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UNAFRAID AND UNBOWED



**Sumanthiran's
Challenge to
Sampanthan**

**Unforgivable Sin:
The Muslim Expulsion**

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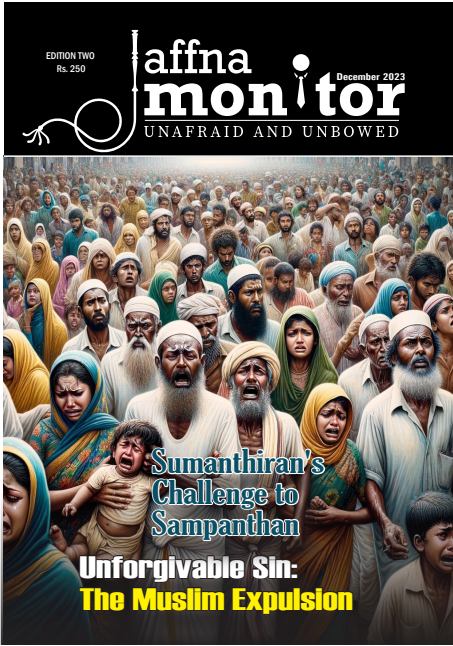
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Welcome to Jaffna Monitor

Dear Readers,

The Jaffna Monitor, your trusted English language magazine, has received overwhelming support since its November launch. Thanks to our local readers and the Sri Lankan Tamil diaspora, we are further inspired in our mission to provide a platform for Jaffna's diverse voices, showcasing our culture, challenges, and achievements impartially.

The December edition of Jaffna Monitor features esteemed writers like Appadurai Muttulingam, translated by Eluttukkiniyavan, alongside an insightful article by Writer Sathiri. We are also excited to welcome Dr. Aravinthan Arunthavanathan, a renowned cricket writer. Our goal remains steadfast: to offer impartial journalism that sparks dialogue and understanding, free from political influences.

In this issue, we delve into a poignant chapter of our history with the cover story "The Muslim Expulsion by the LTTE from Northern Sri Lanka." This reflective piece is not just a recount of past events but a step towards acknowledging and rectifying the mistakes of our past as Tamils. It's a move towards healing and understanding within our community.

Our team, driven by a shared passion for journalism and a commitment to our community, is excited to announce upcoming initiatives to support educational development and critical thinking in Jaffna's youth. We plan to distribute our magazine for free to local schools and libraries and provide additional support through a dedicated website. This initiative, born from our own experiences with limited English resources during our Tamil-medium education, is essential for the next generation.

We also recognize the importance of nurturing a mindset that embraces diverse and critical thinking. Encouraging young minds to question and analyze is not just an educational goal but a societal necessity. It's a vision we only fully appreciated later in life and one we're now dedicated to instilling in Jaffna's youth.

To bring these projects to fruition, we are seeking the support of sponsors and advertisers. Your involvement is more than just financial assistance; it's an investment in shaping a generation that is enlightened, inquisitive, and capable of critical thought.

As we move forward, our commitment to illuminating the untold stories of Jaffna and building a well-informed, engaged reader community remains unwavering. Your continued support is invaluable, and we invite you to join us on this evolving journey.

Thank you for being part of the Jaffna Monitor's story.

With sincere thanks,

Editorial Team
Jaffna Monitor

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Sumanthiran's Challenge to Sampanthan's Tenure



by: **Our Staff Reporter**

The Tamil National Alliance (TNA) faces a critical juncture as M.A. Sumanthiran, a prominent Member of Parliament, urges Rajavarothiam Sampanthan, the once-admired leader of the TNA, now encumbered by health constraints, to retire from his parliamentary duties. This recommendation is noteworthy, given that Sumanthiran is not only a key figure within the alliance but also a known protégé of Sampanthan, often seen as his loyal supporter.

Sumanthiran's call for the 90-year-old leader to step down reflects the gravity of the current situation. Sampanthan, facing numerous health and physical challenges, has struggled with limited mobility, inconsistent attendance in Parliament, and diminishing sensory capacities. These concerns highlight the need for a transition to ensure adequate representation for the Tamil community.

Trincomalee, the district represented by Sampanthan, is a melting pot of Tamil, Sinhalese, and Muslim communities, contrasting with predominantly Tamil regions like Jaffna. This diverse demographic makes the role of a dynamic Tamil representative even more crucial, especially in light of ongoing land encroachments and tensions from Buddhist Sinhalese fundamentalist groups. Sampanthan's limited participation in key meetings and fieldwork has led to a perceived vacuum in advocacy and oversight, prompting calls for more vigorous representation.

Residents and local members of the Ilankai Tamil Arasu Kachchi in Trincomalee have expressed a strong desire for change. This sentiment was echoed in a significant meeting of the party last year, where a faction demanded Sampanthan's resignation. Although a committee led by Mavai Senathirajah was formed to address this issue, Sampanthan's subsequent refusal to resign, citing his election despite known physical limitations, temporarily quelled the debate.

However, dissatisfaction persists among constituents who feel their needs need to be actively addressed. Sumanthiran, typically reticent about Sampanthan's capacity to fulfil his duties, recently broke his silence. During a televised debate, the host raised concerns about the resources allocated to a parliamentarian unable to regularly attend sessions, hinting at potential misuse. Sampanthan's response to these comments further fueled the controversy.

Following Sumanthiran's public stance, internal party critics rallied around Sampanthan, painting Sumanthiran as disloyal. It's notable that Sumanthiran, initially reluctant to enter politics, did so at Sampanthan's behest and is widely regarded as his mentee. Despite this, there has been no significant backlash against Sumanthiran from Trincomalee's residents or the local party branch, suggesting alignment with his views.

Had Sumanthiran supported Sampanthan's continuation in office, especially given Trincomalee's sensitive socio-political environment, it could have been seen as neglecting the urgent need for active representation. Such a stance might have led to criticism of both leaders, potentially framing them as indifferent to the constituents' needs.

This unfolding scenario within the TNA, marked by Sumanthiran's challenge to Sampanthan's tenure, represents not only a pivotal moment in Sri Lankan Tamil politics but also a test of leadership and responsiveness to the evolving needs of a diverse and complex constituency.

Sampanthan's Personal Plea Postpones TNA-Modi Meeting

In December 2021, the Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi's government arranged a meeting with the parliamentarians of the TNA. Sampanthan, citing personal reasons, requested the Indian government to delay this meeting. Since then, almost two years have passed, and the rescheduled meeting has yet to take place, leading to speculation about the missed opportunities that the original meeting could have potentially offered for the Tamil community.

Mavai's Cunning Strategy

Insider accounts reveal that Sampanthan was initially reluctant to contest in the last general election, recognizing the limitations brought on by his advanced age and health concerns. He had even taken steps to pave the way for a successor, nominally endorsing Kugathasan as the next parliamentary representative for Trincomalee and passing on the reins of the party branch to him. However, internal party deliberations around candidate selection brought complications. Mavai Senathiraja, the Leader of the Ilankai Tamil Arasu Kachchi, insisted on Sampanthan's participation as a direct candidate. Mavai's stance was influenced by concerns over his own electoral prospects; he feared that if Sampanthan set a precedent by stepping down due to age, he might face similar pressures to withdraw from his contest in Jaffna.

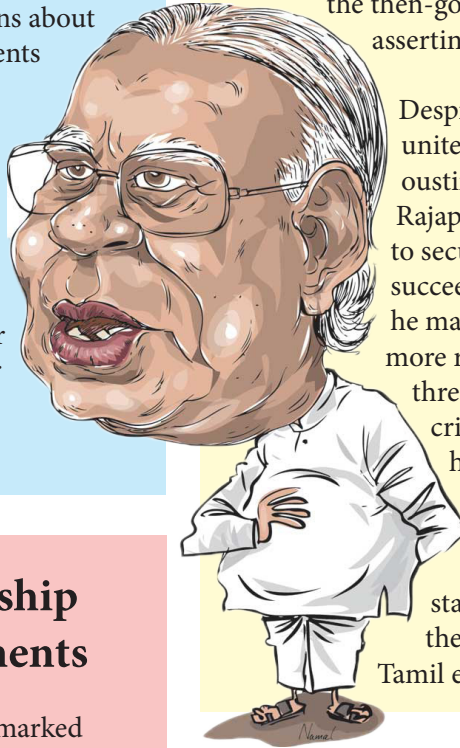
Furthermore, should Sampanthan opt out of a direct competition yet secure a seat through the national list, it would jeopardize Mavai's chances of obtaining a national list MP seat. Driven by these political calculations, Mavai was convinced that encouraging Sampanthan to run was indispensable for his own re-election bid. Consequently, despite Sampanthan's initial disinclination to vie for the seat, he was propelled to stand as the primary candidate in the Trincomalee district.

Unkept Commitments: Sampanthan and the National List Seat

Insiders report that Sampanthan, back in 2020, had announced to his party's central committee and the district offices in his constituency that he would not contest in the 2020 general elections. Yet, upon insistence from his colleagues, he agreed to run on two conditions: one, that he would serve only for a year before resigning to allow a younger party member to take over, and two, that a specific individual from Trincomalee would be given the national list nomination, contingent on the party's vote share. To this day, these terms still need to be met. The TNA secured a single national list MP seat, which went to a member from Ampara instead of Trincomalee. Moreover, Sampanthan has yet to adhere to his initial commitment of stepping down after a year for a younger successor.

Sampanthan's Extended Use of State House and Cars Sparks Controversy

Mr Sampanthan and his relatives continue to reside in the accommodation provided to him during his service as the Opposition Leader from 2015 to 2019. His extended stay in the government residence raises concerns about the potential misuse of the entitlements and advantages afforded to high-ranking officials. The annual cost of utilities and maintenance for the house, which runs into hundreds of thousands of rupees, is a financial burden on the taxpayers. Moreover, according to civil service insiders, the two vehicles allotted for his official use as Opposition Leader are reportedly still being used for personal and familial purposes.



Sampanthan's Leadership Falters as TNA Fragments

Sampanthan's tenure as Leader was marked by his inability to maintain solidarity within the Tamil National Alliance (TNA), as critical groups such as the Ceylon Tamil Congress (CTC) and the Eelam People's Revolutionary Liberation Front (EPRLF), as well as prominent figures like Mr C.V. Wigneswaran, distanced themselves. The subsequent formation of the Democratic TNA (dTNA) has effectively isolated ITAK and underscored Mr. Sampanthan's ineffective leadership. This has not only weakened the TNA's political front but also signalled a missed opportunity to advance the Tamil cause under his stewardship.

Sampanthan's Oversight: Tamil Demands and Yahapalana Disappointments

Sampanthan has faced significant criticism both locally and internationally for his performance as the Leader of the Opposition. He is charged with failing to address or influence any substantial national matters affecting all communities. There were allegations that he was overly accommodating to the then-governing Yahapalana coalition rather than asserting the interests of his constituents.

Despite playing a pivotal role in orchestrating a united front of opposition parties that led to the ousting of the formidable President Mahinda Rajapaksa in 2015, Sampanthan did not manage to secure a resolution for Tamil demands from the succeeding Yahapalana government. In retrospect, he may recognize the missed opportunity for more robust negotiations, such as leveraging the threat of toppling the government by opposing critical measures, like the budget, to fulfil his party's objectives. His reserved stance ultimately led to the Tamil community receiving little to no concessions. This perceived strategic and tactical deficit was starkly highlighted four years on, resulting in the TNA facing a significant backlash from the Tamil electorate in the 2020 elections.

Secret Ballot, Open Comedy

The TNA's pledge of unity under Mr Sampanthan's leadership took a comedic turn in the secret ballot for the president. Despite a public declaration to back Dullas Alahapperuma, some TNA parliamentarians played a game of political 'Guess Who?', casting votes for the then-Prime Minister Ranil Wickremesinghe instead. Wickremesinghe, in a moment of presidential banter during his first meeting with the TNA, quipped, "I know some of you voted for me." The TNA's internal coherence has since seemed like a political sitcom, unravelling even further for all to see.

