

A remarkable man, adored by the people he loved.

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The casket of Mr. Anbton Balasingham, LTTE theoretician and chief negotiator, being carried out of Alexandra Palace on Dec 20, where it had lain in state. Reports p2-9

Depopulation as part of genocidal war

PEOPLE living amid great hardship in areas controlled by the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) there are moving out to the relatively safe areas controlled by the Government of Sri Lanka (GOSL).

The government says the people are fleeing from LTTE oppression and seeking liberty in its areas. The LTTE says the government is driving out these people in a systematic campaign of ethnic cleansing.

The Sinhala - supremacist regime of President Mahinda Rajapakse has a major politico -

military objective. It wants to de-link the North and East and then bring the Eastern province under its full control.

In the process the regime also wants to depopulate Trincomalee district of Tamils and drive Tamils living in LTTE controlled areas in Batticaloa - Amparai into GOSL dominated regions.

This is in effect a scorched earth policy where many Tamils

will be deprived of dwellings and livelihood and reduced to a hand - out dependent life in refugee camps in their land of historic habitation.

The security forces game plan seems to be that of a southern push in Trincomalee and a Northeastern push in Batticaloa to take the Vaakarai region.

Against the backdrop of such an elaborate politico - military

design the people of Vakaraai region - both permanent and temporary - are regarded as being of no consequence.

The GOSL has restricted food and essential items being taken to the Vaakarai region. Quantities amounting to less than half of what is required have been taken irregularly. Movement to and from the area has been restricted for nearly ten weeks.

Access by ICRC, UNHCR and SLMM are severely curtailed. Artillery attacks have been launched regularly.

Nearly a hundred civilians have been killed and more than two - hundred injured in these attacks.

The LTTE request for a 'safe haven' in Vaakarai was pointedly ignored.

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SRI LANKA SPLITS THE NORTHEAST

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NEWS

'Voice of the Nation' mourned

TAMILS across the world this month mourned Mr. Anton Balasingham, the Tamil Tigers' theoretician and chief negotiator, who passed away Thursday December 14 after a brief battle with terminal cancer.

Mr. Balasingham, 68, passed away at his home in south London where he has been resting since his diagnosis last month, being cared for by his wife Adele and specialist cancer medical staff.

In his last public comments, he said last month of his illness: "it is an unfortunate personal tragedy. However, when compared to the vast ocean of the collective tragedy faced by my people, my illness is merely a pebble. I am deeply sad that I am crippled by this illness, unable to contribute anything substantial towards the alleviation of the immense suffering and oppression of my people."

Hailing Mr. Balasingham's three decades of service, the LTTE conferred the title of 'Voice of the Nation' on the veteran negotiator who led the LTTE-delegation in five separate efforts to negotiate a solution with successive Sinhala leaderships.

Mr. Balasingham's funeral was held in London on Wednesday December 20, with a simultaneous ceremonies in

Vanni and Canada.

In an obituary Friday Dec 21, The Times of London described Mr. Anton Balasingham, the theoretician and chief negotiator of the LTTE who passed away Thursday, as "the one man the Tigers could trust with their destiny in what looked like being a breakthrough in talks."

In a message of condolence, the LTTE leader, Mr. Vellupillai Pirapaharan, said: "a source of unwavering strength in the political and diplomatic efforts of our freedom movement, and the light of our nation is extinguished. Bala Annai, from whom I sought advice and solace, is no more with us. It is an irreplaceable loss for our entire nation and for me."

"Bala Annai's life has been much too short. His death comes at a time when we needed him most, as our freedom struggle intensifies. I cannot find words to express my grief and loss," Mr. Pirapaharan said.

"From the beginning of our struggle, when we first met, there was a deep mutual understanding. The fondness that rose from that understanding developed into a rare friendship. We thought and acted in unison. Our friendship grew in strength through our shared day-to-day experiences. This friendship stands apart from ordi-



LTTE leader V. Pirapaharan garlands Mr. Balasingham's portrait at a funeral ceremony Dec. 20.

nary human relationships. It matured with time and was shaped by our shared history.

"I was deeply fond of Bala Annai. In the great family that is our movement he was its eldest son and its guiding star for three decades. That is how I looked up to him. During the time we lived together as one family, I came to realize that he was no ordinary human being. He was strong and unshakable even during the illness that threatened to take his life and the severe pain that illness brought him. The strength of his soul was inspirational. I grieve for him.

"Bala Annai has a permanent historic place in the growth and the spread of our movement. He was its elder member, its ideologue, its philosopher and, above all, my best friend who gave me encouragement and energy. He shared my sorrows, my anxieties and my travails. He was with me from the very beginning of our movement, sharing its challenges and hardships. He was the central figure in all our diplomatic efforts.

"Saluting the immeasurable service he rendered our nation in the political and diplomatic arenas and the efforts by which he

put our national freedom movement on the world stage, allowing our nation to stand with dignity, I am proud to bestow the title of 'Voice of the Nation' on Bala Annai.

"Bala Annai has not left us. He will live permanently in our thoughts."

Mr. Pirapaharan concluded his statement with the rallying call of the LTTE's struggle: "the yearning of the Tigers is Tamileelam!"

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Anton Balasingham, 1938 - 2006

Journalist who became the chief strategist and negotiator of the Tamil Tigers in their struggle for autonomy

Obituary The Times

ANTON Balasingham provided the intellectual framework for the violence of the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam. He was the brains behind the brawn, someone the leadership could turn to for ideological guidance, philosophical justification and political explanation while the killing went on.

A forlorn-faced man, ill with a transplanted kidney, he travelled to devastated northern Sri Lanka in 2002 to act as the rebels' negotiator in peace talks brokered by Norway. The Tigers vainly asked India to host the encounter so that Balasingham could be near a hospital in case of an emergency. Everybody feared that he would die before the best chance of peace in more than two decades could be seized.

The difficulty was how to get him to Sri Lanka without his being assassinated. So, accompanied by his Australian wife, Adele, he flew in from London to the Maldives and transferred to a privately chartered De Havilland DHC-6 Twin Otter seaplane, which land-

ed on a reservoir in a rebel-controlled area south of Kilinochechi. The Colombo Government had ordered the airspace above north-east Sri Lanka to be kept clear of all aircraft, and the seaplane maintained radio silence throughout its journey lest hostile forces picked up the signal, revealing its whereabouts and mission.

The First Secretary of the Norwegian Embassy in Colombo was aboard. Immediately after it landed a Sea Tiger craft moved in to provide security. On the shore, the plump figure of Velupillai Prabhakaran, leader of the Tigers, could be made out standing with his wife Mathivathany, and other Tigers leaders. They were awaiting "Bala Annai" and "Auntie", as young Tigers cadres called the Balasinghams. A house had been constructed for their stay.

This elaborate journey was a measure of the importance the Tigers placed in the one man they could trust with their destiny in what looked like being a breakthrough in talks with the Sri Lankan Government of Ranil Wickremesinghe.

Everybody underestimated, however, the determination of hardcore Sinhalese organisations like the JVP and hardline Buddh-

ist clergy to scuttle any deal that gave the Tamils even a hint of autonomy. The peace deal failed, and Balasingham had made a life-threatening journey with no more to show for it than the continuation of a shaky ceasefire.

Under his guidance the Tigers had entered several rounds of successful talks with the Government, all brokered by Norway, watched suspiciously from the sidelines by President Chandrika Kumaratunga. In the end she used her presidential powers to scupper the deal.

Her successor, President Mahinda Rajapakse, also rejected the concepts of a Tamil homeland and Tamil nationhood. The JVP, in a previous incarnation a fanatically violent organisation but by now the third biggest political party in the country, had threatened "undiplomatic" consequences if the peace deal went through. All of this, Balasingham said with uncharacteristic understatement, represented an obstacle.

In taking the Tigers to the brink of peace, Balasingham had steered the rebels away from their earlier demand for a fully fledged independent state called Eelam. What the Tamils wanted, he said, was "a homeland and self-determ-

ination". If that demand were rejected and the "oppression" continued, there would be no option but to fight for full statehood. Those words signalled the collapse of peace hopes.

Balasingham, who gained a PhD from South Bank Polytechnic in London (his dissertation was on the psychology of Marxism), had been the Tigers' theoretician since the early 1990s and clearly had the full confidence of Prabhakaran. He had a British passport and in 1999, much to the Sri Lanka Government's anger, was allowed to settle in London with his wife, Adele Wilby, an Australian citizen and former nurse he had married in 1978. She lived with him for years in Jaffna, the Tamils' heartland, and became a leader of the Tigers' women's section. Australia sought her arrest for violating a law that prohibits participation in foreign wars.

By the time he moved to London, Balasingham, known among activist Tamils simply as "Bala," was seriously ill with kidney trouble. The Tigers released a large number of Sri Lankan Army prisoners as a goodwill gesture in return for the Colombo Government ensuring his safe passage

abroad. The gesture failed, and so the Tigers took Balasingham aboard one of their ships to Thailand, and from there he travelled to Singapore and on to London. No one expected to see him back in Sri Lanka.

When he did return for the 2002 peace talks the reunion with Prabhakaran was emotional. His influence over Prabhakaran was embarrassingly obvious at a packed press conference in Sri Lanka during the 2002 peace process. Balasingham knew about journalists, having been one himself for a Colombo newspaper before working as a translator at the British High Commission.

He was doubtless responsible for the image makeover of the Tigers leader. Eschewing his customary military fatigues and sidearm Prabhakaran attended the press conference in a safari suit and had even shaved off his moustache. After almost every question he would lean towards Balasingham to be primed with the reply, and for the most part Balasingham would do the replying for him. Which led one commentator to ask: "So who is the real leader of the Tamil Tigers?"

Balasingham died of cancer. He is survived by his wife.

OPINION



Mr. Balasingham (c) in discussion with Mr. Pirapaharan (r) at a landmark press conference by the latter in 2002. LTTE Political Wing head, S. P. Tamilselvan (l) looks on.

A moderating influence in the LTTE

PK Balachandran
Hindustan Times

ANTON Balasingham, the LTTE's chief negotiator and ideologue who died of bile duct cancer in London on Thursday at the age of 68, was a moderating influence on the militant group's supremo, Velupillai Pirapaharan.

"He knew the importance of flexibility in political negotiations when flexibility was called for.

Even though he fully endorsed the hard line of the LTTE and ultimately, always bowed to the wishes of Pirapaharan, he never failed to argue for accommodation when he thought that prudence demanded it," said a Tamil journalist who was close to him.

Towards the end of his life, when he was almost totally bedridden, Balasingham was telling his confidantes that the LTTE should go for a settlement with the Sri Lankan government while he was alive, because he feared that the extremists in the organisation would get the upper hand in his absence and further put off a solution to the Tamil question festering for 60 years now.

Balasingham and Pirapaharan were completely different from each other, but they complemented each other.

Balasingham was academic, analytical and convivial, a completely non-military man.

Pirapaharan, on the other hand, was a man of action, a man of few words who believed in intuitive understanding rather than ponderous analysis.

Balasingham was a quintesse-

ntial negotiator, with a preference for peaceful methods of conflict resolution based on compromise and a step by step movement towards the goal of an independent Tamil Eelam.

