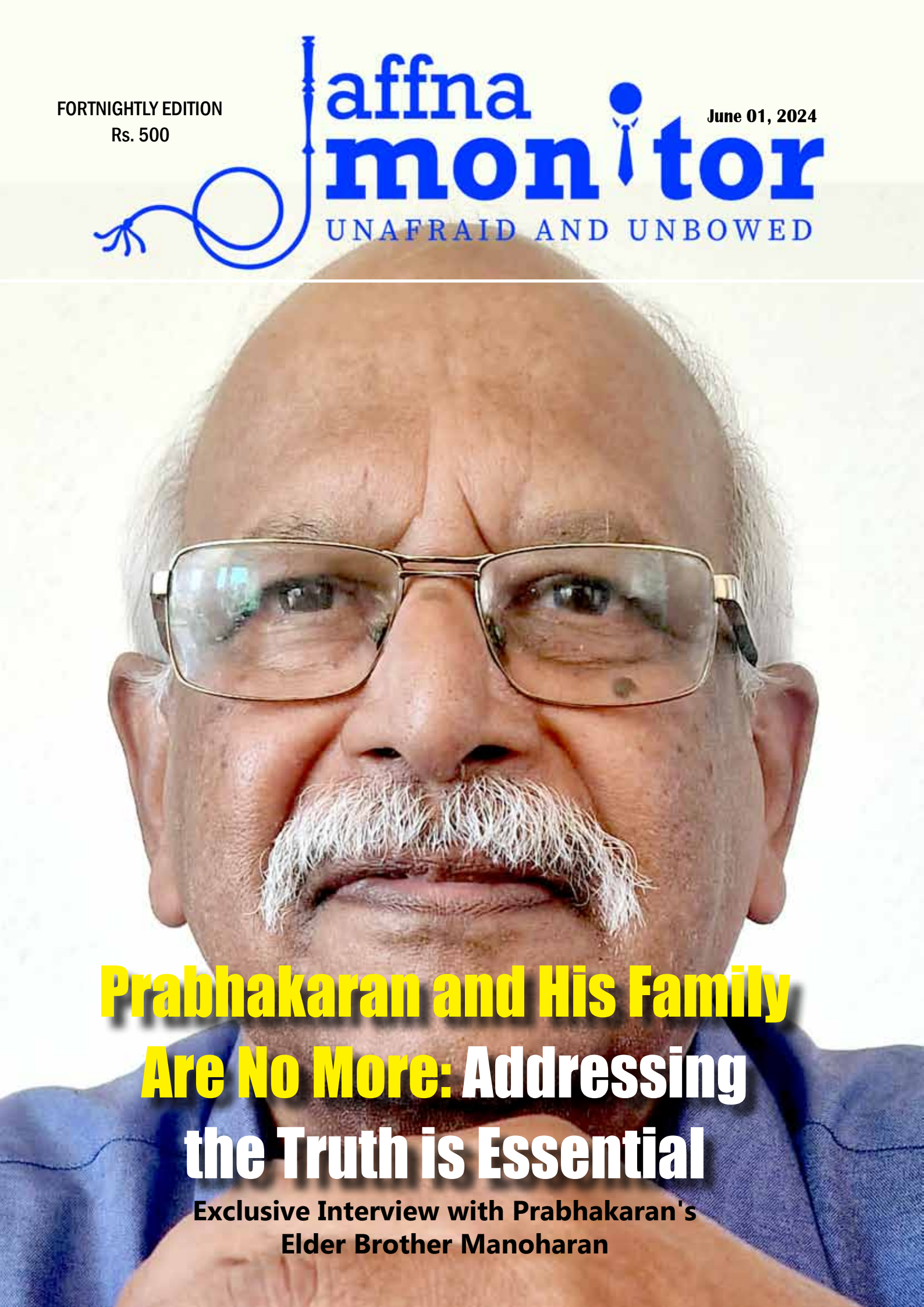


FORTNIGHTLY EDITION
Rs. 500

Jaffna monitor

UNAFRAID AND UNBOWED

June 01, 2024

A close-up portrait of an elderly man with a white mustache and glasses, wearing a blue shirt. He is looking directly at the camera with a serious expression.

Prabhakaran and His Family Are No More: Addressing the Truth is Essential

**Exclusive Interview with Prabhakaran's
Elder Brother Manoharan**

03

Editorial

04

Prabhakaran and His Family Are No More: Addressing the Truth is Essential - Prabhakaran's Elder Brother Manoharan



19

Pioneering Healthcare with Hiccups: Jaffna University's Latest Medical Block

23

TNPF's Guide to Political Gymnastics: Boycotting Presidential Polls, Crawling into Parliamentary Elections!

24

From Traitor to Toastmaster: Sumanthiran's Political Pirouette

26

A Legacy in Jeopardy: The Fight to Save Alaveddy Sadananda Vidyalayam

28

Jaffna Hindu College Student's Path to Medical Faculty Through Extracurricular Excellence

30

Humanitarian Diaries Part-2

40

Jaffna's Sporting Legend Thayalan Shatters Records at 65

42

India Eyes Sri Lanka's Graphite Treasure Amid Political Turmoil

43

Dr. W.G. Rockwood: The First Non-Vellalar Representative in Sri Lanka's Parliament

52

Maharoof's Moment of Magic: All It Takes is One

55

A Train Journey



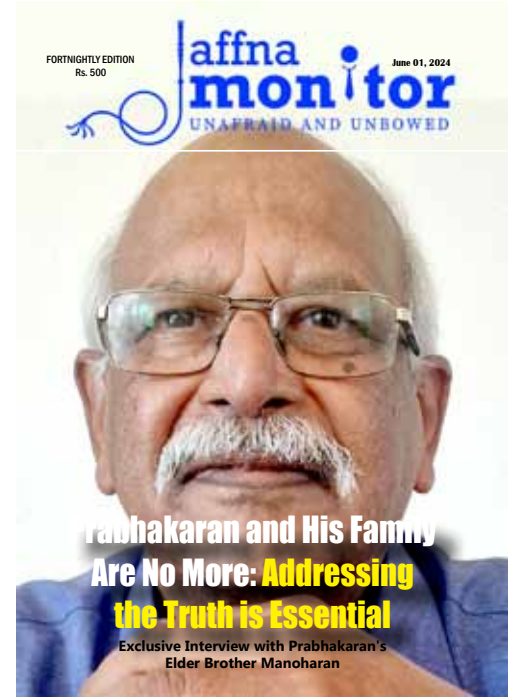
Unveiling Truths: An Exclusive Interview with Manoharan, Brother of LTTE Supremo

In this issue of the Jaffna Monitor, we have the privilege of presenting an exclusive and eye-opening interview with Manoharan, the elder brother of the LTTE supremo, Prabhakaran. Manoharan boldly exposes the rampant fraudulent activities being conducted under the guise of his late brother and his family.

With unwavering conviction, he calls upon LTTE supporters and sympathizers to confront the stark and undeniable truth: neither Prabhakaran nor any members of his immediate family survived the brutal conflict; they all perished in its cataclysmic final days. Manoharan asserts that it is imperative to put an end to these deceitful and exploitative practices, which prey on the emotional bonds that LTTE sympathizers have with their fallen leader and his family. It is time to dispel these illusions and face reality with integrity and honor.

In our relentless pursuit of truth and transparency, this issue also continues our in-depth interview with a United Nations worker who bore witness to the harrowing final stages of the Sri Lankan war. This account offers an unflinching and critical perspective on the catastrophic human toll exacted by the conflict. The interview also sheds light on the egregious war crimes committed by both the Sri Lankan government and the LTTE against innocent Tamil civilians. This unvarnished narrative is essential for understanding the multifaceted tragedy that unfolded.

We are immensely pleased to announce that from this issue onward, we will feature the writings of the esteemed Sri Lankan Tamil author Sarawanan Komathi Nadarasa. Our dedicated team has meticulously translated his insightful work, ensuring his eloquent voice resonates with



our readers. His contributions, rooted in profound knowledge and analysis, will undoubtedly add significant depth to our publication, enriching it with intellectual substance.

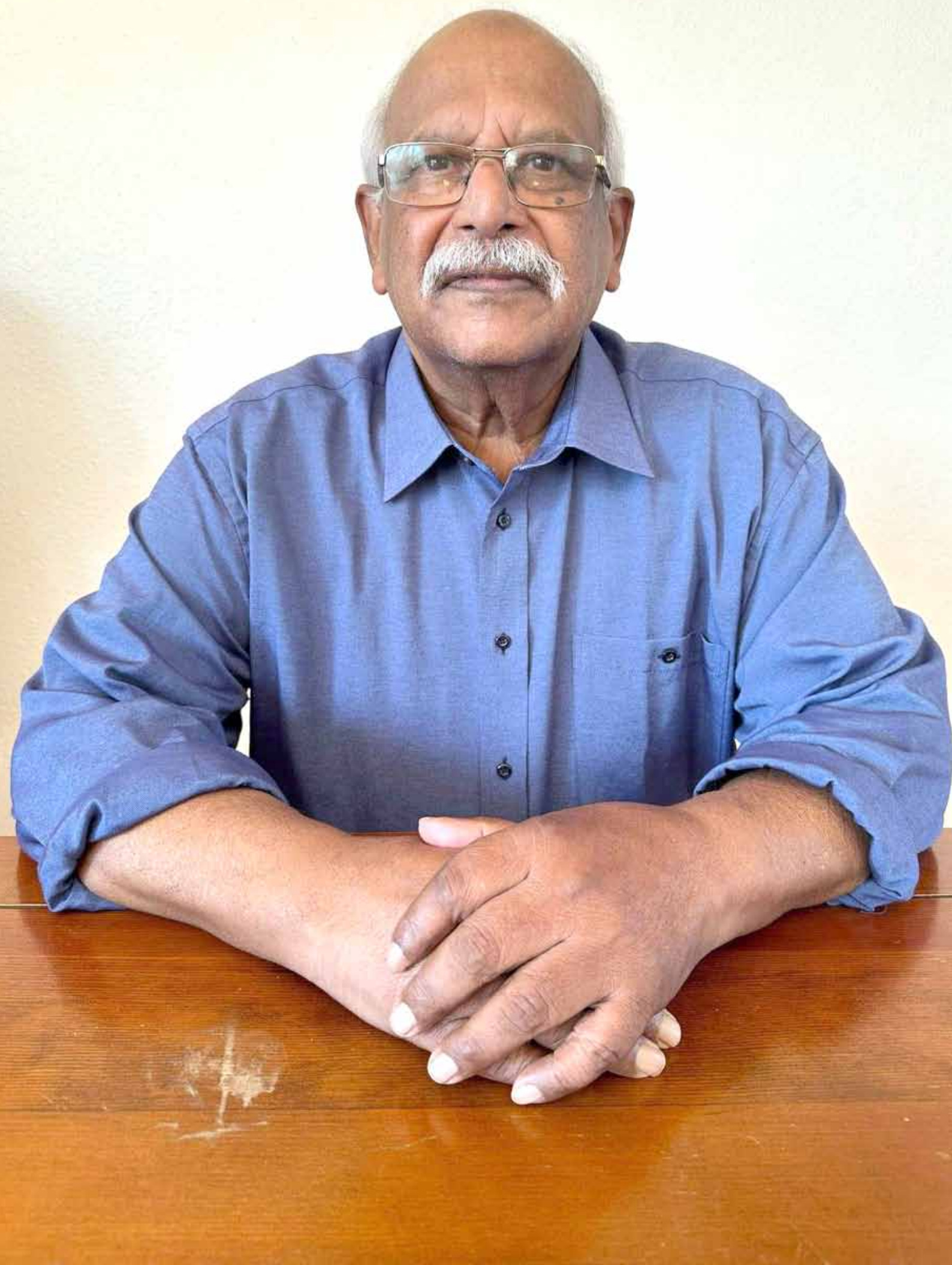
Furthermore, this issue is replete with various insightful and informative articles, each offering unique perspectives and narratives. From incisive political analysis and detailed historical retrospectives to compelling personal stories, our magazine is designed to cater to a broad spectrum of interests and intellectual curiosities.

We sincerely thank you for your steadfast support and engagement with the Jaffna Monitor.

Warm regards,

கணியன் பூங்குன்றன்
Kaniyan Pungundran
Editor- Jaffna Monitor

INTERVIEW



Prabhakaran and His Family Are No More: Addressing the Truth is Essential

Exclusive Interview with Prabhakaran's Elder Brother Manoharan



By:
our special correspondent

Velupillai Manoharan, the elder brother of the late LTTE leader Velupillai Prabhakaran, currently resides in Denmark with his family. On May 18, 2024, marking the fifteenth anniversary of the end of the Sri Lankan civil war and the death of his brother, Manoharan organized a public commemorative ceremony at the DGI Huset conference center in Denmark.

The primary objective of this event was to unequivocally declare that Prabhakaran and his immediate family are no longer alive, aiming to put an end to the financial frauds being perpetrated in their name.

In an exclusive interview with the Jaffna Monitor, Manoharan discussed the motivations behind this ceremony. He emphasized that the commemoration was essential to counter the activities of a fraudulent individual named "Thuvaraga," who falsely claims to be Prabhakaran's daughter



Manoharan (left) with his younger brother Prabhakaran in the early 1960s in Batticaloa.



From left to right: (second from left) Karthic Manoharan, nephew of Prabhakaran and son of Manoharan, (third from left) Manoharan, elder brother of Prabhakaran, (fourth from left) Vanajadevi Manoharan, Manoharan's wife at a public commemorative ceremony at the DGI Huset conference center in Denmark, commemorating Prabhakaran and his family on May 18th, 2024, the 15th anniversary of the brutal conclusion of the Sri Lankan war and the death of Prabhakaran.

and is orchestrated by a large fraudulent syndicate.

We present compelling excerpts from Manoharan's interview with the Jaffna Monitor:

Why did your family organize a commemorative ceremony for your brother and his family after 15 years? What is the need for the commemoration now?



The picture of Prabhakaran's family that was displayed at the public commemorative ceremony at the DGI Huset conference center in Denmark.



Prabhakaran with his wife Mathivathani, his elder son Charles Anthony, and his daughter Duvaraga in the early 1990s.

You need to understand one thing: my brother, Prabhakaran, was not the type to escape from a war zone, leaving his fighters and commanders behind. Nor would he ever let his family escape while hundreds of other families perished. My brother was a true warrior, and abandoning his cause is something a true warrior could never imagine doing. He fought for the noble dream of Tamil Eelam and died on the battlefield alongside his family.

I am sure that none of my brother's family members—Prabhakaran, his wife Mathivathani, my nephews Charles Antony and Balachandran, or my niece Thuvaraga—are alive. All, except for young Balachandran, attained martyrdom on the battlefield, while Balachandran was killed cold-bloodedly by the Sri Lankan government. The need to organize this commemoration after 15 years arose from the emergence of a fake Thuvaraga.

