LTTE sniper. His death is a great loss to the country. Mr. Kadirgamar has performed extremely well as the Foreign Minister of the PA Government from 1994 to 2001 and of the United People's Freedom Alliance Government since April 2004. He has restored professionalism to the Foreign Service, expanded the coverage by the Missions and im-

proved their efficiency. He used his intellectual ability and diplomatic skills to improve Sri Lanka's image abroad and get the support of all countries to further our economic and social development.....

This high profile killing comes in the wake of an increased incidence of murders by the LTTE both in the North and the South. Amidst increasing evidence of LTTE cadre presence in strategic locations in the South, a well known SLBC/Rupavahini media personality, Relangi Selvarajah and her husband, who both had connections with the PLOTE, a rival party to the LTTE, were shot dead in Colombo on the same day. Of the many killings by the LTTE -in the North and East the recent cruel murder of SSP Wijewardena in Jaffna caught the headlines. The LSSP does not associate the acts of the LTTE with the aspirations of the Tamil people. In fact it is the Tamil people themselves who are being terrorized by the LTTE....

While the LSSP mourns the death of Lakshman Kadirgamar and the others at the hands of the LTTE and calls for justice to be meted out to those responsible, it reiterates the necessity for the Government and the people not to allow themselves to be diverted from achieving the objectives of attending to the needs of all those affected by the Tsunami and the eventual achievement of a lasting peace.

Ceylon Workers Congress: "The Ceylon Workers Congress condemns the assassination of Lakshman Kadirgamar. The silencing of differing views by such dastardly acts is most deplorable. Views must be met with counter views in a democracy.

Late Kadirgamar was a person who was respected as a Lawyer and Intellectual. As a Presidents Counsel and internationally recognized expert on Intellectual property law made a valuable contribution to the legal system. His entering Parliament on the National list was most appropriate and he made a valuable contribution to the Government as a Minister and Paliamentarian. As Foreign Minister he introduced professionalism to the foreign service. He was for a good friend and a gentleman politician.

It is tragic that he had to meet his death in this manner. We are saddened by his sudden loss and wish to convey the condolences of Arumugan Thondaman, President, General and all members of the Ceylon Workers Congress to Mrs. Kadirgamar, the children and family members."

Mahajana Eksath Peramuna (MEP): "It is with great regret and with a sense

of personal loss that the Mahajana Eksath Peramuna bemoan the brutal assassination of Lakshman Kadirgamar M.P. P.C. Minister of Foreign Affairs at the hands of assassins who had removed from our midst an exemplary personality who was not only our spokesman but also the visible embodiment of the hopes and aspirations of an undivided Sri Lankan with its territorial sovereignty integrity and dignity intact .

Lakshman Kadirgamar strode the arena of Foreign Affairs as a colossus with a firm grip of relevant matters of both the national and international scene. He was dedicated to the cause of Sri Lanka. He utilized his acumen, eloquence, knowledge and experiences to disabuse the minds of the international community which up to recent times has been prejudiced due to diabolical misrepresentation and misinformation by the LTTE and fellow travellers. It is to his credit that the true image of Sri Lanka has been successfully restored as a self respecting nation in the eyes of the World Community.

The MEP mourns the death of Lakshman Kadirgamar who laid his life at the Altar of Mother Lanka striving to live up to the high ideals of dignity, responsive to truth, loyalty to the country and the democratic traditions. This shall constitute the monument inscription on the headstone of this grateful Nation." - Dinesh Gunawardena. Leader of MEP. **Tamil National Alliance, Parliamentary group leader, R.Sampanthan,** in a press release on 14 August said, "The killing of Hon.Lakshman Kadirgamar, MP, PC has caused shock and consternation. We strongly disapprove of the killing. We convey our deep condolences to Ms Kadirgamar, the children and all other members of the Kadirgamar family.

"The killing of Mr.Kadirgamar has happened at a critical time in the peace process. The many killings that have taken place in the past several months have had an adverse impact of the Cease-fire Agreement. Unless the ceasefire is sustained, the peace process cannot recommence. Delay and drift in the peace process encourages other parties who want to sabotage the peace process and creates the environment for violence. We urge that the peace process be recommenced in a meaningful way. That would be the only way to sustain the Ceasefire Agreement and discourage all forms of violence."

Sri Lanka Muslim Congress: "The late Minister Lakshman Kadirgamar was a towering personality who steadfastly and boldly stood for what he believed

and was one of the few politicians who commanded respect of people from all walks of life as a statesman, a rarity in today's local politics

"Born a Tamil his ascendance in politics as the Foreign Affairs Minister of the country and also at one point a possible candidate for premiership, all purely on merit, will definitely serve as a beacon of inspiration for the minority politicians in the country.

"The late Minister Kadirgamar has throughout his political career been a sympathizer and also a strong supporter of the Muslim cause. "It is with a great sense of gratitude the SLMC recollects the brilliant speech he made at the adjournment debate on a separate Muslim delegation in October 2003, urging the parties to the conflict and the international community to give up the discriminatory practices on Muslims."

Liberal Party of Sri Lanka: "Lakshman Kadirgamar was one of the most distinguished statesmen this country has produced, not only in the last decade, but since independence. His assassination, following after the similar removal of other moderate Tamil statesmen such as Neelan Thiruchelvam, Sam Thambimuttu and Appapillai Amirthalingam, is startling witness to the manner in which the whole issue has been thoroughly brutalized.

Catholic Bishops' Conference: "The Catholic Bishops' Conference is deeply shocked and concerned by the outrageous killing of the Minister of Foreign Affairs Hon. Lakshman Kadirgamar who has been directing our foreign policy during the last decade or so. His assassination is a heinous act and a blow to the attempts to work out a negotiated political settlement to the ethnic conflict which has caused so much loss of life and property in our country..."

Mr. Kadirgamar's assassination is an affront to those who preach and promote a negotiated political settlement to the ethnic conflict. It will only create further mistrust between the two major communities who live side by side in various parts of the country. It will only strengthen the hand of those who oppose any negotiated political settlement.

We call upon the two mainstream political parties to reach some consensus about the kind of political settlement they envisage and to take this issue of the negotiated political settlement out of partisan politics. We feel the time has come for the rival Tamil rebel groups to reach some rapprochement among their groups and to desist from violence which will destabilize the whole country.

Muslim Council of Sri Lanka: "The Muslim Council of Sri Lanka, which comprises of over 50 of the largest and most influential National organisations of

Muslims in Sri Lanka joins the nation to bemoan the loss of Lakshman Kadirgamar, a noble and exemplary son of Mother Lanaka at the hands of an assassin's bullet. Lakshman Kadirgamar, was a person of the highest integrity and honour whilst being an outstanding intellectual and political statesman of our time, who had the courage to take a principled stand on justice for the minorities, when he advocated the right of equal representation to the Muslims in any peace negotiations, whilst speaking in Parliament.

Whilst, conveying our deepest sympathies to his family we join the nation in mourning the loss of this noble son of Sri Lanka who has been taken away from our midst because he took a position different from his assassins."

Rt Revd Duleep de Chickera, Bishop of Ciolombo: "Sri Lanka has lost another of her noble sons to the assassin's bullet. The Hon Lakshman Kadirgamar was an outstanding intellectual and political statesman of our country and a person of integrity and honour. His contributions to the political, legal, religious and social debates in Sri Lanka and abroad were characterised by their clarity, dignity and conviction. His assassination at this juncture is not only an irreparable loss to the nation but also a serious setback to those who were yearning for a negotiated political settlement on the ethnic question with peace, dignity and justice for all.

An analysis of the Hon Kadirgamar's immense contribution to the life of our nation must await a later date. But it is sufficient to mention now that he will go down in history as perhaps the ablest of the Foreign Ministers we have had since independence. He served our national interests with distinction and promoted professionalism in diplomacy and international relations. On the domestic scene, I am aware that his wisdom and judgement were greatly valued in the Cabinet, in Parliament and outside. He took an unequivocal stand for justice and fairness on all issues. Before he entered the political scene, he was an outstanding lawyer whose interventions in civil cases earned the respect of the Bar and the Bench.

The Hon Kadirgamar had a brilliant career as a scholar, sportsman and student leader at Trinity College Kandy and later at Oxford University. Sri Lanka was fortunate that he brought these qualities of discipline, values and leadership into his life as a politician. As an ethnic Tamil, he had the courage to take a principled stand on justice for the minorities in our country whilst speaking out openly against acts of terror. The Hon Kadirgamar is only the latest in a long line of ethnic Tamils who have been as-

sassinated because they took a position different from that of their assassins. It is never too late for all Sri Lankans to take a courageous and principled stand on this and to commit the destinies of our communities and of our country to pluralism, dialogue and a willingness to accommodate dissent. There is no other way we can move forward.

We mourn with his family, with the President and with our people the loss of a man of peace, ideals and sincerity. May his soul rest in Peace and our country experience the peace that we all long for."

National Christian Council: "The National Christian Council of Sri Lanka unequivocally condemns the assassination of Foreign Minister Lakshman Kadirgamar, which has come as a shock to all right-thinking people of our country. The country has lost a courageous leader at a time when it needed the services of such men and women most. We denounce all attempts to stifle dissenting voices, which is so necessary in any democracy. We express our condolences to Mrs. Kadirgamar and the other family members and wish to assure them of our prayers for them in this time of crisis...."

National Peace Council of Sri Lanka: "The assassination of Foreign Minister Lakshman Kadirgamar has taken place when important efforts were being made to re-engage the government and LTTE in a joint mechanism for humanitarian purposes and to re-start the peace process. The National Peace Council condemns this assassination, more so as it has been carried out during a time of ceasefire that has existed for three and a half years. The government has accused the LTTE of this assassination which the LTTE has denied. This open breakdown of relations is a major blow to hopes of a revival of the peace process.

"While Minister Kadirgamar is the most prominent figure to be assassinated during the post ceasefire period, he is only one among a large number of victims. Tamil political opponents of the LTTE, military personnel and LTTE cadres are today being killed virtually on a daily basis. Journalists supporting and opposing the LTTE have also been killed. We are saddened by these killings and condole with their families. Regrettably the repeated condemnations of these actions by civil society and the international community have failed to stem the growing number of such killings.

"The National Peace Council takes this opportunity to once again condemn the use of violence and assassination to address past grievances or to weaken the opponent. Such actions will not serve to bring any benefit to either the peace process or help in finding a political settlement to the ethnic conflict." □

Under Age Child Recruitment on the increase August 2005

The Human Rights Commission of Sri Lanka is deeply concerned to note the dramatic increase in child recruitment by the LTTE reported from our offices in the North and East. Despite the recent Security Council Resolution on Children and Armed Conflict adopted on 26 July 2005, and the decline in numbers of underage recruits post-tsunami, recent reports indicate that the LTTE is again recruiting significant numbers of children. At the annual session held in Geneva of the United Nations Commission on Human Rights in April of this year, the Chairperson noted that recruitment numbers had gone down. We now regret to inform the public that there has been a disturbing increase in the numbers of underage recruits.

Under International Humanitarian Law and Human Rights Law to which Sri Lanka is a party and Customary International Law the recruitment of children into armed conflict is prohibited. It is first and foremost recognised to be a violation of child rights, human rights and human dignity. Under international law, eighteen is set as the minimum age for all participation in hostilities, and any recruitment or use of children under the age of fifteen is considered a war crime. This standard is outlined in Article 38 of the 1989 *Convention on the Rights of the Child*, the *Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the Involvement of Children in Armed Conflicts*, the *Geneva Conventions* and their *Optional Protocols*, and the 1999 *Convention concerning the Prohibition and Immediate Action for the Elimination of the Worst Forms of Child Labour*, which prohibits the forced recruitment of children under the age of eighteen for use in armed conflict as one of the worst forms of child labour.

The international commitment to ending underage recruitment was again reinforced in July 2005 with the adoption of Security Council Resolution 1612 (2005) of 26 July 2005 on children and armed conflict. The Resolution strongly condemns the recruitment and use of child soldiers by parties to armed conflict. The Resolution

Focus on Rights

also recalls the responsibilities of States to end impunity and stresses the primary role of national governments in providing effective protection and relief to all children affected by armed conflict. The Resolution requests that the Secretary-General immediately implement a monitoring and reporting mechanism on the issue. The Security Council unanimously adopted the Resolution and established a Working Group to which the Mechanism will report. The Council underlined that such a mechanism, initially proposed by the Secretary-General in his report on children and armed conflict of 9 February, will collect and provide timely, objective, accurate and reliable information of the recruitment and use of child soldiers in violation of applicable international law. Additionally, it will provide information on other violations and abuses committed against children affected by armed conflict, and must operate with the participation of, and in cooperation with, national government and relevant United Nations and civil society actors. The Resolution reaffirms five previous resolutions on this subject. The previous Special Representative to the Secretary General, Mr Olara Otunno has issued a press statement declaring this to be a new era of application in combating the use of children in armed conflict.

