

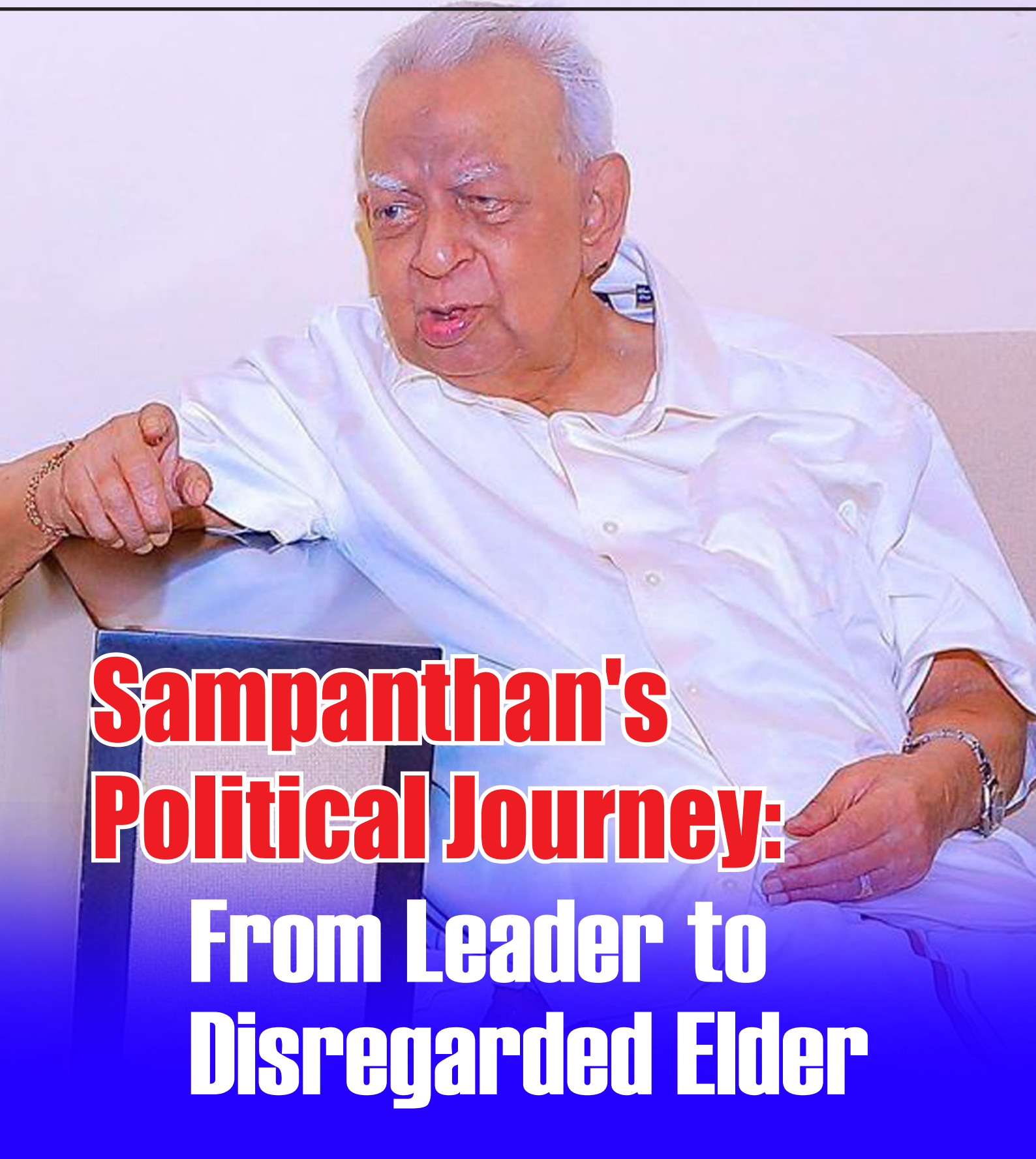
FORTNIGHTLY EDITION
Rs. 500



**affna
monitor**

July 15, 2024

UNAFRAID AND UNBOWED



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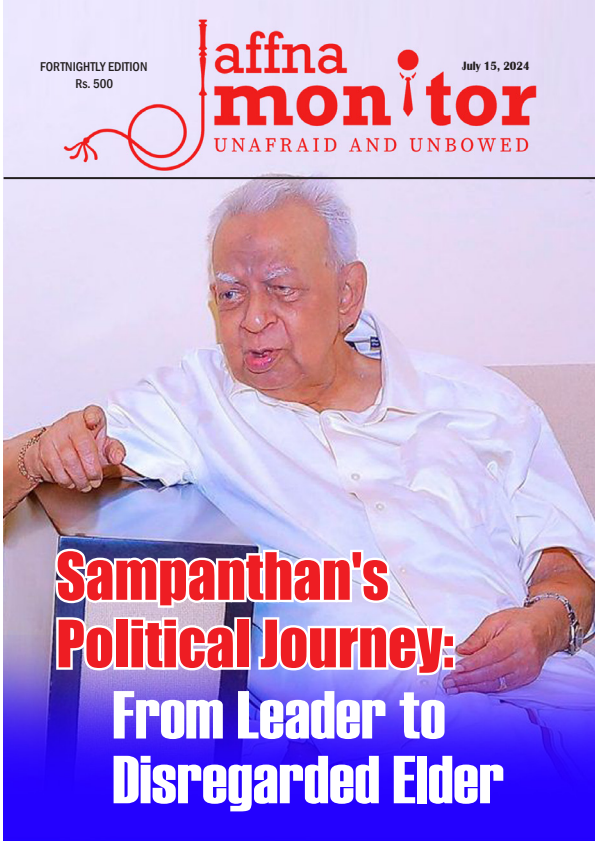
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Chavakachcheri Hospital Controversy: A Reflection on Our Values and Future

The Chavakachcheri hospital issue has become a focal point, stirring much debate and discussion, particularly on the not-so-content Jaffna YouTube channel, Facebook, and diasporic YouTube channels.

At the center of this controversy is Dr. Aruchuchuna, who, in true Tamil fashion, has exaggeratedly linked this issue to the legendary Kurukshetra War from the Mahabharata, subtly stirring the sentiments of the common people. His portrayal of himself as Lord Krishna, evident in his social media posts and narcissistic comments during a television interview, as well as his never-ending Facebook Live sessions, has only added to the sensationalism.

Jaffna YouTubers, who have been content-less and producing “வணக்கம் உறவுகளே, நான் இப்ப பிரான்ஸ் அண்ணா 16 கோடி கட்டின வீட்டுக்கு முன்னால நிக்கிறேன்” (Hello friends, I am standing in front of a house built by France Anna for 16 crores) type of videos, found a newfound adrenaline rush, creating tons of videos, shorts, reels, and whatnot. Our so-called Tamil nationalist politicians, who always seem to be "waiting for someone to die so they can dance," and our diaspora, who thrive on chaos in Jaffna, have all jumped on the bandwagon, making it a big buzz.

As a responsible media outlet, the Jaffna Monitor refrains from sensationalizing this issue. Unlike other

platforms that thrive on controversy, our restraint is not due to a lack of interest or concern but stems from a desire to avoid being part of the media frenzy that often obscures the real issues. Therefore, we are choosing not to report on this matter now. We apologize to our readers who may have expected coverage from us, but our approach will help maintain focus on the more significant underlying problems.

This unfolding saga has inadvertently shone a spotlight on the notorious practices of the Government Medical Officers' Association (GMOA). Astonishingly, this trade union wields the power to transfer doctors—a responsibility that typically lies with government authorities. Moreover, the GMOA holds the authority to issue tax-free vehicle permits, highlighting their undue influence and power. Their reputation is marred by allegations of thuggery and highhandedness.

For instance, Dr. Mayuran, who holds a position within the GMOA, worked at Tellipalai Hospital but traveled to Chavakachcheri Hospital during his duty time and attacked Dr. Archchuna. This incident vividly illustrates that the GMOA is more than just a trade union; it operates like a group of thugs.

Additionally, this saga sheds light on the dire conditions in base hospitals like Chavakachcheri and many others, raising a critical question about operating these hospitals to their full capacity. Addressing this issue could significantly reduce the burden on teaching hospitals.

A disturbing trend has emerged that unfairly accuses every doctor, with social media warriors launching a digital Kurukshetra against our medical professionals and resorting to below-the-belt criticism. We must all remember one crucial point: many Sri Lankan Tamils often dream of emigrating for a better life. Thousands of Sri Lankan Tamils recently migrated to Canada following relaxed visa requirements. Despite this trend, a notable number of consultants and surgeons resisted the allure of foreign life and returned to Sri Lanka after completing their mandatory foreign training. Although they had opportunities to stay abroad for higher earnings and better prospects, their commitment to serving their homeland and Jaffna brought them back. Such baseless accusations overlook their dedication. If these professionals decide to leave again, the impact on our society would be profound and detrimental.

At Jaffna Monitor, we are aware that many surgeons and physicians

are now regretting their decision to return to Sri Lanka and are contemplating leaving again. Additionally, those currently undergoing foreign training might choose not to come back. Driving them away will only result in losing invaluable medical expertise and care for our community.

This exodus would create a vacuum in our healthcare system, exacerbating the challenges faced by an already strained sector. The dedication of these medical professionals is a lifeline for many, and their potential departure would not only diminish the quality of healthcare but also hinder the progress and well-being of our society.

Moreover, the potential departure of these medical professionals would exacerbate the already challenging conditions in our hospitals. Many base hospitals, like those in Jaffna, struggle with inadequate resources and personnel. The loss of experienced surgeons and physicians would only deepen this crisis, leaving countless patients without access to critical medical care.

Before casting accusations, we must remember the dedication of doctors like Dr. Peranantharaja, an eminent consultant who devoted his entire life to the people of Jaffna. He never even owned a bike and often commuted by cycle. Recall Dr. Lakshman, a cardiologist who faithfully reported to duty at Jaffna Hospital even while his wife was terminally ill with cancer. Remember Dr. Gowri, a consultant beloved by patients who called her "Amman" (goddess), who remained unmarried and committed her entire life to the welfare of the Jaffna people, and many more.

Let us not forget these exemplary individuals who sacrificed personal comfort and ambitions to serve their community. Their dedication should inspire us to support and cherish our medical professionals rather than drive them away with unfounded criticisms.

Warm regards,

கணியன் பூங்குன்றன்
Kaniyan Pungundran
Editor- Jaffna Monitor

87 Kilograms of Kerala Ganja Seized in Kodikamam



BY:

Our Reporter

In a significant drug bust, the Chavakachcheri police seized a staggering 87 kilograms—not grams—of Kerala ganja from a house in Kodikamam. Two individuals have been arrested and placed in remand custody. The influx of narcotics into Sri Lanka, especially into Tamil-speaking areas, has been alarmingly high in recent times, raising serious concerns

about national security, public safety, and the future of Tamil youths.

Acting on information from the military intelligence division, the police conducted a search operation at the Sangupiddy Bridge. During the search, a government employee with the Sri Lanka Transport Board was arrested with 500 grams of ganja, which was cleverly concealed inside a car. The arrested individual is a 47-year-old resident of Vavuniya.



During the interrogation, the arrested individual revealed that the ganja was given to him by a fellow government employee attached to the same department who resides in Kodikamam. Following this information, the police surrounded the house of the said individual in Kodikamam. A staggering quantity of 87 kilograms of Kerala ganja was seized during the raid. The main suspect had fled the scene, but his mother, who was at the house and also an accomplice, was arrested.

This massive amount of narcotics raises several critical questions. How did such a large quantity of ganja make its way into Kodikamam? The prevailing theory is that it came by sea, highlighting potential lapses in maritime security. What are the maritime security forces doing to prevent such substantial drug shipments from entering the country?

Adding to the complexity of the issue, many so-called Tamil nationalist politicians are

appearing in court to defend these drug mafias. These lawyers shamelessly speak about Tamil nationalism and Tamil upliftment while representing drug dealers, undermining the very principles they claim to uphold. Despite calls from several civil societies for these lawyers to cease representing drug offenders, their pleas have fallen on deaf ears.

Moreover, the arrested individual and the one who escaped are government employees at the Sri Lanka Transport Board. Their direct involvement in this drug operation raises serious eyebrows and questions about the integrity of public servants and the potential complicity within government ranks.

This incident underscores the urgent need for stringent measures to combat the growing drug menace and ensure that those involved, regardless of their political affiliations or government positions, are brought to justice.



Jayasuriya to Teach Sri Lanka How to 'Bat' Out of Trouble

Sri Lanka Cricket (SLC) has announced the appointment of cricket legend Sanath Jayasuriya as the interim head coach of the men's national team. Jayasuriya, renowned for his explosive batting style and credited with revolutionizing the 50-over format in the 1990s, will take charge immediately and lead the team until the conclusion of their upcoming tour of England. There is uncertainty about whether he will continue in this role after the England tour, with future decisions likely to depend on the team's performance.

Jayasuriya steps into the role following the resignation of Chris Silverwood, who departed after Sri Lanka's underwhelming performance in the ICC Men's T20 World Cup 2024. Despite notable successes during his tenure, including a T20 Asia Cup victory in 2022 and a runner-up finish in the 50-over Asia Cup in 2023, Silverwood's exit was prompted by the team's disappointing campaign in the T20 World Cup, where they managed only one win in four games, finishing third in Group D.

A Proven Track Record

Jayasuriya's cricketing credentials are impeccable. He has played 586 matches for Sri Lanka across all formats, amassing a remarkable 21,032 runs and taking 440 wickets. Known as one of the most dangerous opening batters of his era, Jayasuriya has also served as a selector and is currently the full-time Cricket Consultant for Sri Lanka Cricket. His vast experience and strategic insight are expected to be invaluable as he takes on this crucial role.

Upcoming Challenges

Jayasuriya's first challenge as head coach will be the home series against India, featuring three ODIs and three T20Is. This will be followed by a three-match Test series against England, starting on August 21, with the first Test in Manchester and the remaining two in London at Lord's and The Oval.