In recent months, someone has falsely claimed to be my niece Thuvaraga, deceiving the diaspora out of millions of dollars. As Prabhakaran's elder brother, I felt it was my responsibility to end this nonsense. Additionally, there have been false rumours that my brother is alive and living abroad.

To those LTTE supporters who still believe that my brother is alive, I want to remind you of one incident among many. In 1987, when senior commanders Kumarappa and Pulendran were about to be taken to Colombo by the Sri Lankan army, they took cyanide capsules on my brother's orders and died. A person of such resolve could never escape to live abroad with his family.

Thousands of LTTE fighters died for my brother because they believed in him. He would never betray their trust by cowardly escaping from the war zone. Claiming that my brother or his family is alive and living in a European country is an insult to his legacy. He was a true warrior and leader who would never abandon his fighters and people in their time of need.

Why the commemoration after 15 long years?

If we had stayed silent, the lies about the fake



Original Duvaraga (left) and the fake Duvaraga (right).

Thuvaraga could have been accepted as truth, and innocent people would continue to lose their money. As Prabhakaran's elder brother, I have a responsibility to reveal the truth about what happened to him and his family. If we do not speak out, these false narratives will dominate, and everyone will believe this nonsense.



Prabhakaran

When did you come to know for sure that your brother is no more, given the ambiguity surrounding his death?

I was 100 per cent certain that he would not escape the war zone. In 2009, around May 25, a week after my brother's martyrdom, Priyan (Jeyaragavan Ariyam), the LTTE representative in Denmark, came to our house and informed us that my brother Prabhakaran was no more. He told us that Prabhakaran attained martyrdom on May 18.



May 1983 - At a clandestine training camp in the depths of Udaiyarkaddu jungle, Prabhakaran himself leads the charge, gripping a G3 A3 German gun. This weapon, typically wielded by the Pakistan army, has a storied journey—smuggled from Pakistan to Bangladesh, then to Calcutta, before being acquired by the LTTE. At this pivotal moment, the LTTE was a tight-knit group of fewer than 30 members, with only 20-25 participating in this intense training session.



Prabhakaran

When did you last talk with your brother?

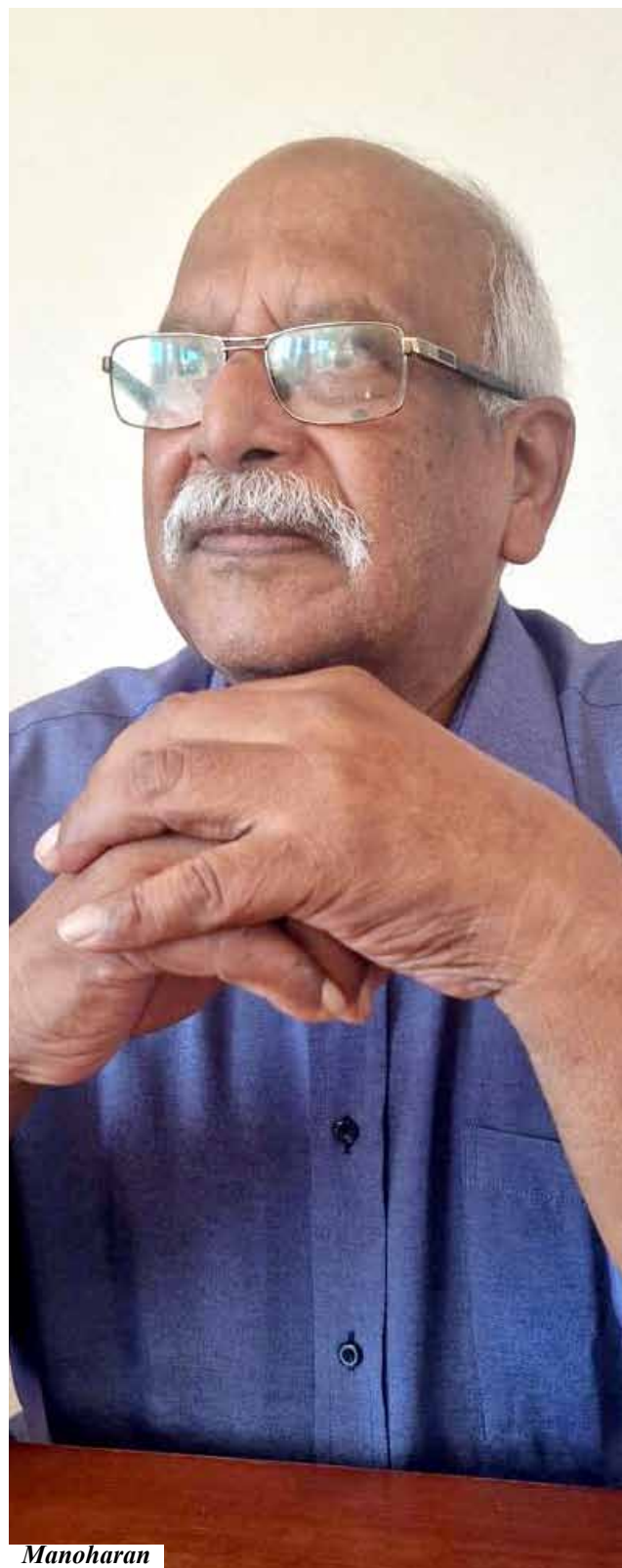
I talked with him often until the end of 2008. However, after 2009, when the war intensified, our communication became restricted. I last spoke with him a few months before May 2009, probably in March. During that conversation, I also spoke with his family and our parents, who were with him.

What did your brother tell you?

He said the situation was getting out of hand and asked for advice since our parents were with him. I told him that due to the visa process restrictions, I couldn't



Manoharan and his family with his father Velupillai and mother Parvathy Pillai.



Manoharan

take our parents out immediately. Additionally, our mother, Parvathy Pillai, was paralyzed, which made obtaining a visa even more challenging. I conveyed this to my brother and said that our parents should do the same as others living in the war zone.

Did he mention that the war was about to end and that the LTTE was going to be defeated?

No, he did not. He said they would continue to fight but acknowledged that the problems were overwhelming. However, he emphasized that they would fight bravely.

Did he mention his end?

No, he did not. But I was very certain that he would not escape the war zone, and I am sure he would not facilitate his family's escape either. On many occasions, we asked him to send at least one of his children to stay with us abroad, but he always refused.

When did you request this?

Many times. Even during the Indian army's presence in 1987, we requested it. We also asked about peacetime in 2004-05. In 1987, when Prabhakaran went into the forest to fight the Indian army, he lost contact with his family. During that time, his wife Mathivathani, son Charles Antony, and daughter Thuvaraga went to Denmark. Mathivathani's elder sister, Aruna Devi, and her elder brother, Sritharan, took them to Denmark. When Prabhakaran learned about this, he immediately called them back. I



Photo of infant Prabhakaran taken around early 1955.



Prabhakaran's wife Mathivathani with their son Charles Antony and daughter Duvaraga in Denmark around the 1987-88 period.

heard that he said, 'When my fighters' and commanders' children do not have the facility to go abroad, how can I send my wife and children there?'

Did you see any leadership qualities in him when he was younger?

Look-wise, he was very average, and academically, he was also an average student. However, he exhibited different traits from an early age.

When the army or police physically and mentally abused us, we would come home and remain silent. But my brother always insisted that we should fight back. He often criticized the non-violent protests of our Tamil leaders. Despite his young age, he frequently told us that the only language Sinhala chauvinists understand is retaliation. He believed they would never respond to peaceful protests from Tamils.

He often said, 'The only language these Sinhala

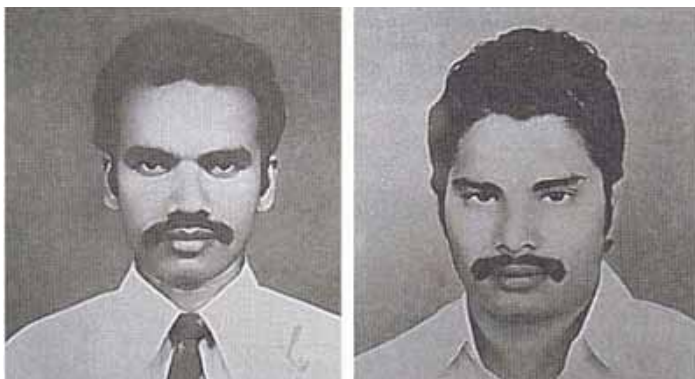


Sathiyaseelan

politicians and chauvinists understand is hitting back.' He believed that Tamils should retaliate and show their strength rather than passively enduring violence.

What was his first involvement in militancy?

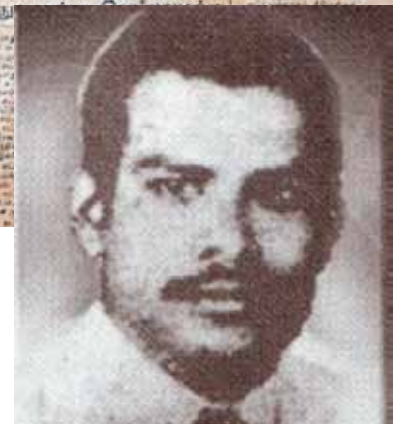
He first joined the Tamil Students Federation (Tamil Manavar Peravai), headed by Sathiyaseelan, when he was only 16 years old. He was actively involved in the activities of the Tamil Students Federation, including making petrol bombs and hand grenades. Kuttimani (Selvarajah Yogachandran) and Thangathurai (Nadarajah Thangavelu) were also part of the Tamil Manavar Peravai. They were my classmates and friends. When Sathiyaseelan



Kuttimani and Thangathurai



A newspaper cutting of Eela Nadu, explaining the brutality of Inspector T.L.B. Bastianpillai, who headed the CID TULF (Tamil United Liberation Front) desk.



Notorious Tamil police inspector T.L.B. Bastianpillai, who headed the CID TULF (Tamil United Liberation Front) desk. He was infamous for his innovative methods of torturing suspects

was arrested in 1973, the activities of the Tamil Students Federation came to a halt.

How did your personal life get affected in your early years because of your brother's involvement in militancy?

After my brother assassinated Alfred Duraiappah in April 1975, the police couldn't find him, so they started arresting me. The notorious CID officer in the Jaffna district, Tamil Inspector T.L.B. Bastianpillai, arrested



me multiple times and held me in custody at a place called King's House inside the Jaffna Fort.

Instead of capturing my brother Prabhakaran, he targeted me. Similarly, instead of Kuttimani, he arrested his younger brother 'Katti,' and instead of Nadesathasan, he arrested his elder brother Maheshathasan. All of us were tortured and beaten black and blue.

T.L.B. Bastianpillai also tried to force me to give a false confession about my brother. At that time, I was working at Vallai Textile, a well-known company. However, the CID's relentless harassment made it impossible for me to continue working.



A rare photo of teenage Prabhakaran

Due to this constant persecution, I had to leave the country in 1975. My father arranged a job for me on a ship, and on April 25, 1975, I left the country, never to return.

Was it true that your brother Prabhakaran met a woman who was a victim of the 1956 ethnic violence and that this encounter changed his life?

Yes, it is true. That woman was a distant relative who often visited our house seeking help. My father, being a generous man, always assisted her. Her hands had been severely burned by Sinhalese thugs during the 1956 violence, causing them to fuse together. Seeing her condition deeply affected my younger brother. He would often ask us why we didn't fight back and why we just endured all the injustices.

Additionally, when we lived in Batticaloa, a lady who lived near our house frequently visited us. Her husband had been killed in the 1956 pogrom. She often narrated the injustices she had endured. My brother, being only 7 or 8 years old, would listen to these stories while sitting on our mother's lap. I believe these experiences of encountering innocent victims profoundly changed his way of thinking.

How were your parents' characters? Were they brave or innocent?

My father was a government servant, working as a land officer and later as the district land officer. He could have easily become an Assistant Government Agent (AGA) or Divisional Revenue Officer (DRO), but he was content with his position as a land officer. During his tenure, he initiated several land schemes, such as the Muthyankatu Land



*Prabhakaran's father
Velupillai with his wife
Parvathy*

Scheme and the Vishwamadu Educated Student Land Scheme, all under his supervision.

He worked diligently until his natural retirement in 1983. He was a very honest land officer.

Once, I met X. M. Sellathambu, a former MP of the Illankai Tamil Arasu Kachchi (Federal Party) in Vavuniya. He told me about my father's integrity. He said that when the new Vavuniya town was being built, my father, who was in charge of allocating land for shops, theatres, and schools, was advised by many to take some prime land in his relatives' names. But he refused.

I am certain that he did not earn a single penny illegally during his years as a government servant. He never drank alcohol, smoked, or even chewed betel leaves. My brother Prabhakaran inherited these good qualities from my father.

My mother, Parvathy Pillai, was a different character. She was very brave. While my

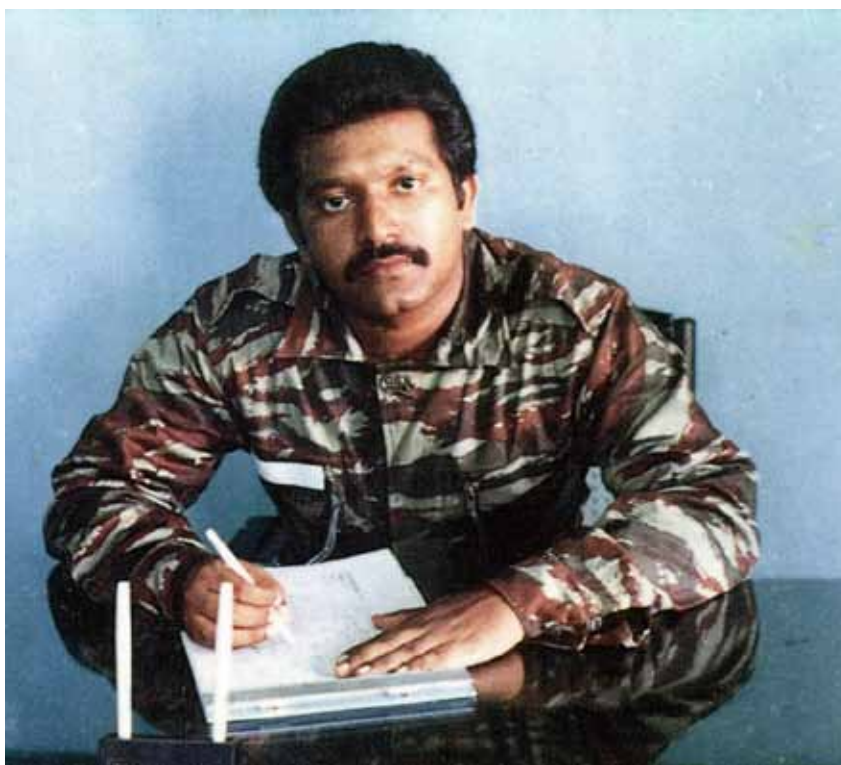
father was soft-spoken, my mother was courageous. She spoke boldly to the police who came searching for Prabhakaran. Once, Inspector Bastianpillai came to our house and asked, "Where is your younger son?" My mother boldly replied, "That is your job to find out." He then slapped her on the cheek and threatened to bring Prabhakaran back like a wounded man from an aeroplane accident. My mother boldly retorted, "Don't talk; do it." This infuriated them, and they arrested her and took her to the police station.