As well as the international framework outlined above that is in place to protect the rights of the child, there have been national developments in Sri Lanka that have contributed to the protection of children and the formal commitment to ending underage recruitment. In June 2003, the GoSL and the LTTE both signed an Action Plan for Children Affected by War. The Action Plan included a commitment by the LTTE to end child recruitment,

whether voluntary or through coercion.

Despite this and other promises made by the LTTE to end underage recruitment and to release those children already recruited, the Human Rights Commission is deeply concerned that documented evidence of underage recruitment has continued, and is on the rise. Reports from Regional Offices of the Commission, the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), and NGOs in the North and East, point to an increase in recruitment in the last few months.

In 2005, the Human Rights Commission has received 141 reports of child recruitment at its Regional Offices of Jaffna, Vavuniya, Trincomalee, Batticaloa, and Kalmunai. Of those reports, there were at least 25 children aged 15 and under (the youngest reported to be 11 years of age).

UNICEF, as of 31 July 2005 has documented 5,081 cases of underage recruitment, (including re-recruitment following the defection of Colonel Karuna in 2004 and the release of 2,437 recruits) since the signing of the cease-fire agreement. The LTTE formally released 1,480 children to UNICEF during this time. Of the cases registered by UNICEF, 1,209 are outstanding as of July 2005. Recent reports from the East show a dramatic increase in child recruitment particularly during the temple festivals. UNICEF reports that in July, there were nearly double the numbers of reports of underage recruitment than in the month of June. There were 59 cases reported in June, whereas the numbers increased to 111 reports in July. Batticaloa in particular has seen a substantial increase in the number of reported cases, of both recruitment and re-recruitment, with 63 cases reported as compared with the 18 reported cases in June.

It is not possible to know the full extent of the problem of underage recruitment. Not all parents are aware of existing reporting mechanisms and in some known cases the parents have not officially reported to the Human Rights Commission or to UNICEF due to fear of reprisal. The figures available do not therefore provide an accurate estimation of the ex-

tent of recruitment. Although the numbers are uncertain, it is clear that child recruitment is a fundamental violation of human rights and international law, and it is therefore unacceptable to have any cases at all.

In addition, the Human Rights Commission is extremely concerned to note the lack of protection for LTTE runaways who surrender to the security forces. Children who have been released or have run away are in a vulnerable position and in need of protection. HRC has received reports that children are regularly harassed and when taken into custody, are sometimes subjected to repeated questioning and videotaping. The Human Rights Commission is also gravely concerned by the failure to determine the identity of those responsible for the events at the Bindunuwewa Rehabilitation Centre that left 27 dead and 14 injured, some seriously on 25 October 2000. The Supreme Court of Sri Lanka decision on 27 May 2005 acquitted the four accused convicted by the Trial-at-Bar of the High Court on charges of the murder of 27 inmates

and attempted murder of 14 others. The majority of the victims were children and former LTTE cadre. The police and judiciary must take all necessary steps in identifying the perpetrators of this atrocity, and bring them to justice. The Human Rights Commission has requested two leading lawyers to study the evidence in the case and to recommend a course of action.

In accordance with the Convention on the Rights of the Child, these children should be seen as "victims" and "survivors" of the conflict and must be protected and supported for return and reintegration into society. The Government of Sri Lanka must, in accordance with provisions of the relevant international conventions, take all necessary measures to provide protection and humane treatment to all children affected by armed conflict, including released child soldiers, runaways, and children who have surrendered to the police or armed forces.

The Human Rights Commission of Sri Lanka, recognising the commitment of both the International Com-

munity and National actors to the comprehensive protection of children in armed conflict, calls for immediate action from all parties to end the recruitment of children to armed groups, and to effectively address the impact of armed conflict on children. To this end it is imperative that priority is given to ceasing recruitment, the return of children to their families, and to the protection and humane treatment of underage LTTE cadres who have run away or have surrendered to government forces.

In light of the serious and continuing nature of reports of underage recruitment, the Human Rights Commission will be writing to the Foreign Secretary to invite former UNICEF Deputy Executive Director Karin Sham Poo of Norway, the current acting Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Children and Armed Conflict, to conduct a visit to Sri Lanka in order to report on the progress of the Plan of Action and to submit her findings to the United Nations Security Council and all relevant parties. □

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The Barber and the Policeman

Dr. Rajasingham Narendran

The recent murders in Inuwil of Jayaseelan Shantharuban (Barber) and Charles Wijewardene (Superintendent of Police) and how the story has since unfolded will be recorded in the annals of the Sinhala-Tamil ethnic conflict in Sri Lanka as landmark incidents. The events leading to the so-called accidental shooting of Shantharuban are yet shrouded in mystery. The accidental misfiring of a soldier's gun while being handed over to a fellow soldier for safe keeping is the most implausible explanation among those proffered, which if true, speaks volumes of the quality of training and professionalism in the Sri Lankan army. On the other hand the explanations that Shantharuban was deliberately shot over problems involving illicit liquor and/ or his spying activities on behalf of the LTTE (D.B.S. Jeyaraj, Tamil Week, 7th Aug'05) or accidentally shot when a soldier was trying to shoot his superior officer (Deutsche Presse-Agentur, 5th Aug'05), sound more plausible.

Shantharuban

The killing of Shantharuban, the barber, over the sale of illicit liquor and /or because he was an LTTE spy is deplorable, if deliberate and premeditated. Our sympathies are with the family of Shantharuban, who have suffered an irreplaceable loss of a young man in his prime, what ever the precipitating causes may have been. No human being deserves to die in this manner, in any civilized society. The Sri Lankan army should be condemned in unequivocal terms for this murder, if it was deliberate. The man should have been brought to justice and subject to due process, if he stood accused of any misdemeanor. If it was a genuine accident, the death was regrettable and the Sri Lankan army has to review its training and weapon han-

dling procedures as a matter of priority. The fact that the Sri Lankan government has expressed regrets and offered compensation to the family of Shantharuban should be appreciated and welcomed. However, it is beholden on the Sri Lankan army and the government to hold an impartial and honest inquiry in to this incident and prosecute expeditiously the soldiers involved, if a prima facie case exists against them. It will be the duty of the Sri Lankan judiciary to ensure there after that justice is done and it is perceived to be so.

Shantharuban, the human being, was however fortunate in having been taken to hospital and offered emergency medical care. He was treated in a manner befitting a fellow human being. The debate is not about whether he was taken to hospital by the so-called public (read mob), the LTTE, the police or the army. The fact that there was an opportunity available for him to be taken to hospital is important. The army, police or LTTE cadres present at the scene did not hinder this humanitarian gesture in anyway. It stands to the credit of the Sri Lankan army and police that they permitted Shantharuban to be taken to hospital, although unfortunately his life could not be saved.

Charles Wijewardene

However, the manner in which Charles Wijewardene, the Superintendent of Police, Jaffna, was abducted, tortured, mutilated, murdered and thrown on the roadside deserves the condemnation of every human being, especially the vast majority of the Tamils who are yet decent folk. The cowardice, brutality, cunning, inhumanity, indecency, beastliness and barbarism displayed in this murder will be a blot on all Tamils, forever. Killing an unarmed and unguarded Po-

lice Officer- although a Sinhalese and owing allegiance to the Sri Lankan government- who had gone to the scene of the murder in pursuance of his legitimate duties and to establish peace, was not acceptable by any standard.

I was personally shocked and appalled at this loathsome murder and have been irritated and angered at the manner in which the mainstream Tamil media and the pro-LTTE news organs are portraying it. I am sure most decent Tamils are feeling the way I do and are frustrated at their impotence in the face of this unnecessary barbarism and inability to give vent to their feelings. I take this opportunity to express my heart felt condolences and regrets to the family of Charles Wijewardene both on my behalf and on behalf of all the Tamils who feel as I do and beg their forgiveness for this dastardly crime committed in our name. Will the LTTE, if it has even a modicum of humanity left amongst its leadership, come forward to identify the miscreants involved and subject them publicly to the judicial process that is now operative in their Ealam? Let us at least belatedly prove to the world that we are yet a decent, civilized and just people!

Implications

The stories of Shantharuban and Charles Wijewardena have far reaching implications for the Tamils of Sri Lanka, beyond the immediate events. The moral basis of the Tamil quest for justice, human rights, equality and democracy within Sri Lanka has been seriously undermined by the murder of Charles Wijewardene and many others - Tamil, Sinhalese and Muslims - who have preceded him. If human life, irrespective of whose it is, is not respected and valued, calling one self a human being will have no meaning. Human civilization is built around this philosophical concept. War, an enduring pre-historic phenomenon, is being subject to the constraints of the Geneva conventions in modern times, in order to humanize an evil we are unable to exorcize. Being a Tamil involves not only speaking the Tamil language, but also living subject to a

perennial set of time tested lofty values. The LTTE and its coterie of sycophants and hangers-on are hell bent on destroying the very fundamentals of the Tamil identity in a very systematic and determined manner.

Uri Avnery recently (Arab News, 28th July '05) wrote with reference to Israelis, "As a 9-year old I saw with my own eyes the collapse of the German republic. It was generally referred to as the Weimar Republic.— Since then, the sights and sounds of the collapse of the republic are engraved in my mind. The big question that has been haunting me ever since and which has remained unanswered to this day is: How could such a thing happen? How could a gang of thugs with an inhuman ideology take over a state that, in its time, was perhaps the most cultured country in the world? On the eve of the Eichman trial, in 1960, I wrote a book on this, concluding with the question: Can it happen here? Today, there is no escape from this terrible answer: Yes, it can happen here. If we behave like the people of Weimar, we shall suffer the same fate as the people of Weimar". Is our position as Tamils any different in Sri Lanka today?

Episodes in Ramayana

Four incidents narrated by Kamban - one of the great Tamil poets - in his version of Ramayana, which is steeped in Tamil culture and values, are worth recalling. The first involves the slaying of Vaali, the monkey king who had usurped the Monkey Kingdom and the queen from his brother Sukreevan, by Rama, to whom Sukreevan had complained about his misfortunes. Rama engineers a wrestling match between Vaali and Sukreevan. While they were wrestling, the concealed Rama shoots brave Vaali with his arrow and mortally wounds him. Before dying, Vaali worships Rama, but questions the cowardly method he had resorted to kill him.

The second involves Hanuman, who was sent as a peace emissary to Ravana to request the immediate release of Sitha. An arrogant Ravana, while rejecting the call for Sitha's re-

lease, wraps cloth around Hanuman's tail and sets fire to it, in contravention of prevailing conventions governing emissaries. An enraged Hanuman sets fire to the capital of Lanka with his burning tail and destroys it.

The third refers to Kumbakarna and Vibhishana, the brothers of Ravana. During the course of the battles with Rama's army, a besieged Ravana requests his brother Kumbakarna to lead the war on his behalf. The brave, but wise Kumbakarna advises Ravana to let go of Sitha, as her kidnapping and incarceration were immoral and wrong. Ravana, calls Kumbakarna ungrateful and accuses him of being incapable of reciprocating the life long care and love he had bestowed on him. A disappointed Kumbakarna agrees to go to battle saying, "My fate is pushing me into this battle and death (Vithy piddithu untha nindrathu - Tamil)" and implores his brother to release Sitha at least after his death. Vibhishana at a later date also implores Ravana to release Sitha in order to save Lanka. Ravana rejects his advice and calls him a coward. Vibhishana crosses over to Rama's side as a result.

The fourth story involves a battle in which Ravana himself takes part. His army decimated and he totally disarmed, a dejected Ravana stands with his head bowed in front of a victorious and fully armed Rama. Rama tells him, "Go today and come back tomorrow (Indru poye, Naalai Vaa)".

These episodes in Kamban's Ramayana highlight values in battle that had to be adhered to even by a Vishnu incarnate like Rama; the respect and safety that had to be accorded to an unarmed emissary sent by the enemy; democratic values of free speech and debate that permit Vaali to question Rama and, Kumbakarna and Vibhishana to question Ravana and advice him; magnanimity towards even a helpless arch enemy that was displayed by Rama; and the consequences when time tested values are blatantly flouted. Where are these values in the

LTTE and among LTTE followers today?

Then and now

Vengeful and mean 'Tit for tat' or 'eye for an eye and tooth for a tooth' concepts were never in the ethos of the Tamils or in the religions - Hinduism and Christianity - they practise. The LTTE songsters who praise the bravery of the LTTE cadres, the sacrifice of the suicide bombing 'Black Tigers' and hark back to the days of Puranaanuru (poetry of the Sangam period) to draw parallels, fail to also point out the differences in values between the Tigers of today and the Tamil warriors of the past. They fail to mention that the much spoken of Veera Thaa (brave mother) of the Sangam poetry who went searching for her son in the battle field, vowing that she will cut her breasts off if her son was a coward - wounded in the back while running away from battle - was though sad, proud to find that her son had died facing battle, with a wound on his chest! This was the bravery that was cherished, admired, praised and celebrated in the past. These were battles conducted between armies away from where women, children and livestock dwelled. These were not battles aimed at helpless civilians and unarmed adversaries! These were not cowardly murders conducted by pistol gangs and organized mobs against dissenters exercising their birth right and unarmed men coming to make peace!

