

Sri Lanka's strategy of terror has international backing

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Raviraj assassinated

Maamanithar award

The LTTE's awards the slain MP its highest civilian award, hailing his contribution to the Tamil cause. [NEWS 2](#)

Latest target

Raviraj is the six TNA MP or candidate to be murdered by Army-backed gunmen. [NEWS 2](#)

Attempt to silence

The TNA says the killing is another attempt to silence them. [NEWS 3](#)



Aid workers mourn

ACF staff mourn the killings, blamed on Sri Lankan troops, of 17 colleagues in August. [NEWS 4](#)

Vaharai massacre

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Stunning bronzes

Chola statues go on display in London. [ART 15](#)

Tamil rage and frustration



Thousands of people marched in Colombo Monday in protest at Raviraj's slaying. Photo Anti-War Front

'This shows the hatred the Sinhalese have toward Tamils'

BLACK flags draped in mourning, shops shut in protest, thousands of Tamils gathered in Sri Lanka's north on Wednesday to pay their last respects to the second Tamil MP assassinated in a year by suspected government death squad.

Mourners sprinkled flowers at the feet of Tamil National Alliance (TNA) MP and human rights lawyer Nadarajah Raviraj, murdered in Colombo on Friday by an unidentified gunman, Reuters reported from Jaffna.

In the distance, artillery shelling could be heard, a near-daily occurrence as Tigers and the Army exchange fire across the frontline at Muhamalai.

Angry and frustrated residents in Raviraj's Tamil hometown of Chavakachcheri in the northern army-held Jaffna peninsula, said they were sick of violence that has killed about 3,000 civilians, troops and Tigers this year.

"This shows the hatred toward the Tamils the Sinhalese have," said 23-year-old Shekar Sintharajah, a student at Jaffna University, after watching a Hindu ceremony at Raviraj's family home.

"Murders and kidnappings have gone too far. How long are they going to kill our MPs and how many?" he added. "These killings must not be allowed nor should they be pardoned."

Joseph Pararajasingam, another TNA MP, was shot dead at Christmas midnight mass in the eastern district of Batticaloa.

The TNA, Sri Lanka's largest party and which is supportive of the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE), have pinned the killing firmly on the majority-Sinhalese government or government-aligned forces.

"The government should take total responsibility for this brutal

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NEWS

Raviraj receives 'Maamanithar' award from LTTE

LTTE leader Vellupillai Pirapaharan's statement conferring the movement's highest civilian award.

A GREAT soul who carried the ideal of the liberation of our homeland as a burning flame in his heart has been made a victim of the Sinhala oppression.

The shock waves created by this tragic news has descended into the depth of our hearts like an earthquake. It has shaken the soul of our nation.

It has heaped further grief on a people facing death and destruction at the hands of Sinhala oppression on a daily basis.

Mr Nadaraja Raviraj was a great man. He possessed rare characteristics.

He was not one to be pushed and pulled for personal gains. He had a deep affection for the Tamil homeland and its people.

He was an exceptional politician. He understood law and justice in its true sense. He possessed a progressive spirit and a desire to follow novel approaches. He was brave and he possessed a purity of heart.

His youthful energy with all of the above stole the hearts of all who came in contact with him.

His clarity and level of consciousness about the freedom struggle was born by observing the tragic living conditions of the Tamil people.

This awareness inevitably

pushed him on the path of freedom struggle. Along this path he whole-heartedly accepted the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam and their goals and served the nation. He contributed on several fronts in this freedom struggle.

As a parliamentarian he worked tirelessly for the Tamil nation. He spoke loudly to the world about the Sinhala Buddhist chauvinistic state terror. He shattered the false propaganda of the Sinhala state infusing his arguments with his legal expertise. He

'He had a deep affection for the Tamil homeland and its people.'

stood firm and fought injustice in the face of threats from paramilitary violence.

In recognition of Mr Nadaraja Raviraj's love of freedom, his patriotism and his services to our freedom struggle, I am proud to bestow the title of Mamanithar on him. Death never destroys the great souls who lived their life for truth. They will live forever in our nation's soul as heroes of our history.

Death list



TNA MPs and candidates killed by military intelligence and associated paramilitaries - since the 2002 ceasefire was signed.

1. **A Chandra Nehru**, former MP for Amparai, shot and killed on 23 Feb 2005, while travelling from Kilinochchi to Batticaloa near Batticaloa.
2. **Joseph Pararajasingam**, MP for Batticaloa, shot and killed on 24 December 2005, in a church in Batticaloa town.
3. **Vanniasingam Vigneswaran**, selected by TNA to replace

Joseph Pararajasingam, shot and killed on 7 April 2006, on his way to work in Trincomalee.

4. **Arumugam Senthilnathan**, a list candidate in the TNA list, shot and killed on 26 April 2006, in his shop in Vavuniya.

5. **Sinnathamby Sivamaharasa**, a former TNA MP, shot and killed on 21 August 2006, near his home in Jaffna.

6. **Nadaraja Raviraj**, TNA MP for Jaffna, shot and killed on 8 Nov 2006, in Narahenpitiya in Colombo.

NEWS

Sri Lanka blamed for Raviraj killing

SRI LANKA'S largest Tamil party and the country's main opposition blamed the military for the assassination of one of its parliamentarians last week, saying the killing was intended to terrorise and silence criticism of President Mahinda Rajapakse's rightwing administration.

Nadaraja Raviraj, a member of the Tamil National Alliance (TNA) and a human rights lawyer, was shot at close range by unidentified gunman on a motorbike at around 8.30am last Friday as he got into his car after giving a TV interview.

The MP died later in hospital. His bodyguard was also killed.

President Mahinda Rajapakse immediately condemned the shooting, calling it a "cowardly and heinous act" by "those opposed to dissent and political pluralism in a democratic society".

However, the TNA was quick to blame the government for the brazen killing by gunmen who coolly departed the scene in the capitol, Colombo.

The gunmen got away after stopping traffic in front of a military installation, without fear of being arrested.

"It is government forces or forces aligned to the government, there can be no question," TNA leader R Sampanthan told Reuters news agency.

"This is an attempt to stifle... and silence those who can justifiably espouse the Tamil cause."

"We understand that a whole magazine has been emptied on

'These killers and the mighty terror of the state are making this a killing field'

them in broad daylight. This is a clear message to Tamil parliamentarians ... don't open your mouth," Suresh Premachandran, another MP for the TNA, told reporters.

"A democratic voice of Tamils has been silenced," Selvam Adaikalanathan, another fellow party member, told Tamilnet.

"He had a convincing way of dealing with even the crude bureaucracy of this failed state. He fought from their platform. His voice in the Sri Lankan parliament, and in south, where injustice and oppression originate, was much feared."

The Tamil Tigers conferred their highest civilian honour Saturday on Mr. Raviraj.

The LTTE leader, Velupillai Pirapaharan bestowed the title of "Mamanithar," or great man, on Raviraj, who on the day before petitioned the United Nations to intervene and protect civilians against violence by the armed forces.

The United States led international criticism of the government, but stopped short of condemning the killing.



Muslims joined Tamils and some Sinhalese in condemning the TNA MP's killing, blamed on government death squad. Photo Anti-War Front.

"The United States deplores the assassination on November 10 of Mr Nadarajah Raviraj, member of the Sri Lankan Parliament," a US embassy statement said.

"We express our deepest sympathy for this loss to the family of Mr. Raviraj, to his parliamentary colleagues and the people of Sri Lanka who have been unjustly robbed of his energy and talent."

"It is critical that crimes such as the murder of Nadarajah Raviraj not go unpunished. We urge the government to begin an immediate investigation into the circumstances of his killing and to find, arrest and prosecute those responsible on the most urgent basis," the US said.

The Federation of All Mosques and Organizations in Eastern Province (FAMOEP), in a statement Saturday, expressed its deep sorrow over the killing of Mr. Raviraj.

"Muslims of North East revere Raviraj as a Tamil leader who had given an important place in his heart for the well-being of Muslims," it said.

"He worked tirelessly for the liberation of Tamil speaking people in the North East and also vehemently advocated the unity of Tamils and Muslims. He openly expressed regret for the suffering the Muslim people had undergone in the North East during war period."

The main opposition United National Party (UNP) said the government must accept responsibility for the killing - the second of a TNA legislator in a year - and ensure the killers were brought to

justice.

"Within a year of parliamentary Joseph Pararajasingham's assassination, Raviraj has been killed. This is a threat to democracy. We strongly condemn this cowardly act and urge the government to take legal actions to bring the killers to justice besides providing adequate security measures to Tamil parliamentarians," UNP leader Ranil Wickremesinghe said.

UNP national organiser S.B. Disanayake blamed the government for the killing, saying it could not get away by blaming parliamentarians or any other organisation.

Mr. Raviraj, who spoke Tamil, Sinhala and English, had often been called on to articulate the Tamil perspective in Sinhala electronic media.

"He clearly explained to the Sinhala people in Sinhala why the Tamils are oppressed because they are Tamils," Gnanasiri Kotthigoda, editor of the Haraya newspaper said.

Mr Raviraj, 44, elected twice as mayor of Jaffna in the Tamil heartland, was an outspoken parliamentarian, voicing objections to extra-judicial killings and civilian abductions, and a leading campaigner for Tamil self-rule.

On Thursday, the father-of-two had taken part in a demonstration against the Sri Lankan Army's shelling near a school in the north-eastern town of Vaharai which killed at least 50 Tamil civilians. The military onslaught in the region has displaced over 40,000 Tamil people.

Thousands of people of all ethnicities protested Monday against Mr. Raviraj's killing at a demonstration organised by anti-war peace groups.

The MP's casket was carried on shoulders of protestors.

A call for hartal (general shut down) protest brought in Tamil parts of the country to a standstill.

The TNA said a request for Mr. Raviraj's cortege to travel to the northern peninsula of Jaffna by road was turned down by the government.

Defence officials confirmed the request was rejected, but said they offered air transport to Jaffna. TNA leader Sampanthan said the party was making other arrangements to charter a private

plane and hold the funeral at his home constituency of Chavakachcheri in Jaffna.

A spokeswoman for the international truce monitors in Sri Lanka, Helen Olafsdottir, told the BBC that there seemed to be total impunity regarding assassinations in Sri Lanka, which she said occurred everyday.

"We are fast becoming a country of widows," said Nimalka Fernando, a leading human rights activist at Monday's protest said. "These killers and the mighty terror of the state are making this a killing field."

"We cannot allow this country to be ruled in this manner," she said. "It is the culture of impunity that must stop."

Rage, frustration ...

Continued from page 1

murder which happened just in front of the military police headquarters," said fellow Tamil MP Suresh Premachandran. "His killers are very confident that they will never be caught."

Rights and aid groups say hundreds of people have been abducted, killed or 'disappeared' in the worst violence since a 2002 truce that has raised fears of a return to a war.

"This is a very, very low cowardly act. They have killed a person who struggled for the freedom of his people in a non-violent manner," said 35-year-old local commerce teacher Thanga-

raja Gopalakrishnan.

On Monday, around 3,500 protesters of all ethnicities marched through Sri Lanka's capital with Raviraj's coffin on Monday to demand the government and the Tigers halt fighting.

President Mahinda Rajapakse, under pressure to solve a rash of extrajudicial killings and abductions, has called for Scotland Yard to investigate Raviraj's murder.

On Tuesday, thousands of Tamils in the Jaffna peninsula paid their last respects to Raviraj's remains, whose body was flown from Colombo to Palaly air base in Jaffna and later kept at Jaffna Municipal Council (JMC) offices at Nallur.

NEWS

Slain aid workers remembered as probe drags

ACTION Against Hunger, the international aid agency, who lost seventeen workers in August in a massacre blamed on Sri Lankan troops held a commemoration service last Monday for the victims.

ACF also pressed for observers and experts independent of the Sri Lankan government to be involved in the investigation into the massacre, which is to be conducted under the aegis of President Mahinda Rajapakse.

In keeping with Sri Lankan tradition, according to which families come together to commemorate a death after three months- a memorial service was organised in Colombo in presence of ACF members, representatives of civil society, the UN and local and international NGOs working in Sri Lanka.

ACF also requested all members of the ACF International Network in its 40 countries of intervention, as well as the larger humanitarian community, to observe a minute's silence on Monday, 6th November 2006, at 5 pm (local time).

"On 4th August 2006, a massacre unprecedented in the history

of NGO's was committed against humanitarian aid workers," ACF said in a statement.

On August 6, 2006, the seventeen ACF were found shot dead execution style at the organisation's base in Muttur.

Fifteen had been lined up on the floor and shot. Two were found shot dead in a vehicle outside.