But Pirapaharan, the warrior, would pitch for the extreme and was uncompromising.

But there had been a fruitful division of labour between the two, by mutual and tacit consent.

In fact, Balasingham did what Pirapaharan could not, and Pirapaharan did what Balasingham could not.

Balasingham was the political interpreter or translator of the LTTE's actions to the outside world, a tough task, given the global hostility towards terrorists.

He was the interface with the genteel world, given his felicity with the English language, the gift of the gab, his wide reading, and his academic and journalistic background.

He was adept at handling political leaders, heads of governments, officials and journalists from across the globe. In arguments, Balasingham could be reasonable and persuasive as well as intimidating, carping, and sarcastic when the occasion demanded.

Writing about the relations between the two in her book *The Will to Freedom* Balasingham's Australian-born wife Adele says: "The relationship between these two single-minded individuals has been unique.

It is one of those relationships where two different personalities come together at a specific juncture and play significant roles in the movement of history."

Although stormy at times, the relationship was remarkably consistent over decades.

While others came and went, Balasingham had been with Pirapaharan right through, and that too, in the inner circle, right from 1979, when the LTTE was still in its infancy.

Balasingham had the unique distinction of being the leader of the LTTE's negotiating team on most occasions since the 1980s.

Despite his privileged and unique place in the set up, Balasingham had never overstepped his limits and had always worked within the unwritten parameters of his relationship with the supremo.

Balasingham had scrupulously avoided military matters because these were sensitive. In such matters, he would wait for Pirapaharan to brief him.

And according to Adele, Pirapaharan would unfailingly brief him so that the required press releases could be written and the concerns of the outside world addressed.

"Trust" had been the basis of the relationship between the two. Pirapaharan had never felt insecure vis-à-vis Balasingham, who, living in the UK for years, had been interacting with the outside world.

Pirapaharan had never feared that Balasingham might be weaned away from the fundamentals of the LTTE by "pernicious" outside influences.

"Bala's lack of concern for power, his preparedness to restrain his role to writing, teaching and advising, and his obvious commitment to the struggle, eventual-

ly made him the most reliable and trustworthy advisor to Mr Pirapaharan," Adele wrote, spelling Pirapaharan in the Tamil way.

Balasingham's penchant for speaking the truth, as he saw it, was appreciated by Pirapaharan, she said.

"One quality that Mr Pirapaharan has admired and valued in Bala all these years, is his commitment to truth.

Bala has always acted on the principle that he should convey accurate and truthful advice in the best interests of both Mr Pirapaharan and the struggle."

"Whether Mr Pirapaharan has always heeded the advice or was displeased by what he frankly conveyed, was not Bala's concern."

"As the advisor to Mr Pirapaharan, Bala has many times told me, it was his duty to tell the truth, regardless of how unpalatable it may be," Adele wrote.

Balasingham had flirted with a wide variety of ideologies before he became an extreme Tamil nationalist. Though born into a Christian family, he took to the Hindu Vedantic philosophy in the early days.

Later, he was strongly attracted to the rationalism of Buddhism and had gone about giving lectures on it.

While in the UK, he read widely on Western philosophy and Marxism and enrolled for a doctorate on a comparison of Marx and Freud.

But he could not complete the thesis because of his involvement with exiles from the Third World who were fighting for liberation.

According to Adele, he soon

realized that a pure Marxist analysis would not be able to explain the core concerns of Jaffna Tamil society, steeped as it was in Hinduism, Tamil culture and history, and the caste system.

Balasingham lectured to young Tamil arm chair revolutionaries and wrote tracts on the guerilla campaigns of Che Guevara and Mao.

He wrote pamphlets on the Sri Lankan Tamil issue also, putting it in a conceptual framework.

Before long, these works attracted the attention of Pirapaharan who was then living in exile in Chennai, India.

Pirapaharan expressed a wish to see him and Balasingham and Adele journeyed to Chennai in 1979. Pirapaharan had by then seen the need to impart to his cadres a knowledge of larger social, economic and political issues.

These were necessary for developing a commitment to the Tamil cause, which was larger than just setting up an independent Tamil Eelam by force of arms, he felt.

Balasingham was assigned the task of giving orientation lectures.

Personal advisor Within a few years of interaction, Balasingham had become a close personal confidante of Pirapaharan's, Adele says in her book.

When Pirapaharan fell in love with Madhivadhani, a young recruit from Jaffna, and wanted to marry her, but was constrained by the norm that cadres should not marry, Balasingham argued for a change, and Pirapaharan changed the rule.

Published, December 15, 2006



'The Tamils have lost a treasure and

IT was a day of national mourning. In a moment of shared grief, Tamils across the world gathered on Wednesday Dec 20 to pay their respects to Anton Balasingham, the Tamil Tigers' theoretician and chief negotiator.

At his funeral in London an estimated 50,000 Tamils from Britain, across Europe and other Diaspora centres, queued patiently to place wreaths and flowers alongside Mr. Balasingham's body lying in state at Alexandra Palace.

At a funeral ceremony conducted simultaneously in Kilinochchi and another in Mullaitivu in Vanni, tens of thousands of Tamils thronged to pay their respects also.

Footage from Vanni was broadcast live to London. The ceremony in London was relayed live across the world - North America, India, Australasia and Vanni.

Thousands attended another ceremony in Canada that day. But hundreds flew to London for the funeral there, including one large group which chartered its own jet.

Tamils from across Europe travelled to London in coaches for the funeral. Planes were chartered by some Tamils from Norway.

Some who had attended earlier memorial events in Sydney and Melbourne also flew to London.

Mr. Balasingham's casket, topped by a large wreath of white lilies, was placed at the front of the Palace's Great Hall at 8:00 a.m. on Wednesday.

It was escorted in by an honour guard of youth, white gloved and dressed in black suits.

Mr. Balasingham's body was dressed in the traditional white verti, his preferred garment.

A brief initial ceremony was held attended by hundreds of Tamil activists, dressed in black suits and black sarees. Some had flown from other Diaspora centres around the world.

The Tamil activists then filed past the casket, placing flower petals on Mr. Balasingham's body.

The doors to the Great Hall were then opened and the acti-

vists were followed by a long line of people who also placed flower petals at Mr. Balasingham's feet.

Families with children, youth and older Tamils were among those paying respects.

Many wept openly, others prayed. Some lifted young children so they could place petals also.

Dozens of wreaths and bouquets were placed alongside the casket by mourners as they passed. Community organizations from across the world sent representatives with wreaths.

'Voice of the Nation' said one wreath, the title bestowed on the LTTE theoretician by the Tigers. 'Bala Uncle' said another, the title by which many LTTE cadres addressed him.

Thousands of people waited outside the venue on a freezing cold day as the queue snaked back from the Palace's Great Hall, where thousands more were waiting. Hundreds of activists urged mourners to keep moving in an effort to give those waiting an opportunity to pay their respects.

In Vanni, senior LTTE commanders, led by LTTE leader Velupillai Pirapaharan, gathered to garland a life-size image of Mr. Balasingham.

Several gave speeches saluting Mr. Balasingham's myriad of contributions to the Tamil freedom struggle. Some spoke of their personal connections with 'Bala Uncle' and their individual grief.

The day of shared grief was also a moment of united national pride. All sections of Tamil society came together in common appreciation of the freedom struggle and Mr. Balasingham's role in taking it forward.

Expatriates and their brethren in the homeland, stood together in line, as did young and old, white and blue collars, rich and poor.

Second and third generation youth conversed in halting Tamil with recent migrants about what 'Bala Anna' meant to them, of his role in the evolution of 'our struggle.'

Conservative elders, familiar

'An unbeatable power standing for the Tamil people, forcefully articulating their rights'

with Mr. Balasingham's efforts since the early eighties waited in line with teenagers, the latter's self-assured swaggers tempered by the solemnity of the occasion.

At 3 p.m. Mr. Balasingham's casket was carried out of the packed hall in a procession led by the honour guard, followed by a



a brave son'

large wreath of 'Eelam' in the national colours of red and yellow.

In Tamil Nadu, large numbers paid their respects as the major political parties there praised the LTTE's veteran negotiator.

In a message to Adele, Balasingham's wife, DMK president and Chief Minister M. Karunanidhi said the LTTE theoretician had 'won the hearts and minds of Tamils the world over.'

Karunanidhi recalled that Mr. Balasingham had worked tirelessly 'to uphold the spirit of Eelam.'

MDMK general secretary Y. Gopalasamy (Vaiko), said Mr. Balasingham had made 'a Himalayan contribution to the welfare of Sri Lanka Tamils.'

"The Tamils in Sri Lanka have lost a treasure and a brave son," he said.

Dravida Kazhagam leader K. Veeramani said: "That his life should have come to an end when the Eelam issue has reached a critical phase only doubles the agony of his passing away."

A four-person Norwegian delegation attended Mr. Balasingham's funeral in London.

International Development Minister Erik Solheim, who had worked with Mr. Balasingham since 1999 in Oslo's peace efforts in Sri Lanka, and with whom he had become firm friends, gave a short speech.

Saying he had come to make a personal comment as a friend, not a political speech, Mr. Solheim said Mr. Balasingham had passed away when he was most needed.

He said Mr. Balasingham had shown his strength and dignity to the very end. Despite his illness, the LTTE theoretician's concern was for the suffering of his people in Sri Lanka.

"He was a sincere person. He was on the very few people [in the peace process] who never lied to me amongst many people from all communities," Mr. Solheim said, a former Norwegian Special Envoy to Sri Lanka said.

At a memorial event in Oslo earlier in the week, Mr. Solheim's successor, Mr. Jon Hansen-Bauer

praised Mr. Balasingham for his invaluable contribution to the peace efforts, and said Norway will miss a much valued friend.

"He has many friends, and I have not met a person, both among Tamils and Sinhalese, who did not respect him for his steadfastness," he said.

"Anton Balasingham was a theoretician. I had great pleasure discussing with him the key thinkers in Europe and relate their philosophy and approach to the peace process in Sri Lanka," Mr. Hansen-Bauer, a senior academic, said.

"With the demise of Mr. Balasingham, the LTTE has lost its Chief negotiator; the Tamil people have lost one of their most important spokesmen; an unbeatable power standing for the Tamil people, forcefully articulating their rights."

"And, Norway will miss a trusted friend. A central wall in the building of 'Peace' constructed painstakingly block-by-block, has fallen."

You showed the world our

Rest in peace, Bala Annai

Prasanna

Tamil Guardian

BALA Annai, as you were once a Marxist I don't know if you believed in God and heaven and such things, but wherever your atman is now I hope you are looking upon your people gathered here today to say goodbye.

Look at your people Bala Annai: you helped us find our dignity, helped us find our self-respect, find our humanity.

Though you did not fire a shot in anger, you were a warrior as powerful as any that have fallen in battle. Your mind was a weapon more deadly than any our oppressor throws against us. Your courage a shield that would withstand any blow. Your wisdom a national treasure that enriched us all; you were Bhima to our Yudhistara; anna to our anna.

For those of us growing up in another land you helped us understand what we were fighting for. You helped bridge that gap that sometimes separates us. You made us realise that were not terrorists and that our path was just. You gave us the courage to say I am a Tamil and demand respect.