I remember a time when the Tamils of Sri Lanka were proud to say that they cannot be enticed in to mob violence like the Sinhalese. Where are the values that brought forth this confidence? LTTE sponsored and paid for individual and mob violence are becoming the norm in the Tamil areas of Sri Lanka today. Are the Tamils more prone to mob violence than they were in a bygone era? I say no. An overwhelming number of Tamils yet retain their timeless values. It is the LTTE and its goons who are creating the illusion of the violent Tamil and the Tamil mob. The LTTE and their gangs are principally responsible for projecting the Tamils of Sri Lanka as terror-

ists, drug smugglers, credit card cheaters, thugs, arsonists, callous murderers, extortionists, kidnapers, child snatchers, welfare cheats, forgers and many other negative stereo types to the world, in the name of liberating us from Sinhala misrule. The LTTE that has the capability to run a trans-national state - contravening international law and conventions - and impose its will on the Tamil Diaspora to collect funds compulsorily through strong arm tactics, does not have moral authority to discipline its die-hard supporters who are principally involved in various nefarious activities including senseless murder around the globe.

Are we Tamils going to continue to be a people who dwell in the past and present, and are prone to miss the future? We know where we were and we also know where we are now. But do we have an idea where we are going or where we are being taken? It is time that we snap out of past memories and the spell it has cast on us. This spell is being regularly recast by the LTTE to hold us in its thrall. The Shanharuban - Charles Wijewardene story is the latest spell that is being cast to keep us bound to memories of an unpleasant past. Let us also hoist ourselves out from the quagmire that is our present.

The quagmire

The peace process presently in total limbo is the quagmire that the Tamils (and the Sinhalese) are trapped in, due to the machinations of the LTTE and the short sighted attitudes of the Sinhala polity. The LTTE is unwilling to take us out of this quagmire, even if it is capable of doing so, because it stands to gain as an organization with military-business-industrial capabilities from a situation where power can be excised without any legal constraints. The LTTE stance has also strengthened the forces within the Sinhala polity opposed to granting the Tamil demands for greater autonomy and self rule. The return to war regularly threatened by the LTTE and the incidents presently being instigated by it to create illusions of an impending

war, such as the murder of Charles Wijewardene, will only sink us deeper in the quagmire.

The LTTE unilaterally pulled out of the peace talks for reasons that did not merit that unfortunate move. This was strategically an unforgivable mistake. The pressure on the Sinhala polity to deliver a solution was eased as a result. The LTTE through its mindless actions has provided the excuses for the Sinhala polity to revert to a state of blissful somnolence interrupted occasionally by flashes of Sinhala-Buddhist demagoguery, with reference to the Tamil demands.

The Tamils as a people have to begin looking to a future within Sri Lanka, as opposed to an independent Tamil Ealam, on account of current international political and economic realities. The glimpses of what a Tamil Ealam governed by the LTTE would be, has been painted quite vividly by the LTTE over the past few years. I do not think any Tamil in his senses would desire to live in such a Tamil Ealam voluntarily. This is an added reason why Tamils have to find solutions to their problems within Sri Lanka. The LTTE in the mean time should be forced to demand resumption of the peace talks with the Sinhala polity immediately. The leading political parties in the Sinhala polity should be forced to set out in clear terms their contemplated solutions to meet Tamil demands, ahead of the anticipated presidential elections. The LTTE should be forced to back track on the policies of violence, kidnapping, murder and extortion that it has imposed on the Tamils in the name of Tamil Ealam and concentrate on establishing the due rights of the Tamils within Sri Lanka and in areas under its control and influence. The LTTE should be forced to rein in its pistol gangs, other assassins, child snatchers and agent provocateurs. The LTTE should be forced to permit dissent and pluralism within the Tamil polity. The LTTE should be stopped from engaging in business ventures of any nature either overtly or covertly. The LTTE should be forced to permit investments in infra structure, human resource development,

agriculture and industry in the Tamil areas without any hindrance. While every one can appreciate the need for the LTTE to secure areas under its control from a military perspective, the LTTE has to be forced to find a way to accommodate the developmental needs of the people.

The future

The future for the Tamils within Sri Lanka can be secured primarily by minimizing economic dependence on the Sinhala polity for employment, livelihood and other matters that are important to civilized life, provided the LTTE acts sensibly. Contentious political issues should be handled in parallel with the awareness that these will take time to resolve given the 'Drink, Eat and be Merry (Kaappalla, Beepalla, Jollykerapalla)' attitude and short sightedness of the Sinhala polity.

The present ceasefire should be exploited to achieve this economic independence for the Tamil areas as quickly as possible. The morally bankrupt LTTE of today does not seem have the vision, wisdom, political acumen or capability to lead the Tamils along this path. It also seems clear the LTTE has outlived its period of usefulness to the Tamils and instead has become a major liability. Its achievements relate to the past, however glorious and necessary they were at one time. The past is gone, while the future is ahead of us. The Tamil people have to jettison the LTTE, if it is unable to reform and lead the Tamils in a democratic, mature, sensible and cultured manner. We Tamils as a people should not be penalized, castigated or damned in the future for the sins of the LTTE, committed in our name. We should demonstrate to the LTTE that we are not a feeble race (recent speech of Pottu Amman) they assume us to be and have the capacity to stand up for the values we cherish. The disappointment and disillusionment of the Tamils with the LTTE, its ways and mores are quite palpable today. This could become a tidal wave that will make the LTTE only a brief episode in our long history, unless the LTTE takes immediate remedial action. □

Incorrect reading of religious texts

Karen Armstrong

Human beings, in nearly all cultures, have long engaged in a rather strange activity. They have taken a literary text, given it special status and attempted to live according to its precepts. These texts are usually of considerable antiquity yet they are expected to throw light on situations that their authors could not have imagined. In times of crisis, people turn to their scriptures with renewed zest and, with much creative ingenuity, compel them to speak to their current predicament. We are seeing a great deal of scriptural activity at the moment.

This is ironic, because the concept of scripture has become problematic in the modern period. The Scopes trial of 1925, when Christian fundamentalists in the United States tried to ban the teaching of evolution in the public schools, and the more recent affair of *The Satanic Verses*, both reveal deep-rooted anxiety about the nature of revelation and the integrity of sacred texts. People talk confidently about scripture, but it is not clear that even the most ardent religious practitioners really know what it is.

Protestant fundamentalists, for example, claim that they read the *Bible* in the same way as the early Christians, but their belief that it is literally true in every detail is a recent innovation, formulated for the first time in the late 19th century.

Before the modern period, Jews, Christians, and Muslims all relished highly allegorical interpretations of scripture. The word of God was infinite and could not be tied down to a single interpretation. Preoccupation with literal truth is a product of the scientific revolution, when reason achieved such spectacular results that mythology was no longer regarded as a valid path to knowledge.

We tend now to read our scriptures for accurate information, so that the *Bible*, for example, becomes a holy encyclopaedia, in which the faithful look up facts about God. Many assume that if the scriptures are not historically and scientifically correct, they cannot be true at all. But this was not how scripture was originally conceived. All the verses of the *Qur'an*, for example, are called "parables" (*ayat*); its images of paradise, hell, and the last judgment are also *ayat*, pointers to transcendent realities that we can only glimpse through signs and symbols.

We distort our scriptures if we read them in an exclusively literal sense. There

has recently been much discussion about the way Muslim terrorists interpret the *Qur'an*. Does the *Qur'an* really instruct Muslims to slay unbelievers wherever they find them? Does it promise the suicide bomber instant paradise and 70 virgins? If so, Islam is clearly chronically prone to terrorism. These debates have often been confused by an inadequate understanding of the way scripture works.

People do not robotically obey every single edict of their sacred texts. If they did, the world would be full of Christians who love their enemies and turn the other cheek when attacked. There are political reasons why a tiny minority of Muslims are turning to terrorism, which have nothing to do with Islam. But because of the way people read their scriptures these days, once a terrorist has decided to blow up a London bus, he can probably find scriptural texts that seem to endorse his action.

Part of the problem is that we are now reading our scriptures instead of listening to them. When, for example, Christian fundamentalists argue about the *Bible*, they hurl texts back and forth competitively, citing chapter and verse in a kind of spiritual tennis match. But this detailed familiarity with the *Bible* was impossible before the modern invention of printing made it feasible for everybody to own a copy and before widespread literacy - an essentially modern phenomenon - enabled them to read it for themselves.

Hitherto the scriptures had always been transmitted orally, in a ritual context that, like a great theatrical production, put them in a special frame of mind. Christians heard extracts of the *Bible* chanted during the mass; they could not pick and choose their favourite texts. In India, young Hindu men studied the Vedas for years with their guru, adopting a self-effacing and non-violent lifestyle that was meant to influence their understanding of the texts. In Judaism, the process of studying *Torah* and *Talmud* with a rabbi was itself a transformative experience that was just as important as the content.

The last thing anyone should attempt is to read the *Qur'an* straight through from cover to cover, because it was designed to be recited aloud. Indeed, the word *qur'an* means "recitation." Much of the meaning is derived from sound patterns that link one passage with another, so that Muslims who hear extracts chanted aloud thousands of times in the course of a lifetime acquire a tacit understanding that one

teaching is always qualified and supplemented by other texts, and cannot be seen in isolation. The words that they hear again and again are not "holy war," but "kindness," "courtesy," "peace," "justice," and "compassion."

Historians have noted that the shift from oral to written scripture often results in strident, misplaced certainty. Reading gives people the impression that they have an immediate grasp of their scripture; they are not compelled by a teacher to appreciate its complexity. Without the aesthetic and ethical disciplines of ritual, they can approach a text in a purely cerebral fashion, missing the emotive and therapeutic aspects of its stories and instructions.

Solitary reading also enables people to read their scriptures too selectively, focussing on isolated texts that they read out of context, and ignoring others that do not chime with their own predilections. Religious militants who read their scriptures in this way often distort the tradition they are trying to defend. Christian fundamentalists concentrate on the aggressive *Book of Revelation* and pay no attention to the *Sermon on the Mount*, while Muslim extremists rely on the more belligerent passages of the *Qur'an* and overlook its oft-repeated instructions to leave vengeance to God and make peace with the enemy.

We cannot turn the clock back. Most of us are accustomed to acquiring information instantly at the click of a mouse, and have neither the talent nor the patience for the disciplines that characterised pre-modern interpretation. But we can counter the dangerous tendency to selective reading of sacred texts. The *Qur'an* insists that its teaching must be understood "in full" (20:114), an important principle that religious teachers must impart to the disaffected young.

Muslim extremists have given the *jihad* (which they interpret reductively as "holy war") a centrality that it never had before and have thus redefined the meaning of Islam for many non-Muslims. But in this they are often unwittingly aided by the media, who also concentrate obsessively on the more aggressive verses of the *Qur'an*, without fully appreciating how these are qualified by the text as a whole. We must all - the religious and the sceptics alike - become aware that there is more to scripture than meets the cursory eye.

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(Karen Armstrong is the author of *The Battle for God: A History of Fundamentalism.*)

7/7 - LONDON BOMBS

Lavanyan Ratnapalan

A city bomb blast leaves all of the people of that city – its survivors – in a similar physiological position. First of all, everybody experiences shock, which is a blow that some will find it too easy to recover from. Later, perhaps on the following day, the reality of events will come to reclaim them. Some Londoners rallied very quickly after the blasts of July 7th. Transport workers at London Bridge Station high-fived each other between shifts: a sign of comradeship in anxious times. The police and emergency services have worked diligently and tirelessly to support the victims and to catch the criminals who committed these terrible acts.

Nevertheless, London has seemed emptier these past couple of weeks. The rush hour is quieter, there are more available seats on the tube, and fewer tourists are to be seen on the pavements of the West End. These are some of the uncomfortable reverberations of the July attacks, and in this sense it is entirely wrong to portray Londoners as 'stoic' and capable of 'taking it', as many politicians and media figures have done. One British journalist has noted that, 'All cities can in some sense take it, and many have suffered more than London. A city is a habitation built for "taking it".'

