

# Saturday Review

## SRI LANKA

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PITHA ENTERPRISE

229 A, Point Pedro Road,  
Anaipanthi,  
Jaffna.

# Hold Direct Talks

The ethnic problem cannot be solved without direct talks between the Government and the militant groups at the highest levels.

We have said that on so many earlier occasions. We repeat it now.

The Tamil United Liberation Front can only play a marginal role in the present situation.

It is the militant groups who matter.

President Jayewardene's visit to India today for the 2nd SAARC Summit Conference offers him an opportunity to initiate a direct dialogue with them.

The militants' leaders, including Velupillai Prabhakaran of the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (the most formidable group), have said that they are not averse to talks with the Government.

The President also is on a more sensible course than acting through 'Brokers' which has been the situation up to now, and is on record as stating that he would like to meet them. (See SR of 30th March).

Of course, both sides have laid down certain conditions. This is quite understandable. It is all part of the negotiating process.

## Manthikai Hospital Shelled

Doctors, Nurses and other employees of the Manthikai Hospital staged a walk out on 12th November after the hospital was shelled from the air. The office of the District Hospital, the Library and the Wards were badly damaged.

They have lodged a protest with the Minister of Health, the President and the Minister of National Security over this 'dastardly incident'.

But a resolution of the ethnic problem cannot wait. The entire country and all the communities are losing heavily because of the delay to come to real grips with the problem, at the crux of which is a more equitable sharing of state power and all that flow from it.

Certain people in certain circles, including from within the ruling United National Party, are making funny noises. These people cannot be described as patriots in the true sense of the term.

What do these people want? Personal power? At the cost of thousands of more lives, many of them innocents? At the cost of economic retardation of the country? At the cost of entire generations of Sinhalese, Tamils and Muslims yet unborn?

There should be a special place in Hell for all those who stand in the way of a reasonable settlement of the ethnic problem. For they are helping to create a Hell in Sri Lanka.

Who wants to end up in Hell?

## THE WEEK THAT WAS Proposed Swap Flops

The week began on a rather promising note—the likelihood of the Security Forces and the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) swapping prisoners.

On Sunday morning (9th November), Colonel Ananda Wijesekera, Capt. Kotelawela and 12 soldiers—all of them unarmed—stepped out of the Jaffna Fort to be greeted by the LTTE's Rahim and Thileepan who then introduced them to Kittu, the LTTE Jaffna Commander. After the usual exchange of greetings, the party drove to a house near the Jaffna Secretariat where the exchange of prisoners was discussed.

During the discussions, the 2 soldiers—Lt. Ajit Chandrasiri and Rifleman Bandara—who were captured by LTTE militants at Adampan about a month ago, were brought in; Lt. Chandrasiri, who was unable to walk because of a leg injury, was carried in by a LTTE militant.

Most of the conditions laid down by the LTTE for the release of these

2 soldiers were accepted. It was tentatively agreed that the prisoner swap would take place on Monday (10th November).

The Colonel then expressed a wish to pay a courtesy call on a long-standing friend and soccer colleague—Mr. E. Kanagalingam, former Principal of Palaly Teachers' Training College and one-time Secretary of the Jaffna Football Association. Kittu arranged for the two pals to meet and swap reminiscences at Mr. Kanagalingam's house.

On Monday, large crowds gathered near the Jaffna Fort, hoping to watch the prisoner exchange.

They were in for a big disappointment. Communication snags between Colombo and Jaffna had unexpectedly snarled up the exchange programme. Even at the time of going to press, the swap—which seemed almost a foregone conclusion—hasn't taken place. And it doesn't seem likely to take place—for some time at least.

The reason? Vallai.

## JAFFNA UNDERGRADS FAST

Jaffna University undergraduates launched a fast campaign on Thursday (13th November), demanding the unconditional release of fellow-undergraduate Arunagirinathan Vijitharan—a third-year Commerce student—who mysteriously disappeared from the house where he was boarded, on the night of 4th November.

The undergrads have been boycotting lectures since 7th November to protest the disappearance.

While all the militant groups have categorically stated that they have nothing to do with Vijitharan's disappearance, the undergrads maintain that it is impossible for Vijitharan to have disappeared just like that, especially when Jaffna is under the firm control of the freedom fighters.

As a run-up to the fast, protesting undergrads blocked the Palaly Road and the KKS Road on Monday and Tuesday (10th, 11th November) for 2 hours, in an attempt to draw the attention of the public to Vijitharan's plight.

Student sources say that if Vijitharan is not released by the 18th, volunteers will begin a fast-unto-death in relays. They also state that the undergrads of all the Faculties in the Jaffna University are backing them up fully.

Student organisations and mass organisations too have come out strongly against the disappearance of Vijitharan—an involuntary disappearance, they allege.

The friendly discussions on Sunday (9th November) took place against the background of fierce running battles between the LTTE and the Security Forces at Valvetiturai on Friday and Saturday (7th, 8th November). Naval boats came under heavy LTTE fire on Friday when they attempted to off-load men and materials at the VVT camp. The Naval personnel retreated and

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## Saturday Review

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## PUBLICATIONS RECEIVED

### THE HUMAN RIGHTS INTERNATIONAL REPORT

September Issue aims to keep the Human Rights Community informed about major international and national developments as they affect Human Rights worldwide.