Look at your people Bala Annai - from Toronto to Thiruchonamalai - from Wembley to Vanni - from Melbourne to Mullaithivu - your people have gathered to bid you farewell and to show the world how much you were loved.

Look at us: students and surgeons; factory workers and farmers; doctors and doormen; professionals and peasants - your people stand united in all our glorious diversity.

Look at your people in Vaharai - again suffering at the hands of our oppressors. Look at your people in the Diaspora in their massive houses but with no place to call home. The people you fought so tirelessly for...the people you sacrificed so much of your-self for.

You gave us a voice Bala Annai: when no one would listen - you spoke of injustice; when others tried to use us as pawns you spoke with self-respect; when we were accused of being irrational and barbaric you spoke with enlightened clarity; when our oppressors spun tales of deceit you spoke truth.

You spoke at Thimpu; you spoke with India; you spoke with Chandrika amma and Ranil mama; you even went to Geneva. Surely you must have known they would not give us what is ours? Surely you must have known their words were cheap?

Yet you spoke Bala Annai, somewhere inside you found the strength, you found the faith in humanity, you found the courage to trust our oppressor so that no more lives would have to be sacrificed.

Rest in peace, Bala Annai.

movement and our people wanted a just peace; you showed the world that our people had war thrust upon us; we do not lust for blood; we would rather quench our thirst with the water that flows through the streams of our land.

They say that politics is the art of the possible, and you knew it was possible for us to live in our own land with dignity and pride, you knew it was possible for our two nations to live side by side. You knew that our movement would not rest until our people could hold their heads high. But our oppressor does not know now what you knew then Bala Annai.

But look at your people carefully Bala Annai...look in their eyes...can you see it? It is not the dullness of defeat and humiliation...no it is the sparkle of self-respect and pride... our spirit is not broken.

At this dark time we mourn your passing but we know...we know you will be reborn in a free Eelam...your tiny feet will walk upon the fertile soil of a Vanni free of fear. Your ears will hear waves crashing on a liberated beach in Batticaloa. Your eyes will look upon a Nallur Murugan who is not shackled by our oppressors. Your nose will smell the salt air that blows in across Trincomalee harbor. You will drink your mother's milk in our motherland Bala Annai - these things will come to pass...this is our legacy to you...there is debt we must erase.

While we know we must say goodbye, we make this promise to you Bala Annai: your people will not rest until your dream of a free Eelam is realized; your people will seek peace at every juncture; but we will not cover as our oppressor seeks to crush us; your people will treat our oppressor with the same humanity that brought to back to the negotiating table time after time; your people will speak out for themselves now that your voice is silenced.

Rest now Bala Annai you must be tired, age will not weary you, your eyesight will not fail you, nor will you stoop. We will remember you standing tall, the giant of a man you were. Join Kittu Annai, Theelepan Annai, Malathi Acca and all the other maveerar who have gone before you.

Do not worry for Adele Acca - a nation awaits to wipe her tears, a thousand sisters will hold her hand as she bids you farewell, there will be a thousand sons to light her funeral pyre when her time comes.

It says in the Bible that 'unless a wheat grain falls into the earth and dies, it remains only a single grain; but if it dies it yields a rich harvest' - many grains have fallen into the soil of Eelam - the time to harvest is near.

Rest in peace, Bala Annai.



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Thousands of people waited outside the venue on a freezing cold day as the queue snaked back from the Palace's Great Hall, where thousands more were waiting. Hundreds of activists urged mourners to keep moving in an effort to give those waiting an opportunity to pay their respects.

In Vanni, senior LTTE commanders, led by LTTE leader Velupillai Pirapaharan, gathered to garland a lifelike image of Mr. Balasingham.

Several gave speeches saluting Mr. Balasingham's myriad of contributions to the Tamil freedom struggle. Some spoke of their personal connections with 'Bala Uncle' and their individual grief.

The day of shared grief was also a moment of united national pride. All sections of Tamil society came together in common appreciation of the freedom struggle and Mr. Balasingham's role in taking it forward.

Expatriates and their brethren in the homeland, stood together in line, as did young and old, white and blue collars, rich and poor.

Second and third generation youth conversed in halting Tamil with recent migrants about what 'Bala Anna' meant to them, of his role in the evolution of 'our struggle.'

Conservative elders, familiar

'An unbeatable power standing for the Tamil people, forcefully articulating their rights'

with Mr. Balasingham's efforts since the early eighties waited in line with teenagers, the latter's self-assured swaggers tempered by the solemnity of the occasion.

At 3 p.m. Mr. Balasingham's casket was carried out of the packed hall in a procession led by the honour guard, followed by a



a brave son'

large wreath of 'Eelam' in the national colours of red and yellow.

In Tamil Nadu, large numbers paid their respects as the major political parties there praised the LTTE's veteran negotiator.

In a message to Adele, Balasingham's wife, DMK president and Chief Minister M. Karunanidhi said the LTTE theoretician had 'won the hearts and minds of Tamils the world over.'

Karunanidhi recalled that Mr. Balasingham had worked tirelessly 'to uphold the spirit of Eelam.'

MDMK general secretary Y. Gopalasamy (Vaiko), said Mr. Balasingham had made 'a Himalayan contribution to the welfare of Sri Lanka Tamils.'

"The Tamils in Sri Lanka have lost a treasure and a brave son," he said.

Dravida Kazhagam leader K. Veeramani said: "That his life should have come to an end when the Eelam issue has reached a critical phase only doubles the agony of his passing away."

A four-person Norwegian delegation attended Mr. Balasingham's funeral in London.

International Development Minister Erik Solheim, who had worked with Mr. Balasingham since 1999 in Oslo's peace efforts in Sri Lanka, and with whom he had become firm friends, gave a short speech.

Saying he had come to make a personal comment as a friend, not a political speech, Mr. Solheim said Mr. Balasingham had passed away when he was most needed.

He said Mr. Balasingham had shown his strength and dignity to the very end. Despite his illness, the LTTE theoretician's concern was for the suffering of his people in Sri Lanka.

"He was a sincere person. He was on the very few people [in the peace process] who never lied to me amongst many people from all communities," Mr. Solheim said, a former Norwegian Special Envoy to Sri Lanka said.

At a memorial event in Oslo earlier in the week, Mr. Solheim's successor, Mr. Jon Hansen-Bauer

praised Mr. Balasingham for his invaluable contribution to the peace efforts, and said Norway will miss a much valued friend.

"He has many friends, and I have not met a person, both among Tamils and Sinhalese, who did not respect him for his steadfastness," he said.

"Anton Balasingham was a theoretician. I had great pleasure discussing with him the key thinkers in Europe and relate their philosophy and approach to the peace process in Sri Lanka," Mr. Hansen-Bauer, a senior academic, said.

"With the demise of Mr. Balasingham, the LTTE has lost its Chief negotiator; the Tamil people have lost one of their most important spokesman; an unbeatable power standing for the Tamil people, forcefully articulating their rights.

"And, Norway will miss a trusted friend. A central wall in the building of 'Peace' constructed painstakingly block-by-block, has fallen."

You showed the world our

Rest in peace, Bala Annai

Prasanna
Tamil Guardian

BALA Annai, as you were once a Marxist I don't know if you believed in God and heaven and such things, but wherever your atman is now I hope you are looking upon your people gathered here today to say goodbye.

Look at your people Bala Annai: you helped us find our dignity, helped us find our self-respect, find our humanity.

Though you did not fire a shot in anger, you were a warrior as powerful as any that have fallen in battle. Your mind was a weapon more deadly than any our oppressor throws against us. Your courage a shield that would withstand any blow. Your wisdom a national treasure that enriched us all; you were Bhima to our Yudisthira; anna to our anna.

For those of us growing up in another land you helped us understand what we were fighting for. You helped bridge that gap that sometimes separates us. You made us realise that were not terrorists and that our path was just. You gave us the courage to say I am a Tamil and demand respect.

Look at your people Bala Annai - from Toronto to Thiruchonamalai - from Wembley to Vanni - from Melbourne to Mullaithivu - your people have gathered to bid you farewell and to show the world how much you were loved.

Look at us: students and surgeons; factory workers and farmers; doctors and doormen; professionals and peasants - your people stand united in all our glorious diversity.

Look at your people in Vaharai - again suffering at the hands of our oppressors. Look at your people in the Diaspora in their massive houses but with no place to call home. The people you fought so tirelessly for...the people you sacrificed so much of your-self for.

You gave us a voice Bala Annai: when no one would listen - you spoke of injustice; when others tried to use us as pawns you spoke with self-respect; when we were accused of being irrational and barbaric you spoke with enlightened clarity; when our oppressors spun tales of deceit you spoke truth.

You spoke at Thimpu; you spoke with India; you spoke with Chandrika amma and Ranil mama; you even went to Geneva. Surely you must have known they would not give us what is ours? Surely you must have known their words were cheap?

Yet you spoke Bala Annai, somewhere inside you found the strength, you found the faith in humanity, you found the courage to trust our oppressor so that no more lives would have to be sacrificed.

Rest in peace, Bala Annai.

movement and our people wanted a just peace; you showed the world that our people had war thrust upon us; we do not lust for blood; we would rather quench our thirst with the water that flows through the streams of our land.

They say that politics is the art of the possible, and you knew it was possible for us to live in our own land with dignity and pride, you knew it was possible for our two nations to live side by side. You knew that our movement would not rest until our people could hold their heads high. But our oppressor does not know now what you knew then Bala Annai.

But look at your people carefully Bala Annai...look in their eyes...can you see it? It is not the dullness of defeat and humiliation...no it is the sparkle of self-respect and pride... our spirit is not broken.

At this dark time we mourn your passing but we know...we know you will be reborn in a free Eelam...your tiny feet will walk upon the fertile soil of a Vanni free of fear. Your ears will hear waves crashing on a liberated beach in Batticaloa. Your eyes will look upon a Nallur Murugan who is not shackled by our oppressors. Your nose will smell the salt air that blows in across Trincomalee harbor. You will drink your mother's milk in our motherland Bala Annai - these things will come to pass...this is our legacy to you...there is debt we must erase.