All but one of the workers - an ethnic Muslim - were Tamils.

The 13 men and four women, aged 23 to 54, worked mostly as engineers on water sanitation and farm projects for the charity.

International Ceasefire monitors have blamed Sri Lankan troops who recaptured Muttur from the Tamil Tigers in early August for the killings.

Following the discovery massacre, Sri Lankan military forces blocked off the area and prevented ACF officials and international ceasefire monitors from retrieving the bodies of the victims.

The Sri Lanka Monitoring Mission (SLMM) said it "cannot find reasons for the restrictions of movements... acceptable, thereby strongly indicating the Government of Sri Lanka's (GoSL) eagerness to conceal the matter from the SLMM".



ACF staff in Colombo released pigeons on Nov. 6 to commemorate the deaths of 17 of their colleagues shot dead by Sri Lankan troops three months previously. Photo Sanka Vidanagama/AFP/Getty Images.

ness to conceal the matter from the SLMM".

"When NGO employees are targeted, the whole humanitarian community is directly affected. If the independence and neutrality of humanitarian workers is not respected, then their activities are undermined."

ACF said it "reaffirms its commitment to ensure that the official investigation progresses and that all evidence is brought to light about the circumstances surrounding the massacre."

"From the outset, Action Against Hunger has done its utmost to ensure that those responsible for the massacre are identified and brought to justice."

"Action Against Hunger is following the investigation closely and has mobilised its partners, the international community," the NGO said.

The massacre was the worst attack on humanitarian workers since a suicide bombing of the UN headquarters in Baghdad in August 2003 killed 22 UN staff.

As part of the investigation, 11 bodies were exhumed and transferred to Colombo on October 18 for an autopsy.

The post-mortems are taking place under the observation of Australian experts.

The earlier autopsies, undertaken by the government, were inconclusive.

But staff at the Trincomalee Hospital reportedly complained against the unusual procedure for performing autopsies of the slain workers.

The hospital's judicial medical officer was reportedly on leave while the government brought in a replacement from Anuradhapura rather than allowing the hospital director to conduct the autopsies.

Under renewed international pressure, the government had no other option but to exhume the dead bodies and conduct autopsies in presence of the Australian observers.

According to Sri Lankan law, the post-mortem report should be transferred to the magistrate in charge of the case, with the conclusions to be published during the next hearing.

In theory, the autopsy could reveal evidence that point toward the killers, such as the type of ammunition used.

But ACF is sceptical.

"Perhaps. But in this kind of situation we have to be very cautious because it can be manipulated," said Benoit Miribel, ACF's general director.

"So you never know who has used these arms. It could be one element. But the key factor to know the truth will be through the eye-witnesses."

Stung by international criticism, the Sri Lankan government has reluctantly agreed to allow international observers to participate in its investigations.

But not before lashing out at the SLMM and its then head, Maj. Gen. Ulf Henricsson and rejecting their findings.

The inquest began in Muttur but has since been transferred twice.

The investigation, along with probes into several other major incidents of violence is to be overseen by a committee to be appointed by President Rajapakse.

The government had initially, under intense international pressure, agreed to an independent international investigation.

But Colombo later withdrew the offer and the President has agreed to a committee under his purview with international partic-

ipation.

The move has been criticised by human rights groups, including the Asian Centre for Human Rights (ACHR).

President Rajapakse has made it clear that the so-called International Commission of Inquiry is being established essentially "in the light of attempts being made in various quarters to discredit the Government, Security Forces and the Police," ACHR said.

"In other words, the government is setting up the International Commission of Inquiry to give 'credit' to [itself] as the SLMM has allegedly been discrediting it."

In its statement last week, ACF was careful not to reject the inquiry, but reiterated the international observers should be independent and free to comment publicly about the investigation.

"The creation of an investigatory commission including Sri Lankan representatives and international observers, under the aegis of the president, is a step that would demonstrate the will to ensure transparency while respecting the sovereignty of the Sri Lankan State," ACF said.

"However, the international observers should be independent and recognised as not only having the mandate to observe, but also the freedom to make public their conclusions."

The Muttur massacre should be at the top of the list of priorities for any such investigatory commission that is created, ACF argued..

"In any case, in view of the seriousness of the Muttur massacre and what is at stake for the international humanitarian community, any initiative that could help bring the truth to light should not be neglected."

'They want to wipe us out'

Thousands flee Sri Lanka on wave of terror

Daniel Pepper
Scotland on Sunday

AT 2.30 last Monday morning, K Thangaraja, a 46-year-old tractor driver from eastern Sri Lanka, stood knee-deep in seawater fearing his end was near.

Surrounding him was the murky confluence of the Bay of Bengal and the Indian Ocean - the barrier between his home in Sri Lanka and a new life in India.

Five hours earlier, a fisherman had pushed Thangaraja and 19 relatives, including young children, from his 26ft wooden boat

and on to a shallow sand bank. "Someone will be along shortly to take you to the Indian coast," he said, before hurrying off into the darkness.

No one came. Not until 4.30 the following afternoon, when they were nearly unconscious from exhaustion, hunger, and dehydration. An Indian fishing vessel happened to spot their improvised white flags and brought them ashore.

"It was the worst experience of my life," said Thangaraja. "If I had to do it all over again, I would take my chances in Sri Lanka."

Yet for Tamils now caught in the crossfire of an increasingly bloody civil war in Sri Lanka, staying is not an option.

Last Wednesday, at least 23 civilians were killed and more than 100 injured when government shells slammed into a school

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NEWS

Sri Lanka unmoved by international criticism

Artillery pounds refugee camp, 42 killed, 100 wounded

SRI LANKA was defiant in the face of international criticism after Army artillery pounded a refugee camp last week, killing scores of civilians and wounding a hundred more.

"While we regret this whole episode, we also say that national security is utmost and it has to be maintained," Minister Keheliya Rambukwella, Defence Spokesman told reporters.

"And as such defensive action by the authorities is something that is inevitable."

The government also claimed the LTTE had fired artillery from near the IDP's camp at Vakaraï and was thus to blame for the deaths.

But international ceasefire monitors who spoke to survivors dismissed the claim.

"Our monitors saw there were no military installations in the camp area, so we would certainly like some answers from the military regarding the nature and reasons of this attack," Helen Olafsdottir, spokeswoman for the SLMM (Sri Lanka Monitoring Mission), said.

Sri Lanka troops at the border checkpoint refused to allow seriously injured civilians to be transported to Batticaloa and delayed Red Cross personnel and other aid workers from reaching the shattered camp.

And unbowed by international protests, Colombo continues to insist that national security is paramount.

Perhaps it is because for all the harsh words, there is little the international community is doing in practice to compel Sri Lanka to desist from hitting civilians.

Civilians have been targeted by Sri Lankan artillery and airstrikes several times in the past year and repeated international protests haven't been matched by curtailing of aid or other punitive measures.

Even when the US protested about the shelling of the Vaharai refugee camp that killed at least 42 civilians and wounded a hundred, Washington, a staunch ally of Sri Lanka, did not condemn the action - it merely 'strongly regretted' the massacre.

But the US pointedly blamed the Colombo military and demanded punitive measures against those responsible. US irritation was fuelled by the Army's firing artillery at the head of the interna-

tional monitors in Sri Lanka.

"The United States strongly regrets the loss of innocent life caused by the shelling by the Sri Lankan military of a camp for internally displaced persons in the Vakaraï region in eastern Sri Lanka on November 8," the State Department said.

"We exhort the Sri Lankan Government to adopt corrective measures to prevent civilian casualties that also take into account instances where civilians may be used as 'human shields' in the future."

"We call upon the Government of Sri Lanka to conduct an immediate, independent investigation into the November 8 incidents and bring the responsible parties to justice."

"We are also disturbed that the Head of the Sri Lankan Monitoring Mission and his delegation came under fire in Pooneryn in the north of Sri Lanka the same day."

The US urged government of Sri Lanka and the Liberation Tigers "to honor their commitment to abide by the cease fire, end all hostilities immediately, and return to negotiations to find a peaceful solution to the conflict."

Canada condemned the attack and echoed the call for the violence to end for talks.

Reacting soon after the attack Wednesday, Amnesty International said it "is appalled that the military should attack a camp for displaced people - these were civilians who had already been forced from their homes because of the conflict."

"[We] condemn all attacks on civilians and is particularly saddened and shocked to see such a large-scale attack on civilians' just days after the government's announcement of its Commission of Inquiry into rights abuses"

The ICRC, which escorted badly wounded survivors to hospitals, said it "deplored the tragic loss of life and the injury to civilians resulting from the shelling, of the densely populated area of Kathiraveli, a coastal hamlet north of Vakaraï."

An ICRC convoy of six ambulances, a bus, a truck and three cars reached LTTE-controlled Vakaraï and transferred 69 serious cases to Valaichchenai hospital, a better equipped facility in the government-controlled area



A hospital worker covers up the bodies of civilians massacred in Vakaraï by Sri Lankan artillery.

Operation USA says Sri Lanka 'blocking aid' to Jaffna, Vaharai

OPERATION USA, a large American NGO, says it is "collecting funds and pushing the US Government and the UN to take firm action to help re-open humanitarian corridors" in Sri Lanka. Demanding access to internally displaced people (IDPs), the NGO said "a contributing factor to the current tension between the Sinhalese and Tamils is the inequitable distribution of tsunami relief aid by the Government of Sri Lanka."

"There is an immediate need for food, nutritional supplements, medication, relief supplies, and funds to support the growing refugee population in the NorthEast," Operation USA said.

"Despite our advocacy efforts ... this aid is not reaching the refugees. This is because the

Government of Sri Lanka is not allowing humanitarian access to affected regions," the NGO said.

"At present, 600,000 people in the Jaffna peninsula do not have access to food and medication due to the closure of a key access road."

"43,000 civilians (9,000 families) from the tsunami-affected regions of Muttur, Sampur, Eechalampattai, and Trincomalee Districts are currently in Vaharai, with minimal access to the region for humanitarian relief."

Operation USA cited wider discrimination against Tamils by the Sri Lankan government.

"A recent survey found that in the predominately Sinhalese south, 75% of temporary shelters have been dismantled and the families moved into permanent

housing," the NGO said.

"In contrast, only 25 % of the population in the Northeast have been relocated to permanent housing, leaving 77% in deteriorating temporary shelters,"

Operation USA last week appealed for people to come forward with "medical supplies or nutritional supplements, are interested in sponsoring children in our Schools and Orphanage program, or are looking for ways to assist the tsunami-affected populations in Sri Lanka who have also recently been displaced by political violence."

It demanded access "enabling our partners on the ground to provide goods and services to the affected IDP and to ensure the safety of tsunami development programs."

India trains Mig-27 support crews

INDIA is training a third batch of six Sri Lanka Air Force (SLAF) personnel at Chandigarh, capitol of Punjab to support Colombo's plans to expand its jet bomber fleet, the Times of India reported.

Sri Lanka plans to purchase four more jet bombers from Russia and, in preparation, SLAF personnel are being put through three months of instruction.

The latest group began training on October 14, despite outrage in Tamil Nadu over the targeting of civilians by SLAF bombers in which over a hundred people have been killed this year.

"We are a group of six and are undergoing electrical first line course for MiG-27s here," SLAF Sergeant Perera told the paper.

They started their training

programme on October 14 and would end on January 5, 2007, he and another Sergeant Srigunasinghe said, adding that theirs was the third batch from Sri Lanka to receive training here.

Another Sri Lankan trainee Ariyadasa said Colombo was going to purchase four aircrafts from Russia and this course would come handy for them.

Srigunasinghe said a batch from their country had received training in basic concepts from Pakistani Air Force in 1999-2000.

About the technical type training (tetra) school in Chandigarh, the Station Commander, Group Captain B K Sood said it had turned out to be a premier training base for MiG-27 and MiG-29 in the last one year.

On August 14, SLAF jets bombed the Sencholai children's home in Vallipunam, killing 51 schoolgirls and four staff and wounding over 150.

The bombing sparked condemnation by Tamil Nadu leaders. Chief Minister M Karunanidhi denounced it as an "atrocious and inhumane act" while the Legislative Assembly passed a resolution condemning it.

A former counter-terrorism chief of India's External intelligence, Research and Analysis Wing (RAW), also criticized the targeting of civilians, saying it was driving the Tamils to the LTTE. "The Sri Lankan Government's counter-insurgency operations are becoming increasingly ruthless," Mr. B Raman said.

EDITORIAL & OPINION

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WEDNESDAY NOVEMBER 15, 2006 No. 336

Joint Strategy

Sri Lanka's strategy of terror has international backing.

