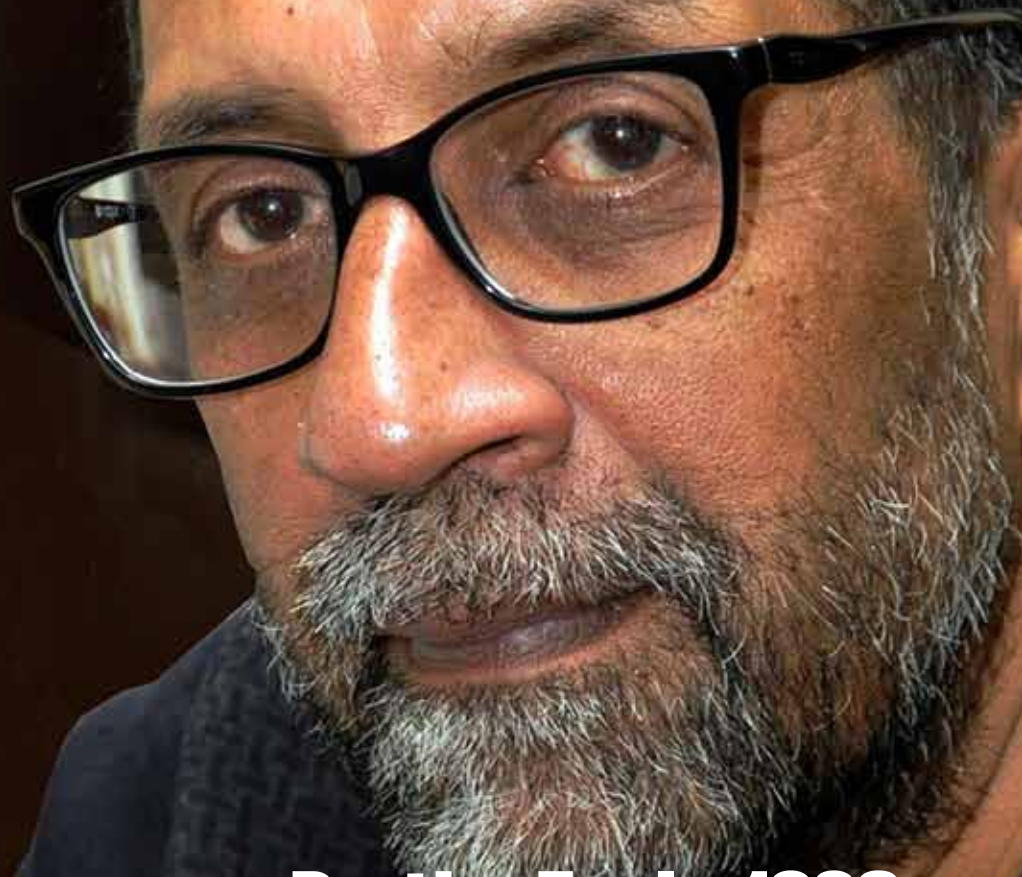


FORTNIGHTLY EDITION
Rs. 750

Jaffna monitor

UNAFRAID AND UNBOWED

October 15, 2024



**By the Early 1980s,
Prabhakaran Saw Himself as
a Divine Incarnation, Justifying His
Killings as Part of His Dharma**

Exclusive Interview with LTTE Co-Founder Ragavan

03

Editorial



05

Jaffna Elections: 23 Parties, 21 Independent Groups, 396 Candidates Compete for Six Seats

06

Pavam (Poor) Ariyanenthiran: Conch Grabbed, Caught in Legal Nightmares

08

Wigneswaran Waves Goodbye to Northern Politics and the Headaches That Came With It

09

By the Early 1980s, Prabhakaran Saw Himself as a Divine Incarnation: Exclusive Interview with LTTE Co-Founder Ragavan

23

On the Day of His Son's Édu Thodakkuthal, Father Slips to Tragic End on Vallai Bridge

24

Sumanthiran to AKD: Promises Aged Like Whiskey-But Where's the Liquor permit List?

26

"ITAK Is Now Sumanthiran's Pvt. Ltd.:" Interview with K.V.Thavarasa

31

Nameplates Before Necessities: Jaffna Uni VC's Unusual To-Do List Angers Local Community

33

Lalith and Kugan Disappearance Case Gains New Momentum as Government Orders Fresh Probe

35

Sinhalese and Tamils: Biologically and Genetically One People: An Exclusive Interview with Professor Mahesan Nirmalan

46

Jaffna Youth Shines at Commonwealth Powerlifting Championships

47

Shanakiyan's "Selective Amnesia" Shines in Latest Speech

49

EPDP Fields Two Buddhist Monks for 2024 Parliamentary Elections

50

President Dissanayake Hints at Northern Political Collaboration

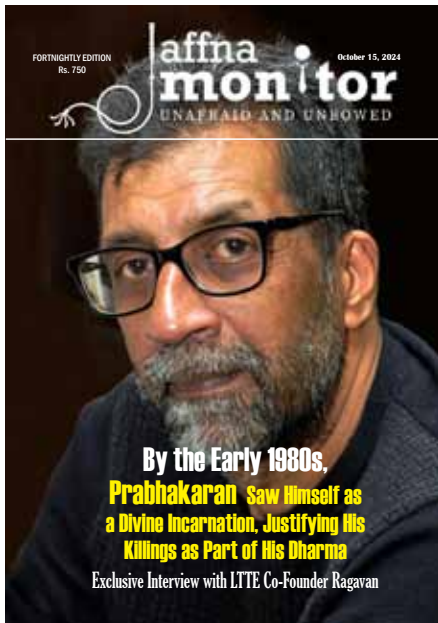
51

When Life Gives You Mangoes: Make Diplomatic Moves!

53

story- Footprints

The Silence on Bar Permits-A Test of Integrity for the New Government



As the first month of Anura Kumara Disanayake's presidency draws to a close, the expectations surrounding Sri Lanka's first non-elite head of state remain both profound and unrelenting. His rise to power was lauded as a decisive rupture from the entrenched political oligarchies that have long monopolized control over the nation's governance. Disanayake's electoral platform was built on a foundation of promises—chief among them a radical transformation of the political landscape through transparency, institutional reform, and unwavering accountability, particularly in addressing the endemic corruption that has permeated successive administrations.

One of the key pledges made by Anura and his coalition, particularly to the northern electorate, was the exposure of those who benefited from the reckless issuance of bar permits under previous administrations. It is a well-known fact that a number of Tamil nationalist politicians—often vocal about their moral rectitude and commitment to Tamil nationalism—were among the beneficiaries.

During his campaign trail across Northern Sri Lanka, Anura Kumara Disanayake resolutely pledged to unmask the hypocrisy of these figures and publicly expose their misdeeds. However, one month into his presidency, the promised disclosure of names remains conspicuously absent. This prolonged silence casts a shadow of doubt over the government's true intentions. It compels us to question whether the new administration, much like its predecessors, has fallen prey to the seductive allure of political opportunism, perhaps safeguarding these individuals to secure future alliances or to gain strategic political leverage.

The political dynamics at play cannot be ignored. The NPP and JVP had little presence in the North prior to the recent

presidential election. In the 2019 election, Anura Kumara Disسانayake received only 1,375 votes in the Jaffna electoral district—an insignificant 0.37% of the vote. However, in the most recent election, that number soared to 27,086, a significant 7.29% of the total votes.

This remarkable increase signals the disillusionment of northern voters with decades of corrupt governance, and their hope that Anura's presidency would bring a much-needed clean slate to Sri Lankan politics. Should this hope prove to be a mere illusion, the political capital the NPP has built in this region will quickly disintegrate.

It is particularly telling that ITAK MP M.A. Sumanthiran has been more vocal than the government itself in demanding the release of these names. While Sumanthiran undoubtedly has his own political motivations—especially given the widespread belief that his intra-party rival, Sritharan, is one of the beneficiaries of the bar permits—his argument cannot be easily dismissed. His relentless demands highlight the central contradiction of the current administration: How can a government elected on the platform of eradicating corruption remain silent on such a crucial issue?

Speculation is rife that the government may be delaying the

release of these names until the parliamentary election, scheduled for November 14th, using the issue as political leverage.

Alternatively, some fear that the administration may be concealing the names altogether. Such a lack of transparency strikes at the very core of the government's mandate. If the promises of accountability and reform are to be taken seriously, the public must see decisive action soon.

The people of Sri Lanka placed their faith in this administration to cleanse the political landscape of its entrenched corruption. The failure to deliver on such a fundamental promise could be catastrophic for the NPP, eroding the trust and goodwill it has worked to build. The integrity of the Anura administration is now on trial, and the outcome will be determined by its ability to rise above the political calculations that have derailed so many governments before it.

The question remains: Will this government live up to its promises and reveal the truth, or will it become yet another chapter in Sri Lanka's long history of unfulfilled political vows? Time will tell, but the silence is already deafening.

Warm regards,

கணியன் பூங்குன்றன்
Kaniyan Pungundran
Editor- Jaffna Monitor

Jaffna Elections: **23 Parties,** **21 Independent Groups,** **396 Candidates Compete** **for Six Seats**

A total of 23 political parties and 21 independent groups, comprising 396 candidates, have been cleared to contest in the upcoming parliamentary elections for the Jaffna District, which is allocated just six seats. Election Officer and Acting Government Agent Maruthalingam Piratheepan made this announcement during a press briefing in Jaffna.

Piratheepan also confirmed that 593,187 registered voters in the Jaffna District are eligible to cast their votes in what promises to be a fiercely contested election. The candidate pool reflects a broad spectrum of political ideologies. Prominent political parties fielding candidates include the Eelam People's Democratic Party (EPDP), Ilankai Tamil Arasu Kachchi (ITAK), All Ceylon Tamil Congress, Tamil People's Alliance, National People's Power (NPP), Sri Lanka Podujana Peramuna (SLPP), and Samagi Jana Balawegaya (SJB).



Maruthalingam Piratheepan

In addition to the political parties, 21 independent groups have been approved to participate, one of which is led by the controversial figure Dr. Archchuna. However, two independent groups were disqualified during the nomination process, with Piratheepan citing valid reasons for their rejection following a thorough review.

Pavam (Poor) Ariyanenthiran: Conch Grabbed, Caught in Legal Nightmares



The Election Commission has revealed that Tamil common candidate Pakkiaselvam Ariyanenthiran, along with two others, has failed to submit their election expenditure reports by the prescribed deadline. The deadline for Presidential election candidates to file their reports ended on October 13th.

Saman Sri Ratnayake, the Commissioner of the Election Commission, named the defaulting candidates as Pakkiaselvam Ariyanenthiran, Ven. Battaramulle Seelarathana Thera, and former MP Sarath Keerthirathna. He further stated, "The list of candidates who failed

to submit the expenditure reports will be handed over to the police for further action, in accordance with the Election Expenses Regulation Act."

Under the Presidential Election Act of 1981, candidates who fail to meet the deadline may face penalties, including fines up to Rs.100,000. The Election Expenses Regulation Act stipulates that all reports must be submitted within 21 days of the election's conclusion.

Ariyanenthiran, who unexpectedly rose as the Tamil common candidate backed by diaspora

factions with hidden agendas, now finds himself in an increasingly precarious position. Initially used as a pawn by groups exploiting Tamil nationalism for electoral gain, he has since been abandoned by those same parties. These political factions, having unethically and cunningly seized the Conch symbol—originally the symbol of the Tamil common candidate and heavily promoted by diaspora investment—have sidelined Ariyanenthiran after the presidential election.

To make matters worse, as a central committee member of ITAK, Ariyanenthiran now faces disciplinary action from his own party. With internal conflicts mounting and the failure to submit the required expenditure accounts hanging over him, he finds himself politically isolated and stranded.

According to legal experts, who spoke with jaffna monitor, a case regarding the non-submission of election expenses is likely to be filed against Ariyanenthiran, as he missed the deadline to submit his accounts to the Election Commission. The groups that once backed him for the election have distanced themselves, leaving him solely responsible for the repercussions.

Just days before the Election Commission's revelation, Nilanthan, a prominent columnist who played a key role in promoting Ariyanenthiran's Tamil common candidacy for his own political and financial gain, was questioned by journalists about the submission of expenditure reports. In response, Nilanthan confidently claimed, "The accounts have been submitted to the relevant authorities, and in

due time, they will be made available to the public." However, the Election Commission's recent announcement swiftly contradicted this, clarifying that the reports were not submitted on time. Observers now remark that Nilanthan's words are as slippery as his political maneuvers.

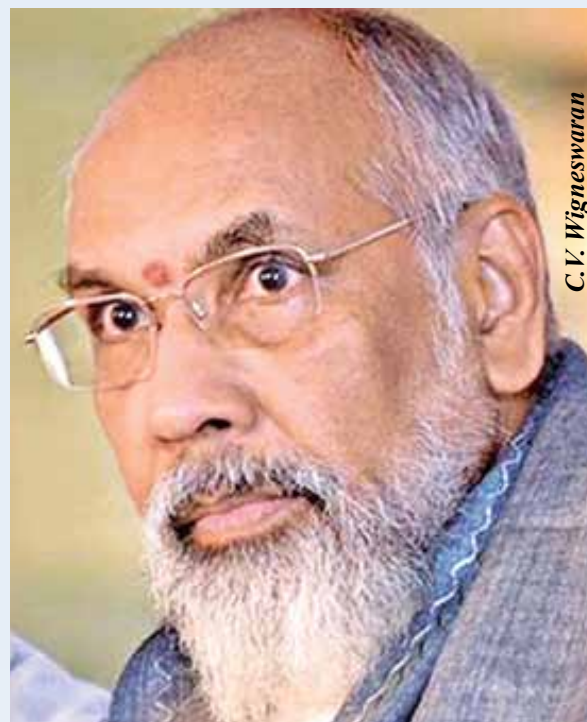


It looks like Pavam (Poor) Ariyanenthiran, who was launched into the election with grand promises and big dreams, is now left to fend off the legal firestorm all by himself!

The whole situation brings to mind the iconic Vadivelu comedy scene: "உசுப்பேத்தி உசுப்பேத்தியே உடம்பை ரணகளம் ஆக்கிட்டாங்கய்யா" which roughly translates to, "They hyped me up and hyped me up until they turned my body into a battlefield, my friend!"

Now, poor Ariyanenthiran is stuck in a real-life comedy where all the hype has left him dodging legal bullets solo, with no backup in sight!

Wigneswaran Waves Goodbye to Northern Politics and the Headaches That Came With It



Former Chief Minister of the Northern Province and ex-MP, C.V. Wigneswaran, is reportedly packing his bags and heading back to Colombo for good—finally returning to his Tamil elite Sinhala-mixed roots in the capital. After a decade of political highs and plenty of headaches for the Tamil community, Wigneswaran seems ready to close the chapter on northern politics.

Backed by the Tamil National Alliance (TNA), he successfully contested and won the Chief Minister post during the Northern Provincial Council elections, with the party providing him with the necessary support and resources. Upon taking office, his very first official move was to write a letter to Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi, not for development or pressing political matters, but to request the release of his guru Premananda's disciples. Premananda, a convicted sexual offender, was jailed for sexually assaulting underage girls and eventually died in prison—a guru with quite the legacy.

His term as Chief Minister was followed by a parliamentary career—successful for him, though not so much for the people—where

he thoroughly enjoyed the privileges and benefits of office. In one memorable episode, Wigneswaran helped a woman secure a bar permit, explaining that she was an orphan in dire need. What he conveniently forgot to mention was that her father had been a disciple of Premananda, and she already owned two bars!