Judgment in Jeopardy

Critics often point out Mr Sampanthan's questionable discernment in people, highlighting his controversial decision to nominate the former Supreme Court Judge C.V. Wigneswaran for Chief Minister of the Northern Provincial Council, despite significant

internal resistance from the TNA. This move proved to be detrimental, affecting not just the functioning of the Provincial Council but also tarnishing the TNA's image and standing both within the local community and beyond.



Power, Politics, and Personal Gain: Opportunism within ITAK

The saga of Rajavarothiam Sampanthan's clinging to his position within the Illankai Tamil Arasu Kadchi (ITAK) despite severe health impediments, including significant hearing loss, highlights a disturbing pattern of opportunism in Sri Lankan politics. This pattern is not just evident in Sampanthan's insistence on holding his chair but also in M.A. Sumanthiran's prolonged silence and recent vocal opposition, raising questions about the genuine motivations of both leaders.

Insider accounts reveal Sampanthan's initial reluctance to contest the last general election, swayed by Mavai Senathiraja's insistence, driven by his own political calculations. This manoeuvring, combined with Sampanthan's extended use of state-provided housing and vehicles beyond his tenure as Opposition Leader and his unfulfilled commitments regarding the national list seat, paints a picture of deep-rooted political self-interest.

Further, Sampanthan's personal request delayed a crucial meeting with Indian Prime Minister

Narendra Modi, and his failure to maintain unity within the TNA, leading to fragmentation and the formation of the Democratic TNA (dTNA), reflects his faltering leadership. This is compounded by the comedic outcome of the TNA's internal voting in the secret ballot for president, revealing a lack of coherence and solidarity within the party.

Moreover, Sampanthan's tenure as Leader of the Opposition is marred by allegations of failing to assertively represent Tamil interests, particularly in negotiating with the Yahapalana coalition. His controversial decision-making, such as nominating C.V. Wigneswaran for Chief Minister, despite significant resistance, further questions his judgment.

All these incidents collectively expose a worrisome level of opportunism, not only in Sampanthan's approach but also among other political figures within the ITAK and TNA, revealing a concerning disregard for the genuine needs and aspirations of the Tamil community in Sri Lanka.

Sri Lanka's Costly Tech Turns Dust Collector in Health Crisis

In the midst of Sri Lanka's economic turmoil, a new fiasco has emerged within its Health Ministry. Officials revealed to a Public Accounts Committee sub-committee that Rs 31.08 million spent on fingerprint attendance machines in 2017 is now essentially wasted. These machines, intended to improve efficiency and reduce corruption, are gathering dust because health workers refuse to use them.

The Health Ministry, under scrutiny for alleged waste and mismanagement, is facing questions from the sub-committee led by Maj. Pradeep Undugoda (SLPP). Despite a government directive, 213 machines remain unused, a point of contention in the recent committee meeting.

Additionally, the committee uncovered another blunder: a supplier to Angoda Hospital, contracted by the health ministry, still needs to return overpayments, citing bankruptcy, yet continues to work for the ministry. This situation reveals a need for due diligence in contract management, further highlighting inefficiencies and possible corruption within the ministry during Sri Lanka's critical economic crisis.

From Vijitharan to Swastika: The Shifting Tides of Activism at Jaffna University



BY:

David Reynolds Ignatius



Vijitharan



Swasthika Arulingam

Swastika Arulingam, a human rights activist and lawyer, encountered significant opposition at the University of Jaffna, thwarting her from engaging in a planned event there. The root of this discord was her critique of the LTTE, which she has publicly labelled as a fascist entity.

During the ceasefire period from 2000 to 2006, the University of Jaffna served as a de facto epicentre for LTTE sympathizers, perpetuating the group's ideological influence. Selvarajah Kajendran, once the student union leader and now a member of parliament for the Tamil National People's Front, had been a staunch advocate for the LTTE. His ascent to student leadership and his continued political trajectory, commencing with his MP role for the Tamil National Alliance (TNA) in 2004 amid accusations of electoral improprieties, reflect the deep intertwining of LTTE politics within the university's governance.

The experience of Swasthika Arulingam highlights a broader issue: while individual perspectives on her actions and intentions may differ, her fundamental right to express her opinions freely and without fear or obstruction remains indisputable. This right carries immense weight

given the history of the University of Jaffna, where, in the past, students paid the ultimate price for challenging the LTTE's oppressive ideology in pursuit of intellectual liberty. Despite the LTTE's military defeat, the continued influence of its ideology within the university demonstrates the complexities involved in eradicating its entrenched academic and cultural foothold. The situation at the university is emblematic of the difficulties faced by advocates of free expression and democratic principles in environments that have long been under the shadow of tyranny.

Remembering Vijitharan: A Chapter of Courage and Consequence

The years 1985 and 1986 marked a defining period in Jaffna's history. During this era, Tamil militant groups, despite their ideological differences, united to defend the city of Jaffna against the Sri Lankan army's incursion. However, the triumph was fleeting as the LTTE decimated TELO, another militant faction. Militants from the Eastern Province, unfamiliar with Jaffna's labyrinthine streets, were tragically ensnared and massacred. This starkly contrasted with the local TELO fighters who, knowing the terrain, often escaped. Some narratives suggest this was not



University and Jaffna school students unite in protest against the LTTE following the abduction of Jaffna University student Vijitharan.



mere happenstance but an intentional purge by the LTTE, fueled by a sense of regional supremacy, which led to mercilessly targeting Eastern militants while sparing their northern counterparts with warnings. The violence against the Eastern militants culminated in their brutal executions and the desecration of their bodies.

During tumultuous times, students from the Highlands and Eastern Provinces at Jaffna University were subjected to harsh persecution by the LTTE, often without proper investigation, driven by mere suspicion. Rumors circulated that some of this persecution was due to personal vendettas. One such rumor involved the LTTE's Jaffna regional commander, Kittu, who reportedly took retaliatory actions because university students ragged someone believed to be his girlfriend, Cynthia. This situation put the safety of students from the affected regions in jeopardy, prompting them to consider transferring to the relatively safer southern campuses.

Amidst the turmoil, there arose a resolute belief that students from the Highlands and Eastern Provinces should not be deprived of their academic opportunities in Jaffna. Advocates voiced that these students had an inalienable right to education and should be able to progress in their studies at Jaffna University without the shadow of fear looming over them.

Amid the LTTE's pervasive intimidation, the Jaffna University student council often failed to stand up for these vulnerable students. It was during this critical time that Arunagirinathan Vijitharan, a resolute commerce student from Batticaloa, emerged as a leader, rallying his peers and leading protests, often circumventing the passive official student council.



Vimala Swaran

The firm resolve of Vijitharan to champion advocacy and resist oppression came at a steep, personal cost. One day, without warning, he vanished as if into thin air, an event that sent shockwaves through his community. Although no one officially claimed responsibility for his disappearance, it was an open secret that the LTTE's high-ranking leaders were behind this grim act. "Colonel" Kittu, the military overseer, alongside Thileepan, the LTTE's political leader in Jaffna at the time, were both rumoured to have played a part in orchestrating his sudden abduction. As a vocal advocate for student rights, Vijitharan

was a thorn in the side of those who wished to silence dissent. His subsequent disappearance remains one of the many unsolved mysteries of the conflict.

The abduction triggered one of the last significant public protests against the LTTE by the Tamil community. This series of demonstrations, marches, and pickets represented a peak of public frustration with the LTTE's autocratic actions, which had long suppressed democratic processes and perpetrated abductions and assassinations. Students from schools joined the outcry, signalling a united front against not only the LTTE but also other militant groups involved in the struggle for Eelam. The protests transcended Vijitharan's case, representing a broader indictment of years of societal transgressions that had eroded democratic freedoms.

At Jaffna University, students, led by Vimala Swaran, embarked on a hunger strike, resolved to continue until their demands were met or until death. This act of defiance, however, ended in tragedy when Vimala Swaran was brutally killed by the LTTE.

Today, the atmosphere at Jaffna University has shifted. Many current students, perhaps oblivious to their institution's turbulent past, have taken actions like preventing Swastika Arulingam from attending an event. Ironically, their forerunners once courageously confronted the LTTE's tyranny and suffered greatly for it. The current generation might be uninformed or possibly wishes to distance themselves from such distressing histories. Regrettably, the university itself appears to have neglected to honor the memory of brave individuals like Vijitharan, Vimala Swaran, and lecturer Rajini Thiranagama, whose voices were silenced by the LTTE. This serves as a somber reminder of the critical importance of remembering our past to honor the sacrifices made by those who stood for liberty and justice.

அமரர். அருணகிரிநாதன்
விஜிதரன்
 (யாழ். பல்கலைக்கழக மூன்றாம் வருட வந்தூக பிரிவு மாணவன்)
 மானவர் மனதை மட்டுமன்றி பேராசிரியர்,
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 சந்தோஷமாக நல்வாழ்வு வாழ்கின்றார்கள்
 உங்கள் ஆத்மா சாந்தியடைவ இறைவனை
 பரார்த்திக்கின்றோம்
 உமது பிரிவால் துயருறும்
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Sri Lanka's Struggle for Freedom of Expression

The recent incident at the University of Jaffna, where human rights lawyer Swasthika Arulingam was barred from delivering a lecture under threats from pro-LTTE student groups, shines a harsh light on the deeply rooted issue of intolerance towards criticism and dissent in Sri Lanka. This event is not just a reflection of university politics but a symptom of a broader, more troubling pattern of suppressing democratic rights and freedoms across the nation.

Historically, Sri Lanka has seen a consistent pattern of suppression of dissent, whether by political parties, rebel groups like the LTTE and JVP, or various presidential regimes. These entities have often responded to criticism not with dialogue and tolerance but with authoritarian tactics, using their power to silence opposition. The LTTE, known for its fascist tendencies similar to the JVP under Rohana Wijeweera, and various Sri Lankan presidents, including Gotabaya Rajapaksa, are prime examples of this. The downfall of the LTTE and the resignation of Rajapaksa can be partly attributed to their inability to accept and engage with criticism, highlighting the detrimental effects of such intolerance.

The silencing of voices like Swasthika Arulingam's is an affront not only to individual rights but also to the foundations of democratic discourse. It contradicts the principles enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR), to which Sri Lanka is a signatory, particularly the fundamental right to freedom of expression. Ironically, the groups and individuals who often champion democracy are the ones engaging in these suppressive acts.