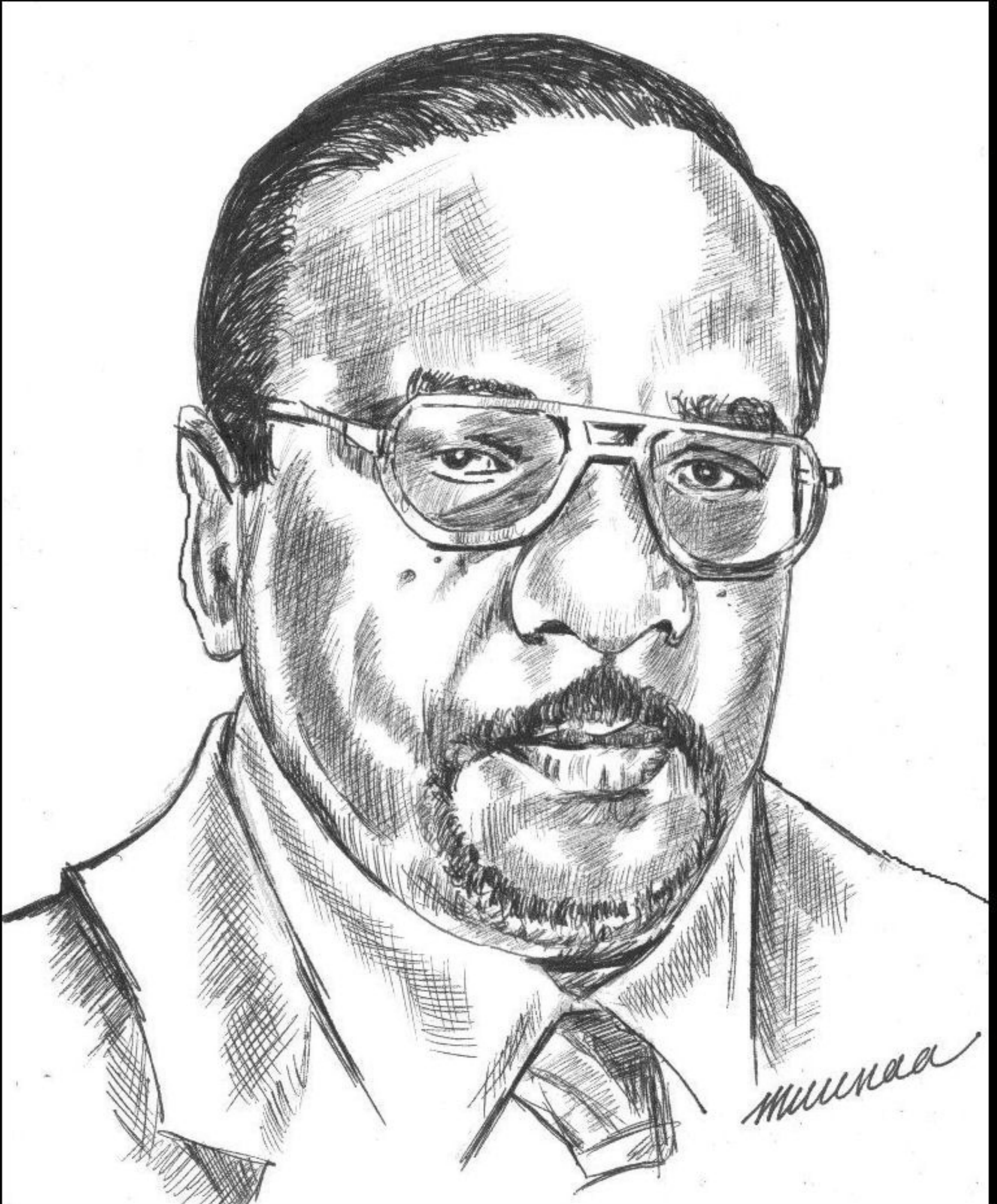
While we know we must say goodbye, we make this promise to you Bala Annai: your people will not rest until your dream of a free Eelam is realized; your people will seek peace at every juncture; but we will not cover as our oppressor seeks to crush us; your people will treat our oppressor with the same humanity that brought to back to the negotiating table time after time; your people will speak out for themselves now that your voice is silenced.

Rest now Bala Annai you must be tired, age will not weary you, your eyesight will not fail you, nor will you stoop. We will remember you standing tall, the giant of a man you were. Join Kittu Annai, Theelepan Annai, Malathi Acca and all the other maveerar who have gone before you.

Do not worry for Adele Acca - a nation awaits to wipe her tears, a thousand sisters will hold her hand as she bids you farewell, there will be a thousand sons to light her funeral pyre when her time comes.

It says in the Bible that 'unless a wheat grain falls into the earth and dies, it remains only a single grain; but if it dies it yields a rich harvest' - many grains have fallen into the soil of Eelam - the time to harvest is near.

Rest in peace, Bala Annai.

ANTON BALASINGHAM, 1938 - 2006

EDITORIAL

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WEDNESDAY DECEMBER 27, 2006 No. 339

Bala Anna

A remarkable man, adored by the people he loved.

News that Mr. Anton Balasingham had passed away after a brief battle with cancer was met with shock and profound grief across the Tamil community. In the thirty years he was associated with the Tamil freedom struggle, he had truly become a legend in his own time. He was the LTTE's theoretician for thirty years and its chief negotiator for most of that time. In that period, a fledgling guerilla group dedicated to the emancipation of the Tamil people grew and expanded into a national liberation movement with a powerful military and an apparatus of civil administration, while Bala Anna became an icon of the Tamil cause.

Mr. Balasingham was many things to the Tamil struggle. The formal titles of theoretician and chief negotiator do not capture them all. Within the LTTE he was a father figure. His door was always open to cadres and commanders alike. No subject was taboo, confidentiality was assured. Most importantly, of course, he was the struggle's political strategist. Beyond the LTTE, he was approached for advice and guidance by a range of Tamils, from parliamentarians to journalists, supportive of the cause of freedom. He was eloquent in formal Tamil, but he could also address us in the colloquial, unraveling the complexities our struggle faced and bringing every one of us closer to it. Which is why his public addresses were so eagerly awaited.

It was Mr. Balasingham's demonstrably keen intellect and political acumen that compelled LTTE leader Vellupillai Pirapaharan to ask him in 1979 to join the tiny group of young revolutionaries their movement then was. (And it was Mr. Balasingham's recognition of Mr. Pirapaharan's abilities as a leader and the LTTE's institutional strengths that persuaded him to throw in his lot with the Tigers rather than any of the many other Tamil militant groups setting out on the long road of struggle.) The strength of the personal bond that grew between them is reflected in Mr. Pirapaharan's poignant words this week as he awarded Bala Anna that unique title 'Voice of the Nation.'

Nothing captures what Bala Anna meant to the Tamils as that title does. For three decades he spoke for us, the Tamil people. He led LTTE delegations in five attempts to negotiate a political solution with the Sinhala state. He represented us in our dialogue with the international community, both in public fora and private discussion.

He explained the oppression we endure and defended our struggle for freedom. He was a formidable representative, aggressively and adeptly pursuing our interests. He could not be intimidated - though it was often tried. His razor sharp intellect was matched by a powerful personality.

But he was, as one commentator puts it, a quintessential negotiator. Amidst the heat of dispute he could find the sites of compromise. And, armed with the complete trust of the LTTE leadership, he would compromise - but not surrender. Thus he earned the begrudging respect of his interlocutors, both Sinhala and international.

His driving purpose was always the well being of his people, as all those who engaged with him from any side of the table quickly came to understand. It is entirely in character that his final public words in November, confirming his diagnosis with cancer, were mainly about the plight of the Tamil people. He loved us as much as we adored him.

It is inevitable that Mr. Balasingham's passing has brought joy to our enemies. Reflecting the character of some of them, there has been public jubilation at his death in parts of the south - just as when his illness was announced last month. This ugliness is characteristic of the oppression we fight.

It also reflects a misunderstanding of what Mr. Balasingham's multi-faceted role was, of where the LTTE now is as a movement and where the Tamils are as a nation. The growth of LTTE over the past three decades has been inexorable, despite the ferocious violence unleashed on it and the Tamil people by the Sri Lankan state and its allies. Mr. Balasingham contributed immeasurably to that growth. His analytical, calculative approach has been institutionalized. Every arm of the LTTE routinely weighs its decisions before committing to a course of action, the long-term benefit to the Tamil cause the overarching priority. As the LTTE's multi-faceted international engagement has grown in scale and complexity, new capabilities have emerged, both in the LTTE and wider Tamil nationalist movement. Mr. Balasingham guided many of these, devising strategies and advising key individuals. As deepening illness precluded a frontline role for Mr. Balasingham for much of this year, he was able to rest, secure his many tasks were being competently carried forward by oth-

ers. The extent of his legacy will only be discernible in the fullness of time.

This newspaper and its staff are privileged to have had a very special relationship with Bala Anna. It began soon after he arrived in London in 1999. He readily agreed to meet the volunteers of the Tamil Guardian when we asked. Our discussions quickly became regular and frequent. We always met at the study in his home, where we were warmly welcomed by him and his wife, Adele. An experienced journalist, Mr. Balasingham had a passion for media. He also appreciated that we were committed to articulating the Tamil cause. He spent considerable time with us in prolonged discussion on the ethnic question, on the Tamil struggle, on international affairs, and many other subjects. The depth of his knowledge was unfathomable. A warm, convivial and humorous man, he was a patient tutor. He scrutinized our work and was generous with his praise and scathing in his criticism. Yet he never constrained us, encouraging us to write freely on the Tamil cause. As with a handful of other Tamil correspondents, he took us into his confidence in exchange for our discretion. In March 2000 we were privileged to be exclusively granted his first media interview after leaving Vanni. He gave many of his infrequent subsequent interviews to us.

Our relationship with the Balasinghams went beyond the production of the newspaper. It was individual, personal and very affectionate. They took an active interest in each of us, inquiring of those who met them about those who were not there. Bala Anna encouraged us to develop our individual interests and offered welcome advice on our academic and professional pursuits. We drew much inspiration and not a little courage from him.

Being close to Bala Anna, we were, for a long time, acutely aware of his health difficulties. His health declined rapidly this year, but only until recently were we unable to converse regularly with him. His death comes as a devastating personal loss to each of us. Our hearts go out to Adele Aunty, his beloved wife and constant companion. Her loss is the deepest. We will all miss him very much. We, at the Tamil Guardian, couldn't be more proud of our close association with Mr. Balasingham over the past seven years. He was, quite simply, a remarkable man.

ALEXANDRA PALACE, 20 DECEMBER 2006



NEWS



Mr. Singh met five TNA MPs and Mr. Subaveera Pandiyan (2nd r), representative of DMK leader Karunanidhi. Reports said the meeting was "very warm and positive"

TNA meets Premier Singh over Tamil plight

IN what some analysts say is a 'major shift' in India's policy towards Sri Lanka, Prime Minister Manmohan Singh met last Friday (Dec. 22) with leaders of the Tamil National Alliance (TNA), the island's largest Tamil party, known for its pro-LTTE stance.

This is the first time that the top Indian leadership was meeting a group openly aligned with the LTTE, banned in 1992 after being blamed for the assassination of Rajiv Gandhi.

The Asian Age reported that observers in India feel that it could well be the beginning of a process, sponsored by Tamil Nadu chief minister M. Karunanidhi, to break the ice with the LTTE and bring pressure on Colombo.

The TNA team, led by Parliamentary Group leader, R. Sampanthan, had met Mr Karunanidhi at Chennai on Wednesday December 20, and briefed him on the situation back home. The DMK is an important constituent of the UPA government.

Mr. Singh was accompanied by India's national security adviser M.K. Narayanan and foreign secretary Shivshankar Menon to

the 45-minute meeting.

"It was a very fruitful meeting with the Prime Minister. He expressed concern about the denial of human rights to the Tamils by the Sinhala government and assured that India would do its best to ensure we live in peace and dignity," said Mr Selvam Adaikalathen, leader of TELO, one of the constituents of the TNA.

"This is a very encouraging development for us," he said.

Mr. Sampanthan quoted Prime Minister Singh as saying that India was committed to a peaceful resolution of the conflict in a manner acceptable to the Tamil-speaking people.