With his parliamentary term behind him, Wigneswaran chose not to contest the recent elections. While he publicly claimed that he was "making space for younger politicians," Jaffna residents have their own version of the story. Many believe he saw an impending defeat and decided to bow out gracefully, delivering a classic judge-like verdict on his own political career.

As Wigneswaran prepares to bid farewell to the Northern Province, word on the street is that he's packed his bags and booked a one-way ticket to Colombo. And if anyone dares to ask why he's leaving, don't be shocked if he pulls out the classic "health reasons" card or claims he's off for some mysterious "medical consultations"—because, of course, political exits need their own diagnoses!

By the Early 1980s, Prabhakaran Saw Himself as a Divine Incarnation, Justifying His Killings as Part of His Dharma

Exclusive Interview with LTTE Co-Founder Ragavan

Part-1



Ragavan



BY:

Our Special Correspondent

Chinniah Rajeshkumar, better known as Ragavan, is a key figure in the history of the LTTE and the Tamil liberation movement. As a co-founder of the LTTE and a close confidant of its notorious leader, Prabhakaran, Ragavan was instrumental in shaping the movement's early years. However, by April 1984, disillusioned by the rising extremism, senseless violence, internal power struggles, and the cult-like devotion to Prabhakaran, Ragavan made the fateful decision to sever ties with the LTTE and relocate to London.

Now a legal advisor and activist, Ragavan remains a crucial voice in discussions surrounding Tamil nationalism. In this exclusive interview with Jaffna Monitor, Ragavan not only shares insights that only someone with his insider experience can provide but also offers his views on the current political landscape. Due to space constraints, we will be publishing this compelling interview in parts—each segment offering a deeper glimpse into the tumultuous journey of the LTTE, the man who walked away from it, his once-close friend Prabhakaran, and much more.

As one of the founding members of the LTTE, you became involved in militant activities at a very young age. Could you describe the moment or circumstances that led you to conclude that armed struggle was the only viable path forward? What were the key factors that influenced your decision?

That was simply the reality of the times. Born in 1956, I had just completed my O/Levels in the early 1970s. During this period, two or three significant issues emerged that convinced many of us that armed struggle seemed to be the only path forward. I came from a middle-class family in Punналаikkadduvan, a rural village in Jaffna, where my parents, both school teachers, were well-known for their discipline and innocence. At that time, I didn't hold particularly strong political views nor had much understanding of the broader political landscape. While it is true that injustices were being committed against the Tamil community during my youth, it would be inaccurate to say that the entire youth population of Jaffna rose up in response.

Two major factors influenced our decision to take up arms: the standardization of university admissions introduced in 1971 and the 1972

Constitution. After the United Front (UF) government, led by Sirimavo Bandaranaike and comprising the Sri Lanka Freedom Party (SLFP), the Lanka Sama Samaja Party (LSSP), and the Communist Party of Sri Lanka, came to power, they introduced a new constitution, making Sri Lanka a republic. While this was seen as a break from the colonial past, the Constitution removed the protections for minorities that had been granted under the 1947 Constitution. Sinhala was established as the sole official language, and Buddhism was given constitutional prominence. This deeply angered Tamil youth like us.

Additionally, the standardization policy of 1971 drastically reduced the number of students from Jaffna who could gain admission to universities. There was a sense of pride in the North, particularly among the middle class, who viewed themselves as highly educated, a "machine" producing doctors and engineers. The standardization policy shattered that pride. Initially, the policy was based on language rather than region or district, which was perceived as a serious injustice. Later, it was shifted to a district-based system, somewhat akin to India's reservation system, where backward areas were given priority.

However, this shift, aimed at social justice by providing quotas for university admissions to underprivileged districts, was not welcomed by Tamil nationalists. They continued to frame the policy as discriminatory against Tamils. In reality, Tamils from the East, Mannar, Vanni, and the Malayagam benefited from the quota system, but this was largely overlooked in the Jaffna-centered Tamil nationalist political discourse.

During this period, Sathyaseelan, a university student and the leader of the Tamil Student Federation (Tamil Manavar Peravai), led an opposition movement against the

standardization policy. Protests were organized in Jaffna, and even schoolgirls participated. One memorable slogan targeted the then-Education Minister, Badi-ud-din Mahmud, mocking him for allegedly not knowing the basics of "alpha" and "beta." This slogan reflected the deep resentment of the middle class.

The situation escalated further with the 1974 Tamil Conference incident, which fueled the growing discontent. The Sri Lankan government, concerned that holding the conference in Jaffna would promote Tamil nationalist politics, suggested moving the event to Colombo. While the conference was academic in nature, there was widespread enthusiasm among Tamils about hosting it in Jaffna. Ultimately, the organizing committee decided to proceed with Jaffna as the venue.

On January 10, 1974, the final day's event drew thousands of attendees and was held under a verbal agreement with the police. However, tensions escalated when the police, armed with weapons and tear gas, attempted to force their way through the densely packed crowd but were unable to proceed. In response, they fired tear gas and used force to disperse the crowd.

During this chaos, shots were fired into the air, causing a power line to snap, tragically electrocuting several people and resulting in seven fatalities. Though the police did not directly fire at the crowd, the deaths and injuries were a direct consequence of their excessive use of force.

In the early 1970s, Tamil activists like Sathiyaseelan and Sivakumaran began advocating that the only solution to the growing injustices was the creation of Tamil Eelam—a state governed by Tamils.

This, in many ways, laid the foundation for

what would follow. Under Sathiyaseelan's leadership, the Student Federation aimed to "weed out" individuals perceived as collaborators with the government, a process they referred to as "kalaiyetuttal" (literally meaning "weeding out").

When the 1972 Constitution was implemented, protests were organized by the Tamil United Front (TUF). In a symbolic act of protest, Chelvanayagam resigned from his parliamentary seat in October 1972. During this period, 42 youths, including Sathiyaseelan from the Student Federation, were arrested and detained without trial for advocating that Tamil Eelam was the only solution and for engaging in acts of violence.

I, too, became involved in small acts of resistance, such as displaying black flags in protest, despite still being in my teenage years. While these were symbolic gestures, they reflected the growing discontent and marked the shift toward more militant forms of opposition.

Leaders of the Tamil Arasu Katchi, such as Kasi Ananthan, channelled the youth's anger—particularly the outrage sparked by the 1974 Tamil Conference incident—towards figures like Alfred Duraipappah, the then-Mayor of Jaffna. Unable to defeat Duraipappah through elections, the Tamil nationalists blamed him for the violence at the conference despite evidence showing he had no direct or indirect involvement with the police violence on January 10, 1974. Nonetheless, a disinformation campaign by Tamil nationalist leaders portrayed Duraipappah as the mastermind behind the incident.

Through their speeches, these leaders subtly insinuated that individuals like Duraipappah would not die a natural death, effectively branding him a traitor in the eyes of the

youth. While the student leaders had not yet engaged in significant actions, they embraced the radical ideology that traitors must be eliminated. This notion was fueled by the rhetoric of Tamil leaders, who stirred these sentiments among the youth with their influence and speeches.

At the time, I, too, subscribed to the Tamil nationalist misinformation and ideology, believing that Duraiappah was a traitor who deserved to be eliminated.

What was the presence of the military like in Jaffna during that time?

At that time, seeing military personnel on the streets of Jaffna was quite rare. On the odd occasion, soldiers might come into town to buy cigarettes or other essentials from the local shops. If my memory serves me correctly, there were likely no more than 150 soldiers stationed at the Palaly army camp, though even that number is uncertain. The Sri Lankan military was more of a ceremonial force in those days, primarily involved in disaster relief during floods or participating in Republic Day parades.

By 1976, the combined strength of the army and police was only around 20,000. As teenagers, whenever we visited the Palaly where the army camp was situated, it never felt like a real military base to us. It lacked the atmosphere of a hardened, operational military installation. Instead, it seemed like a more relaxed place, far removed from the tense and formidable presence we would later come to associate with the military.

When did the shift from peaceful protests to armed struggle begin for you and others in the Tamil youth?

I would say the shift truly began during



Sathyaseelan's time with the Student Federation (Tamil Manavar Peravai). However, Sathyaseelan and his group lacked the experience to spearhead a fully organized armed movement. Their resources were minimal, with only a few rudimentary weapons at their disposal. Not long after the formation of the group, a significant wave of arrests followed, targeting key members, including some of those from the Tamil United Front's (TUF) youth wing. This crackdown, which saw figures like Mavai Senathiraja and Vannai Anandan from the TUF youth wing detained, dealt a severe blow to the movement, disrupting its progress.

What were the connections between the Student Federation and the Tamil United Front's youth wing?

There were links between the Tamil Student

Federation and the youth wing of the Tamil United Front, which led the police to indiscriminately arrest members from both groups. Although the TUF's youth wing was not directly involved in armed violence, some of its members sympathized with the Tamil Student Council. This heightened suspicion and resulted in the widespread arrest of key individuals.

Who were the key figures who evaded arrest and continued armed resistance?

Following the arrests, a few small groups that evaded detention took up arms. Key figures among them included Sivakumaran, Kuttimani, Thangathurai, and Prabhakaran. At that time, the idea of Tamil Eelam was beginning to emerge, though it was still in its infancy.

Was there widespread support for Tamil Eelam and armed resistance during this time?

No, there was very limited support from the Tamil population or the youth at that time. Only small groups of five to ten individuals were actively discussing the ideas of Tamil Eelam and armed struggle. The majority of the Tamil community opposed the idea of taking up arms or creating a separate nation for Tamils.

I would say it was a premature decision by inexperienced youths to resort to arms in the 1970s. While the Tamil nationalist leadership, first under the Federal Party and later the Tamil United Liberation Front (TULF), campaigned for the political rights of Tamil-speaking people, they lacked grassroots organizations and a sustained civil disobedience movement. Their primary goal was to secure parliamentary seats by leveraging Tamil nationalist sentiments. The

radicalized youths, dissatisfied with the TULF's lack of commitment, partly contributed to the rise of militant movements. It is incorrect to claim that the youth took up arms because peaceful protests had been exhausted. After the Satyagraha in 1961, there were no sustained non-violent civil rights movements, aside from a few token hunger strikes and protests organized by the TULF in the 1970s.

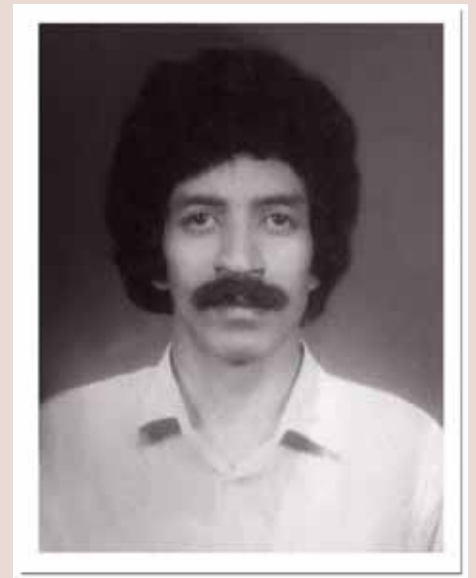
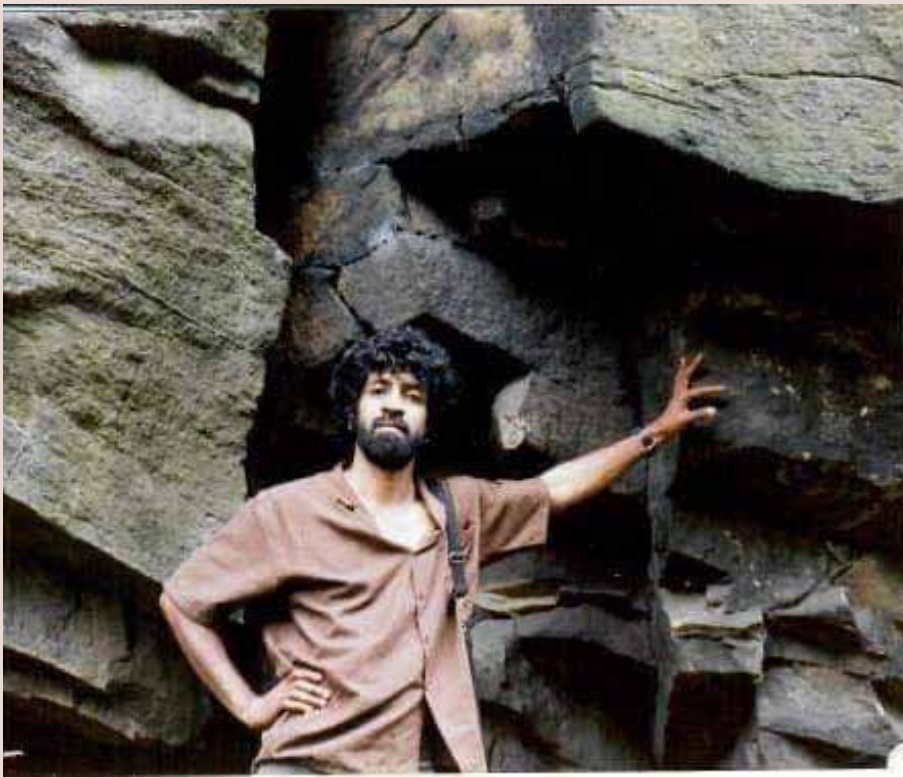
What ideological influences shaped the call for a Tamil homeland?

The concept of a Tamil homeland should be considered within the context of post-colonial nation-building, during which the Sri Lankan state emerged as a Sinhala Buddhist nation-state, with the claim that Sri Lanka belonged exclusively to Sinhala Buddhists. To challenge this Sinhala Buddhist ideology, Tamil political leaders framed Tamil identity and asserted that the North and East of Sri Lanka are the traditional homelands of the Tamils. I would argue that Tamil nationalism is a mirror image of Sinhala nationalism, as both constructed their claims of cultural uniqueness and superiority based on similar premises.

The Jaffna Kingdom indeed existed, but the distortion lies in two points: first, the Jaffna Kingdom did not exist as a Tamil kingdom in the modern sense, and second, it was confined to the Jaffna Peninsula, while other areas were under different rulers—both Sinhala and Tamil kings.

Notably, the East was incorporated into the Kandyan Kingdom, which was 'Sinhalese.' Therefore, it is evident that the notion of a traditional homeland is not primordial but rather a newly constructed idea based on selective myths and historical interpretations.

Leaders like V. Navaratnam from the Tamils Suyaadchchi Kazhagam (Tamil Self-Rule



Ragavan's passport photo taken in 1985, after he left the LTTE.

Party) voiced the need for a Tamil homeland. They drew parallels between the Tamil people and the Jewish community, arguing that while other communities had their own nations, the Tamils did not. Navaratnam even went so far as to translate and publish the Zionist book Exodus in Tamil, which justified Jewish colonization—a perspective viewed as problematic by many.

The underlying belief was that the Tamil people, with their proud history, had lost their significance due to the absence of a homeland. They argued that establishing a Tamil nation was essential to reclaim their historical glory. Meanwhile, the majority government in Sri Lanka consistently refused to grant political rights to the Tamil minority. In response, Tamil political parties proposed a federal solution to address these grievances.

Additionally, the Tamil Arasu Katchi advocated for the rights of Tamil-speaking people, including Muslims and hill-country Tamils. However, numerous challenges hindered this vision. While the concept of 'Tamil-speaking people' was broad and

inclusive, political leaders lacked the expansive mindset needed to effectively implement it. Moreover, when the LTTE became a dominant force, the concept of 'Tamil-speaking people' was abandoned, and Tamil identity became the rallying cry. This shift led to the rise of an exclusive, narrow form of Tamil nationalism, which eventually became the dominant discourse.

Which liberation organization did you first come into contact with?