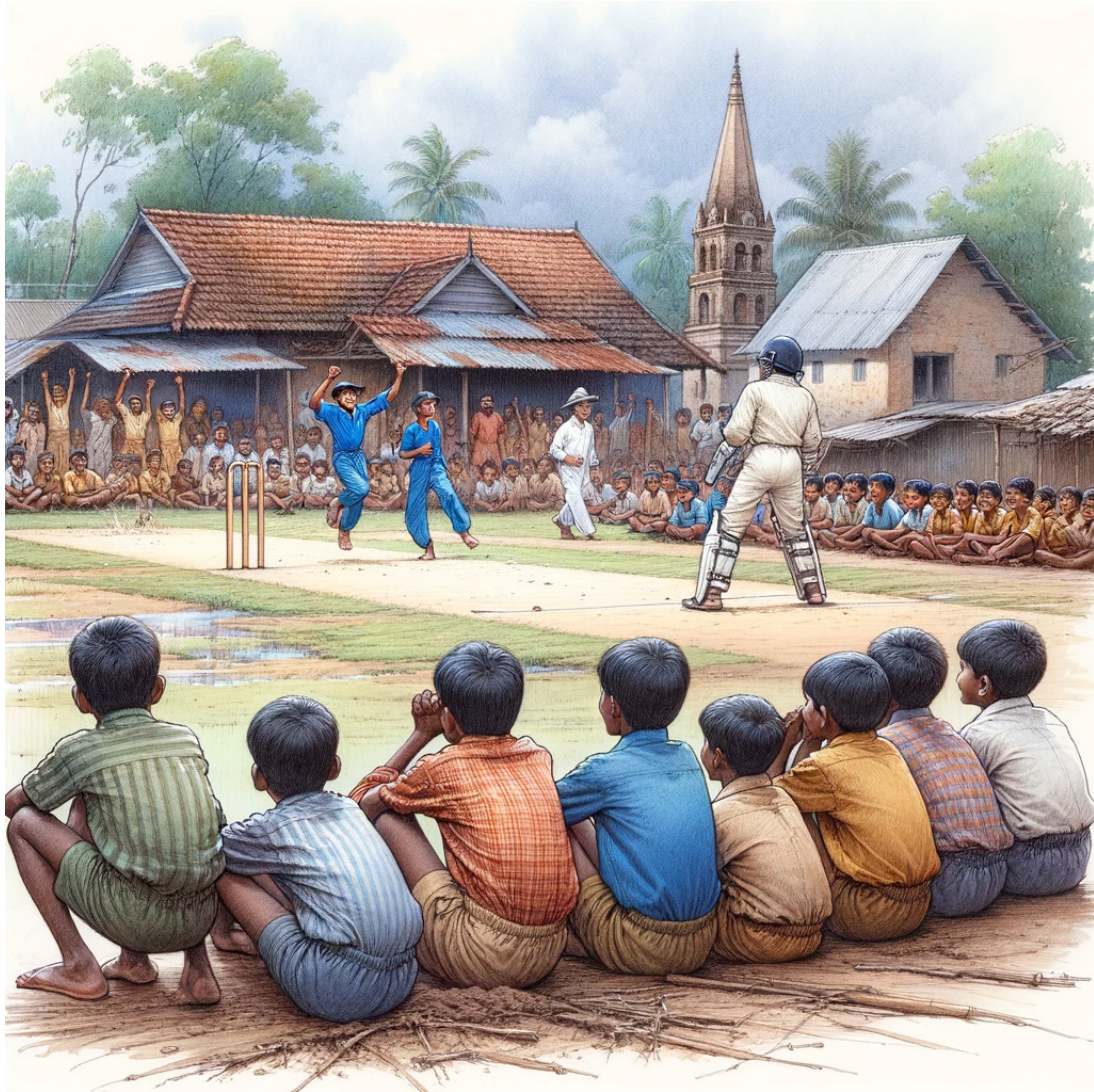
This issue extends beyond student groups and individual universities, signaling a more pervasive problem that affects Sri Lanka's seats of higher learning and its government. The tendency of the educated youth, expected to be the harbingers of change and progress, to suppress dissenting voices raises critical questions about the direction in which Sri Lankan society is headed.

The incumbent government also bears responsibility for this troubling trend. By either turning a blind eye or actively engaging in such suppression, it sets a dangerous precedent and tacitly endorses these anti-democratic practices.

This moment should serve as a wake-up call for all stakeholders – the government, educational institutions, civil society, and the citizenry. There is an urgent need to recommit to the principles of democratic discourse, creating an environment where diverse voices are not just tolerated but actively encouraged, and dissent is seen as crucial to a healthy democracy.

Sri Lanka's journey towards true freedom and democracy is fraught with challenges, but it is a journey that must be undertaken with unwavering commitment. For the future of the nation, it is essential to start this journey now, fostering a culture that values critical analysis and embraces diverse ideologies and viewpoints. Only through such a commitment can Sri Lanka hope to build a more inclusive, resilient, and progressive society.

The Enduring Allure of ODIs



BY:

Dr. Aravinthan Arunthavanathan

The 1996 World Cup was a watershed in the history of ODI Cricket. It unearthed the commercial potential hidden in the Indian subcontinent for the game, coinciding with the rise of a cricketing superstar, Sachin Tendulkar. The on-field exploits of Sri Lanka, resulting in a rag-to-riches type of rise, constructing an underdog fairy tale was just the perfect ending. The ODI format was the new trend. It was here to stay.

Fast forward 27 years later, as the tournament returned to India, everything had changed. India was an undisputed superpower; cricket was being played in a manner that was previously unimaginable. Money was being made in a different format, casting a significant question mark over the future of ODI cricket. The scarce crowd attendance at the opening game only strengthened these doubts.



Was the ODI format we fell in love with nearing its expiry?

As the World Cup 2023 culminated in style, thankfully, the doubts have been dismissed with disdain. Factors such as improved attendance, especially in major cricketing centres, stupendous performances, the rise of Afghanistan, the courage of the Dutch, and the utter dominance of the cricketing superpower, India, have indeed allowed the ICC to breathe easy about the future of the format. The phenomenal rise of India as a team with international dominance has made the format attractive to the beat of cricket's commercial survival.

Undoubtedly, many kids want to emulate feats such as Kohli reaching the pinnacle of ODI achievements in front of Sachin or Shami bowling a spell of dreams in a game that counts the most, like in the semis. These are the dreams that ensure the longevity of formats. It's hard to imagine the same being said of T20 leagues. Who would know who has the most number of T20 centuries, and does it count? Does Herath's magical spell in 2014 against the Kiwis carry the same weight as Shami's seven-wicket show? Perhaps not simply because this format and the World Cup has its own aura.

Beyond those factors, this tournament has shown us the real value of the format. While Tests and T20Is have their own value offering, ODIs are an eclectic mix of both, with an additional skill set requirement.

The Kohli-Rahul partnership in Chennai against Australia serves as an example. Survival of probing spells, followed by consolidation, culminating with sheer dominance. A mix of phases catering to generations of cricket lovers.



The Maxwell masterclass in Mumbai was a different dish altogether. The strenuous test on fitness coupled with insane skill requirements to accomplish the impossible was an act that could be seen only in ODIs. Kiwi Darrel Mitchell wasn't far behind. Having fielded 50 overs in the sultry Mumbai weather, the fitness levels he had to show to score a century, which for a while threatened the host, was a feat to cherish, again rare to be required in a T20. While Tests examine the endurance and T20Is test the tempo, this situation tested both in a way other formats could never examine.

Also, the beauty of this format lies in the approach a team takes. In T20Is, it's slam-bang mostly. But here, one of the key success factors for India was the Rohit-Kohli synchrony. Rohit went hell for leather at the top, playing selfless knocks, dwarfed in quantum but massive in impact. Kohli dropped anchor, batted deep, and scored truckloads of runs, depicting insane fitness levels in order for the likes of Shreyas and Rahul to go ballistic. The multitude of approaches in order to succeed in itself is a beauty found nowhere else.

While the above showcased the various facets of skills tested, the phenomenal rise of Afghanistan and the consistency of the Dutch punching above their weight showed how much potential there is to increase the competitive nature of the ODI cricketing landscape. The re-emergence of the Proteas and Aussies showing their mettle when pushed against the wall were features that reiterated the intrigue that lies within this format, at times even nurturing nostalgia amongst fans.



While the initial part of the tournament seemed dull due to the lack of impact or context of individual results, the latter part more than made up for it with close results, upsets, and semi-final berths remaining numerically open till the last Super Saturday. The host nation showcasing their mighty ODI muscle, challenging the rest to take their games to the next level to even come close, was an additional development that is sure to ignite fire in the bellies of other major nations to reclaim lost pride and bragging rights. Australia's resurgence serves as a prime example. After suffering two losses, the Aussies felt overwhelmed, doubting their ability to break through what seemed like a one-sided dominance against them. However, they turned the tables, winning all subsequent matches and ultimately triumphing over India in the final on November 19th.

In this context, if the ICC makes the necessary moves and ensures the broken systems of nations with rich cricketing history in Sri Lanka, West Indies, and Zimbabwe are put together while developing the Netherlands and Afghanistan further, the next World Cup, with a refined, concise format, can be a ripper in the rainbow nation. In the interim, a

streamlined ODI league with meaning added for each game with a qualification path for the 2027 edition would ensure the lucrativeness of the format and keep the crowd engaged.

The T20s may be money-spinning and more attractive, but none of these leagues would make a man with a broken finger come back to lead from the front like Williamson did for the Kiwis or inspire him to achieve feats like Maxwell with cramps all over the body redefining human willpower. That's the aura of an ODI World Cup, and that cannot be replicated by any other format.

This edition of the World Cup has proven it remains the pinnacle event of cricket, and despite the T20 leagues, its aura and allure remain unmatched. To keep that alive, ODIs just need context, and if the administrators do that, the format will surely keep thriving.

As a fan who fell in love with the game in 95/96, one couldn't have asked for a better celebration of cricket than the one that just concluded. One can hope that, like the 96 edition, this edition too would have made many from younger generations fall in love with this beautiful game.

Dr. Aravinthan Arunthavanathan is a versatile professional, excelling in both medicine and cricket writing. A graduate of Colombo Medical Faculty, he now plays a vital role in the pharmaceutical industry, focusing on areas such as Medical Marketing and New Business Development. Additionally, he's a celebrated cricket writer in Sri Lanka, known for his analyses on his Twitter, @Cricket_decoded. He is also a skilled public speaker with interests in cognitive sciences and education in medical and management fields. His unique combination of scientific expertise, sports analysis, and communication skills has made him a notable figure in both medical and sports circles.

A Wound Unhealed: 33 Years Since the LTTE's Expulsion of Muslims



Reflecting on my upbringing in Jaffna during the late 1980s, my understanding of our community underwent a profound transformation during a visit to Colombo in 2002. It was at the 'Peace Bridge' event amidst a fleeting pause in the conflict, where I first meaningfully interacted with the Muslim community. Meeting a fellow student who shared his early years in Jaffna disrupted my previously held belief that Jaffna was solely Tamil.

This encounter sparked a deeper curiosity about the diverse tapestry of Jaffna's past. A poignant symbol of this was found in the annals of the Jaffna Hindu College's sports record book. Amid its pages, the name 'Zabarullah' stood out, a record holder in the 100, 200, and 400-meter races from the 1970s. This intriguing discovery raised questions about the heritage and contributions of Muslims in Jaffna's prestigious institutions.



My journey then led me to the stark reality of a refugee camp in Puttalam, Sri Lanka, where I met Abdul Rahim. His story, a testament to the rich, multicultural fabric of Jaffna, painted a vivid picture of a life that once was. Born in 1965, Abdul Rahim's childhood was one of cultural harmony. His Muslim identity seamlessly intertwined with the Hindu traditions around him, from celebrating Deepavali to participating in the Nallur Kandaswamy Kovil Festival. The communal spirit extended to religious observances as well, with Hindu neighbours drawn to his home by the tantalizing aromas of Ramadan feasts.

This harmony extended to the political aspirations of the time. Abdul Rahim's family, along with a significant segment of Jaffna's Muslim community, fervently supported

the vision of Tamil Eelam. This commitment was not just ideological but deeply personal. His elder brother, Muhammad Sabir, was an active member of the LTTE cadre, dedicating his life to the pursuit of this shared dream. However, this shared dream was brutally upended in October 1990 when the LTTE, in a drastic and tragic turn of events, turned against the Muslim community in Jaffna. The ultimatum issued was not only to leave their homes within two hours but also to leave behind a lifetime of memories and possessions. In this forced exodus, the community was stripped of both their physical belongings and a significant part of their identity.

As a Tamil from Jaffna, I feel it is incumbent upon us to acknowledge our collective responsibility in this heinous act. Our silence and inaction contributed to the perpetuation of this injustice. The time is now for the Sri Lankan government, Tamil diaspora, and concerned authorities to facilitate a peaceful return for these displaced individuals. It is a moral imperative to restore the dignity and rights of those uprooted, ensuring their rightful place in the land they once called home.

In our series of articles, we delve deeper into this dark chapter of Sri Lankan history, aiming to shed light on the stories of those affected and the path to reconciliation and restoration. It is a journey of coming to terms with our past, confronting uncomfortable truths, and striving towards a future where such tragedies are never repeated.

கணியன் பூங்குன்றன்

Kaniyan Pungundran

Editor- Jaffna Monitor



Editor's Note:

Dear Readers,

We regret to inform you that the second part of our series 'The Deep Roots of Tamil Buddhism in Sri Lanka' will not be featured in the December edition of the Jaffna Monitor. This decision is due to page constraints in this month's publication.