Ashley De Silva, CEO of Sri Lanka Cricket, expressed confidence in Jayasuriya's appointment, stating, "Sanath, with his wealth of international cricketing experience, is well-positioned to guide the national team until we find a permanent solution."

Sampanthan's Political Journey: From Leader to Disregarded Elder



BY:

Kaniyan Pungundran

கணியன் பூங்குன்றன்

Rajavarothayam Sampanthan, a towering figure in Tamil politics known affectionately as 'Perunthalaivar' (Great Leader), passed away peacefully in Colombo on June 30, 2024. At the age of 91 years and 4 months, Sampanthan was one of the last prominent leaders from the era of Thanthai Chelva (S. J. V. Chelvanayakam).

Sampanthan had been in poor health for a considerable period and had been wheelchair-bound for several years. His health issues had notably caused him to miss parliamentary duties and important meetings. An example was an important meeting with the newly

reappointed Indian External Affairs Minister, S. Jaishankar, three weeks before his death. Sources close to Sampanthan mentioned that he was prepared with notes for this meeting, but his ailing health ultimately prevented him from attending.

Sampanthan's last interview was with the leading Tamil newspaper, Virakesari, a few weeks before his passing. The interview was titled “தமிழ் பொதுவேட்பாளரால் தமிழர்களுக்கு என்ன பயன்?” (“What Benefit Do Tamils Gain from a Common Tamil Candidate?”). The interviewer, journalist R. Ram, shared with the Jaffna Monitor that



despite Sampanthan's physical struggles and declining health, his mental faculties were remarkably sharp.

R. Ram recounted that Sampanthan's memory was impeccable; he recalled events and details with precision, and his responses to the most challenging and politically nuanced questions were delivered with astuteness and clarity. Ram noted that Sampanthan's answers reflected a profound understanding and insight into the political landscape. Remarkably, Sampanthan even remembered dates and times from the past with striking accuracy. Despite occasional moments when his speech was initially unclear, a repeated sentence would become perfectly comprehensible, showcasing his enduring acumen and experience. R. Ram added.

However, Ram also observed Sampanthan's physical fragility. While his mind remained as sharp as ever, his body was frail, a testament to the toll that age and illness had taken on him. This juxtaposition of a keen intellect housed in a weakened body highlighted, Ram pointed out, the indomitable spirit of a leader who, even in his final days, remained deeply engaged and committed to the causes he championed throughout his life.

From East to Eminence: Sampanthan's Political Legacy

Sampanthan, arguably the first and only leader to rise to the pinnacle of Tamil politics from Sri Lanka's eastern region, represented a significant departure from the established norm. Historically, Tamil political leadership,

including figures such as 'Thanthai' S. J. V. Chelvanayakam, Amirthalingam, and even LTTE's Prabhakaran during the armed struggle, predominantly emerged from the northern regions.

Sampanthan was a distinguished representative of Sri Lanka's eastern Trincomalee district and served as the Parliamentary group leader of the Ilankai Tamil Arasuk Katchi (ITAK), also known in English as the Federal Party (FP)—a translation that is politically motivated and not entirely accurate.



Rajavarothayam Sampanthan was born in Trincomalee on February 5, 1933, as the eldest of seven children. His father, A. Rajavarothayam, served in the government during British colonial rule and retired post-independence as the Superintendent of Stores at the Gal Oya Dam and Reservoir Construction scheme. This position

afforded young Sampanthan a diverse and comprehensive education.

Sampanthan's early education took him to several prestigious institutions. He began his primary schooling in Jaffna and continued his education at St. Patrick's College in Jaffna, St. Anne's College in Kurunegala, and St. Joseph's College in Trincomalee. His secondary education culminated at St. Sebastian's College in Moratuwa, known for its academic excellence.

Following his secondary education, Sampanthan entered Ceylon Law College. During this era, before the title of Attorney-at-Law was established, he graduated as a proctor in the late 1950s.



Federal Freedom Party Satyagraha at Galle Face Against the Draconian Sinhala Only Act, with Thanthai Selva Seated

Sampanthan returned to his hometown of Trincomalee to commence his legal practice. His adept legal skills and dedication quickly earned him a reputation as one of the most popular and respected lawyers in the area. Sampanthan's political career is distinguished by its remarkable duration and significant impact. He served as a Member of Parliament for the Trincomalee electorate from 1977 to 1983, and subsequently as the Trincomalee district MP from 1997 to 2000, and again from 2001 until his passing in 2024. In total, his parliamentary service spanned over 32 years.

From 2004 to 2014, Sampanthan held the position of leader of the Illankai Tamil Arasu Katchi (ITAK). Although he resigned from this role in September 2014, he continued to lead the now-uncertain Tamil National Alliance (TNA), in which ITAK was the chief constituent party.

During his tenure, Sampanthan played a

crucial role in navigating the Tamil political landscape and advocating for Tamil rights within his capacity. His style of politics—negotiating without angering the majority community or its politicians—starkly contrasted with Prabhakaran's slash-and-burn approach and was often frustrating for those accustomed to LTTE's school of politics.

His leadership extended to being the leader of the Opposition in Parliament from 2015 to 2019, during which he played a crucial but ultimately unsuccessful role in national politics.

Sampanthan's Political Journey and the Sri Lankan Tamils' Story

At just 23 years old, Rajavarothayam Sampanthan joined the Illankai Tamil Arasu Kachchi (ITAK) in 1956, the very year Prime Minister SWRD. Bandaranaike's government enacted the Sinhala Only Act. This ill-



Rare picture of the 1956 Galle Face democratic protest against the Sinhala Only Act under the leadership of S.J.V. Chelvanayakam

conceived piece of legislation effectively laid the groundwork for Sri Lanka's enduring ethnic conflict. The Act insidiously declared Sinhala as the sole official language of Sri Lanka, marginalizing the Tamil-speaking population and stripping them of their linguistic and cultural rights.

This controversial and inflammatory legislation sent shockwaves through the Tamil community, fueling ethnic tensions and sparking protests. For the Tamil community, the Sinhala Only Act was a direct attack on their identity and existence within Sri Lanka. It led to widespread unrest and violence, deeply embedding a sense of injustice and alienation among Tamils. It is important to remember that before this Act, Tamils were not advocating for Tamil Eelam—a separate

country for Sri Lankan Tamils. In fact, it is doubtful that the term "Tamil Eelam" was even in the lexicon of Sri Lankan Tamils before this evil Act was enacted.

The Reluctant Politician: Sampanthan's Journey from Law to Leadership

Thanthai Chelva, the then de facto Leader of Sri Lankan Tamils, saw potential in the most sought-after and popular civil and criminal legal practitioner, Rajavarothayam Sampanthan, who initially resisted entering politics despite close familial ties to prominent politicians. His uncle, S. Sivapalan, was the first MP for Trincomalee, elected in 1947 from the All Ceylon Tamil Congress (ACTC).

Sampanthan's cousin, N. R. Rajavarothayam, later defeated Sivapalan in the 1952 election as an ITAK candidate. Both men were closely related to Sampanthan and to each other.

When N. R. Rajavarothayam passed away in 1963, ITAK leader S.J.V. Chelvanayakam urged Sampanthan to run for the vacant seat, but he declined. S.M. Manickarajah won the by-election instead and was re-elected in 1965. Upon Manickarajah's retirement in 1970, Chelvanayakam again

invited Sampanthan to stand as the ITAK candidate for Trincomalee. Again, Sampanthan declined, and B. Neminathan won the seat.

In 1976, Chelvanayakam secured Sampanthan's commitment to run for Trincomalee, with the support of his political heir, Appapillai Amirthalingam. Sampanthan finally agreed, marking the beginning of his distinguished political career. Reflecting on this decision, Sampanthan once said, "Politics, I always thought, was not my game, and my heart was in the courthouse. The politician whom I respected most, Thanthai Chelva, changed the entire course of my life. Meanwhile, on May 4, 1972, several Tamil political



Mr. S.J.V. Chelvanayakam participating in a Satyagraha campaign in Trincomalee in February 1961, with then parliamentarians (R-L) Mr. Thambiah Ehambaram (Muttur MP) and Mr. N.R. Rajavarothiam (Trincomalee MP).



Thanthai S.J.V. Chelvanayakam



N. R. Rajavarothayam



parties, including the ITAK, Ceylon Workers Congress (CWC), and All Ceylon Tamil Congress (ACTC), formed the Tamil United Front (TUF) under the joint leadership of S. J. V. Chelvanayakam, S. Thondaman, and G. G. Ponnambalam. The TUF later changed its name to Tamil United Liberation Front (TULF) and adopted the demand for an independent Tamil state, the "secular, socialist state of Tamil Eelam." However, the CWC declined to support the newly formed TULF and left the coalition.

Sampanthan's Entry into Politics: The 1977 Triumph and the Impact of the Vaddukoddai Resolution

Sampanthan's political journey officially began in 1977 when he contested and won the

Trincomalee seat as a Tamil United Liberation Front (TULF) member. He garnered 15,144 votes, which amounted to 51.76% of the votes, marking his entry into Parliament during a period of significant political upheaval in the country, particularly for Tamils.

The catalyst for this upheaval was the adoption of the Vaddukoddai Resolution on May 14, 1976, in Pannakam near Vaddukoddai in Jaffna. This pivotal moment in the Tamil nationalist movement saw the TULF, under the leadership of S. J. V. Chelvanayakam and with key advocates like Appapillai Amirthalingam, call for the creation of an independent Tamil Eelam.

The resolution signified a significant shift from earlier calls for federalism to advocating for a separate state for Tamils in the Northern

and Eastern provinces of Sri Lanka. However, this resolution was not a genuine demand for independence. Instead, it was a politically strategic maneuver by the Tamil leaders of the time aimed at garnering votes, mobilizing Tamil youth for their cause, and sending a resolute message to the Sinhala government.

Despite the political machinations of the leaders, the resolution struck a deep chord within Tamil-speaking communities, particularly galvanizing the youth. Among them was Velupillai Prabhakaran, who had already commenced his militant activities by assassinating Alfred Duraiappah on July 27, 1975. The Vaddukoddai Resolution had a profound impact, drawing large numbers of Tamil youths to TULF meetings. In a dramatic display of commitment, these youths would slash their forearms and anoint the foreheads of TULF leaders with their blood, underscoring their fervent dedication to the cause.

One notable incident involved the future LTTE intelligence chief, "Pottu Amman," who earned his name by slashing his thumb and anointing TULF Member of Parliament Yogeswaran's forehead with his blood, like a bindi. Contrary to popular belief that his name stemmed from his involvement in violent activities, the moniker "Pottu Amman" directly originated from this symbolic act. In the LTTE's lexicon, the term "Pottu Vaithal" is often metaphorically equated with killing someone with a bullet to the forehead.



Ironically, in a cruel twist of fate, the LTTE, whose leaders were initially inspired by the TULF's Vaddukoddai Resolution to take up arms, later assassinated TULF Members of Parliament Yogeswaran and Amirthalingam 13 years later. The Vaddukoddai Resolution, which called for an independent Tamil Eelam, was a pivotal catalyst that inspired and compelled many Tamil youths to embrace militancy, setting the stage for a profound and tragic transformation in the Tamil struggle.

Following the adoption of the Vaddukoddai Resolution, the TULF ran in the 1977 Sri Lankan parliamentary elections, campaigning for an independent Tamil Eelam. Their platform resonated strongly in Tamil-majority regions, resulting in a significant victory where the TULF won 18 seats—10

from Jaffna, 4 from Vanni, 1 from Trincomalee, 2 from Batticaloa, and 1 from Ampara. The only seat they missed was Kalkudah in the Eastern Province, where K.W. Devanayagam of the UNP won and was subsequently appointed Minister of Justice.

The July 21, 1977, elections also marked a dramatic shift in Sri Lanka's national political landscape. The United National Party (UNP) secured a landslide victory with 140 of the 168 seats, achieving an unprecedented majority, while the ruling Sri Lanka Freedom Party (SLFP) faced its worst defeat in history, falling from 91 seats to a mere eight.

The TULF's 18 seats made it the main opposition in Parliament, a historic first for a minority party in Sri Lanka. TULF's general secretary, Appapillai Amirthalingam, was elected as the leader of the opposition, making history as the first Tamil to hold this position.

Decades later, Sampanthan became the second Tamil politician to assume the leader of the Opposition role after the 2015 parliamentary elections. This occurred when the two main Sinhala parties formed a coalition government, leaving the Tamil National Alliance (TNA) as the primary opposition; with just 16 seats, R. Sampanthan became the Opposition Leader, the first Tamil in 37 years to occupy the position, and the house allocated for the opposition leader.

Ironically, this house became a favorite target for critics who, despite Sampanthan's other obvious faults, chose to focus on this issue as a way of engaging in cheap politics—or, as some might say, in the classic way of Tamil politics.

In 1983, Sampanthan and all other TULF MPs boycotted Parliament due to multiple pressures. Sri Lankan Tamil militants strongly

opposed the extension of their term beyond six years, and the introduction of the Sixth Amendment to the Constitution of Sri Lanka added further complications. This Amendment mandated that all members of Parliament and public officers renounce support for a separate state and take an oath of allegiance to the unitary state of Sri Lanka. It explicitly prohibited any advocacy for the establishment of a separate state within Sri Lanka, making such actions a criminal offense.

The political climate was further strained by the 1982 Sri Lankan national referendum, held on December 22, 1982, which offered the public the option to extend the life of Parliament by six years. Called by President J. R. Jayawardene, who had recently been re-elected. The referendum aimed to maintain the United National Party's (UNP) supermajority in Parliament.

Opposition parties viewed this as a dictatorial move and campaigned against it. Despite their efforts, over 54 percent of votes cast were in favor of extending the life of Parliament. However, LTTE and other militant organizations firmly warned Tamil MPs against extending their terms, implying that doing so would come with serious consequences. This blend of political and militant pressures ultimately led to the TULF's decision to boycott Parliament, after three months of absence, Sampanthan forfeited his seat on September 7, 1983.