Sri Lanka's Sinhala dominated state is escalating its military campaign to destroy the Tamil struggle. As it does so, its contempt for the Ceasefire Agreement (CFA) and international humanitarian law is undisguised. As ever, there are two components to Sri Lanka's strategy - attacking the Liberation Tigers on the one hand and inducing terror amongst the Tamil populace on the other. These elements have always been part of counter-insurgency in Sri Lanka. And they have always had the approval of the international community.

Despite its rhetoric of multi-ethnic plurality the reality is the state of Ceylon/ Sri Lanka has, since independence, functioned on the logic of us-and-them when it comes to the Sinhalese and the Tamils. And the 2002 peace process has pointedly failed to corrode this racial hierarchy. The state's response to the devastation wrought by the 2004 tsunami - to ignore the Northeast and prioritise the South - is archetypical. The point was underscored last week by frustrated Operation USA.

But it is the state's escalating violence against the Tamil population that is doing most to illuminate contemporary ethnic relations in the island. Sri Lanka's artillery targeted a refugee camp in Vakarai. At least 40 people were killed and 100 wounded. As ever, mimicking justifications of atrocities in another part of the world, Sri Lanka said it was counter-attacking LTTE gun positions - a claim rejected by international ceasefire monitors and human rights groups who spoke to survivors and residents. But the Army also blocked the ICRC and other aid agencies from the area for several hours. It refused to let the badly wounded civilians out to reach hospital. And for the past six months, the Sri Lankan military has been brazenly blocking food, medicine and other essentials to Vakarai and other Tamil region. The protests of international aid agencies, Tamil parliamentarians and human rights groups have been derisively ignored.

And apart from meting out this collective punishment against Tamils in areas controlled by the Tigers, in its own controlled areas, the state is waging a murderous campaign against anyone even slightly inclined to agitate against it. It is not simply a matter of LTTE cadres or supporters, but anyone dabbling in Tamil political activity. It is inevitable perhaps that parliamentarians of the Tamil

National Alliance (TNA) are targets for the Army-backed paramilitaries and death squads. The assassination of Nadaraja Raviraj, MP, last Friday is, as his colleagues say, an attempt to silence their vocal criticism of the state. But it is more than that. The killing, and the wider campaign of terror, is intended to send a message to the wider Tamil community that it is the state, not the international community or the LTTE that controls their fate.

The begrudging and feeble criticism of Sri Lankan atrocities by the international community is shameful and revealing. It confirms what the Tamil sceptics have always said about the Norwegian peace process - that it is an exercise in counter-terrorism, rather than conflict resolution, that it is about hamstringing the LTTE and bolstering the state, rather than ensuing a just solution. In the past few years, there has been much public berating and lecturing to the LTTE about human rights, child rights, political assassinations and so on. But now these formerly strident voices have gone silent.

The point is that these international principles are raised only when they serve to undermine the Tamil struggle, but not when Tamils are victims. After all, we remember the approving international silence during the 'war for peace.' Those days are back. Dozens of ordinary Tamils are being murdered each day. Tens of thousands are being harried daily by military bombardment. Hundreds of thousands of our people are suffering shortages of food and medicine.

And it is the international community's tacit collusion in this onslaught that we must come to terms with. The Sri Lankan state is behaving in the same manner it always has. As President Junius Jayawardene blithely observed in July 1983: "The more you put pressure in the north, the happier the Sinhala people will be here. Really, if I starve the Tamils out, the Sinhala people will be happy." What the Tamils need to understand is that if such brutality against our people will result in us abandoning our demands for our political rights then the international community will also be happy. Which is why there has been no real pressure on Sri Lanka to desist. Which is why the international response to Sri Lankan violence against us is a mocking call for the state to investigate and punish itself. Which is why, even now, there is no international diplomacy to avert the violence.

Human shields: the new front

'Human shields' is the perfect logic through which to prosecute a war that punishes the Tamil populace for supporting the LTTE.

Vidya Kumaraswamy
 Tamil Guardian

IN THE WAKE of the Sri Lankan military's shelling of a camp for internally displaced civilians in Vakarai last week which killed over 40 people and wounded 100, the possibility that the LTTE was using civilians as human shields was promptly raised.

But international ceasefire monitors and other observers who inspected the scene and interviewed survivors reported that there was no evidence of LTTE activity or firing. Despite this the accusations continues to be levelled and have been embellished in the Colombo based media with claims LTTE cadres being amongst the dead.

At first the 'human shields' allegation seemed simply the Sri Lankan government's knee-jerk attempt to evade the moral stigma that could have followed the targeted killing of scores of civilians.

However, a closer examination of the escalation of conflict in the past six months indicates that the accusation the LTTE is using Tamil civilians as human shields is central to Sri Lanka's unfolding military strategy.

Since April this year the Sinhala establishment has (again) rolled out a set of policies that are clearly intended to punish and terrorise Tamil civilians in LTTE controlled areas.

Embargoes on food, fuel and medicines have been re-imposed on the Vanni and the LTTE-controlled areas of the east, including Vaharai while the military has launched air and artillery-strikes on civilians in LTTE controlled areas (besides hitting LTTE positions, that is). Sixteen bombs slaughtered 51 teenagers on a first aid course in August. Last week the government bombed the environs of Kilinochchi hospital wiping out a family of five.

Targeting and punishing Tamil civilians, in an effort to create 'war weariness' is clearly central to Sri Lanka's new 'war for peace.' Accusing the LTTE of using civilians as human shields serves to excuse as necessary and justified every Sri Lankan military attack that causes Tamil civilian casualties.

The claim is doubly useful as

it not only shifts the blame onto the LTTE for civilian deaths caused by targeted Sri Lankan attacks, it also undermines the LTTE's legitimacy as a liberation movement struggling to establish the rights of an oppressed people.

In the past few months the Sri Lankan government has also been gradually creating the conditions in which such accusations can be levelled without proof or being challenged.

Repeating the policies of the ill-fated first 'war for peace,' the Sinhala establishment has been steadily emptying the Northeast of any observers who might be able to challenge its interpretation of events. Foreign non-governmental organisations (NGOs) have been leaving the war zones while access for journalists is near impossible.

The presence of the Sri Lanka Monitoring Mission (SLMM) has to some extent limited the effectiveness of the 'human shields' excuse.

However, Sri Lanka has regularly blocked or delayed monitors' access to the scenes of atrocities. The point was driven home last week when the SLMM chief was himself targeted by Sri Lankan shelling. The message for all foreigners to (literally) take home is: none of you are safe here.

The international community, always keen to demonise the LTTE and pressure it to the negotiating table has also backed the charge of human shields.

By way of comparison, in the past the issue of 'child soldiers' had been key to undermining the LTTE politically and militarily. Not only was the charge used to characterise the LTTE as an irredeemably illiberal bunch of thugs, it was also hoped that it could be used to hamper its growth by demanding greater scrutiny of its recruitment.

However, the LTTE's proactive and multifaceted engagement with the complexities of child rights has somewhat blunted the international community's efforts in this regard - while highlighting the plight of Tamil children under the Sri Lankan state's decades

EDITORIAL & OPINION



Moment of Understanding

long embargo and discrimination.

Now, the Sri Lankan Army's brazen abduction of Tamil children to expand the paramilitary Karuna group has made the issue something of a liability for both the Sinhala establishment and the international community.

Indeed the recent visit of Allan Rock, a representative of the UN Representative for Children and Armed Conflict has notably not incited the flurry of activity that accompanied the visit in 1998 by the then UN Representative, Olaru Ottonu, when the campaign was primarily against the LTTE.

The issue of 'human shields' has become central to a new strategy of weakening the LTTE. By bombarding and terrorising Tamil civilians, it is hoped that popular support for the LTTE will be substantively eroded.

Some international actors are therefore working in tandem with the Sri Lankan establishment to establish the accusation of human shields as a rationale for explaining away targeted attacks against Tamil civilians.

With backing from diplomats in Colombo and their western capitals, sections of the international media have been repeating Sri Lankan accusations of the LTTE using human shields. The SLMM findings that contradict the allegations are largely ignored or sidelined.

And with this doubt in the air, the international community then 'justifiably' holds back from condemning Sri Lankan violations of international humanitarian law, using

platitudes such as 'deep regret', 'concern' and lamenting the 'price paid by civilians.'

A stark contrast indeed from the colourful language used to lambast the LTTE when it appears to have violated those same norms. A contrast that is immediately visible to the Tamils - as it is meant to be. The message is clear: these rights are not for supporters of terrorism.

As with the campaign around child soldiers, international organisations have also been mobilised to focus attention on the human shields accusation against the Tigers. Even before the massacre at Vakara last week, Human Rights Watch (HRW) initiated a campaign on this very theme.

In an interview with the Colombo based Daily Mirror, conducted before the Vakara shelling, but published afterwards, an HRW official asserted Sri Lankan accusations against the LTTE as fact and pointed out that using human shields was a violation of international humanitarian law.

Like many aspects of the child soldiers campaign, the noise level of these accusations insistently echoed and re-echoed by HRW and the Colombo based media, in spite of any evidence to the contrary, establishes the allegations as incontrovertible 'truth.'

The LTTE, rather than the armed forces, then becomes the proximate cause of Tamil suffering when shells and bombs explode amongst civilians.

More insidiously, the noise level of the human shields campaign also works to justify Sri

Lankan attacks against civilians as a necessary part of prosecuting a just war against the morally bankrupt LTTE.

The human shield campaign has however been blunted by the reporting in the Tamil media and by the ongoing presence of SLMM monitors in the war zone.

However, the space for accurate reporting is being steadily closed. There has been a rapid escalation of attacks against Tamil journalists and newspapers based in the war zones. The SLMM's ability to function independently of Sri Lankan and international agendas is also being compromised - note the confidence with which two SLMM chiefs have been shelled by the Army without penalty.

Amid this blackout, Colombo based media as well as international organisations, like the HRW, irredeemably hostile to the LTTE, will ratchet up the noise about human shields whilst simultaneously ignoring attacks against Tamil journalists, disappearances, abductions and intentionally created conditions of starvation and disease.

The HRW has played a similar role in the recent campaign on alleged LTTE extortion amongst the Diaspora. It is no accident that Sri Lankan ministers began quoting extracts from the HRW report even before it was officially published.

That report, it must be recalled, was instrumental in securing the European Union ban on the LTTE. It was also instrumental justifying the subsequent Sri Lankan military actions against Tamil civilians, as it asserted that Tamils are not sup-

portive of the LTTE and civilian deaths caused by Sri Lankan military action are unintentional.

If the Sri Lankan establishment is successful in silencing the Tamil media, we can fully expect the human shields campaign to reach the noise levels the child soldiers issue reached.

The international community will support Sri Lanka's strategy in so far as they believe it is effective in limiting the LTTE's military capacity.

The human shields campaign is the perfect logic through which to prosecute a war that punishes the Tamil populace for supporting the LTTE. As an editorial in The Times of London warned some months ago, the Tamils "will find no peace" until they abandon the LTTE.

But while the human shields campaign is likely to be successful in rationalising Tamil civilian suffering amongst the converted - i.e. in the South and Sri Lanka's international backers - it will have a different effect on Tamil civilians.

Desperate people will do desperate things. And as recent history attests, the Tamils have proven themselves to be a determined group accustomed to international contempt and hostility.

The internationally backed Sri Lankan strategy of prosecuting a 'total war' against Tamil civilians whilst accusing the LTTE of using human shields will only strengthen Tamil resolve against Sinhala aggression and international duplicity. It will, like other efforts to undermine the Tamil struggle, contribute to its strengthening.

What future for Tamil parliamentary politics?

Brian Senewiratne

WHAT is the future of the Tamil politicians in Sri Lanka? They have one of two options - to join the Government and survive, or not to join the Government and be assassinated.

What about representing the Tamil people? Representing them where? It cannot be in the Sri Lankan Parliament because for decades, if not longer, it has been a Sinhala Parliament concerned about the Sinhalese people.

One Sinhalese leader, President J.R. Jayawardene, in an interview given to the London Daily Telegraph, on 11 July 1983, days before the attempted genocide of the Tamils in Colombo said: "I am not worried about the opinion of the Jaffna people now.... Now we cannot think of them, not about their lives or of their opinion about us. The more you put pressure in the North, the happier the Sinhala people will be here... really, if I starve the Tamils out, the Sinhala people will be happy".

This is what his successor, Mahinda Rajapakse, from the other side of the Sinhala political divide is doing right now.