My first contact was with the LTTE, though at that time, the organization was known as the Tamil New Tigers (TNT). Interestingly, the acronym TNT also stands for Trinitrotoluene, an explosive compound, and the name was coined by A. Rajarathinam, a key figure in the early stages of the Tamil uprising.

Rajarathinam was deeply involved in the struggle, and when 42 youths were arrested, he resigned from his government clerical job and fled to India, where he lived under extremely harsh conditions. There was a rumor that his daughter, Dhanu, was responsible for

the assassination of Rajiv Gandhi in a suicide bombing. However, it has now been almost conclusively proven that she was not involved, and the woman believed to be the suicide bomber is reportedly living abroad.

When was TNT officially formed?

The exact date of the TNT's formation is unclear. However, it began to take shape after the arrest of members of the Student Federation around 1972. Prabhakaran, known for his keen sense of self-preservation, managed to evade capture and fled to India. During his time in Chennai, he met Rajarathinam, who played a pivotal role in shaping the idea of TNT. Rajarathinam emphasized the legacy of the Chola Empire, their tiger emblem, and their historical glory. He inspired Prabhakaran with the idea that the tiger, a powerful and fearsome predator, would be the perfect symbol for their guerrilla movement. This was when the concept of TNT began to take root, initially as just an idea.

When did you join TNT?

I officially joined the TNT in the latter part of 1974, by which time I was already deeply entrenched in Tamil nationalist ideology. This came in the wake of the arrest of the 42 youths. During that period, Chelliah Thanabalasingham alias Chetti, Chelliah Pathmanathan alias Kannadi Padmanathan, Ramesh, and another individual—whose name escapes me—managed to escape from Anuradhapura prison. While making their way through the jungles, Chetti killed Kannadi Padmanathan, though the reason for this remains a mystery to me. Chetti's actions, however, sparked a troubling incident, marking the first internal murder within the militant movements. Chetti and Ramesh eventually made contact with people in Punналаikadduvan, my village, where they

stayed with someone I knew.

My first real connection to the movement came through Chetti in 1974. In my village, there was a man named Ramachandran, who styled himself as MSR. He had a friend named Jeevan, who had been part of the Student Federation and was hiding at MSR's house. Through MSR, I was introduced to Chetti.

Why did Chetti kill Kannadi Padmanathan? Was Chetti a criminal?

The reason remains a mystery to me to this day. Some speculated that Chetti killed Kannadi Padmanathan because he opposed bank robberies. Chetti and the others were introduced to us as prison escapees, but the full details of the incident were never entirely clear.

Chetti had been in a juvenile correctional facility, so I can't say for certain whether he was a hardened criminal, but there were definitely criminal elements in his character—that much I can say.

Sathyaseelan believed that individuals involved in criminal activities often possessed a certain kind of resourcefulness, and he thought we could leverage that for our cause. It was Sathyaseelan who brought Chetti into the Tamil Student Federation. Interestingly, Prabhakaran shared a similar outlook and worked closely with Chetti. At that time, Prabhakaran was already in India, but he had connections with Chetti during the early days of the Student Federation.

Were there others with a criminal background like Chetti in the liberation movements? Such as Kuttimani and Thangathurai?

Kuttimani and Thangathurai cannot be

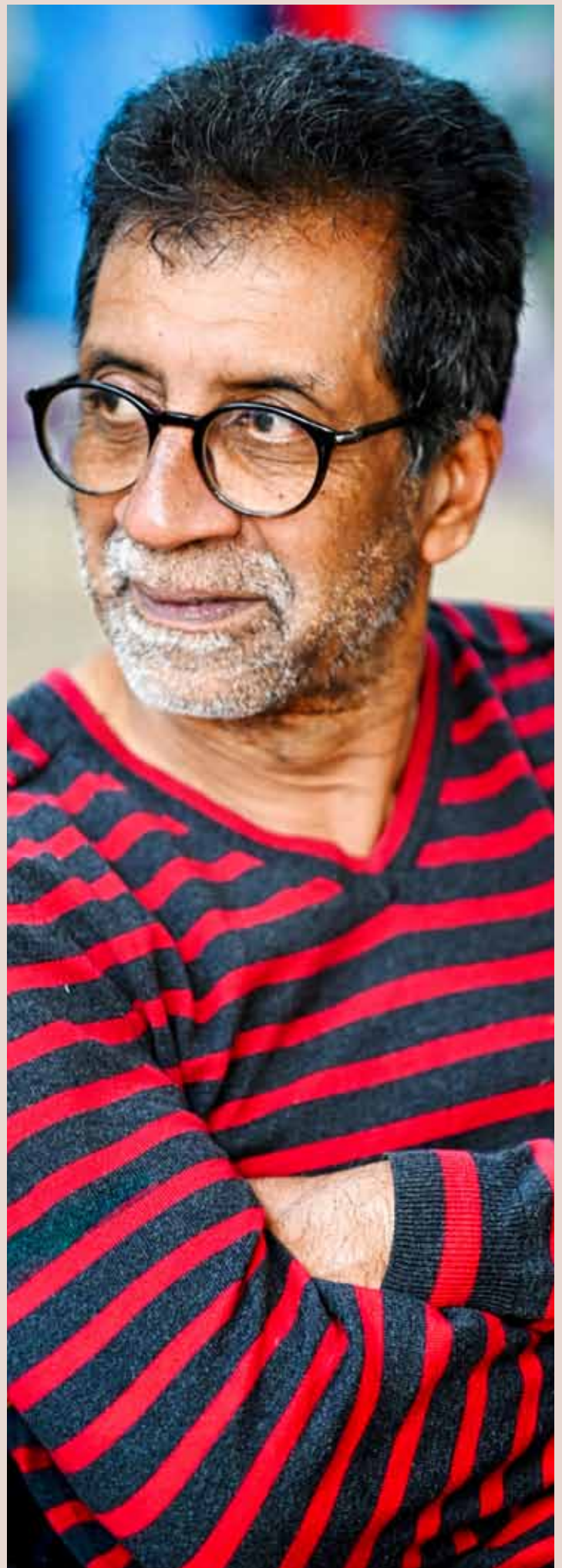
labeled as criminals. Although they had smuggling links, I wouldn't consider that a serious flaw. In fact, during colonial times and earlier, places like Valvettithurai were deeply involved in overseas trade. During colonial rule, Sri Lankans were all subjects of the British Crown, which meant they could travel and trade freely without restrictions.

However, after independence and the establishment of the nation-state, customs regulations were introduced, which created problems for coastal communities like those in Valvettithurai. What had been their way of life for generations was suddenly classified as smuggling. The people of Valvettithurai didn't see it that way—they continued the trade they had always known. To them, it was simply 'business,' not a criminal act.

How did you first meet Prabhakaran, and where did this introduction take place?

By the end of 1974, Chetti introduced me to Prabhakaran, and I first met him in Punnalaikkadduvan. At that time, Prabhakaran was the youngest among them, yet there was something distinctively different about him. He and I formed an immediate connection. Before meeting him, I had never even heard of Prabhakaran—he was virtually unknown. The prominent figures at the time were Kuttimani, Thangathurai, and others, not Prabhakaran.

Prabhakaran was extremely cautious and almost elusive, ensuring that very few people knew him or his whereabouts. This calculated caution allowed him to remain in the shadows during those early days. However, once I met him, I sensed there was something unique about him—his vision was quietly intense, and his resolve was unmistakable. At that time, TNT was



more of a concept than a fully developed organization, but it was slowly taking shape, and I found myself becoming part of its early foundation.

How did the lack of structure within the Tamil Student Federation lead to its downfall?

While Sathyaseelan and a few others were the first to be arrested, many of them revealed the names of their comrades to the police. As a result, nearly everyone connected to the Student Federation was eventually apprehended. Prabhakaran, however, with his natural sense of caution and foresight, managed to avoid arrest and fled to India.

The fundamental issue was that the Tamil Student Federation lacked a proper, secure system. In any secret organization, the rule is that each member should only know a few others, ensuring that the majority of the network remains unknown to them. This way, even if someone is captured, they can't compromise the entire group. However, within the student council, nearly everyone knew each other, and this familiarity ultimately led to its downfall.

What was your first impression when you met Prabhakaran?

I liked him immediately. There was only a two-year difference between us—he was born on November 26, 1954, and I on November 5, 1956. Despite his youth, Prabhakaran possessed a calm intensity and an unshakable determination that was impossible to ignore. He was friendly and focused, and what struck me most was his unwavering commitment to his beliefs. Beyond notions of right or wrong, his loyalty to his ideology was absolute, and that deeply inspired me.

What impressed me even more was his knowledge of global freedom struggles, including the Irish fight for independence—a rare subject for someone our age. He spoke in detail about Irish revolutionaries like Dan Breen and Michael Collins. At such a young age, Prabhakaran had already immersed himself in the strategies of these figures, drawing parallels between their methods and the struggle he envisioned for the Tamil people. He had read Dan Breen's autobiography, *My Fight for Irish Freedom*, which had been translated into Tamil, and thoroughly absorbed its lessons, modeling his own ideas on their tactics of urban guerrilla warfare.

Prabhakaran also held deep admiration for Indian freedom fighters like Subhas Chandra Bose and Bhagat Singh. He rejected Mahatma Gandhi's non-violent approach, instead favoring the militant paths of Bose and Bhagat Singh. While Bhagat Singh was an atheist and socialist who renounced religious and ethnic identities, Prabhakaran did not adopt these aspects of his ideology. He embraced Bhagat Singh's use of violence in the struggle for Freedom but did not subscribe to his broader socialist or atheistic beliefs.

Prabhakaran's focus was always clear: the Tamil people needed a homeland. He frequently drew comparisons between various independence struggles, but his conclusion was always the same—Tamil Eelam was the only solution for the Tamil people.

Why was Prabhakaran selective in his beliefs?

Prabhakaran was deeply opposed to leftist ideology, particularly because he believed it conflicted with the fundamental goal of establishing a Tamil nation. In his view, leftist thinking was rooted in class unity, which he

saw as incompatible with the creation of a unified Tamil identity. He believed that Tamil nationalism required all Tamils to unite under a singular identity without focusing on internal divisions such as class and caste.

Prabhakaran was convinced that emphasizing class would undermine the cause of Tamil Eelam by dividing the Tamil people. This belief led to his harsh stance against leftist leaders like Annamalai and Vijayendran. Although they were leftists who supported the Tamils' right to self-determination, Prabhakaran viewed them as threats to the Tamil nationalist ideology.

His disdain for leftist ideology extended beyond these individuals. He once told me that if the Janatha Vimukthi Peramuna (JVP) ever rose again, he would side with the Sri Lankan government to suppress them. That's how much he despised leftist movements. He believed that the JVP, being a revolutionary Marxist movement, posed a threat to the possibility of Tamil Eelam.

In his view, if the JVP succeeded in their struggle, the chances of achieving a Tamil homeland would be unlikely. He believed that if the Sinhalese and Tamil working classes united, it would be catastrophic for the Tamil nationalist cause. This fear of class-based unity between ethnic groups is what led him to target and eliminate leftist leaders.

Prabhakaran extended this ideology to anti-caste activists as well. Leaders from anti-caste organizations like the Mass Movement for the Removal of Untouchability (Theendamai Ozhippu Vekusana Iyakkam) were also intimidated. In Jaffna, it was primarily communist leaders who spearheaded anti-caste protests. Prabhakaran opposed these movements because he feared that if oppressed

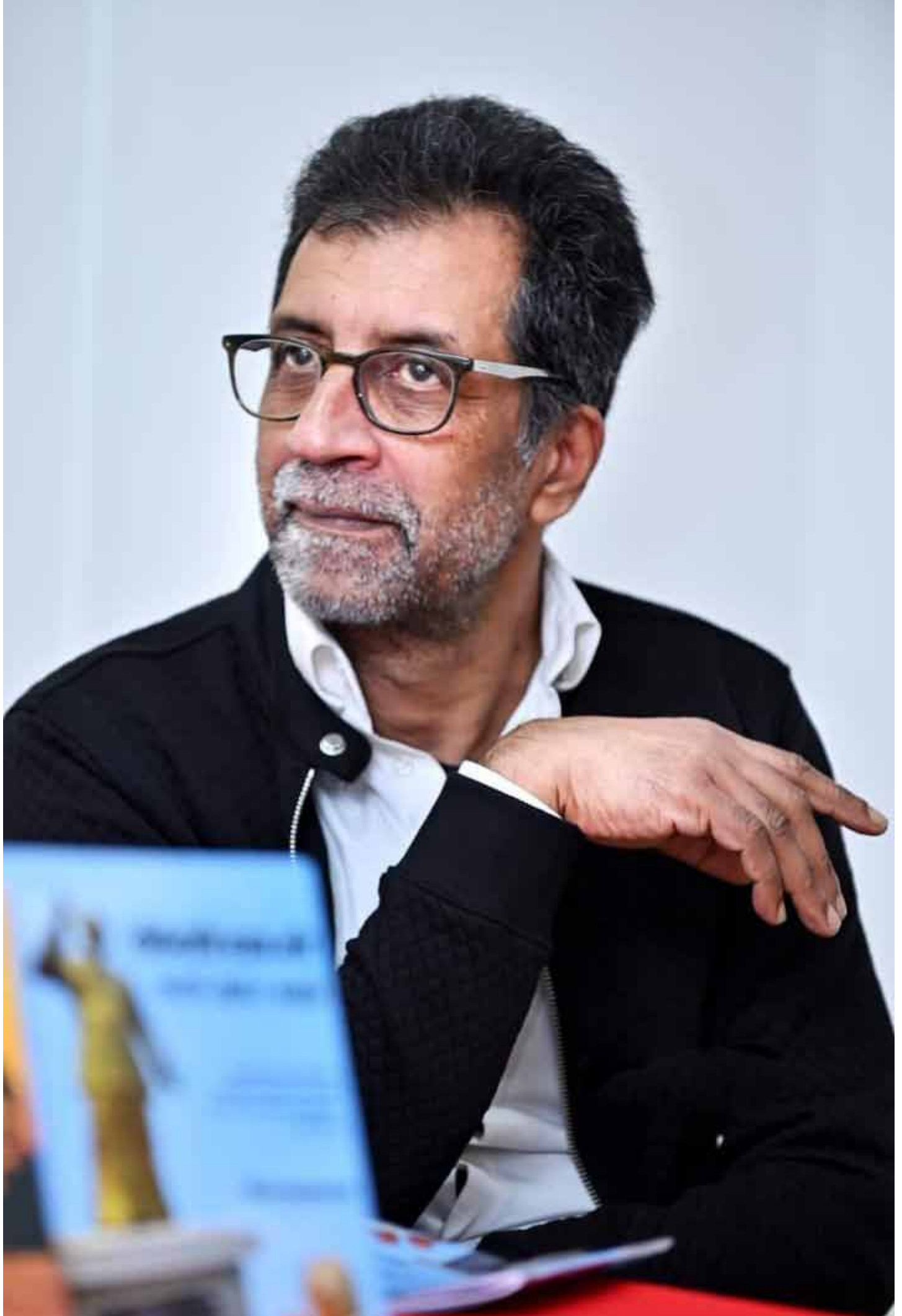
caste Tamils united along caste lines rather than as a unified ethnic group, it would weaken the Tamil nationalist movement. For him, the focus had to remain on ethnic unity, with all other social divisions set aside, as he believed this was the only way to achieve Tamil Eelam.

What was Prabhakaran's view on caste?

