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UNAFRAID AND UNBOWED



**North and East Bid Farewell
to Rhetoric Tamil Nationalism,
Embrace a Unified Sri Lanka**

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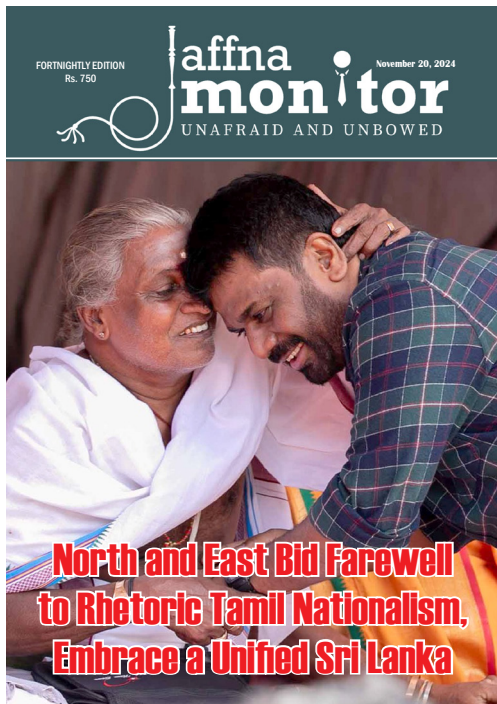
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I Have a Dream



Sri Lanka has undergone a seismic political transformation unparalleled in its modern chronicles. The Parliamentary Elections of 2024 will be immortalized as the epoch when the populace obliterated the deeply entrenched ramparts of ethnicity, religion, caste, and class. In a thunderous proclamation, they affirmed with unyielding conviction: We are Sri Lankans.

For decades, Jaffna has been regarded as the citadel of Tamil nationalism, with a longstanding history of electing exclusively Tamil parties. Yet, in a tectonic shift, 80,830 votes—a remarkable 24.85% of the electorate—catapulted the Sri Lankan nationalist National People's Power (NPP) to the forefront, making it the leading force on Jaffna's electoral list and securing three Members of Parliament from this historically symbolic soil. A similar trend emerged across other Tamil-speaking districts, with the notable exception of Batticaloa, marking an unprecedented realignment of political allegiances.

The winds of change blew even stronger in Trincomalee, where a young Tamil comrade, Arun Hemachandra, an indefatigable JVP volunteer—achieved a historic victory. His triumph was not anchored in ethnic loyalties but was instead secured through the overwhelming support of Sinhala and Muslim voters. Given that the electorate had already elected an ITAK MP from the same district in this election, it was mathematically impossible for the Tamil vote alone to secure another Tamil MP for Trincomalee. It is, therefore, clear that Sinhala and Muslim voters played a decisive role in elevating Arun Hemachandra as their Member of Parliament, heralding a remarkable shift towards inclusive and collaborative politics.

But the crown jewel of this election lies far to the south, in Matara—a district predominantly Sinhala, with only a minimal Tamil presence. Here, history was made as Saroja

Savithri Paulraj, a JVP Central Committee member, became the first Tamil Member of Parliament elected from the Southern Province. Backed exclusively by Sinhala votes, Saroja's victory stands as a profound testament to the evolving ethos of the Sinhala heartland. Joining her from the same district is Arkam Ilyas, a Muslim candidate under the NPP banner, further signaling the inclusive and pluralistic future Sri Lanka is poised to embrace.

In the upcountry estates, a quiet revolution unfolded as Krishnan Kaleychelvi from Nuwara Eliya and Ambika Samuel from Badulla—true children of the grassroots—emerged to represent the Malayaha Tamil community. In stark contrast to the elite gatekeepers of their community, who studied in English-medium opulent boarding schools in Tamil Nadu and whose politics often reek of extravagance and Tamil cinema theatrics, these leaders embody the sweat, resilience, and toil of estate laborers.

Sri Lankans have accomplished what many believed to be unthinkable—they have transcended deep-seated divisions to elect a government driven by collective aspirations rather than archaic allegiances. Yet, the lesson for the NPP is unequivocally stark: this very electorate once propelled the SLPP to unparalleled heights in 2020, bestowing it with 6,853,693 votes, 59.09% of the mandate, and a commanding 145 seats. Fast forward four years, the same populace dismantled that dominance, slashing the SLPP's support to a meager 3.14% of the vote and a humiliating three seats. The message is crystal clear: power resides with the people, and they will not tolerate betrayal or hubris. Their trust is a privilege—precious yet perilously fragile. Tamper with their faith, and the fall will be unforgiving.

As we stand at this juncture of hope and history, I invoke the immortal words of Martin Luther King Jr., reimagined for our beloved Sri Lanka:

"I have a dream that one day, from the tip of Jaffna to the bottom of Matara, little Tamil boys and girls will join hands with Sinhala, Muslim, and Burgher boys and girls as sisters and brothers.

I have a dream that my children will one day live in a nation where they will not be judged by the race, religion, or caste of their ancestors but by the content of their character.

I have a dream that one day, in the lush estates of Nuwara Eliya, the bustling streets of Colombo, and the serene shores of Batticaloa, every Sri Lankan will be free to dream, thrive, and contribute without fear of discrimination.

I have a dream that the wounds of the past will no longer bleed, and the scars of war will transform into symbols of resilience and reconciliation."

I have a dream!

In the Spirit of Reconciliation,

கணியன் பூங்குன்றன்
Kaniyan Pungundran
Editor-Jaffna Monitor

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North and East Bid Farewell to Rhetoric Tamil Nationalism, Embrace a Unified Sri Lanka



Tamil girls at President Anura Kumara Dissanayake's election rally.



BY:

Kaniyan Pungundran

கணியன் பூங்குன்றன்

On November 13, 1989, Patabendi Don Jinadasa Nandasiri Wijeweera—better known as Rohana Wijeweera, the fiery founder of the Janatha Vimukthi Peramuna (JVP) and an ardent extreme-left nationalist—met a brutal and tragic end. The mastermind behind two bloody insurrections, in 1971 and 1987, Wijeweera was subjected to inhumane torture before being executed in cold blood on the Colombo Golf Course. Some accounts even suggest that when he was cremated at a

crematorium near Devi Balika Girls' School, he was still half-alive.

Exactly 35 years and one day later, the National People's Power (NPP)—a political alliance led by the JVP, whose members still regard Rohana Wijeweera as their ideological father—achieved a historic and groundbreaking victory. In an unprecedented feat, the NPP secured 159 seats and 61.56% of the national vote, surpassing all expectations. This election marked a watershed moment in Sri Lanka's political history, as it was the first time a party achieved a two-thirds majority in Parliament under the proportional representation system.





Despite securing only 42% of the vote in the presidential election less than two months ago, the NPP experienced a remarkable surge in support during this brief period. Moreover, the NPP engineered a dramatic shift, reducing the main opposition, the Samagi Jana Balawegaya (SJB), to just 40 seats.

Nationally, out of 160 electoral divisions, the National People's Power (NPP) secured victories in all but 9 divisions. What was most striking was the NPP's remarkable performance in the Tamil-speaking areas of Sri Lanka.

A Fatal Blow to Tamil Nationalism

In the context of Tamil Eelam and Tamil nationalism, the Vaddukoddai Resolution stands mighty and profoundly symbolic, adopted on May 14, 1976, by the Tamil United

Liberation Front under the leadership of S. J. V. Chelvanayakam, with key proponents like Appapillai Amirthalingam in Vaddukoddai, Jaffna. It called for the creation of an independent Tamil Eelam, outright rejecting the Sri Lankan state.

This was a watershed moment in the modern history of Sri Lanka, marking the first formal demand for a separate state for the Sri Lankan Tamils. Before this, Tamil demands were limited to devolution of power or power-sharing within a federal system. One could argue that the resolution, coupled with the state-sponsored violence against Sri Lankan Tamils in 1977 and 1983, fueled the rise of militancy and the ensuing two-and-a-half decades of bloody civil war.

After 48 years, 6 months, 2,530 weeks, and 6

days since the adoption of the Vaddukoddai Resolution, the Vaddukoddai electoral division has been won by a Sri Lankan nationalist party.

While the JVP identifies as a Marxist-Leninist movement, its historical trajectory reveals a staunch Sri Lankan nationalist stance, one that firmly rejected even the idea of devolution of power to Tamils. The party also engaged in bloody armed resistance against the Indo-Sri

nationalism. Furthermore, the NPP claimed 3 out of the 6 seats in the Jaffna electoral district, marking the first time since Sri Lanka's independence in 1948 that a non-Tamil party has triumphed in the Tamil-majority Jaffna.

"This is the crown of our victory," declared Bimal Rathnayake, a prominent JVP member and newly appointed Minister of Transport, Highways, Ports, and Civil Aviation, reflecting on the NPP's historic success in Jaffna. As



Lankan Accord of 1987, which established the 13th Amendment to Sri Lanka's Constitution. This Amendment created the system of Provincial Councils, promising greater devolution of land and police powers to Tamil-majority areas.

Not only in the Vaddukoddai electoral division, but across the 11 electoral divisions in the Jaffna District, the National People's Power (NPP) secured victory in 8 divisions. Remarkably, many of these wins occurred in areas long regarded as strongholds of Tamil

news broke of Jaffna being captured by the NPP, Rathnayake emphasized the significance of the moment in a post on X (formerly Twitter): "In Sri Lankan history, we have seen leaders who were loved by either the North or the South. However, for the first time, we are witnessing a leader—AKD—who is cherished by people from the North, East, South, and West. He is a leader embraced by all Sri Lankans, regardless of religion or ethnicity."

In Sri Lanka's Tamil-majority regions, the NPP's victory extended well beyond Jaffna,



sweeping nearly all districts across the North and East. The sole exception was Batticaloa in the Eastern Province. Notably, the Vanni electoral district—including Mullaitivu, home to Mullivaikkal, the site where the bloody civil war ended and the LTTE leader met his demise—also fell to the NPP in a poignant twist of irony.

In Batticaloa, the Illankai Tamil Arasu Kachchi (ITAK) retained its hold on the Kalkudah and Paddiruppu electoral divisions. However, the NPP still left its mark by winning the Batticaloa electoral division.

A closer analysis at the electoral division level reveals a remarkable shift in voting patterns across the North and East. Out of the 24 divisions in these regions, the National People's Power (NPP) emerged victorious in 15. Overall, the NPP garnered 26.75% of the total votes in the North and East. For context, in the 2020 parliamentary election, the Tamil

National Alliance (TNA)—widely regarded as the torchbearer of Tamil nationalism—secured 27.58% of the vote in these same regions.

If we consider the LTTE's once-claimed Tamil Eelam, encompassing the districts of Jaffna, Kilinochchi, Mullaitivu, Vavuniya, Mannar, Trincomalee, Batticaloa, Ampara, and Puttalam, the NPP achieved a staggering victory, securing 18 out of the 36 parliamentary seats. Notably, an additional 6 seats were won by non-Tamil parties.

The NPP's victory extended beyond the North and East, decisively winning in other Tamil-speaking areas, including the hill country spanning the Central, Southern, and Uva provinces. The results delivered a significant blow to traditional parties representing the Malaiyaha Tamil community. Notably, the NPP dominated the Nuwara Eliya district, famous for Sri Lanka's iconic tea estates. In this region the NPP secured five seats and

captured nearly 42% of the vote share.

"Tamil political parties, long reliant on emotional nationalist slogans and manipulative rhetoric, have operated almost entirely in the realm of self-interest, betraying the very people who elected them. From secret dealings with the government—whether for bar permits or other personal favors—they now face the consequences of failing to critically assess their political trajectory," noted a political observer.

"They thought they could fool the Tamils forever," another observer remarked, quoting Bob Marley's famous lyric: "You can fool some people sometimes, but you can't fool all the people all the time." The observer added, "For them, it's too late even for introspection."

AKD: THE TRUE THESIYA THALIVAR (NATIONAL LEADER)

The sheer popularity and admiration for Sri Lanka's current President, Anura Kumara Dissanayake (fondly known as AKD), can only be captured through a Rajinikanth punchline from Sivaji: The Boss: Pera kettaale chumma athiruthilla! (Doesn't everything quake at the mere mention of my name?).

AKD, in every sense, has won the hearts of people across Sri Lanka, transcending barriers of caste, religion, ethnicity, and social status.

In Jaffna, where the National People's Power (NPP) secured three out of six MPs, voters often couldn't even name the NPP candidates. It was the magnetic love and admiration for AKD himself that drew their votes. Many voters, when asked by Jaffna Monitor about their choice, openly admitted they didn't know the candidates' names.

Take my fish vendor Akka, for example. When she told me she planned to vote for the NPP, I asked her which candidate she would give her preferential vote to. She shot back: "Is that what matters? I'm voting for President Thampi's (younger brother's) party!"

When I pressed her on why, her response was as simple as it was profound: "He looks like us—hardworking, honest, and genuine."

This genuine, unpretentious connection is what makes AKD stand out. They see him as one of their own, someone they can relate to, almost like family. AKD's journey from humble beginnings to the highest office in the country is a story that deeply resonates with the people, inspiring hope and trust in a way few leaders can.

From Promises to Action: NPP's Victory and the Road Ahead

On election day, Sri Lankan President Anura Kumara Dissanayake remarked that he anticipated "strong representation" in Parliament, adding that achieving a two-thirds majority was not a necessity. However, the voters had other plans.

This historic victory marks a seismic shift in the country's political landscape and positions President Dissanayake with the unprecedented advantage of governing without the need for allies or coalition partners to pass legislation. The NPP has already pledged to hold a referendum on drafting a new constitution, signaling its intent to fundamentally reshape the country's political and governance framework. This moment, brimming with possibility, could redefine Sri Lanka's future. But will these promises be fulfilled? That remains to be seen.

Faith in AKD: North and East Await Action on Promises

A few days before Sri Lankans headed to the polls, AKD addressed a fully packed election meeting in Passaiyoor, Jaffna. Speaking to an enthusiastic crowd, the President acknowledged the changing political landscape on the peninsula. "We received just over 27,000 votes in Jaffna during the presidential election. This was because we did not convey our message effectively to the Tamil-speaking people. It was also because we

did not work as hard in the North as we did in the [Sinhala-dominated] South," he admitted.

He continued, "Your turnout today shows that you are willing to place your trust in us. I invite all of you, the people of Jaffna, to join me in this effort to change the political culture of our country."

During his address, President Dissanayake made a bold and transformative promise: lands seized by the State during the war with the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) would be returned to their rightful owners.



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This commitment tackles one of the most pressing and long-standing demands of the Northern people.

Earlier, during a speech in Vavuniya, he declared his intention to end the prolonged detention of Tamil political prisoners, stating firmly, "According to the advice of the Attorney General, we will move forward with the release of these prisoners." His manifesto echoed these sentiments, pledging the abolition of oppressive laws, including the Prevention of Terrorism Act (PTA).

Further, Dissanayake promised during his campaign to conduct provincial council elections within a year and vowed to abolish the executive presidency, a long-debated and highly contentious issue.

Although he affirmed his party's support for implementing the 13th Amendment during a discussion with the Illankai Tamil Arasu Kachchi (ITAK), he notably refrained from making such a declaration in public. Instead, at a recent event in Jaffna, AKD clarified his stance with characteristic candor, stating, "I am not here to barter the 13th Amendment in exchange for Tamil votes."

Now, with the overwhelming faith placed in him by the people of the North and East, it is time for President Dissanayake to translate these promises into action. Importantly, neither AKD nor his party requires external support to fulfill these commitments. With a commanding two-thirds majority in Parliament, they possess the power to enact transformative change independently.

'Our Path Was Forced Upon Us: Tilvin Silva on Rewriting the JVP's Legacy

In an interview with The Hindu, Tilvin Silva, General Secretary of the JVP, challenged prevailing narratives surrounding the party's tumultuous past. "There is a wrong perception because our history was written by those who defeated us. Our path was not one we willingly chose; it was forced upon us," he explained.

"It was not [our] action, but a reaction from our end. If the [State's] repression was armed, so was [our] response."

Looking to the future, Silva expressed hope for a transformative moment in Sri Lanka's political landscape. He underscored that the current context provides an opportunity to rewrite the narrative. "We want to tell this story, not with words, but through our actions," he asserted. "The present context gives us the chance to do that."

Sri Lanka's Moment of Reckoning: Historic Challenges, Monumental Stakes
Sri Lanka, where it stands now, can only be described as being at a historic juncture. The country is grappling with its worst economic crisis since independence—or perhaps even earlier—and the sweeping social and political changes we are witnessing are intrinsically tied to this crisis.

"Had the economic crisis not unfolded, who would have thought the NPP would rise to power or that the North and East would align with a national party?" an observer mused.

With the poverty rate soaring to 25.9% and



the World Bank projecting a modest 2.2% economic growth for 2024, Sri Lanka's fragility is evident. The immediate challenge lies in ensuring access to essential goods and services for its people. How the new government navigates these turbulent waters will not only test its resilience but also define the nation's trajectory. The stakes are monumental, and the people's expectations are even higher.

AKD has pledged to rewrite the narrative: to repay the country's debts, transform Sri Lanka's entrenched political culture, erase the divisions along ethnic lines to unify as Sri Lankans, and hold corrupt figures from past regimes accountable. These promises have struck a chord with a population yearning for justice and stability. Yet, they set a formidable bar, one that will demand vision, grit, and relentless determination to achieve.

The road ahead is steep, the burden heavy, but Sri Lanka's moment for reinvention has arrived. The question remains: will it rise to the occasion?

Achchuthan's Empire: Unmasking the LTTE's Covert Revival Network

Part-2

The Double Life of Pugalenthai Master:



BY:

Jaffna Monitor Investigation Team



Pugalenthai Master

An essential ally in Achchuthan's (Sivarasa Pirunthapan) network is his brother-in-law, Pugalenthai Master, a former intelligence leader within the LTTE. He earned the title "Master" by teaching LTTE fighters, as it was customary within the LTTE to refer to anyone who conducted training or classes for its fighters as "Master."