The Tamils are mentioned in this Sinhala Parliament only when it is time to renew Emergency Regulations, not because there is an 'Emergency' but because these repressive Regulations, adopted from Apartheid South Africa, can be used, and are widely used, to intimidate, harass and murder Tamils, with no questions asked.

I have suggested that the 22 Tamil MPs should review their position and consider quitting Parliament rather than provide a degree of legitimacy to an irresponsible, ruthless and barbaric regime that masquerades as a 'Government'.

If the Tamil MPs are to remain in Parliament, and survive, the responsibility will be with the International Community, to unleash the entire weight of public opinion on the GOSL. There must be some real consequences for the GOSL.

Unfortunately, despite the recent 'condemnations', I doubt if there will be the necessary sustained pressure on the GOSL or the 'real consequences' I have referred to. So, 'the fate of Raviraj' awaits many more.

Sri Lankans must have a sense of déjà vu, as the murderous regime of President Mahinda Rajapakse, complete with 'white vans' which pick up those destined for life outside this planet, appear.

They must surely think that President Ranasinghe Premadasa's regime, the most murderous regime that Sri Lanka has ever known, has been 'reborn' in true Sri Lankan Buddhist style. (Edited)

NEWS



From top left:

● [l-r front row] Nadaraja Raviraj's daughter Praveena Raviraj, son Uthisharan Raviraj, wife Sasikala Raviraj and the MP's mother Mangaleswary Nadaraja mourn at the funeral parlour Sunday.
● Fellow TNA MP, Suresh

Premachandran, and Sri Lankan peace activist, Kumar Rupasinghe, carry Raviraj's casket during a protest attended by thousands of people from all three ethnic communities. Rupasinghe's Anti-War Front, an NGO, organised the event.
● A general shut down brought

Tamil areas of the Northeast to a standstill in a silent protest to coincide with the march in Colombo. Tamils in the Hill Country joined the 'hartal.'
● Sri Lanka's Foreign Minister Mangala Samaraweera expresses his condolence to the slain MP's mother, Mangaleswary

Nadaraja. But his party, and Sri Lanka's main opposition United National Party (UNP) are blaming government forces for the assassination.
● Protesters in Colombo held thousands of posters, many bearing the single word - 'Shame!' - directing their anger

at the hardline government of President Mahinda Rajapakse.
● Women's groups joined the civil society protest. "We are fast becoming a country of widows," said Nimalka Fernando, a leading human rights activist, said. "It is the culture of impunity that must stop."

NEWS

Sri Lanka rejects Tamils' Northeast merger call

AYING that the Sri Lankan state's recognition of the Tamils' historical existence as a people living in the Northeast of the island was realised in the establishment of the Northeast province in 1987, the Tamil National Alliance (TNA), charged Nov 7 that it was the duty of President Mahinda Rajapakse's government to uphold the merger as it constituted a recognition of Tamil grievances.

However, the Sri Lankan government rejected the TNA appeal, saying a (re-)merger was conditional on a referendum of the people of the east - reversing the 1987 Indo-Sri Lanka Accord which, bringing in the merger, said a demerger would be conditional on a referendum.

"The Government will never act, and has no power to act against the ruling of the Supreme Court (SC) that the merger of North and East Provinces was illegal," Sri Lanka's Prime Minister, Ratnasiri Wickramanayake, announced in Parliament.

The exchange came a month after Sri Lanka's Supreme Court upheld a petition by the ultra-Sinhala nationalist JVP (Janatha Vimukthi Perumana) that the procedures by which the Northern and Eastern provinces were merged in 1987 were improper.

The Premier said government was moving to divide the Northeast provincial head office based in Trincomalee so as to administer the two regions separately.

The TNA has appealed to India and the rest of the international community to support the NE merger, saying Parliament would back such a move - a reference to the main opposition UNP's promised support.

The TNA's Parliamentary Group leader, Mr. R. Sampanthan, spoke on Nov 7 in Parliament.

The TNA argues that what is required now is the government takes steps to ensure the merger is effected correctly, both to honour the Indo-Sri Lanka Accord, an international treaty, and to ensure the agreement with the Tamils isn't abrogated.

"We submit that it is the duty of this Government to take the necessary action to restore the status quo ante pertaining to the merger," Mr. Sampanthan said.

"Procedural or technical flaws in regard to the process of merger cannot be an excuse for the non-merger," he said, in reference to the Supreme Court ruling which last month challenged the legal procedure by which the merger had been effected.

"There is a duty cast upon the President to uphold the course of action adopted by each one of his four predecessors over a period of 18 years," Mr. Sampanthan said.

Moreover, he noted that the Indo-Sri Lanka Agreement "did not make the constitution of the Northern and Eastern Provinces as one administrative unit having one Provincial Council conditional upon the fulfilment of any other event."

"There is a duty cast on the President to fulfill Sri Lanka's obligations under an International Treaty signed with neighboring India."

"Technical grounds cannot be a valid excuse for non fulfillment of Sri Lanka's obligation under an International Treaty," Mr. Sampanthan said.

International law stipulates a state "may not invoke the provisions of its internal law as justification for its failure to perform a treaty" with another state, Mr. Sampanthan said, referring to the 1969 Vienna Convention, the Law of Treaties.

"If the Government makes the appropriate decision, this Parliament I have little doubt will support such a measure to restore the status quo ante," he said.

He was referring to the United National Party (UNP)'s support for such a move were the Sri Lanka Freedom Party (SLFP) - led government to make it.

"We appeal to India and the International Community to appreciate that the restoration of the status quo ante relating to the merger is an indispensable concomitant of the peace process and urge that they contribute their best efforts to ensure that the same is done at the earliest."

He described the moves to demerge the Northeast as striking "at the very root of the peace process" and as nullifying it.

"It was the struggle of the Tamil people in the North-East for substantial self-rule, which brought about new Constitutional arrangements," he pointed out.

"The Indo-Sri Lanka Agreement and the subsequent legislative measures and arrangements were the consequence of this struggle and were intended to accommodate legitimate Tamil aspirations."

Moreover, "any contrived dismantling of the North-East merger would remove the corner stone of the peace process. If such a situation continues, the peace process must inevitably crumble," he said.



Nineteen Tamil National Alliance (TNA) parliamentarians led by Mr. R. Sampanthan (l), leader of the party's Parliamentary group, protested last Thursday in front of United Nations office in Colombo condemning the Sri Lanka Army bombing of internally displaced persons in Kathiravelli in which 53 people were killed and over 100 wounded. "The UNHCR, UNICEF, UNESCO and other World Organisations remain silent while the Army perpetrates violence on the Tamils. The silence encourages the military to continue its atrocities against the Tamils unquestioned," TNA MP S. Jeyanandamoorthy said. Photo TamilNet

UN: Sri Lanka military 'recruiting child soldiers'

A UNITED Nations official Monday accused Sri Lankan government security forces of recruiting child soldiers on behalf of an allied paramilitary group which is also fighting Tamil Tigers.

The special advisor to the UN Representative for Children and Armed Conflict, Allan Rock, told reporters in Colombo that he had evidence of direct involvement of troops in forcibly enlisting children for the paramilitary group.

"Sri Lankan security forces rounded up children to be recruited by the Karuna faction," Mr. Rock said at the end of a 10-day mission to study the situation of children in the embattled island.

It is the first time the UN has made such a charge against Colombo.

"We encountered both direct and indirect evidence of... com-

plicity and participation," Mr. Rock further said.

He said there was both eyewitness and anecdotal evidence to back up his claims.

He spoke of 13 and 14-year-old children kidnapped from villages, and no arrests or investigation being carried out by the security forces.

The Sri Lankan Armed forces said Mr Rock's claims that government troops were actively involved in the recruitment of child soldiers were "regrettable".

Sri Lankan security forces say they are "perturbed" by the "completely misleading" allegations, the BBC reported.

In a statement the Sri Lankan military said Mr Rock's claims that government troops were actively involved in the recruitment of child soldiers were

"regrettable".

"Security forces... vehemently deny having any involvement whatsoever with the LTTE break-away group for abductions in Batticaloa," the statement said.

Mr Rock said the fact that Sri Lankan troops were complicit in the recruitment of child soldiers meant that the Tigers would continue to do so, as it corroded the rule of law.

The Tamil Tigers have long been accused of under-age recruitment. Last month, the Tigers outlawed the recruitment of under-17s for military service.

UNICEF lists 1,598 outstanding cases of under-age recruitment by the Tigers, 649 of which are still under the age of 18. The Tigers have promised to release all under-age fighters by Jan 1, 2007.

NEWS

Violence in Northeast - week ending Nov. 12

These are the incidents apart from major clashes. See page 12 for index.

THE week to 12 November saw 27 people killed, 11 injured, 3 disappeared and 8 arrested. However, these figures do not include the major incidents of violence, which saw scores of civilians and combatants killed.

In Jaffna, twenty one people were affected by the violence, of whom 15 were killed and three injured and three disappeared. In Batticaloa, six people were killed and five injured. Eight people were arrested in Colombo during the week. In Vavuniya three people were killed and two injured, while two people were killed in Trincomalee, and one each in Mannar and Amparai.

November 12

● The bodies of two civilians, including a 14-year old school boy who was abducted by men in white van, were found dumped near Aanaippanthy junction, a suburb of Jaffna town. They were identified as Ravi Rajeevan, 14 and Thangaroopan Jeeva, 21, of Vellaipanthi, Kondavil East.

Ravi Rajeevan was a grade-7 student at Kondavil Paramsothi Vidyalayam. He was abducted from his home Saturday. Villagers said a SLA truck was in the area at the time of his abduction.

Thangaroopan Jeeva was interrogated by SLA soldiers during a cordon and search operation in Kondavil Saturday. He was arrested by the soldiers later that day. Thangaroopan returned from UAE 2 months ago and he was to get married within days.

The bodies were found near the spot where two Army Intelligence Officers were killed in a claymore attack on Thursday. ● Armed men in a white van abducted three youths in Chunnakam, Jaffna. Relatives of the abducted say that SLA soldiers operating from the Atchelu Army camp are responsible.

Chelliah Kumarasooriar, 30, a day laborer from Ikkiran, Kantharodai in Chunnakam was abducted by armed men in a white van. The men assaulted Kumarasooriar's wife and children before driving off with the victim.

Saravanapavanathan Hariharan, 24, an employee at the private airline operator Aero Lanka, was abducted by armed men in Chunnakam junction.

Another youth, Balasundarampillai Kamalraj, 23, a day labourer, was abducted by a similar armed group from his residence in Kantharodai Road, Chunnakam.

November 11

● Alaharsamy Saravanakumar, 35 a trader who owned a business near Sathirai Santhi (junction) along KKS road, within the HSZ

in Jaffna, was shot dead by gunmen riding a motorbike. In the same incident, Nadarasa Nishanthan, 24, from Vannarpannai, working as an assistant at the same business was seriously injured.

● A SLA trooper on guard duty close to Malisanthi in Vadamarachy along Jaffna-Point Pedro road was shot and seriously injured by gunmen.

● Two armed men on motor cycle shot two youths at a bus stop at Araiampathy, Batticaloa, seriously injuring both. One of the youths succumbed to his injuries while being rushed to hospital. The dead youth was identified as Krishnapillai Mohanadas, 24 and the injured is Amirthalingam Thineshkar, 22, both cousins and residents of Selavnagar in Araiampathy. The cousins, after finishing work at Mohanadas' father's hotel on Araiampathy Main street, sat talking at the bus stop close to their house as they usually do, when the gunmen shot at them at close range.

● Two armed men on motor cycle lobbed a hand grenade on the Kodaikallaru police sentry post in Kalavanchikudy, Batticaloa, seriously injuring a policeman. The policemen at the sentry point opened fire on the attackers but they managed to escape unhurt. The injured policeman was identified as S. K. Kumara, 28.

November 10

● Nadarajah Raviraj, 44, Jaffna district TNA parliamentarian was shot in Colombo. (See page 3)

● Heavy fighting was reported in the seas off Trincomalee and Nilaveli. Fishermen in Trincomalee reported a big explosion and a series of explosions following it.

● Jesudas Sabaratnam, 35, a civilian from Nalanthanai in Kayts, was shot dead. Gunmen who arrived at Jesudas's Nalanthanai house, shot him at close range and escaped.

● Armed men shot dead a man at Alaiyadivembu area, Amparai. The victim is around 35 years old.

● Three unidentified gunmen took away a tractor driver from his home in Marutha Nagar in Valaichenai, and later shot him dead near a refugee camp on the Vinaya-gapuram School road. Bullet wounds in the victim's head indicated a T-56 gun was used in the killing. The victim, a father of two, was identified as Subramaniam Chandrebose, 31.