Prabhakaran didn't have a deep or nuanced understanding of caste, but he was firmly opposed to caste divisions. He believed that caste distinctions undermined Tamil unity and, in turn, weakened the broader Tamil identity. While he was determined to eliminate caste-based discrimination, he didn't fully grasp the socio-economic, religious, and cultural complexities behind the caste system. However, his resolve was clear—caste differences should not interfere with the collective struggle for Tamil Eelam. Within the LTTE, he did not tolerate caste-based discrimination, insisting that all fighters be treated equally, regardless of their caste background.

That said, it would be unrealistic to claim that the LTTE was entirely free of caste influences, as its members came from the same society where caste was deeply ingrained. Even though caste prejudice wasn't openly displayed, traces of that mentality may have lingered. Nonetheless, Prabhakaran was clear that no caste discrimination should be allowed within the organization.

This principle was not exclusive to the LTTE. Other Tamil liberation movements, like the EPRLF (Eelam People's Revolutionary Liberation Front), also believed that caste divisions should be eradicated. The EPRLF, in particular, was committed to fighting caste oppression. However, Prabhakaran believed that addressing caste issues at that time would



distract from the ultimate goal of Tamil Eelam. In his view, caste differences should be eradicated, but only after the Tamil homeland had been established.

During the LTTE's reign, they took measures to combat caste-based oppression. People from oppressed castes held significant positions within the LTTE, as they did in other Tamil militant organizations, further reinforcing the idea that caste should not play a role in the movement.

Historically, two castes held considerable influence in Jaffna during the colonial era: the Vellalar and the Karaiyar, to which Prabhakaran belonged. The Karaiyar caste had a unique socio-economic and cultural standing; unlike many other oppressed castes, they were not dependent on the Vellalar for their livelihood. They had their own distinct economic and cultural systems, which set them apart.

During colonial times, members of the Karaiyar caste also held important positions in the government. While they were not as dominant as the Vellalars, they were better off than many other castes. They indeed harbored some resentment toward Vellalar's dominance, and this resentment had legitimacy.

Prabhakaran, too, harbored what I believe was a justified anger toward Vellalar hegemony. I recall during a split within the LTTE, Prabhakaran, in a fit of anger, sarcastically remarked to me that what was being called 'socialism' by those who opposed him was nothing more than 'Vellalar socialism.'

What were Prabhakaran's weaknesses?

His fundamental flaw was his authoritarian mindset. He believed that no other

organization, apart from his own, should have a role in the liberation struggle. He lacked democratic values and had no tolerance for pluralistic thinking. In my view, this is not unique to Prabhakaran; those who advocate for ethnic nationalism—whether Tamil or Sinhala—generally lack democratic and pluralistic traits. When you pursue a nationalistic agenda based on ethnicity, it inherently lacks the qualities of democracy, as it fails to accept other ethnicities or cultures.

How did he develop this mindset? Was it due to his upbringing, Jaffna's way of thinking, Tamil heritage, or was it influenced by the books he read?

I would say it was a blend of all those factors. He held a few unwavering beliefs: the Tamils needed a separate homeland, and any means to achieve that end were justified. He believed that ancient Tamil empires like the Cholas, Pandyas, and Cheras were weakened by their divisions, preventing them from establishing a larger, unified empire. From this, he concluded that only one organization should lead the fight for Tamil liberation. His mindset was deeply rooted in a rigid, right-wing ideology.

How did he arrive at these conclusions?

I think he arrived at these conclusions by reading popular novels that glorified the Chola empire, such as Kalki's Ponniyin Selvan or Sandilyan's historical fiction. I don't believe he reached these conclusions through deep historical study but rather through popular literature that romanticized Tamil history.

This kind of shallow historical perspective often influences those who advocate for pure Tamil nationalism. For instance, V. Navaratnam of Suyadchi Kazhagam made absurd comparisons, such as likening Tamils

to Jews in terms of cultural characteristics-claiming a supposed predisposition for intelligence and entrepreneurship-and argued that they were similar. In fact, Prabhakaran was a follower of V. Navaratnam and was inspired by the establishment of Israel by the Jewish people, without understanding the settler colonial project behind it.

What other flaws did he have?

His refusal to allow alternative movements also meant he did not tolerate differing ideas within the LTTE itself. For instance, if someone said, 'I want Tamil Eelam, but I disagree with the methods of the LTTE,' Prabhakaran believed that person was not a suitable candidate.

If an LTTE fighter or sympathizer agreed with the principle of self-determination but had some criticisms of the LTTE's methods, Prabhakaran believed that person had no place and should be eliminated. This mindset led the LTTE to commit thousands of murders in the name of the Tamil cause. It was Prabhakaran's intolerance of dissent or differing opinions that resulted in these massacres.

Where did Prabhakaran's mindset of eliminating those with differing opinions come from?

Prabhakaran's way of thinking was deeply complex. On one occasion, he shot and killed a policeman named Karunanithi at Kankesanthurai (KKS). After the killing, he retreated to one of his hideouts in Urelu. At that very moment, the song

"Maranathai Enni Kalangidum Vijaya,
Maranathin Thanmai Solven...

Māṇiḍar āṇmā maraṇameytātu...

Marupadi pirantirukkum mēṇiyai koḷyāy,

Mēṇiyai koḷyāy"

Which can be loosely translated as:

"Vijaya, troubled by the thought of death, I will tell you the nature of death...

The soul of man does not die...

Kill the body that has been reborn,

Kill the body."- from the movie Karnan, sung by Seerkazhi Govindarajan, was playing. Prabhakaran felt as though the song was speaking directly to him.

He had a profound belief in the teachings of the Bhagavad Gita, which deeply influenced his mindset. The Gita's core philosophy—'Do your duty without expecting the fruits. The soul is eternal; only the body dies.'—resonated strongly with him.

For Prabhakaran, his actions were not murders; in his mind, he was simply performing his Dharma. Even if he had to kill someone close to him, he didn't view it as murder but as fulfilling his duty. If the person was close, he would convince himself that it was only their body that perished while their soul remained eternal.

In addition to this, he also believed in Adolf Hitler's authoritarianism and Zionist exclusivism. His worldview was a complex mixture of right-wing ideologies.

Over time, this belief grew stronger, and he began to see himself as almost a divine incarnation, acting under a higher purpose. His actions, including eliminating dissenters, were justified in his mind as part of his Dharma.



Did he begin to see himself as a divine incarnation while you were still part of the organization?

By 1980 or 1981, Prabhakaran had already begun to see himself in that light. In his mind, anything that aligned with his will was justified. For him, it wasn't just about personal preferences—it was about serving a higher purpose. He started to believe that those who opposed him were not merely disagreeing with him but obstructing this higher purpose, and therefore, they had to be eliminated.

For Prabhakaran, Tamil Eelam—or even the LTTE itself—was secondary. In his view, he was Tamil Eelam; he was the LTTE. He believed that only those loyal to

him could truly be loyal to the cause of Tamil Eelam or the LTTE.

No one could say, 'I am loyal to the Tamil Eelam cause or the LTTE, but I disagree with Prabhakaran's methods.' If someone did, Prabhakaran believed they had to be sidelined, silenced, or eliminated. To him, there was no distinction—Prabhakaran and the LTTE were one and the same. Loyalty to him became synonymous with loyalty to the cause.

Even today, if you speak to former LTTE members, many will say, "Annan (Prabhakaran) never made mistakes." For them, the idea that Prabhakaran could have erred or been vulnerable to mistakes is unimaginable. This strong belief system grew both within him and within the organization. Ultimately, this unwavering conviction—where no dissent or alternative views were tolerated or even considered—led to his downfall and the destruction of the LTTE at Nandikadal Lagoon.

To be continued....

The cover photo and a few inside photos were taken by Santhagunam

On the Day of His Son's Édu Thodakkuthal, Father Slips to Tragic End on Vallai Bridge



Vallai bridge

A young family man tragically lost his life in a fatal accident near the Vallai Bridge in Vadamarachchi, Jaffna, shortly after returning from his son's Édu Thodakkuthal ceremony.

The incident occurred on Vijayadasami Day, the final day of Navarathiri when the Édu Thodakkuthal ritual is traditionally performed. The deceased, Thurailingam Malaimagan, 38, had taken his son to a temple to formally begin his education, a sacred milestone in Tamil culture.

Malaimagan, the manager of the Jaffna branch of Damro Furniture Company and a father of two young sons was on his way home when the tragic accident occurred. While crossing the Vallai Bridge, Malaimagan's motorcycle slipped on the rain-slicked surface and collided with a lorry transporting scrap metal. This marks nearly the 10th accident in the area since the start of the rainy season, raising serious concerns about road safety.

The Vallai Bridge, made of aluminum and

iron, has become notoriously slippery during wet weather, leading to several fatal accidents. Despite repeated requests from the local community for a safer, more durable bridge,

residents claim their pleas have gone unanswered by authorities.

The driver of the lorry involved in the collision has been arrested, and police are continuing their investigations into the incident.

Malaimagan, originally from Myliddy, resided in Point Pedro before recently moving

to Urumpirai. His sudden and untimely death has devastated his family and the local community.

Local residents have voiced their frustration, noting that they have long petitioned the authorities to replace the Vallai Bridge with a safer structure made from more suitable materials. However, they claim their repeated appeals have been ignored, contributing to the growing number of accidents in the area.



Thurailingam Malaimagan

Sumanthiran to AKD: Promises Aged Like Whiskey-But Where's the Liquor permit List?



Anura Kumara Dissanayake , M.A. Sumanthiran

"The newly elected government, headed by Anura Kumara Dissanayake, promised to reveal the names of those who received liquor licenses within three days. It has now been three weeks, and still, no sign of those names. I openly challenge the government to release the details of who got these liquor licenses," said M.A. Sumanthiran, former

Member of Parliament for the Ilankai Tamil Arasu Kachchi (ITAK), during the ITAK candidate introduction event in Jaffna.

Speaking at the event held at the Thanthai Chelva Auditorium in Jaffna, Sumanthiran did not hesitate to criticize the very government and president he had, only weeks earlier,

described as a thorough gentleman and not a Sinhala chauvinist. Sumanthiran remarked that the administration and the president appeared to be faltering in their own anti-corruption narrative, particularly in addressing election expenses and the transparency of liquor license allocations.

"This government, which claims to be anti-corruption, has stumbled in two key areas," Sumanthiran said. "First, they still haven't settled the election expenses with the Election Commission. Second, they vowed to reveal the names of those who received liquor licenses in three days. It's been three weeks now, and we're still in the dark," he added. Sources hint that one of the alleged license recipients might be his political rival within ITAK, Sritharan. If the names are revealed, it could potentially give Sumanthiran a moral and political upper hand both within the party and outside it—a win-win situation for him.

Sumanthiran then shifted focus to his party's candidate selection process. "We've prioritized the youth," he said proudly, though he conveniently skipped over the fact that all the chosen candidates just happen to be his loyal yes-men and women, handpicked for their unwavering allegiance to him.

Sumanthiran then moved on to his party's candidate selection process. "We've prioritized the youth," he said proudly, although he conveniently omitted the fact that all the chosen candidates seem to be his loyal yes-men and women, handpicked for their unflinching allegiance to him.

He wasn't done yet. Sumanthiran then turned his attention to the defectors, accusing them of dishonesty. "At one point, we thought thieves, extortionists, and even murderers had turned over a new leaf, so we brought them into the fold," he said, recalling how former militant groups such as EPRLF, TELO, and PLOTE were welcomed into the Tamil National Alliance (TNA). "But it turns out, they haven't changed at all. First, they stole our party name"—a jab at the Democratic TNA (dTNA)—"and now they've stolen our election symbol too." He was referring to the conch symbol, originally used by the common Tamil candidate in the last presidential election, which was cunningly swiped by the dTNA.

But he conveniently forgot to mention that it was with the help of votes from these same 'thieves, extortionists, and murderers' that he entered Parliament on the national list for the first time in 2010.



ITAK candidate introduction event at the Thanthai Selve Auditorium in Jaffna

"ITAK Is Now Sumanthiran's Pvt. Ltd. - I Stepped Down Because I Had No Desire to Be the Director of Such a Company"

- Interview with K.V.Thavarasa

BY: **Our Reporter**



K.V. Thavarasa

K.V. Thavarasa, a prominent figure in the Ilankai Tamil Arasu Kachchi (ITAK), President's Counsel, and a leading lawyer, has been at odds with M.A. Sumanthiran for years. Although Sumanthiran does not hold the official title of president, he has long been the de facto decision-maker, wielding significant influence over all major decisions within ITAK.

After being passed over as the party's candidate for the Jaffna electoral district, Thavarasa resigned from all his positions within ITAK. He has since formed an independent group, the Democratic Tamil Arasu Alliance, and is now contesting the upcoming election under this new banner.

These are excerpts from our exclusive

interview with him.

You held a significant role within the Ilankai Tamil Arasu Kachchi (ITAK) as the head of its Colombo district, among other responsibilities. What led you to leave the party and contest as an independent?

After the war in 2009, I was appointed as the head of ITAK's Colombo branch, and from that moment until my resignation, I fulfilled my duties with unwavering dedication. I never sought out positions—my loyalty has always been to Tamil nationalism, not political titles. For me, politics is not a livelihood, and the party is not my identity.

Sadly, over the years, many within ITAK prioritized personal gain over the Tamil nationalist cause. From 2010 onwards, the party gradually strayed from its core principles, succumbing to the whims of certain individuals. I raised these concerns with party leaders like Sampanthan and Mavai Senathirajah, but despite my repeated efforts, my words fell on deaf ears. This ultimately drove me to a point where I could no longer remain with ITAK, and so I made the decision to leave.

You mentioned that the party gradually strayed from its core principles, succumbing to the whims of certain individuals. Can you name them?

It's not a group—it's a single person. That person is Sumanthiran.

What specific injustices has he done to you?

In the 2020 elections, my name was initially placed at the top of the national list, a position I never asked for. Yet, within two days, my name was unceremoniously removed and

replaced with Ambika Satkunanathan's—an arbitrary decision by Sumanthiran. I didn't question it at the time, but it was indicative of a growing trend of unilateralism.

By January 2024, during a central committee meeting at MP Shanakiyan's house to discuss the local elections, I witnessed the disintegration of the Tamil National Alliance (TNA). Aside from myself and two others, the entire committee had decided to contest separately. I vehemently opposed this move. The TNA, formed by our national leader Prabhakaran, symbolized Tamil unity, and allowing it to fall apart was, in my view, a betrayal of that legacy. Despite my efforts to preserve the alliance, the others seemed more interested in fracturing it for personal gain. Sumanthiran later suggested that those who left the TNA should return, but in reality, it was his actions that pushed them away in the first place.

Even during the recent presidential election, Sumanthiran's decision to support Sajith Premadasa was made entirely on his own. Although the central committee had agreed to appoint a group of six to review candidate manifestos, Sumanthiran disregarded this process. At a hastily arranged meeting on the day of the Nallur Murugan chariot festival—knowing that several members would be absent due to the temple festivities—he unilaterally declared support for Sajith without proper consultation.

I have no personal vendetta or professional rivalry with Sumanthiran. But he is undeniably responsible for the downfall of our once-thriving party. The TNA, which held 22 seats at its height, is now a shadow of its former self, and it's uncertain whether ITAK will even win two seats in the upcoming election.



The once-vibrant house of Tamil nationalism, represented by the TNA, has been abandoned, with its former residents now scattered. This house does not belong to any one individual—it belongs to the Tamil people, entrusted to us for safekeeping. Yet, Sumanthiran has transformed it into a private enterprise. I stepped down because I had no desire to be the director of such a company.

Why were you not given the opportunity to contest in the parliamentary election?