We understand that many of you have been eagerly anticipating this installment, and we apologize for any inconvenience this may cause. We are committed to bringing you this important piece and are working to include it in a future edition.

Thank you for your understanding and continued support.

Sincerely,
The Editorial Team,
Jaffna Monitor



The LTTE's Unforgivable Sin: **The Muslim Expulsion**



by:

கணியன் பூங்குன்றன்

Kaniyan Pungundran

Jaffna's Fateful Day

On October 30, 1990, an ominous tension permeated the air in Jaffna around 10:30 a.m. LTTE trucks began making rounds in areas where Muslims lived, such as Sonaka Theru, Ottumadam, Bommaively, and a few other neighborhoods. Their loudspeakers blared directives for Muslim families to assemble at the Jinnah Stadium of Osmania College by noon. These trucks crisscrossed the streets of these localities, ensuring their stern message reached every Muslim household. Armed LTTE members began patrolling the streets, with some making direct house-to-house announcements. People quickly dropped their activities and rushed to the assembly point.

The Ultimatum

By 12:30 p.m., a high-ranking LTTE leader named Anchaneyar (Ilamparithi) appeared. He addressed the anxious crowd. His message was brief and precise; the LTTE high command had, citing security concerns, decided that all Muslims should vacate Jaffna within a mere two-hour window. Any failure to comply would lead to severe consequences. Within the LTTE's lexicon, such severe consequences were often a dire euphemism for a death sentence. The crowd was left stunned, and no additional clarification was provided. At this moment, a segment of the public naively started believing that the army was on the brink of invading Jaffna. They thought that the "our boys," were attempting to safeguard the Muslim community by removing them from potential war zones. Amidst this confusion, a few individuals, including the parents whose children had been LTTE fighters and had sacrificed their lives for the Tamil Eelam cause, stepped forward. Among them was Abdul Rahim's father. They sought to engage Ilamparithi in conversation, hoping for clarity. To drive home his message, Ilamparithi fired his gun into the air repeatedly, and several of his bodyguards mirrored his action.

The Looting and Plunder

Abdul Rahim's father and others like him held onto hope. They referred to the LTTE as "Our boys," with a passionate belief that these boys would never harm them. Yet, many Muslims, acquainted with the LTTE's way of operation, took precautionary measures, wisely packing up their possessions, including money and jewelry, ready for whatever might ensue.



Initially, Muslims were not given specific limitations regarding what they could carry. Naturally, they packed all their valuables. As they assembled at the "Ainthuchanthi" junction, they faced a new directive. LTTE male and female cadres began insisting that the Muslim residents surrender all their valuables. When some individuals protested the confiscation of their hard-earned assets, they were met with a curt reply from the LTTE cadres: "Whatever is earned in Tamil Eelam belongs to Tamil Eelam." When some tried to protest, they were swiftly silenced by the menacing display of advanced weaponry and stern threats. Bags filled with clothes and other possessions were seized. All forms of monetary assets and crucial documents like property deeds and checkbooks were taken away.

The harsh measures went beyond mere orders. In acts of degradation, women and girls faced the forcible stripping of their jewellery. Female cadres of the LTTE would violently tear earrings from the ears of Muslim women, resulting in wounds and bleeding. The ruthlessness extended even to children, from whom every watch was taken. In some instances, both men and women endured additional humiliation, being completely disrobed to guarantee they were not hiding gold on their bodies.

Amid this chaos, wealthy Muslim businessmen became targets. At least 35 of them were abducted, and a select few jewellers faced unspeakable torture, forced to disclose the whereabouts of hidden gold. The horror culminated with one being savagely beaten to death, a morbid warning to others.

The Spread of Forced Evictions

The forced eviction of Muslims from the Jaffna peninsula started in Chavakachcheri on October 15, 1990, reaching its climax in Jaffna town by October 30. An event leading up to these incidents happened on September 4, 1990. Close to the Chavakachcheri mosque, a confrontation arose between some Tamils and Muslims. Young Muslim individuals captured a few of the involved Tamils and handed them to the LTTE. Nevertheless, the LTTE released these individuals, cautioning the Muslim community not to provoke the Tamils.

Subsequent to this event, the LTTE reported finding 75 swords in a store owned by a noted Muslim businessman. The credibility of these claims, however, is debated. The LTTE contended that they found the swords in a shop belonging to a Muslim trader whose vehicles regularly travelled between the town and Colombo. The LTTE used this finding as "proof" of a Muslim collaboration with the Sinhala government. But the rationale for amassing 75 swords, especially compared to the LTTE's superior arsenal, raises questions.



A Misguided Notion of Protection:

Perhaps most perplexing is the argument posited by a fringe group of LTTE advocates who suggest that the expulsion was, paradoxically, an act of care. They claim that the LTTE was shielding the Muslims from the horrors of War by removing them from conflict zones. This narrative, however, is starkly at odds with the lived experience of those who were uprooted, losing their homes, possessions, and livelihoods overnight.

Independent Returns: Northern Muslims Resettle Without Aid

Despite the absence of dedicated initiatives for the resettlement of Muslims forced out of the North, with the advent of peace, these families began to independently return to their ancestral lands.

While a number of families in Jaffna have benefited from government support in their resettlement efforts, it has been reported that numerous others have not been able to return home, primarily because no systematic resettlement scheme was put into place for the displaced Muslim communities.

Regardless, with this as their rationale, the LTTE labeled the Chavakachcheri Muslims as "traitors" and felt obliged to act. On October 15, 1990, around 1,500 Muslims, mainly from the Dutch road in Chavakachcheri, were expelled under threat of firearms. They were robbed of their belongings and only allowed to take a pair of clothes and a mere 150 rupees.

Following the forced expulsion of Muslims from Chavakachcheri, the directive spread to Mannar district, with Marichukkatty residents ordered to leave on October 23 and all Muslims in the Musali AGA division, a region with a sizable Muslim population, told to evacuate the next day. This wave extended to Mannar Island, where Muslims were ordered by the LTTE to evacuate by October 28, leading to their displacement to Kalpitiya via a 60-mile sea journey.

Throughout these areas, Muslims were allowed to keep only a pair of clothes and 150 rupees, losing most of their possessions. They underwent rigorous body searches at checkpoints, with some even required to fully undress for inspections.

This pattern of forced removals spread to the Northern Wanni mainland. Muslims in Mullaitheevu were instructed to leave within a week on October 22, and those in Kilinochchi were given a five-day eviction notice on October 23. They were permitted only minimal belongings and subjected to strict body checks at checkpoints.

Jaffna's Moral Dilemma

The LTTE forcefully expelled 72,000 Muslims from the Northern Province of Sri Lanka in 1990, not just uprooting them from their homes but also robbing them of their belongings. This act of mass displacement, coupled with the looting of personal and valuable possessions, marked a profound injustice against a vulnerable minority group. This large-scale expulsion underscores the immense human cost of the conflict, extending far beyond mere displacement to encompass a profound loss of livelihood and heritage.

The forced eviction of Muslims reveals a profound irony. The Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE), which sought to champion the rights of the Tamil minority in Sri Lanka, inflicted egregious harm upon

Balasingham's Apology: Individual Remorse Amid LTTE's Silence

Anton Balasingham, the chief political strategist and negotiator for the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE), did indeed offer an apology for the expulsion of the Muslim community from the Northern Province of Sri Lanka. During the peace talks facilitated by Norway in 2002, Balasingham addressed the issue, describing the expulsion as a "political blunder" and acknowledging the suffering that it caused to the Muslim population.

Balasingham's apology was a notable moment as it was an acknowledgement of wrongdoing by a senior representative of the LTTE. However, it should be noted that this apology, while significant, did not come from the LTTE as an official apology. After its defeat in 2009, various Tamil political parties and leaders, some with former ties to the LTTE, have recognized the injustices faced by the Muslim community and called for reconciliation.

Amidst the 2002-2006 ceasefire and dialogue, the LTTE allowed Muslims, previously driven from their homes, to revisit and potentially reclaim their lands. Despite this, a complete resettlement did not unfold during this period of tentative peace.

Defending the Indefensible:

After the forced removal of Muslims, some ardent LTTE backers rationalized the action, alleging that Muslims had secretly allied with the Sri Lankan government. They accused the community of using mosques to relay strategic information to the military via walkie-talkies, thus posing a security threat. However, when challenged to provide proof, the accusations typically fell back on unsubstantiated rumours and lacked any concrete evidence.

Despite the passage of time, certain LTTE adherents still perpetuate these claims, insisting that Muslims served as government informants and used mosques as hubs for intelligence exchange. Such allegations, often repeated without factual backing, remain prevalent in some quarters, perpetuating a story detached from its original context.



the Muslim community – a group that was itself a smaller minority in the northern regions of the country. This act stands as a haunting reminder of the complexities and moral contradictions in the struggle for minority rights.

The role of the Jaffna Tamils during this crisis is also a subject of introspection. Their silence as the events unfolded paints a troubling picture of communal conflicts, where inaction can inadvertently contribute to the oppression of a vulnerable minority.

Years after the end of Sri Lanka's civil conflict and the dissolution of the LTTE, the repercussions of this forced displacement continue to affect many. While some Muslims from Jaffna have managed to find new beginnings elsewhere, a considerable number remain in refugee camps, enduring hardships and a lack of basic amenities. This situation highlights the enduring nature of the wounds inflicted during such conflicts.

Reflecting on this episode in the history of Northern Sri Lanka, it is evident that the plight of the Jaffna Muslims is more than a historical footnote; it is a stark reminder of the destructive impact of ethnic conflicts and the ongoing struggle for justice and equity. This story, marked by loss and resilience, underscores the need for comprehensive efforts to address the concerns of all minority communities and to foster reconciliation and peace in a nation still healing from its divided past.

Silent Spectators, Active Buyers: Jaffna's Duality in the 1990 LTTE Looting

The Tamils of Jaffna bore witness, almost unanimously and in silence, to this grave injustice. This pervasive silence, while partly due to fear of the LTTE's wrath, does not entirely absolve the moral complexities involved.

Following the expulsion of Muslims from Jaffna, the LTTE's economic division took a significant role in managing the looted belongings of the displaced Muslims. These items, encompassing a wide array of personal and household goods, were made available for purchase by the local Tamil population. The sales were conducted at LTTE-run outlets, widely known as 'Makkal Kadai.' These outlets became focal points for the distribution of the looted goods within the Tamil community.

Many Tamils, seizing this opportunity, lined up to buy these items. Offered at relatively affordable prices, the goods were accessible to a more significant segment of the population. The sale featured a variety of personal effects, furniture, and other household items that had been seized from the Muslim community during their forced evacuation.

The LTTE's looting was extensive; homes formerly belonging to Muslims were left barren, stripped of tiles, wooden frames, doors, and windows. The plundered furniture and other personal effects eventually made their way into Tamil homes through these LTTE-run outlets. This extensive transfer of property became evident when, after the ceasefire, returning Muslims often recognized their belongings in Tamil households and establishments.

Furthermore, the LTTE's actions extended beyond movable property. They also sold properties owned by Muslims, including houses, lands, and vehicles, through illicit transactions. This effectively erased the Muslim community's ownership and presence in these areas. Such actions by the LTTE were part of a deliberate strategy to permanently disrupt the lives of the displaced Muslim community.

In our Jaffna neighborhood, Kanthasamy Iya, renowned for his piety and modesty, often mused about the enigmatic nature of karma. Reflecting on the LTTE's expulsion of Muslims from Jaffna on October 30, 1990, Iya observed a somber pattern of cosmic justice. For five years, silence prevailed among the Jaffna Tamils, many of whom were mute spectators or even supporters of the expulsion, while a section profited from the Muslims' misfortune.

However, on the same date in 1995, a twist of fate saw these Jaffna Tamils, including those who had remained passive or benefited from the situation, being forced into a similar plight of displacement under the same night sky. This turn of events, as if dictated by an unseen force, seemed to balance the scales of karma.

Iya concluded, "Indeed, karma is a relentless mistress, Thampi."