Pugalenthai Master, born as Pugalavan, is the elder brother of Sakalya Pirunthapan, whose LTTE alias was Rathika. Rathika, a dedicated second-year medical student at the Tamil Eelam Medical College, underwent training within LTTE ranks before marrying Achchuthan on October 4,



Rathika

Sources close to the couple reveal that the marriage was arranged, with Achchuthan insisting on marrying a woman from the Vellalar caste, the same as his own. This decision was influenced by both family expectations and his strict adherence to caste traditions. Both Achchuthan and his father, Sivarasa—known for their strong caste views—were determined that his bride would align with specific caste standards. Reportedly, this insistence stemmed from the fact that Achchuthan's elder brother and one of his younger brothers had married women considered slightly lower in caste status than Vellalar, a situation that had allegedly caused some discontent within the family.

Pugalenthi Master, born as Pugalavan, hails from the villages of Vimankaman and Urumpirai. Born in the mid-1970s to

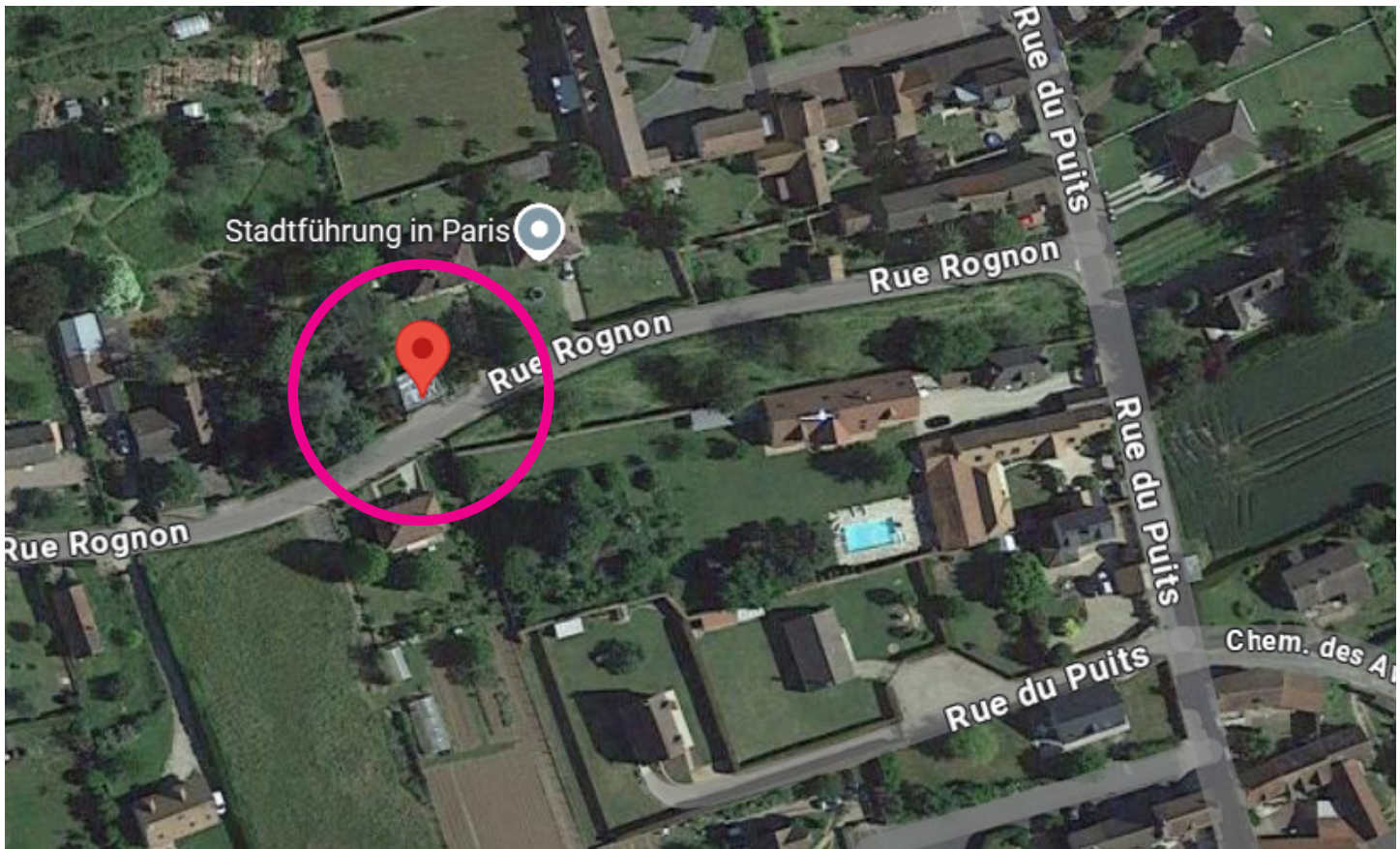
Thevarajah, an apothecary, Pugalavan began his education at Mahajana College, where he studied until his O-Levels before transferring to St. John's College. His family has long-standing connections with the LTTE.

His elder brother, Kesavan, played a significant role in the movement by working with the LTTE's bank and its radio station, Pulikalin Kural. Known as "Pulikalin Kural" Viswalingam, Kesavan was renowned for his



Muthamizhchelvi

political commentary and his participation in political debates aired on Pulikalin Kural. Another sister, Muthamizhchelvi, is the only sibling in the family who did not join the LTTE. She resides in London with her husband, Vithuran, and works at the Tesco supermarket pharmacy on Southend Road, Woodford Green, IG8 8GE, United Kingdom. Meanwhile, her sister Sakalya, who is married to Achchuthan (Pirunthapan), lives in France at 6A Rue Rognon, Saint Pierre d'Autils, La



Exact location of Achchuthan's house in France



Achchuthan's residence in France

d'Autils-Longueville (Eure).

However, Pugalenth Master and Sakalya never revealed their close familial relationship during their time in the Vanni or abroad, as confirmed by credible former LTTE sources who spoke to Jaffna Monitor.

A former LTTE fighter who worked closely with Pugalenth Master for several years shared with Jaffna Monitor that he once believed Pugalenth Master was fully transparent with him. He recalled seeing Pugalenth Master and Sakalya together on multiple occasions, particularly around the time of the arrangements for Sakalya's marriage to Achchuthan. Despite this, Pugalenth Master never disclosed that she was his sister.

Another source who knew Achchuthan well informed Jaffna Monitor that neither Achchuthan nor his wife ever publicly acknowledged their close familial connection to Pugalenth Master. The source described them as "நெருப்புறுகள்" (a colloquial Tamil term meaning "very cunning people").

Sources indicate that Sakalya, born on September 24, 1976, in Pavakkulam, Vavuniya, was the first in her family to join the LTTE, likely around 1992–93 during her O-Level studies. Her elder brother, Pugalavan followed suit during the Jaffna displacement in 1995. He initially worked under Gnanavel, the then-head of LTTE intelligence operations in Jaffna, and later under Pradeep, who oversaw intelligence activities in the region.

Credible sources report that Pugalenth Master eventually became part of Mathavan Master's team, handling veliyaga velai—special external operations—primarily based in Colombo, where he assumed increasingly



Pugalenth Master

significant responsibilities.

Within LTTE ranks, Pugalenth was known as an intellectual and an avid reader. He contributed to the intelligence wing's educational initiatives, editing several publications for the unit. Credible sources within the LTTE describe him as an expert in managing and planting double agents—a skill he later passed on to others in a series of training sessions. One source who attended these sessions in the mid-2000s recalled Pugalenth's meticulous approach, especially in his lectures on handling double agents. Those who knew Pugalenth personally often remarked on his bookish nature. A source who met him on multiple occasions described his room as perpetually filled with books, saying it "looked more like a library than a room."



Pradeep



Madavan master

Pugalenthi's Betrayal in Aasikulam: The Inside Story of Deception

Between January and February 2009, under direct orders from LTTE intelligence chief Pottu Amman and LTTE leader Prabhakaran, an elite team of Black Tiger commandos embarked on a high-stakes mission from Pudukkudiyiruppu, moving through Nedunkeni and into Aasikulam in Vavuniya. The exact objective of their mission remains shrouded in secrecy, with conflicting reports hinting at a planned strike on a significant military or public site in the South.

Despite Aasikulam being under government control, its proximity to LTTE-held areas and the cover provided by dense surrounding forests enabled LTTE presence. One Black Tiger operative involved in the mission confided to Jaffna Monitor that, from Aasikulam, it was possible to navigate westward along forest paths leading ultimately to Colombo.

This elite unit was commanded by Pugalenthi Master, with Nimalan, another intelligence leader. According to a reliable source, Pugalenthi Master and Nimalan had trained these fighters in Black Tiger camps.

By the end of February 2009, the team was fully embedded in Aasikulam. Yet, despite their preparations, the anticipated

strike never materialized. They remained in position until the final days of the war in May 2009, awaiting orders that would never come.

The events that unfolded in the forests of Aasikulam remain etched in memory as a profound betrayal for the LTTE fighters involved. Members of the operation confided to Jaffna Monitor that Pugalenthi's behavior had grown increasingly suspicious, stirring unease among his squad. One fighter recalled that Pugalenthi often spoke on the phone with someone overseas—a contact whose identity was unclear at the time but is now believed to have been his brother-in-law, Achchuthan, with whom he was likely plotting his own escape.

Tensions between Pugalenthi and his team soon came to a

head. One fighter recounted that Pugalenthai frequently ignored essential security protocols, refusing to wear camouflage uniforms and leaving food wrappers, like biscuit packaging, scattered around. Another fighter recalled that Pugalenthai, known for his love of food, even insisted on having kottu roti brought from Vavuniya by a fighter who had traveled there from Aasikulam for intelligence work. This lack of discretion became a serious concern, culminating in a near altercation with one of the fighters over his cavalier attitude.

One source confided to Jaffna Monitor that, while the squad suspected Pugalenthai might be up to something, they never imagined he would abandon them entirely. Yet, within a few days, that's precisely what he did.

One evening, under the cover of dusk, Pugalenthai excused himself, pistol in hand, claiming he needed to go to the forest for a toilet break. Shortly afterward, Karvannan, a courageous fighter from the Sea Tigers, noticed suspicious

movement in the direction where Pugalenthai had gone.

Concerned for Pugalenthai Master's safety, Karvannan informed the squad that he would check on him. As he approached the area, Karvannan spotted Sri Lankan Army soldiers moving into position. A skirmish erupted, and Karvannan was killed by a direct shot to the chest. The LTTE squad was forced to retreat, quickly relocating to avoid further casualties. The army later recovered Karvannan's body, but the squad had no trace of Pugalenthai's whereabouts.

Anxiety within the team escalated, turning to full-blown suspicion when they received a call from Pugalenthai himself, claiming he was safe and asking them to meet at a specific location. Meanwhile, an intelligence unit from Vanni cautioned them against reconnecting with Pugalenthai, warning he might either be in army custody or, given his expertise in training double agents, could have become one himself. Remaining fighters like Nimalan, Muhilan, Thamilselvan, and others grew increasingly wary, sensing the chilling possibility of betrayal.

A fighter from his squad told Jaffna Monitor that when they pressed Pugalenthai Master over the phone for details about his escape, he claimed he had taken a Sinhala family hostage at gunpoint in Aasikulam and was now living



Achchuthan

with them in Vavuniya town, using them as cover. To his comrades, the story seemed implausible. As one of them pointed out, "Aasikulam is primarily a Tamil area; there wouldn't be Sinhala families there. How could he have taken them hostage, and even if he had, how could one man with a single pistol control them and live in Vavuniya without raising suspicion?"

A former LTTE fighter from the squad confided to Jaffna Monitor that he believes Pugalenthii was either captured by the army or orchestrated his escape with their assistance. Another squad member, now living abroad, speculated that Achchuthan and his brother, Ilankeswaran—both known for their sharp cunning—may have facilitated Pugalenthii's escape by leveraging military contacts.

During peacetime, Ilankeswaran operated covertly in Colombo for the LTTE, playing a role in the movement's procurement activities. A credible LTTE source informed Jaffna Monitor that Ilankeswaran even misappropriated funds during these operations—a story in itself. Given his time in Colombo, he likely established connections with authorities and military personnel, contacts he may have leveraged to ensure Pugalenthii's safe passage.

After Pugalenthii's disappearance, the remaining fighters found themselves in a dire financial crisis, as he had been responsible for managing their funds. One squad member confided to Jaffna Monitor that at one point, they were starving, left without any food. What followed was truly heartbreaking. As the war drew to its brutal conclusion in Mullivaikkal,



Ilankeswaran (left) with a Sri Lankan doctor, his close relative, on a flight to Paris en route to Lourdes on 19th September 2023 (we have hidden the face of the doctor intentionally).

the fighters lost all contact with their command structure. Some surrendered to the ICRC, a few were killed by the Sri Lankan Army, and others managed to escape. A source revealed to Jaffna Monitor that some female fighters were killed by the army, their bodies later dragged away—a final, harrowing end for those who had once fought with fierce loyalty.

Sources reveal that, with the help of his brother-in-law Achchuthan, Pugalenth Master meticulously planned his escape route, moving from Vavuniya to Mannar and then to Tamil Nadu by boat, where his family had also sought refuge after fleeing the war. For a few years, Pugalenth Master lived quietly in India, but he was far from inactive. Credible sources indicate that during this time, he attempted to orchestrate several attacks in Sri Lanka from afar with Achchuthan's support.

The 2014 LTTE revival attempt stands out as one of the most serious and coordinated efforts to resurrect the group since its military defeat in May 2009. This operation was led by Suntharalingam Gajatheeban (alias Theiveegan), along with Navaratnam Navaneethan (alias Appan) and Ponniah Selvanayagam Kajeepan (alias Gobi). All three were ultimately killed in a Sri Lankan military operation. Credible sources within former LTTE ranks informed Jaffna Monitor that Achchuthan, his brother Ilankeswaran, and his brother-in-law Pugalenth Master played a crucial role in the attempt. (We will delve further into this in our upcoming issues.)

Another notable incident came to light in 2016 when Sri Lankan authorities seized a suicide jacket in Chavakacheri and arrested several LTTE operatives linked to the plot. Military



Suicide jacket seized by Sri Lankan authorities in Chavakachcheri, 2016.

officials claimed that the jacket belonged to Pugalenth Master and was intended for a high-profile assassination. Sources within the LTTE intelligence wing confirmed that this very jacket had indeed once been owned by Pugalenth during his operations in Sri Lanka.

Sources say that from India, Pugalenth Master embarked on a carefully orchestrated journey, traveling through Malaysia and other countries before ultimately reaching London. This escape route, primarily facilitated by his brother-in-law Achchuthan, allowed Pugalenth to evade capture and establish a new life in hiding. Now settled in London, his transition was further smoothed by the support of his sister, Muthamizhchelvi Vithuran. Muthamizhchelvi quietly assists Pugalenth as he adjusts to life in the shadows from his base in London.

A former squad member from the Aasikulam forest confided to Jaffna Monitor that he is still searching for Pugalenth Master. Knowing that Pugalenth now resides in London, he expressed his determination to confront him and demand answers to unresolved questions:

"Are you the double agent you warned us about? How did you manage to escape from Aasikulam to Vavuniya? How could you live undetected in an army-controlled area by supposedly holding a Sinhala family at gunpoint? And while others in your squad faced death, how did you secure a path to safety? Was it your brother-in-law, Achchuthan, who orchestrated your escape by passing information to military intelligence?"

He went on to say he would confront Pugalenth with these நாக்கை புடுங்குற (piercing) questions. Although some squad members eventually escaped, their retreat was described as நாங்கள் அல்லோலகல்லோலப்பட்டுத்தான் தப்பினோம் ("we escaped in utter chaos")—in stark

contrast to Pugalenth, whose departure seemed deliberate and unscathed.

A former fighter posed a pointed question to Jaffna Monitor: "If Pugalenth Master believes he has done nothing wrong, why is he in hiding?" This fighter suggests that Pugalenth fully understands the weight of his actions. Another source, who once worked closely with Pugalenth, revealed that many former LTTE intelligence members and associates have tried reaching out to him for a conversation. Yet, Pugalenth remains as elusive as ever, carefully avoiding those who seek answers.

Pugalenth's marriage to a woman from Puthukudiyiruppu—a civilian uninvolved with the LTTE—was discreetly arranged by a fellow fighter, Muhunthan. While our sources confirm that his wife and children now reside in India, Pugalenth Master has carefully woven a narrative suggesting he and his wife are estranged or divorced. However, credible sources close to the family suggest otherwise, asserting that they remain very much together.

Pugalenth Master resides in the UK without proper visa documentation, initially staying with his sister, Muthamizhchelvi, before relocating to a separate residence. Credible sources reveal that Achchuthan has traveled to the UK multiple times to meet his brother-in-law, with Pugalenth playing a pivotal role as a key strategist within Achchuthan's intricate web of deception.

Nimalan's saga

There's an intriguing story about Nimalan, one of the key figures in the Aasikulam operation. A native of Vallipuvanam, Puthukudiyiruppu, Nimalan was a highly skilled member of the LTTE intelligence wing who primarily operated undercover in Colombo, often in the heart of enemy territory. His covert work came



Nimalan lighting an oil lamp at a pro-LTTE event in Germany, 2013.

to an abrupt end in 1994 when he was arrested. However, he was released in 2001 during the ceasefire period.

Remarkably, despite his past capture, Nimalan was once again sent back to Colombo on clandestine assignments under orders from LTTE intelligence chief Pottu Amman.