Coming at a critical juncture in the decades-old ethnic conflict, the meeting with the Indian Premier was "of tremendous significance" and was bound to have "significant impact on the coming future", he said.

In telling contrast to the snub they received the last time they came to India three months ago, when both Prime Minister Singh and chief minister Karunanidhi refused to meet them, the Tamil team members were treated as

state guests this time, the Asian Age opined, adding Dr Singh, in fact, came out of his office to receive the delegation with folded hands.

After being led to the meeting room, Mr Sampanthan and his senior colleague, Mavai Senathirajah, draped shawls around the Premier to show their warmth.

However, the expected meeting with UPA chairperson Sonia Gandhi did not take place as the Congress president was touring Uttar Pradesh. Though she was personally unavailable for the Tamil delegation, Mrs Gandhi had sent word to Premier Singh recommending he meet the Tamil MPs, the Asian Age reported.

The previous administration in Tamil Nadu of AIADMK leader Jayalalitha had cracked the whip on anyone even mildly supporting the LTTE.

But by late last year, even the AIADMK was warming to the Eelam cause.

Now there are public rallies almost every day by various Tamil parties across the state, either demonstrating against the Sri Lankan government for the 'geno-

cide' of Tamils in the island or, last week, condoling the death of LTTE ideologue Anton Balasingham. His black-bordered posters are plastered all over Chennai and elsewhere in the state.

Indeed, the pro-Eelam support has never been so high-pitched since the assassination of Rajiv Gandhi by the Tamil Tigers in 1991, the Asian Age reported.

Tamil Nationalist Movement leader Pazha Nedumaran arranged a well-attended condolence meet for "Balanna" (Balasingham) in the city last week.

Dravidar Kazhagam leader K. Veeramani, presided over yet another condolence meeting last Thursday, at which Mr Karunanidhi's daughter, Kanimozhi, was among the important speakers, urging that India should step in to halt the Eelam tragedy.

The Eelam supporters have bagged a star campaigner now in Ms Kanimozhi, the chief minister's daughter, who makes no bones about her strong feelings in support of the Tigers, who she insists are the "sole representatives of the Lankan Tamils."

"The sooner India acknowl-

edges this by lifting the ban against the LTTE the better. The Tigers have expressed regret (for the Rajiv assassination) and we should leave things at that. We should not get stuck to the past and continue making more mistakes. Instead, we must move towards a solution and take the LTTE along, because only they are the true representatives of the Lankan Tamils," Ms Kanimozhi said.

It is unlikely that she has not discussed her Eelam views with her father and it is even more unlikely she would pursue her line if he had objected, the Asian Age opined.

Meanwhile, pro-Eelam rallies continued in Chennai with the Dravidar Kazhagam organising an all-party "human chain" last Friday in which the ruling DMK too participated.

"We are condemning the attacks on Tamil civilians by the Sinhala forces and the continued denial of food to people in Jaffna by the closure of the A-9 highway. India must intervene," said DK president K. Veeramani, who led Friday's demonstration.

Sri Lanka splits Northeast into three

DESPITE strong opposition from India and the rest of the international community, the government of President Mahinda Rajapakse is accelerating the demerger of the Northeast province.

The NEP administration has been split into one for the northern province and one for the eastern province, with Trincomalee district, with the coveted eastern harbour kept as third separate entity.

The move is a direct assault on the Tamil assertion of a homeland in the island, the recognition of which was implicit in the formation of NEP as part of the Indo-Sri Lanka accord in 1987.

The military officer who had been appointed governor of the NEP by President Rajapakse confirmed to reporters Sunday that the de-merger was proceeding as planned.

Rear Admiral (Retd) Mohan

Wijewickrama was last week sworn in before President Rajapakse as governor of the eastern province.

"From 1 January 2007, we have no choice but to run the two provinces separately," Wijewickrama told the Sunday Island yesterday. "Finances have already been appropriated separately for the two provinces."

Fresh appointments are also to be made to the northern and eastern provincial councils in keeping with the Supreme Court ruling two months ago that the 1987 merger was "illegal and void."

The Northern and Eastern Provinces were temporarily merged under the 13th Amendment following the Indo-Sri Lanka Peace Accord in 1987.

The merger was challenged in the Supreme Court earlier this year by the ultra-nationalist Janatha Vimukthi Perumana (JVP) with

the tacit support of President Rajapakse's government.

Until the JVP challenged the merger, the temporary merger was being extended by a Presidential decree every year.

But the Supreme Court's ruling on the NEP was specifically about the modalities of the merger, rather than the notion of the merger itself.

However, despite calls by the international community, particularly India, for the Rajapakse government to carry through the proper merger of the two provinces, the government has instead abrogated the 1987 Accord.

"I have already started appointing the secretary, deputy secretaries and heads of department to the two provinces, the filling of higher positions has almost been completed," Wijewickrama said.

"A lot of structures are in place and they just have to be

divided into two. Thus, there will have to be two secretaries of education, health and so on. There will also be two treasuries."

The Sunday Times reported that the northern province will be administered from Vavuniya and the eastern province from Kalmunai.

The staff of the Northern and Eastern Provincial Council office based in Trincomalee is to be divided between the Northern and Eastern Administrative Secretariat offices, the paper added.

But Wijewickrama rejected the report, saying: "Both administrative offices will be temporarily located in Trincomalee until an alternative location is found for the northern provincial council."

Sri Lanka's move to split the Northeast are a slap in the face for India. Not only does it directly contradict the terms of the Indo-Sri Lanka Accord, it runs contrary

to an explicit call by the Congress government in Delhi that the Northeast remains merged pending a referendum in the east once 'conducive' conditions prevail there.

The point was made directly by Indian Prime Minister Manmohan Singh personally to Sri Lankan President Mahinda Rajapakse, once during the NAM summit in Havana in September and again last month when the latter visited Delhi.

The Co-Chairs of the now moribund peace process - the US, EU, Japan and Norway - have also called repeatedly this year for the Northeast not to be de-merged.

The international community has seen the merged Northeast province as a tool to address the Tamil demand for self-autonomy for the regions they have traditionally inhabited.

OPINION

80% of tsunami affected in NE still homeless

SRI LANKA fell silent to remember its 31,000 dead on the second anniversary of the Asian tsunami, with the United Nations criticising the rehabilitation efforts hindered by the renewed conflict.

The island, which received huge amounts of money for reconstruction, has failed to complete much of the rebuilding, with officials admitting that only about 56 per cent of the work has been finished.

President Mahinda Rajapaksa admitted last year that the country had failed to do enough to help the survivors and thousands still live in "tent villages" along the coast.

Sri Lanka, one of the worst-hit countries, attracted US\$ 3.2 billion in foreign aid pledges, but the state auditor general in September 2005 noted that out of the US\$ 1.16 billion, only 13.5 per cent had actually been spent.

Moreover, most of these reconstruction efforts have been directed to the Sinhala south.

Almost 80% of people displaced in the Northeast by the December 2004 tsunami have not been resettled or have been driven out again by Sri Lankan military action, the Tamil Rehabilitation Organisation (TRO) said this week.

The TRO blamed several key factors of the slower implementation of tsunami recovery activities in the Northeast compared to the rapid recovery that is seen in the south of Sri Lanka.

These included the disproportionate allocation of governmental resources to the Northeast, Colombo's rejection of a landmark aid sharing and management structure (P-TOMS), the centralization of bureaucracy and decision making in Colombo and

the government's slower rate of fund disbursement tsunami affected people in the NorthEast.

Furthermore, with fewer international NGOs (per capita) working in the Northeast compared to the south, less funds and other resources (per capita) were available in the NorthEast, TRO said.

"The difficulties that NGOs have in working in the Northeast due to government restrictions, regulations and harassment [were another factor]," TRO said.

The TRO's protest comes as both outgoing UN Secretary General Kofi Annan and former US President Bill Clinton, Annan's special envoy for tsunami recovery, singled out Sri Lanka for criticism.

Mr. Annan said the renewed conflict between the Sri Lankan government and Tamil Tigers was making the reconstruction effort "even more difficult".

Both Annan and Clinton said that the tsunami had produced an impetus for peace in Aceh, Indonesia.

"Alas, in Sri Lanka that spirit has not been sustained. Instead, the spiral of tension and open conflict, which had wrought so much misery and destruction over the years, has resumed," Annan said.

"Tragically, the tsunami has not had a similar impact on reconciliation in Sri Lanka, where the recovery will be continue to be hampered until the parties resume a serious dialogue and reestablish the cease-fire," Clinton said.

Simmering violence between Sri Lanka Army-backed paramilitaries and the LTTE exploded into direct confrontations between the military and the Tigers in the middle of 2006.

In April the military began

ministry had already stopped making new promises to the government in Colombo.

"It would be good, if other western governments would act in the same way," she told the newspaper.

She said that as result of the renewed civil war and the flare up in fighting in Tamil populated areas, no new funds could be allocated.

Consequently, 19 million euros (25 million dollars), which had been intended for Sri Lanka, for the houses and education projects was to be redirected to the Indonesian province of Aceh.



A family in LTTE-controlled Mullaitivu mourns victims of the Dec 2004 tsunami. Photo TamilNet

large scale bombardments of LTTE-controlled areas, after a suicide bomber wounded the Army chief.

Over 200,000 people, mainly Tamils, have been displaced by repeated military operations and bombardments since then. Hundreds of civilians have been killed and many more wounded.

"I am deeply disheartened by this turn of events. Let me remind all parties of their obligation to respect human rights and international law, and particularly to protect and allow access to the civilian population," Annan said.

Even the TRO's tsunami related projects are on hold due to the prevailing "security situation" and the Central Bank's freezing of the TRO's bank accounts for six months from August for 'investigations.'

Approximately US\$ 800,000 was in 'project specific' accounts at the time of freezing, 80% of which come from international NGOs, the UN, the government itself, ADB, World Bank, and various other multi-lateral and bi-lateral donors, TRO said.

Meanwhile in a statement issued Tuesday this week to mark the second anniversary of the devastating tsunami, the LTTE condemned the Sri Lankan government's campaign against the Tamils.

The tsunami had left "deep scars on the Tamil psyche," the statement said. "In the early hours that day, within a few seconds, in excess of 17,000 Tamils died. Many more thousands were injured. 344,000 people became refugees having lost their homes. Tamil cities and villages were razed to the ground."

"Ten countries in the Indian ocean faced similar devastation. ... The tsunami did not discriminate between ethnicity, religion or language."

"The devastating tsunami also brought out, in an unprecedented manner, the concern of the humanity. As the media took the news of the devastation to all corners of the world, the tragedy shook the conscience of fellow humans all around the world."

Humanitarian agencies and many governments gathered with enormous sums of money to assist. "Sri Lanka had a unique place in their plans; The international community planned to use the opportunity to also create goodwill between the divided ethnic groups."

"[But] the sunami that shook the conscience of humanity failed to wake the conscience of the Sinhala government immersed in the Sinhala Buddhist hegemonic philosophy."

"This government treated the tsunami as a welcome means of destroying the Tamil people," the LTTE said.

Instead of seeing the suffering of the Tamil people, the government "imagined and celebrated that the Tamil leadership and the naval wing of the Tamil force lay destroyed by the tsunami."