November 9

● A Sea Tiger flotilla clashed with Sri Lanka Navy in the Northern waters killing 25 SLN troopers, capturing 4 troopers alive and destroying two Dvora Fast Attack Crafts. (See page 11)

● Unknown persons detonated a

claymore device hidden along the Jaffna-Pt. Pedro road between Nallur temple and Anaipanthi junction in Jaffna, killing two SLA Intelligence Officers riding a motor cycle. A sixteen year old girl, Y. Panuja of Arasady in Jaffna, riding bicycle along the same road was seriously injured and admitted to hospital.

● Arumugam Vignarajah, 50, the President of Koddady Fisheries Society, was shot dead while cycling home from a nearby Temple. Koddady is located in the boarder of SLA HSZ Point Pedro. He was a Tamil activist involved in organizing protests against SLA harassment and violence in Jaffna district.

● Unidentified gunmen shot and injured Sinnathurai Baskaran, 36, from Avarangal, in Valikamam East region, in front of the Jaffna branch office of the SLHRC located close to the SLA's Civil Administration Office. Local residents said Mr Baskaran may have earned SLA's ire because of his involvement in exposing the recent SLA's killing of five youths travelling in an auto-rickshaw in Puththur area. Baskaran led the SLHRC officials to the site of the killing and also openly took part in the agitation against SLA.

● Unidentified gunmen shot and seriously injured a trooper at Madathady junction SLA mini camp near the Water Tank area on the Jaffna Main Street. The SLA trooper succumbed to his injuries while being rushed to hospital.

● Two unidentified gun men shot dead a family man at his house in Alavetty area in front of Alavetty Arunothaya College. Kanthaiiah Sivanesan 48, a father of two, happened to be alone home as his wife and children had gone out.

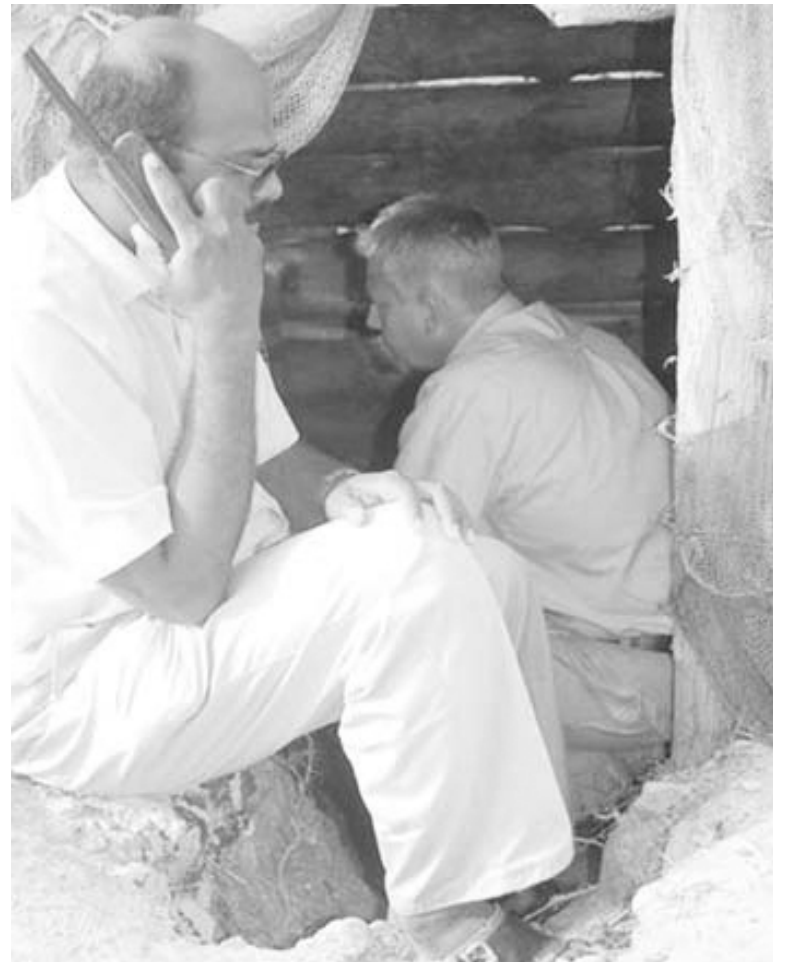
November 8

● Scores of civilians were killed when the SLA fired Multi-Barrel Rockets and artillery shells targeting Kathiraveli, a coastal hamlet 15 km north of Vaaharai, hit a school where five thousand Internally Displaced People had sought refuge. (See separate story.)

● SLA fired artillery shells crossed over the Head of SLMM Major General Lars Johan Sølberg and his delegation who were visiting the LTTE controlled Pooneryn jetty to undertake a feasibility study on Colombo's suggestion in opening Pooneryn Sangupitty Road as an alternative to A9. (see this page).

● Unidentified armed men in military fatigues opened fire on a home guard road patrol unit, killing one on the spot and seriously injuring two at Thirvagama

Continued on page 12



SLMM chief Lars Sølberg shelters in a bunker as Sri Lankan shells explode nearby and the LTTE Peace Secretariat head, S. Puleedevan, tries to contact the monitors' headquarters.

Army shells Sølberg after SLMM rules A9 closure a truce breach

NORWAY reacted angrily last week to the Sri Lankan military's provocative firing of heavy artillery the head of the international ceasefire monitors in Sri Lanka, but later toned down the criticism.

Last Wednesday Sri Lanka shells exploded 50m from the Head of Sri Lanka Monitoring Mission (SLMM), Maj. Gen. Lars Johan Sølberg, when he was an official visit to LTTE-controlled Pooneryn area of Vanni.

Maj. Gen. Sølberg was on a visit to inspect the Pooneryn causeway to assess the viability of the Sri Lankan government's offer to open an access route to the Jaffna peninsula instead of reopening the A9 highway.

The SLMM ruled the alternative route as impassable and has described the closure of the A (as a violation of the 2002 Ceasefire Agreement).

"The government is clearly violating the Ceasefire Agreement and they have trapped more than half a million civilians within the Jaffna Peninsula. The A9 should be opened immediately," acting spokesperson for the SLMM, Helen Olafsdottir, said.

But the Sri Lankan military is still refusing to open the A9 which was closed amid heavy fighting in Jaffna in August.

"The most serious [act] is that the army fired at this level towards an unprovoking target,"

Norwegian International Development Minister Erik Solheim, told VG, the largest national paper in Norway.

The visit was taking place in clear line of sight to Sri Lankan forces, Erik Solheim told the paper adding that it was impossible for the military to have misunderstood the situation.

The Army was in advance informed of the meeting which was about inspecting the pathway

'The Sri Lankan government soldiers have fired to kill unarmed people' - Erik Solheim

that has been damaged, he said.

But later Mr. Solheim said in another interview: "probably those who fired did not know that they were shelling at the Norwegian observers."

"However, it is a very, very serious situation, where the Sri Lankan government soldiers have fired to kill unarmed people," the minister told NRK.

"There is no doubt that shells were aimed gradually to kill those who were there."

Continued on page 15

NEWS

'They want to wipe us out'

Continued from page 4

in a LTTE-controlled area.

Since January, more than 16,000 refugees from Sri Lanka's Jaffna peninsula have fled to the shores of Tamil Nadu, India's southeastern state, where they fan out in refugee camps across the region and receive basic support from the Indian government.

The refugees who have arrived in India constitute a small fraction of nearly 200,000 who have been displaced since April.

But they represent some of the most desperate cases - those who have given up hope for a quick end to hostilities and are trying to start anew.

"It is an expensive and difficult journey to the Tamil Nadu coast," said Meenakshi Ganguly of the New York-based Human Rights Watch.

"These are people who are so terrified that they believe survival is impossible back home."

The number of monthly arrivals has decreased significantly since August, when over 5,700 arrived on the shores of southern India; so far this month less than 200 have arrived.

'These are people who are so terrified that they believe survival is impossible back home'

That is partly because of the weather - rough seas and thunderstorms make the crossing far more perilous in November and December. It is also due to the hope many Sri Lankans had for the peace talks that took place but broke apart with no resolution last month.

With the surge in recent violence, aid workers are expecting an increase in the number of arrivals in the coming weeks and months ahead.

The cost of being smuggled to India is anywhere from 6,000 to 15,000 Sri Lankan rupees. It is the equivalent of just £29 to £73 but refugees often sell property or family jewellery to pay for the smuggling and carry with them only a small satchel of clothes, often tossed overboard if the journey becomes too rough.

It is not the first time India has hosted Tamil refugees. Tens of thousands have come in successive waves since the war began in 1983.

Manoharan Bijayaraj, 49, arrived in late September, his third time in India.

As a union activist for Tamil fishing cooperatives in eastern Sri Lanka he was shot seven times in an attempt on his life in early September. He still experiences a dull pain around the pink two-inch vertical scar below his left arm where a bullet lodged itself.

"They want to wipe out us Tamils," he said. "There is no solution through military means, nor through dialogue. UN Peacekeepers must come to Sri Lanka."

The official conduit for new arrivals in India is the Mandapam transit camp, a fenced-off series of dilapidated one-story cement apartment blocks with communal water taps.

It was originally established and controlled by the British until 1964 as a transit site for thousands of poor Indians being sent to sprawling tea estates in Sri Lanka and elsewhere in the Commonwealth. Today they come in the other direction.

Mandapam has more than 5,000 residents, the majority of whom have been there for months, waiting to relocate elsewhere in Tamil Nadu state.

Although conditions in the camp are substandard, its leaders are reticent to voice their concerns too loudly.

"We do not complain about the conditions because just next to us there are Indian citizens who don't get even what we get," said SC Chandrahassan, an officer with the Organisation for Eelam Refugees Rehabilitation, which helps run the 130 refugee camps throughout Tamil Nadu.

The Indian government provides the refugees with 400 Indian rupees, about £1.94, a month per head of household and a little less for every other member, as well as cooking materials, a refugee ID card, and rice subsidised to 1983 prices, which comes to less than a couple pence a kilo, far below what Indians receive on social security.

Work, and not just the flight from risk of arrest or attack, is another major reason refugees cite for opting for a new life in India. They can join the informal economy, taking jobs in rural areas that poor Indians don't want as the vast country's economy surges ahead.

Vikram Raja, 36, a mason who arrived in early September with his wife and three young children, starts sitting by the highway every morning looking to be picked up for a day's work. He has worked two days in two months, but doesn't regret the move.

"My life was in danger there," he said. "The army will arrest anyone without any grounds."

His home was destroyed in the 2004 tsunami. His mother, father and sister live in displaced persons camps in Sri Lanka, but Raja wanted the opportunity to provide for his family and not sit idly in a camp, which he considers unsafe.

Raja, like many refugees with children, was also increasingly concerned for the safety of his son.

"If anything happened to my children we would be without any help," he said.



Sea Tiger boats pictured off the coast of Mullaitivu here destroyed two Navy gunboats. Photo LTTE

Dozens killed in naval battle off Jaffna coast

A SEA Tiger flotilla clashed last Thursday with the Sri Lanka Navy off the coast of Jaffna, killing 25 SLN troopers, capturing 4 others alive and destroying two Dvora Fast Attack Crafts (FACs). A third Dvora FAC was damaged.

Five Sea Tigers were killed in the intense naval gun battle Thursday, the LTTE said. The body of a SLN trooper was also recovered by the Tigers.

The SLN has listed dozens of sailors as missing.

The clash erupted after the SLN attacked Sea Tiger boats on training exercises off the coast of Nagarkovil in the northern peninsula.

The two Dvora FACs (P461 and P416) were seized and the Sea Tigers dismantled all the armament including a 23 mm cannon and a HK automatic grenade launcher.

A 23 mm Cannon, five PK-LMGs, four 50 calibre guns and an Heckler-Koch Auto Grenade Launcher with ammunition were seized by the Sea Tigers.

On Thursday night reporters in Kilinochchi were allowed to meet the four SLN personnel who were captured by the Tigers.

Meanwhile, Sri Lankan naval officials in Colombo claimed that the Dvora FACs which came under attack east of Point Pedro were escorting a vessel "Green Ocean," with 300 people on board.

However, an LTTE spokesman denied the Sri Lankan claim and said there was no ship observed during the clashes.

The clashes took place when Sri Lankan Air Force (SLAF) Kfir jet bombers and helicopter gunships attempted to attack the Sea Tiger vessels, he said.

He also refuted Sri Lankan Navy officials claim that several Sea Tiger boats were destroyed.