Sources shared with Jaffna Monitor that Nimalan's primary mission was to closely monitor Tamil National Alliance (TNA) MPs who had been handpicked and backed by the LTTE. During the time when the TNA held a formidable 22 seats in Parliament, it was Nimalan who kept a watchful eye on their movements, discreetly tracking their activities and loyalties. He reported their every move to LTTE leaders in Vanni.

Like Pugalenthai Master, Nimalan also managed

to escape from Aasikulam, navigating through Mannar and eventually reaching India by boat. Using his contacts at TamilNet, he successfully made his way to Germany as early as 2012. Credible evidence obtained by Jaffna Monitor suggests that, once settled in Germany, Nimalan began reaching out to his former intelligence wing comrades during 2012 and 2013—many of whom had surrendered and undergone rehabilitation. Calling from a German number, he attempted to rally support for a new venture. However, his efforts proved unsuccessful, failing to win over any of his former associates.

Now residing in Germany, Nimalan has emerged as one of the central figures among the remnants of the LTTE's intelligence wing. A former LTTE intelligence operative, both amused and bitter, confided to Jaffna Monitor: "The intelligence leaders who abandoned



LTTE Intelligence Wing Chief Pottu Amman, with Charles, LTTE Chief of Military Intelligence, appearing on the left.

fighters in Sri Lanka and escaped like cowards have regrouped in Europe, now establishing a shadow LTTE intelligence network." Questioning their motives, he added, "It's likely they're either busy collecting money from the diaspora or simply making unnecessary noise—like the Tamil proverb says, 'wearing silangai at the waist during intimate moments.'" He implied that these former intelligence leaders, who failed to act when it mattered most, are now making irrelevant noises without meaningful action, much like the misplaced clang of silangai.

At the helm of this new network is Thennavan, a former LTTE intelligence leader known for his skill in smuggling banned goods into LTTE-controlled areas, often by bribing Sri Lankan officials. With the recent passing of

Vinayagam—the de facto leader of the LTTE intelligence remnants in Europe—Thennavan has been steadily positioning himself to assume this influential role.

One LTTE intelligence source recounted a memorable instance involving Pottu Amman, who, with evident pride, once instructed him to look down at his feet. Sporting a pair of Adidas shoes, Pottu Amman explained that they were a gift from Thennavan. Smiling, he then held up a sleek coffee cup, announcing with satisfaction that it, too, had been gifted by Thennavan. The source who narrated this story remarked, "This scenario might give you some insight into where exactly our struggle went wrong."

Lankeswaran and Rajaputhiran: The Brothers Behind Achchuthan's Syndicate



Lankeswaran Sivarasa



Rajaputhiran Sivarasa

An important member of Achchuthan's network is his younger brother, Lankeswaran Sivarasa, born on November 18, 1975, and now residing at Résidence du Parc, Bâtiment

Peupliers, Apt 2, Dourdan (Essonne). He was the first in his family to officially join the LTTE and undergo armed training. Lankeswaran is the fourth child in his family and attended Tellippalai Mahajana College, where he completed his O-Level exams in 1991, achieving six Ds and one C. However, he skipped his music practicals, as he had already committed to the LTTE by December 1991.

Credible sources indicate that the Sivarasa family's association with the LTTE began when the organization established a base at the Alaveddi Ashramam, near the Kumpilavalai Pillayar Temple in Alaveddi. This base was led by LTTE fighter Mathi, and the presence of the LTTE in the area naturally attracted young recruits like Lankeswaran.

A former classmate from Mahajana College described Lankeswaran as intelligent and capable. Another source noted that when Lankeswaran joined the LTTE, he was already in a relationship with Suganthiny, his future wife, whom he married on May 1, 2003, in Colombo. Within LTTE ranks, Lankeswaran was known by the alias "Thileepan."

One of Lankeswaran's former training mates recalled a memory from the LTTE's Old Park camp, where recruits were required to disclose details about their personal relationships. Lankeswaran mentioned Suganthiny from Pannalai village as his girlfriend, noting that while she was from the same batch, she was slightly older than him by a few months. When asked why he joined the

LTTE despite being in a relationship, a former comrade jokingly remarked, "He made sure that, even in the LTTE, he wasn't about to be bitten by an ant.

This sentiment was echoed by another LTTE leader, who confirmed that Lankeswaran strategically placed himself in the political wing, far from the front lines, ensuring he stayed safe. Another source within LTTE



Sivarasa's house in Allaveddy



Anjaneyar

ranks shared a humorous incident to counter Lankeswaran's current chest-thumping war stories often told to naive diaspora Tamils. According to this source, Lankeswaran's commander once discovered that he rarely used his revolver, and to his shock, a bee's nest had formed inside the barrel. "The commander," the source recalled, "was bloody furious!"

Following his training, Lankeswaran was appointed as the personal bodyguard to Anjaneyar, a prominent LTTE figure, and head of the political wing in Jaffna. He served in this role through several leadership changes,



Former Prime Minister's Secretary, K. Balapatabendi , being welcomed by then LTTE Political Wing Head, S.P. Tamilselvan. Also present are Ravi (extreme left) and Dominic (second from left).



LTTE leader Velupillai Prabhakaran holding a child, with Col. Shankar, founder of the LTTE's air wing, standing to his right.

including during Dominic's tenure overseeing the LTTE's political division in Jaffna. When Anjaneyar was later assigned to lead the Makkal Uravu Kolkai Munneduppu (People's Relations and Policy Initiative), a public relations team named by language enthusiast Baby Subramaniam, Lankeswaran remained by his side.

Another senior member from Lankeswaran's unit told Jaffna Monitor that, although Lankeswaran had joined the LTTE, he lacked the fiery passion of a true freedom fighter. Instead, he described him as “just a guy who went around grinning” (சும்மா சிரிச்சு கொண்டு இருந்தவன்).

When the LTTE established its air force division under the

leadership of Col. Shankar, each LTTE sector was given the opportunity to nominate recruits. From the Jaffna political division, both Lankeswaran and Kushanthan, the LTTE's communications officer at the Kondavil political office—who rose to become the Air Tigers' deputy chief before being arrested by Malaysian police and deported to Sri Lanka in 2014—were selected to join the air force initiative.

Other notable figures from Jaffna included Col. Roophan, a Jaffna Hindu College alumnus who became a member of the LTTE Air Tigers' suicide guard and was killed in a kamikaze-style attack on the Sri Lankan Air Force in 2009; Suresh, who went on to marry Achchuthan's sister, Sumithirathevi; and



A rare moment as Prabhakaran and his wife Mathivathani grace the wedding of Kushanthan and Rohini—Rohini, the stepdaughter of Col. Shankar and daughter of Kuha Akka, a close confidante of Mathivathani, tragically lost in May 2009.



Col. Roophan

Samraj, a relative of Achchuthan now residing in London, known for a battle injury that left him with speech difficulties.

Though Lankeswaran did not undergo formal pilot training, sources report that he pursued studies in aerospace engineering in Thailand and Malaysia, bringing valuable technical expertise to the LTTE's air operations.

Sources say that Lankeswaran's wife, Suganthiny, was also one of the engineers involved in drafting plans for the LTTE's

airstrip buildings.

While Lankeswaran's wife, Suganthiny, and their two daughters obtained visas for France, he was unable to do so. French authorities placed him on an exclusion list—a designation reserved for individuals deemed security risks or potential threats to public order. Additionally, his name appeared on an Interpol watch list, further prompting French authorities to deny his visa due to these security concerns.

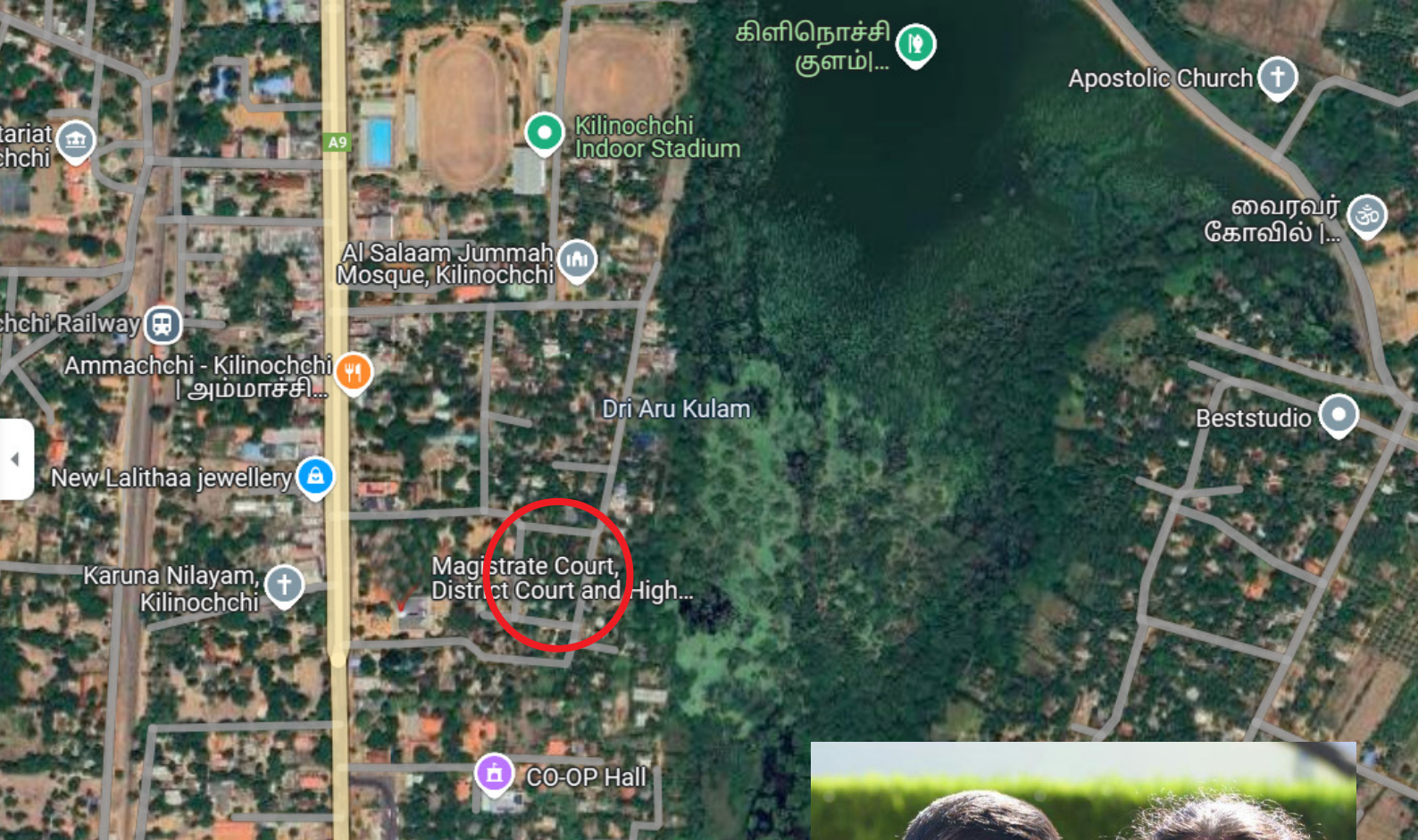
Another key ally within Achchuthan's network is his youngest brother, Rajaputhiran. Described by sources familiar with him as a rough, emotionless individual and a computer expert, Rajaputhiran was born on September 17, 1982, in Jaffna and now resides at 27 Allée de la Loire, Saint-Pathus (Seine-et-Marne), France. He was an LTTE member who served in the political division and trained under S. P. Thamilselvan, the then-head of the LTTE political wing. Known within LTTE ranks by the alias "Bharathi," he was the second in the family to undergo formal training (we apologize for mistakenly reporting him as a non-LTTE member in our previous issue).

Rajaputhiran was wounded in the final stages of the war, and credible sources suggest that he did not surrender to the military. Instead, they report that, due to his injuries, he was transported from an ICRC ship into an army-controlled area, where he registered as a civilian. Following the brutal end of the war, he subsequently escaped to France.

Rajaputhiran now holds permanent residency in both the UK and France. Primarily residing in the UK, he is actively involved in his brother's syndicate and is married to a French citizen.



Road leading to Lankeswaran's house in France

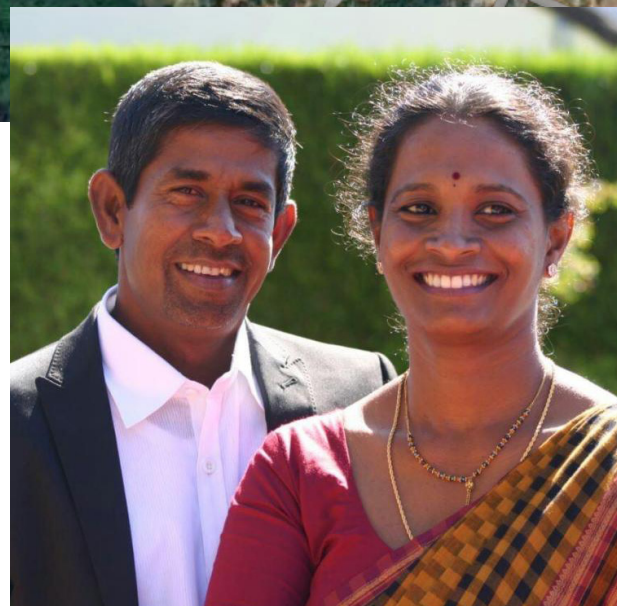


Map showing the locations of Achchuthan and his sister Arunmozhi's land near the Kilinochchi District Court.

While their parents lived with Achchuthan's younger sister, Sumithirathevi, also known as Sumithi, sources indicate that Achchuthan frequently traveled to London. There, he met with Dr. Vaman—one of his key operatives—and his brother-in-law, Pugalenth, who is reportedly hiding in London.

Credible sources within the LTTE administration told Jaffna Monitor that during the peacetime in the early 2000s, Achchuthan and his family members obtained land from the LTTE and built houses near the LTTE's court in Kilinochchi, which now functions as the Kilinochchi court. Land was allocated for both Achchuthan and his sister, Arunmozhi, and they constructed houses on these plots. Sources indicate that another plot was allocated in the name of Suganthiny—Lankeswaran's wife—near their property.

Credible sources from the Kilinochchi Land Department confirm that these lands, initially



Arunmozhi, former LTTE High Court Judge, with her husband

allocated by the LTTE, remain registered under the original owners. It is reported that when Achchuthan's sister Arunmozhi visited Sri Lanka last year, she went to inspect this property. A former LTTE fighter expressed his frustration to Jaffna Monitor, stating, "While thousands of former fighters have no land and live in utter poverty, these people live lavishly in France yet still hold onto their land here."

From Healing to Scheming: How LTTE's Former Medics Power Achchuthan's Operations



LTTE leader Velupillai Prabhakaran with members of the LTTE's medical wing.

Credible sources close to Achchuthan disclosed to Jaffna Monitor that much of his current team consists of former members from the LTTE's medical unit. While leaders and fighters from other factions have grown disillusioned with him, many within the former medical team remain loyal to his operations, largely due to the influence of

his wife, Sakalya (known by her LTTE alias, Rathika). A former LTTE Medical College second-batch student and doctor herself, Sakalya, along with her former superior, Dr. Vaman—an ex-LTTE physician now based in the UK—has been instrumental in rallying former LTTE medical personnel into Achchuthan's intricate web of deception.

Another prominent figure within Achchuthan's network is Kenga (also known as Pathma), the widow of the late Colonel Nagesh, who died heroically in the Battle of Aanandapuram. Originally from Kodikamam in Jaffna, Kenga served with the LTTE's medical team in Batticaloa, where she met and married Nagesh, a commander from the East. Now residing in Switzerland, Kenga plays a crucial role in coordinating Achchuthan's operations in the Eastern region, leveraging her connections with former fighters from the area to expand his influence. A credible source confirmed to Jaffna Monitor that her reach within Achchuthan's network is substantial.



Colonel Nagesh with LTTE leader Velupillai Prabhakaran



Col. Nagesh with LTTE Black Tiger Major Ratnatharan, who orchestrated the first suicide bombing within an army camp. On 09.08.1999, he entered the Vakarai military camp under the guise of collecting weekly food relief and detonated a bomb strapped to his body, killing Major T. G. J. B. Karunanayake, the second-in-command of an infantry battalion.



Dr. Vaman (Dr. V. Tharmarathinam)

Debunking Achchuthan's LTTE Narrative

Despite the image he likes to project, Achchuthan was neither a trained LTTE member nor sent abroad by the LTTE for studies or a special mission, according to credible sources who spoke with Jaffna Monitor. As a student at Jaffna Hindu College, he and his elder brother, Pathipan, reportedly engaged in minor activities for the LTTE. Following these actions, Achchuthan was apprehended by the Indian Army, which led his concerned parents to send both him and Pathipan abroad for their safety.

Credible LTTE insiders assert that claims of Achchuthan being sent overseas on an LTTE mission or for specialized training are pure fabrication. While he was a supporter, he had no official affiliation with the LTTE when he left Sri Lanka. In fact, the first in his family to formally join the LTTE was his younger brother, Lankeswaran Sivarasa.

According to these sources, the narrative that Achchuthan has carefully crafted—that he traveled to France to study aviation for the LTTE—is pure fiction. From 1992 to 1996, Achchuthan initially worked as a team leader and chef at Disneyland Paris. Later, he received flight training at Fly Academy Lognes, located at Aéroport de Lognes in France, where he learned to fly small crop-dusting planes. Some suggest he pursued this training on his own, while others speculate that he was encouraged by LTTE contacts. Regardless, the story Achchuthan tells differs significantly from the reality of his journey.