Acknowledgments

This article has been shaped and informed by the extensive work of numerous journalists and writers whose articles are available in the public domain. While no direct collaboration took place, the insights and narratives provided by these professionals have been invaluable. In particular, the contributions of D.B.S. Jeyaraj, a veteran Tamil journalist, deserves special recognition. His detailed reports and thorough chronicles of events, accessible in the public forum, have been instrumental in providing a comprehensive and nuanced understanding of the subject matter. The depth and clarity of his work, along with that of other dedicated journalists, have greatly aided in piecing together this complex narrative, ensuring a well-rounded and informed perspective. I am deeply appreciative of the efforts of these individuals, whose rigorous journalism continues to illuminate and educate on important historical events.

Returning Home: The Crucial Reintegration of Muslims in the Northern Landscape

For centuries, Muslims have been an integral part of the northern region's community, living in harmony with Tamil neighbours. Their distinct architectural landmarks remain prominent in urban Jaffna, while their contributions to tailoring, commerce, and various other industries have significantly shaped the culture of northern cities. In the rural and village landscapes, both Muslim and Tamil families were essential to the agriculture and fishing sectors. It is against this backdrop that the return of Muslims to the North emerges as a crucial element for fostering a pluralistic and resilient future in the region.

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Staggered Return: Jaffna's Displaced Muslims and the Struggle for Resettlement

In the aftermath of the 2009 conflict's end, the Muslim community has slowly started to make its way back to the northern regions, albeit with no definitive resettlement plan from the government. Out of the 8,000 displaced Muslim families from Jaffna, only 2,000 have registered to return, and of these, just 700 have succeeded in returning to their original homes. These uprooted families face a barrage of social and economic obstacles, including bureaucratic hurdles in accessing war victim housing grants, contested claims over their properties, and scant support for rebuilding their livelihoods. Amidst these challenges, progress on the housing front has been limited.

The Backdrop of **Tamil-Muslim** **Animosity**

After the Indian Peace Keeping Force withdrew in March 1990, hostilities reignited between the Sri Lankan Army and the LTTE by June of that year. Concurrently, the conflict's intensification fueled growing tensions between the Tamil and Muslim communities in the Eastern regions. A number of Muslim members of the LTTE defected, choosing to align themselves with rival factions, including the Sri Lankan military and other insurgent groups. These defections provoked the ire of the LTTE's regional military commander in the East, Karuna, and the political leader, Karikalan. Under Karuna's command, a crackdown ensued within the LTTE ranks, leading to the execution of several Muslim members on the grounds of suspected betrayal. By the end of that year, the LTTE had all but eradicated its Muslim components, with the death toll of those purged rumored to be between 500 and 600.



Karuna Amman



Karikalan





Photos depicting the tragic aftermath of the LTTE's mass killings in the Eastern Province targeting the Muslim community.

Simultaneously, actions by the ruling United National Party (UNP) government exacerbated these tensions. A number of Muslims with questionable reputations were recruited into the Government Home Guard, aligning with security forces to incite violence against the Tamil population. There were instances where the Muslim Home Guards orchestrated mass violence against Tamil civilians, including the obliteration of Tamil villages and settlements, often with the clandestine backing of the security forces.

In a brutal cycle of retribution, the LTTE committed its own atrocities against Muslim civilians. Notably tragic were the instances of LTTE-perpetrated massacres, such as those of Muslims during prayers in mosques at Sammanthurai and Kattankudy, and the targeted killing of civilians in the Eravur village, named after Saddam Hussein. These events marked some of the darkest episodes of communal violence during the conflict.

While tensions between Tamils and Muslims escalated in the eastern region, the dynamics in the North contrasted sharply, with Tamils and Muslims, especially those from Jaffna, coexisting peacefully. The cordial relations between Jaffna Muslims and their Tamil neighbors presented a stark juxtaposition to the strife in the East. This paradoxical

situation was a source of frustration for the eastern LTTE leaders, particularly for Karuna and Karikalan.

With Karikalan at the helm, a delegation from the eastern command made their way to the North, determined to persuade the LTTE's supreme leader, Prabhakaran, of the imperative to take firm action against the Muslim population as a whole, aiming to set a precedent. Karikalan, intent on delivering a stark message, laid out the rationale to Prabhakaran, who was swayed by the argument and agreed to the necessity for sweeping actions, signaling a stern warning to Muslims in both the northern and eastern regions.

Karikalan not only advocated for the expulsion but also took charge of orchestrating the seizure of Muslim properties and belongings. Under his oversight, the confiscation was ruthless and systematic, ensuring that the evicted Muslims were left with little more than 150 rupees and a pair of clothes. This calculated move to strip the Muslims of their possessions was emblematic of the severity with which the LTTE enforced its authority and the cruel precision of its campaign against the Muslims.

A Stark Reality: The LTTE's Systematic Expulsion of Muslims as Ethnic Cleansing



BY:
**Our Special
Correspondent**

In a disquieting echo of history, the expulsion of Muslims from Sri Lanka's Northern Province by the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) starkly aligns with the international legal definition of ethnic cleansing, a grievous violation of human rights. This act, devoid of the brutality of mass killings yet replete with the pernicious intent of demographic alteration, mirrors chilling parallels in global history.

Ethnic cleansing, as delineated in international law, signifies the intentional displacement of a particular ethnic or religious group through force or intimidation. The objective? To forge a homogenous region, purged of perceived ethnic incongruities. The LTTE's systematic eviction of Tamil-speaking Muslims from their ancestral homes in Sri Lanka is a textbook case. Their lives and livelihoods were upended, not through random acts of violence, but through a calculated campaign of forced migration.

The international community, led by the United Nations, has long condemned such acts. UN General Assembly Resolution 47/121, crafted in the backdrop of the Yugoslav conflict, offers a stark condemnation of ethnic cleansing. It categorizes these actions as flagrant violations of international humanitarian and human rights law, demanding not just cessation but reversal.

Looking through the lens of history, the expulsion of ethnic Germans after World War II from Eastern Europe, although not marked by widespread slaughter, was a clear case of forced demographic alteration. Similarly, the expulsion of the Lhotshampas from Bhutan in the 1990s, though less violent than other ethnic conflicts, was no less destructive in its impact on human lives and cultural continuity.

The Bosnian War of the 1990s further exemplifies ethnic cleansing with its deliberate creation of ethnically homogenous territories. Closer in time, the Rohingya crisis in Myanmar showcases the same heinous pattern: a minority group persecuted and forced to flee through a combination of violence and intimidation.

The LTTE's actions in Sri Lanka, viewed against these historical precedents, reveal a disturbing trend. While the method may vary — from violent expulsions to more coercive, systematic displacements — the end goal remains the same: to alter the ethnic and cultural tapestry of a region for political or ideological ends.

This comparison is not just an academic exercise. It serves as a crucial reminder of the continuing relevance and urgency of international human rights law. The plight of the



Muslims in Northern Sri Lanka, much like the plight of displaced populations worldwide, underscores the necessity of global vigilance and intervention in cases of ethnic cleansing.

The expulsion of Muslims from Northern Sri Lanka by the LTTE stands as a stark example of a global pattern of ethnic cleansing. These actions, which clash profoundly with the principles of human rights and dignity, highlight the critical need for a consistent and robust international response to prevent and redress such grave violations. History has time and again demonstrated that the consequences of inaction extend far beyond the immediate suffering of victims, leaving a profound and enduring mark on the collective conscience of the world.

MONITOR MEMO

Cashing in on Rajapaksa: Sumanthiran's Quirky Economic Solution

Addressing Parliament, TNA MP M.A. Sumanthiran made a seemingly outlandish yet serious claim: the Rajapaksa family's wealth is vast enough to compensate every Sri Lankan for the nation's economic crisis. While this might sound like a joke to outsiders, those familiar with the Rajapaksa clan's alleged massive wealth understand the gravity of his statement. Backing the Supreme Court's decision against ex-President Gotabaya Rajapaksa, along with former Finance Ministers Mahinda Rajapaksa and Basil Rajapaksa and others for economic mismanagement, Sumanthiran urged the repatriation of their overseas assets for national economic recovery and citizen compensation.

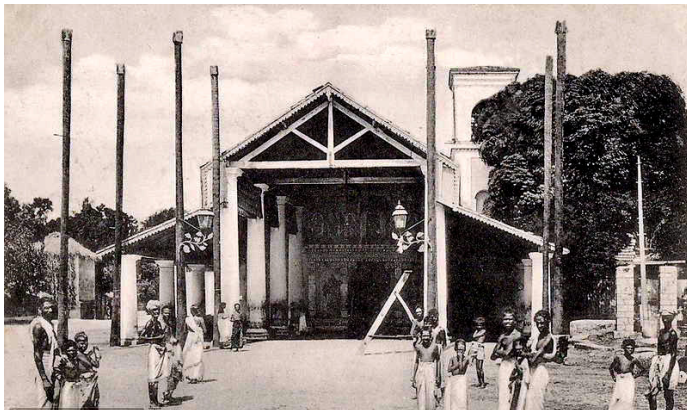




The Vanishing Muslim Imprint on **Nallur Kandaswamy Temple**



BY:
Our Staff Writer



Nallur Kandaswamy Kovil (Murugan Kovil) or Cundaswamy Temple c.1909

During the Dutch colonial period, in 1734 A.D., the present-day Nallur Kandaswamy Temple was constructed by 'Don Juan' Ragunatha Maapaana Mudaliyar. He was not only a prominent figure in the Jaffna society but also served as a Shroff in the Jaffna Katchery. He chose for the temple's location a site known as 'Kurukkal Valavu,' distinct from its original setting. During that period, Kurukkal Valavu was a settlement primarily inhabited by Muslims, and it also housed a significant Sufi shrine.

According to historical accounts, including the *Yalpana Vaipava Malai* written by the Tamil poet Mayil Vaakaanar, the present-day Nallur Kandaswamy Temple was established in the midst of a Muslim settlement. It is said to contain a sacred Sufi tomb of a revered Sufi saint named Sikandar, who was held in high esteem by both Hindus and Muslims.

Initial reports indicate that the Muslims living in Kurukkal Valavu were hesitant to abandon their locale. In reaction, some Saiva Tamils engaged in targeted acts of hostility to compel them to leave. This included the slaughtering of a pig and the desecration of the community wells with its meat, which were essential for the Muslim residents' daily use. Faced with such acts, the Muslims of Kurukkal Valavu ultimately decided to move, finding a new settlement closer to the Jaffna town in regions like Oddumadam and Sonakar Theru.

Anyway, Muslim families who lived in the Kurukkal Valavu enjoyed a special relationship with the temple authorities who, recognizing the community's historical connection to the land also the sin of

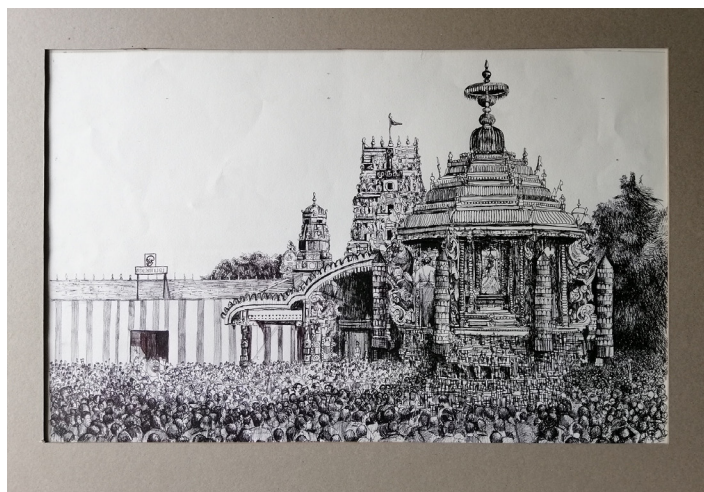
chasing the innocent Muslims from the Kurukkal Valavu, granted them the exclusive rights to sell camphor, an item used in Hindu rituals.

The temple's expansion over the years was inclusive, enveloping the Sufi shrine within its precincts. As the temple expanded its boundaries, the tomb was encompassed within its precincts, but the temple officials didn't forget its significance. They kept a lamp perpetually burning as a gesture of their sustained respect for the Muslim sentiments linked to the shrine.