The entire LTTE flotilla under the Command of Deputy Commander of Sea Tigers, Cheliyan, safely returned to their base in Vanni with the captured armaments, prisoners and the recovered body, quoted Sea Tiger Special Commander Col. Soosai as saying.

The first Dvora was sunk around 5:30 p.m. Thursday in the seas off Point Pedro as the Sea Tigers pursued a group of SLN vessels that had fired on them.

It was engulfed in a ball of fire, disintegrated into pieces and sank.

Another SLN gunboat was damaged around 6:00 p.m. off Valvettithurai by the Sea Tiger flotilla which chased the surviving SLN vessels into Kankes-

anthurai harbour, eyewitness reports in Vadamadachi said.

Two Sri Lanka Air Force (SLAF) Kfir bombers flew overhead attempting to turn back the Sea Tiger flotilla, the eyewitness reports from Point Pedro said.

In a clash at sea near Trincomalee the following day, SLN gunboats destroyed an LTTE boat escorting another boat carrying the body of an LTTE officer, Lt. Col. Arivu, killed in fighting in the Vaharai area earlier this month.

The navy captured the second LTTE boat, but the crew escaped. The SLN handed the body of Lt. Col. Arivu to the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) to be handed back to the LTTE.



Sri Lanka navy officials hand over the body of LTTE Lt. Col. Arivu to an official of the the International Committee of the Red Cross. His casket was captured when the Navy attacked the boat carrying it to Vanni from Trincomalee last Friday. Photo SLN

NEWS

Violence / Nov 12

Continued from page 10

in Vavuniya district. Sunil Jayanth was killed on the spot while the two injured home guards were rushed to hospital.

● Two dead bodies with their hands bound were recovered by Vavuniya police three weeks earlier were buried at government expense as they were not claimed.

● SLA soldiers and police cordoned off and searched Kottawa area in Colombo arresting eight persons including six Tamils in connection with the recovery of a 40 mm hand grenade found on the top of a building in Kottawa area. The six Tamils arrested are staff employed in a Foreign Employment Agency and a Photograph Centre located in Kottawa.

● The body of an elderly disabled man, who was abducted by three unidentified armed men Tuesday from his house near Kanthaswamy Temple in Kopay north, was recovered at Thirunelveli Dairy Farm area in Jaffna, with bullet wounds. Kathiravelu Selvarasa, father of seven, had lost his leg in a mine explosion and moved about with a prosthetic leg. Relatives of Selvarasa said that the abductors took him away saying they wanted to interrogate him.

● Unidentified armed men shot dead Kathirgamathamby Gowri, 31, a mother of two children, at her house on Barathi road at Arumugathan Kudirippu in Eravur. Her husband is working in the Middle East.

● A former SLA trooper was killed in a bomb blast at his house in Eravur. Police suspect that the bomb may have detonated while he was inspecting the device, or it may have been planted in his house by his local enemies.

The dead man was identified as Ibrahim Mohamed Nazeer, 37, a trader by profession. Nazeer, a father of three children, was alone at his house when the bomb exploded. The explosion completely destroyed Nazeer's house while causing some damage to neighbouring houses.

November 7

● The bodies of two youths were recovered by the Uppuveli Police at Kanniya, Trincomalee, and the body of one youth at Allesgarden, north of the eastern port town. All three had been shot.

● Unidentified armed men, alleged to be orthodox Muslims, in a white van lobbed hand grenades and opened fire on Abdur Rauf Moulawi, the Islamic religious teacher belonging to Sufi sect, and some others standing in front of his office near Kathankudy Bathriya Mosque in Batticaloa, injuring four. Ideological conflicts between the orthodox Muslims and the Sufi sect, two rival Islamic sectarian groups in Kathankudy, were the reason for this attack, added the police. Abdur Rauf Mowlavi, a leader of Sufi Islamic sect, escaped without any injuries.

● A SLA Intelligence officer was seriously injured near Nelliady

junction, Vadamardchy, when unknown gunmen shot at two SLA officers riding a motorbike. The SLA Intelligence officers were riding along Jaffna, Point Pedro road after inspecting SLA patrols in several areas in Vadamardchy when the gunmen emerged from the Vathiry-Kodikam road, sprayed gunfire towards the SLA officers, and escaped.

● Four women were injured when a mortar shell launched from the LTTE area targeting the Murkodanchenai SLA camp fell and exploded on a house near the SLA camp. SLA officials allege that the LTTE shell, intended to strike Karuna paramilitary group's newly opened office at Murkodanchenai, had missed its target injuring civilians. The injured women were identified as Chandramathy 28, Indira 40, Kanagamma, 48 and Saraswathy, 50.

● Several hundred residents belonging to more than 100 families, fled from Thihilivettai, Illupaiyadi Mummari and Siruthenkal villages in the Kudumbimalai area in LTTE held area in Batticaloa and sought shelter in the neighbouring jungle to escape mortar fire from the Valaichenai Brigade SLA camp.

November 6

● The SLA launched artillery attacks from Valaichenai SLA camp and Karadikulam SLA camp towards Vaharai amid troop deployment at Gajuwatte SLA camp. The SLAF carried out 2 sorties of aerial bombardment in Paalchenai and Vammivedduvan in Vaharai region in Batticaloa district. All communication and transportation facilities towards Vaharai has been cut off. The limited humanitarian supplies reaching the region twice a week, has been blocked by the military.

● Many Tamils living in the Habarana area, where more than 100 SLN troopers were killed in a blast, are moving out of their homes as Tamils are being arrested in the frequent cordon and search operations held in the area by the SLA and the police.

● SLA soldiers shot dead two youths in Thirunelveli, Jaffna. SLA alleged that the youths were Liberation Tigers and weapons were recovered. Residents heard gunfire and grenade explosions behind Palay Road, near Kaali Kovil (Temple).

● Mathiyaparanam Nimalchandra, 38, was shot dead by unknown gunmen who arrived at his home in motorbikes.

● Kathirgamanathan Lalitha, 45, a mother of seven, was shot dead by unknown gunmen at her home in North West Alvai, Vadamardchi. She also had deep cut wounds on her face, suggesting that she had struggled with the assailants.

● Unidentified armed men took away a fisherman from his home in Valaichenai, Batticaloa, and shot him dead. Thambipillai Karunakaran, 34, father of two, of Kinaiyady Nagthambiran Temple Street, was shot three times in the head with a 9mm pistol.

Violence roundup - week ending Nov. 5

Summary of incidents - apart from major clashes - since October 30

IN THE week to 5 November, 40 people killed, 19 injured and another 16 disappeared across all the districts of the NorthEast. Another 5 people were arrested during this time, mainly by paramilitary cadres working with the Sri Lanka Army.

Of the 36 incidents during the week that resulted in a death, injury or disappearance, Jaffna was the most 'active', with 16 incidents reported.

Batticaloa was the most dangerous district during the week, with 32 people impacted by the violence. Most incidents involved 'disappearances' with 15 youths abducted by paramilitaries traveling in white vans. Nine people were killed and another 8 injured in violent incidents.

In Jaffna eleven people were killed, one injured and another person disappeared. Another four men were arrested during the week, all by paramilitary cadres working with SLA soldiers.

In Vavuniya, four people were killed and another six injured. In Trincomalee three people died and one was injured. In Amparai, the count was four dead and two injured, while in Mannar, two people were killed. There was also a killing in Colombo.

November 5

● An auto-rickshaw driver from Rajakiramam village in Karaveddy West, Vadamardchy was shot dead by gunmen. This is the third killing involving youths from Rajakiramam travelling-in or owning auto-rickshaws in the last six months. Ponnuchamy Ramesh, 30, from Mattakuliya in Colombo, married in the Rajakiramam, and has been driving auto-rickshaw for a living. He is the father of two children.

● Armed men shot dead a shop assistant on a bicycle at Puthukudirrupu, Valaichenai. Selvam Raju, 29, father of one, employed in a Video shop in Valaichenai town, was shot at close range on his head, chest and stomach while going to his house in Kalikovil street in Puthukudirrupu after

closing the shop.

● The body of an unidentified male person washed ashore in Talaimannar coast and was buried at government expense. Talaimannar Police removed the body on receipt of information from the public. A post-mortem examination revealed that the person had died due to drowning.

● Thavasi Rasenthini, 29, was shot at her home in Sirupiddy, Valikamam East, by unidentified assailants.

● Alfred Charles, 16, a student from Chunnakam residing with his uncle in Kayts, was shot dead by SLN soldiers. The SLN alleges that a group of youths tried to flee when asked to stop for violating curfew hours. Witnesses said the students were returning after renting a movie from a video rental store in Kayts town.

November 4

● Nadarasa Sivamoorthy, 26, a former member of the LTTE, was abducted from his home at Iluppaikulam by six unidentified persons on Friday night. His body was found with knife injuries. He left the Liberation Tigers in 2000 and had been living in Vavuniya. He is the father of three month old child.

● A former senior member of the paramilitary PLOTE was abducted from his home in Puliyankudal, Kayts, Friday and his body was found with gunshot wounds. Kumaravelu Suthaharan, alias Appan, 33, left PLOTE less than 5 years ago, got married and was living in Puliyankudal in the Jaffna islet when he was killed. Suthaharan's body was dumped in shrub jungles surrounding the Kaattu Vairavar Temple in Puliyankudal.

Suthaharan was widely believed to be behind the abduction and beheading of a Karaveddy youth, Rajaratnam Rajeswaran, 23, at the PLOTE offices in Nelliady, in 1999. The decapitated body was recovered in from a cess pit behind the office of the PLOTE at Puthuthottam, Nelliady, and the head was recovered

inside a drain near Kasturiam Road in Jaffna town. Suthaharan appeared in court proceedings in Point Pedro courts in the murder case, and later absconded, went into hiding, and started a family in Puliyankudal.

● A SLN soldier was killed and another injured when a road clearing patrol was the target of a claymore attack at Allesgarden, Uppuveli, north of Trincomalee town.

● Unidentified persons triggered a claymore device targeting a truck carrying STF troopers and police at Pottuvil, Amparai, killing a police constable and seriously injuring two STF troopers. The dead policeman was identified as T. N. Jayawardne, 35. L. Nanthasri, 33 and U. Ranatunge 38 were the two STF troopers seriously injured in the blast.

● A former worker at the Jaffna offices of the paramilitary EPDP was shot dead by gunmen at her residence in Puttur, Valigamam East. Gunmen who went to the house of Ms Nagamani Rajinithi, 31, in Puttur North, called her to the front door, shot her at point blank range and escaped.

November 3

● Marimuthu Chandrasegaram from Kilinochchi, 36, was shot dead by unidentified men inside his house at Aachikulam in Samalankulam in northern Vavuniya. He fled Kilinochchi due to military operations and was living at Sithamparapuram Welfare Centre. He later resettled at Samalankulam. He lost his a leg in a mine explosion.

● Four were killed and six injured in a mortar attack launched by the SLA from its Mankerny camp in Batticaloa on Vaharai, a village in LTTE held territory in Batticaloa. The shells launched continuously by the SLA on and around the temporary shelters of the internally displaced persons (IDPs) exploded, causing the IDPs to flee in fear in all directions. Nallathamby Thiyagarajah and his son Thiyagaraja Rajanikanth, 28 were killed while they were riding on a bicycle when the shell fell near them. Nadaraja Anushanthan and Packiyaraja Thileepan, two IDPs from Manalsenai, Trincomalee, were also killed.

● Two SLAF Kfir bombers targeted a Sea Tiger base at Kiranji in Pooneryn, dropping 16 bombs on two different targets. They also attacked Palai later in the morning.

● Sivalingam Krishnan, 39 and a father of five, of Periyamurippu

EPDP - Eelam People's Democratic Party
FDL - Forward Defence Line
IDP - Internally Displaced Person
HRC - Human Rights Commission
HSZ - High Security Zone
ICRC - International Committee of the Red Cross
LTTE - Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam
PLOTE - People's Liberation Organisation of Tamil Eelam
SLA - Sri Lanka Army
SLAF - Sri Lanka Air Force
SLHRC - Sri Lanka Human Rights Commission
SLMM - Sri Lanka Monitoring Mission
SLN - Sri Lanka Navy
STF - Special Task Force

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NEWS



Patients and relatives flee Kilinochchi hospital as SLAF jets drop 16 bombs on a house nearby.

Dismay over weak criticism of deadly Sri Lanka airstrike

THE NOTABLY mild response by the international community to the Sri Lankan Air Force's airstrike which wiped out a family on the environs of Kilinochchi hospital created dismay amongst Tamils earlier this month.

Five members of a family were killed when SLAF Kfir jets dropped 16 bombs within 500 meters east of the newly built Kilinochchi General Hospital at Anandapuram on November 2.