The Blitz spirit that some commentators have found among London's population in the aftermath of 7/7 has only been possible through a necessary distortion of history. What is seldom recalled about this event are the many instances of theft and looting carried out by Londoners while homes were evacuated for air raid shelters during the night-time bombing raids of 1940-41. It is a common circumstance of any war, you might assert, which would be true, but would it then be fair to praise Londoners in particular for their spirit, and not the residents of any other war-ravaged city? And is it also fair in this respect to ignore the boos and chanting that greeted Churchill on his first visit to the East End during the war? And the widespread and mutual Cockney hatred of the Royal Family at the same time? All of these facts must be placed in counterpoint to some of the

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propagandistic devices that are currently being foisted on people all over the world about Londoners' resilience during this nervous period.

The choice of the word propaganda is deliberate, since the issue that is being avoided by the British government is why London *should* take it. What made London have to take it anyway? Everyone knows that the war on Iraq has made living in London more dangerous than it has been for many years. In this respect the IRA's recent announcement that its war with the British people is over comes as a reminder of the peaceful possibilities of negotiating with groups classed as terrorist.

The example of the IRA also points to a common misconception about the causes of the attacks on London, namely, that they were motivated by religious fanaticism. It is as yet completely unproven that the men who conducted these attacks were devoutly religious, let alone fanatics, so that anyone who makes such a presumption can only be extolling a racist point of view given the information presently at hand.

What it is possible to show, however, is that the history of suicide bombing, in the last century at least, suggests that religion is less a motivating factor of terrorist activity than specific political goals, particularly when conceived in nationalist terms. In the case of 'Islamic' terrorists, the key unifying concept is that of the *Ummah*, which describes the global community of Muslims as a kind of state without territorial borders. Such a concept helps to clarify the motives of British-born suicide bombers in defence of a people - be they Iraqi, Afghan or Palestinian - with whom they can only have had minimal social contact.

The key motivating factor for these activists is political combat against a perceived aggressor, who in this case are the British and American governments that have sent their armies to fight wars in Iraq

and Afghanistan. The alleged statement to Italian prosecutors of one of the terror suspects who was caught in Rome, Hussein Osman, supports this view: 'More than praying we discussed work, politics, the war in Iraq ... we always had new films of the war in Iraq ... more than anything else those in which you could see

Iraqi women and children who had been killed by US and UK soldiers.' Religion could help to facilitate suicide from a psychological point of view, and organisations such as Al-Qaeda could provide money and logistical support, but neither of these factors are adequate in themselves to explain the desire to carry out such attacks.

At the same time, all of the terrorists in London appear to have been young men under the age of 30. This may prove to be highly significant in terms of the psychology of political action, as one commentator has recently noted: 'Terror, particularly self-annihilating Terror, seems to resolve certain conflicts in masculinity. It seems reasonable to posit a drive in young men towards self annihilation... Terror seems to give the male drive towards self-destruction an ethical dimension, transforming idiotic self-destruction into heroic self-sacrifice.'

I know what some readers will be thinking as they read such explanations: another middle-class liberal fails to understand how there could be fanatics out there who make a conscious decision to destroy themselves and many others in order to gain a martyr's place in heaven among beautiful virgins and everlasting pleasure. Such an irrationalist interpretation may be true, but it is unhelpful in understanding the root causes of terrorist action. Many of the young men who were behind the attacks in New York and London, not to mention Osama Bin Laden, hail from respectable middle class families; they are smart and educated, even urbane citizens of the global, multicultural world that we all claim to share a place in today. Even if these men could have succumbed to the heavenly temptations described above, it could not have been the first step, the primary motivation to terror: to assume so would mean removing social and political reasoning entirely from the issue, which is another way of mystifying events that have a concrete substance and reality. □

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Child recruitment intensifying: July 25 – The United Nations children's agency, UNICEF, said that the LTTE has recruited 28 children during July this year despite repeated pledges to stop child recruitment. It said that the Tamil Tigers were intensifying child recruitment. According to the UNICEF office in Colombo, there have only been 18 cases in June.

The agency says every time they raise the issue, the Tigers promise to 'look into' the matter, but kept recruiting under-age cadres. "Not every one is forcefully recruited. Some do join the LTTE voluntarily," Jeffrey Keele, communications officer for UNICEF told the BBC. "But the child recruitment needs to stop." The spokesman said the current no-war, no-peace situation in Sri Lanka make it difficult to find a permanent solution to the problem. "It is going to be very difficult to see child recruitment ends once and for all without an active peace process going on."

Two youth hacked to death: July 26 - Two youth, Kumarasamy Pathmakaran (aged 23) of Kotahena, Colombo and Subramaniam Gokulan (aged 26) from Chavakachcheri, Jaffna were hacked to death by some unknown persons last night at Manipauram near Nelukulam on Vavuniya – Mannar Road. The killings appear to have taken place Monday (25) night and the victims were brought to Manipuram from elsewhere by the killers, according to the villagers.

The dead bodies were found under a banyan tree. No trace on the murderers was possible but the villagers had informed the police that they saw a white colour Hi-ace van near the spot.

286 Tamil medium teachers for NE schools: July 26 - 286 GCE Advanced Level qualified Tamil medium teachers are to receive their appointment letters from zonal education offices in their respective districts in the northeast province Wednesday. These teachers have been selected by the Colombo Ministry of Education based on the results of the competitive examination held in December last year and the list has been handed over to the North East Provincial Ministry of Education for posting, education department officials said.

Selected teachers have been notified to collect their appointment letters from zonal education offices in their respective districts in the northeast province. The breakdown of the newly appointed AL qualified teachers is given below district wise: - Jaffna-50, Mullaitivu-22, Killinochchi-16, Vavuniya-25, Mannar-12, Batticaloa-62, Amparai-67 and Trincomalee-32.

EPDP member shot dead in Batticaloa: July 27 - Pankirajah George, 39, a member of the Eelam Peoples Democratic Party (EPDP), was shot and killed by suspected LTTE gunman riding a bicycle Tuesday (26) night around 11:00 p.m., Batticaloa Police said. The incident took place 2 km. south of Batticaloa town, at Chinese Road in Puthur. The EPDP cadre, also known as Ramesh, was attached to the EPDP's Chenkalady office. Ramesh, a father of two children, was residing in Theemaltheevu in Batticaloa. The gunman had used 9 mm handgun, according to Batticaloa Police conducting investigations into the killing.

Batticaloa youth shot dead in Colombo: July 27 - Mr. Kirupaharan Krishnapillai, 28, a Tamil youth, who was shot by unidentified gunmen Tuesday (26) night around 11:30 p.m in Colombo, succumbed to gunshot wounds Wednesday morning around 6:30 a.m. at Colombo Hospital, Police sources said.

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Mr. Kirupaharan, a resident of Sithandy in Batticaloa, was staying at a lodge in Colombo waiting to go abroad, according to the staff at the lodge. Two unidentified gunmen on Tuesday night entered

the lodge, located on Hussaniya Lane connecting with Dam Street, and shot the victim who is suspected to be a supporter of the Karuna faction of the LTTE.

Muslim businessman shot dead: July 27 - A muslim businessman, Mr. M. M. Ibrahim Mohideen, was shot and killed by two unidentified gunmen on Wednesday (27) at 9:55 p.m in Abdul Jawath Alim Mawatta, Kaththankudy, a large Muslim town 4 km south of Batticaloa, Police said. Gunmen followed Mr. Ibrahim in a motorbike when he was returning home in his motorbike, residents said. Kaththankudy Police conducting investigations into the killing said that the killers had used 9 mm handgun to shoot the businessman who was once president of the Kaththankudy Business Society.

Mahinda Rajapakse Presidential candidate: July 28 - The central committee of the Sri Lanka Freedom Party (SLFP) endorsed the name of Prime Minister, Mr. Mahinda Rajapakse, as its candidate of the Sri Lanka's executive presidency. Mr. Nimal Sripala de Silva, Cabinet spokesman and Minister in the United People's Freedom Alliance (UPFA) government announced this at a press briefing held in Prime Minister's official residence 'Temple Trees'.

Sixty-two members of the central committee supported the name of Mr. Rajapakse as presidential candidate. Mr. Nimal Sripala de Silva said the Presidential election would be held in December 2006 and not in 2005 as demanded by the main opposition United National Party (UNP). President Ms Chandrika Kumaratunge in the capacity of President of the SLFP presided the central committee meeting.

LTTE office in Vavuniya attacked: July 28 - Two unidentified men lobbed grenades at the Administrative Office of the LTTE in Vavuniya around 10:00 p.m. Thursday (28). No one was injured in the attack. The attackers, who came in a motorbike, fired into the building after charging two grenades. The office is located at Thirunavatkulam, two kilometers north of Vavuniya town. There were four LTTE administrative officials inside the building at the time of the attack which damaged a motorbike and a computer, LTTE sources said.

Coffin protest against killings: July 29 - Relatives and colleagues of a slain EPDP activist placed his coffin near the office of European truce monitors, SLMM, Friday (July 29) in northern Sri Lanka, demanding justice for alleged killings by the Tamil Tigers. Suliampillai Nixon, 22, was fatally shot Thursday (July 28) by a gunman suspected to be a Tamil Tiger in the northern town of Jaffna. His relatives and colleagues refused to remove the coffin until the European cease-fire monitors assured them they would try to find a way to stop the killings. Earlier EPDP members escorted by soldiers of the Sri Lanka Army and Policemen brought the body of Mr. Nixon in a procession from Kailasapillaiyar Koviladi junction carrying placards to the office of the SLMM located along Nallur Temple Road in Jaffna. Nixon had been selling the EPDP's newspaper when he was shot.

"We understand their frustration ... but we don't have a mandate to go after the perpetrators," said Helen Olafsdottir, spokeswoman for Sri Lanka Monitoring Mission. Nixon was a

member of the Eelam Peoples' Democratic Party, or EPDP.

Tamileelam TV begins broadcasts: July 30 - "The importance given to nurturing the electronic and printed media by the Tamil Eelam leader Pirapaharan is why we are now able to extend our Television services to countries in Asia," said K Veera of National Television of Tamileelam (NTT), speaking at an event held Friday (July 29) 10 am at the Media Co-ordinating office in Kilinochchi to mark the inauguration of television broadcasts to southeast Asian countries as from 1st August, sources in Kilinochchi said.

"We faced several hurdles to inform our public the factual details of events that affected them during the period of war. The ability of the State to spread false propaganda through state-controlled media taught us that building a strong media network to disseminate the Tamil point of view locally and internationally was crucial to our progress. Our media capability grew with our growth in military strength and now we have the capability to broadcast live news through satellite technology to most parts of the world where Tamils live. We urge all journalists to co-operate with us to make our new broadcast program to SouthEast asian countries a success," added Mr Veera. The new service using Eurostar at 11.5GHz will reach India, parts of Pakistan, Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Nepal, Myanmar and China for two hours between 13.30 - 15.30 GMT, the media unit officials said.

Arrested for possessing explosives: July 29 - Mohamed Sayed, 39, was arrested by the Sri Lankan Police for alleged possession of explosives Saturday (July 30) morning at Iyankerni. Police unearthed explosives kept buried beside a coconut tree in the compound of his home on Jinna Road, Eravur Police said. Eravur Police conducting investigations said that the arrest was made after the police discovered two powerful explosives following a tip off.

Elderly man killed in Jaffna: Aug 1 - A 52-year old Tamil man, a father of three, was killed by alleged LTTE assailants in Atchuvely in Jaffna on Friday (29 July). Mr. Phillipiah Jeyarajah was killed by men riding in two motorbikes. Mr. Jeyarajah, a farmer, was returning to his field when he was gunned down. Area residents reported that one of Mr. Jeyarajah's son was a member of PLOTE, and Mr. Jeyarajah himself was detained and assaulted by LTTE in the past. According to residents in Jaffna, LTTE pistol gang members are now targeting the family members of rival groups.

Three LTTE men arrested: Aug 1 - Three persons with suspected LTTE links were arrested by police when they were caught videotaping the high security residence of Foreign Minister Lakshman Kadirgamar in Colombo. Police sources said they suspect the three men were linked to the LTTE, and have handed them over to the CID for interrogation. Minister Kadirgamar, is noted for his anti-LTTE campaigns internationally and is believed to be high on the LTTE hit list. The foreign minister's last barb at the Tamil Tigers came on Friday when he said that a lasting solution to the country's national question was impossible until the LTTE was fully decommissioned. He called on the LTTE to follow the IRA's stand in giving up "war for good".

Injured man in grenade attack, dies: Aug 2 - Mr. Ratnasingham Sivakumar, 30, a salesman at a Liquor shop in Batticaloa succumbed to his wounds at Batticaloa hospital from injuries received from a grenade attack. An unidentified attacker lobbed a grenade into the liquor shop at Pillayaradi in Sinna

Urani, 5 km north of Batticaloa where Mr. Sivakumar was employed was alone at the shop at the time of the attack which took place on Monday (Aug 1) around 2:00 p.m.