When did Prabhakaran leave your house forever?

It was in 1974 when Prabhakaran left our house for good. That evening, a known friend of his came to our home and called for Prabhakaran by name. Prabhakaran wasn't there at the time, and another person had accompanied his friend. When Prabhakaran returned, we informed him about the visitors. He told us that the friend who had come calling had already been arrested by the police, and he was curious to know who had accompanied him.



A rare photo of teenage Prabhakaran.



Prabhakaran then took out a file containing photos of CID officers, and I identified the man who had come with his friend. Prabhakaran told me that it was Bastianpillai. That very night, a large group of army and police officers came to our house to arrest him. However, Prabhakaran was not in his bed; he had escaped and never returned home.

Before escaping, he meticulously destroyed all pictures of himself from the family albums. The only photo the police had of him was taken during his GCE O/L exams for his admission card. In that photo, he had cut his hair short and looked very different from his usual self. He was very cautious about his personal safety, even from a young age.

Did you observe that your brother had the traits of a leader who could potentially lead an armed struggle?

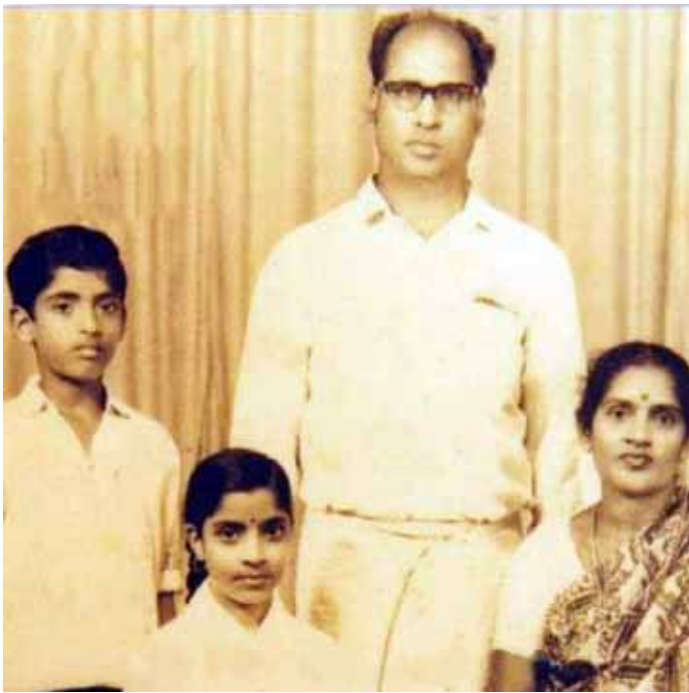
No, he was just my younger brother, and I didn't see any particular qualities that stood out as those of a future leader. In fact, both my father and I did not want him to go into armed struggle. We advised him many times against it. My father even arranged a job for him on a ship, hoping he would choose a different path. But he was not ready to listen to us.

Who is behind the fake Thuvaraga?

There is a large syndicate involved in this deception. Organizations such as the Tamil Coordinating Committee (TCC) and the World Tamil Coordinating Committee (WTCC) are implicated in this fraudulent scheme. The TCC, for example, used to collect 200 kroner every month from each family in Denmark. We contributed from 1998 until 2006. In 2006, we discovered that the TCC was not sending the money to Tamil Eelam as intended but was instead diverting



sritharan



From left to right: Mathivathani's elder brother Sritharan Erampu, Prabhakaran's wife Mathivathani, Mathivathani's father Erampu, Mathivathani's mother Sinnamma.



Seraman



From left to right: Mathivathani's elder sister Aruna Devi's second daughter Vidya, Aruna Devi, Prabhakaran's elder son Charles Anthony, daughter Duvaraga, Mathivathani, and Prabhakaran, during peace time around 2004-05.

it for personal gain. Once we identified this misuse, we stopped our contributions.

Prabhakaran's wife, Mathivathani's elder brother, Sritharan, and her elder sister, Aruna Devi are also part of this syndicate. They provide a legitimate face to this scheme. Additionally, fraudsters such as Seraman, Chinnaiah Mouleeswaran, Gobi Sivanthan, Kirupakaran, Inpha Tamil Radio owner

Balasingam Prabakaran, Jeyabalan alias Abdulla, and a few others are deeply involved in this operation. Working for Seraman from Denmark are Seharan Kandasamy, Sivabaskaran Sinnathamby, and Pancharajah Bach Thambipillai.

These individuals and organizations have orchestrated a complex network of deceit. They exploit the emotional and financial



Photo of the public commemorative ceremony at the DGI Huset conference center in Denmark, arranged by Manoharan's family.

support of the Tamil diaspora by falsely claiming that Thuvaraga, Prabhakaran's daughter, is still alive. This claim is used to siphon funds from well-meaning supporters who believe they are aiding Prabhakaran's family and the Tamil cause.

Why is Mathivathani's family involved in these fraudulent activities?

It's all about easy money. By falsely claiming that Thuvaraga is alive, they can potentially



Mathivathani's elder brother Sritharan (left) with Mathivathani's younger brother Balachandran, also known as Captain Arun. He died in Kilinochchi Puliampokkanai, committing cyanide suicide during an encirclement by Indian forces in April 1988. Later, Prabhakaran and his wife named their last born son Balachandran in his memory.



Abdulla



Prabhakaran's wife Mathivathani (second from left) with her mother Sinnamma (extreme left), Duvaraga (right side of her), and her father Erampu (left) in front of the name sign for Anaiyiravu (Elephant Pass). The name plate notes the Jeyanthan Regiment of Eastern Fighters' war cry, "எங்கும் செல்வோம் எதிலும் வெல்வோம்" (We will go everywhere, we will conquer everything).



Prabhakaran's elder sister Vinothini Rajenthiram, who lives in Canada.



Former District Medical Officer of Valvettithurai Regional Hospital, Doctor Mayilerum Perumal with Prabhakaran's mother, Parvathy Amma, in Uurani Hospital.



Parvathy Amma's funeral

earn millions of dollars without having to work hard or do anything significant. Sritharan has been a fraudster for a long time. In 2004, he brought a man to me, claiming he was from Tamil Eelam and needed help. I gave him 25,000 kronor, but later, I found out that the man was actually from Italy, not Tamil Eelam. I even informed my brother Prabhakaran about this. Ironically, Aruna Devi's three daughters are doctors in Denmark and earn well, yet she chose this fraudulent path.

When did you last talk with your father?

We were able to talk with him and our mother

until May 2009. When they crossed over to the army-controlled side, we lost touch and couldn't find their contact information. We reached out to various Tamil nationalist MPs, but they didn't help us. A few MPs indirectly asked for money to facilitate communication with our parents.

Who are they?

I don't want to name them, but they are still there, occupying their seats in Parliament.

Former Member of Parliament Sivajilingam has made a few allegations about you, claiming that you did not help your parents. How do you respond to these accusations?

First of all, Sivajilingam is not related to us, not even distantly. He used our name for his own fame, trying to portray himself as a close relative of Prabhakaran to gain money and fame. When my father passed away, our brother (not a direct brother but a close family relation) was about to handle the cremation. However, Sivajilingam somehow intervened, used his influence, and performed the final rites. He then profited substantially from this.

Even my sister, who resides in Canada, sent him 4 lakhs. Additionally, he received money from various diaspora associations. I know he collected money from many people and foreign associations using my parents' funeral as an excuse. He is a dishonest person who exploited our family's situation and name for personal gain, and he continues to profit from it.

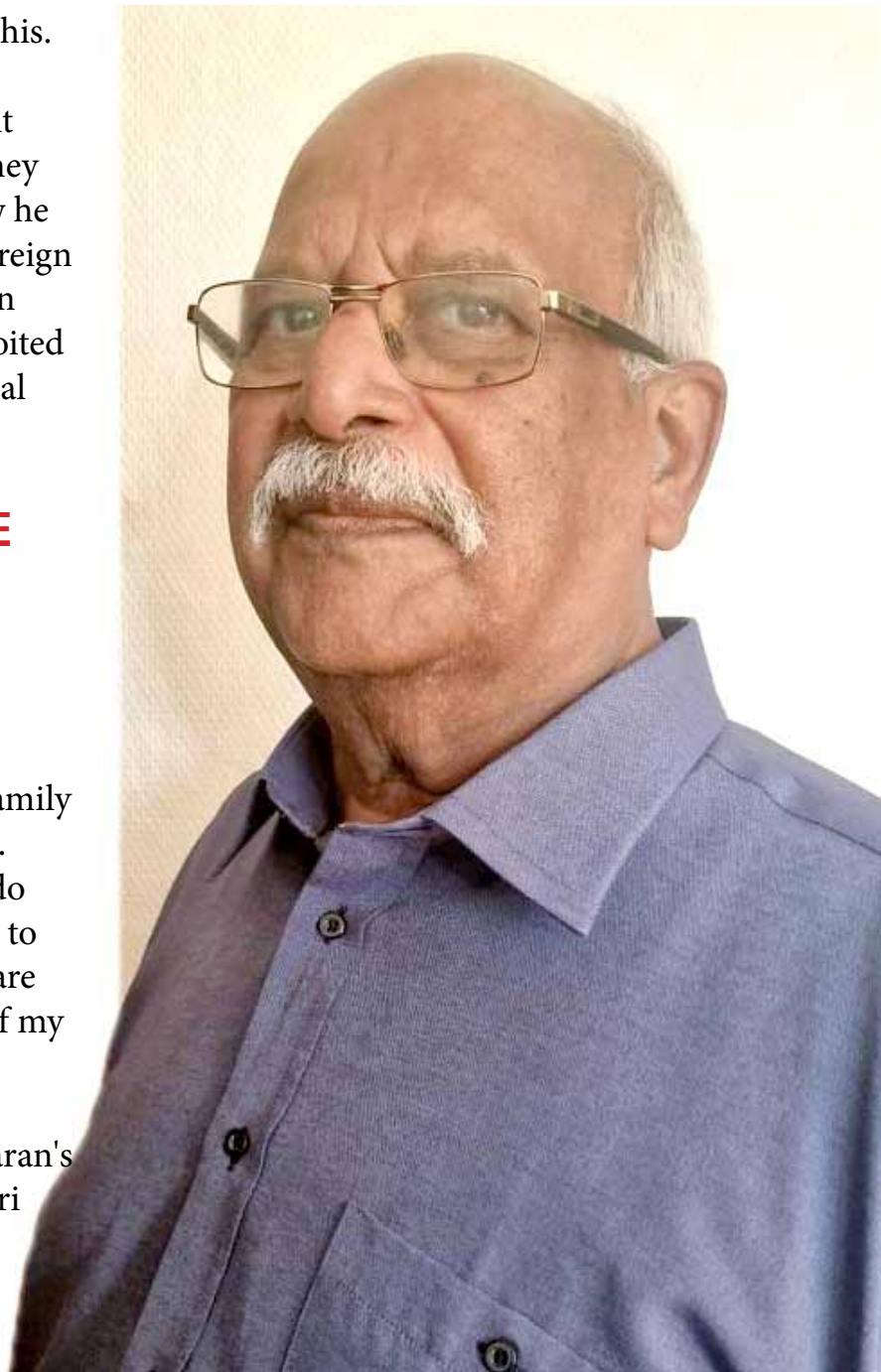
What would you like to tell the LTTE supporters who still idolize your brother and somehow long for his miraculous return?

My brother, Prabhakaran, and his entire family are no more. They all attained martyrdom. It is essential to accept this reality. Please do not fall prey to these fraudsters who claim to be my brother's family. These individuals are exploiting your emotions and the legacy of my brother for their own gain.

If you genuinely want to honour Prabhakaran's memory, focus on helping our people in Sri

Lanka. Many Tamils who were affected by the war still live in abject poverty and face daily struggles. They need your support more than ever. Channel your efforts and resources toward rebuilding the lives of these war-affected individuals. Support initiatives that provide education, healthcare, and economic opportunities for them.

Remember, the best way to keep my brother's legacy alive is by working towards the betterment of our Tamil community and ensuring that those who have suffered do not continue to live in hardship. Your contributions can make a significant difference in their lives.





Pioneering Healthcare with Hiccups: Jaffna University's Latest Medical Block



By:

Jaffna Monitor Reporter

Jaffna, Sri Lanka - In a monumental stride towards advancing medical education and healthcare in the Northern Province, President Ranil Wickremesinghe inaugurated the cutting-edge Clinical Training and Research Block at the University of Jaffna's Faculty

of Medicine on May 24th. This impressive facility, constructed with an investment of LKR 942 million, is set to revolutionize medical training and treatment in the region. Despite its inauguration coinciding with the imminent presidential election, experts unanimously agree that this development marks a significant milestone for Jaffna, promising enhanced healthcare services and educational opportunities for future generations.

Spanning 6,000 square meters, the newly inaugurated building is the first of its kind to be constructed in 46 years at the University of Jaffna. According to a press release from the President's office, it includes multiple lecture halls, clinical skills laboratories, an auditorium, and essential medical facilities such as operating theatres, recovery rooms, and research labs. The facility will accommodate 1,200 students for both undergraduate and postgraduate clinical training, fostering international research collaborations.

"The construction of this building marks a significant milestone. With this new facility, we are taking a major step towards elevating the standards of medical education in the Northern Province," President Wickremesinghe remarked during the ceremony.

The President's media unit highlighted that the Clinical Training and Research Block is equipped with patient waiting rooms, consultation rooms, and specialized units dedicated to endoscopy, vascular surgery, and mammography. It also houses research laboratories, a forensic investigation unit, and a museum for educational purposes. The Fertility Care Unit, managed by the Department of Obstetrics and Gynaecology, will offer specialist consultations, diagnostic procedures, and treatment facilities.

The Clinical Trials Unit (CTU) will facilitate clinical research on locally adapted, cost-effective treatment methods, while the Clinical Genetics Unit (CGU) will focus on genetic cost-effectiveness, disease management, and preventive measures.

In his address, President Wickremesinghe unveiled ambitious plans to elevate Jaffna



Hospital to a national hospital, aiming to ensure top-tier healthcare standards in the Northern Province.