The Sri Lankan media was totally occupied with reports of this nature, the statement pointed out.

The Sri Lankan government, "ignoring the fact that two thirds of those affected in the island were from the Tamil homeland, channelled all international tsunami aid to the Sinhala areas. It used the volunteers and the security forces that came to assist from several countries to rebuild the Sinhala areas."

"The responsibility of caring for the devastated Tamil people fell on the shoulders of the LTTE. It is well known to the world that the recovery work in the Tamil homeland was exemplary. The structures put in place by the LTTE for tsunami reconstruction was praised world wide."

"The assistance from their Tamil brethren living around the world went a long way to help the affected Tamil people. Many international humanitarian agencies also came forward to channel their assistance through the structures put in place by the LTTE. The Government of Italy also gave its assistance directly to the LTTE."

"All of this assistance went a long way to alleviate the misery of the Tamil people."

"[But] not a drop of the inter-

national assistance given to the Government of Sri Lanka reached the Tamil homeland."

Instead, "relief convoys sent from the northern parts of the Tamil homeland to the eastern parts of Tamil homeland of Trincomalee, Batticaloa, and Amparai, were stopped and redirected to the Sinhala areas by the Sri Lankan military and [Sinhala nationalists]."

The international community is well aware of the government's conduct, the LTTE said, pointing to how Mr. Annan and Mr. Clinton were both denied access to the northern areas devastated by the tsunami.

Referring to the PTOMS, the LTTE said "[we] came forward to create a joint structure with the Government of Sri Lanka to implement reconstruction projects with international aid and facilitation. This too was thrown to the dustbin by the Government even though this joint structure was promoted by the international community."

Even now, assistance to the Tamil people devastated by the tsunami has not progressed beyond the temporary shelter phase, the LTTE said.

Instead the government has begun to openly wage another war on a people who have been devastated by decades of war and the tsunami, the statement said.

Singling out the Vaharai region, which is being bombarded and blockaded by Sri Lankan security forces, the LTTE said: "while tsunami affected Sinhala people are resettling in new homes, the worst affected Tamils are being chased even from their temporary shelters."

On Tuesday, as tsunami anniversary memorial prayers were being held in Vaharai, Sri Lanka's military launched a sustained bombardment.

Sri Lanka Airforce (SLAF) Kfir fighter jets bombed Kathiraveli and Palchenai residential areas while artillery and rocket fire was directed from Sri Lanka Army camps in Mankerny, Kadjuwathe.

Depopulation, p14

Germany wants peace conditions on new aid

THE international community should make further assistance to Sri Lanka dependent on the resumption of the peace process in the country, German Development Minister Heidmarie Wiecek-Zeul was quoted as saying in an interview to be published Sunday.

Ms. Wiecek-Zeul's interview, which was released a day early and is to be published in Berlin's Tagesspiegel am Sonntag, is to mark the second anniversary of the devastating Tsunami which swept across coastal regions surrounding the Indian Ocean on December 26, 2004.

Ms. Wiecek-Zeul said her

NEWS

Violence round up - week ending 24 December

24 December

● LTTE cadres repulsed an attack by the STF inside LTTE controlled Kanchikudichcharu area in Amparai district. A group of STF soldiers from Thandiyadi and Kanchirankuda Camps infiltrated up to 2 km inside into the LTTE territory and took cover near Kanchikudichcharu school where a fierce fighting broke out when an LTTE foot patrol came under attack. Three STF soldiers were injured in the retaliatory shelling by the LTTE, and the infiltration group retreated to barracks. LTTE cadres Nishanthan and Jegan were killed in the attack. The STF claimed that it has recovered 2 T-56 rifles, 1 walkie-talkie and 196 rounds in the search operation.

● Sri Lankan forces arrested four Tamil youths in a combined search operation conducted by the SLA and Police in Dehiwala, Colombo. Two of the arrested youths are residents of Puttur and Achchuveli in Jaffna district and the rest from Kaduwela in Colombo.

● Seven Tamil youths including a woman were arrested in Habaraduwa in Galle district and in Kandy town in two separate cordon and search operations conducted by security forces. The security forces arrested a Tamil youth and woman when they were walking along Dalada Veediya in Kandy Town. Five Tamil youths were arrested in Habaraduwa in Galle.

23 December

● The SLA launched an artillery barrage simultaneously from three directions, Kallaru SLA camp, north of Vaharai, Karadikulam, in the west and from Manakerni SLA camp in the south towards Kathiraveli, Kandalady, Palchenai, Vammiveduvan, Vellayadimadu and Uriyankattu villages in the Vahara region. The artillery barrage continued for more than 8 hours. Vaharai hospital reported artillery explosions 200 meters close to Vaharai hospital.

● LTTE combatants successfully repulsed an attack by the SLA and its collaborating paramilitary group from Black Bridge SLA camp at Chenkalady in Batticaloa on the LTTE held Karadiyanaru area. Three SLA troopers were seriously injured while no one was injured on their side, the LTTE said. The clash took place near the LTTE FDL in Koduvamadu into which the SLA tried to penetrate. Two houses, home gardens and

paddies belonging to residents in Karadiyanaru area were damaged in the mortar firing launched by the Chenkalady SLA camp. None of the inhabitants was hurt, though four goats were killed.

● Armed men opened fire on SLA patrol unit troopers who were conducting a search for armed persons said to be moving around at Manandy in Vadamaradchi, killing one and seriously injuring two of the SLA troopers. The attack on the SLA troopers who were engaged in a search operation launched on information that armed persons were in Thikkam, were fired upon when they were emerging out of liquor distillery in the Thikkam area.

● Armed men opened fire on persons returning from a funeral killing two on the spot and seriously injuring six, at Puthukudiruppu in Batticaloa. The two killed were identified as Navaratnam Sivendran, 23, of Puthukudiruppu and Sellathamby Gunasingham, 31, of Thalankuda. The wounded were identified as Kunarathnam Kanesalingam, 22, Karunakaran Thiagarajan, 23, Muthulingam Mogan, 34, Sanmugam Satheswaran, 22, Poopalappillay Kageniran, 26 and Kirushnappillai Thevakumar, 22. The armed men, hiding by the road along which the victims were returning after participating in the funeral of Sinnan Soundaran of Beach Road at Puthukudiruppu, opened fire.

● Two armed men following on a motor cycle opened fire on two civilians riding a motor bicycle along Kachai Road at Kodikamam in Thenmaradchi, killing one on the spot and seriously injuring the other. The dead man was identified as Sinnathamby Ketheeswaran, 34, from Thavasikulam in Kodikamam. The injured man, Nallathamby Rajathurai, 63, who is being treated at the Intensive Care Unit of the hospital is a relative of the dead Ketheeswaran. Kachai Road, along which the shooting took place, is situated within Thenmaradchi area where SLA troopers are always present.

● A Tamil youth, identified as Mayuran, working in a telecommunication center on 37th Lane in Wellawatte, Colombo was abducted by unidentified persons.

22 December

● SLAF Kfir jets bombed a Mullaithivu suburb. This followed a similar raid on Wednesday, when Vanni observed the funeral



The wall outside the UN compound in Jaffna is being raised.

Photo TamilNet

NGOs increase security

Both international and local Non-governmental organizations (NGOs) in Jaffna are reinforcing security arrangements around their offices due to violent incidents and abductions taking place close to their offices, TamilNet reported.

Offices of ICRC, UNHCR, UN, Tamils Rehabilitation Organisation (TRO) and several other NGOs are located in Temple Road in Nallur Jaffna, also known

as the 'VIP' road.

The wall enclosing the UN office compound is being strengthened and raised to ten feet making it difficult for anyone to trespass or break-in. ICRC office is constructing an additional iron fence four feet high to prevent invaders.

A representative of an international NGO who wish to remain anonymous said, that the hand grenade attack in front of ICRC

office, the sporadic clashes between the Sri Lanka Army troopers and unidentified armed men on Temple road where the ICRC office is located, the burning of the TRO office and the abduction of Halo Trust employees have created an environment of insecurity among the NGO community.

The SLA and the police have increased patrols in Temple road in recent weeks.

of LTTE theoretician and Chief Negotiator Mr. Anton Balasingham. At that time SLAF bombers targeted a suburb in Puthudiyiruppu in Mullaithivu district.

● A youth, from Thunalai, Pandatharippu in Valigamam, whose family members had complained to the SLHRC Jaffna office of his disappearance earlier, was found to be held at the Special Detention Police Camp at Kankesanthurai by Jaffna SLHRC officers, when they went on their weekly visit to the Special Detention Camp.

Manoharaseelan Thevaseelan, 21 who was discovered at the Special police detention camp by SLHRC Jaffna officials, headed by its co-ordinating officer S. Surenthirarajah, accompanied by legal officer M. Remedius. Thevaseelan's family members had complained to the SLHRC Jaffna office that he had been missing since he went to work and they suspected SLA and the paramilitary cadres collaborating with it had abducted Thevaseelan.

In the context of many youths missing in Jaffna peninsula, alleged to be abducted by the SLA and its paramilitary group, the news of Thevaseelan being held by the police without his family being informed of his arrest, was a shock to the community, confirming their suspicions that killings and abductions of youth are closely connected to the SLA and its paramilitary cadres.

● Armed men opened fire on the office of Karuna group on New Muhathuvaram Road in Batticaloa injuring one Karuna group member. There were more than eight Karuna group members inside the office at the time of the shooting. The firing on the Karuna group office, in front of the Batticaloa Petroleum Corporation, lasted for nearly 15 minutes.

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21 December

● Two children were seriously injured when a mortar shell, launched from the Kumburumoolai SLA camp at Kiran in Batticaloa, fell and exploded on a house in Kiran. V. Sathurjini, 2, and T. Suman, 9, both from Kiran, were playing in the front yard of the house.

● The SLA handed over the dead body of a youth to Vavuniya hospital claiming the youth was killed in a fight between the SLA and the LTTE at Nedunkulam area in Kidachoori in Vavuniya when five LTTE cadres entered 50 meters into SLA held area. An SLA trooper also showed the Vavuniya District Magistrate 2 claymores, 2 hand grenades, 2 jackets, 2 magazine rounds they claimed to have recovered from the site of the incident.

● A 70 year old patient suffering from pneumonia succumbed to his illness at the Vaharai hospital for want of medicine, Dr. Thuraiasa Varatharajah of Vaharai hospital said. The doctor had earlier made an urgent appeal to transfer 7 critically ill patients warded at Vaharai hospital for further treatment to Batticaloa Teaching hos-

pital to the ICRC and the Deputy director of health services in Batticaloa, but the patients are yet to be taken to Batticaloa Teaching hospital. K. Nagendran 70, of Palchenai is the patient who died of high pneumonia fever.

20 December

● Unidentified persons triggered a claymore device concealed in a rubble heap along the A9 route at Thandikulam in Vavuniya, seriously injuring a SLA trooper. The claymore attack, targeting the SLA troopers on a tractor, took place close to the site near Thandikulam Agriculture Farm School where five SLA troopers including an officer were killed on November 18 in a similar attack.