Grenade lobbed at EPDP office in Colombo: Aug 5 - The office of the Eelam People's Democratic Party (EPDP) leader Mr. Douglas Devananda came under a grenade attack around 11:40 p.m. Thursday (4), Police sources said. There were no casualties reported but a big noise due to the explosion echoed throughout the highly residential Park Road, Colombo 5, the area where the EPDP office is located. Mr. Douglas Devananda, MP, leader of EPDP is the Minister for Vocational Education. He was not at the Park road office when the grenade was thrown. A week ago an EPDP cadre was shot dead in Jaffna while he was selling the group's newspaper Thinamurasu.

Grenade attack on LTTE office: Aug 5 - Unidentified men, suspected to belong to the Karuna faction, attacked Kaluwanchikudy political office of the LTTE Friday (5) early morning. At least five hand grenades were lobbed inside the office premises, Kaluwanchikudy police said. Five LTTE political cadres who were in the office narrowly escaped from the attack, LTTE sources said. Doors and windows in the front side of the building and the roof were damaged in the attack, Kaluwanchikudy Police conducting investigations said. Shortly before this incident, Periyakallar LTTE political office also came under attack. The name board of the Periyakallar office was removed and dumped on the road. LTTE political officials have brought these incidents to the notice of the Sri Lanka Monitoring Mission (SLMM), the LTTE Political co-ordinator said.

Fisherman abducted and killed: Aug 7 - Sivarajah Mariyapalan, 22, a fisherman, was shot in his head and killed by unidentified persons who abducted him Saturday (7) evening at Arumugathankudiyiruppu village in Eravur, Police said. The victim, a resident of the village, went for fishing to Savukkady sea around 9:00 p.m., parents told Eravur Police. The body of the victim was found by his parents Sunday morning behind a bush near St. Anthony's church at Savukkady. Mr. Mariyapalan was shot with a 9 mm handgun, according to the Eravur Police conducting investigations into the killing.

Grenade attack on shops: Aug 7 - A shop owner was seriously injured and another civilian injured when two unidentified persons riding a motorbike lobbed a grenade into a shop at Chenkalady junction, a high security zone area between Sri Lanka army garrison in Kommathurai and the Black Bridge checkpoint, 15 km. north of Batticaloa. Four shops located near the Chenkalady market were fully burnt by the fire caused by the grenade explosion. The attack took place around 8:30 p.m. Saturday (6), according to Eravur Police. The shop owner, Mr. Srimohan, with serious injuries is admitted to the Intensive Care Unit (ICU) at Batticaloa Hospital. Mr. Ravinthiran, the other civilian with injuries is admitted to Eravur Hospital.

Soldiers attacked in Mirusuvil: Aug 8 - Three soldiers of the Sri Lanka Army sustained injuries when the vehicle in which they were taking meals to fellow soldiers stationed in the area came under attack after being waylaid by unidentified persons Sunday (7) night around 9 p.m. at Mirusuvil in Thenmaradchchi divisions in Jaffna district. The attackers fled from the scene. Two soldiers sustained minor injuries and the third was admitted to the Palaly military hospital in a critical condition, security sources said.

Attack on JVP office condemned: Aug 8 - The Janatha Vimukthi Peramuns (JVP) has condemned the cowardly attack on JVP office on 7 August in Trincomalee allegedly by the LTTE and urged the government to restore democratic rights of the people in the north and east.

Jayantha Wijesekera, JVP parliamentarian from Trincomalee, said that he had survived the attempt carried out by suspected members of the LTTE at the eastern town of Kantalai in the Trinco district. "I was sitting just outside my office when two LTTE members arrived on a motor cycle and threw a grenade at me. It dropped without exploding and I was led away by my personal security personnel," Wijesekera said.

A Police Sergeant was injured when two suspected LTTE cadres hurled a hand grenade at the JVP Trincomalee district political office and fired at policemen on duty. Police said two people had come on a motorcycle and hurled the grenade and fired several shots before fleeing the scene. JVP Trincomalee district parliamentarian Jayantha Wijesekera had been at the office at the time of the attack and five policemen who were on duty had retaliated by firing back at the two suspects. A Police Sergeant who was injured in his right leg was rushed to the Kantale hospital while one of the suspects who were riding the motorcycle had escaped leaving the bike behind.

Two LTTE cadres shot dead: Aug 10 - Two political cadres of the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) were shot and killed by suspected Karuna gunmen who were riding in a blue colour van Wednesday around 7:30 a.m. The incident took place at Kanjirankuda junction on Akkaraipattu-Pottuvil Main Road, around 300 meters away from the Special Task Force (STF) base in Kanjirankuda, which is located 3 km south of Thirukkivil in Amparai district.

The LTTE cadres, Mr. Ramesh (Vellayan), 32, from Sinnathoddam in Thirukkivil and Mr. Sujiventhan, 19, from Vinayagapuram were traveling on a motorbike from LTTE controlled Pavattai to their political office located Thambiluvil village. Hands of the slain LTTE cadres were bound behind their backs. Their motorbike was taken away by the attackers, sources said.

SP killing- LTTE must bring culprits to book: Aug 11 - Some non-LTTE Tamil groups say if the LTTE is not responsible for the killing of Senior Superintendent of Police, Charles Wijewardane it is their responsibility and duty to bring the culprit to the book. They say "Killing of Mr. Wijewardane a good officer is a violation of the Ceasefire Agreement signed between the government and the LTTE. If the LTTE is so keen to safeguard the CFA they must bring to justice the killers of Mr. Wijewardane."

They have expressed their sadness on the brutal slaying of Wijewardane, an officer who worked closely with Tamil people and others. Colleagues described him as very honest and a sincere officer who does not even have a house having served the Police for a very long time. Intelligence sources say the LTTE had targeted Mr. Wijewardane due to his popularity with the Tamil people. A senior Police Officer said, "Tamil people loved him and trusted him and he trusted them in return. That's why he went to speak to the mob unarmed and he would have never thought the LTTE would kill him in such a brutal manner." The Police said the LTTE had threatened witnesses not to give evidence against the killers of Charles Wijewardane.

M'sia, Recruiter of Lankan workers: Aug 12 - Malaysia may nearly top the list of labour-receiving countries of Sri



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Lankan migrant workers soon if a delegation from Colombo visiting Kuala Lumpur next week is able to convince the authorities to fulfil a promise to recruit 80,000 workers annually, local officials said. Malaysia has promised to recruit 80,000 workers annually and a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to this effect was signed during a recent visit to Kuala Lumpur by Sri Lankan Labour and Foreign Employment Minister Athauda Seneviratne.

However, the officials said cabinet sanction or higher government authority would be required for its full implementation.

Currently Sri Lanka has some 5,000 domestic workers in Malaysia and raising that to an annual 80,000 male and female workers would place it second only to Saudi Arabia which has an annual intake of up to 125,000 workers from Sri Lanka.

Other countries in the Middle East, the region that hires the largest number of Sri Lankan workers, recruits less than 80,000 per country annually, according to Suraj Dandeniya, President of the Association of Licenced Foreign Employment Agencies (ALFEA). Dandeniya is leading a delegation of 50 members of ALFEA to Malaysia on this promotional mission accompanied by the Deputy Minister of Labour and Employment Relations Mervyn Silva. Dandeniya said that the delegation would look for opportunities for jobs in the IT and the hotel sector rather than for housemaids or lower level jobs. He said they were hoping to persuade the authorities to speed up recruitment of both males and females.

EU approves Euro 45 million for Tsunami victims: Aug 12 - The European Commission approved another €45 million for two Tsunami reconstruction projects in Sri Lanka. Building on the €30 million already provided by the European Commission for emergency work since the Tsunami struck last December, this €45 million is the first instalment of the EC's longer term reconstruction package. The funding will support livelihood recovery in the areas affected by the Tsunami in the North and East and will reconstruct 270 km of the coastal road that goes from the South to the East.

Charge de affairs of the EU delegation in Sri Lanka Wouter Wilton said: "Efforts to help victims of the tsunami must continue. The immediate crisis response may be over but the challenge of longer term reconstruction of the shattered coastal communities of Sri Lanka remains.

This Commission Decision will provide €5.5 million for an Immediate Communities Livelihood Programme in order to revitalize the livelihoods and basic economic opportunities in the affected communities. Communities will receive equipment, vital infrastructure and skills training to reconstruct their villages, their local infrastructure and to help them earn their own livings again. The project will be implemented in cooperation with the existing community-based United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Transition Programme in the north and east of Sri Lanka.

An additional €39.5 million will be available to reconstruct different sections of the road from Matara to Batticaloa, which have been extensively damaged by the tsunami, as well as having been in a bad state for many years. Rehabilitation of the road is viewed by the Government as a strategic priority for post-tsunami recovery but also for the longer-term sustainable development of the southern and eastern regions. The EC will finance the corresponding road sections with the Asian Development Bank (ADB). The reconstruction of the road will help to restore the local economy in the tsunami-affected regions in the south and east. Up to 50 million more will be provided for further reconstruction work in due course.

Grenade attack on tsunami camp: Aug 12 - Two unidentified persons, riding a motorbike lobbed a grenade into an armed post located close to the Triple Gem tsunami refugee camp in Kalmunai Thursday (11) night around 10:00 p.m. Two civilians, standing near the armed post, were also injured in the grenade attack, Police said. Police Constable Mr. Nimal Somasri, 36, and the homeguard Mr. Gamini, 30, were the security personnel injured in the grenade attack. The two civilians injured in the attack were: Mr. Nadarajah Sivanantharajah, 39, and Ms. Parvathy Subramaniam, 50. The Triple Gem tsunami refugee camp is located near Kalmunai Pansala, which is located around one kilometer from Kalmunai town.

Police constable shot: Aug 12 - A police constable, Mr. Farook, 35, was shot and injured Friday (12) noon in Karaithivu, 48 kilometres south of Batticaloa. The constable was on duty at Vettuvaikalavai Bridge with two other police constables when the incident happened. The gunmen fired from a long distance, from an abandoned land, Police said. Police constable Farook was admitted to Amparai Hospital with wounds in his leg, hospital sources said.

STF water bowser attacked: Aug 12 - Unidentified gunmen fired at a water bowser belonging to Special Task Force (STF) Friday (12) evening around 4:30 p.m. at Sangamamkandy in Pothuvil, 90 km. south of Batticaloa. Three STF soldiers sustained minor injuries and the vehicle was damaged, Police said. The incident took place at 212 milepost on Akkaraipattu - Pottuvil main Road, between Thandiyadi and Komari. Sangamamkandy is located in Amparai district. STF water bowser usually supplies water to Sangamam and Kalugolla villages, sources said. The police blamed the LTTE for the attack.

Policeman killed, two injured: Aug 12 - A Police Constable, Mr. Athukorala, was shot and killed and two other policemen were seriously injured when suspected LTTE gunmen shot at a police mobile unit Friday (12) around 2:30 p.m. at Dehiyathakandia in Amparai district in the East. Injured police constables have been admitted to Amparai Hospital, Police said.

Grenade attack on tsunami camp: Aug 12 - The LTTE hurled two grenades at Thisarana camp for displaced tsunami survivors, wounding four people on Thursday (11) night in Akkaraipattu, police said. One police constable and a Home Guard and two tsunami survivors were admitted to Batticaloa hospital with injuries. It was the third attack on the tsunami camp in just over a month, police said. A complaint was lodged with Scandinavian truce monitors by the tsunami survivors.

Grenade lobbed at police station: Aug 14 - Two unidentified gunmen riding a motorbike lobbed a grenade and shot into the main entrance of the police station in Thirukkivil around 8:45 p.m. Saturday (13). No one was injured in the attack, Thirukkivil Police Officer-In Charge (OIC) Mr. Ahmeer said. Police returned fire, but the attackers managed to escape from the site.

LTTE political office attacked: Aug 15 - Political office of the LTTE in Batticaloa, located inside the Sri Lanka Army held eastern town's high security area, was attacked by two unidentified men Sunday (14) noon. The attackers, who approached the office in a motorbike, lobbed more than five grenades, one by one, into the building through the main entrance, neighbouring residents said. Five LTTE political officials who were in-

side the building narrowly escaped the attack, sources said. Frontal part of the building, documents and the furniture inside the office were damaged in the attack. The Batticaloa political office of the LTTE was attacked at least six times within the last 12 months, sources added.

Policeman, homeguard injured: Aug 15 - Unidentified persons lobbed three grenade into a police checkpoint wounding a police constable and a homeguard at Pandiruppu in Kalmunai at 7:50 p.m. Sunday (14), Police said. The injured Police Constable Mr. A. Gunatilleke and the homeguard Mr.M. Azmi were rushed to Kalmunai Ashraff Memorial Hospital.

The checkpoint, attacked for the second time in three weeks, is located around 500 meters near Kalmunai police station at Thalavettuvan junction on Batticaloa-Kalmunai Road, 39 km. south of Batticaloa, a TamilNet report said.