A patient at the hospital was also killed and another person was seriously wounded in the attack.

Following the air raid on Kilinochchi - one amongst several in the preceding weeks - the Ambassadors representing the Co-Chairs - the US, EU, Japan and Norway - issued a brief statement.

The statement - issued by the Colombo envoys, rather than their governments, as in other instances - pointedly avoiding condemnation of the raid or blaming Sri Lanka.

"[The Co-Chairs] express their deep regret over the bombing of a house in Kilinochchi on 2 November 2006 that resulted in the death of five civilians," the statement said.

The statement went on to say: "the Co-Chairs expect both the Government of Sri Lanka and the LTTE to refrain from military action. This latest attack comes at a delicate time when both sides should seek to build confidence and compromise to ensure further rounds of talks can soon be agreed, and an escalation of the conflict can be avoided."

Meanwhile, the Tamil National Alliance, the largest Tamil party in the Sri Lankan parlia-

ment, condemned the bombing as a "serious violation of International Humanitarian Law" and said the bombing was "conducted with callous disregard for the safety and the security of Tamil civilian life and property."

The TNA also expressed disappointment that despite repeated attacks by the government against civilian life and property, "the International Community is unable to bring such attacks of the GOSL to an end."

No condemnation or blame from Co-Chairs - just 'deep regret'

Ahead of the Co-Chairs' statement, the Liberation Tigers' Political Wing, Mr. S. P. Tamilselvan, noted: "the International Community should have no reservations in condemning this gruesome act."

Reflecting widely held Tamil sentiments, the Geneva based Tamil diaspora organisation, the International Federation of Tamils (IFT), slammed the international community's response, contrasting international response to a Tamil Tiger attack on a military convoy last month.

"The Co-Chairs do not name Sri Lanka as being responsible for the bombing. Nor do they say that Sri Lanka's attack on Killinochchi was a gross violation of international humanitarian standards," the IFT said.

"[They] refuse to categorise the Sri Lanka attack on a civilian population centre in Killinochchi in the proximity of a hospital as a

war crime. "[They] fail to identify the civilians killed as Tamil civilians."

By contrast, the IFT observed, "the Co-Chairs were quick to name the LTTE and condemn it for the attack on a Sri Lankan military convoy in Habarana on 16 October 2006, as a 'terrorist' attack."

"The Co-Chairs fail to state that the Sri Lanka attack was a breach of the pledge given by Sri Lanka in Geneva, (a mere three days earlier) to refrain from launching military offensives."

The IFT said the message sought to be conveyed by the Co-Chairs is clear: "We will not condemn Sri Lanka's message of terror in Killinochchi, but if the LTTE responds to Sri Lanka's continuing aerial bombardment of Tamil civil population centres, then we will condemn the LTTE for taking military action and categorise such action as 'terrorism'."

"[The Co-Chairs'] failure to condemn and hold Sri Lanka accountable for the Killinochchi bombing appears to reflect the strategic interests of the Co-Chairs rather than a willingness to apply international humanitarian standards," the IFT said.

Moreover, "the failure of the Co-Chairs to state that the attack on Killinochchi was an offensive action in breach of the Ceasefire will encourage Sri Lanka to continue such attacks with impunity," the IFT warned.

The IFT urged the international community "to recognise that turning a blind eye to the gross and consistent violations of humanitarian law by the Sinhala government will not lead to a peaceful resolution of the conflict."

Violence/Nov 5

Continued from page 12

village in Mannar, was shot dead by unidentified persons. His body was found near the suspension bridge along Madhu Road to Kunchukulam Road. Relatives of Krishnan, a fisherman, moved the body from the scene to Periyamurippu village. He had earlier been a member of the LTTE and later left the movement and was living in the village with his family, TamilNet reported. A police team that visited the scene recovered 9 mm bullets.

Assailants hurled hand grenades at the cadres of the paramilitary EPDP selling the "Thinamurasu", a weekly paper printed by EPDP, in Valaichchenai, Batticaloa, but no one was injured in the attack. SLA soldier and EPDP members beat youths passing through the junction, and searched nearby houses following the attack. Paramilitaries operating with the SLA in the Valaichchenai Fishing Harbor Army camp used to force people travelling in buses, minibuses, motorbikes and bicycles along the Valaichchenai-Kalkudah Road to buy the paper, TamilNet reported.

November 2

Five members of a family were killed and another person seriously injured when SLAF Kfir jets dropped 16 bombs within 500 meters east of the newly built Kilinochchi General Hospital at Anandapuram (see separate story).

Yasothiny Narayanamoorthy, 25, from Odai area, Point Pedro was shot dead near Pandaary Amman Temple in Thambachetty, Jaffna. She was riding a bicycle near the Amman Temple when two gunmen followed her in a motorbike, shot her at point blank range and escaped. The "Ellalan Force" claimed responsibility for the killing in a press release issued to the media stating that she was punished because of her involvement in anti-social activities.

Sivasubramaniam Tharmenthira, 25, was arrested at Fifth street on Brown Road in Jaffna town by SLA troopers.

November 1

SLAF Kfir bombers bombed civilian settlements in LTTE held Kattumurivu, Batticaloa, nine times. Twelve civilian houses are said to be badly damaged.

The SLA launched heavy artillery fire and multi-barrel rockets on Vaharai areas from Valaichchenai Paper Factory, Karadikulam, and Kaduwatte SLA camps on Panichankerny, Ooriyankaddu, Salithivu, Kandalady, Vaharai and Thadumunai villages in the LTTE controlled territory. SLA soldiers were brought in 10 buses to Mankerny, said residents from Mankerny. The LTTE retaliated by launching mortar fire on Mankerny and Kaduwatte SLA

camps.

SLA troopers on field bikes along with paramilitary cadres in a White van arrested Baskaran Pirathaban, 23, an auto rickshaw owner, at his home at Manipay Road in Inuvil west. Pirathaban's mother, Kamalavathy, 52, was shot and seriously injured by the SLA troopers.

Nadarasa Narmathan, 20, a technical college student was arrested at home in Chunnakam east by SLA troopers on field bikes and paramilitary cadres in a white van, relatives said in the complaint with SLHRC.

Sivananthan Sriharan 30, a carpenter of Kerniyady in Kokuvil was arrested by SLA at his house in Kerniyady area.

Thirugnanasampanthar Raman, 23, a recent returnee from Malaysia, disappeared after being last seen undergoing interrogation at the SLA check post at Inuvil when he was on his way to Mallakam. He did not return from the SLA check post and no information is available about his whereabouts, his relatives said.

Unknown persons triggered a claymore bomb killing one civilian woman, Kovinthesamy Jegathambal and injuring two SLA soldiers and a policeman at Thekankaadu in Vavuniya. The attack was targeted towards a SLA road check-post located 1 km from Vavuniya town. The woman died due to heart attack caused by the blast.

A pavement trader near Muneeswaram Road, in front of Jaffna Teaching Hospital, was shot dead by gunmen on a motorbike. Local traders said that the killing was carried out by the Sri Lanka security forces as revenge for the killing of another trader near the same spot Monday. The killers escaped after dousing the body of Thiruchelvam Surendrakumar, 34, from Navanthurai, with gasoline and setting it on fire. SLA soldiers stationed about 100 meters from the scene of the incident failed to approach the crime scene after the killing, local witnesses said.

Two armed men on motorcycle shot dead Thambipillai Atputharanee, 48, a seamstress, in her tailor shop at Manning Place in Wellawatte, Colombo. Atputharanee, originally from Madduvil Jaffna, had been living in Wellawatte for the last 10 years with her 20 year old son.

SLA soldiers stationed along the coastal belt of Gurunagar fired at 21 fishermen, returning in six boats from LTTE-controlled Pooneryn and adjoining areas. No one of was injured in this attack. The fishermen earlier fled to the LTTE controlled area following the break out of fresh violence between LTTE and Sri Lankan Forces on August 11. SLA soldiers arrested all fishermen when they reached the shore at Gurunagar Jetty and later released after interrogation.

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NEWS

Western tourists shun Sri Lanka

HOLIDAYMAKERS to Sri Lanka fell 12.0 percent for the 12 months to October, the Sri Lanka Tourist Board said last, amidst soaring violence in the island's North and East.

Sri Lanka greeted 38,815 visitors in October, the largest monthly decline since December 2005.

However, cumulative arrivals from Jan to Oct rose 7.4 percent to 482,787.

But there is a shift in the mix of visitors: Indians are the single largest visitor group while numbers of relatively high-spending European visitors are falling.

The traditional key markets of Britain and Germany, which attracts the usual sun 'n surf discount packages, continued to falter, as sun worshippers cancelled their holidays.

Arrivals from Britain fell 30.9 percent to 5,837, while German fell 14.8 percent to 4,218, for the 12 months to October 2006.

Amid rising violence, the Australian government has warned its citizens to reconsider travel plans to Sri Lanka. The US has warned there could be attacks in Colombo soon.

"We believe arrivals are likely to moderate further during the coming winter season as violence in the North and East continues to attract adverse publicity," C T Smith Stockbrokers said in a report this week.

Downgrading expected 2006 total arrivals by 4.9 percent to 570,102 visitors, the report said, "assuming little significant change in the security situation, our 2007 tourist arrivals forecast is

43,877 persons, down 4.6 percent year-on-year."

The decline has been worsened by a Tamil Tiger attack on the Sri Lankan naval base in the port town of Galle.

Galle is a popular tourist destination owing to its Unesco World Heritage-protected fort. It is also home to around 500 British expatriates.

"Achieving targets for this winter season will be a problem," tourism ministry secretary Prathap Ramanujam predicted after the attack which destroyed three naval craft.

"Without [this] attack, we were expecting occupancy of 50 to 60% this winter, lower than our usual average of 75 to 80%," said Malin Hapugoda, managing director of the Aitken Spence hotel chain.

Sri Lanka was counting on 600,000 tourists this year, but Seenivasagam Kalaiselvam, Director General of SLTB, expects visitor arrivals to be flat at just over 500,000 in 2006. SLTB had projected tourist arrivals to reach one million by 20-10.

Meanwhile, the SLTB says it is aiming to increase the average expenditure per tourist to US\$ 155 within three years.

The current average spending of a tourist is \$84. The 12.5% segment of business travelers is considered the sector that has the highest buying power.

With almost all tourists arriving by air, Sri Lanka is to expand and re-surface its runway to handle jumbo sized A380 airbus aircraft, LBO reported.



Galle residents watch the Tamil Tiger attack on the local navy base last month. Photo TamilNet

Driven away by 'distant' war

Tourists won't put up with bombs and random violence.

Irfan Husain
Daily Times

I AM writing this on my laptop in the thatched dining area of our cabanas in Tangalle, Sri Lanka, safe in the knowledge that we are the only guests here.

Given the rising level of violence, and the refusal of both sides to make concessions in peace talks, it is no surprise that tourists haven't exactly been flocking to this fabled isle. And after the LTTE attack on the Galle naval harbour last month, there have been massive cancellations.

Long considered safe, the attack on Galle demonstrated yet again the long reach of the Tigers.

Although foreigners were not the targets of the attack, the proximity of the naval harbour to Galle's ritzy boutique hotels was enough to make foreigners think twice about a holiday here.

So while the Sri Lankan government optimistically hopes to match last year's 600,000 tourists, it will be lucky if half as many come.

The reality is that a large number of the foreigners who flew in last year were relief workers and NGO-wallahs. But after the more obvious effects of the tsunami have worn off, they have moved on to fresh disasters.

All the locals here in Tangalle - from tuk-tuk drivers to hotel owners - have told me how they are suffering from the sharp drop in the number of tourists.

We normally stay at Surya Gardens, a set of cabanas owned by our Italian friend Manuela, and

they have been empty for months. Manuela almost sobbed with relief when we checked in.

She explained it wasn't just the money, but the loneliness that made her think of selling out after 17 years. There are hardly any reservations for Christmas, although the peak tourist season is about to start.

The island's economy is heavily dependent on tourism for its foreign exchange. To promote this industry, more than any other, peace is essential.

While tourists might put up with minor inconveniences and hardships, they will not put up with bombs and random violence. Pakistan has learned that the hard way, with tourists now an extinct species. If Sri Lanka doesn't want to follow our path, the government should be looking very closely at its policies dealing with the stalled peace process.

Iran to build 2 thermal power plants in Sri Lanka

IRAN will build two 300- and 500-megawatt thermal power plants in Sri Lanka, Iranian Energy Minister Parviz Fattah has said.

Speaking to press after meeting with his Sri Lankan counterpart W D J Seneviratne, Fattah said an agreement on construction of the power plants is to be signed by the two sides this week.