However, this harmony was disrupted in 1990 when the LTTE, in their quest for an ethnically singular Tamil state, ousted the Muslim community from Jaffna. This forceful relocation cut Muslims off from their deep-rooted heritage, including their historical ties to the Nallur Temple.

In the post-war years, as Muslims began returning to Jaffna, the physical and spiritual landscape they encountered had altered. The practices surrounding the Sufi tomb had dwindled. While the historical memory of the shrine lingers, the present-day religious observances of the Muslim community have largely moved away from Sufi traditions. The tomb itself has been obscured, walled off from the public eye, a silent witness to a once-shared reverence that transcended religious divides.

The "Nallur phenomenon," reflective of a bygone era of Hindu-Muslim unity around the historical Sufi tomb,



is gradually being forgotten. The returning Muslims, whose forebears shared a symbiotic relationship with the Hindu population through the Nallur Temple, are now experiencing a cultural shift. With a growing orientation towards Wahhabi principles, which starkly oppose the worship at Sufi shrines and tombs, these returning Muslims are moving away from the syncretic customs that once characterized the region's religious practices.

Moreover, there's an active movement within parts of the Jaffna Saiva community to efface the historical footprint of Muslims in the Nallur Temple narrative. Attempts to rewrite history are underway, with some even denying the very existence of the Sufi shrine, striving to remove the legacy of a time when mutual reverence transcended religious boundaries.





Translated from the original Tamil short story *kōdaimalai* (கோடை மழை) from the 1964 collection of short stories titled *akkā* (அக்கா)

by **A. Muttulingam**
(அ.முத்துலிங்கம்)

Translated by:
Eluttukkiṇiyavan
(எழுத்துக்கினியவன்)

Summer Rain

Our village is not so renowned that it warrants spreading out a map of Sri Lanka, looking for Jaffna on its head, and marking a big cross with a red pencil, boasting, “This is Kokuvil.”

But it is also not so unremarkable that one wouldn’t spread out a map and draw a line on it to declare this is Kokuvil.

One must say that like the half-male, half-female *artanārisvara* form of Lord Siva, Kokuvil has its own unique culture without swaying to this side or the other.

For some, the name Kokuvil conjures up memories of the *kōda*-coated shiny K.S. brand country cigars. For some, it could bring up the scent of meticulously prepared spicy moonshine arrack. For those unfortunate enough to have been acquainted with neither, it could be the vicarious pleasure of reminiscing about some of those notorious murder cases.

But if anyone who had ever visited Kokuvil says that it is known for only one of those things above, one must wonder if they were totally vision impaired.

Kokuvil is famous for its lanes. How many different kinds of lanes? Cart tracks, sand roads, limestone paths, stone roads, corner lanes, tiny lanes, footpaths, foot-and-a-half paths, and on and on.

These lanes are known for dust. Not only that, but they can also sometimes deceive even those who were born and brought up in those very lanes. If you were distracted even momentarily, they had the extraordinary ability to take you back where you started from!

One should have in-depth practice to be able to ride a bicycle along these lanes. If someone started from KKS road that bifurcates Kokuvil, travels along the set of lanes that look like intertwined tobacco leaf stems and manages to surface on Palaly road at the other end, we can daresay that his stroke of luck was so large that he should have bought a lottery ticket that day.

In such a village, where fashion trends go up and down like the temperature chart of a feverish patient, recent fashion imports from Colombo quickly become very trendy. The general women's fashion trend has grown so far that at four in the evening, Kokuvil women change from their sarees into dressing gowns and loiter around by the front gate but scamper indoors as soon as they spot a youngster on a bicycle turning the corner by the front gate of Whitefoot Kandaiya's house.

Men who violate government-imposed curfews to sit on culverts chit chatting had so much bravery and courage that they disappear into thin air when the headlights of a military jeep half a mile away flicker into sight.

Children! One doesn't need to talk about them!

Children born in generous numbers, in complete disregard to family planning, infested the lanes.

When there is a 6-month-old in a mother's arms, the next in line will already be in the mother's tummy, imploring to be admitted into the world. The gullies by the railroad tracks are the children's playground.

Their early childhood play ends with lining up soda bottle lids along the tracks and looking on from their hiding places when the express train speeds past.

Readers who are new to Kokuvil may wonder where Kokuvil begins.

As the 6:20 am Colombo train departs Jaffna station and passes the cemetery, those in the train wouldn't have failed to notice the hundreds of cloth turbans floating behind the tall palmyra trees, having given the slip to the health inspectors.

Without a doubt, that is where Kokuvil begins.



Although the leading cottage industry in Kokuvil is cigar manufacture, if you want to count the number of those who got rich by making cigars, you don't need hands. Education is in the same state.

The pinnacle of everyone's hope is a "clerical" job. If, by chance, someone got through secondary school, it meant that the deity in the Nallur temple, Lord Kandasamy, is going to get a special *pūja*.

If men are like this, there is no need to talk about the state of women.

Their educational attainments are such that they could compose a telegram message in English with at least four mistakes such that it will not reach the recipient.

Whatever said and done, those who value trendiness never acknowledged Kokuvil's fame.

* * *

The old woman Sinnaachi looked like a sexagenarian and a half! But her physique, toned from watering a thousand tobacco plants, was still intact. Her profession was village gossip, with a side hustle on collecting jak leaves for her goats. She had no shortage of all the stereotypical attributes of old women: nagging, stinginess, whining about hardship, etc.

If you ignore the "Beware of coaches" warning sign and go past the railway crossing and turn left at the junction, there is a signboard announcing, "Harmonium repair here," putting the language itself in need of repair.

Opposite to that sign is a narrow lane.

Even at the height of noon, one's heart will pound if one were to walk alone along that lane, greeted only by the cacti and thorn shrubs that had grown right in the middle of the footpath, unaccustomed to foot traffic.

If we muster up our courage and go further, we will encounter a giant cactus adorned with *umal* bags woven from palmyra leaves, bearing witness to the recent increase in Kokuvil's livestock.

Those blessed with handkerchiefs can provide some respite to their noses and venture further to see the 'hallowed spot' where Attalai Murukesar was murdered. If you glance east from that vantage point, you can see the old woman's dilapidated cottage.

But you cannot really get there directly anymore. Because the village court had to intervene in a dispute between the mother and the child over a tamarind tree and put up a temporary fence, you must turn around, swallow the inconvenience and walk along Pillaiyar Kovil Lane that the old woman routinely takes.

An old poster put up by someone during the election campaign season was still loyally hanging on to the old woman's gate.

The gate was held in place with a rock tied to a taut rope. If you let go of the gate, it will shut itself with a bang. The surprising thing is that neither the old woman nor the gate was aware of the fact that such a mechanism has the fancy English term "automatic shutter!"

The rickety old gate doesn't easily inspire confidence. Therefore, let us crawl through the *poṭṭu* in the fence like the old woman does.

Some palmyra sprouts were drying on a winnowing basket. Next to it, a ripe chilli on a stick was keeping the crows at bay. A little further, there was a tethered goat by the entrance. A bundle of grass and a hoe handle lay next to it. Neither the goat nor the hoe seemed to pay attention to the grass.

There was a raised veranda porch wide enough to dry half a sack of paddy. On the mud wall next to it, in the tiny space not already covered by charcoal scribbles, an old picture calendar without dates was hanging pitifully. Judging from the attire that Lord Murugan's consort, Theivanaai, was sporting in the picture, it must date back to the time when puffed sleeves were in fashion in women's blouses.

The old woman was cleaning prawns in the backyard. A sad-looking twentyish young man stood next to her.



"My goodness! How could you? Your mother's heart must be burning up."

"What can I do Aachchi? I have to pay up for a job in Colombo. I tried my best to explain to her, but it was all in vain. What else can I do? As soon as I get my first salary, I will redeem the jewelry. Don't forsake me! The police have been to my house to search."

"What! Did you come here after reporting the missing jewelry to the police! I don't need this hassle. If the police come to question me tomorrow, I would be at a loss to explain ..."

The young man knew the ways of the world.

"Aachchi, why are you unnecessarily scared? Could I not have pawned this in the big pawnshop in town? I thought if I pawned to a neighbor like you, you too would get a five or ten percent cut."

The mention of a five or ten per cent cut' had the intended effect.

The old woman took the washed prawns inside. The stray dog that frequently visits the old woman came out of nowhere to thwart the crow that had been patiently waiting and helped the old woman out by licking the sickle clean.

Wiping her hands on her saree's border, she held out her hand. "Let's see."

It was quite heavy. With the years of experience behind it, the old woman's hand told her it was worth at least four hundred.

"It doesn't look like it will measure up to even two and a half sovereigns. How much are you asking?"

"Maybe three hundred ..."



“Who is going to lend money now? Sellachchi had to spend a lot for her eldest daughter’s childbirth. Sinnamonai is bedridden... “the old woman continued to mumble inaudibly.

She tightened her saree around the waist, pulled out a sitting mat from the roof truss and laid it on the porch. “Sit here, *makan!* I will be back in five minutes ... the cursed cow might wander in ... watch out for it”. She took the *kuththusi*, the leaf-collecting spear, and left mumbling to herself.

“That scoundrel! He has stolen from his own mother. I don’t know how he is going to reform himself. The whole world has gone to the dogs ... Kanakam’s eldest son is a type .. but she deserves it ... she is so vain that she is the only one in Kokuvil with a gemstone gold necklace ... when she came by for Muththachchi’s funeral, she didn’t even join me in the lamentations!”

By the time the old woman returned after doing her rounds, the young man was almost exhausted. He had been breaking off all the splinters from the roof truss and absentmindedly cleaning his teeth with them.

Oblivious to his state of mind, the large red ants trooping away on their way occasionally bit him.

A woman carrying a bundle of grass passed by, looking back suspiciously at him.

She comes by often.

He was thoroughly embarrassed to be sitting on the porch while wearing pants.

At around noon, the old woman returned cursing someone or the other, listing all the maladies that they and their descendants for seven generations will succumb to.

The *kuththusi* was full of jak leaves.

She sat down leisurely and started feeding the leaves to the goat.

The young man waited patiently. It didn’t look as if the old woman was going to talk! He felt like he was sitting on fire. “What happened, Aachchi?”

“What can I do? All the cursed women are whining about their poverty... did you know.. the granddaughter of Kandaiya... the newly rich woman... showed the true colors of her caste ... like a cat that climbed up the areca palm...?”

He ran out of patience. “Ok, I am leaving, give that back to me!”

“Why are you getting upset so quickly? Is she the only rich woman in Kokuvil? Has everyone else perished? Here... this is what I managed to get ... no one else has anything to give now!”

“How much did you get?”

“Count it yourself. She gave me twenty seven, the cursed woman! I took two. The remaining two hundred and fifty are there. Make sure to redeem your pawn by the end of the month”.

“Monster,” the young man mumbled as he put the money in his pocket and began to leave.

* * *

The season changed. Western monsoon gave way to the Southern monsoon.

There was no sign of the young man returning from Colombo.

The old woman had anticipated just that.

Was she so crazy as to pawn such a valuable piece of jewellery with someone else? She had, in fact, lent him the money herself, money that she had saved so diligently, often going without everything but just the bare necessities.



If the young man had ever returned, her plan was to bluster her way out.

That day, the old woman's eldest daughter dropped by.

"Aachchi, I am going to have a grand puberty ceremony for my daughter, inviting everyone. Will you borrow four hundred from someone for me? I will return right after the ceremony."

"What on earth is this! Who will give you money at the drop of a hat? Besides, will anyone lend you money for free?"

"What are you saying Aachchi! All my money is tied up in loans I have given to the village folk. My girl's ceremony will net me at least five or six hundred rupees... what do I need your money for, I will return it to you with a five percent interest."

"All right, go home! I will go look around here," the old woman said, pointing to the east.

Pakkiyam is the old woman's daughter, after all. If the old woman is pointing to the east, it means she is going to finagle something from the west.