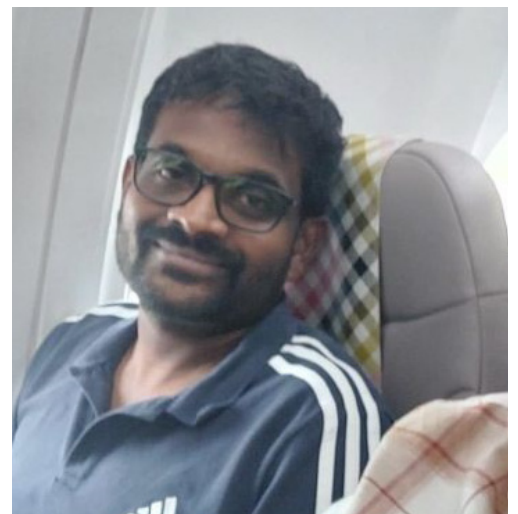
A senior LTTE leader recalls that Achchuthan's initial involvement with the organization in France began with fundraising efforts. During this period, he connected with prominent LTTE operatives, including Kumaran Pathmanathan alias KP, who was impressed by Achchuthan's proficiency in English and his apparent skill set. Sources say they encouraged him to pursue pilot training, recognizing his potential. In time, Achchuthan was assigned to work directly under KP—a relationship



Pathipan Sivarasa, also known as Parthipan



Pirunthapan, also known as Achchuthan

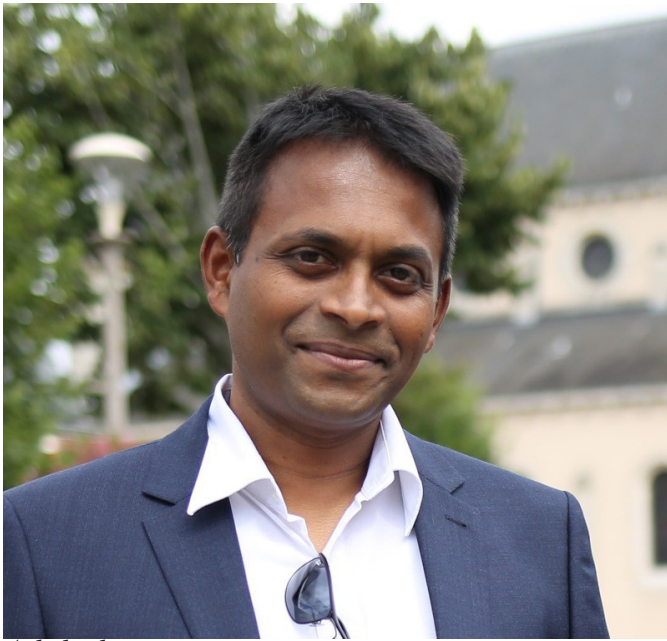


Lankeswaran Sivarasa

that would later take an ironic twist, as Achchuthan and his brothers betrayed the very man they once served.

However, after KP's reinstatement as head of the LTTE's international wing in late 2008, reliable sources confirm that Achchuthan was once again tasked with working closely alongside him.

The Battle for Money: How Achchuthan Orchestrated KP's Fall from Grace



Achchuthan

Sources close to both Achchuthan and Kumaran Pathmanathan (alias KP), the then-LTTE Head of International Relations, revealed to Jaffna Monitor that Achchuthan was instrumental in orchestrating KP's removal from his position in 2001. After KP's ousting, Castro was appointed to take over the role.

A credible source revealed to Jaffna Monitor that the late LTTE intelligence leader Vinayagam, who recently passed away in France, had confided that Achchuthan made repeated, unreasonable, and often malicious allegations against KP. Vinayagam reportedly told this source that he had personally witnessed these accusations. According



Kumaran Pathmanathan (alias KP)

to Vinayagam, Achchuthan and his team harbored an ultimate plan to remove KP from his position as the LTTE's international head. Their motive, Vinayagam suggested, was to gain control over LTTE funds and siphon them off with Castro's (V.Mannivannan) assistance. Though Castro was a dedicated fighter, he reportedly harbored a personal dislike for KP for reasons known only to him.

Credible sources revealed to Jaffna Monitor that Achchuthan even met with Pottu Amman, the LTTE's intelligence chief, to present allegedly fabricated documents aimed at implicating KP. Achchuthan reportedly disseminated these allegations to key individuals close to Prabhakaran,



Vinayagam

including a trusted confidant of the LTTE supremo living abroad. These accusations portrayed KP as a rogue operator who acted independently, misappropriated funds, and—most damagingly—overcharged for arms procurement.

This narrative gained significant traction, ultimately influencing Prabhakaran, who was known for his unwavering stance on financial integrity. "Prabhakaran could tolerate many things, but dishonesty with money was not one of them," a source remarked.

According to insiders, Achchuthan convinced the LTTE leadership that arms procurement could be handled at a significantly lower cost than what KP was allegedly managing. While it remains uncertain whether Prabhakaran fully believed these claims, the campaign was persuasive enough to lead to KP's removal from his role as the LTTE's Head of International Relations in 2001.



From left to right - LTTE supremo Prabhakaran, Kumaran Pathmanathan (alias KP), behind them LTTE's theologian Anton Balasingham, and standing is Col. Shankar."



From left to right - LTTE Intelligence Wing Head Pottu Amman, LTTE Supremo Prabhakaran, Brigadier Theepan, LTTE Political Wing Head Thamilselvan, and Jeyam on LTTE's runway in Kilinochchi in the early 2000s, watching LTTE's light aircraft being flown.

However, the new team under Castro, which took over the LTTE's international operations and arms procurement, faced significant setbacks. They were unable to secure even a single arms shipment, leaving the organization's resources severely strained. By late 2008, a frustrated Prabhakaran reappointed KP.

Another source, once close to Achchuthan and his brothers, told Jaffna Monitor that Achchuthan and his brother often claimed to close friends that, following KP's removal in 2001, it was they who kept him under house arrest in Malaysia, allegedly confining him to a

serviced apartment. Achchuthan and his circle frequently boasted about having control over KP during this time.

However, sources close to KP strongly refute this narrative, emphasizing that KP—a man renowned for his resourcefulness and audacity—was far from being an appa koppai (a colloquial term for someone extremely naive or gullible) who could be subdued by Achchuthan and his family. The claim, they argue, is yet another exaggerated tale in Achchuthan's arsenal to inflate his role in LTTE history.



Castro, Right - Prabhakaran.

A credible source recounted a particularly intriguing story to Jaffna Monitor. When the shocking news of LTTE leader Prabhakaran's death reached them, KP, Achchuthan, and a few other international operatives were in Indonesia, operating under assumed identities. Recognizing the gravity of the situation, KP decided to officially announce Prabhakaran's death to the Tamil community the following day. They went to bed that night, prepared to confront the somber task in the morning.

However, when dawn broke, Achchuthan vanished without a trace. Along with him, a substantial sum of cash had also disappeared, according to a source close to the incident.

Within three months of the LTTE's defeat and the death of its leader, Prabhakaran, KP was apprehended in Malaysia on August 5, 2009, by Sri Lankan intelligence. The high-profile arrest sent shockwaves through LTTE circles abroad, instilling fear among the remnants still in hiding.

Credible sources reveal that Achchuthan, who was also in Malaysia at the time of KP's arrest, wasted no time in fleeing. Abandoning everything, he boarded the next available flight to Switzerland and eventually sought refuge in France. As a French citizen, Achchuthan likely recognized that France offered him a greater sense of security and protection than any other country.

A source close to Achchuthan and his family disclosed that the brothers nurtured a deep-seated grudge against KP, holding him responsible for their inclusion on the Interpol watch list in 2010. The source explained that KP was the only individual with detailed knowledge of their operations in Malaysia and other countries, making him uniquely positioned to expose their activities. The family believes that, after KP's arrest, he deliberately leaked this information, resulting in their names being added to Interpol's list and fueling their resentment toward him.

LTTE's Flights in Eritrea and Achchuthan's Fundraising Deception



At the time of the LTTE's military defeat and the death of its leader, Prabhakaran, in May 2009, approximately 10 LTTE aircraft were reportedly stationed in Eritrea. Eritrea, a nation that gained independence from Ethiopia in 1993 after a prolonged struggle, shares a history that resonates with the Sri Lankan Tamil cause. Sources suggest that

President Isaias Afwerki sympathized with the Sri Lankan Tamil cause and, by extension, the LTTE's efforts, allowing Eritrea to serve as a strategic base for LTTE operations. A few LTTE operatives who went to Eritrea reportedly built a respectful rapport with the ruling government.



Col. Shankar, Pottu Amman, and Prabhakaran in front of an LTTE aircraft

After the LTTE's collapse at the Nandikadal Lagoon, sources within the LTTE's foreign division confirmed that roughly 10 LTTE aircraft remained stationed in Eritrea. Credible sources told Jaffna Monitor that following the LTTE's defeat, Achchuthan and his brothers allegedly began raising funds under the pretext of maintaining these aircraft. A source who had previously contributed financially disclosed that he personally donated over 1,000 euros on multiple occasions. Reportedly, Achchuthan and his brothers collected 15,000 euros each month, citing aircraft upkeep as the reason. However, sources allege that around 2015, Achchuthan sold off the planes and diverted the proceeds for personal gain, leaving Tamil supporters unaware of the true fate of the funds and aircraft.



LTTE Supremo Prabhakaran standing behind an LTTE aircraft.

Another credible source told Jaffna Monitor that in the final days of the war, Achchuthan's and his team collected large sums of money across Europe by claiming he would personally pilot a flight to rescue LTTE supremo Prabhakaran. Sources say this narrative helped them amass substantial funds, playing on the hopes and desperation of supporters.

Achchuthan's Bid for LTTE's Throne

A credible source informed Jaffna Monitor about a conversation with Achchuthan during a meeting in a European country a few months ago. After a few glasses of wine, Achchuthan reportedly revealed his ambition. According to the source, Achchuthan appeared serious when he claimed that he alone was capable of leading the remnants of the LTTE. His reasoning, as stated, was based on his status as the last surviving senior leader of one of the LTTE's tri-forces.

According to a source close to Achchuthan, his reasoning is as follows: Following the death of Colonel Shankar (Vaithilingam Sornalingam), the founder and chief of the LTTE's Air Wing, in September 2001, Achchuthan briefly assumed leadership of the Air Wing for a few months—though some dispute this, claiming he never actually led the Sky Tigers.

Achchuthan argued that this brief role granted him a unique legacy, as he had once headed one of the three major divisions of the LTTE. When reminded of others still alive, such as Janarthan, the former leader of the Jeyanthan Regiment, Achchuthan contended that those leaders commanded only sub-divisions, whereas he had been entrusted with one of the LTTE's core pillars, a role integral to Prabhakaran's vision.

However, sources close to Achchuthan suggest a different motive: he and his brothers are allegedly driven by a desire to seize control over the remnants of the LTTE diaspora network, ensuring a steady "waterfall" of millions of euros into their coffers. To bolster their standing, Achchuthan and his brothers



Details of one of the bank accounts of Sivarasa Pirunthapan, also known as Achchuthan, linked to funds collected from the diaspora.

are said to have fabricated numerous tales to impress naive members of the diaspora.

In one particularly audacious claim, one of the brothers reportedly told naive diaspora Tamils—an account witnessed by a reliable source—that, in the final moments of the war, their beloved Thesiya Thalaivar Prabhakaran had allegedly called them and instructed, "If anything happens to me... please lead the organization." When Jaffna Monitor approached other former LTTE leaders for their opinion on this claim—fully aware of its absurdity but curious to hear their reactions—they responded with a barrage of colorful and unprintable Tamil expletives.

Another former close associate of Achchuthan disclosed to Jaffna Monitor that this ambition fuels Achchuthan and his inner circle to stir up unrest in Sri Lanka, whether through the murder of someone critical of the LTTE, a bomb blast, or any disruptive act, no matter how small. According to this source, if Achchuthan's team orchestrated even a minor incident in Sri Lanka, they would quickly be hailed as heroes among a faction of trouble-seeking members of the Tamil diaspora, especially in Switzerland. "With a single small bomb blast or gunshot in Sri Lanka," he stated, "they could raise millions of euros within hours—and that is their bloody motive."



BY:

Jeevan Thiagarajah

Former Governor Northern Province/
Former Member Commissioner
Election Commission.

This piece is based on work initiated to catapult the Northern Province to become the iconic frontier province for other Provinces to follow. It's driven by a belief our people past and present have become global citizens from the 1920's. Today they possess enormous knowledge, skills, resources and connectivity. The text shows the breadth of options available to transform the Province. Several States of India undertake similar and visioning exercises including promoting themselves in select global destinations.

The Governor as CEO

In any enterprise the hand and direction the CEO provides is fundamental for the success or its failure. I speak of the Governor who can sit back and enjoy the perks and comforts of office, work hard to ensure personal pecuniary and posessional gain (i.e. % as commission for approvals,

appropriating state land, commissions on government relief for citizens, possession gifts in lieu of approvals for commercial enterprises, fine tuning service records, having several vehicle accidents where animals are named as the primary cause, cavalier use of vehicles to cite a few living examples), sign only what officials send and listen only to what officials want you to know and do what they want you to do. make it ones business to ensure you know the acts of commission or omission of the officials (35,000 out of an approved cadre of 40,000) or make its every state entity and officials including the Governor priority and imperative the safety, security and development of 401,000 families in the Province.

Governors have rank of Cabinet Ministers. The Governor can make it his or her business to come on behalf the citizens with all Ministry Secretaries, Five District Secretaries and thirty four Divisional Secretaries reporting. No response should wait beyond 24 hours. Every response within the system must demand follow up action. Tri service Commanders, the SDIG should be met frequently. Every Central agency required to support the Province should not only be written but also met direct. Four Governors of Tamil origin including the incumbent have been seen in the Province. This is the fire and sense of purpose the Office of Governor can generate. The intelligentsia, officials, citizens, intelligence agency reports and media have a fair knowledge of how we have functioned and behaved todate.

I pay tribute to Governor General (Rtd) Chandrasiri who set the bar for work of a Governor in the Province soon after 2009. Fair to say a majority of officials responded unflinchingly with the poor Chief Secretary bearing the brunt of the follow up load.

Unfortunately, in government sudden Machiavellian needs to derail the progress

of opposition parties or self driven interests requires wrecking anything as long it achieves the political objectives. On 15th May 2023 a journey in the Province was disrupted due such a political emergency in Colombo with quid pro quo rewards to be given bringing disrepute to the Election Commission as the Supreme Court deemed fit to describe their actions including one chosen for special mention.

A legislated authority to develop a Province

In the mid 90's a development authority was set up for the Southern Province. A similar authority for Northern Sri Lanka should be responsible for the matters relating to the planning, execution and monitoring of development schemes and projects in the Northern Region. Its vision to accelerate the pace of socio-economic development of the so that the districts of the North enjoy growth parity with the rest of the country (some words mirror intent of a similar instrument for North east India).

The mission would be to derive maximum benefits from reserved, concurrent and provincial schedules of the 13th Amendment; A single window harmonising plans and policies in collaboration with Central Ministries and the Province for the rapid development of the region; Intensive monitoring to ensure full utilisation of Budgetary Support; Strengthening institutions, promoting social harmony and augmenting capacity with a view to encourage flow of private investment to increase development opportunities.

Objectives include raising private finances for investments, returns and development; Attracting local and foreign investor funds, be it big or small; Generating revenue through

investments for development in the province; Creating a wealth owning community of citizens from the province, attracting surplus wealth of Sri Lankans overseas; Ensuring revenue from development is earmarked in part to long stay citizens in the province as a pension fund contributing to a scheme through licensed banks in Sri Lanka.

The emphasis on save and grow through part counterpart voluntary contributions of ultimate beneficiaries as a long-term savings plan so that both current and future generations get to benefit. Development Bonds and pension scheme deposited through CBSL with Treasury administered by the Governor, Central Bank Governor, Secretary/ Treasury and pro Bono ex office advice for start-up phase from Tamaseak Fund Singapore (if they consent) or an entity of equal global eminence

Destination North

- We believe that our province -the Northern Province, should be a place that any one of us can pursue and achieve our dreams.
- It should be a place that no one is left behind, and most importantly a place that celebrates diversity and champions equality.
- We believe that by embarking on a journey of inclusive development we can forever leave behind the challenges of the past, and never again regress into conflict – for any reason!

or from persons of eminence from India, Vietnam, Singapore with possessing required competence.

Snapshot of focusses for the Northern Province

- Achieve optimal happiness ratings from citizens emulating Bhutan and Finland: This objective aims to prioritize the well-being and happiness of citizens, drawing inspiration from countries like Bhutan and Finland, which emphasize the Gross National Happiness index. It involves implementing policies and initiatives

that enhance the overall happiness and satisfaction of the population.

- 118,000 land grants to families are awaiting completion in our province. Dedicating land for public servants to lease and build homes. Plant trees at a ratio of 1:5 for every one of the 401,000 families in our province.
- 4 forest reserves to support the creation of 4 new reservoirs, and to green every open space under local government since the Province is earmarked to be hardest hit by climate change
- Every poor family in our province becomes an owner of 10 perches of state land
- A green province earning off carbon credits
- Development officers, becoming specialised cadre with training programs in areas such as ward development, mental health, women and children, police, land, archaeology, tourism, wildlife, and forests, among others. Seeking assistance from SLIDA, the Singapore civil service academy and comparable institutions in India to further upgrade the skills of our OES cadre up to special grade.
- Ensuring every Provincial employee is protected and service commended bi monthly . The Provincial Public Service was informed of the intention to do so and specifically, ‘ to promote the wellbeing of Provincial Public Service Officers of the Northern Province with career development paths , protection from discrimination, harassment including sexual harassment, victimization, witness protection of whistle blowers, timely transfers, supporting access to statutory claims, leave, allowances, access to fundamental facilities for sanitation, safe water, partaking of meals, safety of personal belongings and official data’

- Teams from key government institutions deployed for listening visits in every local government, to understand their needs whilst ensuring political representatives are heard continuously, 24 hour duty officer to respond to public inquiries and publishing financial details for scrutiny.