Following his visit, a formal proposal to upgrade Jaffna Teaching Hospital was swiftly submitted to the Sri Lankan Cabinet. This proposal, championed by Minister Douglas Devananda, received President Wickremesinghe's endorsement during the Cabinet meeting on May 27th. As a result of this initiative, Jaffna Teaching Hospital is poised for significant enhancements, including improvements in physical infrastructure and an increase in staffing. This development is expected to elevate the hospital's capacity to provide high-quality healthcare services and support the advanced training of medical professionals.

Experts say that if these improvements are done honestly, they will create an optimal environment for delivering superior healthcare services to the people of the Northern Province, marking a transformative step forward for the region.

When contacted by the Jaffna Monitor,



Minister Douglas Devananda stated, "President Ranil was very keen on upgrading Jaffna Teaching Hospital to a national hospital. He asked me to submit a proposal in the last Cabinet meeting, which was endorsed by the President and approved by the Cabinet."

Professors from the Jaffna Medical Faculty acknowledged that the newly opened Clinical Training and Research Block is indeed a significant step forward for medical education and healthcare in the region. However, they also pointed out that the facility still faces substantial challenges due to a lack of basic amenities. They provided a detailed overview of the building's intended purposes, highlighting its potential to transform medical training and research. Despite this, the professors emphasized the need for additional resources and improvements to fully realize the facility's capabilities and address its current shortcomings.

The Clinical Training and Research Block was constructed with three main objectives, they said:

Undergraduate and Postgraduate Teaching: The primary purpose of the building is to facilitate clinical training for both undergraduate and postgraduate students. This includes MBBS students (student doctors), registrars, and senior registrars in surgical specialties. The training encompasses examining patients, performing procedures, and conducting various medical investigations. This hands-on experience is essential for developing competent medical professionals.

Service Delivery to the Public: The second goal is to enhance service delivery to patients. By performing surgeries and medical procedures, the aim is to reduce patient waiting times and alleviate overcrowding in hospitals. This improvement will increase patient comfort and streamline the healthcare process, benefiting

both patients and the healthcare system.

Medical Research: The third objective is to facilitate medical research, contributing to advancements in medical science and healthcare practices.

However, professors pointed out that despite the significant investment of over LKR 900 million, the building currently lacks the necessary facilities. They emphasized that it is essentially just a physical structure at this stage, as the government has not yet provided the funds required for essential furnishings and medical instruments. An additional allocation of around LKR 150 million is needed to fully operationalize the building. They told the Jaffna Monitor that this crucial funding shortfall must be addressed to ensure the facility can effectively meet its intended purposes.

Current Challenges and Priorities

Furniture and Basic Equipment: The first priority is to acquire furniture such as chairs, tables, and cupboards for staff, students, and medical practitioners.

Day Surgical Unit: A day surgical unit is being built where patients can undergo surgeries in the morning and return home by evening. This will be the first such unit in the government sector in Sri Lanka. The benefits include improved patient comfort, reduced hospital overcrowding, and increased staff motivation. To establish this unit, professors explained that theater instruments, laparoscopic and endoscopic equipment, anesthetic instruments, beds, monitors, and cardiac monitors are needed.

Advanced Reproductive Technology (ART)

Theater Complex: This facility will provide advanced infertility treatments like IVF, making them accessible to economically disadvantaged patients. This will be the first government sector ART center in Sri Lanka, offering treatments typically costing LKR 1.5 to 2 million.

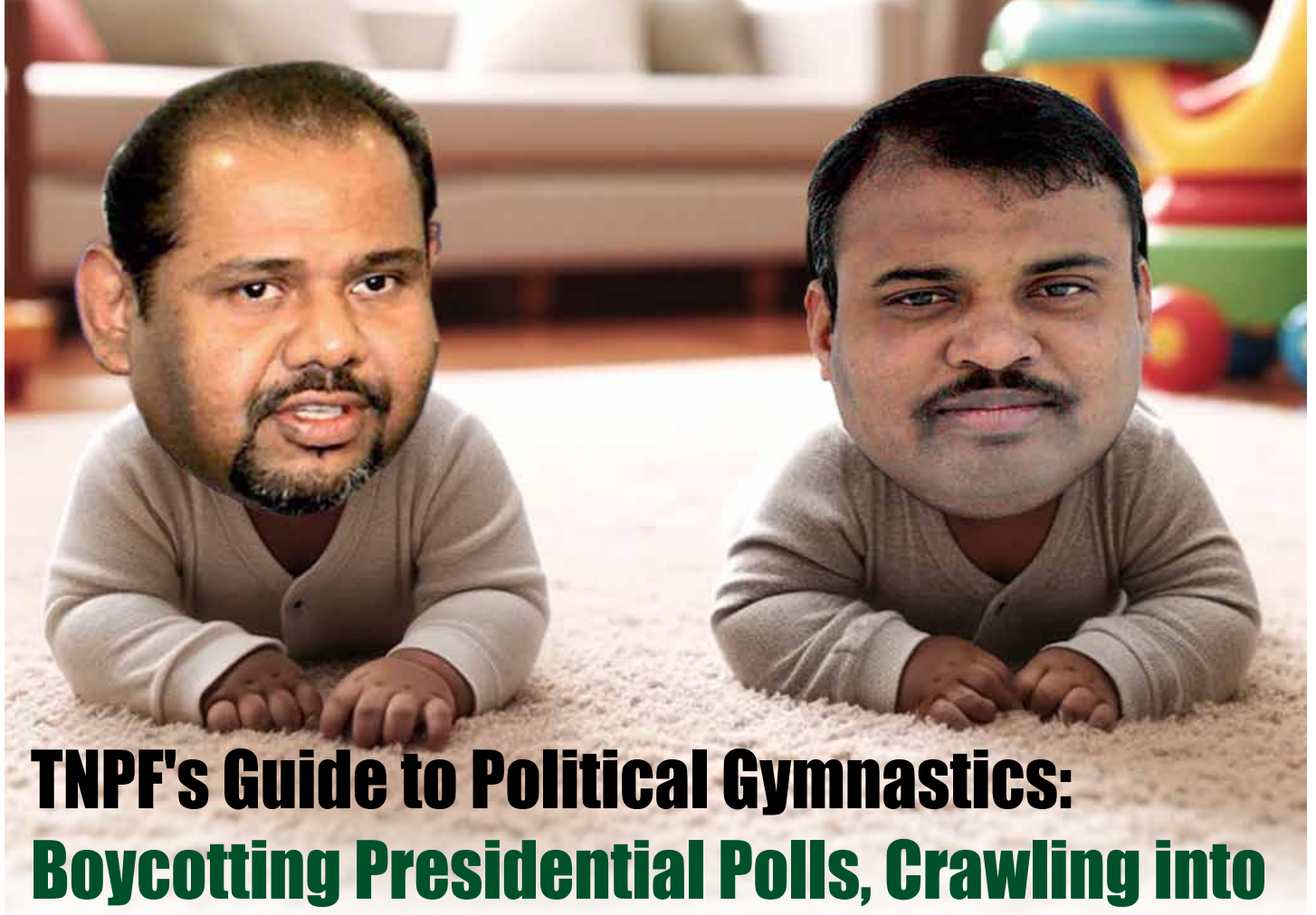
Laboratories and Diagnostic Facilities:

Plans include building laboratories for blood investigations, endoscopic procedures, mammograms for early breast cancer detection, neurological investigations, andrology investigations (such as seminal fluid analysis), and vascular investigations. Additionally, ultrasound machines and digital histology equipment are needed. These facilities will enhance diagnostic capabilities and allow for advanced genetic testing, such as karyotyping and molecular tests.

Long-Term Vision

Achieving these priorities will enable the provision of excellent service to the public and deliver high-quality clinical education to undergraduate and postgraduate students. In the long run, this unit aims to become a center of excellence, offering free services to the public and promoting health tourism. This initiative is expected to attract the diaspora and generate revenue that can be reinvested into the hospital, ultimately benefiting the local population.

The professors concluded that while the building represents a great start, there is still a long way to go to realize its full potential and provide the intended benefits to the medical community and the public.



TNPF's Guide to Political Gymnastics: Boycotting Presidential Polls, Crawling into Parliamentary Elections!

The Tamil National People's Front (TNPF), true to its often confusing and aimless political stance, has called on Sri Lankan Tamils to boycott the upcoming presidential election. They argue that Tamils should refrain from voting until their aspirations are fulfilled. However, the TNPF has not provided any reasons or logic behind why they are still contesting in the parliamentary elections, nor why their President Gajendrakumar Ponnambalam and Secretary-General S. Kajendren are happily occupying their parliamentary seats.

"The Sri Lankan government views the Tamil homeland as an enemy," stated the TNPF in a rhetoric-heavy yet logic-lacking announcement. "They continue their Buddhization, militarization, and structural genocide in our homeland. As long as the majority representation is in their hands, they will not consider Tamils as their people but as enemies. Therefore, the only option left to the Tamil people is to reject the presidential election," the TNPF declared.

Yet, how does this logic hold up during parliamentary elections? Does the Sri Lankan government suddenly view Tamils as close relations, making it okay for

the TNPF to participate? The TNPF has provided no clarity on this glaring inconsistency.

Jaffna political observers quip, "Even if Ponnambalam's son pulls off Olympic-level somersaults, he won't land in the president's seat. So, the TNPF is flipping out of the presidential race. But hey, since there's a shot at making him an MP, they're all in for the parliamentary elections!"

The TNPF, in their naive optimism, claimed that boycotting the elections would send a crystal-clear message to the government: the Tamils are stepping out of this electoral dance. How would this grand gesture resonate, or why would the government care about the Tamils boycotting or casting votes? Well, the TNPF left that part as mysterious as the strategy itself.

Switching gears in their marathon statement, the TNPF made a rather sensible point, highlighting that nearly half of Sri Lanka's salary budget is splurged on defence personnel, even with no active conflict. "The Security Forces are a colossal burden on the economy, but they refuse to admit it," their epic declaration noted.

From Traitor to Toastmaster: **Sumanthiran's** **Political Piouette**



In a scene reminiscent of Vadivelu's legendary comedy moment, "படுத்தே விட்டான் மன்னா" ("He laid down, my Lord") from the film *Imsai Arasan 23rd Pulikesi*, where the comedy king Imsai Arasan 23rd Pulikesi dramatically prostrates himself before the enemy king Vallavaraayan to save his life and fend off an impending invasion, Sri

Lankan Tamil lawmaker M.A. Sumanthiran has pulled off a similar political somersault that left everyone gobsmacked.

Known for his vehement criticism of the LTTE and their violent tactics, Sumanthiran has long maintained that their methods only brought suffering to the Tamil community without



yielding any political gains. This stance has earned him the ire of pro-LTTE factions within the Tamil diaspora and local politics, who have branded him a traitor.

But in a twist worthy of the best comedy scripts, Sumanthiran recently made a jaw-dropping verbal U-turn, showering praise on those "who took up arms on our behalf" during the Tamil liberation struggle. "While I personally believe that true political liberation can't be achieved at gunpoint, I've always said we can't judge the decisions of the Tamil youth who felt they had no other choice during times of oppression and military force," he declared, just ahead of the commemoration of the end of the brutal Sri Lankan civil war on May 18, 2009. "Their commitment and sacrifices, made unselfishly, should be held in the highest regard," he added, adding a dramatic flair to his sudden change of tune.

His remarks came before making a rare appearance at the main commemoration ceremony at Mullivaikkal on May 18, the very site marking the end of the LTTE's armed struggle. Sumanthiran's sudden shift in tone is as surprising as Pulikesi's antics, leaving many wondering if this is another theatrical performance or a genuine change of heart. Either way, it certainly adds a dramatic twist to his political narrative!

With his unpredictable antics, Sumanthiran has turned the political stage into a circus of speculation. Is he trying to cozy up to the pro-Tiger factions, or is he genuinely acknowledging the tangled web of the Tamil struggle? Only time will spill the beans. For now, this twist has given political pundits enough material to last a lifetime.



A Legacy in Jeopardy:

The Fight to Save Alaveddy

Sadananda Vidyalyayam

Alaveddy, Jaffna – Alaveddy Sadananda Vidyalyayam, a historic school with nearly a century of educational service, is on the verge of closing its doors. The recent departure of its last batch of fifth-grade students, who have transferred to other schools for middle education, has left the institution without any students. Currently, the principal and a solitary teacher are waiting in hopes of new enrollments, clinging to the possibility of a turnaround. Education officials say the school will be permanently shut down if no new

admissions occur within the next few months. This development marks a bittersweet chapter in the storied history of Alaveddy Sadananda Vidyalyayam, a venerable institution that has been a cornerstone of primary education for countless residents of Alaveddy, one of the largest villages in Jaffna.

Established nearly a century ago, this school once bustled with over 300 students in the mid-1980s, serving as a beacon of learning and community spirit. Throughout its illustrious

history, Alaveddy Sadananda Vidyalayam garnered numerous district, zonal, and divisional accolades, reflecting its commitment to educational excellence and its pivotal role in shaping young minds.

Experts say that the situation at Alaveddy Sadananda Vidyalayam is emblematic of a broader issue affecting many rural schools. They pointed out that the concentration of resources and support in prestigious urban schools has left rural institutions struggling for survival. Alumni associations and local organizations often prioritize well-known schools, neglecting smaller, rural ones. Experts assert that sustainable development across all societal levels can only be achieved when educational resources are equitably distributed. Post-war dynamics have funnelled resources into popular schools and prominent locations, pushing grassroots educational institutions like Alaveddy Sadananda Vidyalayam to the brink. Despite these challenges, Alaveddy Sadananda Vidyalayam still has hope. The school might be saved if neighbouring schools could share their resources and persuade some students to continue their education at Alaveddy Sadananda Vidyalayam.

They indicate that former students and the local community must unite to revive this institution. They pointed out that the successful revival of historic schools, such as the Varuthalaivilan American Mission School in Jaffna, through community support serves as a beacon of hope. By coming together, the community can ensure that Alaveddy Sadananda Vidyalayam continues to provide quality education for future generations. The ancestors of Alaveddy built educational institutions with great effort and dreams for the future. The prosperous and thriving Alaveddy community, which produced many



renowned scholars and professionals like the late V. Ponnambalam—a distinguished teacher, politician, and former Jaffna district secretary for the Communist Party—and the late Muhandiram T. Sathasiva Iyer, who served as the Director of Education for the combined Northern and Eastern provinces of Sri Lanka, should inspire the current residents to take the lead in saving this school.

A united community effort is essential to ensure that Alaveddy Sadananda Vidyalayam survives and thrives once again. The residents of Alaveddy and neighbouring schools must collaborate with the Department of Education to achieve this goal.