Sealed in the Air: Sampanthan's Pivotal Role in the Indo-Lanka Accord

As a prominent member of the Tamil United Liberation Front (TULF), Rajavarothayam Sampanthan played a key role in the crucial discussions leading up to the signing of the historic Indo-Lanka Accord of 1987. Reflecting

on this significant period, The Hindu's Meera Srinivasan reported an intriguing anecdote shared by Sampanthan.

Sampanthan recalled learning that President J.R. Jayawardene, notorious for his cunning and strategic maneuvering, had managed to convince Romesh Bhandari, the special envoy of then-Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi, that there was no linguistic contiguity between Sri Lanka's north and east. This misinformation threatened the prospects of merging the two provinces, a critical issue for the Tamil community.

Determined to set the record straight, Sampanthan, along with TULF stalwarts A. Amirthalingam and M. Sivasithamparam, was in Madras (now Chennai) and sought an urgent meeting with Prime Minister Gandhi. The Prime Minister's Office informed them that Gandhi would be visiting Tiruchi (Tiruchirappalli) and suggested that the only way to secure a meeting would be to accompany him back to New Delhi on his chartered flight.

Seizing the opportunity, the TULF trio took an overnight train from Chennai to Tiruchi. They managed to secure a place on Gandhi's flight and, after takeoff, were escorted to the Prime Minister's suite. Armed with a map, Sampanthan demonstrated the linguistic contiguity between Sri Lanka's north and east, meticulously explaining the geographical and cultural connections.

As they prepared to disembark, Sampanthan, shaking hands and bidding farewell to the Indian Prime Minister, emphasized, "What I have told you is the absolute truth." His earnest plea and detailed presentation left a lasting impression on Gandhi.

Months later, the Indo-Lanka Accord was

signed, prominently featuring the merger of the north and east provinces among its key provisions. Reflecting on this critical moment, Sampanthan later remarked, "The merger was sealed in the air," referring to that decisive flight where he and his colleagues successfully conveyed their message to Prime Minister Gandhi.

In the early 2000s, Rajavarotheyam Sampanthan, whether out of fear of the LTTE or due to engaging in opportunistic politics, began to vehemently criticize the 13th Amendment, a pivotal element of the Indo-Lanka Accord. This was an agreement Sampanthan had originally supported and worked hard to help establish. During this period, when the LTTE was at its peak, Sampanthan famously declared that "they wouldn't even touch the 13th Amendment with a broomstick."

However, following the annihilation of the LTTE in 2009, Sampanthan's stance shifted dramatically. Recognizing the Amendment's potential for devolving power and promoting reconciliation, he began to advocate for its implementation.

From Defeat to Tragedy: Sampanthan's 1989 Campaign and Amirthalingam's Assassination

In the 1989 parliamentary election held on February 15, Sampanthan ran as one of the ENDLF/EPRLF/TELO/TULF alliance candidates in the Trincomalee District. Unfortunately, the coalition won no seats, and Sampanthan secured only 6,048 votes.

Later that year, on July 13, 1989, the LTTE carried out the assassination of Amirthalingam, then the leader of the TULF and widely regarded as the Leader of Sri



A. Amirthalingam with his wife Mangaiyarkarasi

Lankan Tamils. This event marked a significant turning point in the Tamil political landscape.

The LTTE cited various reasons for branding Amirthalingam a traitor, but the underlying motive was more straightforward. Prabhakaran, the LTTE supremo, recognized that as long as Amirthalingam was alive, the Sri Lankan Tamils would never wholly accept Prabhakaran as their sole leader. Amirthalingam's influence and stature threatened Prabhakaran's quest for undisputed leadership. By eliminating Amirthalingam, Prabhakaran sought to consolidate his control over the Tamil movement and assert his dominance as the singular voice for the Tamil people.

1994 Defeat and 1997 Redemption

Sampanthan ran again in the 1994 parliamentary election but failed to get re-elected, coming in second among TULF candidates. Arunachalam Thangathurai, a noble statesman who was well-liked by the rural public, polled the highest number of preferential votes in the August 1994 General

Election, with Sampanthan coming second in the TULF's list for the Trincomalee district, securing 19,525 votes.

Sampanthan re-entered Parliament in 1997 following the assassination of Arunachalam Thangathurai on July 5, 1997, which coincided with Black Tiger's Day. Thangathurai was killed along with six others, including three school principals, in a grenade attack and shooting by the LTTE while attending a function at Sri Shanmuga Hindu Ladies College in Trincomalee.



Arunachalam Thangathurai

Sampanthan ran in the 2000 parliamentary election as one of TULF's candidates in Trincomalee District, but unfortunately, the TULF did not win any seats in the district.

Formation of the TNA: "Tiger Nominated Agents"

LTTE supremo Prabhakaran often remained politically naive. However, in the early 2000s,



*Sampanthan with LTTE
Supremo Prabhakaran and
LTTE Political Wing Head
Tamilselvan*



*Sampanthan with
LTTE Political Wing
Head Tamilselvan
and LTTE Chief
Political Strategist
Anton Balasingham*

thanks to some astute advisers, he recognized the need for a political arm to legitimize the LTTE's actions. This realization led to the formation of the Tamil National Alliance (TNA), humorously but revealingly dubbed by some as "Tiger Nominated Agents."

This improbable coalition brought together a mix of moderate Tamil nationalist factions and former militant groups. The alliance comprised the Tamil United Liberation Front (TULF), All Ceylon Tamil Congress (ACTC),

Eelam People's Revolutionary Liberation Front (EPRLF), and Tamil Eelam Liberation Organization (TELO).

The formation of the TNA was a strategic move, bringing together these diverse groups under one banner and providing political cover for the LTTE's actions. Ironically, TELO and EPRLF members, who were previously branded as traitors and hunted down by the LTTE, joined forces with the very organization that had once killed them with impunity.

Leaders of these militant organizations, whose friends and comrades had been brutally killed by the LTTE, bowed to Prabhakaran's authority and were effectively "baptized" by the LTTE. It was akin to the mythical transformation of Ahalya, who was turned to stone and then revived by the touch of Lord Rama—these militant groups, once ostracized by LTTE, were resurrected by LTTE itself.

The Tamil National Alliance (TNA) was officially established in October 2001 to participate in the 2001 parliamentary elections on a unified platform. R. Sampanthan was appointed as the leader of the alliance by the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE). However, due to the lack of recognition from the Election Commission, the TNA contested the 2001 elections under the Tamil United Liberation Front (TULF) banner.

In the 2001 parliamentary elections, the TNA, using the TULF name and its rising sun symbol, garnered 348,164 votes, representing 3.89% of the total votes. This electoral effort resulted in the TNA securing 15 out of 225 seats in the Sri Lankan parliament.

From Target to Mouthpiece

Upon his appointment as the leader of the TNA, R. Sampanthan showed little to no political shame, unabashedly becoming a mouthpiece for the LTTE. This was despite the LTTE having previously hunted down several leaders of his own party. Remarkably, Sampanthan himself had been on the LTTE's hit list just two years before the coalition was formed.

Following the brutal LTTE suicide attack that killed Neelan Tiruchelvam on July 29, 1999, credible sources within the LTTE informed



Neelan Tiruchelvam

the Jaffna Monitor that Sampanthan was also a target. These sources revealed that Pottu Amman, the head of the LTTE intelligence wing, had assigned the task of eliminating Sampanthan to Charles, who was then in charge of LTTE intelligence operations in Colombo.

On August 1, 1999, just two days after the assassination of Neelan Tiruchelvam, newspapers reported a significant security shift: "The Presidential Security Division (PSD) has been assigned to provide protection for the TULF General Secretary, R. Sampanthan. This decision replaces the Ministerial Security Division, which typically safeguards cabinet ministers and had been responsible for Dr. Neelan Tiruchelvam's security. The change follows considerable intelligence indicating a credible threat to Sampanthan's life from the LTTE."

However, this scenario changed after the formation of the Tamil National Alliance. Sampanthan, too, was 'baptized' by the LTTE supremo and became a patriot. In return, Sampanthan went beyond all boundaries to whitewash the LTTE and its supremo, Prabhakaran.

On October 28, 2001, newspapers reported: "The Tamil Parties' Alliance has been formed to muster the support of the Tamil people and their political forces for the freedom struggle of the Liberation Tigers in and out of Parliament. The time has now come for all the Tamil political forces in the northeast to unite under one banner to give full support to the LTTE who are involved in the freedom struggle," declared Sampanthan.

He elaborated, "Without the wholehearted participation of the Liberation Tigers, no firm and lasting political solution can be found for the Tamil national question. A political solution found in talks with the Liberation Tigers can only be implemented under the supervision of the international community. Therefore, the government should first declare a cease-fire and initiate talks with the Liberation Tigers without hesitation."

In a brazen display of deference to the LTTE, he further stated, "One of the main demands of the 'Tamil parties' alliance is that no talks should be held by the government with any other group when negotiating with the Liberation Tigers."

Revival of ITAK: The TNA's New Symbol and Political Journey

In 2001, due to unforeseen circumstances, the newly formed Tamil National Alliance (TNA) lost the right to use the Tamil United Liberation Front (TULF) symbol, the rising sun. This led to the revival of the long-inactive Ilankai Tamil Arasu Katchi (ITAK).

The TNA secured fifteen seats in the December 2001 parliamentary polls, including one national list MP. The TULF President at the time, Murugesu Sivasithamparam, was appointed to this national list seat. However, following Sivasithamparam's demise on June



Ananda Sangari

5, 2002, Veerasingham Anandasangaree, a maverick politician, became the President of the TULF.

Anandasangaree, true to his unyielding political style, was defiant towards Prabhakaran's authority. His attitude was essentially, "Who the hell is Prabhakaran to order me?" Predictably, he soon clashed with the LTTE. Miraculously, and for reasons best known to Prabhakaran, the LTTE supremo did not order Anandasangaree's assassination, a stark contrast to his usual tactics. This decision left many of Prabhakaran's supporters deeply confused.

At that time, this writer was a school student and overheard discussions among die-hard LTTE supporters, questioning why our beloved "Thesiya Thalaivar" (national leader) had not yet ordered Anandasangaree's assassination. Prabhakaran was revered almost as a deity, and disobeying or insulting him was considered blasphemy. Despite this, Anandasangaree remained resolute and unafraid, exuding an "I don't care even if you kill me" attitude. He even wrote a few letters to Prabhakaran, saying,

“தம்பி, நீயும் அழிந்து தமிழ் இனத்தையும் அழிக்காதே” (Brother, do not destroy yourself and the Tamil race), which turned out to be prophetic a few years later.

The LTTE ordered the TULF to remove Anandasangaree from office. Most of the TULF, out of fear of the LTTE, complied and removed Anandasangaree, prompting him to take the matter to court. Legal disputes over the rising sun symbol ensued, and the courts eventually ruled in favor of Anandasangaree, allowing him to retain the symbol. Consequently, the TNA opted for the ITAK symbol, the house, and the previously dormant ITAK gained new life, becoming the principal component of the TNA.

2004 Parliamentary Elections: TNA's Unprecedented Victory Amid Electoral Malpractices

In the 2004 parliamentary elections, the Tamil National Alliance (TNA) contested under the Ilankai Tamil Arasu Kachchi (ITAK) symbol and achieved an unprecedented victory. They garnered 633,654 votes, accounting for 6.84% of the total vote, and secured 22 seats—the maximum number a Tamil party could win in the North and East. This triumph was largely attributed to the pervasive fear of the LTTE and evident electoral malpractices.

This writer witnessed widespread electoral malpractice in Jaffna. In one instance, a friend of his, who was only 17 and couldn't legally vote, managed to cast five votes on polling day, all as fake votes for the TNA. His first-choice vote was for Selvarajah Kajendran, the then-president of the Jaffna University Student Union and now an MP and General Secretary of the Tamil National People's Front (TNPf). The atmosphere was such that polling agents and officers were verbally or indirectly

instructed to just observe and not intervene. In some places, these officers even facilitated the malpractice.

Selvarajah Kajendran alone garnered 112,077 votes in Jaffna district, an unprecedented figure in Jaffna's electoral history. This astonishing number was achieved through various malpractices. Many deceased individuals seemingly "reemerged" as their votes were cast, and numerous Tamils settled abroad also had their votes cast in this election despite not physically being present.

The manipulation was so blatant that it turned the entire electoral process into a farce. While the TNA would have likely won the election even without these malpractices, the argument can be made that achieving 22 seats was significantly influenced by these fraudulent activities.

TNA's Changing Fortunes: From LTTE-backed Victory to Independent Struggle

After the election, Sampanthan was chosen as the leader of the TNA parliamentary group with the blessing of the Tigers. This appointment solidified his leadership of the alliance for the next two decades, even after the LTTE and its leadership were annihilated in Mullivaikkal in 2009. Sampanthan remained in his position until his death in 2024.

By the time the TNA contested the general election in April 2010, the LTTE was no longer a force, having been obliterated by the Sri Lankan army, a downfall hastened by their own strategic blunders. Without the Tigers to manipulate the electoral process and stuff ballot boxes, the TNA faced a stark reality. The party managed to secure only 14 seats, a sharp decline from their previous triumphs. The

absence of the LTTE's heavy-handed influence laid bare the challenges of maintaining political dominance without the crutch of electoral malpractice.

Sampanthan and the LTTE: A Controversial Alliance

Sources close to Sampanthan told the Jaffna Monitor that Sampanthan was more pragmatic than a steadfast ideologue. They elaborated that while Sampanthan maintained his belief in nonviolent politics until the end and was not a fan of the LTTE's killing spree or its violent tactics, he always lamented the killings of TULF leaders Amirthalingam, Yogeswaran, Neelan Tiruchelvam, and many others by the LTTE.

However, he never publicly criticized the LTTE regarding these actions. The slightest criticism came in an interview with an English newspaper (he conveniently avoided giving even the slightest criticism of the LTTE on Tamil platforms), where he stated, "The killings of Amirthalingam, Yogeswaran, and Tiruchelvam cannot ever be justified. They were wrong, and they should never have been killed. That was my view then, and that is my view today. That will always be my view. There is no question about it."

