

TAMIL EELAM TERRORISTS MURDER AGAIN

07751

TIME BOMBS KILL 30 AT MADRAS AIRPORT





At 10.52 on the night of Thursday, August 2, a massive blast ripped through the Meenambakkam International Airport at Madras. The walls of the building collapsed and the wails of the injured was heard till the next morning, trapped underneath the debris.

The world watched, while TV cameras panned to and fro showing the carnage in minute detail, two days later.

The dismembered head of an innocent victim was hurled as far as 145 feet from the scene of the blast. Rescue workers toiled for three long days to bring out the mangled remains of 30 people, all burnt beyond recognition. Out of those innocents perished, were 24 Sri Lankans – 6 men and 18 women – all of whom were on their way to lands of the Middle-East, in search of greener pastures to provide for their families.

Of the other dead, two were customs officials, both with children of five years and under, who were courageously removing two heavy bags, from the left luggage area of the

Meenambakkam Airport, on information that the bags contained two powerful bombs, placed by yet unknown persons, at the customs area of the Airport, on the hope that they would be loaded into an Air Lanka (Sri Lanka's national carrier) Boeing 737 plane bound to Colombo with 69 passengers.

Even though their personal identities are not yet known, it is not a secret that the insensate perpetrators of that outrage, succeeded in killing 30 helpless people, totally removed from the sordid games of power politics, in furtherance of their own devious ways of terrorism.

Their plan was different. If it worked out as envisaged the killed, maimed and injured would have been as high as 500 people and untold millions of damage to property.

“THE PLAN”

A passenger calling himself Kathiresan had checked in two briefcases containing the two time-bombs. He had been on Air Lanka's waiting list for flight 122 from Madras to Colombo since Tuesday. Seat confirmation was delayed because of heavy bookings for flights to Colombo by participants in an on-going conference, organised by the World Fellowship of Buddhists, which was being held in Colombo.

The mystery passenger who did not appear when the flight left had checked in his baggage at the Air Lanka counter (which is serviced by Indian Airlines). He had checked in with 35 kilos of excess baggage for which he had paid the counter 300.00 Indian Rupees.

On the two briefcases were affixed “CMB” baggage tags (meaning they were destined for Colombo). Thereafter they were to be weighed in, moved for customing and then loaded on to the Air Lanka Boeing 737 aircraft.

However, in between, the "CMB" labels had been changed with the connivance of someone at the airport. On one bag was affixed the label "LGW" (meaning Gatwick Airport, London) and on the other "CDG" label (meaning Charles De Gaulle Airport, Paris).

Had the two bags found their way into the Boeing 737, they would have been unloaded in Colombo and loaded again on two Air Lanka flights, one due to leave for London and the other for Paris.

If that had happened, the explosions would have still taken place at the Colombo Airport, as both aircraft were on ground at 10.52 p.m. the time the explosion occurred.

According to security measures at Madras Airport, passengers passing immigration formalities (stamping of passports), must identify their baggage at the customs. After identification and inspection, the baggage is sent to the waiting aircraft.

On this occasion as nobody had identified the two briefcases for customs inspection, airport authorities had gone up to the waiting aircraft and asked passengers already on board to whom the bags belonged. As no one claimed them, the authorities had wanted to take the briefcases to the airline office, but Customs, suspecting a gold-smuggling exercise, wanted them kept at the left-luggage counter in the international section of the airport until claimed so that the possible smuggler could be apprehended.

The Air Lanka flight UL 122 left Meenambakkam Airport at 8.23 p.m., Thursday.

The Air Lanka flight for Gatwick (London) via Dubai and Zurich was scheduled to leave Colombo at 11.55 p.m. while the flight for Charles de Gaulle Airport (Paris) via Muscat and Vienna, was scheduled to leave at 11.30 p.m.

The two briefcases containing the powerful detonators were expected to explode soon after being loaded on the respective aircraft, possibly even before passengers boarded them in Colombo.

At the time the bombs exploded in Madras, five Air Lanka Lockheed Aircraft, a Boeing 747, a Singapore Airlines Boeing 707 and the Air Lanka Boeing 737 would have been parked quite near each other in the apron. There would have been immense damage if the bombs had exploded in Colombo, which would have set off a chain explosion and could have endangered the lives of more than 500 persons who had been at the airport at the time.

The terrorist group yet to claim responsibility for the explosions, appeared bent on destroying two Air Lanka aircraft on the tarmac of the Colombo airport. The plan misfired.

Soon after the Colombo-bound Air Lanka flight had left Madras, the guilty party realising the "cargo" was grounded, had frantically telephoned the Madras airport authorities to warn them about the bombs.