He said Sri Lanka has been keen to bolster cooperation with Iran in the energy field, adding that "further talks with Sri Lanka on the subject of power plant construction will be held if the issue of the country's use of the Iranian forex credit is settled."

He noted that a Sri Lankan delegation had visited Iran's power plants and thereby became familiar with the capabilities of

Iranian experts, and said an Iranian expert delegation would pay a visit to Sri Lanka to discuss cooperation in the field of hydro-electric power.

Fattah said that a number of Sri Lankan experts, under the agreement, would be trained in Iran. Meanwhile, Iran-Sri Lanka economic interactions, regarding the average price of oil in the last two years, were evaluated as much as 400 million dollars.

Non-oil economic interactions, not including tea, are evaluated as much as 30 million dollars, Iran's minister of mining and industry, Alireza Tahmasebi, said.

Tea adds another 20 million dollars, he said.

Tahmasebi expressed hope that Iran and Sri Lanka would

enhance economic ties especially in the export of technical services.

He also named, building of cement making, car manufacturing and steel factories and transferring science and technology in discovery and exploitation of mines by Iranian experts as the promised terms to Sri Lanka by the Iranian side.

For his part, Sri Lanka's minister of industry also asserted on the enhancement of Iran-Sri Lanka industrial ties.

"Iran's industry possesses a good level of technology and we demand Iran's cooperation in the fields of automobiles, agriculture, cement producing factories, trucks and tractor manufacturing factories, discovery of iron mines and exploitations," he said.

Heavy intervention shoring up rupee

A COLLAPSE of Sri Lanka's currency was being stymied by heavy intervention by the Central Bank, the main opposition party said.

The central bank had spent 352 million dollars from January to September to defend the rupee, with 121 million dollars being spent from September 01 to 19, former Deputy Finance Minister and United National Party (UNP) parliamentarian, Bandula Gunewardene, told Lanka Business Online (LBO).

Gunewardene charged that senior bureaucrats in charge of economic policy was deceiving President Mahinda Rajapakse, who is also the finance minister, and hiding their incompetence.

"Inflation has now gone up to 17.2 percent, and oil prices are

falling," he said.

"They can no longer say inflation is caused by rising oil prices. It is because they printing money to finance the budget deficit."

He said the in their time, the UNP had stopped printing money and brought inflation down to 3 percent despite rising oil prices.

"The numbers speak for themselves. Can anyone deny that inflation is now 17.2 percent and the rupee is 108? Can anyone say that our total foreign reserves had not fallen?" he asked.

He said the rupee was being devalued because the government was printing money to finance the forthcoming budget, and the rupee had been held at these levels through heavy central bank intervention.

ART

Stunning Chola bronzes in London exhibitions

'Beautiful, elegant, fluid, magical'

BRITAIN'S Royal Academy of Arts this week begins a blockbuster new exhibition devoted to the Chola dynasty of southern India, showcasing bronze sculptures from the ninth to the 13th centuries, press reports said.

For collectors of Indian sculpture, a Chola bronze is a must, John Eskenazi, a curator of the Royal Academy of Arts exhibition dedicated to these sacred south Indian sculptures, told the Financial Times.

Chola bronzes are widely considered to be among the very finest works of Indian sculptural art.

"Chola bronzes are beautiful, they are elegant, they are fluid and they are magical," enthuses Eskenazi.

The Cholas were a Tamil dynasty that emerged in the ninth century after the capture of Thanjavur - located in the present-day state of Tamil Nadu - in 850 and ruled for the next 400 years.

During their reigns, the Chola kings controlled much of southern India, extending as far as the islands of Sri Lanka, the Maldives and parts of Indonesia.

Commissioned between the ninth and 13th centuries by the Cholas, the bronzes were made using the lost wax method, which produced only one cast per mould (which was broken to access the newly sculpted bronze), making each piece unique.

The bronzes are considered works of high art. But they are also not considered too expensive in collecting terms.

A fine Chola image of the god Shiva went for \$725,000 at Christie's in 2003, a world auction record. Five Chola bronzes now at Bond Street dealers Rossi & Rossi, run from \$175,000 to \$500,000, the FT reported.

A Royal Academy spokesman told the Evening Standard newspaper: "the exhibition will show UK art lovers for the first time that the Cholas were great patrons of the arts, who oversaw an extensive programme of temple construction."

The RA exhibition will contain over forty of these very rare and diverse bronze sculptures from the ninth to thirteenth centuries including the portrayal of Krishna dancing on the serpent Kaliya, one of only two in exist-



tence (pictured above).

The exhibition will continue into next year, the 60th anniversary of the independence of India.

"It also marks the 60th anniversary of the last major exhibition of the art and culture of India at the Royal Academy," the spokesman said.

Every Chola bronze was made for temple use. While large stone carvings were part of daily worship, the bronzes, being portable, were carried around the temple complexes during festivals.

On important days they were placed on 'thurs' - large, carved wooden chariots (the original juggernauts) - and pulled through the lanes of the surrounding town.

The history of these pieces reveals why such a sculpture is sacred in the temple but art in a gallery. Once a bronze was completed, a priest invited the spirit of the divinity portrayed to move in - it was then a living god.

Separately, but to coincide with the Royal Academy's exhibition, Rossi & Rossi, dealers in Indian and Himalayan art, will stage their own exhibition of five Chola bronzes.

Titled, 'Sensuous and Sublime: A Selection of Chola Bronzes', it will be held at 13 Old Bond Street, London W1, from 2 to 30 November 2006.

'Chola: Sacred Bronzes Of Southern India' is on until 25 February.

NEWS

Incidents till Nov 5 ...

Continued from page 13

October 31

● Fifteen students of Chenkalady Central College are alleged to have been abducted on by armed men in a white van. The parents of one of the missing have lodged complaints with Eravur Police, the ICRC and SLMM. The abducted youths include G.C.E Advanced Level students, Kugathasan Thusyanthakumar, 18, and Bawa Pratheepan, 19, both of Chenkalady main road. According to the parents of Thusyanthakumar, he and some other students were forcibly taken away.

Many others in the region have complained that a large number of youths are being abducted while they are involved in sports activities after school. Hundreds of abductions have been reported in the recent months in Batticaloa, Amparai and Trincomalee district in the Eastern province. Most of the parents or relatives fail to report the abductions due to fear of retribution.

● One trooper was killed and two others from the Mandur Kampikattu Bridge STL in Batticaloa were seriously injured by the LTTE when they responded to an attack by the STF. The STF unit had penetrated and waited in ambush 4 km into LTTE held area from their STF camp. The LTTE cordoned off and searched the area and attacked the STF troopers when they tried to escape. A Buffel Armoured Personnel Carrier was badly damaged.

● A Sinhala home guard was shot dead by gunmen who attacked a checkpoint at Neelapola in Trincomalee. SLA soldiers retaliated but the gunmen escaped.

● STF soldiers shot dead two from the political wing of the LTTE when the SLA cordoned off and searched Vinayagapuram in Thirukovil, Amparai. The dead youths were identified as Pava-kkannan, 23 and Satha, 25. An LTTE representative said the youths had gone to do political work in the Amparai district. Pothuvil STF said that they recovered one pistol and two hand grenades from the two youths.

● Kattankudy police recovered the body of a youth with gunshot wounds near Puthukudiruppu Ayurveda Medical Centre in their division. An SLA and STF road patrol unit found the body with hands and legs bound and eyes tied. The victim was identified as Ponnambalam Krishnanathan, 25, of Puthukudiruppu Multi-purpose Society Road in Puthukudiruppu. Krishnanathan had been abducted by armed men a few days previously.

● A SLA soldier was killed and three others seriously injured when attackers triggered a claymore mine targeting a foot patrol at Rangathgama junction in Poovarasankulam, Vavuniya.

● Joseph Kumar Ramanakumar, 27, a resident of Uppukulam in Mannar, was arrested by the Slave Island Police in Colombo.

Ramanakumar had been residing in Wellawatte in Colombo and following a course in English Language.

● Attackers lobbed a grenade into a SLA checkpoint close to the public playground in Mannar town while the soldiers were checking a lorry. Tension prevailed in the town and the shops were closed for the day as SLA soldiers detained an old passenger of the lorry. The other persons on board the lorry had fled from the site following the grenade explosion.

● Two armed men riding bicycles shot dead Ramalingam Thavathurai, 47, from Thumpalai, a trader, at his shop near Lourdes Mary Church on the Point Pedro-Thumpalai road in Point-Pedro, Vadamardchi. The assailants, pretending to be buyers shot the trader and escaped.

October 30

● The SLN fired at a group of fishermen in Mullikulam-Pookulam sea area in Mannar. Fishermen fled to the shore leaving their boats and nets in the sea. No one was injured. Some boats left by fishermen in sea had been taken away by the SLN.

● SLA soldiers stationed in camps along Gurunagar, south east of Jaffna town, fired and launched mortar attacks on about 45 Gurunagar fishermen returning to shore in 15 boats from LTTE controlled Pooneryn and Kanjikuda. One boat was destroyed but no one was injured.

Several fishermen from Gurunagar, Pashiyoor, and Mandaitivu, who were at sea when fighting broke out along Jaffna lagoon on 11 August, had sought refuge in LTTE controlled areas on the southern shores of the lagoon as they were unable to return to the Peninsula. With the closure of A9, and as the failure of Geneva-II talks reduced the prospects of A9 reopening in the near future, the fishermen said they took the

risk of crossing Jaffna lagoon by boats. SLA soldiers fired at them after they anchored their boats in Mandaitivu and were walking towards Jaffna town waving white flags, the fishermen told TamilNet. The SLA arrested the fishermen for further investigation.

● A civilian was shot dead by gunmen on Muneeswaram Road in the central business area of Jaffna town.

● Gopalasundaram Pathmakalapan, a member of the Verugal Pradesiya Sabha in Eachilampathu division, Trincomalee, was shot dead by armed men as he was cycling near a bakery, about fifty meters from a Sri Lanka police check point.

● M. Gunaratne, 41, from Monaragala, a father of two and a policeman attached to Pothuvil police station in Amparai district, shot himself in an apparent suicide at the his room near the police station. The reason for Gunaratne's suicide is not known said the police who are investigating the death.

● The bodies of two men, riddled with bullets and hands bound, were found by SLA and STF road patrol troopers in a paddy field along the Pillaiyady Veethy at Sathurukondan, Batticaloa. One of the men was identified as belonging to Christopher Christin, 28, from Church Road in Thannamunai. The body was found 100 m from Sathurukondan SLA camp. The police suspect these two men may have been abducted on Sunday or earlier and shot to death before being dumped in the fields.

● Navaratnam Mahinthan 17, a street vendor was shot dead at Muneeswaram road in Jaffna town. He was from Kaithady east.

● Ramiah Krishnakumar, 38, an auto owner was shot at Temple Road in Nallur. He was from Kalviyankadu, a suburb of Jaffna town and was traveling in an auto-rickshaw when he was shot and killed.

SLMM chief shelled ...

Continued from page 10

Solheim, describing the experienced 54-years-old Norwegian Major General as a "quiet and calm" person said the Head of Mission feared for his life while he came under artillery fire.

SLA fired artillery shells exploded 200 meters behind in Pooneryn jetty area while a team of SLMM and LTTE officials was visiting the site. While they were returning, SLA artillery shells exploded 20 meters away.

The SLMM visit was to study the feasibility of the Sri Lankan government's suggestion that opening the Pooneryn-Sangupitty Road was an alternative to opening the A9 highway.

The SLMM has criticized the Sri Lankan government for clos-

ing the A9 highway at Muhamalai, ruling it a breach of the February 2002 Ceasefire Agreement.

After two months of embargo, 600,000 people in the Jaffna peninsula are desperately short of food and other essential supplies.

The LTTE says the Sri Lankan government is preparing major invasions of its controlled areas and has warned of an all out war breaking out unless Colombo is restrained.

SLMM has said while the government continued to ignore the pleas of aid agencies to open the A9, the monitors would continue to mount pressure and hold discussions with the government till such time the road was opened.

Vakarai, p5



23mm ammunition seized by the Sea Tigers from a Sri Lankan gunboat destroyed amid heavy fighting near Jaffna Thursday. Report, more photos p11. Photo TamilNet.



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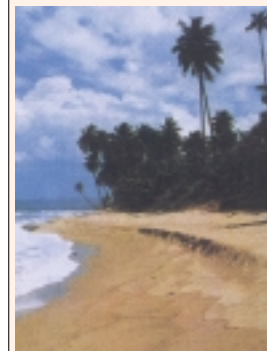


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