Despite his personal views, Sampanthan accepted and recognized the LTTE as the sole representative of the Tamil people. Some might call this political opportunism, while others might see it as a political roller coaster. He even admitted in Parliament that their electoral victory was largely due to the support of the Tigers and officially recognized the LTTE as the sole voice of the Tamil populace. Like Prabhakaran, Sampanthan showed little concern for the involvement of TNA members in the peace process. He believed that in

discussions about a political solution for the Tamil people, the Tigers alone could represent the Tamil community. This stance mirrored the LTTE's perspective, effectively sidelining other Tamil political entities and reinforcing the LTTE's role as the sole representative of the Tamil people in negotiations.

Silence in the Face of Atrocity: Sampanthan's Complicity with the LTTE.

Under Sampanthan's leadership, the TNA remained committed to the LTTE's brutal strategies until the very end. Having granted the LTTE the unprecedented status of the sole representative of the Tamil-speaking people—albeit by force—the TNA and Sampanthan remained silent as the LTTE dragged lakhs of innocent people with them to Mullivaikal.

The LTTE's tactics became increasingly desperate and ruthless. As the Sri Lankan military closed in, the LTTE forcibly conscripted civilians, including children as young as ten, to fight on the frontlines. The TNA and Sampanthan did not speak out against these heinous actions. They never publicly asked the LTTE to release the civilians and allow them to escape the war zone, nor did they demand that the LTTE fight with dignity without using their own people as human shields. Despite the harrowing reports and pleas, the TNA and Sampanthan maintained a troubling silence.

A considerable number of conscientious Tamils later told the Jaffna Monitor that they had contacted, begged, and pleaded with Sampanthan to denounce the LTTE's brutal strategy of using civilians as human shields. These individuals implored him to put pressure on the LTTE to release the civilians. However, whether out of fear, political expediency, or other reasons, he and the TNA



Sampanthan waving the Sri Lankan lion flag, a gesture that sparked significant discussion among Tamil nationalists and the diaspora Tiger proxies

remained numb and indifferent to the plight of the Tamil people.

On moral grounds, the TNA and Sampanthan can never disassociate themselves from the LTTE's murderous actions against their own people. Sampanthan knew exactly what he was doing. He fully realized that the LTTE was dragging the Tamil community into a destructive war, yet he chose to remain a mute spectator, complicit in their reprehensible strategy. This inaction not only tarnished his legacy but also left an indelible stain on his leadership, a silent betrayal of the very people he was supposed to protect. The weight of this moral failing cast a long shadow over his contributions.

Sampanthan's Gamble: Aligning with Fonseka Against the Rajapaksas

Just eight months after the Mullivaikkal

tragedy and the complete destruction of the LTTE, the Rajapaksa brothers celebrated a victorious presidential election. In a politically audacious and courageous move, Sampanthan chose to support Sarath Fonseka, the former army commander of the Rajapaksa regime.

Insiders close to Sampanthan revealed that he was acutely aware of the potential backlash and the risk of being labeled a traitor by some Sri Lankan Tamils for this decision. Fonseka, after all, was the military leader who had executed the final war.

Sources close to Sampanthan revealed that he believed supporting the opposition candidate standing against the formidable Rajapaksa brothers was not just a political and diplomatic maneuver but also a reflection of the collective sentiment of the Tamil people. They further explained that Sampanthan was fully aware of the near impossibility of defeating the Rajapaksas at the height of their power. He also

received no assurances from Sarath Fonseka on Tamil rights and struggled to articulate how Fonseka would be better for Tamil interests than Rajapaksa. Nevertheless, he made the decision, even though supporting a ruthless army commander made him unfavorable to a section of Tamils and weakened the diaspora Tamils' attempts to brand the Sri Lankan army as genocidal. By supporting the chief who ran the entire military operations, Sampanthan, in a way, gave implicit recognition to the Army.

2015 Election and Becoming a Kingmaker

Sampanthan became a kingmaker in the 2015 presidential election. Sources close to Sampanthan told the Jaffna Monitor that by supporting a candidate against Rajapaksa in the 2010 presidential election, Sampanthan laid the groundwork for the Rajapaksas' eventual defeat in 2015. They elaborated that, in the context of Buddhist-Sinhala supremacy, the victory at Mullivaikkal was their greatest and most challenging achievement, and Mahinda Rajapaksa was the torchbearer of Buddhist-Sinhala supremacy. Most of the Sinhala population did not consider him a president but a king. Yet, few anticipated, including Sampanthan, that the victors of Mullivaikkal, the torchbearer of Sinhala supremacy and the 'never crowned' king of the Sinhala people, could be overthrown within six years.

They argued that this shift did not stem from a single election but was a result of Sampanthan's strategic stand in 2010. By uniting the Tamil people and demonstrating to the international community and southern Sri Lanka that the Tamils were willing to go to any lengths to defeat Rajapaksa, Sampanthan set the stage for the political shift that culminated in 2015, they told the Jaffna Monitor.

Sources close to Sampanthan posited that his decision inspired the Sri Lankan opposition to unite and present a single candidate in the 2015 election. According to them, Sampanthan was instrumental in conveying to diplomatic circles and southern Sri Lanka that a direct contest between Ranil Wickramasinghe and the Rajapaksas would only guarantee another victory for the latter. Consequently, Maithripala Sirisena, a cabinet minister who was in the inner circle of Mahinda Rajapaksa even the previous night of him filing nomination, emerged as the consensus candidate for the opposition in the 2015 presidential election. The Tamil electorate's support was pivotal in securing this victory. Following his defeat, Mahinda Rajapaksa famously lamented to his wailing supporters in his hometown, "You did not defeat me. The Tamils defeated me."

Eight months after the groundbreaking presidential election in which TNA-backed Maithripala Sirisena surprised many, particularly the Rajapaksa clan, by becoming the seventh President of Sri Lanka, a significant parliamentary election took place. The election led to an unexpected political shift when the two main Sinhala parties formed a coalition government. This coalition left the Tamil National Alliance (TNA) as the primary opposition party with just 16 seats. Consequently, R. Sampanthan became the leader of the opposition, marking him as the second Tamil politician to hold this position since Amirthalingam.

A Quest for Peace: Sampanthan's Efforts and Disappointments Post-LTTE

After the end of the LTTE's armed struggle, which marked the conclusion of the Tamil's armed struggle, as the LTTE had annihilated

other militant organizations, taken charge as the sole agent of the Tamil struggle, and eventually led countless people to their deaths at Mullivaikkal, Sampanthan redirected his efforts toward finding a peaceful solution to Sri Lanka's enduring ethnic conflict.

Sources close to Sampanthan disclosed that he steadfastly believed he could resolve this seemingly intractable issue within his lifetime. These insiders also highlighted that Sampanthan was convinced that any lasting resolution required the consent of the Sinhala people, who form the vast majority in Sri Lanka.

To this end, Sampanthan pondered ways to embrace the Sinhala people and their political parties, with the aim of dispelling the hostility, fears, and prejudices they harbored. He believed the LTTE's armed struggle had entrenched a deep-seated enmity among the Sinhala population.

Consequently, Sampanthan adopted a political approach that sought to avoid further alienating the Sinhala community. He was resolute in his determination to find a solution acceptable to the Sinhala people and steered his party toward this goal.

Sources close to him revealed that this determination drove Sampanthan to first oust the often troublesome Gajendrakumar Ponnambalam's faction from the TNA, which he considered a self-styled pseudo-Tamil nationalist. Following this, he targeted Suresh Premachandran of the Eelam People's Revolutionary Liberation Front (EPRLF). Premachandran had a notorious past as a mass murderer during the time of the Indian Peace Keeping Force (IPKF) intervention. He was later baptized by the LTTE and rebranded himself as a Tamil nationalist leader.

These sources elaborated that Sampanthan's aim was to transform the TNA into a moderate political entity, shedding its image of Tamil extremism. He believed that portraying the TNA as a party open to peaceful and democratic solutions would garner broader support from both the Sinhala and international communities. According to people close to him, Sampanthan believed this approach would help find a peaceful solution for Tamils within a united Sri Lanka. To achieve this vision, he brought in figures like Sumanthiran and C.V. Vigneswaran, whom he perceived as moderates capable of steering the party toward a more centrist and inclusive stance. However, they later betrayed him, which is a different story altogether.

Sampanthan and his TNA played a pivotal role in the regime change that occurred in 2015. As a result of that regime change, the Ranil-Maithri government accepted the UN's Resolution 30/1. In 2015, the Government of Sri Lanka co-sponsored this landmark UN Human Rights Council resolution, making commitments to promote reconciliation, accountability, and human rights in Sri Lanka. The resolution called for the establishment of a judicial mechanism with a special counsel to investigate allegations of human rights violations and international humanitarian law abuses. It also emphasized the importance of including Commonwealth and other foreign judges, defense lawyers, and authorized prosecutors and investigators in this process.

The resolution mandated structural changes to resolve the ethnic problem and initiated arrangements to draft a new constitution. Sampanthan, believing the Sinhala politicians and their promises, fully cooperated. Sampanthan meticulously traced the constitutional evolution of Sri Lanka, highlighting the pivotal moments that shaped the nation's political landscape. He examined the 1947 Soulbury Constitution, crafted by



the British Colonial government, the first Republican Constitution of 1972, framed by the Sri Lanka Freedom Party-led government, and the second Republic Constitution of 1978, drafted by the United National Party. In each instance, he identified a critical shortfall: the absence of national consensus.

"The ongoing conflict in Sri Lanka, which has persisted since Independence in 1947 and escalated into an armed struggle lasting 25-30 years, can be attributed to the lack of a Constitution founded on the broadest possible national consensus, tailored to meet the needs of our diverse and pluralistic society,"

Sampanthan asserted. He emphasized that all previous constitutions had been created without the contribution of the Tamil people.

Sources close to Sampanthan told the Jaffna Monitor that he harbored a profound aspiration: to create a new constitution with the active participation of the Tamil community. He believed that only through such inclusive and comprehensive constitutional reform could Sri Lanka achieve lasting peace and unity.

Sampanthan went to great lengths to support the Maithri-Ranil government, sometimes

acting as its spokesperson. The efforts to draft a constitution progressed to an interim report. When this interim report was submitted and debated in Parliament, Sampanthan declared the new constitution as a solution to the ethnic problem and gave promises to the Tamil masses.

Sampanthan, who initially entered electoral politics when the Tamil United Liberation Front (TULF) campaigned on the promise of Tamil Eelam, later came to despise the term. During a heated parliamentary session, when Mahinda Rajapaksa's party was inciting anti-Tamil sentiment by alleging that the Tamils were seeking to divide Sri Lanka, Sampanthan delivered a powerful rebuttal. He stated, "I would like to put this on record because I want everyone in this country to know that it was malicious, vicious, fallacious, false propaganda on the part of President Rajapaksa and the Sri Lanka Podujana Peramuna (SLPP). If you proceed with this agenda, I want to tell you that [Tamil] Eelam will bloom, not on account of us, but on account of your Lotus Bud. Your Lotus Bud [the SLPP's symbol] will bloom into an Eelam. That is what will happen. Therefore, please resist your temptation to achieve cheap political gain by carrying on such false propaganda."

In 2018, Maithripala Sirisena, the then "unfit president," one of the initiators of the constitution-drafting efforts, betrayed the process. Sampanthan's dream was shattered. Sources close to Sampanthan told the Jaffna Monitor that he was deeply saddened and felt betrayed. All the promises he made to the Tamil people turned out to be false. Not only was his belief defeated, but as a result, the TNA also lost its long-held dominance. In the next election, the party's votes scattered, going from 16 seats to 10 seats, and its overall vote percentage dropped from 4.62% to 2.82%.

Sampanthan's Political Decline: The TNA's Fragmented Legacy

Under Sampanthan's leadership, the Tamil National Alliance (TNA) has become increasingly fragmented. The chief constituent party, Ilankai Tamil Arasu Katchi (ITAK), stands on one side, while the other two constituent parties, the Tamil Eelam Liberation Organization (TELO) and the People's Liberation Organization of Tamil Eelam (PLOTE), align on the opposite side. This division is attributed to the politics of Sampanthan's political heir, M.A. Sumanthiran, and Sampanthan's perceived ineffectiveness in maintaining unity within the alliance.

Of the ten seats held by the TNA in Parliament, six belong to the ITAK, three to TELO, and one to PLOTE. The alliance has now effectively been reduced to only the ITAK, making the TNA synonymous with ITAK. Under Sampanthan's leadership, the TNA's political clout has dramatically diminished. From a staggering twenty-two seats—the maximum number of seats a Tamil party can win from the North and East—the TNA has been reduced to a mere six seats.

Currently, even the ITAK is embroiled in internal turmoil, splitting into two factions: the Sumanthiran faction and the Shritharan faction, both engaged in a fierce legal battle. When his beloved ITAK was dragged into court, Sampanthan was powerless to intervene.

In a family, when conflicts arise, the elders step in to resolve them. It is the same within a party—respected senior leaders resolve disputes. But as a senior leader, Sampanthan's word was not heeded by anyone. His once authoritative voice was ignored by everyone, including Sumanthiran, the very person he



had brought into the political arena.

Adding insult to injury, Sampanthan's influence had diminished so drastically that he had to lodge a formal complaint about appointments being made in his own electoral constituency without his knowledge.

The Decline of Sampanthan's Leadership

One could argue that a leader's true legacy is defined by their protégés, how they keep their party united during their tenure, and how they fulfill the promises made to the people they represent. Unfortunately, neither Sumanthiran nor C.V. Vigneswaran—whom Sampanthan had elevated to political prominence—managed to uphold his vision. C.V. Vigneswaran distanced himself from Sampanthan, openly criticizing his approach,

while Sumanthiran, once considered Sampanthan's crown prince, publicly humiliated the veteran leader.