During the candidate selection meeting, a resolution was passed barring anyone who had previously supported the Tamil

common candidate in the recently concluded presidential election from contesting in the upcoming parliamentary election. An 11-member selection committee was appointed to choose the candidates, but it wasn't the party's original committee—it was one handpicked by Sumanthiran and stacked with his loyalists. Aside from Mavai Senathirajah and Sritharan, the rest were mere puppets, bending to Sumanthiran's will.

In a general meeting, such a committee must be formally proposed and seconded by others, but that process was entirely bypassed. Ideally, no candidates should be part of the selection committee;

however, both Sumanthiran and Sritharan were included, which blatantly violates natural justice. As they say, "Can I be my own judge?"

The committee claimed to represent all districts, yet Sumanthiran stacked it with four of his loyalists from the Batticaloa district, conveniently leaving out the Colombo district, where I was president of the Colombo unit of ITAK.

I knew my name wouldn't be selected as a candidate, but I still applied to expose their unjust actions. Had I not applied, they could've claimed that they would have chosen me if I had. That's precisely why I went through with it, fully aware that Sumanthiran's team would reject my application. Once the candidate list was announced, I made sure the world knew about their unethical practices, and with my resignation letter ready, I submitted it.

What do you think caused the decline of TNA and ITAK?

I place the blame squarely on Sumanthiran but also on the lack of leadership from the late Sampanthan and Mavai Senathirajah. Everything Sumanthiran decides is carried out within the party as though it were his personal enterprise, even though it's meant to be a people's party. If one person dictates everything, what's the point of having a party?

How do you view the candidate selection process for the Jaffna electoral district?

For the six seats in the Jaffna electoral district, nine candidates need to be nominated. Except for Sritharan, the other eight ITAK candidates belong to Sumanthiran's faction, and even Sritharan has now aligned with them. The entire lineup has been carefully orchestrated to

guarantee Sumanthiran's victory.

It was explicitly stated that those who had lost in the previous parliamentary election would not be given another chance to contest. So why was Emmanuel Arnold given the opportunity? The answer is simple: he is a loyalist of Sumanthiran.

Sumanthiran also put on a grand spectacle, claiming they had been searching far and wide—through jungles and mountains, no less—for female candidates. Yet, when the time came, he announced two women as candidates, completely disregarding the four women who had already applied from the party's women's wing. Their applications were systematically ignored, while Sumanthiran perpetuated the farce of having scoured the wilderness for female representation. The women's wing has been sidelined, as has the youth wing, with Sumanthiran handpicking his own candidates in a blatant display of arrogance.

Are these women candidates members of ITAK?

I've been in the party for 14 years, and I've never even heard of them. No one in the party knows who they are. I'm not blaming the women themselves, but I place the blame squarely on the leadership. It's their responsibility to ensure transparency and proper representation.

Do you think this is a play orchestrated by both Sumanthiran and Sritharan?

No. Sritharan has no other option. He's a prisoner of circumstances.

But Sritharan was part of the selection committee, wasn't he?

Even so, he didn't have a voice there. Out of the 11 members of the selection committee, except for Mavai Senathirajah and Sritharan, the remaining nine were Sumanthiran's people.

Who appointed the selection committee?

That's an excellent question. The selection committee was appointed under the leadership of Mavai Senathirajah. When I directly asked him about the rationale behind the appointments, he was unable to provide a clear explanation. This is why I've consistently pointed out that Mavai Senathirajah's ineffectiveness as ITAK president has significantly contributed to the party becoming, in effect, a private entity controlled by Sumanthiran. The lack of strong leadership has allowed this centralization of power.

Why did you decide to contest independently?

We have now parted ways and submitted our nomination under the banner of the Democratic Tamil Arasu Alliance. The people, disillusioned by the autocratic and Sumanthiran-centric leadership of the Tamil Arasu party, will cast their votes for us. The Tamil Arasu party will struggle to win even two seats, while we expect to garner significant support.

If that's the case, why is Sritharan still with the Tamil Arasu party?

If Sritharan were to leave, the party would be completely under Sumanthiran's control. For now, it's better that he stays. There's a possibility that Sritharan may reconsider his position after the election, but for me, stepping away was the only necessary course of action.

If, as you claim, the Tamil Arasu party is

becoming Sumanthiran's personal enterprise, where do you believe the core issue lies? Is it a problem with the party's structure, its leadership, or the organization as a whole?

The issue lies not in the structure or organization but in leadership. The root cause is the lack of effective leadership from senior figures like Sampanthan and Mavai Senathirajah. Leadership is key, whether it's a company or a political party. If the leadership is weak, nothing can function as it should. This absence of strong leadership has allowed the party to gradually transform into Sumanthiran's personal domain.

Do you think Sumanthiran is operating under the agenda of any external forces?

The Sinhala political agenda has always been to fragment us, and Sumanthiran is skillfully executing that plan. This time, from the Jaffna electoral district, a total of 23 parties and 23 independent groups filed nominations, with 2 being rejected. This leaves 44 groups contesting for just 6 seats. The interests of southern Sinhala politics are being perfectly orchestrated in the Tamil region, with Sumanthiran as the chief architect of this division.

When Sumanthiran steps away from politics, what kind of damage do you think he will have caused to Tamil nationalist politics?

He will have completely dismantled Tamil nationalism. What he has done to the ITAK and TNA, and to Tamil nationalist politics from within, should be regarded as nothing less than a betrayal. History will remember him as someone who committed a profound betrayal against Tamil nationalist politics.

Nameplates Before Necessities: Jaffna Uni VC's Unusual To-Do List Angers Local Community

There's a Tamil proverb, unrefined in its original form, but when translated politely, it conveys: "The strong sheep laments over grass for survival, while another sheep laments over more trivial matters." This classic, albeit unpolished, proverb aptly reflects the actions of Jaffna University's Vice-Chancellor, Dr. Srisatkunarajah.



Vice-Chancellor, Dr. Srisatkunarajah.

While the university struggles with inadequate infrastructure and its students face a lack of basic necessities, critics accuse him of lavish spending on unnecessary vanity projects that focus on personal self-promotion rather than addressing student welfare or critical infrastructural needs.



Vice-Chancellor Dr. Srisatkunarajah's name prominently engraved on the foundation stone

One of the key projects under scrutiny is the construction of a gateway near Parameswaran Temple within the university, which cost Rs. 9.5 million. The controversy escalated when an additional Rs. 4.5 million was spent on renovating the university's main entrance, which was originally inaugurated in 1974 by then-Prime Minister Srimavo Bandaranaike and has served the university for over 50 years.

Following the renovation, a public ceremony was held, during which the Vice-Chancellor's name replaced that of the former Prime Minister on the commemorative plaque. This act has sparked accusations of historical revisionism and highlighted the Vice-Chancellor's inclination toward self-promotion.

Meanwhile, the disparity between these expenditures and the realities faced by Jaffna University students is glaring. Many students reportedly struggle to meet basic needs, with some unable to afford even three meals a day. Restroom facilities for both male and female students are woefully inadequate, and the existing ones are in disrepair. Additionally, hostel accommodations for out-of-district students remain insufficient, and those available fall far short of acceptable standards.

The university's research labs are also under-equipped, which has significantly impacted academic activities, as noted by lecturers who spoke to Jaffna Monitor.

"This is a clear example of misusing public funds for unnecessary projects while neglecting the real needs of students," said a concerned observer.

"At a time when the country is grappling with severe economic challenges, it is deeply troubling to see funds being wasted on vanity



projects. The Vice-Chancellor seems intent on leaving his name on these projects rather than addressing the pressing needs of the university," a university professor, who wished to remain anonymous, told Jaffna Monitor.

An insider from the NPP revealed to Jaffna Monitor that the recent removal of the University Grants Commission (UGC) Chairman and Vice-Chairman was tied to their backing of such controversial actions by Vice-Chancellors. Further investigations are expected, with more administrative shake-ups likely to follow.



The newly renovated university's main entrance

Lalith and Kugan Disappearance Case Gains New Momentum as Government Orders Fresh Probe



BY:

Our Reporter

The Ministry of Public Security has ordered the police to expedite investigations into seven key cases, including the high-profile disappearance of human rights defenders Lalith Kumar Weeraraj and Kugan Muruganandan. The two activists from the Frontline Socialist Party (FLSP) were abducted in Jaffna on December 9, 2011. This directive, issued to the Acting Inspector General of Police, is part of the government's renewed efforts to resolve long-standing, unresolved crimes, according to a source close to the NPP government who spoke to Jaffna Monitor.

Lalith and Kugan, both human rights activists and allies of what is now the National People's Power (NPP) government, were abducted while organizing a press conference for the People's Struggle Movement in Jaffna, which was scheduled for World Human Rights Day on December 10, 2011. Their abduction has raised questions for more than a decade, with

many believing that the then-government, under President Mahinda Rajapaksa and Defense Secretary Gotabaya Rajapaksa, was involved in their disappearance.

The two activists were last seen leaving Kugan's residence in Avarangal, Jaffna, before being reportedly abducted by a group of men on motorcycles and a white van along the Point Pedro main road. At the time, white vans were notoriously linked to abductions, particularly in Tamil-speaking areas. Eyewitnesses claim Lalith and Kugan were forcibly taken, making their disappearance one of many such cases that occurred during Sri Lanka's postwar period.

The Frontline Socialist Party (FLSP), following their abduction, issued a statement praising Lalith and Kugan's activism, saying: "Lalith and Kugan are remembered as two individuals who bravely fought against the wave of abductions and disappearances taking place in Sri Lanka during the postwar period. At a time when the North and the South were divided by an 'iron wall,' Lalith and Kugan



Lalith and Kugan

worked tirelessly to raise awareness among the people of the South about the struggles faced by the people in the North. They also strived to convince the people in the North that the people in the South were not their enemies but fellow citizens suffering in similar ways. Their efforts to bridge these divides were seen as a direct challenge to the authorities."

FLSP also added, "During a time when the authorities wanted to separate people as Sinhala, Tamil, and Muslim, Lalith and Kugan fought to unite these races as Sri Lankans. That is why they were abducted." Their commitment to uniting all ethnic groups in Sri Lanka under a single identity was seen as a threat to the then-ruling regime.

Lalith's father, a rubber tapper from Siri Niwasa Watte, has long believed that government forces were responsible for his son's abduction. His suspicions were reinforced by an early statement from then-Cabinet Spokesman Keheliya Rambukwella, who initially claimed that Lalith and Kugan

were in police custody. However, this claim was later denied by both the police and Rambukwella.

With the recent change in government and the rise of the NPP to power, there are reports that this case may be reopened, signaling a potential shift in political will to address unresolved cases from the past. Speculation is mounting that reopening the investigation could lead to senior figures from the previous government being brought to court or even facing jail time.

For over a decade, the families of Lalith and Kugan have sought justice and answers. This new directive by the Ministry of Public Security, if acted upon, could finally bring closure to a case that has come to symbolize the broader issue of enforced disappearances in postwar Sri Lanka. The outcome of this investigation may also set a precedent for the pursuit of justice in many other unresolved cases of abductions that occurred during the same period.

"Sinhalese and Tamils: Biologically and Genetically One People-There Are No Two Distinct Races"

- An Exclusive Interview with Professor Mahesan Nirmalan



Professor Mahesan Nirmalan



BY:

Kaniyan Pungundran

கணியன் பூங்குன்றன்

Professor Mahesan Nirmalan, originally from a humble middle-class family in Karainagar, has ascended to become one of the most internationally renowned figures in his field. He currently holds the prestigious title of Professor of Medical Education and serves as a Consultant in Critical Care Medicine at the Manchester Royal Infirmary in the United Kingdom. Alongside his academic chair, he practices as a consultant in one of the most demanding and high-stakes specialties—intensive care medicine.

Professor Mahesan Nirmalan's influence transcends borders. He is a distinguished member of the International Scientific Advisory Group for UK Research and Innovation (UKRI), the principal body governing research funding for the UK Government. His academic reach extends even further with Honorary Chairs in Intensive Care Medicine at the University of Cairo, Egypt, and in Post-Conflict Studies at the University of Gulu, Uganda. Adding to his global contributions, he also serves on the advisory board of the Centre of Digital Epidemiology (CODE) at the University of Jaffna, Sri Lanka, driving cutting-edge advancements in public health and epidemiology.

These are excerpts from our exclusive interview with Professor Nirmalan.

Could you share with us insights into your early life, particularly how growing up in Sri Lanka, and Jaffna

specifically, influenced your personal and intellectual development? How have these formative experiences shaped the person you are today?

I was born into a middle-class family in Karainagar, Jaffna. My parents were educators from a traditional Hindu background, which meant my upbringing was steeped in the cultural and religious richness of temples, தேவாரம் (Thevaaram)—sacred hymns dedicated to Lord Shiva, திருவாசகம் (Thiruvvasagam)—a collection of devotional hymns by the poet-saint Manickavasagar, திருவெம்பாவை (Thiruvempavai)—hymns sung in worship of Lord Shiva during the Tamil month of Margazhi, and literary classics such as பொன்னியின் செல்வன் (Ponniyin Selvan)—a historical novel by Kalki Krishnamurthy set in the Chola dynasty, and சிவகாமியின் சபதம் (Sivagamiyin Sabatham)—another historical novel by Kalki focusing on Pallava dynasty politics and intrigue. I was also exposed to கர்நாடக இசை (Carnatic music), வில்லு பாட்டு (Villu Paatu)—a traditional form of storytelling accompanied by a bow-shaped musical instrument, and கதா பிரசங்கம் (Katha Prasangam)—a dramatic form of storytelling blending narration, music, and performance—all of which have profoundly shaped me as an individual to this day.

My father, an old-school English teacher, and both my parents, graduates of the University of Peradeniya, provided a bilingual upbringing. At home, we predominantly conversed in English. When my parents were transferred to Bandarawela in the 1970s, I learned to read, write, and speak Sinhala fluently.

I was fortunate to study at some of the best institutions in the country, including St. Thomas's Preparatory School in Bandarawela,



Jaffna Hindu College, and the Colombo Medical Faculty. During my time in Colombo, I resided in a Catholic medical hostel known as 'Kittiyakkara' with around 50 Sinhala students, most of whom hailed from the outstations. I maintain close relationships with all these institutions and have built lifelong connections with people from all communities.

Growing up, I was deeply influenced by the novels of Jayakanthan and the poetry of Subramaniya Bharathy, both of which shaped my social conscience and political worldview. I personally witnessed pivotal moments in Sri Lanka's history: the burning of the Jaffna

Library in 1981, the 1983 riots, and my subsequent return to Jaffna on a refugee cargo ship. I sought refuge in Nallur Temple when the conflict erupted between the LTTE and the IPKF.

I narrowly escaped death in a harrowing incident when the van I was traveling in was fired upon by a military helicopter, tragically resulting in the deaths of a few fellow passengers. I also lived through the infamous Pettah Bombing at the Colombo Central Bus Station, the massacres at Kokillai and Nai Aru, and the mass eviction of Muslims from the Jaffna Peninsula.

The JVP uprising of 1988/89 and its brutal suppression left an indelible mark on me. Some of my closest friends from Kittiyakkara were kidnapped and killed in cold blood during those tumultuous times. These cumulative experiences have granted me a unique perspective on Sri Lanka's complex socio-political upheavals, allowing me to view the ethnic conflicts and challenges through the lens of all its citizens.

After completing my postgraduate training at the Postgraduate Institute of Medicine in Colombo and serving as a doctor at the General Hospital for five years, I moved to the UK in 1995 to further my studies. I currently reside in Manchester, in the North West of England, where I continue to work and contribute to both the medical and academic fields.

Despite being a fulltime clinical academic at the University of Manchester, UK and a Consultant in a busy clinical specialty at one of the largest NHS Trusts in the UK, we can see that you are increasingly drifting into social activism in Sri Lanka. Why? And what makes you think that people in Sri Lanka would take your views seriously?