They told the authorities that two briefcases containing time-bombs were left behind from the Colombo-bound Air Lanka flight.

When airport officials dismissed the call as a hoax, the caller is said to have pleaded to have the explosives defused. The caller had also made apologies.

It was only then that the airport authorities took action.

But in the meantime two enormous explosions at exactly 10.52 p.m. ripped through the airport.

First to condemn the carnage was the Premier of India, Indira Gandhi. In a message to President J. R. Jayewardene, she said, **"I condemn as much as you this outrage. Both our governments should take all steps to prevent the recurrence of all such forms of mindless violence. She asked the Lankan Head of State to convey her deepest sympathies to the families of the bereaved.**



Srimathie Indira Gandhi

President Jayewardene in his message to the Indian Premier said, "**Whilst sympathising with the families of all those who have died or have been injured as a result of this blast, it is clear that we who are committed to a democratic way of life and to a democratic process in finding solutions to problems must co-operate to fight terrorism which has become an ugly monster challenging the very foundations of the international community and its values.**"



H.E the President J. R. Jayewardene

Mr. M. G. Ramachandran, the Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu, of which Madras is the capital, described the bomb explosion as a *ghastly act committed by cruel minded persons*. Governor of Tamil Nadu, S. L. Khurna said the explosion *went against all norms governing civilised human conduct*. Pope John Paul the Second in a message of sympathy to the families of the bereaved *“renewed a plea against violence and beseeched Almighty God to grant peace to Sri Lanka, while expressing his heartfelt sadness.*



Mr. M. G. Ramachandran

The blast brought into sharp focus, the tragedy in which Sri Lanka and India has been locked together, these past months. For several months, there has been a dispute between India and Sri Lanka about the presence of terrorist training camps in Tamil Nadu. Both the Tamil Nadu State Government and the union government have denied the presence of such camps. The only

time when the Indian authorities made even the semblance of an attempt to take action against the terrorist activists were taken into custody over the kidnapping of an American couple in Jaffna in May, 1984.

Now comes this tragedy which has affected Indians no less than Sri Lankans in the heart of the very town in which Sri Lanka has charged Tamil Eelam terrorists freely roam about. It drives home, if any proof is needed – the absolutely lethal implications of entertaining on one's national soil, a terrorist movement whatever its objective and however closely linked it might be with the host country.

IN FACT NO BETTER EVALUATION OF THE SITUATION CAN BE MADE THAN TO QUOTE THE EDITORIAL "DEEP WATERS" IN THE "INDIAN EXPRESS" OF 08.08.84

"EVEN AS INVESTIGATIONS ARE UNDERWAY TO FIX RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE GHASTLY BOMB EXPLOSION THAT TOOK SUCH A SAD TOLL OF INNOCENT SRI LANKAN AND INDIAN LIVES AT MADRAS AIRPORT. THERE HAVE BEEN A SERIES OF BLOODY INCIDENTS AND ENCOUNTERS BETWEEN TAMIL TERRORISTS AND SRI LANKAN SECURITY FORCES IN THE NORTHERN PART OF THE ISLAND. THE SCALE OF OPERATION APPEARS TO BE LARGER THAN ANYTHING REPORTED EARLIER. WHILE THIS IS BAD NEWS IN ITSELF IT IS IMPERATIVE THAT WHAT IS AN INTERNAL AFFAIR OF SRI LANKA BE TREATED THAT WAY BY ALL CONCERNED WITHOUT INVOLVING INDIA IN ANY MANNER. THIS APART TERRORISM OF WHATEVER BRAND IS TO BE CONDEMNED EVERYWHERE.

IT IS THEREFORE DISCONCERTING TO SAY THE LEAST, THAT THE LIBERATION TIGERS OF TAMIL EELAM SHOULD ISSUE A STATEMENT IN MADRAS ON MONDAY

STATING THAT THE TIGERS HAD STEPPED UP THEIR GUERRILLA ATTACKS IN NORTHERN SRI LANKA. FURTHER THAT ELEVEN POLICE PERSONNEL INCLUDING AN ASSISTANT SUPERINTENDENT OF POLICE AND TWO ARMY MEN WERE AMBUSHED AND KILLED IN FIVE SEPARATE INCIDENTS AND THAT A WHOLE LOT OF ARMS HAD BEEN SEIZED FROM THE SECURITY FORCES.