Three injured in grenade attack: Aug 15 - A Special Task Force soldier, a policeman and a homeguard were seriously injured at 9:30 p.m. Sunday (14), when unidentified attackers lobbed a grenade into their checkpost located on RKM Road in Akkaraipattu, 64 km. south of Batticaloa, Police said. The injured men were rushed to Akkaraipattu Hospital and later transferred to Amparai Hospital. Tension prevails in Akkaraipattu following the attack.

STF soldiers returned fire on the attackers. Continuous firing was heard for 5 minutes, residents said. Five Lankan security personnel were stationed in the sentry post adjoining a tsunami refugee camp at Tharmasangari playgrounds, one kilometer from Akkaraipattu town. The injured men were STF

soldier Mr. Ratnayakka, homeguard Mr. Ramesh and policeman Mr. Abdullah, according to hospital sources. Three STF soldiers were injured in a previous grenade attack on the same checkpost on July 21, according to a TamilNet report.

Karuna cadre shot dead: Aug 16 - Suspected LTTE gunmen shot and killed Mr Mahathevarajah, a cadre from the Karuna Group, Monday (16) night at Namalpockuna in Polannaruwa. Mahathevarajah was shot in his head with a 9 mm. handgun, Aralaganwela Police said. The dead body was found by Aralaganwela Police Tuesday morning following a tip off from the two Karuna Group cadres who told the police that they escaped from the attackers. The three Karuna cadres were attacked near a forest area, according to their statement to the Police.

Soldier killed in the east: Aug 16 - Suspected Tamil Tigers fired on two army posts in northern Sri Lanka on Tuesday (16), killing one soldier, in the first anti-government violence since the assassination of the country's foreign minister last week, police and the military said.

A rebel sniper fatally shot Lance Cpl. H. K. A. Hendeniya while he was on duty at a post in Muttur in eastern Sri Lanka, said Rohan Abeywardene, the regional police chief. He said Hendeniya was taken to a nearby hospital but succumbed to his injuries. Barely 15 minutes later, at least four rebel assailants opened fire on a separate army guard post in the same area, but no one was injured in that attack, Abeywardene said. Also Monday (15), suspected rebels shot and killed a 17-year-old who had been associated with a breakaway Tamil Tiger rebel faction near the town of Batticaloa in northeastern Sri Lanka, Brigadier Ratnayake said.

Navy seize explosives and one killed in east: Aug 16 - The navy has seized high explosives from a fishing boat along with eight detonators in northern Sri Lanka. The explosives and detonators were uncovered in Jaffna late Monday (15) by navy officers who were suspicious of the boat, said Brig. Daya Ratnayake, the military spokesman. The three occupants of the boat were arrested. Ratnayake said the explosives had the potential to "cause substantial damage."

In a separate incident late Monday near eastern Batticaloa, three suspected Tamil Tiger rebels shot and killed Madawaraja Pirav, 17, Ratnayake said. Pirav was associated with the breakaway faction of the mainstream rebel group.

Injured in grenade attack: Aug 16 - Five Army and Police personnel were injured in two grenade attacks allegedly by LTTE cadres in two different locations in the Ampara district on 15 August..

In Alayadiwembu, Akkaraipattu, alleged LTTE cadres reportedly attacked policemen providing security to a Tsunami Welfare Centre injuring an STF commando, a police constable and a home guard. They were admitted to the Akkaraipattu hospital and later transferred to the Ampara hospital. In another incident, suspected LTTE cadres allegedly hurled hand grenades at a police patrol around 7.45 p.m. in Pandiruppu in Kalmunai, injuring a policeman and a home guard. The injured were admitted to the Kalmunai hospital.

Policemen shot in Iruthayapuram: Aug 17 - Unidentified persons fired on two Sri Lankan policemen, wounding them on

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Tuesday (16) night around 8:30 p.m. in the Iruthayapuram suburb of Batticaloa town, Police said. The attackers used T 56 rifles and shot from a long distance, Police said blaming the LTTE for the attack.

The wounded policemen, Mr. Amararatna Dissanayake, 46, and Mr. K. N. Gunawardana, 39, were rushed to Batticaloa Hospital at 8:50 p.m. The policemen were on duty, around 50 meters from a sentry post at the time of the incident. Iruthayapuram is located about 2 km. off Batticaloa town.

Sammanthurai police station attacked: Aug 17 - Unidentified attackers armed with automatic rifles opened fire on Sammanthurai police station Tuesday (16) night around 11:30 p.m. Police constables returned fire on the attackers. No one was injured, Police said blaming the LTTE for the attack. Continuous firing was heard for five minutes, according to neighbouring residents. The police station building sustained damage in the attack, Police said. Sammanthurai town is located in Amparai district, 45 km. south of Batticaloa.

Youth with explosives arrested: Aug 17 - Soldiers of the Sri Lanka Navy conducted a cordon and search operation in the Pallimunai coastal area in the Mannar district Wednesday (17) for about two hours from about 7:00 a.m., civil sources said. During the operation SLN soldiers recovered about three kg of gelatin sticks, 31 detonators and four feet of wire. The soldiers arrested a Tamil youth and handed him to the Pallimunai Police for further action, sources said.

Magistrate goes underground: Aug 17 - A leading lawyer and acting magistrate from Akkaraipattu has gone into hiding following death threats made allegedly by the LTTE. The acting Magistrate, S. Jeganathan, a resident of Thambiluwil, started receiving death threats after he had remanded ten LTTE cadres who were arrested for being in possession of ammunition and cyanide capsules. The remand order was based on a plaint filed by the Akkaraipattu police which produced the suspects in court. The police plaint said that the suspects were arrested while travelling in a vehicle and in possession of two T-62 weapons, bullets, two cyanide capsules and two LTTE dog tags.

"A group of LTTE cadres had gone to Jeganathan's house in Thambiluwil subsequent to the remand order and threatened him with death if he fails to resign from the post of acting Magistrate," according to local sources.

LTTE sniper kills soldier: Aug 17 - A soldier on duty at an Army checkpoint, at Colony 64, Pachchanur, Mutur, was killed by suspected LTTE sniper fire on Tuesday (16). The deceased was identified as Lance Corporal Hendigoda. He was shot dead when he was about to leave the checkpoint after finishing his turn of duty at around 12.00 noon, a senior army official said.

Grenade attack on EPDP office: August 18 - Suspected Tamil Tiger cadres hurled a grenade at the office of a rival Tamil political group on Wednesday (17) in northern Sri Lanka, injuring one person, the military said. M. Ambarasan, 28, was asleep at the office of the Eelam People's Democratic Party in the Tamil heartland of Jaffna when an assailant flung the grenade into the building, said Brig. Daya Ratnayake, military spokesman.

Meanwhile, two ethnic Tamil men found loitering outside

Devananda's heavily guarded home in Colombo were arrested Tuesday (16) evening after failing to provide a satisfactory reason for their presence there, Ratnayake said, adding that they were still being interrogated.

Kidnapped and killed: Aug 18 - A Tamil youth, Mr. Satheeskumar, residing in Armour Street in Colombo, was abducted Wednesday (17) night around 9:30 p.m and was found dead a day later with gunshot injuries behind a bush at Kahathoduwa in Homagama, 22 kilometers southeast of Colombo. The youth, estimated to be 25 years of age is a native of Pungudutheevu division 11 in Jaffna, Police said. The body of the deceased victim is lying at Kalubowila Hospital for post-mortem and final identification by the parents or relatives, Hospital sources said.

Former TELO member shot dead: Aug 18 - Gunmen allegedly belonging to the LTTE shot and killed a former Tamil Eelam Liberation Organisation (TELO) cadre in Kurumankadu, around 1.5 Km. west of Vavuniya around 8.20 p.m. on Wednesday (17), Vavuniya Police Officer In-Charge A.M.C. Abeyasinghe Banda said. The killing took place in a populous area, close to the UNHCR office in Vavuniya. The victim, identified as Somapalan Jegadeeswaran alias Mathy, 30, was shot twice in his head with a 9 mm. handgun at point blank range, as he was walking close to the UN office at Kali Kovil road in Kurumbankadu, Vavuniya Police said. Meanwhile, the TELO Office in Vavuniya said that Mathy, who is from Maharambai kulam in Vavuniya, had left their organisation a few months ago.

TRO de-listed in the UK: Aug 18 - The British Charity Commission has decided to remove the Tamil Rehabilitation Organisation (TRO) from the list of registered charities, according to reports. A spokesman for the British Charity Commission is reported to have said the decision was taken after a report on the activities of the TRO from the year 2000 that revealed its links with the LTTE, which is banned in Britain.

Policemen injured in attack: Aug 18 - The police reported that suspected LTTE cadres fired at two policemen, wounding them on Tuesday (16) night around 8:30 p.m. in the Iruthayapuram suburb of Batticaloa town. Police said that the attackers had fired T 56 assault rifles and shot from a long distance. The injured policemen were identified as Amararatna Dissanayake, 46, and Mr. K. N. Gunawardana, 39. They had been admitted to the Batticaloa government hospital.

More suspects sought in DIG's murder: Aug 19 - The Criminal Investigation Department (CID) probing the murder of DIG Charles Wijewardena in Jaffna had identified eight suspects who are reportedly involved in the abduction and killing and their arrest is imminent, according to a senior officer of the investigation unit. According to the investigators the eight suspects after the killing had left their village in Jaffna and taken shelter in several other areas which are now known to the CID. The special CID team was sent to Jaffna by the CID DIG on the direction of IGP Chandra Fernando.

DIG Charles Wijewardena was killed by a suspected LTTE instigated mob in Jaffna when he tried to inquire into a death of a civilian at Inuvil, Jaffna two weeks ago. The LTTE has denied

(continued on page 41)

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ABOUT PEOPLE AND EVENTS**OBITUARIES**

Mrs. Masilamani Muthuvelu (Maniamma), passed away on the 10th of August 2005.

She was the beloved wife of the late Mr. Muthuvelu of Urumpirai, a loving mother of Dr. Maheswaran (UK), Somasunthary (UK) and Balakrishnan (NZ), mother-in-law of Sivayogawathy (Thevaki) (UK), Dr. Sivalingam (UK) and Mahaluxmy (Ramani) (NZ), grandmother of Gayathiri, Baskari, Renuka, Bhamini, Yasothiny (Geetha) and Vidhya, and great grandmother of Chanthru, Chanthia, Imaany, Ashwini, Arjun, Anjali, Amaran and Amala. The funeral took place at the City of London Crematorium at Manor Park on 15th of August.

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wish to thank all friends and relatives who attended the funeral, sent floral tributes and messages of sympathy and assisted them in several

ways during the period of grief. - 27 Abbotswood Gdns, Clayhall, Ilford, Essex IG5 0BG, Tel: 020 8550 5139



Mrs GNANAMBAL GNANANAYAKI NARENDRA-NATHAN; most dearly beloved adoring wife of late Mr Ponnudurai Narendranathan; daughter of late Mr & Mrs Sabapathypillai (of Karampan East); daughter-in-law of late Mr & Mrs Ponnudurai (of Maruthanamadam); dearest loving proud Amma to her children Thrinayani Jegathambal, Sowmya Wijayambal, Sobhana Meenambal, Priyadarsani Brahathambal, Adhithya Thrilochannan, Vasutharini Kirjambal, Agasthya Ponnambalam and Ambika Dhakshayani; always thoughtful mother-in-law of P Arulampalam, T Ilangovan, R Srikanthan, Meera Narendranathan and Malini Narendranathan; darling dearest Payeeya to her grandchildren Abhirami Janani Raveendran, Amarnath Thirumadhavan Raveendran, Nirmala Arulampalam, Janaki Saruhasini Srikanthan, Janarathanan Ragavan Ilan-

govan, Dhivya Saraswathy Ilangovan and Divani Kruthika Narendranathan; (all of UK); loving sister of Sabapathypillai Pathmanathan (India); and sister-in-law of Savithridevi Sivaloganathan (Sri Lanka), Gayathridevi Ganesan (US), late Mayithridevi Arumugam, Sriyadevi Ponnudurai (Sri Lanka), Kathirayidevi Ponnudurai (Sri Lanka), Ponnudurai Poopendranathan (Sri Lanka), and Padmini Pathmanathan (India); passed away peacefully surrounded by all her loving family on 30th July 2005. Funeral services and cremation took place according to Hindu rites on 2nd August 2005. A soul of great nobility, whose gentleness, kindness and generosity knew no bounds; she will be greatly missed, but always be in the thoughts and minds of all her family and friends.

Family members express their sincere thanks and deep gratitude to all their friends and relatives for their gracious presence; and for all their expression of sympathy, words of comfort, messages of condolences; and the floral tributes; as well as to all those who helped in numerous ways; on this sad occasion of our bereavement - 53 Crossways, South Croydon, Surrey CR2 8JQ, UK.