● Valvetithurai police recovered the dead body of Thangarasa Tharmakulasingham, 24, of Thunalai east, Karavedy in Vadamaradchi, among shrubs in a deserted place at Vallaveli in Vadamaradchi. He had a 9 mm gunshot wound to the head. His parents said he had been abducted forcefully by armed men in a white van Tuesday on Nelliady road while he was riding his bicycle. The family members of Tharmakulasingham said they suspect the SLA and the collaborating paramilitary cadres, to be behind the abduction and killing. Tharmakulasingham was previously arrested along with another youth by the SLA who accused them of lobbing hand grenade on

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NEWS



Starving children in Vaharai try to cook crabs they've caught. The region has been under blockade by government forces for several months. International aid donors say there is little they can do.

Violence/ Dec 24

Continued from page 12

the SLA troopers at the Nelliady camp. They were acquitted for want of evidence by the district court, the parents added.

● Armed men clad in military fatigues abducted 19 youths, 16 boys and 3 girls, from a private bus en route to Colombo from Kattankudy at Korakallimadu in Kiran, in Batticaloa district. The abductions have taken place on Kattankudy - Polonnaruwa route, heavily guarded by SLA soldiers. Parents of six children have lodged complaints with the Police. Parents who opposed the abductions were beaten by the kidnappers, alleged to be paramilitary cadres of Karuna Group.

19 December

● Two LTTE cadres were transferred to Kilinochchi from Amparai to face disciplinary action for enlisting underage youths from a tuition centre in Thirukkivil. All the 23 civilians, including the 21 students, in the custody of an LTTE unit attached to a training camp, were freed after an internal investigation initiated by LTTE Commander Ram. Two teachers, Tharmarasa Vigneswaran and Velupillai Uthayakumar, were among the persons taken by the LTTE unit from the tuition centre.

The Tigers have outlawed recruitment of under-17s and participation in combat of under-18s.

● A paramilitary cadre of Karuna Group was killed and another wounded when unidentified gunmen armed with RPG launchers attacked the office of the group in Kalmunai town, Batticaloa. The paramilitary office, located between a police post and the STF camp in Kalmunai, was completely damaged in the attack. STF officials identified the killed Karuna cadre as "Castro."

● Two armed men shot dead the owner of a hairdressing saloon, Anthonypillai Pirabakaran, 32, a family man, close to Athiady temple on the Thondamanaru - Valveitthurai road in Vavettithurai in Vadammaradchi at his saloon. The killing, which took place in an area continuously monitored by the SLA troopers, has shocked Athikovilady residents.

18 December

● Unidentified men using pistols shot dead three cadres of the paramilitary Karuna Group standing along the Main Road near Chenkalady market in Batticaloa. One civilian standing by was seriously injured in the shooting. The three dead victims were identified as Sellathamby Suthan, 22 of Krishnan Temple Road, Valaichenai,

Packiarasa Nithyarasa alias Illamoliyan, 20 of Kalmadu Road, Vinayagapuram, Valaichenai and M. Iniyavan 18, of Kali Kovil Road, Mavadvembu. The injured were identified as Kathirgamathamby Kovinthan, an auto rickshaw driver from Uma Mill Road in Kommanthurai, Batticaloa.

● Three armed men driving a car shot dead three men and injured a woman at their house at Chalampaikulam in Vavuniya. Two of the dead men were identified as Arunachalam Arulkumar from Sittandy in Batticaloa, and Mr Sulojan from Vavuniya. The third man killed is said to be from Killinochchi. The injured woman is Sulojan Mathanalagini, 22.

● M. S. M. Casim, 46, resident of Sainthamaruthu in Kalmunai and a father of one, a Police Sergeant attached to Kalmunai in Amparai district, shot himself dead at the Kalmunai police station lodge, using his friend's AK47 rifle.

● Three youths who left their homes Friday morning to go to Chavakacheri in Thenmaradchi were reported missing by their parents at the SLHRC Jaffna office. One of the youths was on his motor cycle while the other two went riding bicycles and all three had to pass Chemani area between Chavakacheri and Jaffna, close to the SLA camp, where two months ago many youths had mysteriously disappeared. Sooriyakumar Suhanthan, 20 from Thavady, Kokuvil, and two friends Nahanathan Senthooaripriyan, 17 and Nahanathy Parthipan, 18, both from Araly Road, Jaffna are the three youths reported missing. The two youths had chosen to trade in coconuts as their families were on the edge of poverty, the parents said. The two friends had gone on their bicycles while the youth from Thavady had gone riding his motor cycle.

Violence round up - week ending 17 December

16 December

● The SLA continued shelling from the Kallar SLA camp towards LTTE controlled Kathiraveli region. Krishnapillai Venukanthan, 19, from Echilampattu, Trincomalee area who earlier was displaced to Kathiraveli was seriously injured in the SLA shell attack.

● The SLA and Police recovered a powerful claymore mine weighing 2kg from Kandasamy Kovil Road in Vavuniya. Vavuniya police closed the road and sent the residents to the temple for safety, before the SLA bomb squad defused the mine.

● An eleven year old boy was seriously injured when an unexploded ordnance he found behind his house exploded at Meeravodai, Batticaloa. The injured boy was identified as A. Peroskhan whose face, hands, stomach and legs have been badly injured.

● Seven IDPs travelling from Kathiraveli to Vaharai in a two-wheel tractor were killed when an artillery shell fired by the SLA exploded on their vehicle. Fellow passengers told the officials that they had to bury the dead before returning to Kathiraveli.

15 December

● Fourteen Vaharai IDPs fleeing to Valaichennai by sea were killed when their boats capsized.

● S. Raveendranath, the Vice Chancellor of the Eastern University of Sri Lanka, who was forced to resign his post recently following threats from the paramilitary Karuna Group, went missing from a High Security area in Colombo. Raveendranath, 55, and father of two girls, was living in Colombo as his resignation was not accepted.

● Batticaloa district ICRC handed over the bodies of six LTTE cadres killed in an ambush by the SLA and its paramilitary troopers at Miyankulam.

The LTTE cadres, injured in an earlier battle, were being taken for treatment across the Colombo-Batticaloa road at Miyankulam, when they were ambushed. Three of the dead were identified as Ethirmannasingham Kannathasan, alias Sujithan, 18, of Kardiyannaru, Batticaloa, Abraham Ronard Antony, alias Thamil Mannan, 18, of Thanthamalai, Kokatticholai, Batticaloa and Tharman Jegan, alias Vipunakaran, 19, of Uthayanmoolai, Sithandy, Batticaloa.

SLA troopers attacked a convoy of wounded LTTE cadres transported by the LTTE medics from Vaharai to LTTE controlled

Karadiyanaru for medical treatment via sea route. SLA reports said 5 Tigers were killed. They also claimed a wounded SLA soldier, K.M.S. Ratnayake, who had been in LTTE custody since 8 October and was being transported by the Tiger medics, was captured. According to SLA claims more than 9 were wounded in the attack.

LTTE's Military Spokesman Irasiah Ilanthirayan said the SLA attacked an unarmed medical transport and described the attack, a "cowardly" act. "Wounded LTTE fighters and a wounded SLA man were being transported our medics," Mr. Ilanthirayan said.

● Kallaru SLA in Trincomalee launched shells on Kathiraveli civilian settlements in Vaharai in LTTE territory, killing two civilians and seriously injuring three. The SLA shells were directed against the Kathiraveli Kali Temple and its surrounding areas. One shell exploded on a house seriously injured the three residents occupying the house.

● The STF stationed at Pattiruppu Bridge in Batticaloa launched mortar shells on LTTE territory in Porathivu. The LTTE retaliated with mortar fire, and two civilians were injured in the exchange. Seven houses and an Irrigation department building were damaged in Kalavanchikudy.

● The body of a family man with stab wounds was found inside his house at Mirusuvil north, in an area close to the SLA FDL in Thenmaradchi north. A motorcycle and another vehicle of Murugesu Sathiyathan, 55, had been stolen by the killers. He lived alone after his family moved to Point Pedro in Vadammaradchi north when shelling intensified at the FDL.

● Four armed men in two vehicles in Vepankulam in Vavuniya, called a trader out of his shop in Sinhalese and opened fire using T-56 type assault rifles, killing the trader, Ambikaipahar Manickavasagar, 59, on the spot.

● The bodies of two youths with gunshot injuries to their heads were found at Pichchaikulam in Murunkan, Mannar district.

14 December

● Officials of the SLHRC in Jaffna said that they have received several complaints of the SLA confiscating the National ID cards of young men and women during cordon and search operations, and refusing to return them.

Officials said SLA soldiers request the individuals to come to

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EPDP - Eelam People's Democratic Party
FDL - Forward Defence Line
HRC - Human Rights Commission
HSZ - High Security Zone
ICRC - International Committee of the Red Cross
LTTE - Liberation Tigers 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

FEATURE

Depopulation is part of Rajapakse's genocidal war against the Tamils

The Sinhala supremacist regime of President Mahinda Rajapakse has a major politico - military objective against which the Tamil people are regarded as being of no consequence

D.B.S. Jeyaraj
Transcurrents.com

THE Northern region of Batticaloa district is being rapidly de - populated of people.

People living amid great hardship in areas controlled by the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) there are moving out to the relatively safe areas controlled by the Government of Sri Lanka (GOSL).

There is a propaganda war on. The GOSL says the people are fleeing from LTTE oppression and seeking liberty in GOSL areas.

The LTTE says the Government is driving out these people in a systematic campaign of ethnic cleansing.

Meanwhile the people are on the move seeking refuge and safety. All they want is to be safe and exercise that fundamental freedom - the right to life.

The Koralaiattu North region has been impoverished and backward even during the best of times. Its economy is mainly based on fisheries, agriculture, forestry and livestock and dairy. The outbreak of war has affected it drastically.

With the LTTE gaining control of the region it became systematically deprived and deliberately targeted. This northern region of Batticaloa district is separated from Southern region of Trincomalee district by the Verugal river.

The Koralaiattu North region had around 10 - 12,000 permanent residents in April this year. Then came the deliberate bombing and shelling of Tamil areas in the Muthur East region of Trincomalee district.

This campaign was undertaken with the ostensible purpose of driving the people out of the

strategic Sampoor area. The people fled southwards moving from place to place in search of safety as aerial bombardment and artillery shelling intensified.

The bulk reached the Koralaiattu north region and took up temporary residence as IDPs. The number of people in Koralaiattu north swelled up to more than 50,000.

Their troubles however were not over.

The GOSL began deliberately curtailing the movement of people and transport of medicine, building materials, food, essential goods etc to and from the Koralaiattu north division generally known as Vaakarai region.

GOSL also conducted several aerial bombings of the area. Artillery was also used to fire into the area. The GOSL of course justified these attacks and stringent measures on the grounds of security.

While the LTTE oriented hostilities provided the security forces with a convenient excuse to target the Vaakarai - Verugal region there was also a larger objective.

The Sinhala - supremacist regime of President Mahinda Rajapakse has a major politico - military objective.

It wants to de - link the North and East and then bring the Eastern province under its full control.

In the process the regime also wants to depopulate Trincomalee district of Tamils and drive Tamils living in LTTE controlled areas in Batticaloa - Amparai into GOSL dominated regions.