In reality, the fate of Alaveddy Sadananda Vidyalayam rests in the hands of its community. With concerted efforts, this historic institution can be revived, continuing its legacy of educational excellence for future generations.

Jaffna Hindu College Student's Path to Medical Faculty Through Extracurricular Excellence

By:
**Our Sports
Correspondent**



Prasanthan

In an exceptionally rare achievement, Prasanthan, a standout student from Jaffna Hindu College known for his excellence in extracurricular activities, has been selected for the Faculty of Medicine at Uva Wellassa University. Initially chosen for the Molecular Biology program, Prasanthan secured his place in the medical faculty following a rigorous national-level selection interview conducted by the University Grants Commission for top achievers. His success is attributed to the additional Z-score points he earned through his extracurricular accomplishments, a unique factor in the university selection process.

The General Certificate of Education Advanced Level (GCE A/L) examination results are calculated using the Z-score obtained from three main subjects. However, the University Grants Commission (UGC) awards additional Z-score points to students who demonstrate significant achievements in extracurricular activities, providing them with enhanced opportunities.

In 2022, 99 students from the Jaffna district were admitted to medical faculties, with two receiving special recognition.

Among them was Prasanthan, a student from

Humanitarian

Diaries

Part-2

A UN Worker's Exclusive Testimony to 'Jaffna Monitor' on the 15th Anniversary of Sri Lanka's Brutal War Conclusion



BY:

Kaniyan Pungundran

கணியன் பூங்குன்றன்

Niththilan (name changed), a former courageous United Nations worker, witnessed the harrowing scenes of Sri Lanka's final war in 2009. Among the few living who can testify to the devastating atrocities committed by both the Sri Lankan government and the LTTE, he played a crucial role in the conflict's final stages. In September 2008, after the directive for the evacuation of UN and international humanitarian organizations from LTTE-controlled territories, Niththilan was appointed as the officer in charge of all UN operations in the region. He led the UN mission within LTTE-controlled areas,

directing local staff in the absence of his international colleagues. Currently residing in Europe, Niththilan has decided to break his silence and share his experiences with 'Jaffna Monitor' under the condition of anonymity.

You have repeatedly mentioned that former LTTE heavyweight Elilan was a brutal child abductor and a war criminal. Could you elaborate on this?

In early March 2009, as the Sri Lankan civil war reached its devastating climax, thousands who had fled from different parts of Vanni, including Mannar, sought refuge in the northern region's last remnants of LTTE-controlled territory. These displaced people settled in the narrow coastal strip



encompassing Puthumathalan, Pokkanai, Valaignarmadam, and Mullivaikkal. This shrinking enclave, measuring a mere 400 meters in width and extending 5-6 kilometers in length, became the final bastion of Tamil Eelam.

In Valaignarmadam, a Catholic church became a sanctuary during the final days of the Sri Lankan civil war. Over 400 families, seeking refuge from the chaos, gathered within the church compound, which welcomed people of all religions. The parents, desperate to protect their children from the brutal abduction teams of the LTTE, hid them within the Church's confines. Armed only with sticks and poles, they guarded the Church, determined to keep the LTTE out.

Displaced Catholic clergy from the vast Vanni region, including priests and nuns, also found shelter on the premises connected to the Church. The parents believed the sanctity of the Church would shield their children, naively trusting that the LTTE would not violate the holy grounds. They stood vigilant, refusing entry to anyone who might threaten their children's safety, ready to defend them with whatever means they had.

The Church challenged the LTTE's authoritarianism. The LTTE, who desired absolute power, had never allowed anyone to question them. Throughout their decades of rule, they made it clear that no one could raise a voice against them. However, this half-acre church compound defied their authority. Parents, defying LTTE orders, were hiding their children there and went a step further by guarding the church premises from the LTTE's brutal abduction teams with sticks and poles.

Near the Church stood the temporary office of the Mullaitivu Government Agent, Parthiban.

Parthiban, who is now in Switzerland, often received visits from my colleagues and me, especially when United Nations food supplies arrived. We would hand them over to him first, ensuring that the aid reached those in need.

One fateful day, I went to discuss arrangements for an expected ship arrival in 2-3 days. I was engulfed by a wave of chaos as I approached his office. The desperate cries of youths echoed through the air, a heart-wrenching sound that pierced my soul. I saw 4 to 5 buses parked there, an unusual and alarming sight. My heart sank as the horrifying realization dawned upon me—this was an abduction operation. The LTTE had breached the sanctity of the Church, intent on tearing away the children and youth sheltered there.

When I arrived, the LTTE, heavily armed and clad in protective gear, had brought the majority of their remaining forces from Vanni. They resembled a full-scale military invasion, but tragically, their target was not an enemy force but their own innocent youths. The leader of this brutal abduction team was Ezhilan.

I recognized Ezhilan immediately. We were from the same Divisional Secretariat (DS) division in Jaffna. He was a well-known volleyball player who represented the Avarangal Central Sports Club. I had known him only as a peaceful and good-hearted young man. But now, Ezhilan looked like an evil child abductor, ready for full combat and willing to go to any lengths to abduct children. He wore body armor and protective gear, carrying two guns: a pistol in his hand and an AK-47 slung over his shoulder. He had come to abduct children as if he were going to war.

When I approached him, Ezhilan saw me and seemed to feel ashamed. He turned his face



and stepped aside, unable to meet my eyes.

I heard horrifying sounds as the LTTE mercilessly beat the parents who were desperately trying to protect their children. The anguished cries of the parents, mixed with the sickening thud of blows landing, created a cacophony of terror. Blood ran through the corridors, staining the sacred ground of the Church. In their brutal assault, the LTTE showed no regard for the sanctity of the place; a few statues of Jesus and Mary were vandalized. The once peaceful Church was transformed into a scene of chaos and violence. Amidst this devastation, the LTTE forcibly abducted the innocent children, dragging them away from the arms of their pleading parents.

The desperate parents fought back as best they could, but they were no match for the heavily armed militants. The LTTE didn't shoot anyone but fired into the air and savagely beat the parents, behaving like wild animals and treating the parents no better. The LTTE's brutality knew no bounds as they ruthlessly

overpowered the defenseless families.

On that dreadful day, the LTTE abducted nearly 400 children from the church premises. These children, who sought refuge in the sacred space, were torn from their families' arms and thrust into the clutches of a losing war. It's important to remember that, at that time, the LTTE's territory had shrunk to a mere few kilometers. The end was clearly in sight, and any sane person would understand the imminent total annihilation of the LTTE. Yet, the LTTE forcibly abducted children for a war they were destined to lose. Knowing their days were numbered, the LTTE leadership, instead of facing their inevitable defeat with dignity, chose to drag innocent lives into their doomed struggle to save themselves. In a horrifying act of self-preservation, they sacrificed innocent children, displaying a monstrous contempt for humanity and decency.

When I was in Vanni, I always wore the UN uniform to identify myself as a UN worker, carrying a UN radio with an antenna and a

satellite telephone. On that horrific day, as the LTTE herded the children onto the buses, the children saw me and recognized me from my clothes. The sight of my familiar uniform sparked a desperate glimmer of hope in their eyes. They began shouting and crying out for help, their voices filled with terror and desperation. "Anna, please save us, save us," they cried. Their pleas still echo in my mind to this day.

I stood there, paralyzed by a mixture of helplessness, rage, and despair, unable to do anything to stop the abduction. The sight of those children, torn from their families and thrust into a nightmare, was more than I could bear. By my estimation, at least 400 children were abducted by Ezhilan from the Valaignarmadam church that day alone. Overall, he abducted thousands of children and sent them forcefully into the jaws of the multibarrel shells.

Today, Ezhilan's wife, Ananthi Sasitharan, is a prominent advocate for the disappeared, but her husband bears the responsibility for the disappearance of those 400 children on that single day. The weight of those lost children, their stolen futures, and the endless grief of their families are a burden that Ezhilan and his wife must carry forever.

Ezhilan, who surrendered to the army in the final battle, remains on the missing persons list. Since the end of the war, Ananthi, who has been searching for her husband, has appeared in numerous international forums, emphasizing the tragedy of missing persons. She does not, however, speak out about her husband's forcible abduction and disappearance of minor children. I would salute and support her if she accepted the fact that her husband was a brutal child abductor responsible for the kidnapping of hundreds

of children and fought for those made to disappear by her husband.

You mentioned that all the Catholic clergy in the Vanni region were in that Church at the time of the abduction. Why didn't they intervene and stop the brutal abduction?

It's true that while these atrocities were happening, all the fathers and sisters of the Vanni region who were present there were hiding. No one came out to speak against the brutal actions of the LTTE. None of the clergy stepped forward to tell the LTTE not to do this inside the Church, not to abduct children, or not to vandalize the statues. Instead, they were hiding inside the Church, remaining silent in the face of such brutality.

Why didn't you intervene?

In a sense, I was paralyzed with fear. Had I intervened, the LTTE would have definitely killed me on the spot.

What happened to those 400 children?

I believe the vast majority of those abducted were killed on the battlefield. Almost all of them were forced to fight on the front lines with only a few days of training. How can one imagine that children, with minimal preparation and without the will to fight, could stand on the front lines with guns, facing sophisticated military shells and gunfire?

We heard that you were the one who proposed the no-fire zone. Can you tell us about it?



A harrowing yet tragically common scene of Mullaitivu during the early months of 2009, showcasing the devastating aftermath of indiscriminate shelling.

Yes, I proposed the no-fire zone during the intense fighting in Kilinochchi in mid-December 2008. As the war intensified, the area from Kandavalai Junction to Theravil Junction became densely populated with displaced people. Most of the displaced chose to settle in Tharmapuram, Visuvamadu, and nearby places.

From Tharmapuram junction to Visuvamadu junction, a makeshift town emerged, created by the displaced population. Along Tharmapuram Road, shop signs bore the names of other cities and villages from the Vanni region, such as Mangulam, Murigandi, and Kilinochchi. The LTTE offices and the remaining NGOs were also situated in this area.

During the height of the conflict, the district secretariat moved to Tharmapuram.

In one of our coordination meetings, I proposed establishing a no-fire zone from Kandavalai junction to Theravil Pond, a stretch spanning 6 kilometers. Despite initial scepticism, no one objected to my plan. I quickly drafted a one-page proposal and sent it to the UN coordinator for Sri Lanka. I secured the support of the GA of Mullaitivu, Vethanayagam, the director of education, and several other key officials.

Within 30 minutes, I received a positive response from my office.

I submitted this proposal in December 2008, but the government did not respond immediately. By January 2009, on Thai Pongal day, the Visuvamadu and Tharmapuram areas were displaced as the army captured Kandavalai.



On January 20th, I received a late-night call from my superior at the UN. "Your proposal has been approved by the government of Sri Lanka," she said. "The government has agreed to a no-fire zone, but the boundaries are different from what you proposed. The government announced boundaries from Theravil Kulam to Suthanthira Puram junction."

Although these boundaries differed from my original proposal, I was elated because people, including us (UN workers), had already moved to that area.

Overjoyed, I announced the news to the general public. The relief and happiness were palpable; people believed they could finally sleep peacefully. Many came to my temporary shelter to confirm the news. I felt immense

pride and joy, knowing my proposal had made a difference and that I could finally do something meaningful for my people.

However, at that time, I did not understand the government's true intention behind announcing the no-fire zone.

What happened after the establishment of the no-fire zone?

The next day, all radio channels, including Ilankai Vanoli (Sri Lankan Radio), repeatedly announced the establishment of a no-fire zone. Civilians believed wholeheartedly that this would alleviate their suffering and reduce the deaths of non-combatants, allowing them to finally sleep peacefully without the threat of indiscriminate shelling. People from all areas flocked to the no-fire zone, spreading out



A temporary school in the war zone

tarpaulins and living there without building bunkers for safety.

Despite the announcement, the LTTE continued to operate within the no-fire zone as usual, with camps and offices already established before the declaration. Initially, the LTTE refrained from attacking the army from within the zone. However, the LTTE's brutal child abduction teams continued their forced conscription activities even within the designated no-fire area.

What were the conditions and challenges faced within the no-fire zone?

Though the Sri Lankan government had proclaimed the no-fire zone, the specific

conditions and limitations were not communicated to the UN. We eagerly awaited this information, as the zone was established at the UN's request. Unfortunately, the UN did not have an official agreement or discussions about the no-fire zone with the Sri Lankan government, which was a significant oversight on our part. Ideally, both parties in a conflict should refrain from using or carrying weapons in a no-fire zone. However, this was not the case here, as the LTTE maintained weapons, camps, and offices inside the zone, and forced conscription continued unabated.

We established our UN hub in a playground at the Suthanthirapuram junction within the no-fire zone. In this expansive area, spanning 5-6 acres, we established our UN hub and a civilian distribution point for the goods brought by the UN convoy. At that time, the

last UN food convoy arrived with around 50 trucks loaded with supplies. Six international staff members entered the war zone, but four left. Two stayed: Karun Khan, a Bangladeshi national working in the UN Department of Security, and Peter, a UN operations specialist, who remained with the intention of evacuating the UN staff. They took the risk and stayed with us at the UN hub.

In the UN hub, we constructed a bunker with the help of locals for the safety of our two international staff. We shared the GPS location of the UN hub with the army through our Vavuniya office. Although it was a no-fire zone, we deemed it necessary to share our location for added security.

What happened after the announcement of the no-fire zone?

About a week after the announcement, there were no incidents or shelling within the no-fire zone. However, one night, around 2 o'clock, the army began shelling the no-fire zone. I can confirm that all the shelling was targeted solely at the no-fire zone because the Sri Lankan government and army were fully aware of its boundaries and our UN hub's GPS location.

The initial calm was shattered by the sudden and intense bombardment. Shells rained down on the no-fire zone and our UN hub, creating chaos and panic. The shelling was so intense that it prevented us from reaching the safety of our bunkers. Instead, we were forced to hide under and near the UN lorries, seeking any cover we could find. Some staff members managed to reach the bunkers, but many of us were caught in the open, exposed to the deadly barrage.

The civilians in the no-fire zone had taken

no precautions, fully trusting the Sri Lankan government's announcement. They hadn't dug a single bunker, believing that the no-fire zone would keep them safe. The trust placed in the government's word proved fatal. On the first day of the attack, around 16 civilians died within the UN hub alone. The situation was even more dire in other areas of the no-fire zone.

Based on my estimation, approximately 150 people were killed during the first day of shelling. The aftermath was devastating. Bodies lay scattered across the area, the sounds of weeping and cries for help echoing through the night. The once hopeful and relatively safe haven had turned into a scene of horror and despair. The trust the civilians had placed in the no-fire zone was brutally betrayed, leading to a tragic loss of innocent lives. The experience left us all shaken, with the haunting realization that the supposed safe zone had become a deadly trap for those seeking refuge.