Driving the right to development

3,452 DOs are in the Northern Province and will be the Communication bridge for clients and service providers; they Focus on development and vulnerability imperatives of targeted citizen groups;

Householder profiles. Each household (HH) will have a unique code and a SMART card ; Citizens will communicate by SMS or issues of concern communicated at systematic visits by DO or Community Police officers, Media, GN, DS; Recorded centrally, filtered, acted on site, by district relevant agency, reported to central facility at Office of the Governor with nominee of Chief Secretary tracking.

Example of sector focus-Education:

Areas focused on: Transport, Sanitation facilities, Early Childhood Development, English and IT access ,Drug awareness and counseling , Drop outs, poor attendance, focus on island schools and fisher community kids, Smart teaching, Enhanced IT Labs ,Hub Schools , Teaching Pool, Career guidance and Training for School Leavers, Post OL Vocational skills training, Future Focus, ZDEs clusters to oversee the following sectors : View of children and students' welfare program, E Resource centres ,Children with Special needs and vocational training, Out Side class room setup program

Example of sector focus-Health : Create a smart integrated provincial service which intervenes inter district; Each RDHS and other qualified medical administrators in the NP responsible for a sector; Invite faculties, specialized units in other parts of country to collaborate, visit, provide services; Invite Experienced health personal from overseas to join process with NP providing single window facilitation services , Palliative Care, Radio-active iodine services ,Pathology & Haematology services, Digital, data and devices ,Clinical trials unit ,Building projects looking at infrastructure needs , Special focus on NCD and preventive health care

Investment and Development with National planning

Low cost power - renewable energy with excess capacity, identify solar and wind sites; Boosting fisheries and agriculture sector in designated areas; Economic clusters and special economic zones to attract Industries; Food security through government supported Smart agriculture to maximize yield, storage silos, warehousing, exports ; Rural and cooperative development, especially in Dairy and Unorganized sectors. Promote exports, with an ideal target of 20-25 percent of families engaged in export-related activities.

Promote innovation and entrepreneurship:

Encourage innovation, creativity, and entrepreneurship in the Northern Province. Support the establishment of start up incubators, provide access to financing and mentorship programs, and create an ecosystem that nurtures and supports local talent and innovative ideas.

Develop robust infrastructure: Invest in the development of high-quality infrastructure, including roads, ports, airports, energy

systems, and digital connectivity. Enhance transportation networks, ensure reliable power supply, and improve internet connectivity to attract investments, facilitate trade, and create an enabling environment for businesses to thrive.

Ensure environmental conservation and sustainable resource management:

Adopt sustainable resource management practices, including water conservation, waste management, and renewable energy initiatives. Promote eco-tourism, nature-based activities, and sustainable livelihood options that contribute to environmental conservation and minimize ecological footprint.

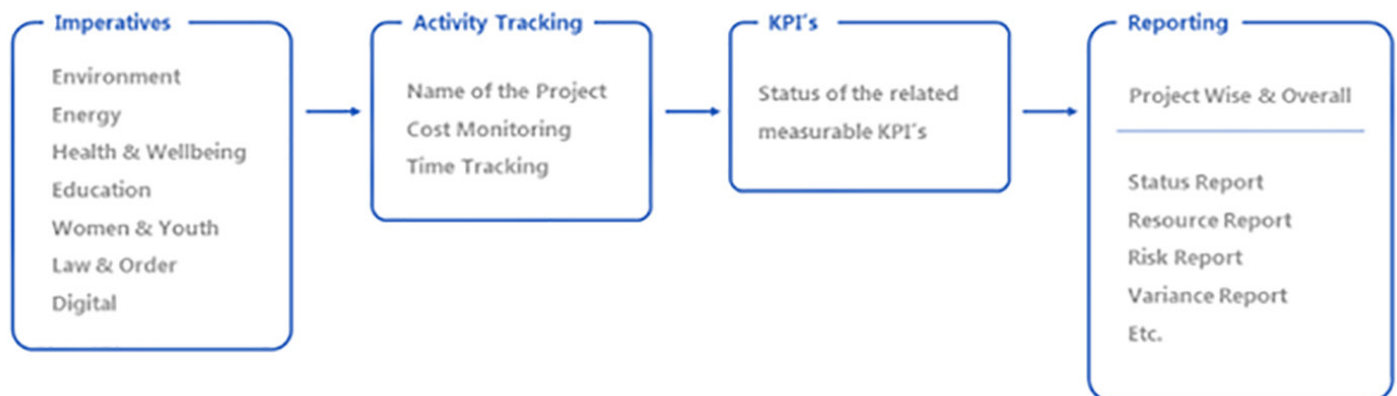
- Attract non- resident Sri Lankans and foreigners to invest in a second home - Golden visas
- Establish a modern police force equipped with the latest forensic skills and newer infrastructure for every police station. Equip our Police with the latest and cutting edge methodologies, developments, and technologies from our partners in India, and other global well-wishers.
- Vocational education after regular school hours. Digital education a focus with ICT based approaches to ensure equality and equity in education and vocational training across segments.
- Utilize all rooftops for solar power generation, and ensure that every government institution is powered by solar energy. Produce and sell solar power through the CEB, contributing to the overall energy sustainability of our province.
- Raising revenue, allocating savings towards areas such as housing grants for the poor through the Treasury and promoting cooperatives, rural industries, and industries

to uplift families, communities, and rural economies.

- Communication and support to every religious institution in our province.
- Enable festivals in the Northern Province to represent the local Religion, Culture, Music, Movies, Literary, which will in turn spur tourism and development. Incentivise global conferences and exhibitions to the provinces.
- A smart digital provincial dashboard for the Governor's Office to update on all Provincial Activities. Digitally dashboard driven with real time data for development for every household and governance indicators working with the line Ministry. To provide an insightful & efficient method in which the Governor and other stakeholders could monitor the performance of ongoing projects in the Northern Province by use of a digital platform that connects all these entities to stakeholders to be built with a feedback mechanism that facilitates corrective action to be taken by the project owners in minimal time.
- Representatives of central line agencies with financial votes and powers over delivery of services in the Province convened by the Office of the President to work with the Office of the Governor linking Provincial structures seamlessly harmonise an all of government focus.

All the information provided in this piece comes from records at work from the Office of the Governor from October 2021 until May 2023. It is proof the enabling framework exists for us to dare to dream for our people, our region and our country. Suffice to say we have amongst a few scoundrels whose priorities are elsewhere. However be it the 401,000 families in the province, those outside within

Strategic Plan for Governor's DB



Example of a mechanism at work to build homes - One stop single window mechanism to provide construction and maintenance assistance in the Northern Province

Objectives:

- Alienate state land and support poor low cost home owners.
- Land zoned and alienated by UDA and/or ventures of BoI develop for overseas clients
- Private landowners including NPC cadre seeking construction, refurbishing or building maintenance services
- Private land and building owners domiciled overseas seeking construction, refurbishing or building maintenance services.

The process of receiving requests, undertaking due diligence and agreement with client shall not take longer than 30 days.

- The basic principles include that the construction and maintenance standards should ensure adoption of cost effective approaches while complying with CIDA's specifications with culturally friendly,

architecture leading to environmentally friendly and greened surroundings.

- The Buildings Department will be the implementation arm whereas monitoring shall be carried out by the Governor's Secretariat through a monitoring committee comprising Chief Secretary, Governor's Secretary or his representative authorized by Governor, DCS – Engineering, Commissioner – Local Government, Commissioner – Lands and Director – Buildings Department.
- NPC shall charge a fee (not exceeding 7%) for the service rendered in accordance with the Procurement Guideline Reference: 4.3.1 & 4.3.2 of NPA's Procurement Manual. The levy shall not exceed 5% for those whose construction is classified as low cost and 3% for the poor. Costs for local government levies, labour, construction shall be made direct by the beneficiary client facilitated by this single window one stop service

Mode of Operation having the following key steps:

- Beneficiary shall choose one of the type plans made available by the Buildings

Department or shall propose own plan to enable the Buildings Department to finalize the layout and specifications.

- Buildings Department shall carry out necessary investigation, designs and prepare drawings, specification and bill of quantity.
- Once the authenticity of land ownership is verified and necessary approvals from UDA and or Local Authorities were sought by the NPC and the beneficiary has given its concurrence to Buildings Department's proposal, the Monitoring Committee shall give its concurrence for the construction.
- An agreement shall be entered between Buildings Department and the beneficiary.
- Buildings Department shall prepare the

breakdown of material requirement and skilled and unskilled labour requirement in accordance with the bills of quantities and provide the details to beneficiary.

- Buildings Department shall assist the beneficiary to procure the material, labour and machinery through the identified supply chain.
- Buildings Department shall supervise the work to ensure that the works are carried out as per the standard specification, drawings and Bills of Quantities.
- Buildings Department shall support to obtain Certificate of Conformity (CoC). Interested parties obtain further information from Provincial Director's Office, Provincial Department of Buildings.

India as a stimulus

India has produced over 100 unicorns in the past 2 years. With this achievement, India now boasts of giving birth to 1 out of every 10 unicorns globally today. The term 'unicorn' refers to the rarest of the rare start-ups who attain a valuation of more than \$1 billion. Last year, India got 44 unicorns with a total valuation of \$93 billion. Meanwhile, in the first four months of 2022, India got 14 unicorns with a total valuation of \$18.9 billion. The India government launched the Skill India initiative in 2015 to train over 40 crore Indians in different industry-related jobs. The vision has created an empowered workforce with the help of various schemes and training courses. This combined effort has propelled India to become a super power in research, technology, innovation,

manufacturing supported by a skilled efficient workforce.

Opportunities include in inward investments and technology in Education, Energy, Tourism, Manufacturing, Textiles, Aqua Culture, Fisheries, Agriculture, Seeds, Logistics, Packaging and Information Technology.

A conclave for Sri Lanka to go beyond loans and credit lines with India in the future, in an extended common market, to address our energy security, skilling, tech transfers, investments, market access and connectivity.

An India- Sri Lanka special purpose compact focused on skilling with GoI courses from states, investments to build up our fisheries sector to fully harness our maritime zone,

bringing in Indian IT expertise to Sri Lanka, strengthening existing education systems, tourism, healthcare and diagnostics, education and training including teachers and nurses, seeds and agriculture, renewable energy, electronic servicing and digitalization, wind turbine manufacturing, Courses such as Cyber, Digital Forensics & Forensic

Psychology which can create high end global job opportunities in Sri Lanka, labour for Indian garment sector.

Extended Common Market with India and an India - Sri Lanka conclave involving the top leadership from the Sri Lanka and Indian government, to be as soon as possible.

Example of a focus on IT -Access to education and skills with IT information highway in the Northern Province

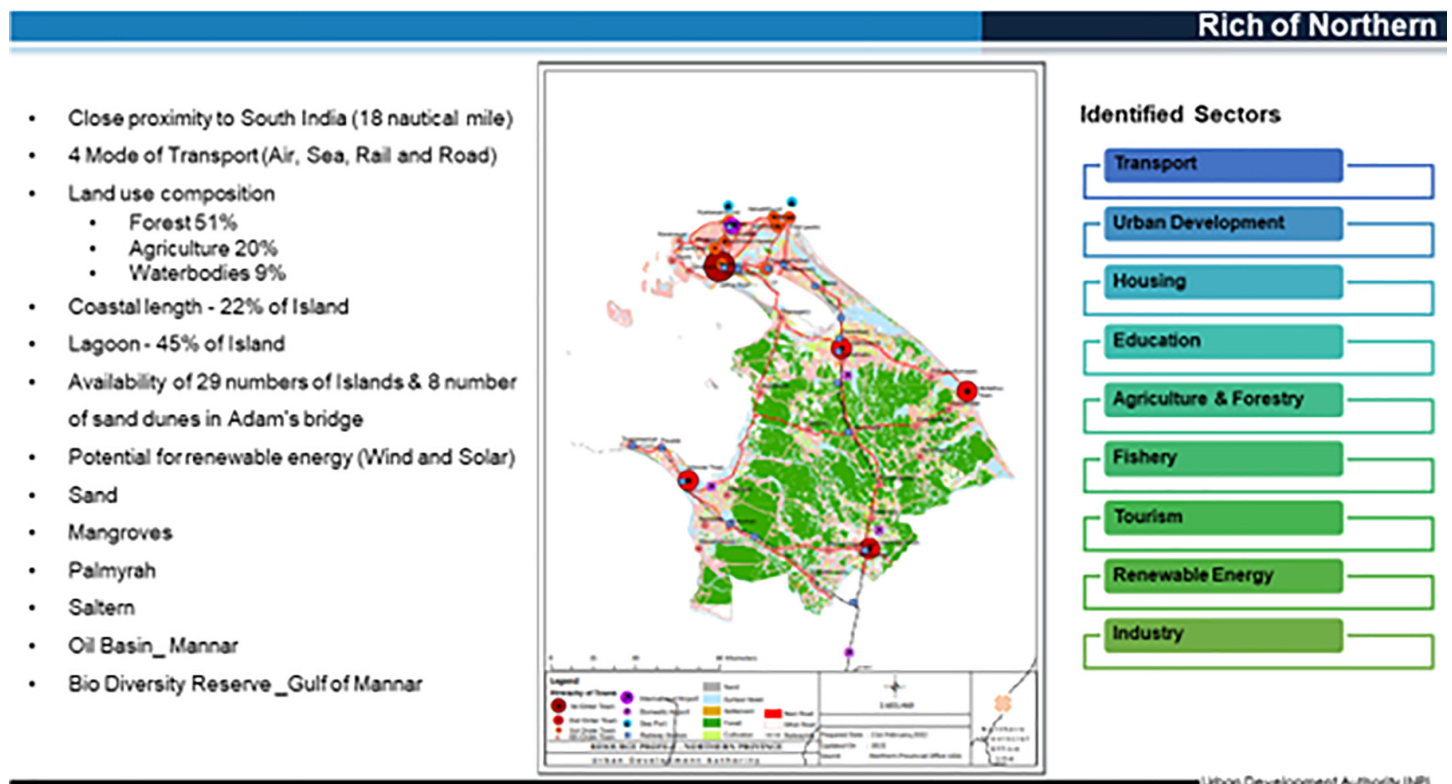
Objectives:

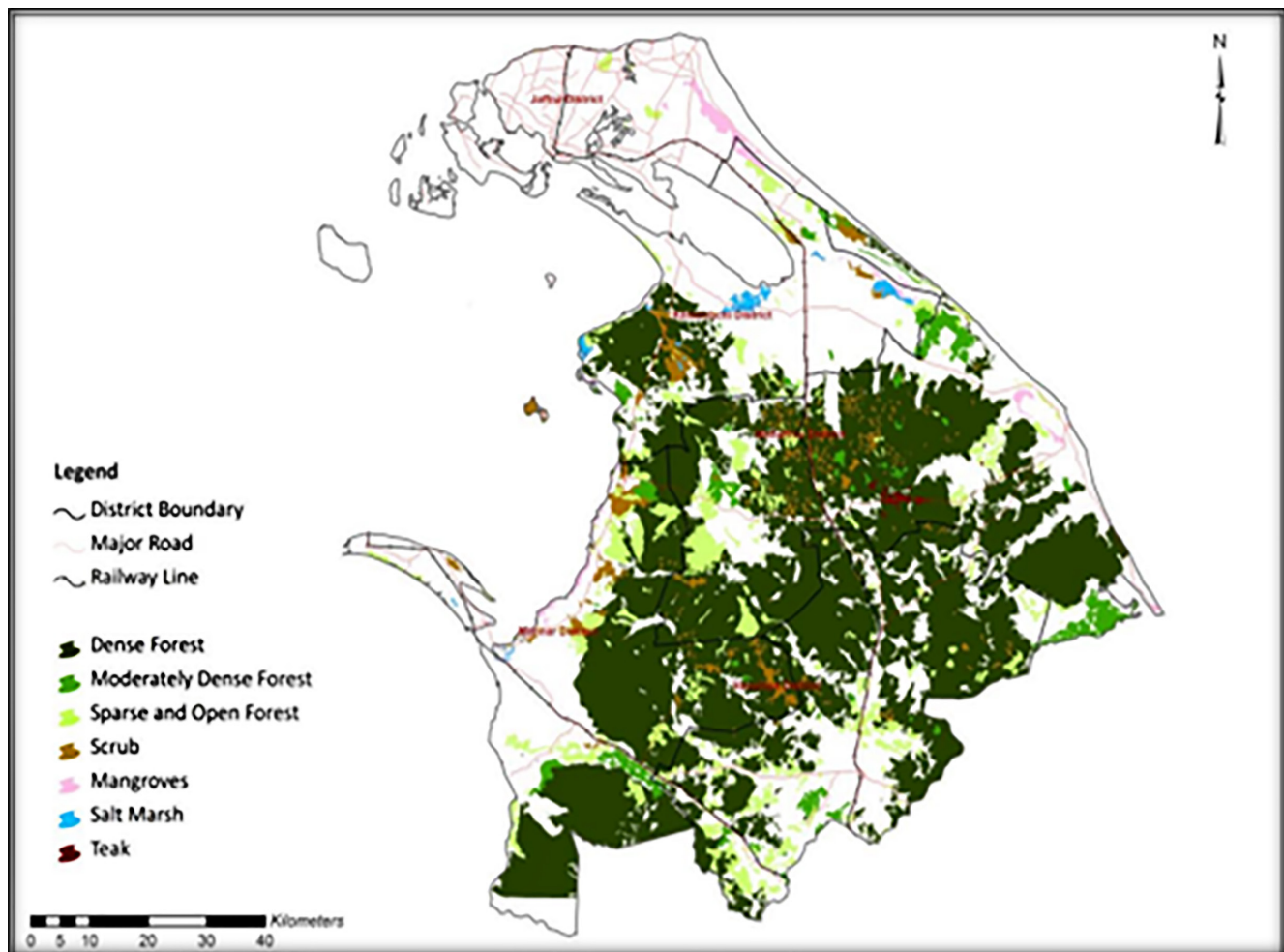
1. Providing basic ICT, English and distance learning through school based labs;
2. Provide comprehensive training in all aspects of ICT training