Social responsibility is a key objective at the University of Manchester, and as a result, all staff are encouraged to engage in activities that foster positive societal impact. When the Sri Lankan civil war ended in 2009, I became a trustee of the Meththa Foundation UK (MF), a charity dedicated to the rehabilitation of amputees across Sri Lanka, including the war-

torn North and East.

I also had the privilege of applying the lessons we learned in Sri Lanka to Northern Uganda, a region similarly ravaged by prolonged conflict and its devastating aftermath.

These experiences instilled in me the profound realization that conflict prevention is not the responsibility of governments or organizations alone, but of all citizens. Reflecting on Sri Lanka's past, it is clear that its problems were perpetuated by vested interests that suppressed the reasonable majority within all communities. I now deeply regret having once been part of that silent majority—whether out of fear or self-preservation.

The University of Manchester has provided me with the platform to redress this silence, and I am committed to speaking out and articulating these complex issues objectively, cutting across ethnic divides. Whether my views are taken seriously or not is beyond my control—but I am resolved to contribute to the dialogue.

You have been a frequent visitor to Sri Lanka since leaving the country in 1995, and you have visited Jaffna regularly since the end of the war in 2009. What are your thoughts on how society in the Jaffna peninsula has evolved since the war ended?

I return to Sri Lanka a few times each year for academic and social commitments, mostly in Colombo. Since the war ended, I have also visited Jaffna frequently and engaged with youth from diverse backgrounds.

Over this period, I've observed that the orthodoxy, regionalism, and sectarianism that

once dominated our society are rapidly fading, and schoolchildren are developing a keen interest in broader development, including multilingual skills and sports.

Leading schools are nurturing a new generation of boys and girls who are able to interact with their southern counterparts on equal footing. The state has made significant investments in infrastructure, resulting in economic transformation on a scale never seen before. Limited but progressive investments have led to changes in sporting facilities, cultural centers, organic agriculture, and tourism—positive developments overall.

However, these changes have not been inclusive, and many still live in abject poverty and marginalization. A significant number of war victims remain excluded from society and in need of active support. For example, many young people in the Vanni region with severe spinal cord injuries have had to form self-support groups to address their medical needs, as wider societal support remains inadequate.

The extent of abuse of vulnerable children and single women is poorly understood and largely unaddressed. Additionally, the rapid changes in regional demography, proselytization under the guise of poverty alleviation, and the grief endured by families with missing loved ones remain serious challenges.

A growing desire for emigration among the youth leaves them feeling unsettled or dissatisfied, and cultural practices that once held the community together are being eroded by external influences such as South Indian films and the unchecked inflow of diaspora funds. This has created a stark disconnect between economic development and measures of happiness or contentment. It may explain the high rates of suicide, substance misuse, and violence.



In your interviews, you've expressed concerns about young people wanting to leave Sri Lanka and the serious implications of this trend. However, a skeptic might argue that it could be seen as hypocritical for someone who left Sri Lanka and thrived abroad to advise today's youth against emigration. How would you respond to that perspective?

Yes, it is indeed hypocritical, and I do not wish to pretend otherwise. However, I ask for understanding. We are all shaped by circumstances, and what happened to me and my 'generation of migrants' was part of a broader socio-cultural-political wave that

encouraged emigration. Of course, the war further fueled this underlying trend within the Tamil community, particularly in Jaffna. The path to success was clear: study hard, attend university to pursue medicine, engineering, or accountancy, get married, and then emigrate. This was the norm, the standard by which success was measured.

Many great men and women returned after spending brief periods abroad to serve their communities and country, but unfortunately, I was not one of them. The circumstances in the 1990s simply didn't allow for that.

However, emigration during our time was limited in scale and did not threaten the community's stability. Today, the situation has reached epidemic proportions, endangering the very fabric of the Tamil community. For example, the Jaffna Monitor issue for October highlighted that the number of members of parliament allocated to the Jaffna district for the upcoming general elections has been reduced from 7 to 6, due to the decline in registered voters. If current trends persist, this number could decrease even further in the next election (JM October 2024).

One of my friends told me there is now a shortage of people to carry the deity during annual temple festivals in remote towns and villages. Many of the islands surrounding the Jaffna peninsula are nearly deserted, unable to sustain their traditional farming and fishing lifestyles. These changes pose the single greatest threat to the stability of the Tamil community in Sri Lanka. This is why I believe it is our duty to raise awareness, especially among our friends and fellow countrymen in the diaspora.

Jaffna has a long history of migration in pursuit of opportunities and wealth. In the late 19th and early 20th centuries, many migrated

to Southeast Asia, followed by waves to the Middle East and Africa in the 1970s. Before World War II, substantial remittances were sent back by Jaffna migrants in Malaysia and Singapore. However, their descendants no longer maintain strong ties to Jaffna, and these remittances have largely dwindled. Now, a new generation of first-generation migrants to Western countries has taken their place.

In your interviews, you've highlighted that relying on these remittances is short-sighted, as future generations may not maintain the same connection to Sri Lanka. Why do you view this as a problem? Isn't it possible that a similar pattern could emerge, with each new generation of Tamil migrants sending remittances from different destinations?

The migration you refer to was limited in scale and, as mentioned before, did not destabilize our community. This issue cannot and must not be viewed solely through an economic lens or based on the sustainability of inward remittances.

Moreover, the world has changed significantly, and the West is now adopting a very different stance on immigration. Ethno-nationalism is on the rise across many Western countries, and sooner or later, restrictions will likely be imposed on the outward flow of resources or funds associated with the split loyalties often seen among immigrant populations.

There are no viable alternatives to developing the local economy so that communities and individuals can thrive and achieve their life ambitions within their own countries. You may have noticed the recent riots in London



and several other UK cities protesting against mass immigration. This should serve as a clear warning to our people that the future of our community and culture lies in Sri Lanka, not in the West—no matter how green the other side may seem at present.

How do you respond to those who claim that the 'Tamil problem' was merely a 'terrorist problem' resolved in 2009, and that no further political solutions are needed for the Tamil community?

Whether we like it or not, there is a prevailing view among certain sections of the Sinhala right that the so-called 'Tamil problem' is merely a figment of imagination, created and propagated by Tamil politicians for electoral gains. They argue that the issues affecting the Tamil people are no different from those faced by all citizens of the country, and therefore, the only real problem that required a solution was the 'terrorist problem.' In their view, since this 'terrorist problem' was decisively resolved at the banks of Nandikadal in 2009, the country

can now simply move on, focusing solely on economic development.

Many prominent members of this group have publicly claimed that there are no political problems unique to the Tamils that require a political solution. Despite being small in number, this group is highly influential and continues to shape political discourse in the South. The election of Mr. Gotabaya Rajapaksa to the presidency in 2019 is a clear indication of this group's influence.

In my view, it is essential to approach the challenges faced by all minority communities objectively and articulate them in a way that an ordinary person can understand and empathize with. Genuine grievances that led to the armed conflict cannot simply be 'wished away,' as some might hope, as this hinders the country from realizing its full potential. Additionally, it creates opportunities for internal players to exploit these differences for electoral gains and for external forces to advance their own regional geopolitical interests.

Prolonged conflict inevitably leads to mutual destruction, as evidenced by current events in West Asia. It is the responsibility of all of us to ensure that we do not become trapped in repeated cycles of violence due to these unresolved grievances.

The Tamil question has been extensively discussed in the media, in Parliament, on election platforms, and in international forums. Given this background, some argue that there is no need or purpose in rearticulating these same issues. What is your perspective on this?

Since the time I became politically aware (mid-70s onwards), the question of ‘Tamil rights’ and ‘Tamil identity’ has been framed in highly emotive language, laden with ethno-nationalist undertones by all parties involved.

In my understanding, this began soon after independence and reached its peak during the period leading up to the ‘Vaddukoddai Resolution,’ which called for a separate state, and the 1977 elections that followed.

The Jayawardene government further fueled this divisive debate by recruiting short-sighted politicians and pseudo-intellectuals to present these issues to the electorate, fostering paranoia and fear. For instance, textbooks such as Kumarodaya (Book 2) portrayed the Tamil people to young Sinhala children as “ඔවුන් හරි නපුරු මිනිස්සු” (They are very nasty people). In my view, the Tamil political leadership has consistently failed to effectively communicate the problems faced by the Tamil people to the ordinary, decent Sinhala electorate in a way that they could understand and empathize with.

The existing language barrier only compounded these issues, and even today, many ordinary Sinhalese genuinely believe that any attempt to solve the ‘ethnic problem’ through power devolution is simply an effort to divide the country by ‘global forces,’ acting under the influence of a financially powerful Tamil diaspora.

As long as this mindset prevails in the South, no solution will emerge from any government in Colombo. It simply cannot happen in a democracy. Imposing such a solution through external pressure is not only immoral but also a self-defeating exercise. In this context, I firmly believe that there is a need to rearticulate our challenges in a responsible and

thoughtful manner—one that the ordinary Sinhala person can comprehend, relate to, and sympathize with. The Dissanayake presidency provides us an opportunity to do so.

If so, In your view, what are the key challenges facing minority communities in general, and the Tamil community in particular?

In my view, there are three key challenges that specifically affect all minority communities, including the Tamil community:

i. Physical security:

There is a significant challenge for an average Tamil person, particularly one not conversant in Sinhala, when seeking support or assistance from the security forces. While this may not pose a major issue in daily life, it becomes a significant challenge in the face of organized political violence against the community. The events of 1958, 1977, 1981, and 1983 have left permanent scars and fears in the collective psyche of the Tamil community. Similarly, recent events like the Aluthgama and Digana riots have brought the question of physical security to the forefront for the Muslim community. In many of these instances, the security forces have been either ineffective or unwilling to intervene for reasons that are well known.

ii. Loss of cultural identity:

Cultural heritage and the identity formed through it are invaluable. The Tamil community has a legitimate fear of losing this identity due to the relentless demographic changes within the country. There is compelling evidence that many Tamil

communities across Sri Lanka have gradually shed their original identities and assimilated into Sinhala culture. Even a casual visit to towns and villages along the coastal belt from Puttalam to Negombo bears witness to this transformation. While gradual assimilation over generations is a natural process in a multicultural country, the process needs to be organic and gradual allowing time and space for the changes to be embedded.

However, attempts to expedite this transformation through systematically enforced and centrally-supported land settlement policies set off alarm bells regarding the loss of identity and the so-called 'Sinhalaisation.' This legitimate grievance must be acknowledged and addressed.

iii. Belonging and ownership:

The notion that the country belongs solely to one community, with everyone else viewed as an 'external person' or an 'outsider/invader,' has been systematically ingrained in the collective psyche of the Sinhala people. A recent reference to 'Landowners' vs 'Tenants' by a prominent and controversial social leader encapsulates this mindset. This idea is deeply rooted, reinforced through literature, mythology, and even children's textbooks.

Recent scientific studies confirm, beyond reasonable doubt, that the Sinhalese and Tamils share a common genetic pool—they are, biologically and genetically, one people. In reality, there are no two distinct races. However, these findings have unfortunately not altered the damaging social constructs propagated through mythology and pseudo-intellectualism.

These three issues encapsulate the key challenges faced by the Tamil and Muslim



communities in Sri Lanka. They can be resolved through appropriate constitutional arrangements without inflaming fears or anxieties among ordinary citizens. What is needed is an honest and fair narrative from leadership, and once again, the Dissanayake presidency provides a window of opportunity. I hope this opportunity, emerging in the wake of an economic catastrophe rooted in the country's disharmony, will not be wasted.

You've highlighted the need for a conversation in Sri Lanka around end-of-life care, with a focus on quality of



life and death. But what about elderly care? In our society, there is an expectation that children will care for their aging parents. However, some argue that this can be impractical, particularly for children without access to a village-like support network. Should we, as a society, first have a conversation about the quality of elderly care before moving on to discussions about end-of-life issues?

I fully agree that a conversation on elderly care is urgently needed. The purpose of my visit to Sri Lanka in August was to attend the annual scientific meeting of the Sri Lanka Medical Association (SLMA), which included a

workshop on end-of-life care and the perception of 'death' across different cultural traditions.

However, I also acknowledge that a discussion on elderly care is equally important, especially given the shifts in demographics and lifestyle. In my view, while the state has an obligation to care for the elderly, this responsibility cannot and must not rest solely on the state. We cannot distance ourselves from the traditional belief in our country that there exists an unwritten covenant between parents and children, a bond that inherently demands sacrifice from both sides at different stages of life.

This covenant is deeply rooted in our history, culture, tradition, and religions. Abandoning it on the grounds that 'it is incompatible with modern life' would be detrimental on multiple fronts. The love and responsibility between parents and children form the bedrock of a compassionate society. While the state must intervene when necessary, it should not adopt policies that systematically undermine the obligations children have towards their aging parents.

In relation to these broader issues, what do you see as the strengths and weaknesses of medical education in Sri Lanka?

Traditional medical education in Sri Lanka was heavily focused on factual knowledge. It placed a strong emphasis on the acquisition of scientific facts, with students being tested in great detail. As a result, students prioritized memorizing and mastering factual knowledge over more subtle, and perhaps less testable, skills such as empathy, attitudes, and performance.

However, I am aware that this is changing rapidly. For instance, the Colombo Medical Faculty now has a systematic approach to incorporating medical humanities into its core undergraduate program. I understand reliably that similar changes are taking place in many other medical faculties across the country as well.

Finally, what are your views on the role of the Tamil diaspora in Sri Lanka's evolving socio-economic and political landscape?

I see the diaspora as a double-edged sword. On one hand, they are integral to the revival of our post-war society and economy. Many have been extremely generous in financially supporting their families, schools, places of worship, and the wider community.

The revival we see across the peninsula would not have been possible without the interventions of the diaspora. Some have played key roles in establishing major projects that generate employment and provide livelihood support. These investments are most welcome and are gratefully acknowledged by the communities involved.

Many past pupils' associations have made strategic and generous investments in their schools, enabling them to reach new heights in

terms of available facilities. As a direct result, children from these schools are now able to compete nationally on an equal footing.

On the other hand, despite their material wealth and professional success, many in the diaspora yearn for their lives back 'home' at a fundamental level. A section of the diaspora carries deep scars and resentments stemming from past experiences, losses, and injustices. Due to language barriers, many may not fully understand the injustices and marginalization that rural Sinhala youth also faced, resulting in two uprisings and their brutal suppression. While the scale of the perceived injustices and structural destruction differed, the negative experiences across various segments of society had many parallels. However, there was no space to view these problems through the lens of the other side.

There was no opportunity for the 'Manamperies of Kataragama' and the 'Isaipriyas of the Vanni' to come together—the politicians and pseudo-intellectuals on all sides ensured that. Due to these scars and resentments, not all interventions by segments of the diaspora are beneficial to the political discourse needed for our community and the country to move forward.

There is a need for the diaspora to recognize the changing socio-political realities on the ground—in the country, region, and world—and to adjust their narratives accordingly. While it is important to remember history, it is equally important to ensure that the scars of the past are not passed on to future generations. History must serve as a guide to the future, not as a chain binding us to the collective mistakes of the past. For the community and the country to move forward, a positive outlook within the Tamil diaspora is essential—however difficult that transformation may be.

Jaffna Youth Shines at Commonwealth Powerlifting Championships



Satkunarajah Pushanthan (wearing a blue jacket) standing proudly on the winning podium at the Commonwealth Powerlifting Championships in Sun City, South Africa

A young athlete from Jaffna, Satkunarajha Pushanthan, has made Sri Lanka proud by winning three medals at the Commonwealth Powerlifting Championships held in Sun City, South Africa. Organized by the Commonwealth Powerlifting Federation (CPF), the event aims to promote drug-free powerlifting on the international stage. This year's championships, which occur from October 4 to October 13, feature classic and equipped powerlifting categories.