What was the impact on the UN staff and subsequent events?

Fortunately, no UN staff died during the initial shelling, but a few were injured. Our UN vehicles were littered with human remains, a grim reminder of the attack's brutality. This was a clear violation and a war crime committed by the Sri Lankan government. We repeatedly communicated with them, pleading for the shelling to stop. However, the next day, the army shelled the no-fire zone again.

On the second day, the situation escalated further. The LTTE, now desperate and enraged, retaliated from within the no-fire zone. This only intensified the conflict. The army's shelling became even more relentless. That day, around 350 people died in the no-fire



zone. The scenes were horrifying, with civilians caught in the crossfire, unable to escape the relentless bombardment.

In total, more than 500 people were killed by the indiscriminate shelling over the two days.

Were those attacks on the no-fire zone intentional?

Absolutely, yes. There were deliberate and intense attacks on the no-fire zone targeting civilians.

What was the real motive of the Sri Lankan government to attack the no-fire zone?

I believe the then-government sought revenge

against Tamil civilians who had supported the LTTE, aiming to teach them a brutal lesson. It wasn't just retaliation; it was a calculated strategy to ensure no group like the LTTE would ever rise again. By inflicting severe punishment on the general public who had long supported the LTTE, they aimed to crush any future support for such movements.

The government blatantly disregarded the rules of war, knowing full well that 90 percent of the population in the no-fire zone were civilians. Yet, they shelled the area mercilessly. It was a deliberate, heartless assault on the general public meant to send a clear, chilling message. The sheer brutality was designed to break the spirit of any potential resistance, to instill a deep, paralyzing fear.

To be continued...

Jaffna's Sporting Legend Thayalan Shatters Records at 65

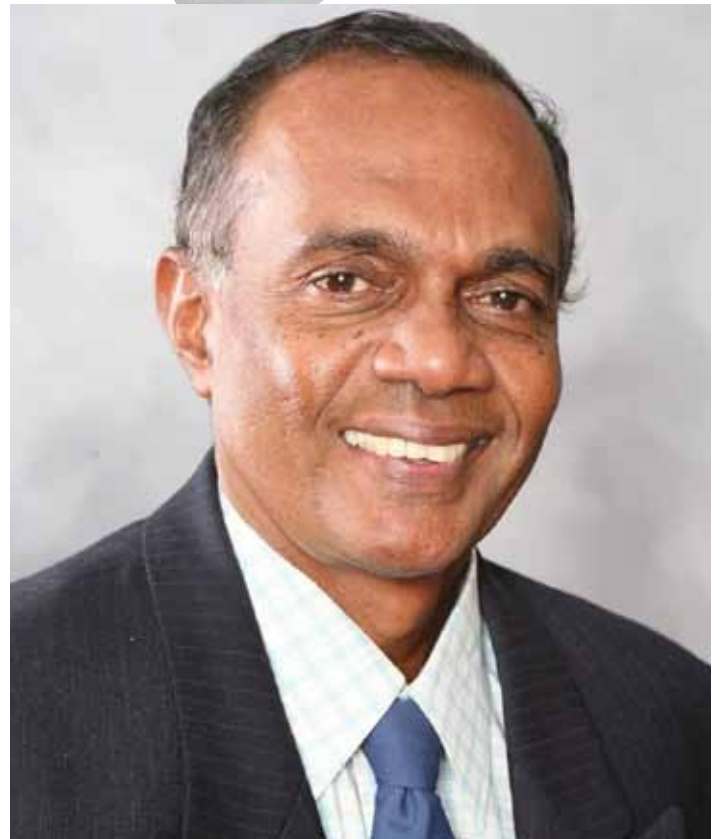


By:
Our Reporter

In a stunning display that has electrified the sports community, Jaffna's very own Thayalan, former Assistant Director of Physical Education and legendary athlete from Jaffna Hindu College, has broken a sporting record at the Sugathadasa Stadium during the 10th Annual Masters Athletic Meet. At 65 years old, Thayalan achieved an extraordinary feat by soaring to a breathtaking height of 2.32 meters in the pole vault, smashing the record previously held since 2019 by N.W.A.C. De. Silva of Anuradhapura.

This incredible achievement not only redefines the boundaries of athletic capability at his age but also cements Thayalan's legacy as one of Sri Lanka's most enduring and inspirational sports icons.

Thayalan, a name synonymous with Jaffna's athletic excellence, boasts a storied career that spans decades and inspires many. His journey in sports began during his school



Thayalan

years, where he excelled in cricket, hockey, football, basketball, and athletics, showcasing a remarkable versatility and unyielding determination. Thayalan's early promise was just a prelude to a lifetime of achievements.

In 1977, he captained the Sri Lankan youth football team at the Asian Games, demonstrating not only his exceptional skills but also his leadership on an international

stage. His ability to excel across multiple sports disciplines made him a force to be reckoned with. Thayalan's prowess in athletics saw him setting records in high jump, javelin throw, shot put, marathon, and middle-distance running, solidifying his status as a household name in sports circles.

Beyond his own remarkable achievements, Thayalan has been a cornerstone in Sri Lanka's sports officiating. His diverse roles as a football referee, cricket umpire, athletics judge, and basketball and hockey referee have earned him immense respect and admiration. His ability to adapt and excel across various sports is a testament to his profound understanding and passion for athletics. Thayalan's recent high jump record at 65 is a triumphant celebration of his unwavering dedication and spirit.

Even today, Thayalan remains a vibrant force in basketball, football, and cricket, both as a player and a referee. His daily routine is a testament to his enduring spirit; he plays sports every day and walks miles each morning. In the early hours, while the town of Jaffna still sleeps, you can spot Thayalan briskly walking through the streets, his dedication undimmed by time.



	Profomance	Name	Year
100 M.	14. 2 Sec.	A. Puliyadda (Imbulgoda)	2019
200 M.	14. 2 Sec.	B.R.Rukunayake (Boyagane)	2021
400 M.	29.20 Sec.	B.R.Rukunayake (Boyagane)	2022
800 M.	1:08.50 Sec.	A. Puliyadda (Imbulgoda)	2019
1500 M.	2:54.6 Sec.	K.E.N.Silva (Gampaha)	2018
5000 M.	6:11.05 Sec.	K.E.N.Silva (Gampaha)	2018
100 M.Hur.	23:21.7 Sec.	K.A.D.Sunil (Katunayaka)	2019
300 M.Hur.	20.09 Sec.	S.D.C.Fernando (Gampaha)	2018
5 K.M.Race Walk	52.4 Sec.	B.R.Rukunayake (Katunayaka)	2016
5000 M.	30:37.1 Sec.	K.E.N.Silva (Gampaha)	2016
2000.M. S/C.	21:40.60 Sec.	K.A.D.Sunil (Gampaha)	2019
High Jump.	09:43.06 Sec.	Ariyadasa Vitharana (Hambantota)	2022
	1.25 M.	B.R.Rukunayake (Boyagane)	2021
	1.25 M.	G.M.S.S.Kumara (Baddegama)	2022
Long Jump.	4.64 M.	G.L. Jayasundera	2017
Triple Jump.	9.52 M.	G.L. Jayasundera	2017
Pole Vault	2.30 M.	N.W.A.C.De Silva (Anuradapura)	2019
Shot Putt	9.60 M.	W.M.Ariyangoda (Veyangoda)	2022
Discuss Throw	36.96 M.	M.B.D.M.Bandara Nattarampetta	2023
Javelin Throw	36.06 M.	W.R.A.Wickramasinghe (Imbulgoda)	2022
Hammer Throw	30.70 M.	W.M.Ariyangoda (Veyangoda)	2022

His record-setting leap is more than just a personal triumph; it stands as a testament to the enduring spirit of sportsmanship that flourishes in Jaffna and beyond. Thayalan's journey serves as a beacon of inspiration, demonstrating that age is no obstacle to excellence and that a positive mental attitude is the true key to success.



India Eyes Sri Lanka's Graphite Treasure Amid Political Turmoil

COLOMBO/NEW DELHI: In a move that could significantly impact the global mineral market, India is negotiating with Sri Lanka to acquire the country's coveted graphite mines, the Press Trust of India reported. The demand for graphite, essential for the anodes in lithium-ion batteries, is rising rapidly, making this acquisition strategically crucial. However, these talks are still in the early stages, with no additional details provided by sources.

Sri Lanka's graphite is renowned for its purity and quality, and it is considered among the best in the world. Last year, India identified graphite as one of its 30 critical minerals, highlighting its importance. To secure these essential resources, Indian public sector giants like Coal India, NMDC, and ONGC Videsh Ltd (OVL) are actively scouting for mineral assets abroad. KABIL, a joint venture of Nalco, Hindustan Copper Ltd (HCL), and Mineral Exploration and Consultancy Ltd (MECL), is also on the hunt for international opportunities.

Political Drama Unfolds

These talks come amidst a political tempest in Sri Lanka. Former President and SLPP leader Mahinda

Rajapaksa has publicly called for a halt to the government's divestiture drive, arguing that the current administration, an interim arrangement, lacks the popular mandate to sell state-owned assets. He suggested postponing such decisions until after the upcoming presidential election.

Despite Rajapaksa's objections, the government led by President Ranil Wickremesinghe is forging ahead. Rajapaksa's open letters, urging caution and delay, seem to have little effect on the ruling administration or his own party members.

JVP/NPP's Ambitions and Stance

Adding to the intrigue, the JVP/NPP has expressed ambitions to produce graphene from Sri Lanka's high-quality graphite as a solution to the nation's foreign exchange problems, should they come to power. This raises questions about their stance on India's interest in acquiring these mines. Will they oppose India's efforts or turn a blind eye, given their recent softer stance post-India tour?



Dr. W.G. Rockwood:
The First Non-Vellalar
Representative
in Sri Lanka's
Parliament



By:
Sarawanan Komathi
Nadarasa

The first constitution for Ceylon (Sri Lanka) and the political framework for governing the country were established in 1833 through the Colebrooke-Cameron reforms. The Legislative Council created under these reforms consisted of 15 members: 9 official members and 6 unofficial members. Among the 6 unofficial members were 3 Europeans, 1 Sinhalese, 1 Tamil, and 1 Burgher.

Based on this structure, the first Tamil representative in Sri Lanka's Legislative Council was Arumugampillai Coomaraswamy, the first Sinhalese member was J.G. Philipsz Panditharatne, and the first Burgher member was J.C. Hillebrandt.

The Coomaraswamy family subsequently became a longstanding force in representing Tamils. Following Arumugampillai Coomaraswamy, the family lineage continued to produce representatives: Ethirmannasingham, Arumugampillai Coomaraswamy (from May 30, 1835, until his death on November 7, 1836), Ethirmannasingham (1846-1861), Muthu Coomaraswamy (1861 until his death in 1879), Sir Ponnambalam Ramanathan (1879-1930), Ponnambalam Coomaraswamy (1892-1898), and Ponnambalam Arunachalam (1912-1913), among others.¹

Among them, Sir Ponnambalam Ramanathan had a political career spanning nearly half a century. However, his younger brother, Sir Ponnambalam Arunachalam, is revered even more highly. Arunachalam, who was born after Ramanathan but passed away before him, served as a Legislative Council representative for only one year. Despite this short tenure, his role as a civil servant and his contributions to

politics and trade unions were significant.

In the Sinhalese context, members of the "Govigama" caste, a Sinhalese Vellala/farming caste, have dominated the Legislative Council from the beginning. Similar to how the Vellala Coomaraswamy family continuously held significant positions from the Tamil community, the Sinhalese Govigama families of Bandaranaike and Obeyesekere have also been prominent.



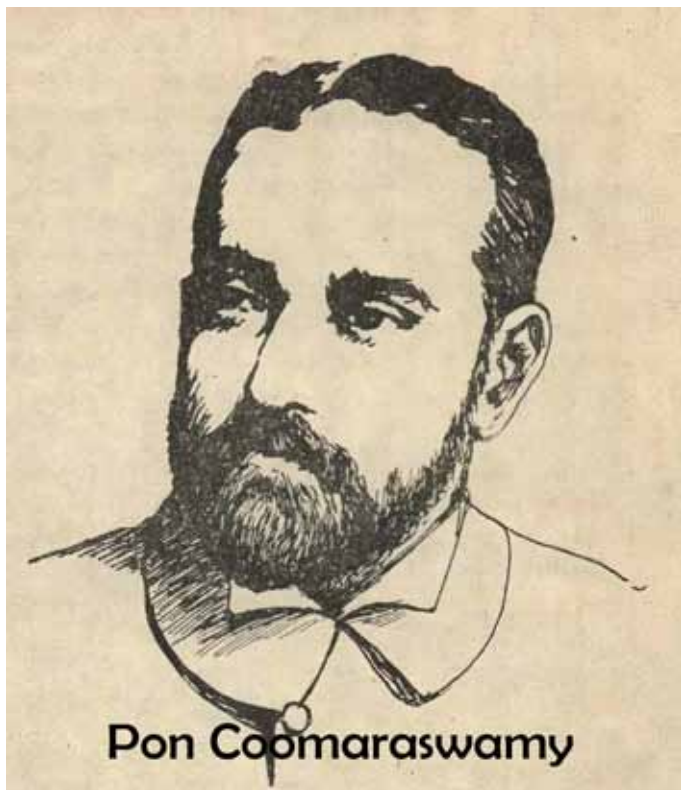
Notable representatives from these families include:

H. Dias (1861-1865)
James Alwis (1875-1878)
J.P. Obeyesekere (1878-1881)
A.L. de Alwis (1881-1888)
De Alwis Seneviratne (1888-1900)
S.C. Obeyesekere (1900-1911)
One exception to this pattern was E.H. Dehigama, who served from 1865 to 1875.²

- 1 N.Sarawanan, Gate Mudaliar Arumugampillai Coomaraswamy: The first parliamentary representative of the Sri Lankan Tamils, Thinakural, 12, Jan, 2020
- 2 Lakshmi Kiran Daniel, Privilege And Policy: The Indigenous Elite And The Colonial Education System In Ceylon, 1912- 1948, Thesis submitted for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy, Faculty of Modern History, Michaelmas Term, 1992

Tamil Vellala and Sinhalese Govigama Combination

In the later period, during the 1911 election for the Legislative Council, Marcus Fernando, who belonged to the Karava caste, contested against Sir Ponnambalam Ramanathan. The elite Sinhalese Govigama community was unwilling to accept a member of the Karava caste as their representative. Consequently, they ensured the defeat of Marcus Fernando and secured the victory of Ponnambalam Ramanathan, who belonged to the higher Vellala caste.