3. Training for computer based learning in the classroom
4. IT hubs for higher education – grant based and fee based
5. IT labs for PPP ventures- BPO's

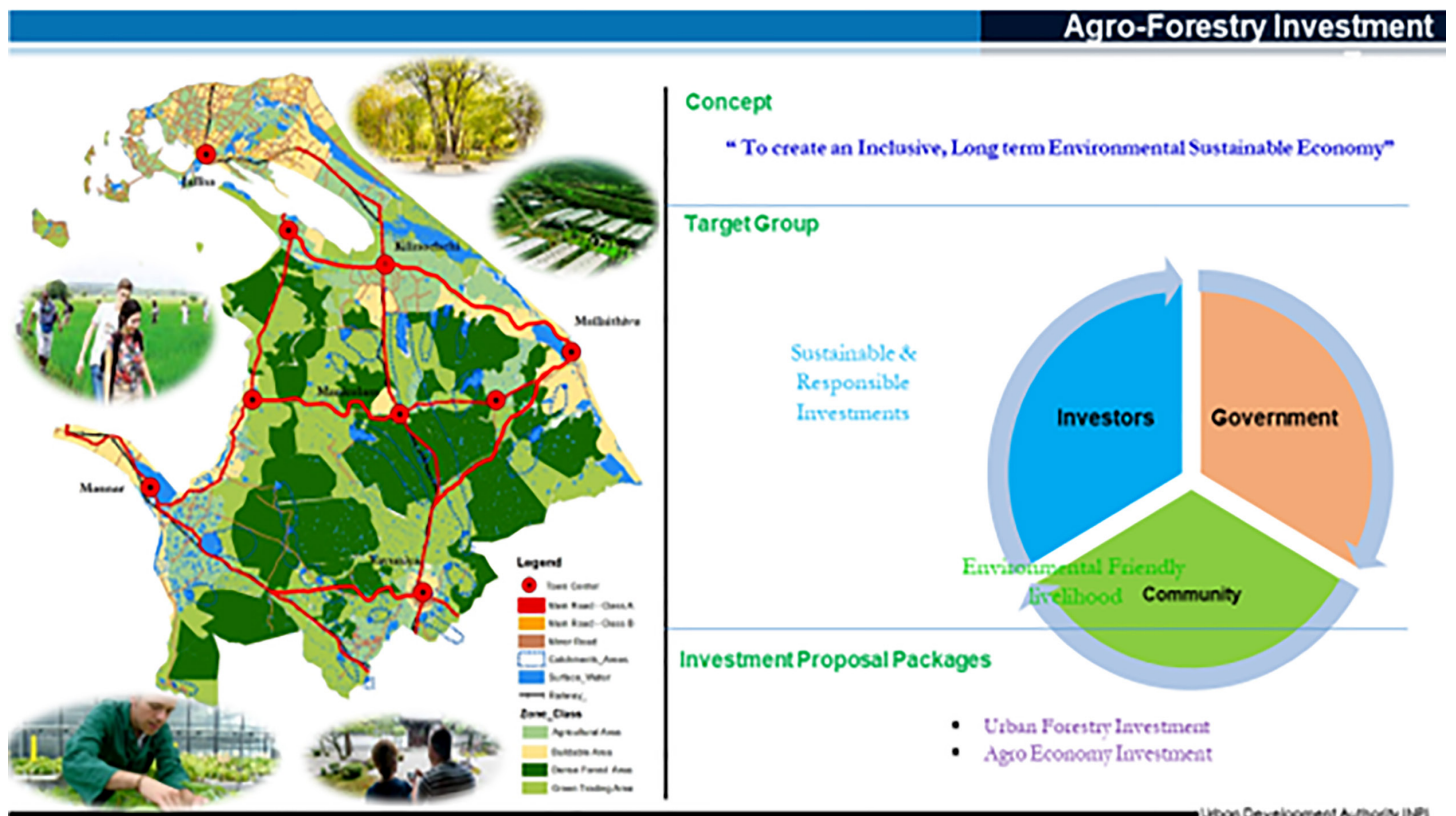
Planners landscape for development. UDA developed options.

Planners landscape for development. UDA developed options.



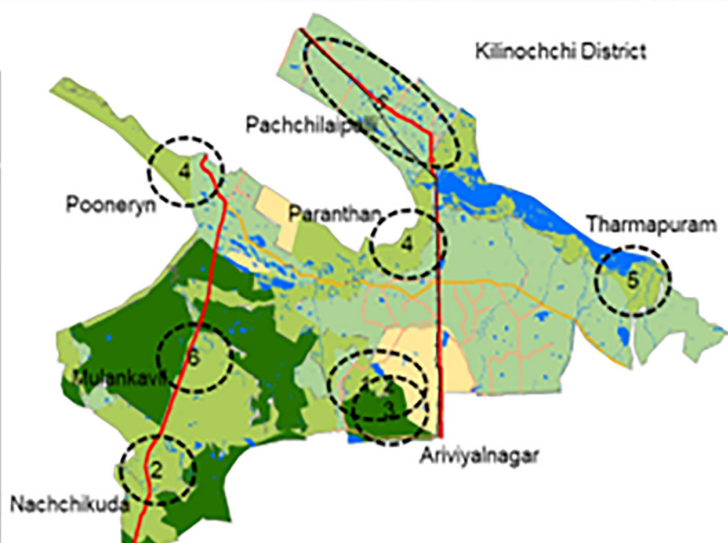


***4,563.31 Sq. km (51% of total land of NP)**



Investment Opportunities

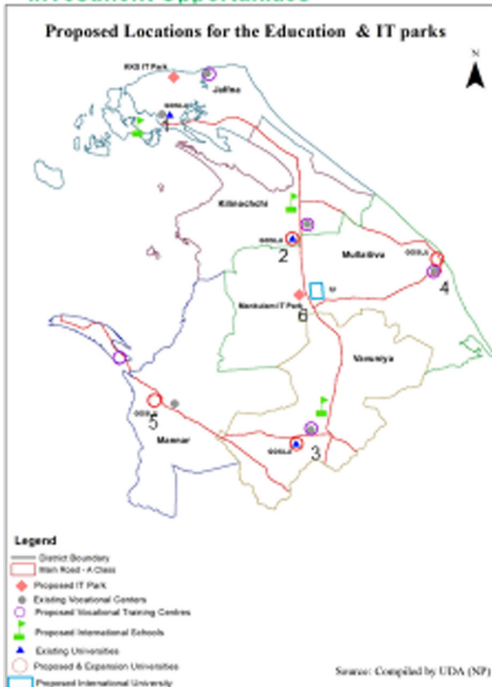
N o	Investment Packages	Action Project
01	Agro Economic Investment	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Research Education Centers 2. Agro Processing Centers 3. Storages & Ware house 4. Palmyra Production & Processing centers 5. Agro Tourism Corridor



Urban Development Authority (NPI)

Education

Investment Opportunities



Source: Compiled by UDA (NPI)

Township Development	Extend (AC)		Investment Proposal
	Exi	prop	
1 Jaffna (Tirunelveli)	75		<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Corporate Buildings Administration, Educational, Finance, Medical & Health,• Accessory Food and Retail Services Convocation Centres, Stadiums, Retail Services, Supermarkets, Cinema theatre• Essential Utility Service Gas, Water, water supply wells, strome water facilities, electric power generating plants, Sub station water tank, water sewage treatment plants and buildings• Stadiums large open or enclosed places used for athletic or major events, swimming pool• Transportation Facilities Public or Private facilities which are necessary for the operation, maintenance, shuttled service, minor transit or transfer terminals, Fuel Station• Medical Office Surgical and related, Medical and dental laboratories• Day Care and Elders Care Centre• Staff Quarters(Academic, Non Academic) / Student Hostels
2 Kilinochchi (Ariviyal Nagar)	570	150	
3 Vavuniya (Pambaimadu)	160	150	
4 Mullaitivu (Mullivaikal)	-	100	
5 Mannar (Uyellankulam)	-	25	
6 Mullaitivu (Mankulam)		100	

Vocational Training Centres		Investment proposals
Jaffna (Information Technology)		Relevant Infrastructure Facilities(Internal roads, water supply, electricity, telecommunication), Lecture hall, Labouries, Experiment equipment's, Modern labs, Student hostels, Staffs quarters, Staff Quarters
Kilinochchi / Vavuniya (Skill labour Development)		
Mullaitivu(Hotel Management)		
Mannar(Marian Development)		

IT Parks	Extend (AC)	Investment proposal
KKS/ Mankulam	200	Well established infrastructure facilities(Internal roads, Power, Water, Telecom), technological centres, national centre, satellite centre, Transportation, research laboratories,

Urban Development Authority (NPI)

- Territorial Sea - 12 Nautical Miles
- Length of Coastal Shore Line: 1,800 km (SL), 403 km for NP (22%)
- Historic Waters (Jaffna & Mannar)
- Continental Shelf - 30,000 sq.km
- 17 numbers of lagoons with 45,525 ha of extent
- Naturally located harbours, anchorages & landing sites
- 9000 Acres of sea potential for Mari farming

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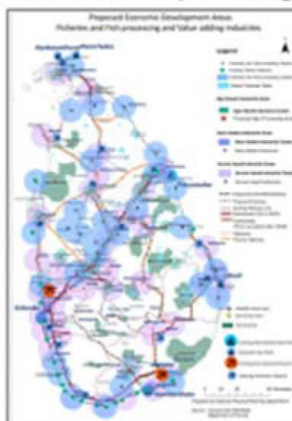


Manifesto

- Modernization of existing fishery harbour, Build-up of all fishery harbours, jetties with related facilities.

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Fisheries & Fish processing Clusters



- Improve the nutritional status and food security of the people by increasing the national fish production
- Minimize post-harvest losses and improve quality and safety of fish products to acceptable standards
- Increase employment opportunities in fisheries and related industries and improve the socioeconomic status the fisher community
- Increase foreign exchange earnings from fish products

Urban Development Authority (NP)



- Religious based tourism islands
- Eco tourism based islands
- Heritage based tourism islands
- Islands for Mixed development



Urban Development Authority (UDA)

Available Islands within the Jaffna District

	Name of Island	Extent (ha)
1	Thuruthupiddy	14
2	Karainagar	2295
3	Eluvaitivu	140
4	Paruthithivu	38
5	Analaithivu	482
6	Pulyanthivu	44
7	Kurunjathivu	5
8	Siruthivu	28
9	Neriyampiddythivu	2
10	Kannadithivu	19
11	Kachathivu	68
12	Mandaithivu	756
13	Kannathivu	122
14	Urathivu	1
15	Punguduthivu	2256
16	Kanaththivu	97
17	Palaithivu	16
18	Nainathivu	422
19	Delft	4717
20	Velanai	6401
21	Kurusadithivu	



Selected Islands for Development

	Name of Island	Extent (ha)	Specialty	Suitable Development Activity
2	Karainagar	2295	Close proximity to Jaffna Town, Land availability for new development	Mixed Development
8	Siruthivu	28	Mangroves	Mangrove Park
11	Kachathivu	68	Religious	Religious festival
12	Mandaithivu	756	Mangroves, Close proximity to Jaffna Town, Land availability for new development	Mixed Development
18	Nainathivu	422	Religious	Scared development
19	Delft	4717	Ruins of Colonial	Heritage Island
20	Velanai	6401	Close proximity to Jaffna Town, Land availability for new	Mixed Development

Available Islands within the Killinochchi District

Name of the Island	Extent (ha)	Specialty
Iranaithivu North	422	
Iranaithivu South	171	
Erumaithivu	104	
Kakkathivu	110	

Mannar Island

Name of the Island	Extent (ha)	Specialty
Mannar Island	14200	Mixed Development

the country and those living overseas the dream will become a reality one day blowing aside the detractors and the bigoted amongst us. It would be a proud day when the Province and its people here and overseas show who we are notwithstanding past conflict and its accompanying cost.



Exclusive Interview with LTTE Co-Founder Ragavan - Part 3
Due to unforeseen circumstances, this much-anticipated segment will feature in our next issue.



Cilappatikaram: a timeless Tamil classic that transcends time and ethnic boundaries



BY:

Professor Mahesh Nirmalan
MBBS, MD, FRCA, PhD, FFICM

*“Dharma will become the God of
Death to kings who swerve from
the path of righteousness”.*

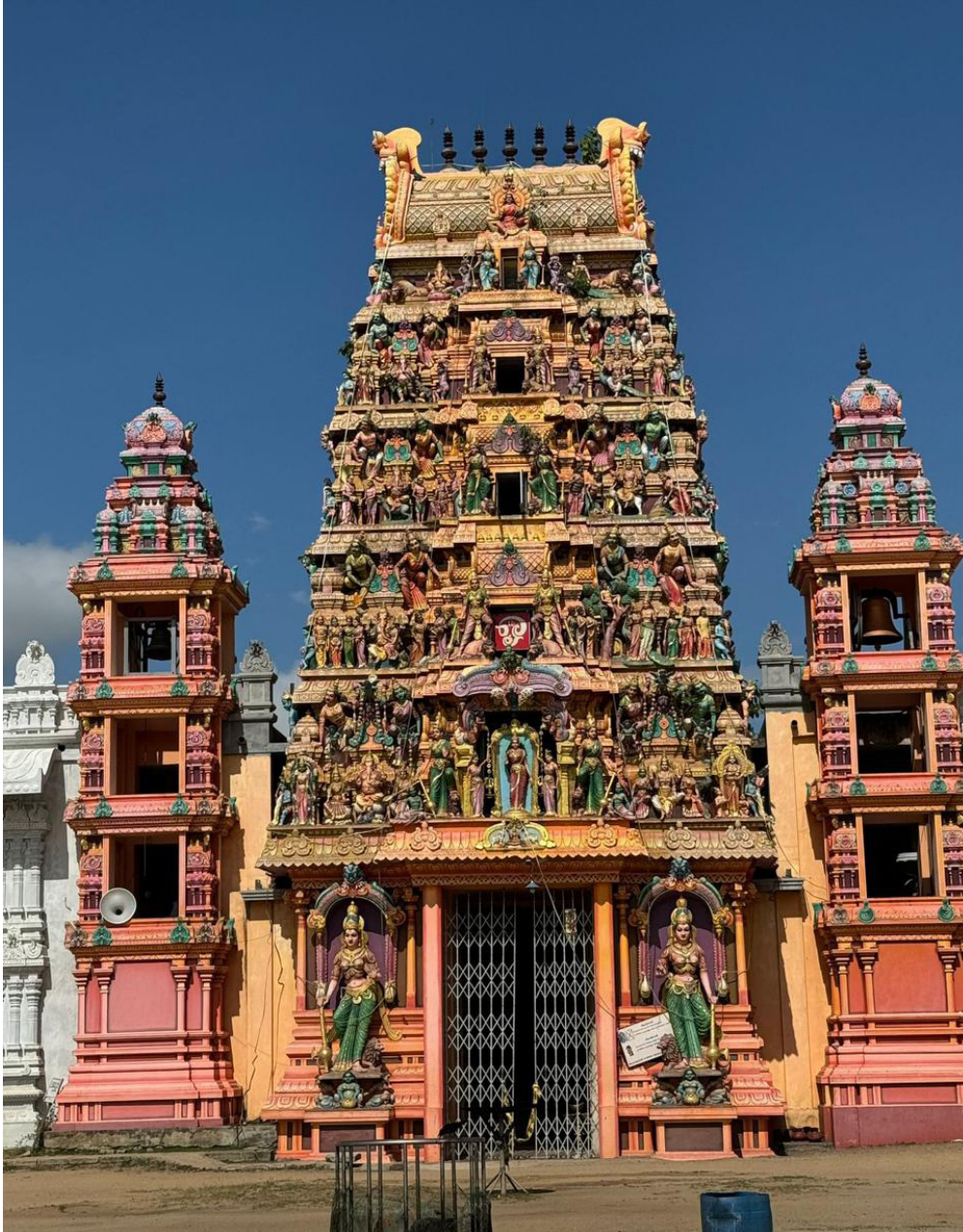
Cilappathikaram

How true!..... and if in doubt, ask the President who ran away, “spurned like a cur” by his millions. Cilappatikaram is perhaps the oldest Tamil classic from the Sangam period and is credited to the Jain poet ‘Ilango Adigal’ – the saintly brother of a Chera King. At the heart of this poem is the story of three ordinary folks – Kovalan, Kannagi and Madhavi, who are caught in a web of love, marriage, infidelity, betrayal and the miscarriage of justice attributed to the forces of destiny. This ancient story is also well known amongst many other cultures in South India and Sri Lanka. The dating of Sangam literature - including Cilappatikaram, is a matter of contention. The renowned social anthropologist Gananath Obeyesekere, in his book ‘The cult of the goddess Pattini’ states that Cilappatikaram was “probably composed during the period A.D 500-800”. Others argue that, since Cilappatikaram mentions the names of two kings – Senguttuwan (from the

Chera Kingdom) and Gajabahu (or ‘Kajavahu’ From Sri Lanka) who ruled their respective kingdoms in the 2nd century AD, to have been present at the consecration of a temple to Kannagi, an earlier date of 2nd century AD may be more appropriate. However, whether Senguttuwan and Gajabahu, are true historical figures or merely legendary characters, perhaps from a distant past, remains a matter of speculation.