Satkunarajha Pushanthan, hailing from Chavakachcheri, competed in the 120 kg

weight category, delivering an outstanding performance in multiple events. He won a gold medal in the Deadlift, a silver medal in the Bench Press, and a bronze medal in the Squat event, marking a remarkable achievement on the international stage.

A former student of Drieberg College, Chavakachcheri, Pushanthan is no stranger to success, having previously set national records in powerlifting competitions in Sri Lanka. His most notable national accomplishment includes lifting a total of 766 kilograms, showcasing his strength and skill.

SHANAKIYAN'S "SELECTIVE AMNESIA" SHINES IN LATEST SPEECH



Shanakiyan Rasamanickam

Shanakiyan Rasamanickam, the Ilankai Tamil Arasu Kachchi (ITAK) lead candidate of Batticaloa district and former Member of Parliament, delivered yet another one of his signature naïve political speeches recently. This time, he boldly claimed that only those with squeaky clean records—free from abductions and killings—are contesting under the ITAK banner in the upcoming parliamentary elections.

He went further, throwing shade at other parties for fielding candidates with murky pasts. But in a classic Shanakiyan move, he somehow "forgot" to mention his own fascinating history of collaborating with, well... exactly the kind of people he's now opposing.

Let's rewind for a second. In his last election, Shanakiyan proudly stood with the Tamil National Alliance (TNA), where ITAK was the chief constituent. The TNA lineup wasn't exactly a roster of angels.

Alongside ITAK, there were former militant outfits like the Eelam People's Revolutionary Liberation Front (EPRLF), People's Liberation Organisation of Tamil Eelam (PLOTE), and Tamil Eelam Liberation Organization (TELO)—all known for widespread killings and abductions. Yes, the very same activities Shanakiyan is suddenly so horrified by.

If that wasn't enough of a contradiction to keep the political theater entertaining, in 2015, our dear Shanakiyan was actually a candidate for the United People's Freedom Alliance (UPFA)—under the leadership of none other than Mahinda Rajapaksa, a man not exactly famous for his gentle hugs or peacemaking skills.

Speaking at a media briefing and candidate introduction event held in Kallady, Batticaloa, Shanakiyan Rasamanickam proudly announced that ITAK has 'suddenly' taken a principled stand by selecting candidates who have not engaged in any unsavory activities like murder, abduction, or betrayal. The event was organized to introduce ITAK's "newly reformed" candidates for the Batticaloa District in the upcoming elections.

"Compared to the Tamil candidates from other parties in Batticaloa, it is widely recognized that our candidates are of a higher caliber. Our candidates are individuals who have no record of corruption or fraud, unlike those fielded by other parties."

Shanakiyan criticized rival parties, accusing them of nominating individuals with tainted histories. "Candidates from other parties who have been involved in corruption, fraud, and land grabbing are now being fielded to contest the elections. Only those who have not committed murder, abduction, or betrayals are running under the ITAK symbol," he added.

The former MP also noted that other major political parties, such as the United National Party (UNP) and the National People's Power (NPP), have fielded candidates from multiple ethnic backgrounds, which he suggested dilutes their focus on Tamil issues.

"This time, only two of our previous candidates are contesting, while six fresh faces have been introduced to the field. This demonstrates our commitment to renewing our party's representation with clean and capable individuals," Shanakiyan proudly stated. Of course, he conveniently skipped over the part where the previous candidates, who were critical of his political boss, Sumanthiran, were quietly sidelined. That's the real reason they could only accommodate two of the old guard.

He went on to criticize, saying, "One candidate, who previously stated this would be their last election, spent most of their extended term in London and has now re-entered the contest." This remark was clearly aimed at his former TNA ally and vocal critic, MP Govinthan Karunakaran, also known as Jana of TELO.

Shanakiyan underscored his own record, stating, "I am the only candidate from ITAK who has consistently worked on development projects across all areas of the Batticaloa District. We are now working tirelessly to secure four parliamentary seats for ITAK in this election."

While the Batticaloa District remains a key battleground in the upcoming elections, and Shanakiyan's campaign promises to focus on clean governance and development for the Tamil people, he conveniently glossed over the specifics. He failed to elaborate on what exactly this "clean governance" and "development" from ITAK MPs has accomplished over the years. Perhaps they are so clean that they've left no trace at all. Maybe. Who knows?



EPDP Colombo district candidates

EPDP Fields Two Buddhist Monks for 2024 Parliamentary Elections

The Eelam People's Democratic Party (EPDP), under the leadership of former Fisheries Minister Douglas Devananda, has made a landmark move by becoming the first Tamil political party to field Buddhist monks as candidates for the 2024 Parliamentary Elections. This unprecedented step marks the first instance of a Tamil party nominating Buddhist monks to contest a national election in Sri Lanka.

Venerable Kiriebbanare Vijitha Thera and Venerable Udawalawe Jinasiri Thera will contest from the EPDP in the Colombo District. Speaking to the media after submitting his nomination, Venerable Vijitha Thera stated that his decision to run was driven by the desire to promote national reconciliation. "I decided to contest from the EPDP to foster unity. Our goal is not to seek positions, but to work towards building a united Sri Lanka," he said.

The EPDP's candidate list for the Colombo



District includes a diverse group of representatives from Tamil, Muslim, and Sinhala communities. Former Western Provincial Council member S. Rajendran, who is leading the list, stated that the party aims to approach the election by focusing on inclusivity and bridging ethnic and religious divisions.

The Colombo District candidate list comprises 21 individuals, including 10 Tamil, three Muslim, and seven Sinhala candidates, along with the two Buddhist monks.

President Dissanayake Hints at Northern Political Collaboration Amid Speculation of ITAK Leaders' Private Agendas

President Anura Kumara Dissanayake has expressed that political parties in the Northern Province are prepared to collaborate with the government after the upcoming parliamentary election. Speaking at a gathering of National People's Power (NPP) candidates at the Grand Monarch Hotel in Thalawathugoda, he underscored the significance of the forthcoming election, describing it as a crucial opportunity to rid the parliament of allegations and accusations.

He highlighted that during recent discussions with a key northern political leader, it was mentioned that the people of the region are willing to work with the government. "The upcoming parliamentary election on November 14th presents an opportunity for us to secure the strong political power needed to make critical decisions for the country," Dissanayake said.

He stressed the need for a parliament that is not only representative but also capable of efficiently utilizing resources. "Unfortunately, parliament has been branded as a place that squanders public resources. We need to change that perception," the president added.

However, behind these public remarks, recent meetings between President Dissanayake and two key leaders of the Ilankai Tamil Arasu Katchi (ITAK)—S. Sritharan and M.A.



Sumanthiran—have sparked local speculation about their true motives. According to sources in Jaffna, Sritharan may have met with the president to request that the names of bar license holders, granted by the previous government under Ranil Wickremesinghe, remain undisclosed—due to concerns that such revelations could implicate him or his associates.

In contrast, sources claim that Sumanthiran's meeting may have had the opposite objective: he allegedly urged the president to release these names, aiming to expose his intra-party rival Sritharan, whose name is rumored to be on the list.

While President Dissanayake emphasized unity and collaboration in his speech, the behind-the-scenes maneuvering by northern political figures paints a far more complex picture.



ITAK breakaway group leaders Saravanapavan and Thavarsa present a basket of mangoes as they meet ITAK elder statesman Mavai Senathirajah, seeking his blessings for their new political venture.

When Life Gives You Mangoes: Make Diplomatic Moves!



BY: **Theivigan Panchalingam**

Four years ago, former Tamil National Alliance (TNA) MP Saravanapavan visited Colombo to gift Jaffna mangoes to then-President Mahinda Rajapaksa. Now,

just days ago, he appeared before former Ilankai Tamil Arasu Kachchi (ITAK) leader Mavai Senathirajah, once again with a basket of mangoes. This time, he sought Mavai's blessings for a new party that he and his allies, who were denied the chance to contest under ITAK, have launched ahead of the upcoming election. Mavai, whose political appetite seems to have waned, smiled innocently at those who approached him, unsure whether the mangoes were sweet or sour.

Much like the mango that caused the famous sibling rivalry between Murugan and Ganesha, the fruit seems to be at the center of a political sibling rivalry between the Ilankai Tamil

Arasu Kachchi (ITAK) and the newly formed Democratic Ilankai Tamil Arasu alliance. Whether this mango will offer a harmonious resolution to their election struggles remains to be seen, but one thing is clear: the tradition of "Mango Diplomacy" is not to be dismissed lightly.

From Jawaharlal Nehru to Manmohan Singh, Indian leaders have trusted in the power of mango diplomacy, using it to accomplish significant political feats. In the 2000s, when the United States banned Indian mango imports, then-President George W. Bush visited New Delhi. Manmohan Singh, determined to resolve the mango matter, personally served Bush a mango, convincing him to lift the ban. In return, Singh agreed to allow the import of Harley-Davidson motorcycles into India, which had been restricted until then. This historical context sheds light on the enduring power of mango diplomacy.

Pakistan, too, has long upheld the tradition of gifting mangoes to foreign leaders. Former Prime Minister Zia-ul-Haq once sent the delicious Rataul mangoes to Indira Gandhi, signaling a desire for improved relations with India. However, after Indira's time, India grew skeptical of these offerings. The attitude became: "You can't bomb us on one hand and send mangoes on the other," and they would turn away from such gestures.

In 2015, then-Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif sent 10 kilos of mangoes each not only to Narendra Modi but also to former Prime Ministers Manmohan Singh, Atal Bihari Vajpayee, and President Pranab Mukherjee. India, though appreciative of the sweet gift, didn't let it soften its stance.

Bangladesh's former Prime Minister Sheikh

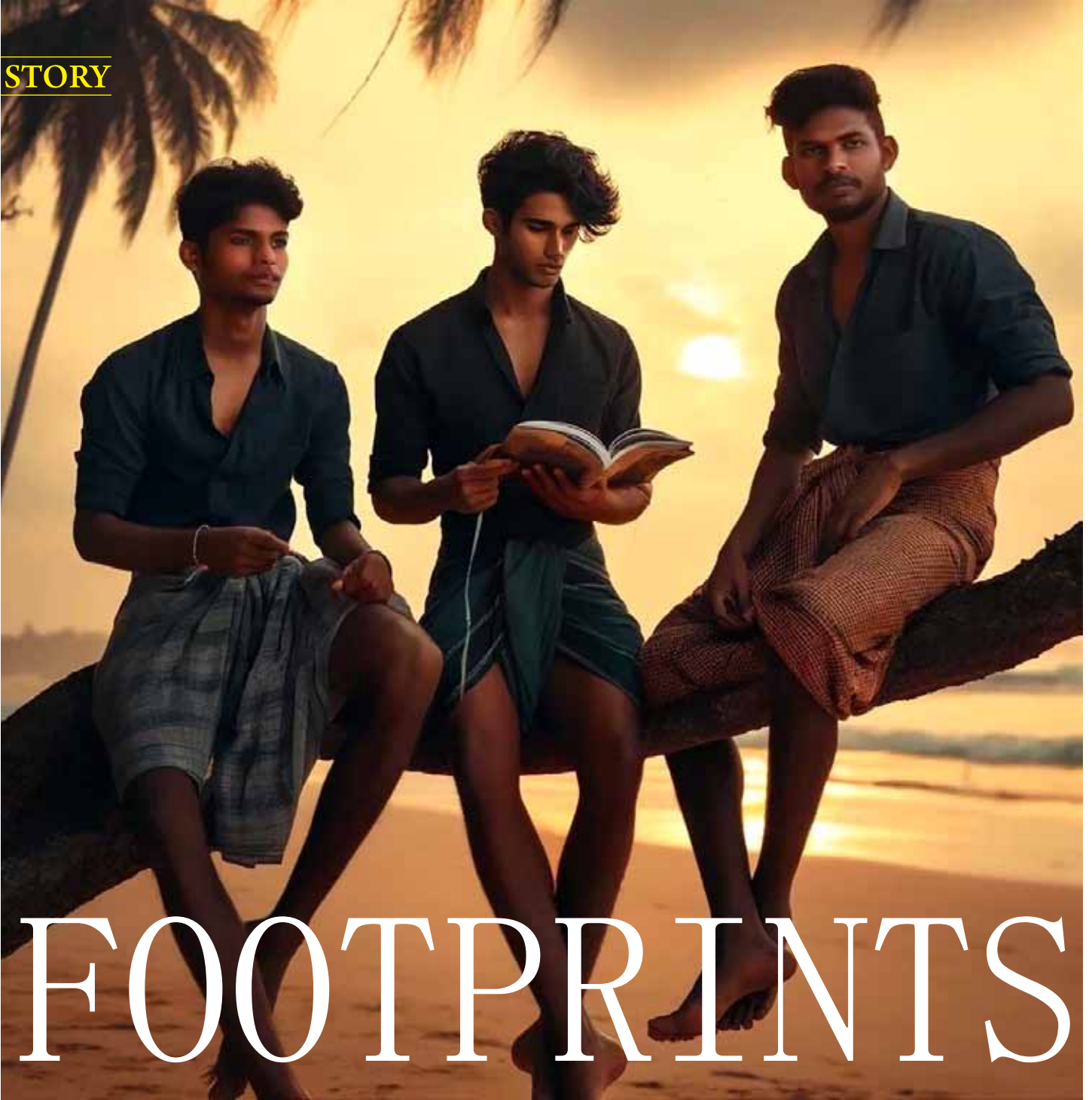


Hasina is another notable fan of mango diplomacy. She would often send mangoes to Indian state leaders. The year after Saravanabhavan gave mangoes to Mahinda, Sheikh Hasina also sent a batch to Mahinda with affection.

While South Asian leaders have exchanged plates of mangoes over the years, such gestures carried much more value when gifted to the West. Western leaders not only received these mangoes with great appreciation, but sometimes even needed lessons on how to eat them! A former UN Secretary-General once remarked, "Indian leaders keep sending me mangoes, but I have no idea how to eat them properly."

Thus, while the newly formed Democratic Ilankai Tamil Arasu alliance or the actions of its members may seem politically insignificant today, the historical and diplomatic value of the mango, their chosen symbol, is undeniable.

Fruit for thought!