At that time, the Sinhalese-Tamil divide was not a significant factor. The choice was between "Jaffna x Saiva x Tamil x Vellala x Educated Elite" Ponnambalam Ramanathan and "Colombo x Buddhist x Sinhalese x Karava x Educated Elite" Marcus Fernando. In this context, Ponnambalam Ramanathan's caste was the deciding factor in his selection.

Given this background, Dr. W.G. Rockwood stands out as the first Tamil representative to break the monopoly of the Vellala-Govigama caste dominance. It's also worth noting that in the Sinhalese context, it wasn't until 1912 that someone outside the Govigama caste was chosen.³

Some might argue that Simon Cassie Chetty, who served as a Tamil representative from 1838 to 1845, is an exception. However, the Chetty community has always been regarded as equivalent to the Vellala caste within Sri Lanka's caste hierarchy.

There was a time when Tamils and Muslims had a single representative, as Muslims were also considered Tamils. From August 28, 1879, to December 15, 1892, Ponnambalam Ramanathan served as the unofficial Tamil representative in the Legislative Council. At the request of the government, Ramanathan was appointed Solicitor General in 1892, which made his position in the Legislative Council vacant.

His brother, Ponnambalam Coomaraswamy, was recommended for the position and was appointed as the unofficial representative in the Legislative Council on February 4, 1893. This appointment was made by Arthur Elibank Havelock. Following Havelock, the next Governor was Ridgeway.

Who is Ridgeway?

After Governor Arthur Havelock, Sir Joseph West Ridgeway became the Governor of Ceylon (Sri Lanka). He had a military background and served as the British government's representative at Tsar Peter's court in Russia, where he signed agreements.

3 K. M. Desilva, Universal Franchise, 1931-1981 The Sri Lankan Experience, Department of Information Ministry of State Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka, July, 1981



He also served as a resident at the Sultan's palace in Morocco, Africa. Ridgeway requested the position of Governor of Ceylon and arrived on the island with prior knowledge and information gathered from former governors of Ceylon.

Ridgeway arrived in Ceylon in November 1895, toured the island, and engaged closely with the locals, gaining direct experience. It is said that he operated without bias, treating all residents equally, regardless of ethnic, religious, or linguistic differences. Due to the favorable financial state left by the previous Governor, Ridgeway was able to initiate several development projects in Ceylon, including tea plantations, railway construction, road building, healthcare improvements, educational reforms, and the restructuring of the Survey Department.

This period saw significant advancements in various sectors. During this time, Ananda

Coomaraswamy provided invaluable service as the head of the Department of Mineralogy. The British government agreed to bear half the cost of developing the Colombo port. Transportation improvements were notable, with the introduction of electric trams and the importation of the first motor cars. This era also marked the birth of S. W. R. D. Bandaranaike, a future Prime Minister of Sri Lanka, whose father named him Solomon West Ridgeway Dias Bandaranaike in honor of the Governor.⁴

During Ridgeway's tenure, the government purchased the building that now serves as the Prime Minister's official residence, Temple Trees. There had been widespread illegal deforestation and land acquisition by wealthy individuals and officials. Consequently, in 1840, a law was enacted declaring forests, barren lands, and lands with less than five years of ownership as government property. A special officer was appointed to record land ownership under this law.

This led to the perception that the British colonial administration was seizing local lands, resulting in native uprisings and debates in the British Parliament. However, Governor Ridgeway remained steadfast, asserting that the law was enacted for the prosperity of the people of Ceylon and would benefit future generations. He clarified that those claiming ownership needed to present valid documents to prove their claims. This law also allowed the allocation of land for coffee cultivation and facilitated the settlement of Indian Tamil laborers.

The Sinhalese community accused Ridgeway of distributing land to Indian Tamils. During the rise of native opposition against Ridgeway, one of his critics was

4 K. C. Kularatnam, *From Noth to Gopallawa - A Political History of Sri Lanka in Recent (1798-1962), Part I (1798-1947)* (Tamil), Asirwadham Press - Bookstore. Jaffna. 1966

Ponnambalam Coomaraswamy, who denounced the Governor's approach as that of a "plunderer." When Coomaraswamy's term as a representative ended, Governor Ridgeway decided not to reappoint him.

However, a large meeting led by Rockwood was held to demand Coomaraswamy's reappointment as the Tamil representative. Some suggested appointing Swaminathan, Britto's son-in-law, instead.

Arumuga Navalar in the Britto vs. Ramanathan Contest

When Ramanathan was first appointed to the Legislative Council in 1879, his competitor for the seat was Britto. Britto, a prominent and influential figure from the Jaffna Tamil Christian Chetty community, was defeated by Ponnambalam Ramanathan, who came from a Jaffna Tamil Saiva Vellala background. Arumuga Navalar put in significant effort to ensure Ramanathan's victory over Britto. Interestingly, both Ramanathan and Britto were married to daughters of the wealthy E. Nannithamby from Manipay, Jaffna.

Prabhakaran's great-grandfather, Thirumeniar Venkatasalam Pillai from Valvettithurai, supported Britto's political aspirations. However, Arumuga Navalar was determined to bring a Saiva Vellala representative into politics and fully supported Ramanathan. If this event had not occurred, the political history of Sri Lanka might have taken a different turn.⁵

Governor Ridgeway ended the monopoly of caste-based representation by secretly inviting Rockwood to his office in early 1898, persuading him to become the Tamil representative. Rockwood succeeded Mudaliar Ponnambalam Coomaraswamy, who had served as the Tamil representative until 1898. On March 14, 1898,⁶ Governor Sir Joseph West Ridgeway appointed Rockwood as the Tamil representative to the Legislative Council for a five-year term from March 13, 1898, to March 13, 1903. This appointment marked the end of the family-dominant and caste-based monopoly.⁷ Rockwood was reappointed on March 15, 1903.

What Does Ponnambalam Ramanathan Say?

Rockwood's appointment caused Ramanathan significant disappointment. M. Vaithilingam, who wrote Ponnambalam Ramanathan's biography, recorded this incident. Ramanathan expressed his discontent over the Governor's decision to appoint Rockwood instead of extending Mudaliar Coomaraswamy's term.

Ramanathan expressed his discontent over the Governor's decision to appoint Rockwood instead of extending Mudaliar Coomaraswamy's term. as follows:

"Another Governor contributed greatly to the disgust of the people in 1892. There was a very strong Member of Council representing the Tamils. He condemned some of the administrative and legislative acts of the

5 N. Sarawanan, The story that brought Ramanathan to politics by Navalar-, Kaakkai chiraginile, April, 2020 (Tamil Magazine, from Tamilnadu)

6 John H. Martyn, Martyn's Notes on Jaffna: Chronological, Historical, Biographical, Asian Educational Services, 2003

7 Roland Wenzlhuemer, From Coffee to Tea Cultivation in Ceylon, 1880–1900 An Economic and Social History Leiden • Boston, Martinus Nijhoff Publishers and VSP 2008

Government of Ceylon. On the expiry of the term of office of that Member of Council he was my elder brother the Tamil people held a mammoth meeting at the Town Hall of Colombo to consider who would be a competent successor to that Member Mr. Coomaraswamy who was too outspoken for the Government. The late Dr. Rockwood, a man in whom the whole of the European Community had great confidence, and who was himself a Tamil man, was the Chairman of the meeting and there was a unanimous resolution passed in which the Chairman himself joined, that they should again submit for nomination the name of Coomaraswamy who had acted so independently during his term of five years in the Legislative Council. Then Governor Ridgeway took this extraordinary step. He did not want Mr. Coomaraswamy back again in Council. So he wrote a private letter to Dr. Rockwood and asked him whether he would accept the Seat. And Dr. Rockwood, without communicating with Mr. Coomaraswamy or any other person who took part in the meeting, accepted the offer. It was thus realized that no reliance could be placed upon the Governor for doing the right thing at the proper time when the system of nomination prevailed..⁸

However, in the editorial of the Jaffna College Miscellany published in 1909, it was noted that Ramanathan congratulated Rockwood on his appointment:

"The Tamil community could not have thought

of anyone who commanded the respect and admiration of people of all races and classes, as well as the high regard of various communities, like Dr. Rockwood."

This statement was recorded as part of Ramanathan's speech at the meeting held for his brother Coomaraswamy's re-election.⁹

Governor Stubbs later issued a report expressing the colonial administration's dissatisfaction with this appointment, stating that the decision prevented a powerful family from continuing its dominance (CO. 723 of March 29, 1909, Stubbs minute). M.U. de Silva also referenced this incident in his article on the role of caste in British colonial appointments in Sri Lanka during the 19th century.¹⁰

It's worth noting that Rockwood came from the Koviya community, which was once treated as a servile caste in Jaffna's caste system.

Rockwood

William Gabriel Rockwood was born on March 13, 1843, in Alaveddy, Jaffna. He was the second son of Chinnathambi Elisa Rockwood, the Sub-Collector of Customs at Kankesanthurai. Rockwood received his early education at Vembadi Boys' School in Jaffna and later attended Presidency College in Chennai, where he completed his matriculation. He then pursued medical

8 M. Vythilingam, *The life of Sor Ponnambalam Ramanathan*, Ramanathan Commemoration Society, Colombo, 1971

9 Jaffna College MISCELLANY Published by the Faculty and Students of Jaffna College, Vaddukkoddai, Ceylon. Vol. XIX. No. 3. July 1909

10 M. U. de Silva, *Caste Consideration In Native Appointments — A Review Of British Administrative Policy In Sri Lanka. During The Nineteenth Century*, Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society of Sri Lanka, Vol. 51 (2005),

studies at Madras Medical College, graduating with first-class honors.

Upon returning to Ceylon (Sri Lanka), Rockwood was appointed as a medical officer in Puttalam. During the cholera outbreak in Jaffna in 1866-67, he worked on special duty. Although he returned to Puttalam for his medical duties, he went back to Jaffna during the rapid spread of cholera in 1875 and worked intensively on eradication efforts, saving many lives in the medical facilities there.¹¹ After serving in several medical institutions, he was appointed as a surgeon at the Colombo General Hospital in 1878 and later became a lecturer in surgery at the Ceylon Medical College.

Rockwood was recognized as a skilled and renowned surgeon, a competent doctor, and, later, a capable politician. During his tenure, he played a significant role in advocating for the railway service to the North and Chilaw and was instrumental in establishing the railway line to the North.¹²

Two of Rockwood's daughters married prominent professionals: one to lawyer Saravanamuthu and the other to accountant S. Kumaraswamy. In honor of Rockwood, a hall at the large hospital in Colombo was named "Rockwood Hall," which was inaugurated by the then-Governor Sir Henry McCallum on April 16, 1912. Rockwood had served as the chief surgeon at this hospital for about 20 years.¹³

Rockwood was highly respected among Europeans not only as a doctor but also as an excellent surgeon. Notable comments from two famous surgeons highlight his reputation: Dr. Jonathan Hutchinson called him the best surgeon in the East, and Sir Frederick Treves, an expert on tropical diseases, remarked that it would have been beneficial to have Dr. Rockwood from Ceylon during a challenging surgery.

Rockwood had the opportunity to provide medical advice to the King of England during the coronation ceremony and made two trips to England. During these visits, he became a member of the Royal College of Surgeons and the Royal College of Physicians.

In 1904, he donated 1,000 rupees to Jaffna College to establish a scholarship fund. He was also among the first eight philanthropists to fund the establishment of the first medical college in Ceylon.¹⁴ Financially well-off, Rockwood was also a plantation owner. By 1917, the Rockwood family was listed among the wealthiest in Ceylon, owning over a thousand acres of coconut plantations.¹⁵

During his extended term starting on July 9, 1903, Rockwood traveled to England, and W.N. Aserappa was temporarily appointed to his position on April 19, 1904. In January 1906, Rockwood resigned from the Legislative Council due to health reasons, and A. Kanagasabai, another Vellala, was appointed in his place on February 4.

11 S. A. Meegama, *Famine, Fevers and Fear The State and Disease in British Colonial Sri Lanka*, Sridevi Publication, Dehiwela, 2012

12 Ferguson's Ceylon Directory, 1904

13 1959 - Ferguson's Ceylon Directory, Associated Newspapers of Ceylon Limited, 1959

14 The University Of Ceylon at Peradeniya, The Ceylon University Pres, 1954

15 K. M. De Silva, *History Of Ceylon (Volume Three)*, Printed for The University of Ceylon, Peradeniya, 1973

16 Obituary, William Gabriel Rockwood, Published 24 April 1909, 1909;1:1034

Rockwood retired from medical, social, and political activities due to a stroke in 1906 and passed away on March 27, 1909, at the age of 66.¹⁶ Dr. W.G. Rockwood married Muthamma, the daughter of Chinna Mudaliar Kathiraverpillai of Moolai, Jaffna (1857-1925).¹⁷ She was well known for her involvement in all her husband's social activities and was a respected figure in her own right. She passed away on August 29, 1925.

Ramanathan

The Coomaraswamy family has been a dominant force in Sri Lankan Tamil political history for over one and a half centuries. Among this lineage, Sir Ponnambalam Ramanathan stands out as a key figure who maintained conservative religious politics. By the end of his life, he had become a representative of orthodox, traditional, high-caste, educated, elite male dominance, though his early roles were different.

In 1921, at the age of 70, Ramanathan was knighted by the British government. He believed that reform, not independence, was sufficient for the natives. It is not an exaggeration to say that he was a product of the Arumuga Navalar and the Saiva Renaissance. Appointed to the Legislative Council of Ceylon for the first time in 1879 at the age of 28, he remained active in politics for 50 years until his death.¹⁸

Ramanathan did not want political power in the hands of ordinary people. He believed it



should rest only with educated, high-class, high-caste men. Based on this principle, he openly opposed universal suffrage during the Donoughmore Commission inquiries.

During his testimony on December 20, 1927 (Evidence No. 101), he said: "Leave our women alone in their role. It is not for you to understand why they are meant to be subordinate in this world by God's will. A woman's entire life and focus should be at home. There is no world beyond that for them. Do not allow them to go beyond their household duties."

17 Arnold Wright, *Twentieth Century Impressions of Ceylon: Its History, People, Commerce, Industries, and Resources*, Asian Educational Services, 1999

18 N. Sarawanan, 1915: *The Kandy Riots*, Kilakku Publishing House, 2017.

He reiterated these views during debates in the Legislative Council: "Why are they teaching us this rotten philosophy? Why are they forcing it down our throats?" he said during the debate on the Donoughmore Constitution on November 8, 1928.

He did not live to see the implementation of the Donoughmore scheme and universal suffrage, as he passed away in 1930, two years after the debate.

Is there anything from this conversation you'd like me to remember for the future?