Pakkiyam got up to leave, guessing, "could it be Senior's Sellachchi?"

* * *

The sun was scorching. But the old woman's instincts hinted at impending rain showers.

She hurriedly gathered the drying firewood and stacked them under the eaves.

Picking up the *kuththusi*, she left, feeling the pouch in her saree around the waist.

She had never before enjoyed the excitement of lending money to her own daughter.

Sellachchi will instantly pony up four hundred when she sees the gold necklace.

Something bothered the old woman at the back of her mind. She opened the pouch and inspected the item. Something was not quite right.

She held the necklace to the light and peered. Her stomach churned!

The world was spinning around her. She slumped down in the middle of the path.

The necklace in her trembling hand grinned at her. Bronze, after all, is bronze.

Somewhere, a rooster flapped its wings noisily.

There was no lightning, no thunder. Outsized raindrops started dropping down here and there and splattered.

One couldn't tell where the dry tears of the old woman fell.

The characteristic scent of Kokuvil dust wafted in the air.

Glossary

artanārisvara: A half-male/halffemale manifestation of Siva and his consort Parvati.

kōda: A concoction made by boiling tobacco stems for several days and then mixed with arrack, sugar, and spices. It is used in Jaffna to coat bundles of rolled cigars while they are packed.

makan: An affectionate way to address a much younger man. Literally, "son."

poṭṭu: A small opening left in a fence as a shortcut.

umal: A bag woven from a palmyrah leaf. When a cow or other livestock gives birth in Jaffna, the umbilical cord is put in an umal and left to hang from a branch of a tree far away from residential areas.

Transliteration guide for proper names

Places

Attalai	<i>aṭṭālai</i>
Kokuvil	<i>kokkuvil</i>
Kovil	<i>kōvil</i>
Nallur	<i>nallūr</i>
Palaly	<i>palāli</i>

Howzat for an Apology? Sri Lanka Says Sorry in Cricket Blame Game



The Sri Lankan government has officially apologized to Jay Shah, President of the Asian Cricket Council (ACC) and Secretary of the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI), following comments made by former Sri Lankan cricket captain Arjuna Ranatunga. Ranatunga blamed Shah for the decline of Sri Lankan cricket, but Ministers Harin Fernando and Kanchana Wijesekara, speaking in Parliament, asserted that Sri Lanka's own administrators are to blame, not external figures.

Meanwhile, there's concern over the International Cricket Council (ICC) ban on Sri Lankan cricket. Tourism Minister Harin Fernando highlighted that this ban could jeopardize the upcoming under-19 cricket world cup in Sri Lanka. Essentially, no cricket, no money!

Additionally, a Ministerial Sub-Committee, led by Foreign Minister Ali Sabry, has been set up to negotiate with the ICC about the ban. The committee's job is to examine the crisis and suggest changes. Minister Wijesekara emphasized that the ban affects all levels of Sri Lankan cricket, from the national teams to the juniors.

To cap it off, earlier this month, the ICC suspended Sri Lanka Cricket's membership, citing severe breaches, including government interference in cricket affairs. The drama unfolds as the country's sports minister, Roshan Ranasinghe, is also involved in the spat. It's like a cricket soap opera but with more apologies and committee meetings!

Sajith's 'Blast from the Past' Plan Against Rajapaksas



Sri Lanka's Opposition Leader, MP Sajith Premadasa, has called on President Ranil Wickremesinghe to decisively act against those implicated in the country's economic crisis, following a Supreme Court ruling that held former President Gotabaya Rajapaksa, ex-Finance Minister Mahinda and Basil Rajapaksa, and former Central Bank Governor Ajith Nivard Cabraal responsible for the turmoil.

In a parliamentary address, Premadasa suggested a course of action similar to a historical incident under J.R. Jayewardene's rule when Srimavo Bandaranaike's civic rights were revoked. This precedent, under which both Premadasa's father and President Wickremesinghe served, is now proposed to be applied against the Rajapaksa brothers through the formation of a Special Presidential Commission.

However, this proposal by Premadasa is viewed as impractical and potentially counterproductive. President Wickremesinghe's lack of a solid parliamentary majority, combined with perceptions of his connections to the Rajapaksa clan, makes such a drastic measure unlikely. Additionally, critics argue that this suggestion, while dramatic, might lack relevance and could unintentionally rehabilitate the Rajapaksas' image during the economic crisis.

Notably, the historical precedent set by J.R. Jayewardene, often considered a grave injustice to Srimavo Bandaranaike, actually resulted in her gaining public sympathy. This outcome could serve as a cautionary tale, suggesting that similar actions against the Rajapaksa brothers might evoke public sympathy for them, potentially aiding their political recovery.

The Journey Beyond Propaganda



by:
Kaniyan Pungundran



Thirteen years ago, one fine day, I took the bold step to mildly criticize the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) and its leader, Prabhakaran, in a Facebook post. My criticism, written in Tamil, read as follows: “தலைவர் எங்களுக்காக சிந்திக்கிறார் என நாங்கள் மோட்டு வளையத்தை பார்த்துக்கொண்டு இருந்துவிட்டோம். தலைவர் எங்களைக் கொண்டு போய் முள்ளிவாய்க்கால் முட்டுச் சந்துக்குள் நிறுத்திவிட்டார்”. When translated, it essentially means, “We have been idly lying around, staring at the ceiling, thinking that our leader is doing the thinking for us. But, the leader has led us to a dead-end at Mullivaikal’.

The backlash from my then-close Tamil friends was immediate and intense; they questioned my birth, my value, and the level of my IQ; one of my classmates from Jaffna Hindu College commented in that Facebook post, suggesting with a tone of sympathy, “Surely, you must be out of your senses to level

criticism at Our boys or our leader. It would be wise for you to seek a psychiatric evaluation." Others, who were more confrontational, challenged me to return to Jaffna, insinuating that a harsh lesson awaited me there.

The Indoctrination of Tamil Youth Compared to North Korea



The response I got for the post can draw parallels with the kind of reaction you might expect from staunch, brainwashed religious or cult followers. The very idea of questioning the LTTE's actions or its leader was blasphemous to many of my close friends. If you were born and raised in the northern and eastern parts of Sri Lanka during the 1980s and 1990s, where the majority are Tamils, there's a good chance you were never introduced to the notion that no person or organization is beyond criticism. For the youth of that era, Prabhakaran's word was taken as law.

The extent of indoctrination that the Tamil youth experienced in the 1980s and 1990s in the northern and eastern regions, in my view, mirrors the intensity of indoctrination imposed by the North Korean regime on its own people. I recall viewing a video years ago in which North Korean citizens were seen weeping at the mere sight of their Supreme Leader, Kim Jong Un. In the video, an elderly woman, with great emotion, expressed to the television crew how her beloved leader was safeguarding their nation from the mighty United States and its allies. The facets of North Korean existence — from Information Isolation, Forced Labor, and Human Rights Violations to Travel Restrictions — are deeply ingrained in daily life.

However, when indoctrination takes deep root, one might find justifiable reasoning in every action taken by their revered leader, wouldn't you agree? This same manner of mental conditioning was imposed on the minds of my generation, and tragically, many remain unaware that even their once leader, Prabhakaran, or his organization, are subject to evaluation and criticism.

The Cult of the 'Sun God': Deepening the Indoctrination

The image of Prabhakaran as an uneducated figure does not accurately reflect his exceptional skills in manipulating propaganda and carrying out systematic indoctrination. His effectiveness in these realms was such that the LTTE managed to effectively eliminate other Tamil militant groups that had surfaced to advocate for the exact cause. These groups were condemned as traitors, and their members, including intellectuals and prominent figures, were executed ruthlessly. These extreme actions were condoned by a significant section of the Tamil public, who, influenced by LTTE's persuasive propaganda, believed such measures were a necessary evil in the fight for freedom.

Rationalizing Atrocities Under Propaganda

During the era of Prabhakaran's leadership, his singular ideology became the defining narrative for the entire movement. His perspectives and tactics weren't merely representative of the LTTE; they were emphatically instilled within the Tamil youth. Such was the level of indoctrination that reached a point where the child began to internalize the belief that a 'normal' thought process echoed the staunch devotion of an ardent LTTE supporter.

The Perils of Absolute Ideology and Suppressed Criticism

The potency of the LTTE's propaganda instilled a deep conviction among many youths of my generation that Prabhakaran was not just a leader but a "Sooriya Thevan," a "Sun God," endowed with an almost mystical aura of invincibility. This perception was bolstered by the LTTE's unexpected military victories under Prabhakaran's leadership, feats that seemed to defy reality and elevated his status to one of divine-like reverence. The propaganda machine systematically cultivated an environment where questioning his decisions was tantamount to heresy. Followers were urged to emulate the unquestioning obedience found in the pages of religious texts, where faith dictates that the word is to be followed without doubt or debate.

Blind Allegiance Among Educated Professionals

The effectiveness of the LTTE's propaganda is evident in the manner in which they secured the allegiance of many Tamils, convincing them to rationalize even the horrors they perpetrated against their own. The LTTE excelled in crafting narratives that glorified the ultimate



sacrifices of their youth, linking their cadres' loss of life to the organization's ruthless actions. Tamils harbour deep sentiments for the thousands of young lives lost to the cause of the LTTE, with a prevailing belief that these individuals surrendered everything for their people's welfare, thus nurturing a profound sentiment within the community.

Learning from the LTTE's Strategic Failures

However, the irony lies in the fact that even those Tamils who fervently supported the Tamil cause yet expressed any dissent towards the LTTE's strategies were quickly labelled as traitors. For instance, in the LTTE-controlled areas, suggesting in 2006 that Prabhakaran's actions were leading the community towards a catastrophic outcome like that of Mullivaikkal would be enough to have one deemed a traitor and likely executed. This draconian stance towards any form of criticism created an atmosphere where

open dialogue was stifled, and it inevitably contributed to the tragic and unnecessary loss of thousands of lives. The LTTE's indoctrination was so entrenched that it not only justified their brutalities but also silenced those who dared to question their approach, regardless of how faithfully they championed the Tamil cause.

Looking Towards a Future of Liberated Minds

What's startling is that even after the glaring failures of the LTTE's strategies, many from my generation, including accomplished professionals like doctors, engineers, and lawyers, remain blinded. Listening to their one-sided, impractical, and unrealistic arguments, I often wonder: how could someone with such brainwashed views become such a studious and knowledgeable individual? That sometimes leads me to wonder, Do brainwashing and academic studies engage different parts of the brain?

In the end, the legacy of the LTTE and the indoctrination of Tamil youth stands as a sombre reminder of the perils of absolute ideology and the critical need for open dialogue and introspection within any movement. True liberation cannot be achieved when minds are shackled by the chains of dogma and uncritical allegiance. As we look to the future, it is paramount that we heed the lessons of our past, recognizing that genuine freedom is rooted in the empowerment of the individual to think freely and critically. In my opinion, you cannot liberate people with their minds in chains. The path to true liberation is paved with questioning minds, the courage to challenge monolithic narratives, and the willingness to embrace diverse perspectives.

At the very least, this can be a starting point for some much-needed self-reflection.

MONITOR MEMO

Perumal's Playbook: Dial India for Tamil Solutions in Sri Lanka

A. Varadaraja Perumal, the former Chief Minister of Sri Lanka's North-Eastern Province, emphasized the need for Sri Lankan Tamil parties to increase engagement with India to address the Tamil issue. In an interview after a book launch in Coimbatore, he expressed concern that current Tamil leaders are not actively pursuing dialogue with Indian counterparts, unlike during 1983-87. Perumal stressed the importance of India's role in resolving the Tamil question, noting that the Indian government's actions must be supported by its people and leaders. He advocated for closer ties between Tamil leaders and officials in New Delhi and Tamil Nadu.

Perumal warned against extreme or radical approaches and highlighted the significance of properly implementing Sri Lanka's 13th Constitutional Amendment, which deals with devolution of power to provincial councils. He suggested revisiting this Amendment, with Indian legal experts advising on its effective implementation. Additionally, Perumal called for humane consideration of Sri Lankan refugees in Tamil Nadu, proposing solutions like providing permanent documents for employment and easing restrictions on their travel to Sri Lanka.