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IN MEMORIAMs


**First Anniversary
Remembrance**
8th August 2005
**Mrs Poo
Sivasubramaniam**
(1929 - 2003)

*Remembered with love and
affection by family
and friends.*
*Siva.niranjan@steria.com.uk
+44 1442 259122*
Fourth Year Remembrance

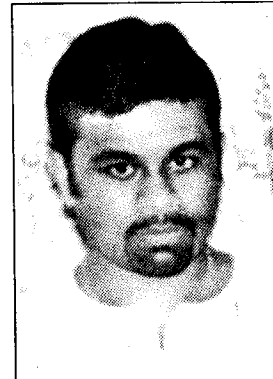
**Dr. Chelvadurai
Manogaran**

(1935 - 2001)

 Emeritus Professor of
Geography, University of
Wisconsin, Parkside, USA.

*Sadly missed and fondly re-
membered by his beloved
wife Santhana Devi (Kili);
daughters Anita and
Shakila; son-in-law Douglas
Shimp; grandson Nathaniel
Shimp, family and friends.*
Anniversary Remembrance of
Mr. Mayilvaganam Velummylum

**Mr. Mayilvaganam Velu-
mmylum J.P., U.M., Attor-
ney-at-Law and former
Chairman, Urban Council,
Point Pedro, Sri Lanka pas-
sed away on 31.8.89 and the
sixteenth anniversary falls
on 31st August 2005.**
*Sadly missed and lovingly
remembered by his loving
wife; children Thayananda-
raajah (UK), Nithianandarajah
(New Zealand), Mayilvaga-
narajah (UK), Chitra (Colo-
mbo), Anandarajah, Krish-
narajah and Jayanthi (all of
Chennai); grandsons Came-
ron, Ewan and Atharsan;
son-in-law Kamaleswaran
(Colombo); daughters-in-law
Sumitra (UK), Devi (New
Zealand), relations, friends
and a host of grateful con-
stituents*
*- 'Hillcroft', 14 Howards
Wood Drive,
Gerrards Cross,
Bucks SL9 7HN.*
Second Year Remembrance

August 2003.
*Sadly missed and fondly
remembered by his beloved
wife Balasaraswathy; loving
children Ragulan, Renuka
(both of UK), Ravichandran
(Chennai, India), Ragavan
and Rathika (both of UK);
sons-in-law Shriananda and
Rajaloganathan; daughters-
in-law Sujatha, Shantha and
Shankari; grandchildren
Hartharan, Rishiharan, Sind-
uja, Bhairavi, Sriram, Pirana-
van and Lakshman.*
*In loving memory of Mr.
Chellappah Balasingam
on the second anniversary of
his passing away on 10th*
*- 3A The Drive, Northwood,
Middlesex HA6 1HQ.
Tel: 01923 842275.*
Ninth Anniversary Remembrance
22nd August 2005

*membered by his loving par-
ents, Mr. & Mrs Selvarajah
(UK); brother Muraleedaran
(Australia); sisters Dr.
Subathini Ramesh (Jaffna
University), Mrs Shanthini
Shanmuganathan and Mrs
Shamini Uthayakumar
(both of UK); uncles, aunts,
nephews, nieces, other re-
latives and friends.*
**Your Memories are always
with us**
*- 63 Elm Croft Crescent,
North Harrow,
Middlesex HA2 6HL.
Tel: 0208 863 6768.*
*In ever loving memory of Mr.
Selvarajah Kiritharan.
Sadly missed and fondly re-*
Fifth Year Remembrance

*In loving memory of Mrs
Amirtharane Ratnasing-
ham on the fifth anniversary
of her passing away on the
21st August 2004.*
*Affectionately remembered
by her loving son Kumaran,
sister Thevaranee and other
members of the family.*
*- Miss. J.T.Rasiah,
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London SE18.*

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Death Anniversary Remembrance**Mr. Apputhurai Gunaratnam**

on 28th August 1990. Sadly missed and fondly remembered by his loving wife Rani; children Thirukumar (Australia), Vasuki (Sri Lanka), Devaki (Australia), Sutharsan (UK), Sarathadevi (California); sons-in-law Ravindran, Radhakrishnan and Sashikanth; daughters-in-law Vasanthi, and Suzanne; grandchildren Ashvini, Yathurshini, Prushoth, Mayurikka and Mayuran.

In loving memory of Mr. Apputhurai Gunaratnam, formerly Divisional Superintendent of Post Offices, Sri Lanka on the fifteenth anniversary of his passing away

– 1 Appin Court,
Roxborough Park,
Harrow-on-the-Hill,
Middx HA2 0KQ.

Third Anniversary Remembrance

In ever loving memory of Mr. Sinnathambi Sivapiragasam of Sandilipay, formerly of Irrigation Department, Colombo

on the third anniversary of his passing away on 23rd August 2002 (20th August according to the Hindu calendar)

Fondly remembered and sadly missed by his children Radha, Sivakumarran, Rajini, Ramani, Rohini and Renuka; daughter-in-law Navamani; sons-in-law Viswanathan, Dr. Salama and Umasuthan; grandchildren Sivaruby & Sivayogi, Krishnakumar & Ahilan, Shireen, Vidya & Menaha, Jenani & Richard; great grand daughter Yalini & Leela, Maya and sister Kanmani. – 10 Orchard Court, Worcester Park, Surrey KT4 7LD, Tel: 0208 330 6722.

Forthcoming Events**September**

2. Amavasai
3. Feast of St. Gregory the Great
4. Aavani Sunday (3)
5. Feast of The Dedication of Basilica of St. Mary Major
6. Feast of The Transfiguration of the Lord
7. Vinayagar Sathurthi
8. Feast of St. Dominic
9. Shashti

10. Feast of St. Lawrence
11. Aavani Sunday (4) the last; Feast of St. Clare
12. Aavani Moolam
13. Feast of St. John Chrysostom
14. Eekathasi
15. Pirathosam; Feast of The Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary
16. Feast of St. Stephen
17. Full Moon;

- Puraddasi Sani (1)
20. Sankatahara Sathurthi
 21. Feast of St. Mathew
 22. Karthigai
 23. Feast of St. Rose of Lima
 24. Puraddasi Sani (2)
 27. Feast of St. Monica
 28. Karthigai
 29. Feast of the Beheading of St. John, the Baptist
 30. Pirathosam; Feast of St. Jerome

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Email: info@bhavan.net

Sept 7th 7 p.m. Ganesh Sathurthi – Bhajans, Puja and Prasad All Welcome
10th 10.30 a.m. to 4.30 p.m. Bhavan Admission – Open Day
17th 6 p.m, Kathak: Sankara Eye Foundation presents Gauri Sharma Tripathi & Geetha Sridhar.
25th 6 p.m. Bhinna Abhinna – Steel Pan Music from Trinidad and Indian Music.
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LONDON TAMIL CENTRE ANNUAL DRAMA FESTIVALS**Professor Kopan Mahadeva**

We were recently invited by the London Tamil Centre (LTC) to a rare and memorable phenomenon among Eelam Tamils, which I feel is worthy of reporting to TT. It was the 10th annual thespian highlight of LTC's hyperactive elders' community group consisting of around 130 regulars. LTC is a charity founded in 1996 by the illustrious social workers headed by Dr. Ratnam

Nithiyannathan. Its new Board of Trustees are: Messrs. N. Seevaratnam (Chairman), E. Ponnambalam (Secretary & Welfare Activities President), S. Uthayakumar (Treasurer), M. Manuelpillai, V. Shanmugalingam, and Mrs. P. Sivanesan & Mrs. S. Yoharajan. The Centre's multifarious activities are administered by Mrs S.Selvakumar, Mrs S.Sahathevan and Mrs. L. Jeyseetharan.

This year's drama was *Destiny's Decree*. The evening's proceedings started sharp at 6.00 pm, as scheduled (which itself is a rare phenomenon among Eelam Tamils' activities in London) and ended around 9.00pm, as intended. The venue was Wembley High Technology College. Project engineer & popular poet Mr. Kandiah Rajamanoharan and his medical consultant wife Sashikala, were the Special Guests. This year's play, like the previous nine staged annually by the LTC, was written and directed by the indefatigable and versatile teacher Mrs. Guna Veluppillai, with her usual one-a-minute, home-spun, wise-cracks, that made the full house of 300-odd invitees choke with chuckles and rock with laughter. The play was staged by LTC's 50-60 amateur thespians, all of whom appeared on stage in one role or another. Of course, they did forget or repeat their lines, now and then, in keeping with their age, and then improvised, triggering spontaneous cheers from the tickled audience. The fun was enjoyed more by the actors themselves, in the true spirit of real drama.

The previous plays staged by this group were: *Sankiliyan*, *Kannan Enke?*, *Muththamilzae*, *Murukan Aalayam*, *Ellalan*,

Theyva Nampikkai, Paththinith Theyvam, Thaay Naadaa? Thancha Naadaa?, Verii Naaddu Mokam, and Ootum Uravum. I had been present at a few of these with my wife, and seen the rest in VHS video format, and was ever impressed by the amount of trouble that these elders had taken to absorb the plots and characters, to memorize lines, to rehearse their roles several times, to procure and wear appropriate make-up and costumes, and finally to perform with no stage-fright or inhibitions at all, at their ripe ages which ranged from 60's to the 80', and even 90's as were Mr. S. Arumugam & Mr. M. Thiagarajah when they died. And the love for Tamil language and culture, Tamil nationalism and liberation displayed by these youngsters-at-heart is remarkable, a rare phenomenon deserving to be preserved alive, and in electronic forms in the Jaffna Library, Tamil Nadu, UK, Canada, and elsewhere.

The plot of *Destiny's Decree* staged on 17th July is topical, in that it brings the 26-12-2004 tsunami and its social impacts dramatically into focus. Mother Laxumy from a village in Tamil Eelam lives with her two sons, Rajendran and Arasendran, and her daughter-in-law Mrs. Rasam Rajendran. Both of her sons get caught to the tsunami, and while the younger son Arasu manages to return to their much devastated home, himself unhurt,

Rajendran fails to show up, even after months, and is deemed to have been killed and buried in the sea by the tsunami. These survivors adopt a refugee camp where Arasu dedicates himself to reconstruction and Re-housing tasks, and becomes acknowledged as a skilled builder. As before, he continues to respect, adore and look after his sister-in-law Rasu (who loses her power of speech, soon after her husband's loss, but regains it, due to Laxumy's efforts), but village gossips and a do-gooder bully Laxumy to almost compel Arasu to marry Rasu. The couple live happily, and are soon blessed with a child. Meanwhile, Rajendran was saved at sea by some Tamil Nadu fisherman and is given refuge by a religious-minded Samaritan called Saratha. Once he collects some cash Rajendran returns to Eelam, to investigate the plight of his mother, wife and brother. But even his mother and wife, now affluent and complacent, fail to recognize him. In fact they insult him, who looks like a real beggar. He notes his wife and brother living very happily with a child and decides to leave them alone to their destiny.

All the actors looked their parts, some appearing as real 20-30 year olds, playing their designated roles with great dedication and realism. This play deserves to be seen by a wider audience, on stage, as well as on TV.

Tamil Triumphantly Towers at Toronto Concert



She was born blind, a handicap that confines a person in perpetual darkness. Many blind people accept this as an inevitable karmic consequence in this birth and opt to while away a lifetime in less human circumstances; in most cases they are helpless but worse, even shunned without helping hands and compassionate hearts.

Gayathri Sankaran was among the exceptions. When hardly eleven, she gave her vocal arangetram in Camatic music at Tenali in Andhra Pradesh. Indeed a child prodigy, she went from strength to strength powered by her singular determination and in the process developed what could be termed as the divine eye. She is now well on her way seeking her Ph.D in music.

Her first guru was her mother, a popular Camatic musician. Later she came under the tutelage of Sri Allamaraju Someswara Rao. Gayathri reveres several masters who guided her along, and among them was her primary guru, Padmabushan Lalgudi Jayaraman. She also had the privilege to spend some time at Kalakshetra and enjoyed the inspirational guidance of Rukmini Devi. All along her husband gave her immense support.

On Sunday July 10, 2005 Gayathri Sankaran accompanied by her student Ramya Rangarajan thrilled a packed audience at Toronto's Yorkwood Library auditorium with their vocal recital. It was entirely of Tamil masterpieces written by great composers like Swati Thirunal, Mahakavi Subramanya Bharathiar, Papanasam Sivam, Arunachala Kavirayar, Ootukadu Venkata Subbaiyar, Ambujam Krishna, Sundar Raj and Lalgudi Jayaraman.

Beginning with a sparkling Varnam in the Bhoulai raga, com-

posed by Lalgudi Jayaraman, they rendered seventeen well-known pieces; among them were Ramanukku mannan mudi (Hindolam), Yen Palli Kondoor (Mohanam), Eesane (Nalinakanthi), Devi Neeye thunai (Keeravani), Mayil meethu (Vasantha), and Koovi azhathal (Valaji). Their Thillana in the Desh raga composed by Lalgudi Jayaraman was an appropriate final number to a remarkable evening.