The miscarriage of justice at the Pandian court in Madurai results in the wrongful conviction of Kovalan for robbery of the queen’s Anklet. As a result Kovalan is executed on the orders of the Pandian King- Nedunchelian, who fails in his duty to ensure a fair process in the enquiry and the subsequent dispensation of justice. Kannagi, the virtuous wife of Kovalan, having proven her husband’s innocence, seeks revenge on the people who wronged her beloved. As a result of Kannagi’s wrath and through the powers of her piety, chastity and virtue, King Nedunchelian dies and the city of Madurai is reduced to ashes. “Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere” – the people of Madurai certainly experienced it in Kannagi’s fury. Whether Kannagi’s reaction to her personal grief, and the collective punishment inflicted on the people of Madurai, was justifiable in this context is a question that is poorly discussed amongst the readers of Cilappatikaram. It certainly will not sit comfortably in a modern court of law – legal or moral.

The noble child – Manimehalai, born out of wedlock through the forbidden love between Kovalan and his lover Madhavi, goes on to become the central figure in the other Tamil Buddhist classic from the Sangam period, *Manimehalai*. Buddhism certainly had deep roots within Tamil culture- perhaps amongst segments of the hindu society, who could not come to terms with some of the divisive



The new look of Vattapalai Kannagi Amman temple, following extensive renovations

Vedic practices and rituals. The Chera king Senguttuwan, having heard the story of Kannagi bestows a status of divinity on her, thus initiating a tradition of Kannagi worship, which, over the centuries, has become an integral component of culture mainly amongst the rural/coastal communities in South India and Sri Lanka. According to Gananath Obeyesekera, Kannagi should be seen as a “*deity of the heterodox religions – Buddhism, Jainism and Ajivakism*”. Obeyesekera, however does not deny the possibility that Kannagi may indeed be one of the many goddesses of the Hindu pantheon. He confirms the South Indian Tamil origins of Kannagi (Pattini) worship and its subsequent diffusion into the Sri Lankan society, where it found a broad appeal amongst the Sinhala and Tamil people. What then are the key moral principles that underpin this timeless classic?

One could identify three strong themes that emerge from a deep analysis of Cilappatikaram. Namely

- i. A King (or kingdom) who deviates from the principles of thoroughness and fair processes in the dispensation of justice, even to the most weak and marginalised amongst its citizenry, will be punished and condemned by history.
- ii. Misfortune suffered by a person of virtue is temporary and the rightful honour and dignity that belongs to that person is usually restored by history.
- iii. The cruel hand of fate – referred to as ‘*ool-vinai*’ (in Tamil) or ‘*Daivaya*’ (in Sinhala) does play a role in all our lives and needs to be taken into account in understanding events that surround us.

In addition to these timeless moral lessons, Cilappatikaram also places on record several key features that are essential in understanding Tamil culture during the Sangam period and its subsequent evolution. It

presents an insight into the position of women in ancient Tamil society as an active decision-making partner rather than a passive dependant under the patronage of the husband. In contrast, for example, women's voices had little if any impact in Homer's *Odyssey* where Telemachos, the son of Odysseus, says that '*all power in society is the business of men*'. The virtual subjugation of Penelope, Odysseus's wife, in the absence of her husband by the potential suitors from adjacent kingdoms confirms the subservient role played by women in ancient Greek society. Cilappathikaram also highlights the diverse range of social classes, and how an ordinary citizen had to navigate these differences in daily life. The author also places on record the performance of dance and music at the royal courts alluding to the rules that governed these art forms. Wind instruments (Kulal), string instruments (Yarl) and percussion instruments (Murasu) are mentioned and possibly were the precursors of similar categories of instruments that are in widespread use in Carnatic music and Bharatha Natyam, to this



Illustration of Kannagi in the court of the Pandya king.

day. The concepts of 'Sruti' (or pitch), 'Iyam' (or rhythm) and 'Bhavam' (or expression) are well articulated, albeit indirectly, and give strong pointers that the origins of classical South Indian music and dance to be rooted within popular Tamil culture during (or preceding) the Sangam era (3rd century BCE to 3rd century CE).

Following her early blissful married life and the subsequent betrayal of her trust by Kovalan in Puhar (in the Chola kingdom), Kovalan and Kannagi move to the city of Madurai (in the Pandiyan Kingdom) where Kovalan is the victim of miscarriage of justice. Following her dramatic display of fury, by the public dismembering of her left breast and her curse that burns Madurai, Kannagi finds her way to the land of the Cheras (modern day Kerala), where she is conferred a state of divinity. Chera King Chenkuttuvan orders the construction of a statue for Kannagi and the consecration ceremony is described by Ramachandra Dikshitar (1896-1953) – another renowned Indologist and Dravidologist, as follows. "*To that venerable lady was dedicated, by the united aid of the Dharmic Brahmanas, Purohitas, Astrologers and expert sculptors, a shrine*

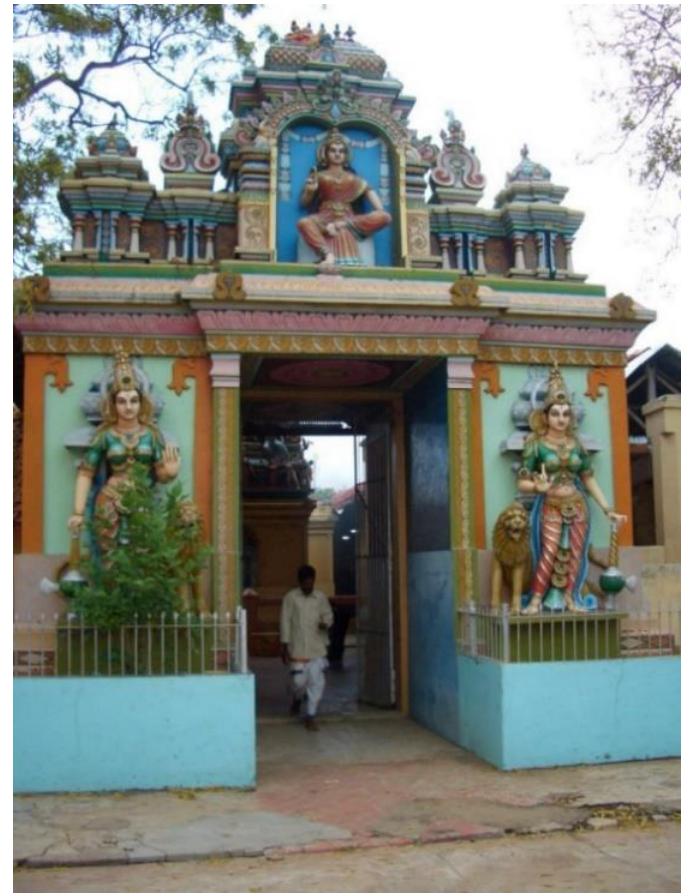
(Pattinikkottam), constructed in all its parts according to the prescribed rules so that it might win the approval of the wise. Therein was planted the image of Pattini, carved with expert handiwork upon the stone brought from the Himalayan slope, the residences of gods, after prayers to the god on the top of those hills” (Gananath Obeyesekera. The cult of the goddess Pattini. 1984).

Thus began the tradition of Kannagi (or Pattini) worship, which was subsequently introduced to Sri Lanka where it remains a popular belief system, mainly in the coastal regions of the country. To this day she remains a popular

deity, people turn to in times of disease, drought, famine and destitution. The resurgence of Saivism or Vaishnavism through the Bakhti movement between the 6th-12th centuries in South India – with Shiva and Vishnu as the key deities, does not seem to have blunted the enthusiasm found amongst the rural



Nawagamuwa Pattini Devalaya



Front and back Gopurams of Vattappalai Kannagi Amman Temple, Mullaitivu District (By Mahimsan and Umapathy. Reproduced under Wikimedia Creative Commons licence)

populations for Kannaki (or Pattini). The popularity of Kannagi Temples of Vattappalai (in the Mullaitivu district) or Pungudu Tivu (Jaffna district) as places of adoration and sites for annual pilgrimages bears testimony to this timeless devotion to Kannaki amongst Tamils. Amongst the Sinhala people *“the worship of goddess Pattini was most popular in the coastal regions of the Western and Southern provinces and in the province of Sabaragamuwa, which lies in the interior of Sri Lanka adjacent to these two provinces. She is also propitiated in the Kandyan region, particularly in and around the main cities of the old Kandyan kingdom – that is, Kandy itself, Matale, Hanguranketa and Badulla. The goddess is constantly referred to as Pattini of Nawagamuwa because her main shrine is in a village of that name in the Colombo district. This main shrine is a tiny, unimposing structure totally overshadowed by the Buddhist temple that has since been built on the same premises”*. (Gananath Obeyesekera,

The Cult of the Goddess Pattini. 1984).

The term ‘Cult’ used by Gananath Obeyesekera to describe Kannaki (or Pattini) worship is, in many ways, unfortunate as it gives the readers a tinted or biased view of a people’s faith, which, in this case is no different to any other form of deity worship – the personification of an eternal and formless god. The fact that an ordinary woman, born in the imaginations of a Tamil speaking Jain poet living in South India, has been able to capture the imagination and adoration of a large number of people living across several religious-socio-political barriers in the three kingdoms of ancient South India – the Cheras, Cholas and the Pandiyas, and the Buddhists and Hindus living of Sri Lanka is, in its own right, a very significant phenomenon. Kannagi epitomises the virtues of integrity, honesty, chastity and the willingness to stand up to authority in the face of injustice. Injustice experienced by a woman of such



The new look of Vattapalai Kannagi Amman temple, following extensive renovations

qualities seems to resonate deep within human conscience, evoking powerful sentiments within all people – despite any social, religious or linguistic differences that may exist between them. The ability to face up to and fight (and win) against injustice seems to elevate the status of such individuals to even above the more traditional gods. Legend has it that Goddess Meenakshi descended on earth to quench the rage of Kannagi in order to save the wider region from destruction, implying that Kannagi was considered more powerful than the consort of Lord Shiva – the source of all creative

energies in the cosmos (Shakthi). In some, perhaps more secular quarters, Kannagi is seen as a revolutionary who challenged authority and demanded justice from the king rather than pleading for it. The ability of a single destitute woman to bring an entire kingdom to a grinding halt may even be seen as a precursor to female power and empowerment widely discussed in modern society. Thus the appeal of Cilappatikaram goes beyond mere



religious sentiments and/or blind devotion. Cilappatikaram also displays the co-existence of multiple faiths and the diversity of society in the Sangam period. While leaving Puhar, Kannagi and Kovalan pass by a Vishnu temple, seven Buddhist Viharas and wondering Jain ascetics all within close proximity to each other. History and literature have great inherent value and as such may be considered as an end in themselves. Ilango Adigal's composition can and must be respected and valued for its literary beauty and the art of compelling story-telling. Nevertheless, the opportunities available to all of us to deploy history and literature as agents for change within our troubled and divided society also must not be missed. The political leaders and some academics of post-independence Sri Lanka, in their wisdom, have largely chosen to deploy literature and history as tools for division and disharmony. The long term consequences of this short sighted approach is apparent to all of us who have witnessed 30+ years of war in the North-East along with the two bloody



uprisings and their brutal suppressions in the South resulting in the bankruptcy of an entire nation's economy. A detailed and diligent study of Cilappatikaram, perhaps in our schools in the Sinhala, Tamil and English media provides an opportunity to reconsider this approach. Such a bold move may even help to evolve a more inclusive approach to nation-building, sustainable peace and an era of co-existence through mutual respect. The deep rooted devotion to a Tamil mythological goddess at times of great personal anguish and suffering – by people on either side of the ethnic divide, must amount to something more than literary interest alone.

November: The Month of Heroes

Keppetipola–Shankar–Wijeyweera



By:
**Sarawanan Komathi
Nadarasa**

In the month of November, we might not have observed that three individuals are commemorated in Sri Lanka on remembrance days. The remembrance days of Keppetipola, Sankar, and Wijewira all happen to fall within this month. These three individuals share the commonality of having been killed in the struggle for liberation.

Keppetipola can be seen as a martyr for Sinhala nationalism, Sankar for Tamil nationalism, and Wijewira for “internationalism.” On November 26 each year, Keppetipola’s remembrance day is observed, and in 2015, President Maithripala unveiled a statue in his honor on this day.

Liberation Tigers fighter known as Lieutenant Sankar, or Selvachandran Sathiyathan, sustained a fatal stomach injury in battle, passing away on November 27, 1982.

JVP leader Rohana Wijewira, who was in hiding, was captured at Ulapane and secretly shot and burned near the Borella Cemetery on November 13, 1989.

In Sri Lanka's history, heroes who fought against British rule and sacrificed their lives are often celebrated not as national heroes but primarily as Sinhala heroes. Key figures include those from the Uva Rebellion, such as Keppetipola (1818), Veera Puran Appu from the Matale Rebellion (1848), and Utuwankande Sura Saradiel (1864). These are among the most prominently celebrated figures. Sura Saradiel, famously known by the British as Sri Lanka's Robin Hood, stole from the rich to aid the poor and was ultimately captured and executed for resisting British rule. Films and even television series in Sinhala have portrayed these three figures. Songs about Saradiel, sung by renowned artists like Jothipala and the recently deceased maestro Visharada Amaradeva, are also well known.

Though more than two centuries have passed

since Keppetipola's execution, his annual remembrance day continues to be observed at his memorial, located in the courtyard of the Temple of the Sacred Tooth Relic (Dalada Maligawa) in Kandy, where he was beheaded.

A few years ago, when Karuna Amman was arrested, Udaya Gammanpila held a press conference in protest, drawing a comparison to Keppetipola. He stated:

"Karuna Amman is like our Keppetipola—a man who came from darkness into light, from the wrong side to the right side. He is one of the champions of the freedom we enjoy today."

This article is intended to explore the story of that very Keppetipola.

In recent times, Sinhala nationalists have promoted "Veera Keppetipola" on a mass scale, often with underlying political motives. He is not merely remembered as a Sinhala freedom fighter against British colonialism; there is a narrative claiming that it was the Muslims who betrayed this heroic figure. This adds a layer



of significance that limits Keppetipola's legacy, narrowing him to a hero celebrated solely by Sinhala Buddhists, rather than by all Sri Lankans. His remembrance day has thus been turned into a commemorative event tinged with ethnic sentiment.

The rebellion he led is known in Sinhala as the "Uva-Wellassa Freedom Struggle" or the "Great Uprising of the Hill Country." At the end of this struggle, the British captured, executed, imprisoned, or exiled 778 individuals as punishment.

The last Sinhala king to rule Kandy was Sri Vira Parakrama Narendra Singha (1707-1739). Without an heir, he arranged for the crown to pass to the Nayakar dynasty through the brother of his queen, Sri Vijaya Rajasinha, who was brought from Madurai and ruled from 1739 to 1747. Following him, the Nayakar dynasty saw the reigns of Kirti Sri Rajasinha (1747-1781) and Rajadhi Rajasinha (1781-1798). (These Tamil kings of the Nayakar lineage, who spoke Telugu, were referred to by the Sinhalese as Vaduga kings.)

After the death of Rajadhi Rajasinha in 1798, the king expressed a wish for his queen's brother, Muthusamy, to succeed him. However, the Chief Minister (known as the Maha Adigar in Sinhala), Pilimatalawa, had his own ambitions for the throne. Pilimatalawa, who belonged to the Nayakkar Vamsa (Nayakkar Dynasty), anticipated that the other ministers, many of whom opposed him, would insist that a member of his lineage assume the throne.

In his bid to place a compliant ruler on the throne, Pilimatalawa identified Kannusamy as the ideal candidate. Kannusamy was the brother of one of Rajadhi Rajasinha's wives and was born in Rameswaram. Upon his father's death, Kannusamy came to Sri Lanka with his uncle, Kondasamy, and resided in the area allocated to the Nayak dynasty within the

Kingdom of Kandy.

Before publicly announcing the king's death, Pilimatalawa visited Kannusamy, securing his cooperation. Only then did he inform the ministers of the king's demise and the selection of the new ruler. Though initially shocked, the ministers eventually agreed to the plan. Thus, at the age of 18, Kannusamy ascended the throne under the name Sri Vikrama Rajasinha.

Dreaming of reclaiming power from the Tamil rulers of Madurai and establishing a Sinhala monarchy, Pilimatalawa sought to control the young king. However, as time passed, Sri Vikrama Rajasinha grew aware of Pilimatalawa's schemes and began disregarding many of his counsel. Tensions among the ministers increased, and conspiracies against the king persisted, fueled by various internal conflicts.

Amid increasing pressure from the British to capture Kandy, Pilimatalawa secretly began corresponding with the British Governor, Frederick North, plotting to overthrow the king. Pilimatalawa's aim was to seize power for himself through a pact with the British.

The British, meanwhile, proclaimed Muthusamy, who was under their protection, as the rightful king of Kandy. Believing Kandy to be captured, they advanced, but the king regrouped, launching a fierce counterattack. Unable to withstand this assault, the British retreated. Many were captured, including Muthusamy, who had acted as a guide for the British forces. The king sentenced Muthusamy and those who fought alongside him to death, executing them as traitors.

A web of plots followed one after another. Though enraged at the British for declaring Muthusamy king without his consent, Pilimatalawa found himself helpless. At one point, he even requested the king's approval

to marry the daughter of one of Kirti Sri Rajasinha's wives to his own son, a proposal the king saw through and promptly rejected.

After twice forgiving Pilimatalawa's assassination plots, the king finally acted when a third conspiracy was uncovered with witnesses. Pilimatalawa was arrested, and his trial took place in 1811. Key officials, including Molligoda and Keppetipola, sat in on the tribunal, presided over by the king himself. Ultimately, Pilimatalawa was sentenced to death. Ironically, he was executed by the very king he had once placed on the throne.

Pilimatalawa's son-in-law, Ehelepola, was appointed to the position of Chief Minister. He had married Kumarihami, Keppetipola's sister. Like Pilimatalawa, Ehelepola also continued conspiracies against the king, aligning himself with British officials. Legend has it that as punishment, Ehelepola's wife Kumarihami and their children were executed, with tales of them being crushed and beheaded in a mortar. (However, many Sinhalese scholars argue that no evidence supports such a brutal execution, which is another part of the story.)