In his final days, Sampanthan became a leader who was disrespected by everyone, including his own protégés. He silently had to witness the disintegration of his alliance and the fragmentation of his party. Moreover, Sampanthan failed to fulfill the promises regarding Tamil rights made to the Sri Lankan Tamils during the Yahapalana government, in which he, being the opposition leader, often acted as the government's spokesperson. The high hopes for political reform and greater autonomy for Tamils were left unfulfilled, leading to widespread disillusionment within the Tamil community.

One may argue, How could he hope to unify a diverse and divided nation when he couldn't maintain unity within his own party?

Breaking Free: Sampanthan's Candid Confession on TNA's LTTE Liberation

Just a few weeks before the 2015 presidential election, the late Rajavarothiam Sampanthan admitted that the annihilation of the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) had liberated his political alliance-the Tamil National Alliance (TNA), which he headed-from the clutches of the LTTE.

Sampanthan, who led the alliance for 23 years, addressed this issue when an English newspaper journalist raised it at a special press conference called by the TNA in Colombo to announce its decision to back Maithripala Sirisena's candidature at the 2015 presidential election.

At the time, the TNA declared its support for Maithripala Sirisena, and its parliamentary group consisted of 14 MPs, making it the third-largest group in Parliament.

The journalist sought an explanation from Sampanthan regarding several issues:

1. Did the TNA probe its own conduct as a political party, particularly its controversial 2001 decision to recognize the LTTE as the sole representative of the Tamil-speaking people?

2. Why did the TNA ask the Tamil electorate to boycott the November 2005 presidential election?
3. What led to the TNA backing retired General Sarath Fonseka in the 2010 presidential election?

In response, Sampanthan declared that both the government and the Opposition had the freedom to operate because the LTTE no longer existed. He stressed that the LTTE had been a ruthless militant organization and admitted that the TNA had also been freed from the LTTE's influence.

The TNA leader justified the recognition of the LTTE as the sole representative of the Tamil-speaking people on the basis that both then-President Chandrika Bandaranaike Kumaratunga's government and the UNP wanted to have talks with the group.

Commenting on the November 2005 polls boycott, Sampanthan claimed that the Tamil electorate had no option but to abide by the LTTE directive. He did not comment on the TNA having to issue that directive on behalf of the LTTE.

How Sampanthan Engineered Ranil's 2005 Defeat

When the LTTE leadership wanted to teach Ranil Wickremesinghe a lesson—due to his involvement in the LTTE's infamous eastern split, where LTTE's eastern commander Karuna Amman and his 6,000 cadres left the LTTE—Prabhakaran decided to make the people of the North and East boycott the 2005 presidential election. Prabhakaran knew that these people would overwhelmingly vote for Ranil. Sampanthan, without any shame, carried out Prabhakaran's directive to the masses and gave it a political spin.

Sampanthan declared that there hadn't been any peace developments. "Nothing worthwhile would be achieved by supporting either of the two leading candidates, Mahinda Rajapaksa and Ranil Wickremesinghe," he stated. Sampanthan

shamelessly asserted that the Tamil-speaking people were not interested in the election.

Recently, TNA member of parliament Sumanthiran commented on the 2005 polls boycott in the presence of President Ranil Wickremesinghe in Jaffna. Sumanthiran told the gathering, which again stirred controversy among the LTTE's diaspora and its supporters: "It is possible that the challenges in the North may have impeded your journey in 2005, a fact that I believe is now regretfully acknowledged by the people of the region."

However, he failed to mention that the TNA and its leadership, including his once-regarded guru Sampanthan, compelled the people to boycott the elections on orders from the LTTE.



Women's T20 Asia Cup 2024 Set to Ignite Dambulla

The Women's T20 Asia Cup 2024 is slated to commence on July 19 at the Rangiri Dambulla International Cricket Stadium (RDICS) in Dambulla. While women's cricket traditionally doesn't draw as many eyes as the men's, Sri Lankan fans are buzzing with excitement this time. Perhaps the never-ending saga of underwhelming performances by the men's team is driving this newfound enthusiasm.

The tournament will feature teams from Sri Lanka, India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, UAE, Nepal, Malaysia, and Thailand. Divided into two groups, the teams will compete fiercely over 15 matches, culminating in the semi-finals and finals.

Powerhouses India and Pakistan will clash alongside UAE and Nepal in Group A. Meanwhile, Group B will witness battles between Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, Malaysia, and Thailand. The opening day will see UAE facing Nepal at 2 p.m., followed by a highly anticipated match between arch-rivals India and Pakistan at 7 p.m.

Ravin Wickramaratne, Vice President of Sri Lanka Cricket, has been appointed as the Tournament Director by the Executive Committee of Sri Lanka Cricket and the Asian Cricket Council. In a statement, Wickramaratne expressed confidence in hosting a successful tournament, highlighting its potential to elevate women's cricket globally.

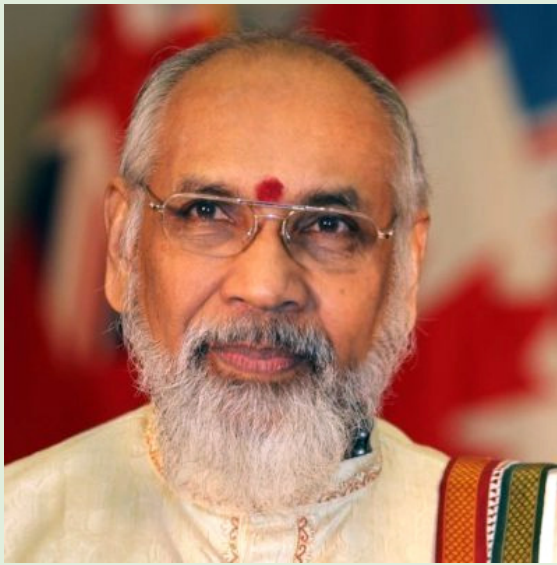


"Sri Lanka Cricket, with the support of the Asian Cricket Council, is planning to conduct a highly successful tournament, as a successful outcome of this tournament will help advance women's cricket on the world stage," said Wickramaratne.

Adding a humorous twist to the fan enthusiasm, a few Sri Lankans on Facebook have even suggested forming a mixed team after the World Cup, given the stellar performance of Chamari Athapaththu, the current captain of the women's Twenty20 International team of Sri Lanka. One fan quipped, "Chamari Athapaththu is playing better than our so-called men cricket stars. It's time we let her lead a mixed team!" Another fan added, "At this rate, we might finally have a winning team!"

All Women's T20 Asia Cup 2024 matches will be broadcast live on international platforms. Moreover, in a bid to encourage public support, the stadium gates will be open for free, inviting cricket fans to witness top-class cricketing action firsthand.

TPNA's First Conference: Rudderless Leaders to Navigate Jaffna



The first national conference of the Tamil People's National Alliance (TPNA)-a political party whose leaders seem as directionless as a rudderless ship-has been announced to take place in Jaffna. This conference will be held on Sunday, the 21st of this month, at 3 PM, at the Thanthai Selva Auditorium.

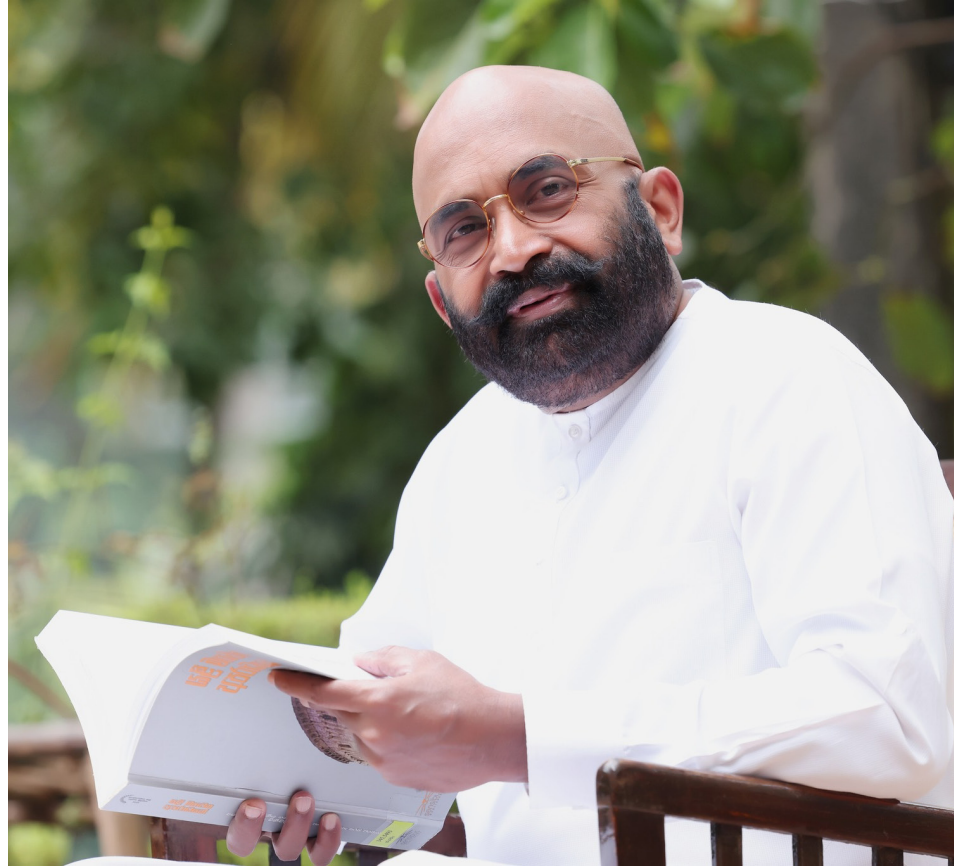
The conference will be presided over by the self-aggrandizing Secretary General of the TPNA and Member of Parliament, C.V. Wigneswaran. The chief guest for the event will be TNA's Member of Parliament, Sivagnanam Shritharan, who is currently embroiled in a leadership struggle within ITAK with Sumanthiran. Rumor has it that Shritharan might deliver an address on "The

Art of Faction Politics: How to Divide and Conquer."

The keynote address will be delivered by Dr. K. T. Ganeshalingam, Head of the Department of Political Science at the University of Jaffna, who is likely to offer his profound insights on political science, possibly titled "How to Appear Knowledgeable While Being Clueless."

The TPNA promises that the event will feature cultural performances, though there's no announcement yet on whether C.V. Wigneswaran will dance to the political tunes from diaspora tiger proxies. Special speeches and the announcement of conference resolutions-if they can decide on any-will also be part of the event.

Decision on Lifting Vehicle Import Ban Expected by Mid-August



Finance State Minister Ranjith Siambalapitiya has announced that the final decision on lifting the ban on vehicle imports will be made by the second week of August. This announcement comes amid soaring vehicle prices in Sri Lanka, with the ban severely impacting the availability and affordability of vehicles.

The committee assigned to review the import ban issue met on July 4 and is expected to present its final report to the Cabinet by mid-August. Minister Siambalapitiya expressed optimism that the import of vehicles can be resumed without adversely affecting the country's exchange rate while also addressing the urgent needs of the people.

"The import order will prioritize public transport vehicles, goods transport vehicles, alternative vehicles, general vehicles, and

private vehicles," the Minister stated. This structured approach aims to balance economic considerations with public demand.

Since the implementation of the ban, vehicle prices in Sri Lanka have skyrocketed. A second-hand motorbike, which previously sold for less than 2.5 lakhs, is now unaffordable for many. Similarly, cars available for 25 lakhs before the ban are now being sold for 60 lakhs, creating significant financial strain for the populace.

Additionally, Minister Siambalapitiya informed Parliament that the Cabinet has approved the import of 1,000 vehicles specifically for the tourism industry. This includes 250 buses and 750 vans, which require approval from the Tourism Ministry. Despite this approval, none of these vehicles have been imported yet.

Historic Win for Sri Lankan Tamil: Uma Kumaran Becomes MP for Stratford and Bow

Uma Kumaran, a British national of Sri Lankan Tamil descent, has been elected as the first Member of Parliament (MP) for Stratford and Bow in the United Kingdom. Representing the Labour Party, Kumaran secured 19,145 votes in the recent UK general election.

Kumaran was born in East London to Tamil parents who fled Sri Lanka's civil war. Her professional background spans work in the National Health Service (NHS), politics, and global climate advocacy. Reflecting on her family's history, she said, "The war changed the course of my parents' lives - so many millions of our lives. We are a displaced people in every corner of our planet."

Kumaran recognizes the challenges British Tamils face in political engagement but sees positive trends. "Representation matters. We need more women, people from working-class backgrounds, ethnic minorities, and LGBTQ+ persons overall," she said.

Kumaran has criticized the Conservative government's policies on Tamil asylum seekers facing deportation from the UK and territories such as Diego Garcia. She described the policy of sending asylum seekers to Rwanda as "dehumanizing" and assured that a Labour government would abolish such practices. "I'll always push to ensure that Tamils in the UK who have a



genuine asylum claim are not being sent back to danger," she pledged.

Domestically, Kumaran emphasized the importance of the National Health Service (NHS), noting the significant number of British Tamils working there. She supports Labour's plans to address NHS waiting times, improve mental health services, and tackle other critical issues. "A Labour Government created the NHS, and it's a Labour Government that will fix it," she said.

Encouraging political participation, Kumaran urged young British Tamils to get involved in politics. "Do it! It's your right, and it's your voice," she said.

In an unexpected turn of events, Kumaran faced a personal challenge shortly after her election. On her first day in the Commons, her 39-year-old husband, who is otherwise healthy, suffered a stroke. Kumaran shared the news, describing the last 24 hours as "the hardest of our lives," and expressed gratitude to the NHS staff at the stroke unit. She asked her constituents for patience as she dealt with this personal crisis, assuring them she would soon be back in Parliament. "Thank you to the Speaker, House staff, police, Whips team, and colleagues for their support," she added.