This is in effect a scorched earth policy where many Tamils will be deprived of dwellings and livelihood and reduced to a hand - out dependent life in refugee

camps in their land of historic habitation.

The security forces game plan seems to be that of a southern push in Trincomalee and a Northeastern push in Batticaloa to take the Vaakarai region.

Against the backdrop of such an elaborate politico - military design the people of Vaakarai region - both permanent and temporary - are regarded as being of no consequence.

The deaths, destruction and displacement undergone by them will only be "collateral damage". The stakes however are high and both sides have been fighting fiercely to win or more importantly not to lose. Inhuman methods have been employed.

The GOSL has restricted food and essential items being taken to the Vaakarai region.

Quantities amounting to less than half of what is required have been taken irregularly. Movement to and from the area has been restricted for nearly ten weeks.

Access by ICRC, UNHCR and SLMM are severely curtailed. Artillery attacks have been launched regularly.

In a display of callous disregard for civilised norms refugees housed in schools have been victimised on many occasions. Nearly a hundred civilians have been killed and more than two - hundred injured in these attacks.

The LTTE request for a 'safe haven' in Vaakarai was pointedly ignored.

A slow exodus in search of safety and relatively better conditions began.

It was Mao Ze Dong who compared guerrillas to fish and the people to an ocean. If the ocean is drained then fish will flounder. Likewise a region bereft of people will render guerrillas vulnerable.

The LTTE did not want that to happen. So the LTTE enforced strict controls. The people would have come out sooner but for LTTE prevention.

No people on earth can continue to suffer like the people of Vaakarai. There had to come a breaking point.

The first signs came when the LTTE began moving out some cadres, artillery and military assets out of the region. The people realised the LTTE was not going to hold out much longer.

Adding to their woes was the weather that would make existence a tremendous burden. This fear of bad weather provided further impetus to the refugee outflow.

So the people began moving out. Initially it began as a trickle but soon became a flow. From hundreds a day the outflow increased to thousands per day.

After some attempt to prevent the exodus the LTTE apparently gave up. The local tigers from the area did not have the heart to pre-



Forcing thousands of Tamil civilians to vacate their homes in the East is thought to be a part of the government's war strategy, aimed at altering the demographics of the region. Photo Rukmal Perera/DailyNews

vent the people from going out.

The IDP figure of people taking refuge in other areas of Batticaloa has reached 27,837 on December 21st evening, more than half of the population in Koralaiattu North.

Given the current rate of movement this figure is likely to exceed 35, 000 in a few days unless the LTTE enforces firm restrictions.

The people living in Koralaiattu North are moving out primarily to eke out a life of relative safety.

They have been pushed to this position by the series of harsh, inhuman measures adopted by the GOSL to drive them out.

The GOSL has reached the heights of hypocrisy when it says the people have escaped from Tiger tyranny to seek liberty in Government areas.

The GOSL has used brute force and inhuman methods to persecute a voiceless segment of its population and drive it away from its habitat for politico - military reasons.

This is part of the genocidal war being waged by Colombo.

With Vaakarai region being rapidly de - populated GOSL sec-

urity forces are likely to escalate military activity soon. Massive aerial bombardment and artillery attacks will be launched. The civilians remaining in Vaakarai will be regarded as "tigers" and treated as such.

The on going de - population of Koralaiattu indicates what lies in store for Eastern Tamils currently.

Sampoor was ethnically cleansed of Tamils. A high security zone bereft of Tamils is being established.

A similar re-play with slight modifications is likely in Vaakarai too. This pattern is likely to emerge in other theatres of conflict in the East.

Later the North too will be afflicted in the same manner.

The Tamil homelands are being systematically ravaged and de - populated. A scorched earth policy is being implemented ruthlessly.

Only the Western nations and India can curb the Rajapakse administration.

The Tamil people are on the edge of disaster. The regime is all out to wreak havoc.

The International Community can halt it if it wants to.



Some people fled Vaharai by boat, despite unpredictable seas.

NEWS

Violence round up - week ending 17 December

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the SLA camps to get the cards back, but the youths have to make several visits before the SLA returns the cards. Several complaints made by the victims relate incidents of harassment and disruption to their normal life without the ID cards. Students have complained of having to miss school fearing being caught by the SLA soldiers without the IDs. ● A Muslim protestor was killed and 8 wounded when Police fired at the protestors in Kathankuddy town, Batticaloa. The town was in turmoil for the eighth consecutive day as police used bullets and teargas to control crowds which set fire to a police sentry post, four auto rickshaws, four shops and four banks in the town. Orthodox Muslims, engaged in a spate of anger against a Sufi sect, demand the remains of one of the leaders of Sufi sect be removed from Katthankudy soil and buried elsewhere. Mohammad Mustafa Mohammad Rafik, 38, was killed on the spot when police opened fire at the protestors. At least 25 houses were set on fire by the mob and a number motorcycles destroyed. ● A Police Sub Inspector was injured when unidentified persons hurled hand grenades on a Buffel Armed Personnel Carrier taking police officials from Batticaloa Police headquarters.

The police were on their way to a meeting with Muslim leaders to discuss ways to diffuse the escalating tension in Kattankudy. M. Chandra-sena was admitted to hospital. The attack took place along the Batticaloa - Kalmunai road in Kattankudy town where Police, SLA and STF in large numbers maintain a strict security. Two grenades were thrown at the Buf-fel when the curfew was in force.

● Gunmen shot dead a fisherman of Koyilkudiyiruppu, Thambuthottam in Chavakachcheri area, Jaffna, while he was returning from fishing in Kachchai Sea. Gunmen waited for Nagalingan Jeyendran, 41, living near a SLA base in the area, on the road away from his home, shot him and escaped.

● Two men riding a motorbike shot dead a youth near the 4th Cross street in Thumpalai Road, Point Pedro. Tharmathas Mohanathas, 21, a fisherman living on Light House Lane, Sea Street was walking to Point Pedro Town along Thumpalai road when he was shot.

The killing took place in the same area where two youths on their way to the Hospital disappeared one month earlier. Police have not been able to trace the abductors or the victims.

● Unidentified persons lobbed a bomb on the house of K. P. S. Hameed, Vice-chairman of Ottamavadi Predeshya Sabai, at M. P. C. Road in Meeravodai, Ottamavadi. Though he and his family were in the house when the bomb exploded, no one was hurt. Mr. Hameed, a father of two children and a former Police Sub-inspector, was elected to his post in the

Predeshya Sabai election in Meeravodai on a UNP ticket.

13 December

● Armed men abducted Rajukamal Raj, 16, from his house at Kali Kovil road in Ariyampathy, Batticaloa and shot him dead near Selvanagar junction in Ariyampathy from where Kathankudy police recovered his dead body. The police said that the youth may have been subjected to interrogation before being killed by the armed men who abducted him.

● Jaffna police issued a directive barring drivers from parking their vehicles in the central area of Jaffna town, except in seven places demarked for parking. Vehicles violating the directive will be confiscated, the Police warned. The SLA and police allocated these parking places mainly in civilian residential areas away from SLA and police sentry points.

12 December

● A lorry speeding through Kalmunai hit two Muslim civilians at Mavadiipalli, Sammanthurai in Amparai district, killing both on the spot. The allegedly drunk Sinhala driver sped without stopping, hitting two more Muslim civilians in Sammanthurai town killing one and seriously injuring the other, and continued along on recklessly hitting two more Muslim civilians injuring both before stopping. Enraged Muslims in Sammanthurai town, set fire to the lorry and threw the driver's assistant into the fire, killing him.

The crowd stoned the police force and another high officer who tried to control the crowd. STF troopers, called in for assistance, opened fire on the crowd injuring three. The three dead men were identified as M. Nawfath, 25, M. Larief, 32, a father of one and Mohideen, 53, a father of five. The three injured in the STF shooting are Munas, 26, Riyas, 32 and Mubeen, 23. The owner, driver and assistant of the lorry are Sinhalese.

● Pottuvil police recovered the body of a male civilian with severe bodily injuries from a well in the premises of the office of the Veterinary Surgeon of Vaddiveli in Pottuvil, Amparai. The victim was identified as Kanapathypillai Mochinathan, 48, of Vaddiveli, a carpenter by profession who left for work on Friday but failed to return home.

● SLAF Kfir jets dropped eight bombs in four sorties on the villages of Kattumrivu, Kathiraveli and Palchenai in LTTE held territory in Batticaloa district. No casualties were reported though four houses of civilians were badly damaged.

● Civilians in Kathiraveli, Palchenai, Vammivettuvan and Kandaulady, fleeing artillery and Multi-Barrel Rocket fire from SLA positions had sought refuge in Vaharai hospital. If not for this evacuation from the bombed areas, many lives would have been lost.

● Intermittent shelling from Kallaru in Trincomalee, and Kadjuwath, Punalai, Mankerny in Batticaloa and Singapuram in Polanaruwa SLA bases were made on LTTE held areas. The shells, falling and exploding near Vaharai Hospital, pose great danger to the lives of the people who have sought shelter there.

● Armed men opened fire on the policemen posted at the entrance of Uthayan Tamil daily office located in the Jaffna HSZ, seriously injuring one of them.

● Two armed men shot dead an employee of the Jaffna Teaching hospital at his house at Udupidy in Vadamardachi. The body of Paramsothy Ananthakumar, 47, a father of five, with more than six gunshot wounds, was taken to hospital for post-mortem examination.

nations.

11 December

● Unidentified persons triggered a claymore device, targeting a bus in front of Al Hithaya School on Amapari Road in Akkaraipattu, seriously injuring six policemen and two civilians.

The six policemen were identified as S. M. Sat-hath, 42, Nizar, 30, Mohamed Lebbe, 43, Marsup, 32, S. Amaradasa, 52 and Santhirakantha, 20. The civilians were Pirathaban, 22 from Thirukovil, the driver and S. Bala, 34, the bus conductor.

The claymore blast, exploding 500 meters from Amparai town, damaged an electricity transformer nearby, completely cutting off electricity supply to Amparai city.

● Armed men abducted Thangarasa Kanthan, 16 of Pandiyirupu, at Kalmunai in Amparai district and shot him dead.

● An unidentified man shot dead a policeman attached to Palamenmadu police station at Kurukal-madam, Batticaloa. The assailant had followed the policeman and shot him while he was waiting for a bus. S. Chandrakumar, 34, a father of two, had been returning from two day's leave.

● A 50 year old civilian, caught in the cross fire in a clash between armed men and a SLA road patrol unit at Kokuvil in Jaffna was killed on the spot. The Kokuvil clash lasted for 15 minutes and came in the wake of a hand grenade attack by unidentified persons on SLA troopers, seriously injuring two of them.

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LTTE leader Vellupillai Pirapaharan (l), his wife, Mathivathani, and senior LTTE officials paying their respects to LTTE theoretician Anton Balasingham. Reports p2-9



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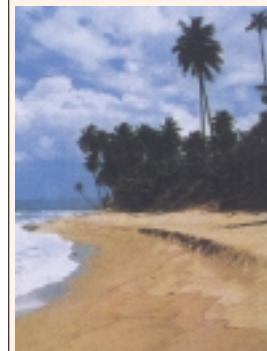


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