With Ehelepola's collaboration, the British captured Kandy in 1815. Sri Vikrama Rajasinha, along with his queens and mother-in-law, attempted to escape to the remote area of Medamahanuwara but was betrayed and arrested on February 18, 1815. Following his transfer to Colombo, the British and the Kandyan chieftains, led by Ehelepola, signed the Kandyan Convention on March 2, 1815.

The first three clauses of the Kandyan Convention are noteworthy. They stipulated that the "Malabar" (referring to Tamil kings originating from Malabar) king, Sri Vikrama Rajasinha, was deposed, that no member of his Tamil lineage would henceforth be allowed to ascend to the throne, and that all male relatives of his lineage were to be expelled from the

country.

Sri Vikrama Rajasinha was detained in Colombo until he was exiled to Madras aboard the Cornwallis on January 25, 1816. The ship reached Madras on February 21, from where he was taken to Vellore and held in confinement until his death on January 30, 1832.

The Kandyan chieftains who had trusted the British and signed the agreement soon realized they had been deceived. After the Kandyan Convention, Molligoda was appointed Chief Minister, Ehelepola became the Governor of the Hill Country, and Keppetipola was made the Governor of Uva. However, as rebellions against the British began to stir across villages, the British sent a force led by Keppetipola to Uva on November 17, 1817, to suppress the uprisings.

Upon encountering the fervent Sinhala rebels, Keppetipola had a change of heart. He handed over his weapons and the British flag to his soldiers, dismissed them, and joined the rebellion himself, taking up leadership in the fight against the British. Other chieftains soon joined him, including Ehelepola. In response, the British stripped Keppetipola and 16 other leaders of their titles, seized their properties, and issued a bounty for their capture, offering rewards to anyone who would hand them over.

During this period, Keppetipola made two announcements to rally the people to his side. First, he claimed to possess the "Sacred Tooth Relic of the Buddha," which he said he had received through Sumangala Thera and was keeping safely. This, he asserted, gave him legitimate authority to rule. Second, he announced that the rightful heir of the Nayakar dynasty, Duraisamy—known as "Wilbawe"—was with him. This confused the British, who launched an investigation and discovered that this was a fabricated story and



that the real Duraisamy was in Madras. The British publicized this, revealing that the local Wilbawe was merely a Buddhist monk and not a true Nayakar heir.

The British eventually obtained the Sacred Tooth Relic, which led to a loss of faith among the people, as they believed that whoever held the relic had rightful authority. (Even today, it is customary for election winners to visit the Temple of the Sacred Tooth Relic to receive blessings.) With this blow to morale, the rebellion began to falter. The British then deployed forces from Madras to crush the insurgent forces, gradually suppressing the rebellion.

One day, a Muslim merchant visiting the village where Keppetipola was staying noticed unusually tight security and patrols, unlike what he'd typically seen in the local areas. After spending the night observing, he passed this information on to the British, leading to Keppetipola's capture on October 23, 1818, after a surrounding operation.

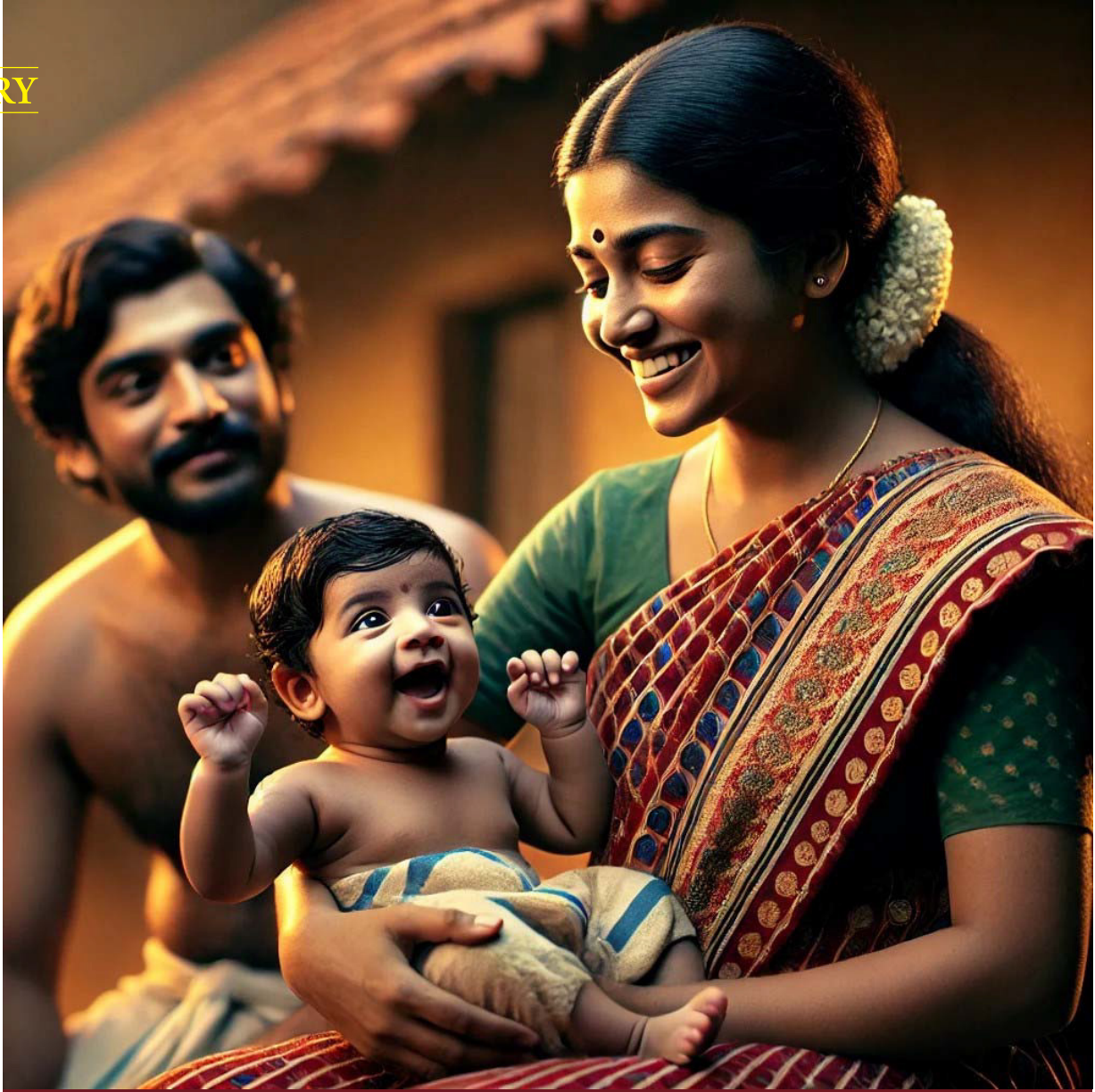
On November 26, 1818, Keppetipola was beheaded near the Bogambara Lake in Kandy.

Before his execution, he visited the Temple of the Sacred Tooth Relic for his final prayers. He reportedly instructed the executioner to sever his head with a single stroke. The British took Keppetipola's skull to England for study, and in 1954, following requests from his family, it was returned to Sri Lanka.

Ehelepola was exiled to Mauritius, where he eventually passed away.

In Sinhala historical narratives, Keppetipola is portrayed as a freedom fighter who opposed British imperialism and sought to establish a Sinhala Buddhist state. However, renowned historian Ralph Pieris, in his work *Sinhalese Social Organization*, establishes that Keppetipola's lineage traces back to a family that arrived from Malabar with a Tamil king. Pieris also affirmed in a *Sunday Leader* article (October 18, 1998, p.11) that Keppetipola was indeed Tamil.

The political motivations behind elevating Keppetipola in commemorations during November, a month of remembering heroes, must be understood in the context of this background.



PREMATURE



Translated from the original
Tamil short story *kurai*
mātam (குறை மாதம்) by
M. S. Kanakaratnam
which appeared in the 1961-
62 University of Colombo
Tamil Association's
magazine *ilantenral*
(இளந்தென்றல்)

Translated by:
Eluttukkinivan
(எழுத்துக்கினியவன்)

How terrible!

“Sundaram was hit by a car near the post office. It ran over him, leaving him severely injured and unrecognizable...”

Murthy stopped listening and took off like a bolt of lightning toward the scene of the accident. By the time he arrived, a large crowd had gathered. He pushed through to the center but



could hardly bear what he saw.

“Aiyō aṇṇā!” his wail shook the entire neighborhood.

His beloved brother—his only brother—lay in a pool of blood. Just five minutes earlier, he had left home saying, 'I'm going to the post office, I have an important letter to mail.' Now, he lay there, motionless, speechless, lifeless...

Yes, he was dead. Nothing more than a corpse in the middle of the street.

He who was here yesterday was gone today. He who is here today may be gone tomorrow. Life is merely an illusion, nothing but a web of lies.

Murthy was shocked into philosophizing.

Friends and family sobbed uncontrollably, unable to hold back their grief. Sundaram's sudden demise had shocked and saddened everyone. It was no surprise that the loss of a good man caused so much pain and grief.

Murthy could not hold his grief back either.

Tears, tears, everywhere.

‘My dearest brother is no more. My brother, who sacrificed his comforts to ensure a comfortable life for me, whose only wish was that I should live a happy life, has left me, our family, and this world itself.’

Murthy could not bear his grief.

‘How he struggled to give me an education! What obstacles he faced to help me find a job. He paid the price of sacrificing his comforts only because he wanted to see me succeed.’

Choking back his sobs, he glanced at what was laid out on the desk. He had been handed the items that were in Sundaram's pocket at the time of the accident.

A wallet, a pen, and a letter.

Sundarams had been using that pen and the wallet for a long time.

What was this?

— Murthy was surprised to notice that the

letter was addressed to a woman.

Was he corresponding with a woman? Did he, too, have a romantic liaison like everyone else? Cheche! It can't be anything of that sort.

Something in Murthy's heart urged him to read the letter.

He opened it and started to read.

"My Darling Sarasvathi...", Murthy was taken aback by the opening.

'*Aṇṇā* had a lover?'

Overcome with disbelief and shock, he read the entire letter:

*My Darling Sarasvathi
I bring you good news. The goal that
made me postpone our wedding—my life's
goal—is finally on the verge of fruition.
You may recall that I vowed to marry
only after completing my responsibility of
educating my brother Murthy and helping
him find a job. That has come to pass. He
is about to start his new job on the first of
next month.
I'll visit your home next week to meet
your mother and ask for your hand. We'll
arrange the wedding right after that. You
can wait, can't you?
I understand the risk in delaying our
wedding, and I feel your pain every
moment. It's true we made a mistake in
a moment of weakness, but I share that
responsibility. You trusted me, and I will
never abandon you.
Saras, don't worry about anything. We'll
be married before the truth comes out,
and no one will judge us after that.
Yours
Sundaram.*

Murthy reread the letter countless times. His surprise at discovering that his brother had a

lover instantly gave way to grief as he learned of Sundaram's resolve not to marry until Murthy had graduated and secured a job.

Che! Sundaram never had the good fortune to enjoy the satisfaction of achieving his dream. His life was taken before he could see his brother start a job.

Murthy felt there was something hidden in the letter that he did not quite grasp. But no matter how many times he read it, he could not figure out what it was.

He wondered how Sarasvathi would grieve when she heard of Sundaram's passing. How could he summon the courage to deliver such shocking news? Yet, he knew he must.

He recognized the village name in the letter's address as the location of the school where Sundaram had been teaching until the previous month, when he transferred to a school in his own village.

Who was that woman?

Perhaps their liaison began at school?

The riddle seems to be slowly unraveling.

Murthy had heard that Sundaram was a lodger at someone's house while he worked at that village school. He had eaten and slept in that house. He had heard that the house belonged to an elderly widow whose husband had recently passed away. The widow had a daughter.

Could it be her?

Murthy guessed that it might be her. Whoever it was, they needed to be informed of Sundaram's death. Murthy thought it only proper that he himself went there to deliver the bad news.

He located the house i and stepped in through the front entrance. There was no one about.

When he called out for a second time, he heard a feminine voice respond, “Who is there?” Presently a young woman appeared, dazzling Murthy.

What a beauty!

Beauty had taken refuge within that woman. She was very attractive, despite not wearing any makeup. A certain indescribable charm radiated from her calm, understated presence.

Murthy recovered somewhat to say, “I am Sundaram master’s brother,” and stuttered, unable to continue. Her eyes lit up, “Is that so? Come in, come in,” she invited him in and showed him to a chair.

Murthy sat down, still unsure how to break the news. All the preparation he had done for this moment evaporated instantly. He was sweltering.

How could he begin this conversation? He was at a loss.

Should he say, ‘The one to whom you gave your heart has forsaken you’ or ‘The



one who was to enrich your life had his life taken away from him’ or ‘The hands that you hoped would hold you have been incinerated’?

What could he say? How could he say it?

She must have noticed Murthy’s discomort. She started the conversation herself, “Sundaram master has told me a lot about you. Even though he was staying with us for such a long time, it is only today that you found your way here,” she laughed.

‘It is not as if I am making a pleasant social call today. I bear horrible news. You are laughing now, but in a minute, you are going to wail,’ Murthy lamented silently.

He had no option but to say something. In a shaky voice, he asked, “Are you Sarasvathi?”

“Yes, at least you know my name! Did your brother tell you that?”

Murthy’s heart howled again. He steadied himself. He must tell her the news.

“I came to tell you something, but I don’t know how to begin,” he hesitated.

“Don’t worry, just say it out loud,” she encouraged him.

‘Would she say this if she realized the horror of the news I bring? Aiyō, your grief is going to overwhelm you!’

“My brother... Sundaram.. He ...last Saturday ... he passed away,” Murthy spat out the words in fits and starts.

She reacted exactly as he had feared. Before he could even finish speaking, she let out a scream unlike any he had ever heard.

Somehow Murthy managed to tell her everything that had happened.

She sobbed, sniffed, screamed, and wailed.

Murthy sobbed along with her. He stopped grieving for his brother and began grieving for her.

They drowned in tears.

After what seemed like an eternity, Murthy handed her Sundaram’s last letter. When she heard that Sundaram met with the accident on his way to post this letter, her grief only became deeper.

She read the letter and sighed. Staring into nothingness, she moaned, “He has left me, but, but...”

Murthy felt that she was holding something back.

“But what?” he asked.

“But I can never forget him. It will be a symbol of our eternal love, that symbol...”



“What do you mean?” Murthy stuttered.

“That symbol is being formed...”

“Tell me in a way I can understand...”

“In... my.. belly...”

Murthy felt as if the sky collapsed in on him. He regarded her in shock.

Now he could read between Sundaram's lines in a way he hadn't been able to before.

His brother’s flesh and blood is growing within her womb.

What now?

“Does anyone else know about this?” asked Murthy.

“No one. Not even my mother knows about our relationship. Your brother lived here like a member of the family. Therefore neither my mother nor anyone else suspected anything...”

Her words were caught up in her throat.

She was silent for a few moments, but continued, “But sooner or later everyone will find out...”

In his mind's eye, Murthy could visualize that, sooner or later, her life would be destroyed, and the world would spit on her and call her a whore.

‘Must the world label her a fallen woman? Does she not deserve a promise of a future like everyone else? Can she not live like every other woman? Is there no salvation for her?’

Murthy closed his eyes and immersed himself into a deep trance, oblivious to his surroundings.

Silence reigned for a long time.

A profound silence.

‘There is a way. There is only one way in which she can find salvation.’

From some corner of his heart, a voice said, ‘Murthy, your brother Sundaram lived for you. Your happiness was his happiness. He dedicated his life for you. He even postponed the chance to wed his beloved for your sake, and lost that happiness forever. For him to rest in peace, for the sake of your dear brother, wouldn't you do this?’

He opened his eyes as though he had reached a firm resolution, and his face shone with an extraordinary light.

He looked at her with unshakable resolve and, in a quavering voice, said, 'I've come to a decision after careful thought. If you don't object...'

“If I don't object...?”

“I want to marry you myself.”

She was stunned and could not speak.

Silence. A long silence.

She struggled to turn her tumultuous emotions into words. Deep within her chest, words tripped over one another and festered.

Murthy looked at her face.

He could not tell if what he saw on her face was joy or surprise or shock or wonder.

After a long lapse, she started speaking again.

“Have you really thought this through?”

“Yes, I have. As far as I am concerned, it is a decision cast in stone now.”

Again, silence.

She said, “You are selfless.”

He looked into the distance, smiling to himself, and muttered, “More than my brother?”

Everyone was aghast at Murthy's behavior. Not even a whole month had passed since Sundaram died. Murthy started his new job only a week ago. Yet, he had started planning



his wedding. Who would not be surprised at such behavior?

People could not make sense of how Murthy could go from uncontrollable grief at Sundaram's funeral to seeking the earthly pleasure of a wedding so soon.

No one could understand why he wanted to take on responsibility for another human being, even before he had drawn his first salary, even before he had set his finances on a firm footing.

But it did not matter what the world thought of it. Everything happened the way Murthy had wanted. Without any traditional wedding rituals, without the bustles and banquets of wedding ceremonies, Murthy wed Sarasvathi in the company of a handful of relatives.

He felt relieved to have shut the world's mouth preemptively.

The baby was born.

Everyone—except Murthy and Sarasvathi—worried about the potential for a premature baby to run into health complications.

Everyone thought the baby looked just like Murthy.

That was no surprise, was it?

The baby sat on Sarasvathi's lap, waving its tiny arms at Murthy and smiling beatifically.

It seemed to want to tell them, 'I, too, know the secret of my birth, not just you two!'

Sarasvathi lifted her head to look at Murthy.

Her glance was filled with wordless gratitude saying, 'You are selfless.'

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