WHY SHOULD MADRAS BE ALLOWED TO BECOME AN INFORMATION BASE, EVEN IF NO MORE, FOR SRI LANKA TERRORISTS AT WAR AGAINST A FRIENDLY GOVERNMENT? IT IS NOT THE FIRST TIME THIS HAS HAPPENED AND CERTAINLY DETRACTS FROM THE CREDIBILITY OF OFFICIAL INDIAN PROTESTATIONS DENYING DIRECT OR INDIRECT AID AND COMFORT TO SRI LANKAN TERRORISTS. ON THE OTHER HAND IT IS STATEMENTS OF THIS KIND THAT GIVE CREDIBILITY TO REPORTS SUCH AS THAT OF ENCOUNTERS AT SEA WITH SRI LANKAN PATROL BOATS ENGAGING GUERRILLA PARTIES ALLEGEDLY TRYING TO MAKE THE CROSSING TO THE ISLAND. ”

Many people of Tamil Nadu identify themselves with the aspirations of Tamil people in Sri Lanka. That is a fact of history and culture. But the reality today is frightening in the clarity of what is unfolding with each passing day. What happened to India's own citizens at Madras Airport is a terrible portent of the times.

Sri Lanka's Foreign Minister Shahul Hameed said in a statement to the country's Parliament –

“ It is hoped that the international community will take serious note of the trials and tragedies that Sri Lanka and her people are undergoing as a result of the activities of terrorists who seek to

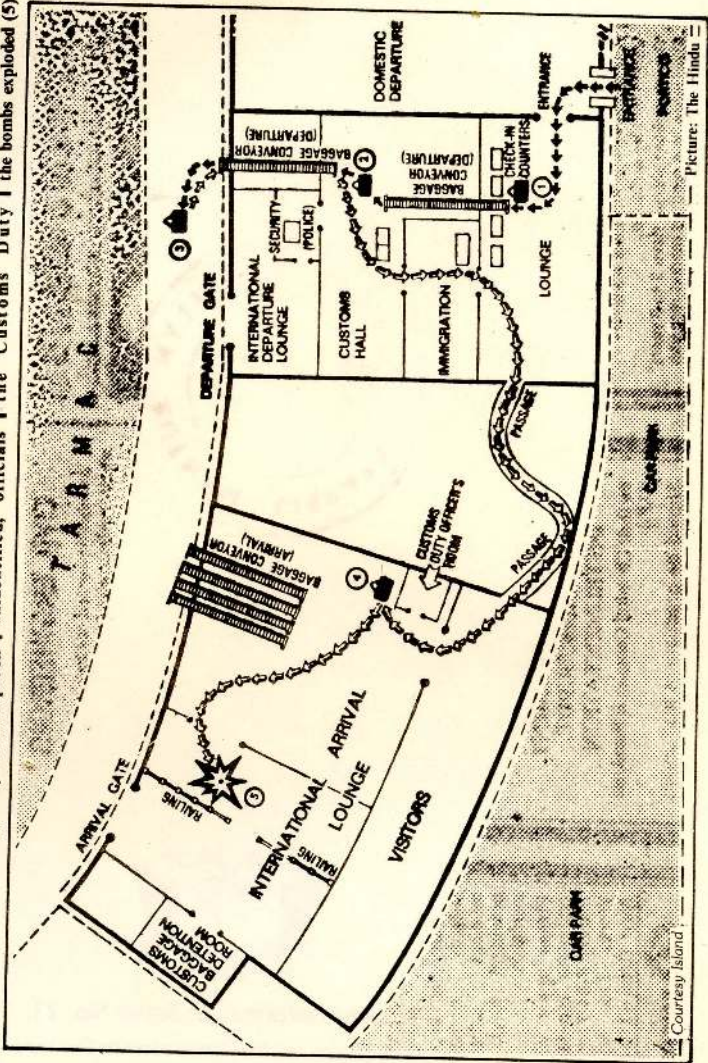
destabilize and destroy one of the oldest democracies in the Third World and disturb and dismantle the economic development which the government has been following with careful approach and planning during the last eight years ”.

It is time that the world opened its eyes to the truth that Tamil Eelam Terrorists are murderers.

The Path of the Madras Airport Bombs

The two pieces of baggage that contained the explosives were apparently all over the Madras airport terminal building on that fateful Thursday night, as a reconstruction of the events, as narrated by the various agencies at the airport shows. Their owner brought them first to the check-in counter (1). They were then put on the conveyor and moved to the Customs hall (2) where passengers identified the baggage. With no claimants, the two pieces of baggage were taken to the Customs Duty Officer's room (4) where they lay for some time. Following the last anonymous telephone call, the suitcases were being wheeled away when the bombs exploded (5).

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