Prabhakaran:

A Journey from Reverence to Regret



BY:

Gowripal Sri aka Sathiri

Gowripal Sri, formerly known as Sathiri in the LTTE ranks, is a writer based in France. With 18 years spent in the LTTE, his transition from militancy to writing has allowed him to share a deep, reflective account of his experiences. His stories, conveyed to 'Jaffna Monitor' editor Kaniyan Pungundran, shed light on the personal and collective journeys of those involved in the struggle for Tamil Eelam.

I spent over 18 years of my life with the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE), a journey that began in the shadow of a harrowing ordeal that my people, the Sri Lankan Tamils, endured in 1983. The violence was meticulously orchestrated by the Sri Lankan government at the time, led by President J. R. Jayewardene of the United National Party (UNP). I still vividly recall the horror as thousands of Tamils were mercilessly slaughtered, and hundreds of Tamil women were subjected to unspeakable acts by Sinhalese mobs. It was clear that these atrocities had the tacit approval of the Jayewardene government, which seemed intent on teaching a brutal lesson to the Tamil community. This pogrom was a direct retaliation for the Four Four Bravo ambush by the LTTE at Tirunelveli.

Haunted by the images of destruction and the cries of my people, I felt an overwhelming urge to seek retribution and justice. It was this passion that propelled me to join the ranks of the LTTE as a fighter. The memory of the violence acted as a catalyst, igniting a fierce resolve within me to hold the Sinhala government accountable for its heinous

actions. My life's path was irrevocably altered by the events of 1983, setting me on a course of armed struggle for the liberation of my people.

I was far from alone in my resolve. Many of my peers, driven by a shared dream of a sovereign nation for the Sri Lankan Tamil people, rallied to the call of various Tamil militant groups. Among my close friends, the divide in our paths was marked by the different groups we joined; one enlisted with the Tamil Eelam Liberation Organization (TELO), another with the People's Liberation Organisation of Tamil Eelam (PLOTE). At one point, the landscape of our struggle was a mosaic of some 30 to 35 different militant groups, each with its own methods and strategies, but all were woven together by a single, unifying thread: the dream of establishing a separate country for the Sri Lankan Tamils. All of my immediate friends were aligning with one faction or another, each of us bound by the same vision of freedom and self-determination. As for me, I found my place with the LTTE. For us, the leader of the LTTE, Prabhakaran, was an inspiration, though he had yet to attain the demigod status he would later achieve within the organization.

Over the years, approximately 50,000 LTTE cadres gave their lives, believing that Prabhakaran's war tactics would lead to the establishment of Tamil Eelam. However, our dreams were shattered, mainly due to Prabhakaran's



LTTE Chief Prabhakaran pictured with his deputies, Kittu and Mathaya.



Photos capturing the devastating aftermath of the 1983 violence against innocent Tamils in Colombo and its suburbs

stubbornness and his mistakes that ultimately led to the demise of the LTTE. In the final stages of the war, the LTTE, under Prabhakaran's leadership, lost sight of its initial goals and turned its guns against the very Tamil civilians it had vowed to protect.

Reflecting on the tumultuous journey of our struggle, it's evident that the most critical and divisive actions were made by Prabhakaran. He was the architect behind the ban and the ensuing execution of thousands of militants from competing factions, the forceful eviction and robbery of the Muslim community from their ancestral homes in the north and east, and the grievous assaults on innocent Sinhala and Muslim civilians. Even the assassination of Indian Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi was a directive from Prabhakaran. These decisions, originating from the top echelons of the LTTE and executed by its cadres, severely marred our image on the world stage. Tragically, it was the young, often innocent cadres of the LTTE who bore the brunt of these actions, sacrificing their lives for the cause under the shadow of their leader's fateful choices.

As a former member of the LTTE who dedicated many years to the cause, I take a measure of comfort in

acknowledging that Prabhakaran, once venerated as our unyielding leader, stood firm in his convictions to the very end. As confirmed in Kamal Gunaratne's book 'Road to Nandikadal,' Prabhakaran fought valiantly until the last bullet was fired, until his final comrade fell. I am confident of his demise, which was as steadfast as his life; he lost everything in pursuit of his belief, including the lives of his family and his young son, Balachandran. This unwavering commitment, regardless of the mistakes and the dark turns his leadership took, provides a strange comfort. It offers thousands of us, former LTTE cadres, a sense of closure and a moral compass, enabling us to come to terms with our past and to find our way back to a semblance of everyday life.

The assertions by specific political figures and self-serving entities that Prabhakaran is still alive are a source of profound grief for us. We know these claims to be false. The very thought that he could be covertly alive after the demise of 50,000 innocent young lives under his command is inconceivable. If, against all odds, he were to be found alive, my plea to my former leader would be stark: it would be better for him to embrace death, for in life, he has already caused immeasurable loss and suffering.

EDITOR'S NOTE: The views and opinions expressed in this article are those of Gowripal Sri, and are presented from his own personal perspective based on his experiences. They do not necessarily reflect the views of our publication or editorial stance. This piece is intended to provide our readers with one individual's insight into a highly complex issue, allowing for a diverse range of voices to be heard and understood.



Australia Clinches Historic Sixth World Cup Victory: A Tactical Masterclass in Ahmedabad

by:
Our sports reporter

In a display of cricketing prowess and strategic acumen, Australia secured their record-extending sixth World Cup victory, outmaneuvering India in a high-stakes final in Ahmedabad. This triumph wasn't just about sheer skill; it was a testament to Australia's cricketing philosophy, a blend of aggressive batting, clinical bowling, and fielding that borders on the artistic.

The hero of the hour, Travis Head, played a pivotal role in setting up this monumental victory with a masterfully paced 137 off 120 balls. Yet, it was his extraordinary fielding effort earlier in the day that truly turned the tide. His stunning catch to dismiss India's captain, Rohit Sharma, was more than just a display of athletic prowess; it was a strategic masterstroke that shifted the momentum firmly in Australia's favor.

India's total of 241, a figure that could have been far more daunting, was held in check by Australia's disciplined bowling and agile fielding. The early dismissal of Sharma, who was just beginning to unleash his destructive batting, proved crucial in restraining a team known for its explosive scoring potential.





"World Cup Champion Cummins Foregoes IPL for National Glory"

In an era where franchise cricket offers fame and fortune, Pat Cummins, the victorious captain of Australia's 2023 World Cup squad, has taken a path less travelled. Earlier in the year, Cummins made a bold decision, steeped in foresight and national pride, to sit out of the glitzy Indian Premier League season. This choice was made to preserve his physical condition and focus on leading Australia to glory in the international arena.

The decision paid dividends as Cummins steered his team through the crucible of the World Cup, culminating in a triumphant campaign that solidified his team's and his own legacy. His strategic withdrawal from the IPL highlights a prioritization that goes beyond personal gain, showcasing a commitment to the long-term objectives of Australian cricket. As a result, Cummins's priorities have not only set a precedent for balancing club versus country debates but have also been vindicated by his team's success on the world stage. This triumph is a testament to his leadership and the clear vision he held for Australia's cricketing future.

Australia's chase, though initially shaky, was steadied by Head and Marnus Labuschagne's resilient partnership. Overcoming the early loss of crucial wickets, they demonstrated a calm and calculated approach, effectively neutralizing India's formidable bowling attack. The strategic nuance was evident in their handling of the dew-affected conditions, which they turned to their advantage, nullifying the threat posed by India's seamers.

The Australian bowling lineup, led by Pat Cummins, showcased their prowess and adaptability. They not only exploited the conditions but also maintained relentless pressure on the Indian batsmen. The strategic field placements and rotation of bowlers by Cummins were masterstrokes, suffocating India's run flow and picking up crucial wickets at regular intervals.

This victory is a reflection of Australia's deep understanding of the nuances of one-day cricket. Their ability to adapt to varying conditions, their foresight in

field placements, and their tactical acumen in bowling changes were exemplary. It wasn't just a victory achieved by individual brilliance but a collective effort where every player contributed to a well-executed plan.

As the Australian team lifted the trophy, it was a reminder of their dominance in the world of cricket. This victory, carved out in the cauldron of a World Cup final, is a testament to their enduring legacy as one of the most excellent cricketing sides in history. The last played against the backdrop of a sea of blue in the Narendra Modi Stadium, was anticipated to be a coronation for India. Instead, it turned into a showcase of Australia's cricketing supremacy, leaving an indelible mark on the annals of cricket history.

Australia's journey to this sixth World Cup victory reiterates their status as the most formidable winners in the game, a team that knows not just how to play cricket but how to win it.

The Quintessential 12th Man of Sri Lankan Cricket

It's been a few weeks since the vibrant chants and the fluttering flag of Percy Abeysekera, known endearingly as 'Uncle Percy', were stilled by the passage of time. At the age of 87, the most ardent cheerleader of Sri Lankan cricket left behind a silence that resonates deeply within the hearts of cricket enthusiasts across the nation and beyond.

His enthusiasm spanned over seven decades. Born in Boossa in 1936, Percy's love for cricket began with witnessing the legendary Don Bradman play in 1948. He officially started cheerleading in 1979, becoming a celebrated icon in Sri Lankan cricket, known for his ever-flying Lion flag and infectious enthusiasm.

Percy's passion led to remarkable moments in cricket history. He danced with Sir Garfield Sobers onboard a



plane in 1983 and heroically saved Sobers from a mob during the 1983 riots. He showed unwavering support for Sri Lanka cricket, even facing death threats, and was recognized by Martin Crowe, who presented him with two Man of the Match trophies. Percy's dedication extended to an incident in Australia, where he was briefly ar-

rested for entering the field, leading international cricketers to intervene on his behalf.

Uncle Percy's legacy goes beyond Sri Lanka, touching hearts worldwide. His absence leaves a void, but his spirit continues to inspire cricket fans globally.

MONITOR MEMO

"President Wickremesinghe's Balancing Act: A Mix of Diplomatic Tightrope Walking and Bold Critiques"

Sri Lankan President Ranil Wickremesinghe is not just walking a diplomatic tightrope but also performing some daring stunts along the way. On one hand, he's playing the role of a careful mediator, skillfully accommodating the Chinese research vessel Shi Yan-6 in Colombo, and on the other, he's not shying away from boldly criticizing America and the West over their stance on Gaza.

Wickremesinghe's strategy seems akin to a juggler at a carnival, trying to keep several balls in the air - from maintaining cordial ties with China to cautiously navigating the complex waters of India's concerns. But then, in a surprising twist, he turns into a trapeze artist, swinging out with sharp critiques of the West's approach to human rights issues in Gaza, breaking away from the script of a cautious diplomat.

His move to allow the Shi Yan-6's docking, seemingly a nod to China, is paired with his outspoken comments on the West's perceived double standards in international affairs. This combination of diplomatic prudence and candid criticism is like hosting a dinner party where, amidst ensuring everyone's wine glasses are full, he casually drops a conversation bombshell that leaves the guests wide-eyed.

In this high-stakes international circus, Wickremesinghe appears to be carefully avoiding confrontations while not hesitating to voice his opinions on controversial matters. It's a humorous yet intricate dance of diplomacy and outspokenness, showcasing his attempt to balance Sri Lanka's foreign relations with a flair for the dramatic.

Voice of the Reader

At JaffnaMonitor, every voice matters — and every perspective is welcome. Whether it's a word of appreciation, a constructive critique, or a differing viewpoint, we believe in fostering a space where conversations thrive. We invite all to share their thoughts and engage in meaningful discourse regardless of political leanings or affiliations.

Our articles are penned with care, research, and dedication, but we acknowledge the diverse perspectives of our esteemed readership. If your submission equates to our quality, credibility, and relevance standards, we're more than happy to give it a platform.

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Ready to make a mark? Submit your contributions or pitch your ideas to hellojaffnamonitor@gmail.com. Dive into the exciting world of journalism and storytelling with us, and let's co-create content that matters.

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