FOOTPRINTS

Translated from the original
Tamil short story *tadaṅka!*
(தடங்கள்) from the 1976
collection of short stories
titled *kōṭukaḷum kōlaṅkalum*
(கோடுகளும் கோலங்களும்)
by **Kuppilan Ai.**
Shanmugan

Translated by:
Eluttukkiṇiyavan
(எழுத்துக்கினியவன்)

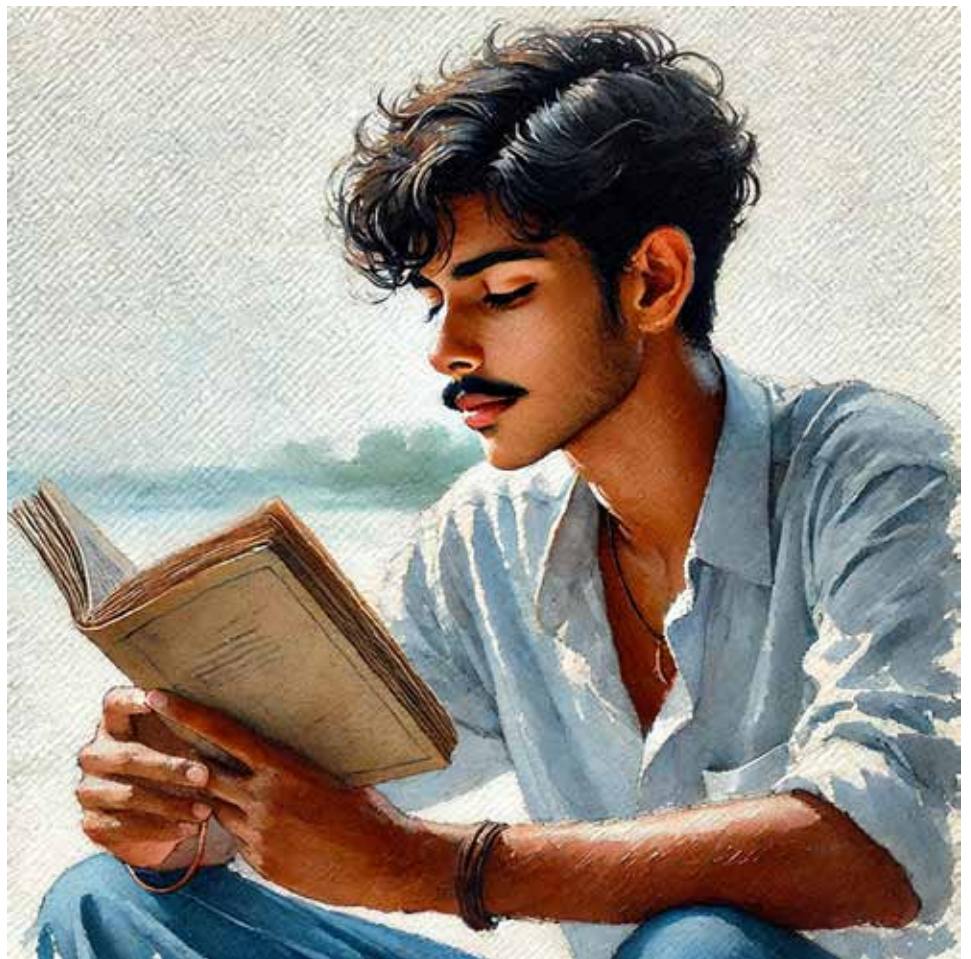
The sky was gradually growing darker. The wind swirled and howled. The blue waves, folding and foaming, crashed against the shore and retreated.

He, along with Nandakumār and Ponnuthurai, was sitting on a branch of a seaside screwpalm tree that dipped towards the sea. He was completely lost in thought. A certain joy bubbled up, breaching the bounds of his heart. A joy that could not be captured in words. He was immersed in those feelings, drawing a tapestry of melodies in his heart, mumbling something in an attempt to give voice to this tapestry. His mind dwelled on the melodic shifts of his mumbling and realized that

those variations exquisitely captured his joy in a way that words could not. Enveloped in his bliss, he forgot his surroundings and became one with nature.

He reflected on the life of a river, born in the mountain, culminating in the sea. When it encountered vertical cliff drops, it fell like streaks of diamonds, shattered like silver beads, and then reunited, with the magical incantation, 'Om,' into a whole. Through the forests bearing flowers, it crawled like a smiling little baby. It bumped and crashed into rocks, swirling and flowing on ferociously. It entered the fields in villages and ran in rings, frolicking. When it reached its point of confluence, it calmly merged into the sea, like a hermit who had given up all worldly bonds and desires.

He imagined the lively movements of the river as melodies. The river flowed within the ups and downs of the melodic variations in his heart. It made music like a waterfall. Bearing flowers, its laughter tinkled. It roared, pounding on to the rocks. Finally, it became silent with the sea. He reveled in his joy. He felt as if he was soaring high in the sky. His body became weightless like a bundle of



cotton wool. He felt the urge to sing aloud. He wanted to roll around on the moist green cover of the screwpalm leaves. He wanted to jump with joy on the moist crystalline sand that reflected the colors of the sky, and dance as the waves retreated back into the sea. Eventually, he felt dizzy and faint.

He held fast to the branch of the screwpalm tree to steady himself. Extricating himself from his poetic reverie, he regarded his friends. Nandakumār was immersed in some story in a Tamil magazine. He was holding the magazine in his right hand, while his left was unconsciously ruffling through his hair. His face was serene. He looked very handsome in this pose. The budding pencil mustache gave him a particular radiance.

Ponⁿnuthurai was sitting at the top of the branch, his feet swinging freely below him. Holding the branch with one hand, he was savoring the smell of a withered screwpalm flower.

Time crawled. A southbound train sped along the seaside tracks. The green screwpalm leaves, dappled by the yellow evening sunlight, shimmered, glittering through the foaming white waves. A young girl of twelve or thirteen, at the cusp of womanhood, was frolicking on the beach, keeping up with the



advance and retreat of the waves.

He delighted in the beauty around him. He thought that the soul of the universe manifests in beauty like this. Musical montages pervaded his heart, like a fresh spring gushing forth; like a vibrant multi-coloured sparkler that pours green, red, blue, and yellow; like a grand park pulsating with life in the Spring; like the flocks of birds that rise from the paddy fields at dusk. They gently caressed his heart and blossomed into mumblings and scattered.

He thought about her, her warmth of her sideways glance, the elegance of her gait, the charm of her smile, the sweet majesty of her voice that emerges from the depth of her heart, the easy grace with which she gets along with everyone.

Overcome with emotion, he suddenly turned to his friends and said:

“The genesis of art is based on the

appreciation of beauty. It is the allure of beauty that enchants the human heart and triggers the emotional outburst that leads to the creation of art. What do you think?”

A soft, gentle smile appeared on Pon̄nuthurai’s face.

Nandakumār lifted his eyes up from his magazine, hesitated for a moment, and then twirling the ring on his right ring finger with his left hand said:

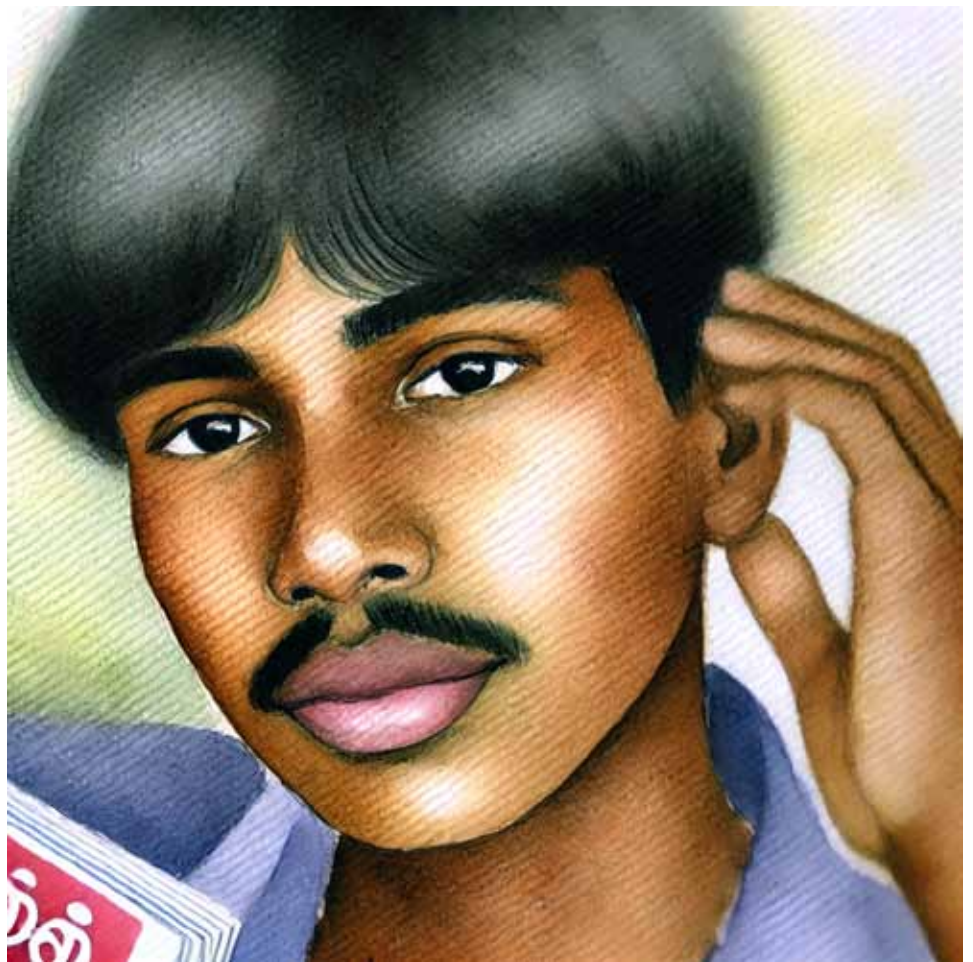
“I cannot accept the argument that beauty is the basis of art. Emotional turmoil and sorrow have also engendered great art!”

He interrupted Nandakumār, “That is true; but it is only when a person is full of joy that their emotions bubble over the brim. Ancient humans produced art only when they were joyful. Was not every art form, be it dance, music, painting, or sculpture, the expression of some emotion? Is it not so, even now?”

“That is exactly what I said. Appreciation of beauty is not the basis of art. The expression of all nine types of emotions, like joy, suffering, sorrow, happiness, and so on, is the basis of art,” Nandakumār said as he flipped through the pages of his magazine, reflecting on what he had just said.

Pon̄nuthurai, who was silent until then, hopped off the branch, planted his feet firmly on the ground and leaned on the branch. He folded his arms across his chest, smiled and said in a booming voice:

“You say that art is the expression of emotions. I daresay that the best art is that which expresses society’s emotions. They are the ones that will hasten social development. They are the ones that will nudge the oppressed, who suffer like slaves under the yoke of society, into reflecting about their plights, and catalyze them into struggling for equality in society. I will say that the laments of those who suffer under the oppressive social structures of today should be the weft of creative art. Just focusing on personal human emotions and sorrows only serve to distract and destroy attempts to reform society.”



“I cannot accept this argument. Neither the struggle for basic needs like food and clothing nor victories in those struggles constitute social development. Meeting all the basic needs and beyond, and the distraction of creature comforts in life, do not constitute an ideal life either. There should be a meaning to life, my friend. Struggling for food and clothing is not the meaning of life.”

Nandakumār was listening quietly to both arguments while looking at the round-faced beauty on the cover of his magazine.

The waves in the sea roared.

Pon̄nuthurai usually roared with righteous indignation like a tumultuous sea whenever he talked about societal ills. But that day, he was very calm. He said, with determination, and a hint of sarcasm, in his voice, “A man who is denied food and clothing must need to think about food and clothing; the meaning of his life is the satisfaction he derives from food and clothing; if he cannot eat, there is no life for him.”

He remained silent, rocking the branch back and forth by rhythmically pushing against a big rock, staring at the horizon.



He was watching the blazing red globe of a sun set into the sea.

Dark clouds were dispersing.

He was deep in thought, pondering the meaning of life. He marveled at the magic of creation, wondering what puzzle lay behind its secret. "How many living beings; How many kinds of grass and weeds; How many trees; How many bushes and creepers; How many birds; How many creatures; How many types of people; How much beauty," he thought, amazed.

'This life is a struggle. The world revolves around the struggle between the strong and the weak. Creation itself has produced the strong and the weak and is spectating the ensuing struggle between them. Sometimes the survival of one depends on the destruction of the other. When destruction leads to sorrow, this entire world glistens in its sadness,' he thought.

Pon̄nuthurai was deep in thought, leaning on the branch with his hands folded across his chest. Nandakumār, holding the rolled-up magazine in his right hand, spread his legs wide, bent over as if he was searching for something on the ground, below his legs.

He looked at them and said softly, "The struggle between the strong and the weak, and the struggle between humanity and nature, are the forces driving the evolution of human civilization; They are authentic and inevitable; How many people lack food, clothing, and other essential needs, and are exploited by others; It is true that creating art about them can make them ponder their fate, and thus lead to their emancipation; But that is no reason to assert that art must be concerned only with their plight. The beauty, sorrow, and the ups and downs of all creation can also be made into art.

He hesitated for a moment, and continued in his soft, refined voice.

“External struggles are inevitable; Art must explore them; But one must not argue that aspects of the internal life of the human mind is off topic for art. The beauty that humans see in nature, the empathy they feel with the naturally deprived and the disadvantaged, their inherent sorrow they see in destruction, their yearning to appreciate beauty, and the resulting anguish and disappointment, all certainly lead to exquisite art. This is what we see in the ruins of ancient civilizations.”

They were silent.

Time crawled.

The silence hung heavily among them.

He waited for them to say something but could see from their facial expressions that they would not. He stared at the expanse of the sky through the gaps in the screwpalm branches towards the northeast.

A yellow electric lamp whimpered on top of the tall pillar that rose from the southern wall of the railway station. Two crows sat on the iron grill supporting the lamp. It looked like a signal post. Behind them, in the railway station building, the roof ridge that ran in the east-west direction was bookended by two sharp, erect poles that reflected the traditional architectural style.

He closed his eyes.

A melody that carried the essence of suffering emerged as mumblings from his mouth.

He reflected on the atrocities of this societal life. This society, which insists on repeatedly wailing loudly about ethics, morality, justice, religions, and beliefs, nevertheless carries

on its unethical, immoral, unjust, faith-destroying march. The bulk of this society has transmogrified into a fertile ground for unethical life, a sacrificial altar for justice and faith. But the righteous sermons continue...

One can be immoral while admitting being immoral or destroy justice and faith while acknowledging doing so. That would be better, he thought.

He was truly enchanted by her beauty, its bewitching charm, and its elegance. He had complete trust in her and his friends. After she declared, “You and I are one. The essence of my life is in living it with you,” he had wholeheartedly allowed her to socialize with his friends.

She could have told him, “I like your friend better than you.”

He could have tried to make me understand, “Machān, she loves me – I love her, too.”

He mumbled to himself, ‘When I see morality and faith being destroyed, I am overcome with emotion, anger, self-pity, and hurt.’

Through the screwpalm branches, the night smiled where the sea and the sky united on the western horizon. Dark clouds gathered, chasing one another.

They jumped off the screwpalm branch and walked away.

He followed his friends, intently watching their footprints forming in the moist beach sand; He walked mumbling that painful melody.

Voice of the Reader

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

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

Have something to say about what you've read? Do you feel a different pulse on an issue? We invite you to be a part of the dialogue. Your insights enrich our content and bridge the gap between the writer's desk and the reader's heart.

Reach out to us at [*hellojaffnamonitor@gmail.com*](mailto:hellojaffnamonitor@gmail.com)

Let's craft a narrative that resonates with every corner of our community.

Your Voice, Our Pages

Are you a budding writer with a story to tell? Perhaps an observant reader with a fresh perspective on a burning issue? Or a student eager to make your voice heard beyond the classroom walls? Whatever your background, JaffnaMonitor welcomes you.

We understand that the most vibrant ideas often come from unexpected places. That's why we're opening our pages to passionate contributors like you. Whether it's a piece of investigative journalism, a heartwarming personal essay, a thought-provoking opinion piece, or even a poetic reflection — we want to hear from you.

Every article we receive undergoes a careful review to ensure it aligns with our standards of quality and relevance. Remember, it's not about the stance but the substance. Irrespective of political leanings or backgrounds, if your work resonates with our values, there's a place for it in JaffnaMonitor.

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

CONTACT US

We value your feedback, questions, and insights. Feel free to get in touch with us via the methods below.

Email : hellojaffnamonitor@gmail.com

Phone : +94715418220

Editorial Inquiries : For story pitches, press releases, and other editorial matters,
please email hellojaffnamonitor@gmail.com

Advertising Inquiries : Interested in advertising with us?
Contact our advertising department at hellojaffnamonitor@gmail.com