Sampanthan: A Towering Voice of Integrity with International Reputation



BY:

N. Thiruchelvam

Regardless of opinions, the truth remains that despite various challenges and severe criticisms throughout his career, R. Sampanthan maintained a significant influence in Tamil nationalist politics, particularly within the political landscape of the Eelam Tamils. His stature was unparalleled, with no other contemporary figure able to rival his standing.

Sampanthan's influence extended far beyond the Tamil political sphere, earning him widespread respect internationally and from other communities in Sri Lanka. While many Tamil leaders struggled to gain recognition outside their immediate circles, Sampanthan's standing was notably higher on the global stage. His ability to transcend ethnic and national boundaries set him apart, making him a unique and respected figure in both national and international political arenas.

Sampanthan's reputation was not solely based on his political activities or leadership qualities but on his unwavering commitment to a moderate and inclusive political stance. This approach garnered him accolades and recognition that few other Tamil leaders could



achieve. His diplomatic efforts and dedication to a united Sri Lanka, while advocating for Tamil rights, resonated with the international community and other ethnic groups within the country. His value was greater outside the Tamil sphere than within it.

After the annihilation of the LTTE, Sampanthan's political stance underwent a significant transformation. Moving away from traditional hardline Tamil nationalism, he adopted a notably more moderate approach. He aimed to work inclusively with other ethnic, religious, and linguistic groups, incorporating a multi-ethnic perspective and an international viewpoint into his politics. By distancing himself from the identity associated with the Tigers, Sampanthan sought to reshape the external environment to align with his vision.

One of Sampanthan's key objectives was to establish that the Tamil National Alliance (TNA) and its politics were not a continuation or reincarnation of the LTTE. He openly stated this numerous times, believing that only by doing so could he successfully advance his political agenda among the international community, the Sinhalese, and the Muslims.

In a symbolic move to support this position, Sampanthan joined then-Prime Minister Ranil Wickremesinghe in Jaffna to hoist the national flag, rejecting the Tiger flag in favor of the Lion flag. This act clearly demonstrated his commitment to a united Sri Lanka and his willingness to break away from the past.

Throughout his career, Sampanthan consistently pursued a moderate form of Tamil nationalism. Unlike the hardline stance that fiercely opposed everything, his approach was characterized by a willingness to compromise and seek common ground. He believed that this was the only way to achieve a just solution within a united Sri Lanka, emphasizing the importance of inclusivity and reconciliation.

This perspective allowed Sampanthan to boldly advocate for a just federal solution within a united Sri Lanka, earning him respect from

both Sinhalese and Muslim communities. Sampanthan's fair understanding of the post-2009 context drove his belief that post-Tigers politics should aim for unity rather than division. He recognized the need for equality, understanding, and compromise, leaving no room for extremism. Thus, his politics aligned with principles of consensus, agreement, and democracy, which the international community also supported. Sampanthan believed this was achievable in Sri Lanka and steadfastly maintained this as his political stance.

He never indulged in cheap politics, and the LTTE era was a black mark on his otherwise integrity-driven political career. He did not amass fortunes through his political endeavors and lived a humble life.

In his later years, he was deeply committed to solving the ethnic issue in his own way, and the world also somewhat believed that Sampanthan's time was best suited to solve this never-ending ethnic issue.

Ashok Kantha, the former High Commissioner to Sri Lanka, who frequently met with Sampanthan and Mahinda Rajapaksa between 2010 and 2013 to advocate for a solution to the ethnic issue, described Sampanthan in a tweet as a "towering personality and voice of sanity and moderation in [the] fractured polity of Sri Lanka. [He] worked tirelessly for the settlement of the ethnic issue."

Kantha added, "I recall telling President Rajapaksa and other Sri Lankan leaders that they should resolve the ethnic issue while Sampanthan was around."

This phrase best sums up his international reputation.

Our Systems Need Change. However, Believing That Such Change Can Occur Instantly Is Misguided.



By:
**Dr. Nimalan
Arulnesan**

It's disheartening to witness our society's decline. We live in a world where people blindly follow fleeting trends, embrace baseless conspiracies, and idolize so-called 'heroes.' Social media, mistakenly seen as the entirety of our world, fuels this misguided worship. A society driven by the relentless pursuit of dopamine surges, seeking instant gratification at every turn, will never foster genuine community, nor will it cultivate true progress and enlightenment.

Everyone acknowledges that our systems—political, healthcare, educational, and beyond—need change. However, believing

that such change can occur instantly is misguided. While it's true that change must start somewhere, the most successful and sustainable transformations begin quietly and progress gradually. Day-to-day or even month-to-month changes might seem negligible, but over time, the cumulative effect is significant.

One example I always cite when my juniors complain about internships as part of our training is the gradual transformation it brings. You might not notice the knowledge and skills you acquire each day, but consider the year-long training and how it transforms you as a doctor compared to your first day. Over time, these incremental changes accumulate, leading to significant personal and professional growth. The challenges and experiences faced during internships build resilience, enhance practical skills, and deepen your understanding of medical practice. By the end of the internship, the transformation is profound, shaping you into a more competent and confident healthcare professional.

Though this is an example of personal change, it applies to society as a whole because it reflects the behavior and growth of individuals within it. Just as interns gradually become proficient in their field, society progresses through the collective, incremental improvements of its members. These small, consistent changes contribute to the overall advancement and betterment of the community, highlighting the importance of patience, persistence, and long-term commitment to achieving meaningful societal transformation.

Sudden, flashy changes often signal underlying issues. Though these stunts might initially bring smiles, they ultimately

destabilize existing systems without yielding long-term benefits. A recent example is Gotabaya Rajapaksa's presidency. His dramatic tax cuts initially pleased the populace but led to long-term sorrow, resulting in the same people who elected him rallying for his removal. He was elected with a mandate for "systemic change," yet the abruptness of his policies led to failure.

True leaders must think laterally and make decisions with careful consideration of the circumstances. They should embrace their employees and the people they serve, moving forward collectively along the right path. Genuine leadership doesn't seek publicity; the changes they implement are often too minute to capture immediate public attention. However, the public will recognize and appreciate these changes once they start manifesting in the community.

As a proud Jaffna Hindu old boy, it fills me with immense pride to see my school excelling not only in academics but also in sports. It's a proud moment for our college. Our Principal, Ratnam Senthilmaran, achieved these feats over the years, not in days or months. Everyone remembers the status of JHC when he was appointed as principal, but now it's time to harvest what he cultivated over the last few years. Hopefully, he will be remembered as one of the greatest principals of JHC.

I have never met him in person or talked to him, but I have silently admired his leadership in taking the college forward. He is a true example of a leader. We need more leaders like him to build this society anew. His approach, characterized by patience, dedication, and a vision for long-term success, is what truly brings about meaningful and lasting transformation.

Humanitarian

Diaries

Part-4

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 United Nations worker of immense bravery, witnessed the harrowing final stages of Sri Lanka's war in 2009. As one of the few remaining individuals who can testify to the atrocities committed by both the Sri Lankan government and the LTTE, Niththilan played a critical role during this period.

In September 2008, following the directive to evacuate UN and international humanitarian organizations from LTTE-controlled territories, he was appointed as the officer in charge of all UN operations in the region. Leading the UN mission within LTTE-



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

How did you manage to escape from the LTTE that night?

Our journey began sometime between 1:30 and 2:00 AM. It was a spine-chilling journey indeed. I carried my child as I walked, with my team following closely behind me. The night was dark, and the air was thick with tension and fear. Every step we took was cautious, as we knew the dangers that lurked around us. In Nandikadal, the battlefield was scarred by the relentless shelling, leaving behind massive craters. As we made our way through the treacherous terrain, my daughter and I fell into one such crater—a vast pit about 15-20 feet deep. The shock of the fall was overwhelming, but I managed to escape because I knew how to swim, pulling my daughter to safety.

Following this, my close friend Luckumar, a former Sewa Lanka Foundation worker who accompanied us, went ahead and instructed others to follow him. He played a crucial role in our escape from the LTTE-controlled area. Luckumar was instrumental in negotiating a deal with the Tigers guarding the defense position.

We bribed the fighters guarding one checkpoint and managed to pass through their area to reach the sea. However, with multiple checkpoints nearby, we constantly feared being shot by guards at another checkpoint. Thankfully, they did not shoot.

By around 4:30 AM, we reached the vicinity

of the army area and loudly declared ourselves as United Nations personnel. An army officer called out my name, asking, "Are you Mr. ...?" To my surprise, he continued, "Welcome, sir. We have been waiting for you for the past three days. Unfortunately, we can't open the gate right now. Please wait until 6 AM." So, we waited near the shore. I later learned that my office in Vavuniya had informed them of our arrival.

Knowing that we, the United Nations personnel, had escaped, the Tigers launched their fiercest shell attack around 5:30 AM. They targeted us ruthlessly, not just with shells but also with RCL and RPG guns. Shells fell very close to us. Having crossed the dangerous Nandikadal, I believed we were about to be killed on the shore in the Tigers' shelling. Terrified, we all buried our heads in the sand. Along with us, hundreds of people who had escaped that night were on the shore, all waiting to enter the army-controlled area at dawn.

In retaliation, the army conducted a fierce shelling attack from their tanks towards the LTTE-controlled area, particularly targeting the spots where the shells had come from. Sadly, I believe many people in the LTTE-controlled area must have been killed by the army's retaliatory fire.

How can you be sure that the Tigers targeted only the escaping United Nations personnel?

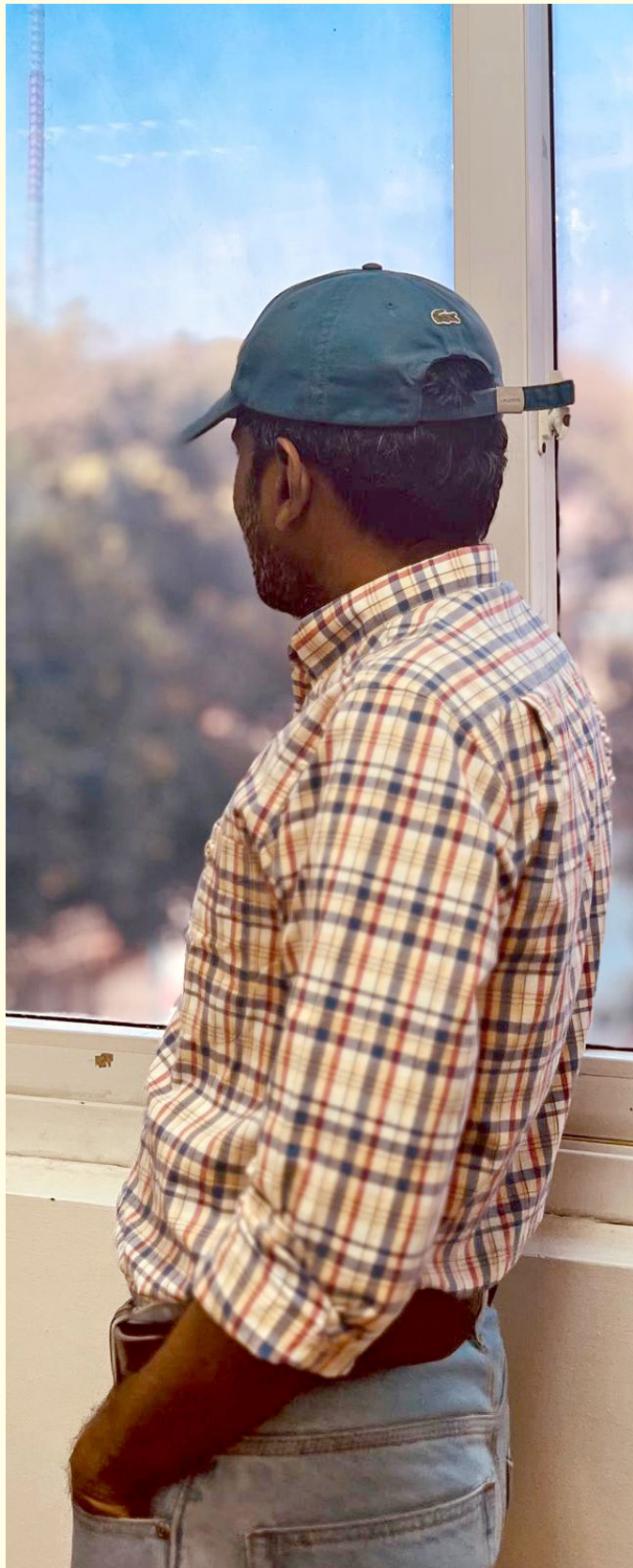
I can confirm it based on the timing of the attack. They attacked in anger upon realizing that the last UN team had escaped their control.

What happened next?

In the aftermath of the attack, the army



opened the gate before 6 AM and let us into their controlled area. An officer, a Lieutenant Colonel, came to welcome us. He mentioned they had been waiting for us for three days. Indeed, we had been trying to escape for the previous three days but couldn't. They



welcomed us and provided us with bread and fish curry, which was a luxurious meal for us, as we hadn't seen such food in about five months.

The military officer approached me with evident discomfort and said, "I'm sorry, sir. We are compelled to conduct a strip search. I deeply regret this necessity." He explained that a month before, in Vishvamadu, amidst innocent civilians, a female suicide bomber had detonated, claiming numerous lives. "Since that harrowing event, we've instituted a stringent entry protocol that includes a complete strip search," he added. He further explained that men and women would be searched separately, and everyone would be searched alone. I responded, "If that's the procedure, proceed as such." But deep inside, I felt humiliated.

Post-search, we were provided military jeeps to reach Thevipuram School. While others were processed quickly and sent to camps in Vavuniya, our group experienced an unexpected delay. Curious about the holdup, I inquired and was informed that someone of significant stature was en route to meet me.

By around 12:30 PM, the scene transformed dramatically. Two armored vehicles rolled in, flanked by a convoy of security motorcycles and vehicles, signaling the arrival of a high-ranking official from the Sri Lankan military. Stepping out amidst the security detail, this tall, imposing figure approached me directly, asking my name with a stern but focused demeanor.

To be continued...

Note: This testimony will conclude in the next issue.