Even though every piece rendered that evening had its own unique characteristics in pristine purity, clarity and honeyed and mellifluous melody, Gayathri reached her peak when she flowed gently into the tuneful harmony of the Mohana raga alapanam. Truly a descent of Ganga from the heavens, it brought tears of rapturous joy to many in the audience.

The concert was sponsored by the Tamil Isai Kalaamanram of Ontario. The accompanying artistes were Senthivel Kesavamoorthy (violin), Vasu Rajalingam (mrithangam) and his students Sujeenthara, Sajeev and Surenthara on the kenchira, gatam, and morsing respectively. They gave an excellent account of their proficiency.

Not often a vocal recital of such high standard by an artiste, totally dedicated to this divine music is held in this part of the world. Famous vocalists and instrumentalists, most of them professionals, do perform here but a person of the calibre of Gayathri Sankaran inspiring an audience not only with her melodious singing but also being a living proof that a handicap of this nature need not affect a person provided there is determination and faith; such are certainly blessed with the divine eye.

Friendly and pleasant, she related herself with every one she met with an overflowing warmth and along with her sisya Ramya, they were truly ambassadors of our culture from India; what an inspiration to our young people!. Gayathri, with unprompted magnanimity offered her research material to be edited and published as a book on the history of Camatic music by the Tamil Isai Kalaamanram. Her research has all the marks and merits that are passionately pursued by academics and scholars.

Gayathri and Ramya presented on the stage and off, the sacred nature of the Guru-Sishya bond that touched the hearts of many. Theirs, it was evident, is a unique, mutually shared lead-and-follow rapport.

Their devotion to each other certainly gave an insight into the loyalty and fidelity of attachment of a teacher-student relationship that has come through eons of centuries in our culture. What prevailed in the universities of the forests in ancient times among sages and their sishyas was brought to us by these two on the modern stage in all its authenticity and integrity.

Earlier, on Thursday July 7, Gayathri Sankaran conducted a well attended seminar on the history of Carnatic Music at the Scarborough Civic Centre which was also sponsored by the Thamir Isai Kalaamanram. She was assisted in this presentation

by Ramya Rangarajan.

Mr Thampiah Siripathy, President of the Thamir Isai Kalaamanram, presenting both artistes paid a tribute to Gayathri Sankaran for being such an enormous source of inspiration to many, apart from being an authority on Carnatic music, and equally, as a vocalist and violinist. He also appreciated the role of Ramya as a very special sishya of a great guru.

Tamil certainly towered triumphantly in Toronto that Sunday night.

- Victor Karunairajan in Toronto

Kunasekeram Nesiah: His Life and Vision

The centenary year of the late Mr. K. Nesiah was 2003. He led a simple life with a great vision. He was lecturer of Education at the University of Ceylon, Peradeniya for a long time and retired in the sixties. He lived in Jaffna till his passing away in 1993.

He hailed from Kaitadi but his ancestors were immigrants from Malayasia. He married the daughter of Cannon Somasunderam who was a dedicated servant of God in the early part of the 20th century.

Mr. Nesiah was a man of firm convictions. He was a follower of Mahatma Gandhi and adopted the gandhian way of life. He made it a commitment to lead a simple life and was particular in wearing the national dress. He was a person who believed that money should not be spent unnecessarily on purchasing expensive materials. Nesiah practised austerity in all aspects of his life. His contention was that there are many people in the world who suffer from lack of their basic needs and one should save whatever he can and help the poor. He has been helping several social rehabilitation projects like the Kaitadi School for the Deaf and Blind and the Christian Orphanage run by Ms. Hutchkins at Kilinochchi. He was also associated with Ariyaratne of the Srilanka Shramadana Movement. Mr. Ariyaratne attended the funeral of the late Nesiah, travelling all the way from Colombo.

Having been a lecturer in Education, Nesiah continued to have an alert interest on current educational issues. With a B.A Honours degree, he was selected by Professor Green who had gauged his intellectual capacity at the interview. He had the knack of remembering volumes of facts and can speak fluently on any aspect of education. He participated in national and international conferences and seminars on education. He had written research papers on all major milestones in the history of education in Srilanka like the nationalization of schools, introduction of Swabhasha as the medium of instruction, vocational education and the Zonal system.

Nesiah believed in a Sri Lanka that is socially and nationally integrated. He was a pioneer in the field of social studies as a subject in the curriculum. Being impressed by the theories of education put forward by John Dewey, Nesiah asserted that children should be presented with an integrated social knowledge instead of compartmentalizing it into Geography, History, Sociology and Civics. It is through the efforts of educationalists like him that social studies has now become a subject in the curriculum up to the G.C.E ordinary level, displacing the traditional subjects- which would ensure a life-centred education.

His view for Srilanka was that it should remain united

through social, cultural and national integration. He shunned caste distinctions and gave shelter in his own home for so called depressed class children so that they could attend prestigious schools like St. John's, from where they were debarred in the past. He participated in functions at 'harijan' homes to build their social esteem and acceptability. He practised Gandhism and adopted it to suit Sri Lankan conditions. A person helped by him later became the head of the Primary Section of St. John's. Much to his credit, the members of the so-called low caste later entered the fields of medicine and engineering which were earlier monopolized by students from affluent homes.

Nesiah was one of the philosophers behind the Federal party led by the late S.J.V Chelvanayakam. He was an active member of the 'think tank' of the Federal Party which had its discussion meetings at his very home. He believed that Federalism is the solution to Srilanka's burning ethnic problem. Federalism will ensure to safeguard all the component ethnic groups. Srilanka being a small country is not suitable for partition and therefore every effort should be made to preserve its unity through a political concept. He preferred Federalism to any other solution.

The pivotal strength of Nesiah's emotional and spiritual well being was self-reliance. He was a hard nut who always stuck to his principles and convictions. After his retirement he continued to live in his mansion at Somasunderam Avenue. When his sons wanted him to move to Colombo and live with them he refused. During the time his wife became feeble and weak, he is the one who looked after her. Even at the ripe old age of 90, he could draw water from his well and bathe (rope and bucket). His stamina could be compared to the 'kaitadi Campu' which has the capacity to survive in a dry and rugged terrain. When the I.P.K.F took over Jaffna, they wanted the people in Chundikuli to go and take shelter in schools close by. Nesiah did not budge. He continued to stay at home during the turmoil and survived dangerously. He had the indomitable courage to live by his convictions. He lived alone! In his house during the latter stages of his life, a woman came and cooked for him during the day time but he lived boldly in his huge mansion without any help. He lived by his faith and courage which helped him throughout his life. I happened to be his kinsman and neighbour. While conversing with him a few days before his demise, I mentioned that John Dewey, the American educationalist died at the age of 93. It was unfortunate that he became ill and died just a few days after at the age of 93. He was a legend of his times- a Tamilian who had the makings of a 'gandhian type philosophy'. His life-style should be a shining example for the future generations of Tamils and give them the inspiration to lead a courageous and purposeful life.

- J. J. Atputharajah

Australian Newsletter

Although Tamils are a young migrant community in Australia and in New Zealand, they are upwardly mobile and are quite dynamic. Tamils in this region are no exception to the rest of the Tamil Diaspora in connecting largely with the humanitarian and rehabilitation efforts in their homeland in the current milieu. Nevertheless, Tamils in this region like their counterpart elsewhere, attribute particular regard to preservation of Tamil identity through social, cultural, religious activities, which in turn serves to embrace the younger generation to their heritage. In that sense, all community organizations such as temples, churches, mosques, language schools, various other institutions, OBA's are all contributing a vital part in their own right. Manipay Hindu and Jaffna St John's OBA in Melbourne and Hartley College and Mahajana OBA's in Sydney recently celebrated their annual cultural evening with dinner.

Innisai Malai, a light music concert was staged within a fortnight in three major centres across the east coast of Australia in support of the rehabilitation projects undertaken in the North and East. The Innisai Malai group, which is primarily based in Melbourne, has had a long history spanning over two decades and one of its greatest successes has been in attracting large number of young artistes to the ensemble. This year's concert series was held first in Canberra and then in Sydney and finally in the home turf of Melbourne. No doubt,

the event was a grand success and the proceeds are pooled for worthy projects in Tamil homeland.

World Saiva Peraval, in collaboration with The Saiva Manram in Sydney is organising the 10th International Saiva Conference in Sydney during January 2006 on a theme of "Saivam - Challenges and Opportunities". There are Hindu temples in every state and territory of Australia and a few in New Zealand and it is widely believed that an event of this nature would probably increase the profile of the Hindu community.

Sydney and Melbourne are the two major cities in Australia with significant proportion of Tamils and each city could boast excellence in a trait of learning... Sydney offers admirable opportunities for Tamil language learning while Melbourne displays copious openings for learning Tamil classical arts. It has been mentioned before in these columns about the intensification of arangetrams in Melbourne. It was not surprising when a scholarly persona like Mrs Balam Lakshman, recently avowed in one of the arangetrams that Melbourne is fast becoming the Tanjore of Australia. Indeed, a glance through the cultural calendar reveals that about two dozen or so arangetrams are being scheduled in the next year in Melbourne, of which half seems to be Miruthangam arangetram. Undoubtedly, proliferation of arangetrams is a welcome trend and even if only a handful of them were to treasure the art and culture, it would mean a great leap for Tamils in Kangarooland.

- Sivasupramaniam Sitsabesan

(continued from page 35)

any involvement in the DIG's murder stating that ana angry 'Tamil mob' had abducted and hacked him to death.

Four Tigers killed at: 19 Aug. At least four Tamil Tiger cadres were killed and three others were injured as a result of internecine clashes, SriLankan defence officials said. The LTTE road block at Arasadithivu in Batticaloa came under attack around 11 pm last Thursday, 18 Aug.

Defence sources said the attack had been carried out by the rival Karuna faction who had arrived in push cycles at the road block. When the Tigers attempted to search the Karuna loyalists the renegade group members had opened fire at the LTTE cadres. Weapons belonging to the victims had been reportedly snatched away by the assailants.

Soldier injured in grenade attack: Aug 20 - Two motorcycle-riding attackers lobbed a grenade into a sentry point of the Sri Lanka Army located on Kalliyankadu Cemetery Road near the Batticaloa Railway Station Saturday (20) noon. An SLA soldier, Sanjeeva Prasanna Wikramarachi, 21, was injured in the attack. Four SLA soldiers were on duty at the sentry post at the time of the attack. The wounded soldier was rushed to Batticaloa Hospital. The police blamed the LTTE for the attack.

Newspaper office attacked: Aug 20 - Unidentified persons Saturday (20) evening around 5:30 p.m. lobbed two grenades inside the advertising office of the Tamil daily "Sudaroli" located in Perara Mawatta, Wellawatte, in Colombo. The grenades did not explode. Three employees were inside the office at the time of the attack. None was hurt, Wellawatte Police said. Bomb disposal squad of the Sri Lanka Army rushed to the site and defused the unexploded grenades, Police said.

Attack on LTTE office in Vavuniya: Aug 21 - Three LTTE women officials were injured when unidentified attackers lobbed a grenade through the backdoor of the LTTE Women's political office located in Vairavapuliyankulam, 1.5 km west of Vavuniya town Saturday (20) night at 10:55 pm. This is the fourth time that an LTTE office in Sri Lanka Army controlled Vavuniya town has been subjected to attack, a report in TamilNet said. The women's political office is located close to the LTTE's District Political office. The administrative office of the LTTE located in Thirunavatkulam was also attacked once, the report said. Vavuniya Police is conducting investigations into the attack.

SLTMA condemns attack on newspaper office: Aug 21 - The Sri Lanka Tamil Media Alliance (SLTMA) in a news release said it strongly condemned the grenade attack on the Uthayan newspaper's office in Wellawatte, Colombo, on 20 August calling it a "cowardly act," and urged the Sri Lankan government to take prompt action to stop such attacks. "In recent days Tamil media personnel are being intimidated, and their professional activities are being monitored with suspicion," said the SLTMA. "It is shocking to note that it was after the emergency regulations had come into effect, and the city of Colombo put under tight security, that the Tamil News paper office has been attacked."

EPDP member shot dead: Aug 21 - Unidentified gunmen on Saturday (20) evening shot and killed a member of the Eelam People's Democratic Party (EPDP), Nadarasa Kesavavarnan, 25, in Vavuniya. The killing took place around 6:00 p.m. at Samanakulam, five kilometers southeast of Vavuniya town. The victim was riding a bicycle when suspected gunmen approached him on a motorbike and shot him using a micro pistol to kill the victim, according to Vavuniya Police. The EPDP cadre, a father of two children, was from Asikkulam in Vavuniya. □

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