While the research books and articles by Ramanathan are still praised by many scholars today, some have also sparked controversy. One of the most notable is his essay titled "Ethnology of the Moors." He presented this research essay publicly at the Ceylon Legislative Council in 1885 and at the Royal Asiatic Society - Ceylon branch in 1888. In it, he explained that the Moors of Sri Lanka are ethnically Tamils and religiously Muslims. He venomously argued in his essay that the eastern Muslim community originated from traders who married "low" caste people. Given that he emerged from the political milieu of Arumuga Navalar's camp, such venom is unsurprising.

These views caused significant controversy at the time. The Muslim community strongly condemned his data regarding Muslims. Buddhist, Saiva and Islamic revivals were occurring in Sri Lanka roughly during this same period. Muslim scholars who could respond to Ramanathan's views also grew during that time.

When the government announced in 1929 that all students in schools should be given equal seating regardless of race, religion, caste, or nationality, enraged Vellalars set fire to fifteen schools. In 1930, when the Kopay Teachers' Training College admitted lower-caste students for the first time and provided equal seating with Vellalar students, Sir Ponnambalam Ramanathan appealed to the Governor against it. That same year, he passed away.

How could Ramanathan, who had such a dominating priestly mentality, tolerate a non-Vellalar person attaining political power? Moreover, how could he bear it when a person from a slave caste (Kovia) was appointed to his position after removing his elder brother from that place? He perceived it as a tarnish on his high-class, high-caste influence. Although Rockwood was well-educated and not inferior to Ramanathan in terms of class, he still experienced caste-related pressures and inconveniences in his political representation. Without the support of Governor Ridgeway, how long might the Tamil community have had to wait for the representation of a non-Vellalar?

We must understand the politics behind why not a single line about Rockwood has appeared in Tamil literature so far. How did Rockwood disappear from the list of achievers in Jaffna? Why was he hidden? We do not need profound knowledge to understand the reasons. Anyone with a basic understanding of the caste hegemony in Jaffna can easily grasp it. Apart from the caste-based manipulation of Jaffna's hegemonic politics, what else can we blame for the absence of any record about Rockwood in Tamil?



Maharoor's Moment of Magic: All It Takes is One



By:
**Dr. Aravinthan
Arunthavanathan**

A little but intriguing moment from the glory days of Sri Lankan cricket. In this article, we are going to explore a captivating moment from the golden days of Sri Lankan cricket, focusing on an unexpected hero who turned the tide in a crucial match. This isn't just a tale of celebrated stars but rather a story of how one player's moment of brilliance can redefine the outcome of a game.

Prior to the 2007 World Cup, Sri Lanka faced India in a four-match series. The first game was washed out, and the second took place in Rajkot. Led by a brilliant century from Sangakkara and the skill of their bowlers, Sri Lanka was hanging on by the skin of their teeth in the game.

At this time, Dhoni had not yet become the celebrated finisher he would eventually be. However, Sri Lanka was well aware of his might, having experienced the pain of his unbeaten 183* just 18 months earlier. With 11 runs needed off the last over, it was Dhoni against Jayasuriya, often overlooked as one of Sri Lanka's better death bowlers. Sanath's brilliant yorkers restricted India to just one run from the first three balls. It came down to 10 runs needed off the last three balls—Dhoni vs. Jayasuriya.

Here's the twist: this isn't about Sanath or Dhoni but Maharoof. You might wonder how. Here's the story. As Sanath delivered a full-length delivery as the fourth ball, Dhoni stepped down the track and hit it hard to long

on. Maharoof, positioned at long-on, wasn't the best fielder. He dived over a difficult but manageable stop, conceding a boundary. The equation was now six runs needed off two balls.

As often happens in such moments, in front of thousands of spectators, skipper Mahela pulled Maharoof into the circle—a humiliation for any fielder. Now, Maharoof was in the covers. But the story wouldn't end there.

Next delivery, Sanath bowled another full-length delivery outside off. Dhoni tried to smash the ball out of the park to seal the game. The ball caught the leading edge and flew above the circle, heading towards no man's land. Tharanga, a fresher on the side, was charging in from sweeper cover. Maharoof ran





backward at full speed. A nasty collision seemed imminent, which would have been a case of going from bad to worse for Maharoo. Just when it seemed like the worst might happen, magic occurred. Tharanga and Maharoo were almost on top of one another, but in the blink of an eye, Maharoo pulled off a blinder. Magic had happened for Maharoo. Redemption at its best, or perhaps just pure relief.

The fortunes fluctuated dramatically from almost losing the game for Sri Lanka to winning it by catching Dhoni. Rightly so, Maharoo ended on the right side. He had already had a good game with the bat and two early wickets; it would have been cruel to end up on the losing side.

At times, it all comes down to one moment. What you do at that moment can define everything. On that day, it was a joyous ending for Maharoo.

This picture says it all, capturing that memorable moment from one of the better games Sri Lanka has played.





A Train Journey

Translated from the original Tamil short story *oru rayil payanam* (ஒரு ரயில் பயணம்) from the 1976 collection of short stories titled *kōṭukaḷum kōlaṅkalum* (கோடுகளும் கோலங்களும்) by **Kuppilan Ai. Shanmugan**

Translated by:
Eluttukkiṇiyavan
(எழுத்துக்கினியவன்)

The train was speeding along noisily. Inside, a teeming crowd bustled. I stood at the open door of the carriage I was traveling in and surveyed the scenes outside. The railway line was hugging the coast. The train moved ahead, occasionally letting out a long sigh. My eyes scanned the coast. My mind strayed from the actual scenes that were rushing past, and dwelled on imaginary scenes, forming a tapestry.

Pockets of people sat on the blackstone benches that lined the shore, busily chatting with one another. Officials wearing trousers, ordinary workers wearing *sarongs*, fishermen wearing only loincloths, women,

old men, young men, damsels, crones, and toddlers formed knots after knots of people, and immersed themselves in conversations. Humans engage in conversation from the day they are born. Even Adam and Eve must have conversed. I wondered when this conversation would end.

It seemed to me that many of them were

laughing, some were talking aloud excitedly, others were moaning weakly from illnesses, while yet others were crying. All the different types of humanity were represented there.

The train heaved a long sigh and sped along. As if to announce an approaching station, it blared out a high-pitched wail. Eventually, accompanied by a series of jolts, moans, and





squeaks, it came to a halt at a station. I turned my eyes from the outside towards the inside of the train. A middle-aged man and a young twenty something woman in a red sari got off the train, almost bumping into me. She had the power to instantly attract attention. Many others got off from my carriage, too. But my mind was fixated on that woman. She and the man rushed towards the south, mingling among the sea of heads on the platform, and disappeared from sight.

I was lost in thought, thinking about her. My eyes stared blankly at the platform. The hawkers' calls of *vadai.. vadai..* soda, gently rapped on the wall of my consciousness.

The train sounded its horn, getting ready to leave. I peeked outside. The guard waved the green flag from the carriage at the northern end of the train. The train started with a jolt and began crawling slowly. I yearned to catch a glimpse of the woman somewhere on the platform. The crawling train gradually sped up to a steady trot. I kept looking outside until the platform disappeared from sight. Finally, with a sigh, I turned my gaze inside the carriage. The crowd had dissipated. Everyone

but me had a seat. I looked around to see if I could find an empty seat.

Suddenly I saw a pair of eyes looking at me inquisitively. When she saw me returning her gaze, she blushed and cast her eyes downwards. Her face was round like the moon. She was a little paler than a lemon. She wore three thin lines of *vibhūti* on her forehead. A small black *poṭṭu* adorned the center of her forehead. She had parted her hair in the middle in a straight line and wore it in a plait held by a red ribbon. She wore a white *pāvā dai* long skirt and a green blouse with a flower pattern. In her arms that looked like banana stems, she held two books and a notebook. I tried to read the title of the book. 'Bharathi and Shelly.' She must be a literature lover, I thought. My eyes refused to move away from her.

She lifted her eyes up once again, only to cast them down when she noticed that I was still looking at her.

With a smile, I turned my gaze towards the outside. I marveled at my own psyche. Just a little while ago, I was infatuated by a woman,

yearning to see her again. But now, I want to look at a different woman, admire her beauty inch-by-inch, and struggle to take my eyes off of her.

My mind urged me to look at her again.

I resolved to suppress this urge, forcing my mind away from thinking about her.

The sun's gentle evening glow pervaded the landscape. The sea water shimmered in the sun. The white waves reflected the sunlight directly onto my face. At a distance, the hazy pale dot of a ship was hurrying away. Nearer to the shore, on the northwest side, a sailboat was gently swaying in the wind. Two people on the boat appeared as two tiny dots. A couple stood by the railway tracks looking at the passing train. A three-year old boy, standing between them, cackled and waved.

With a jolt, the train came to a halt at the next station.

She, who was regarding me from the corner of her eye, smiled and turned to look at the sky.

I suppressed, with difficulty, the urge to laugh and looked for a seat. I resolved to speak to her.

As luck would have it, right next to her in her seat, there was just enough space for one person. She kept staring at the sky. I hesitantly walked towards her and sat down next to her.

She turned to look at me nonchalantly, as if she was in fact expecting me to sit down next to her! Her eyes shone with an intoxicating beauty. She squirmed a little in her seat as if she could not bear my body brushing against hers. She also seemed very anxious to tell me something.

The train started again with another jolt. She was gazing outside through the window as if she was ignoring me. With a sigh, I turned my eyes to scan the interior of the carriage. She turned to look at me as if my sigh had interrupted her reverie. I pretended not to notice her glance and stared intently at something. I could sense through the corner of my eye that she was sizing me up from head





to toe. I continued to ignore her.

A baby started to scream. The young mother who was sitting opposite to me tried to hold the baby tightly to her chest, attempting to make the baby fall asleep. The baby's cry subsided in the comfort of its mother's bosom. I turned my attention to the carriage. It was now a little more crowded. A couple of people must have boarded the train at the last station. A young man was standing where I used to stand, immersed in some imagined stories. Next to him, a fisherman had upended his empty basket and was sitting on it. A boy selling lottery tickets was holding a board with lottery tickets hanging from it and regarded the seashore with interest. Beyond him a bearded old man was staring at me and the young woman sitting next to me. Some beggar woman was doing her rounds while singing a new film song. She came to stand before me and thrust her hand towards me for money while continuing to sing.

I groped around in my pocket. I could not find anything smaller than a fifty-cent coin. The young woman deftly opened the black handbag next to her, took out a ten-cent coin

and put it on the beggar's palm. Until then, I had not noticed that she had a handbag.

The beggar looked at me. I signaled her to go away. I was embarrassed to do this while the young woman was still watching me. But I did not have any other option. Some romances would give up anything to be able to impress women. But I could not part with a fifty-cent coin as casually as they would have.

I am not sure what she thought of this interaction. She turned to look at me. I met her gaze. She cast her eyes downwards. She did not have the same flourish on her face as before. The beggar moved on and started her lament once again. I silently cursed the beggar.

The train paused at the next station and started again. The beggar woman and the lottery-ticket boy had disembarked. The young woman with the baby was leaning her head onto the seat back while still holding the baby tight. The fisherman with the basket was mumbling a popular Sinhala song. The young man at the door was immersed in some deep thought. The bearded old man was fast asleep.

I looked at the young woman. She was lost in the scenes fleeting past outside. Her beautiful hands tightly clutched her books and notebook. Her handbag nestled among them.

The train left the coast and turned inland. It was zipping along on the railway track that snaked through beautiful verdant paddy fields. In the dimming sunlight, the scene glittered with a particularly beautiful elegance. I, like her, kept looking at this stunning natural beauty.

The train rumbled noisily over a river bridge. There were two women bathing on the riverbank. Next to the path lay lavish green paddy fields and banana plantations.

Tired of looking at nature, I turned my gaze towards her. There was no change in her. She kept staring outside.

“May I borrow this book?” I asked. She moved slightly as if being woken from a reverie. Without turning her head, she flipped one of her plaits over her shoulder, laid it on her chest, and adjusted it. When the plait moved from her back to her front, it caressed me on its way. I yearned to embrace her. She had not responded to my question. I thought perhaps she did not hear me.

The train rolled on through a tunnel, engulfing the carriage in an artificial darkness. I assume she turned her gaze inwards during this time. When the train emerged from the tunnel, she lifted her head and looked at me. Our gazes met in a head-on collision. With a shy smile, she bowed her head once again.

The old fisherman on the basket was mumbling *ādarē, mama ādarē* (in love, I am in love). The baby in her mother’s embrace wiggled its toe playfully. The young man

standing at the door thought of something and smiled.

I looked at her, and asked again, “Could you please let me have a look at your book?” Her hands moved. She took the book with care and placed it in my hands. I looked down on its cover. It said, ‘Two Poets - Dr. K. Kailasapathy.’ I was right – I decided that she was indeed deeply into literature.

I turned the cover over. The name ‘Piramiḷā’ was written in Tamil, Sinhala, and English. I turned the next page and asked, “Is your name ‘Piramiḷā?’”

She nodded, and asked, “What is your name?”

“Iḷaṅkō,” I responded. “Oh! You have the name of the author of *Silappathikāram*,” she laughed.

I flipped through the pages. I did not feel the urge to read even a single word. She was observing me.

“Do you know Sinhala?” I asked suddenly. She said, “I am deeply fond of literature. While I was reading Tamil literature, I accidentally came across the Tamil translation of a poem called ‘The House.’ A Sinhala poet had written that beautiful poem. From that day, I resolved to learn Sinhala so that I can read Sinhala literature in its original form. Now I know Sinhala reasonably well!”

“In that case, would you help me learn Sinhala?” I asked.

She laughed out loud. “We are on a train,” she said. “You and I are friends during this journey. Once the journey ends, we will go our separate ways,” she let out a deep sigh.



I have no idea how I mustered so much courage. I said, “Having met you in this train journey, I cannot forget you in my life journey, Piraṁiḷā; you have captured a permanent place in my heart.”

She smiled silently. Tear drops glistened in her eyes. Suddenly, she buried her face in my chest and cried. I stroked her hair.

The bearded old man kept staring at us. I did not pay attention to the others.

The train slowed down. She wiped her tears and said, “All these days, I was waiting for something. I found it here,” she pointed to my heart.

Presently she returned to her jovial self. “Would you return my book? My station is approaching.”

I gave the book back to her. The train came to a stop.

She got off the train, and told me, “Like you said, we met on this train journey, but I, too, cannot forget you in my life journey. It is from you that I received what I was expectantly searching for. Life is full of expectations, is it not.?” She brought her hands together in farewell.

Her beautiful form was disappearing from my view. The train blared plaintively in a sorrowful tone and started moving again. Through my tears, I saw the outline of her waving to me. I waved back.

The train has traveled far. I glanced inside the carriage. The fisherman with the basket, the young woman with the baby, and the young man, had all disembarked from the train. The bearded old man kept staring at me intently.

I cast my eyes outside. The crescent moon was disappearing behind the cloud cover.

The train was speeding towards its destination.

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