Wanindu Hasaranga's Exit:

The Captaincy, The Apologies, and the Unwanted Wisdom



BY:

Our Sports Correspondent

In a not-so-surprising turn of events, Wanindu Hasaranga has decided to step down as the captain of the Sri Lankan Men's T20I team. Despite facing criticism for his leadership during the team's early and disappointing exit from

the T20 World Cup, Hasaranga's resignation letter to Sri Lanka Cricket CEO Ashley De Silva emphasized his unwavering commitment to the team as a player.

Hasaranga, known for his fiery and often controversial demeanor on the field, acknowledged that his intense attitude has sometimes led to disciplinary issues and



misunderstandings. However, he offered a philosophy that might make even a few yogis raise an eyebrow: "I have at all times expressed emotion on the field, and such an attitude has helped me overcome challenges and inspire myself to do better. This is in no way aimed to offend anyone," he said, yet showing gentlemanly conduct by offering sincere apologies to anyone who might have been offended by his remarks made in frustration.

The all-rounder's resignation comes after a disappointing performance at the recent T20 World Cup, where Sri Lanka's early exit left fans and the team disheartened—and, of course, angry. Reflecting on the campaign, Hasaranga admitted, "Sri Lanka's early exit at the T20 World Cup is extremely disappointing to me as the Captain and for the entire team."

In his resignation, Hasaranga took full responsibility for the team's performance, expressing regret for not delivering better results. "The team and I have let our country down," he stated, apologizing to the nation and Sri Lanka Cricket. He emphasized his intention to continue serving the team as a player, aiming to focus on his individual performance. "I feel my performances at my peak were extremely helpful to bring about victories to our nation," he said, vowing to maintain high standards and support the team in any capacity.

Predictably, Sri Lanka Cricket has accepted Hasaranga's resignation and acknowledged his continued importance to the team's international strategies. The board emphasized that Hasaranga will remain a pivotal player whose contributions to the field are invaluable.

A final like no other: A conclave of narratives



By:
**Dr. Aravinthan
Arunthavanathan**

The tsunami of fans that filled the picturesque Marine Drive in Mumbai was a testament to the power of sport. It unites people like nothing else, even as it has the potential to divide. This power arises not solely from the action that unfolds in the middle but from the narratives woven around the action.

India's win in the World T20 is a triumph

for the ages, purely for cricketing reasons alone. However, the narratives that unfolded alongside the win make it unmatched in recent cricketing history. Among the many stories, a few truly stand out.

The first story is the most unspoken about Axar Patel. Axar has been an eternal bridesmaid, often overshadowed by Ravi Jadeja. But this was his day. He kept India



afloat with the bat and cleaned up Stubbs at a crucial juncture. Yet, Klaasen's onslaught, through no fault of Axar's, could have left him with the stigma of being labeled as the man who cost India the match despite doing everything he could. Imagine the plight he would have had to endure. As loving as India can be, it can also be beyond brutal. It would have been an injustice of unimaginable proportions, but fortunately for Axar, it turned out otherwise.

For Virat Kohli, it was a similar narrative. Kohli played anchor and propelled India to a score that should have been adequate if not for the Klaasen show. It seemed as though his efforts might be in vain until the bowlers triumphed. Had the result turned out differently, Kohli would have been chastised for the conservative approach he took, as always. Context wouldn't have mattered. Imagine a man who has made the unthinkable



the norm walking out with the blame for losing a World T20 final. Thankfully for Kohli, it turned out otherwise.

But unlike the above two, one man would have wished for the ground to swallow him up had he not defended the last over: Hardik Pandya. Sixteen runs from six deliveries may seem like a lot, but the pressure could have been immense if it came down to ten off five. Pandya's redemption arc is a story of its own. He played a pivotal role in instilling hope for

India in his brilliant way, but all that could have been lost had that ball traveled for a six.

No one can say for sure, but it was a bet Pandya couldn't afford to take. The ball that seemed destined to be a maximum turned out to be a wicket, thanks to the magical Suryakumar Yadav. The skill was special, but considering the Mumbai Indians saga, it's poetic that the man considered competition for Hardik came to his rescue. Hardik's day could have been different, which would have made matters worse, but thankfully for him, it turned out otherwise.

Finally, it's the man who made all this possible: Rohit Sharma. Taking over Kohli's captaincy under controversial circumstances, Rohit worked his magic on this team. Winning World title finals across formats doesn't happen the way it has for India, especially after the trauma of the World Cup 2023. It would have been a travesty for Rohit to have a near miss. His leadership legacy in the international arena would have been less glittering. It seemed like it would be until the magic unraveled at the end. Thankfully for Rohit and India, it turned out otherwise.

That's the beauty of sport. It heads in one direction and makes a U-turn when you least expect it. Results



change, and with that, narratives change. Narratives drive emotions and what follows thereafter. Usually, it's one or two narratives, but that beautiful day in Barbados changed the themes of multiple narratives for many individuals with different stories, all for the good. This is what makes that final unlike any other—a final with multiple beautiful narratives for the ages.

Peradeniya University and Arunachalam Padmanabha



By:
**Sarawan Komathi
Nadarasa**

In the lineage of Kumaraswamy, Sir Pon Arunachalam is regarded as a progressive historical figure, free from accusations of caste, class, or ethnic bias. He had eight children: three sons and five daughters. The eldest among them was Padmanabha. Before Arunachalam's demise, Padmanabha had already passed away at a young age in England.

Padmanabha's death remains a mystery to this day. Additionally, information about him is extremely scarce. Many have grown weary of searching for details about him. This raises the suspicion that information about him and the circumstances of his death may have been deliberately concealed.

It was only when a Sinhalese scholar shared some details about him with me that I was encouraged to learn more about such a personality. According to the scholar, Padmanabha spent time in England with a woman there. Concerned by this, Padmanabha's

father, Ponnambalam Arunachalam, traveled to England to bring his son back to Sri Lanka. Unfortunately, he found only his son's lifeless body, as Padmanabha had allegedly committed suicide just before his father's arrival.

Despite many months of effort to verify the credibility of this information, my attempts have been unsuccessful. Nevertheless, I felt compelled to record the few important details I had uncovered about him. To my knowledge, there is no record of Padmanabha in Tamil.

Background of University Formation in Sri Lanka

Though the discussion about establishing a university in Sri Lanka took place in the Legislative Council as early as 1884, this dialogue only progressed to the next stage in the early 20th century.

In 1906, the Ceylon University Association, formed under the leadership of Sir Ponnambalam Arunachalam, served as the primary foundation for establishing the Ceylon University College, a higher education institution in Sri Lanka. On January 1, 1921, this college was inaugurated at the "Regina Walawwa" building on Thurston Road (now Kumaratunga Munidasa Mawatha) in Colombo. This building was later renamed College House. This College House was recognized as an institution for higher education by the University of London, allowing students to pursue external degrees in arts, law, and science. The first principal of this educational institution was Dr. Robert Marrs.

Significant financial contributions were made by individuals such as Sir Pon Ramanathan, Sir Pon Arunachalam, Sir John Kotelawala, D. R. Wijewardena, and D. S. Senanayake. D. R.



Sir Pon Arunachalam

Wijewardena dedicated one of his own houses, named 'Sangavasa', to monks studying at the institution.

In 1938, Sir Ivor Jennings became its principal. A council called the College Council was established to assist the principal in administration.

The constitution for the new university was developed by Sir Walter Buchanan Riddell, who was the chairman of the British University Grants Committee and the Ceylon University Commission. This constitution was modeled after the Hong Kong University constitution and was said to resemble the administrative models of the universities of Bristol and Birmingham in Britain. Although a bill was introduced again in the Legislative Council in 1930 to pursue this effort, its implementation was delayed due to World War II and a malaria

epidemic. 1942, Ivor Jennings was sent from England to reform Ceylon's constitution and educational system. Subsequently, the Legislative Council enacted it as University Ordinance No. 20 of 1942.

Arrangements were made for the construction of the University of Ceylon. In 1928, the Legislative Council appointed a committee (the University Site Committee) to identify a location for establishing the university. The Legislative Council agreed that the university to be established should be autonomous and have residential facilities. Although there was a debate on whether to establish the university in Colombo or outside of Colombo, it was eventually decided to set it up outside Colombo. Accordingly, two places, "Peradeniya" and "Aruppola" in Kandy, were proposed, and it was finally decided to establish the university in Peradeniya.

A large tea plantation was being transformed into a university. However, there were two major reasons why it could not be completed on time. The first reason was that the area was submerged in a major flood. The second reason was the ongoing Second World War.

Dr. Andreas Neil and Dr. Samuel Chelliah Paul prepared and submitted the project plan for acquiring land for the university in Peradeniya. Initially, 700 acres were acquired, which later expanded to 1,700 and eventually increased to 2,400.

On July 1, 1942, the Ceylon Medical College and the Ceylon University College were merged to form the University of Ceylon. Arunachalam Hall was established in 1950, Jayatilaka Hall, Mars Hall, James Peiris Hall, and Hilda Obeyesekere Hall were established in 1952, Sangamitta Hall in 1953, and Ramanathan Hall in June 1954. Sir Ivor



University of Peradeniya

Jennings served as its first Vice-Chancellor.

The University of Ceylon operated in Colombo from 1942 to 1950. In 1950, after establishing the necessary infrastructure such as university buildings, lecture halls, libraries, hostels, gymnasiums, sports fields, and other facilities, the University of Ceylon officially began its operations in Peradeniya in 1952.

The University of Ceylon, which was relocated from Colombo to Peradeniya in 1952, was scheduled to be officially opened on October 6, 1952. However, the official opening was postponed due to King George VI of England's death. The university was formally inaugurated on April 20, 1954, by Queen Elizabeth and the Duke of Edinburgh.

During the opening ceremony at the university, the Duke of Edinburgh delivered a speech in which he said, "Starting a university is not easy. Once started, it must always remain open. For example, during the Second World War, even when air raids and bombs fell in London, shops remained open... Similarly, the university must remain open at all times."

In 1972, following the enactment of the University Act No. 1, all universities in Sri Lanka were renamed as the University of Sri Lanka. Accordingly, the University of Ceylon in Peradeniya was maintained as the Peradeniya Campus of the University of Sri

Lanka. Under the University Act No. 16 of 1978, the universities in Sri Lanka were once again established with individual names. Thus, from 1979 onwards, it has been named the University of Peradeniya and continues to be known by this name to the present day.

Timeline:

1942-1952: University of Ceylon

1952-1972: University of Ceylon, Peradeniya

1972-1978: Peradeniya Campus, University of Sri Lanka

1978 - present: University of Peradeniya

When discussing the overall design of the buildings, lecture halls, hostels, classrooms, libraries, gardens, water features, ponds, and lakes of the University of Peradeniya, the university's first Vice-Chancellor, Dr. Ivor Jennings, remarked, "No university in the world has such a setting."

The names of those who funded the buildings and provided books for the university are mentioned in the commemorative book published on April 20, 1954, and also in the book released for the "University Opening Ceremony" in 1992.

The pioneers behind the establishment of this university included Supreme Court Judge M.T. Akbar, Sir Ponnambalam Arunachalam, Sir Marcus Fernando, Sir Baron Jayatilaka, Dr. Robert Marrs, Sir James Peiris, Sir Ponnambalam Ramanathan, D.S. Senanayake, and D.R. Wijewardena.

It is essential to mention another significant aspect. The people of the hill country substantially contributed the funding for the construction of the University of Peradeniya.



William Digby

Their labor was the primary source of Sri Lanka's revenue. Every cent spent by the Sri Lankan government on creating this university was derived from the income generated by these people.

Their donations of personal wealth to the university reflect the unity and harmony of that era, transcending ethnic, religious, and class differences. This unity was a testament to the ethnic harmony of the time. The establishment of the University of Peradeniya also marked the end of the era when students had to rely on foreign countries for higher education.

Padmanabha and William Digby

Among those who petitioned the British Crown for the establishment of the University of Peradeniya were notable scholars such as Ponnambalam Arunachalam, Ponnambalam Ramanathan, D. R. Wijewardena, Marcus Fernando, James Peiris, and D. B. Jayatilaka.

The first collection of books for this library was donated by Sir Pon Arunachalam. Sir Pon Arunachalam passed away in 1924. His eldest son, Padmanabha, had already passed away in England in 1921. The collection of books from Padmanabha's library was the first major donation to the University of Ceylon library.¹ A total of 1,421 books were donated. These fortunate donations laid the foundation for what would later become one of the finest libraries in Sri Lanka.

The first recorded book from Padmanabha's Encyclopedia Britannica collection was registered on April 8, 1921.²

From number one to 1,421, these books are still available under the "Padmanabha Collection" today. The library now operates with over 800,000 books.

After Padmanabha, many prominent political leaders and scholars of Sri Lanka have donated their collections to this library towards the end of their lives. These collections are preserved under their names.

While we know the year of Arunachalam Padmanabha's death, his birth year remains unknown. Consequently, we cannot determine his age at the time of his death. Some records depict him as a student studying in England, but the profound reports and books he authored suggest he was not as young as these records imply.

1. V.Muttu Kumaraswamy, *Founders of Modern Ceylon (Sri Lanka), Eminent Tamils*. Uma Siva Pathipakam, Jaffna, 1973

2. Kanchana Dehigama, *Centenary of a Library under the feet of giants: a retrospective*, Newsletter University Librarians Association of Sri Lanka Volume 15, Issue 04, October-December 2021, <https://lib.cmb.ac.lk/history-of-the-library/>, http://www.lib.pdn.ac.lk/about_us/history.php,

During the research for this article, an important document was found. In the June 1908 issue of the Ceylon National Review (no.6), Padmanabha authored an extensive article titled "Reform of the Ceylon Legislative Council." He also provided a detailed introduction to William Digby's article, "An Oriental Colony Ripe for Self-Government," which discusses the necessary political reforms for Ceylon. Notably, William Digby had passed away in 1904.³

The article spanned 31 pages and was published as a small book in the same year.⁴ It was also released as a pamphlet, as indicated by Padmanabha's writing.⁵ Padmanabha published this article as a pamphlet in 1904, the same year William Digby died. In his recommendations, Digby emphasized the importance of Tamil representation in Colombo. He argued that five representatives should be allocated to the Legislative Council for Europeans, Burghers, Tamils, Sinhalese, and Muslims/Malay communities.

Forty years later, in 1919, when the Ceylon National Congress was established, Sir Pon

3. William Digby was not only a famous journalist but also a radical social reformer. He was a vocal critic of colonial methods in India and Sri Lanka and an advocate for Indian workers at that time. He served as an associate editor of the Ceylon Observer in Sri Lanka and wrote for The Madras Times in Madras. He was also the editor-in-chief of the magazine. Sir Pon Arunachalam was his close friend, and this friendship likely brought him closer to Arunachalam's son, Padmanabha. During his involvement in the Temperance Movement, William Digby, along with Ram-anathan and Arunachalam, actively led the movement against the paddy tax.

4. A. Padmanabha, 'Reform of the Ceylon Legislative Council', in Ceylon National Review Vol: 11, No. 6 1908.

5. James T. Rutnam, *Sir Ponnambalam Arunachalam, 1853 – 1924*, (2nd Edition) Colombo, 1988.

Arunachalam endorsed the same demand for Tamil representation. You might know that he was later disappointed and subsequently left the Ceylon National Congress. Notably, Digby had proposed this demand as early as 1877, and by 1908, Padmanabha was actively supporting this cause.

During his time in England, Padmanabha was encouraged by his father, Arunachalam, to meet with Lord Milner, the then Secretary of State for the Colonies, to discuss the political reform situation in Sri Lanka.^{6, 7}

This article's detailed political reform recommendations confirm that Padmanabha was deeply engaged in Sri Lankan politics and possessed profound political thinking. Unfortunately, gathering more information about Padmanabha's political role and involvement has been challenging.

Within the Gate Mudaliyar A. Coomaraswamy family, five members served in the Legislative Council. These include his son-in-law Edirimanasinghe Mudaliyar, his son Sir Coomaraswamy, and his grandsons Ponnambalam Ramanathan Coomaraswamy, Ponnambalam Coomaraswamy, and Ponnambalam Arunachalam Coomaraswamy. Following in their footsteps, it is evident that Padmanabha also had significant social and political involvement.

University of Peradeniya Library

In Sri Lanka, the Printing and Publications Act, introduced in 1886, was amended in 1952. According to this amendment, four copies of every publication issued in Sri

Lanka must be submitted to the Department of National Archives. One of these copies is kept at the National Library, another at the National Museum, the third at the Peradeniya University Library, and the fourth at the Ruhuna University Library. Unfortunately, today, many do not adhere to this law. As a result, there is a risk of losing the opportunity to preserve books and journals published in Sri Lanka nationally.

During my discussions with the librarians at the University of Peradeniya Library when I donated my books to the library, they expressed concern about this issue.

It is also important to note that the history of this library predates the history of the University of Peradeniya itself.

Today, the Chief Librarian of the University of Peradeniya Library is a Tamil scholar, Dr. Maheswaran, who is an excellent librarian. This library houses very rare and unique ancient palm-leaf manuscripts of Sri Lanka. It is the repository of the complete old original palm-leaf manuscript of the Mahavamsa. After the Mahavamsa manuscripts were declared a World Heritage in June, these palm-leaf manuscripts were placed in iron boxes and are now preserved in a special room with military security, as I learned during my visit there.

Unfortunately, I noticed that only about three percent of the books and documents in this library are in Tamil. This situation is not unique to this library alone but extends to other major institutions in Sri Lanka regarded as national archival organizations, such as the National Archives, the Colombo Museum Library, and the National Library, among others.

6. M. Vythilingam, Ramanathan of Ceylon, The Life of Sir Ponnambalam Ramanathan, Vol II, 1977.

7. H.A.J. Hulugale, The life and Times of D.R. Wijewardene, Lake House, Colombo, 1960



Resolution and Refutation

Translated from the original Tamil short story *saṅkalpa nirākaraṇam* (சங்கல்ப நிராகரணம்) from the 1964 collection of short stories titled *akkā* (அக்கா) by **A. Muttulingam**

Translated by:
Eluttukkiṇiyavan
(எழுத்துக்கினியவன்)

Nadēsan is one of those Colombo dwellers who eagerly yearn for: “when will the next long weekend come around, so that I can make a quick trip to Jaffna.” He was standing on the border line of the horrendous grief called separation. Never before had he experienced such pain.

He did write letters. But were they mere letters? They were repositories of his tears; throbbing of his heart.

But for how long can declarations of love in letters

keep his wife content?

‘She is just a naive child; What did she gain by getting married? Our half-baked interactions were like a puppet show of shadows; when did we have a chance for a heart-to-heart conversation?’

How did she, who would stand shyly in front of him, biting into her plaits, learn to write this way?

‘I have never seen your face fully; I have heard that dimples form on your cheeks when you laugh, I have never got to experience even that; Still ...’

‘I am your wife, publicly betrothed to you as your own. Shyness overcomes me when I think of it ...’

Every word was like a red-hot spear piercing his heart.

So, what, it is just his luck!

Luck manifests to different people in many different forms. But his luck!

The day after the wedding, he left on what they so eloquently call in English, “the honeymoon.”

But the day they set foot in Colombo, it wasn’t the usual city of Colombo. There were riots everywhere; hatred; ethnic hatred.

People were beating and killing other people. The streets of the great city of Colombo were drenched in blood, as though Mother Earth, unable to tolerate this outrage, shed tears herself.



The rough ground lay below. The broad canopy of the sky rose above. A heavy police cordon prevented any unauthorized entry.

It was teeming with humanity. He and she spent that fabled “first night” amidst this sea of humanity. A mind-piercing look emerged from the depths of his heart.

The single tear droplet that struggled to emerge ended up dissolving all her heart’s dreams.

For ten days, they suffered as refugees amidst the sea of refugees.

When they finally left for Jaffna by a refugee ship, he with a stubble, and she with her hair in a mess, love was the last thing in their minds.

When they set foot in their village, overcome with embarrassment, an emergency telegram arrived, summoning him back to work.

Back to the city of Colombo!



2

Kamali didn't even notice that it got dark.
Nadēsan's letter w lay sprawled on her chest.

Everything she saw, everything she
sees, seems to her like reflections and
reverberations of grief.

Her heart pained as though it had lost
everything. Through it she felt the anguish of
having lost some nameless bliss.

'Is everything Vimalā said true?!'

'Chee Perhaps this is how everyone says it
out aloud!'

'Kamali! Tell me the truth. Can't you really
tell your husband apart just by the sound of
his footsteps?'

'Vimalā isn't a fool like me; I am 'married'
only in name.'

'Look at her! How old is she? When I started

wearing a sari, she hadn't even graduated to
wearing a long skirt.'

'It seems his big toe is enough for her to
identify him. Apparently, she knows the
warmth of his breath... is it not just the
breath? ... Che... if she was still asleep, he
apparently doesn't wake her up by touching
her, but ... bends over ... on the lips, ch-
chee... ...'

'What would she have thought of me – what
else – she would have pitied me.'

One could still hear the sound of Pālaṇ's
sobbing. It was already dark. Kamali lit a
lamp and placed it on the table.

"Lift your head Pālaṇ; enough crying; it is a
kerosene lamp, if you knock it over, that's it."

"No, I won't. I will stay like this!" His parents
had not taken him along to the wedding but
left him behind to keep Kamali company. His



anger has not entirely subsided.

Kamali lifted the kudam to her hip and started towards the well. Like the soft blanketing of dusk, a darkness was filling her heart. The crack from a nameless sorrow was slowly pervading the depths of her heart.

She heard the sound of someone taking a bath.

Kamali was startled.

“Who is there?”

“It is just me.”

“Is it you Rāsaṇ?” she called out, in a voice palpable with relief.

“Why akkā, were you scared?” He guffawed.

“No, I thought it was some stranger ...”

“Give me a couple of buckets of water, thambi”

‘I was scared of Rāsaṇ! He was just wee high before’

‘Perhaps boys grow up fast!’

“Why Rāsaṇ, did your ammā and everyone else go to the wedding?”

“They? They went already earlier.”

“So no one else is at home!”

“No akkā, it is just me!”

When she bent down to lift the kudam up, her thāvaṇi slipped.

She hurriedly gathered it up and draped it back over her shoulder. In the dull moonlight, her instincts told her that he was looking at her intently. She was pleased.

When she lifted her head, she was taken aback. His stunned look with hair dripping with water, his forelocks covering the forehead – reminded her of something.



‘He ... he is like this, too...’

The second time she came to the well, her heart was pounding, thinking ‘would Rāsaṇ have left by now?’

‘How old is Rāsaṇ now? Sixteen?’

‘He sat for his Senior Secondary School examinations already last year!’

Rāsaṇ was lathering soap on.

“Why Rāsaṇ! So, are you the one guarding the house?”

“Yes akkā, exams are approaching; I have to stay home to study... ..”

For some reason, a little smile crossed his lips.

The dimple on his cheek. His cute dimple.

‘Those cheeks – those hairless silky cheeks’ – she wanted to regard them till eternity.

The moon rays that reflected off those dimples reached out and shyly touched her breasts that were heaving with no reason.

She jolted herself out of her reverie and grabbed the rope tied to the well sweep.

“You want water! I will draw it for you akkā.”

“No thambi, you dry yourself first.”

“It is ok. You shouldn’t be drawing water when it is this dark.”

A strange feeling came over Kamali. She wanted to fondly call out “Rāsaṇ!” to her heart’s content.

He grabbed the bucket from her. In doing so, his soapy hands gently touched her slender arms.

Kamali’s heart bubbled over its rims. A new feeling.



When Rāsaṅ drew water, his hands trembled for some reason.

3

When she started towards the well, carrying a kudam, for the third time it did not look like she was doing it of her own free will. It was as though she was possessed by a demon that was urging her forward.

‘Why, why?’

‘I want to see him smile, just one more time’. The desire grew large and enveloped her entire mindscape. Afraid of a change of heart, she hurried towards the well.

Rāsaṅ stood there towelling his hair.

“Do you need more water?” – his voice was hoarse for some reason.

“Just one more kudam” – the response came from somewhere deep within.

“A... k... kā” – he blurted out, unsteady on

his feet.

Kamali was silent. She stood staring at him.

“You... you will not tell ammā, will you?”

What came over her?

She stood transfixed like a statue.

A displaced star in the sky was falling.

When she lifted the empty kudam to her hips and walked away, it weighed a tonne.

Inside the house, Pālaṅ’s sobbing could still be heard.

4

Her life inched forward in a “dream state” so to speak. Sometimes it looked like Kamali understood her situation, sometimes it didn’t. Whenever she was alone, she steelled her heart. But ...

There was a pulsation, an eagerness, again and again kept pushing her into the abyss of sin.

Kamali was just a walking corpse.

Sometimes the letter from her husband melted her heart. She felt like running to his feet to bawl her heart out; on those days, she was resolute.

But when the sun set and it was time to light the evening lamp, the crystal-clear sound of Rāsaṇ's bicycle bell as he turned the corner at the junction would completely shatter all her resolve within a second.

5

Kamali was holding a kokkaththadi in her hand. The moringa tree had exceptionally borne a fruit. She jumped up aiming for the lone fruit.

She knew that her husband loved it. She will cook it for him today.

Nadēsan stood relishing this scene. He cannot see such a scene tomorrow since his time off from work was ending that day.

He felt a discomfort in the depths of his heart. 'Kamali – my darling Kamali – should I be separated from her again?'

Her tired face, laced with beads of sweat, was exquisite.

"Kamali" he called out with great fondness as he turned her warm cheek towards him.

"Ich. People are looking" she said shyly.

The two people who sat on top of the passing cadjan bullock cart enjoyed the privilege of their vantage point a little too excessively.

6

He prepared to leave.

She was left with the feeling that the entire world had come to a standstill.

She understood every strand of his breath, every reverberation of his heart. It is only now that she understood the full meaning of separation.

Nadēsan took her left hand. She felt a burning sensation.

It was the same hand that Rāsaṇ's unsteady soapy hands touched.

"Chee" – she cast away those impure thoughts. But they rose up again, in a gigantic form, to torture her.

Kamali cried her heart out, thinking of something.

Tears flowed out of Nadēsan's eyes, too.

"Why are you crying?" She sobbed, wiping his tears with her tiny fingers.

"Because you are crying!"

"When will you return, aththaan"

Silence was the response.

Kamali's two warm streams of grief mingled with his quivering lips.

Unconsciously a resolution was forming in her heart.

7

It was a Sunday. There were no other friends in the boarding house. Everyone had gone off to see a movie. Nadēsan sat down with relief



to write a letter for Kamali.

“Kamali! If I could grow wings this instant, would I not fly to you right away? Will I not admire every little detail of your walk, the way you decorate yourself, your voice, that little mischievous smile that curls in the corners of your lips?

“My darling, as I write this letter, you will be standing beneath the familiar jasmine bush; your thoughts wander. All those thoughts ...

On the same day, at the same time as Nadēsan was writing this letter, many miles away —

Kamali’s father was coaxing the ‘white lagoon’ chickens he had just brought from Colombo to climb up the tree.

Inside, his wife was cleaning the soot covered hurricane lamp.

Pālaṇ held his book wide open and was alternating between reciting the Vipulāṇthar

poem in a voice with a loudness that was uncalled for, and lifting his head to watch his sister:

“uḷḷak kamalamaṭi kiḷiyē

[It is the flower of your heart, parrot]
uttamaṇār vēṇṭuvatu”

[that the lord asks for]

Kamali was chopping green plantains for dinner.

She wasn’t paying attention to anything, not even to chopping green plantains.

A darkness engulfed her heart, weighing heavily!

At a distance, Rāsaṇ’s bicycle bell needlessly rang twice, as he turned around the bend by the tamarind tree.

It echoed on Kamali’s bleeding fingers!

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