### FORUM

A fortnightly publication of News and Views.

### TAMIL TIMES

Published monthly, inter alia, to expose and focus attention on many issues including the growing menace of State terrorism and the undermining of the constitutional and electoral processes in Sri Lanka.

### GOVIYA

A Monthly publication directed to the aspirations of the farmer—his life and his needs.

Six Views Of Non-Violence for Peace Research.

A pamphlet by Prof. Theodore Her-  
man of Colgate University, published by the Non-Violent Direct Action Group in Chavakacheheri.

# The Caspersz-Devananda Mission

Tamils here are generally aware that there are some in the South who understand their problems and aspirations and also try to do something about them. On the 1st Nov. at the Lakshman Wickremasinghe memorial meeting held at St. John's College they had the chance of hearing two of them in the flesh—namely Fr. Paul Caspersz and Fr. Yohan Devananda. They addressed a meeting of the MIRJE the day following. Fr. Paul left on 3rd November and Fr. Yohan remained until 6th November. They had also come to see and listen, to get a feel of the mood in Jaffna.

The difficulty of doing the latter specially that of discerning the more potent and less visible currents, was clearly recognised by the speakers. In his address at St. John's College Fr. Paul referred to the trial of St. Paul by King Agrippa around 60 A.D. The charge against St. Paul was he maintained that a shadowy figure called Jesus Christ who had died three decades ago was yet alive. In the world of Caesars, Pilates and Agrippas, who but the most discerning would have known that Christ and St. Paul would by far outshine them all, making the former footnotes to their story? One may add, would a visitor to Athens in 399 B.C. the year of the judicial murder of Socrates, have discerned amidst the doings of the mighty, the spiritual turmoil and anger of a young man named Plato who would not merely immortalise Socrates but would influence the course of ideas for centuries to come?

Fr. Paul went on to say that he was a lesser Paul who had come to say that Bishops Lakshman Wickremasinghe and Leo Nanayakkara were yet alive and will remain alive in the minds of the people. The history of the Church in Ceylon, he said, had two phases—the exclusivist phase until about 1956 and the next phase, marked by Pope John's Vatican II, when the Church had moved out of its confines into an ecumenical movement embracing other denominations and also in Ceylon towards a dialogue with other faiths. Lakshman and Leo were pioneers of the second phase in Ceylon. During this phase the Church had imbibed some of the ambient Sinhala chauvinism. To illustrate this he gave the experience of an old parish priest in Kandy. During the communal attacks of 1977 the Church became an unofficial refugee camp for Tamils with the parishioners helping out. But in 1983 the youth of the Church told the priest that if he was helping Tamils, he was on his own. The priest was reduced

to tears. This imbibing of chauvinism was the price paid by the Church for what was at its inception a good thing. Lakshman and Leo were men of great compassion and vision who understood this and tried to steer the Church and nation towards recognising the rights of their Tamil brethren.

Fr. Yohan spoke of his long friendship with Bishop Lakshman from school at Royal through their sojourn in England through Oxford and Cambridge. They were made very conscious of their westernisation and of a need to go to their native roots. This had initially made them

was being signed by persons of eminence throughout the land.

## Their approach

Fr. Paul's account of the changing role of the church gives a fair insight into their approach to the present crisis. Their debt to Marxian historicism, was evident in uses of such expressions as 'the judgement of history' and 'progressive forces'. Their Christian vocation was reflected in the expression 'militant non-violence.' In their reading the Tamil youth taking up arms against state oppression was essentially a progressive

by

Rajan Hoole

Sinhalese nationalists, somewhat oblivious of Tamil aspirations. The suffering and the alienation of the Tamils impressed on them the urgency of having to make amends. In the wake of the '83 violence Lakshman disobeyed medical advice to undertake an arduous two months of activity visiting Tamil victims, during which period he was often moved to tears. His ensuing death may be said to have been in the Christian spirit—having suffered vicariously for the sins of others. Fr. Yohan pointed out that many Sinhalese too were being detained under the PTA and that many Sinhalese too were victims of oppression. He went on to describe Lakshman's role in the workers' strike of 1980 and in the peasant struggle against the takeover of their lands by sugar multi-nationals. Bishop Lakshman's stance was described as militant non-violence that actively opposes injustice and yields nothing to the oppressor.

During his address Fr. Yohan read out a petition for peace that

response which has brought into the community certain evil effects. It was now the task of the Tamil community to cleanse the rebellion of its sinful manifestations by the mobilisation of peoples' power. Fr. Yohan later spoke of a wonderful instance of people's power in action near where he was staying in Colombuthurai.

If this approach is stretched a little further we may have what many Sinhalese intellectuals have maintained—that the Sinhala only act of 1956 was an essentially progressive

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## Sports Newsreel

Northern Sports-lovers are in luck's way. A brand new monthly magazine—*The Sports Newsreel*—catering specially to their interests was released last Saturday.

The Publishing organisation—headed by Dr. J. P. C. Phillips—states in a press release "Since there are no periodicals and/or newspapers devoted solely for sports, the publication of a monthly sports magazine *The Sports Newsreel* was proposed and unanimously accepted by all lovers of sports".

The press release goes on to say "Our objective can never be realised without the active support and positive patronage of the sports-loving organisations in the Northern Region."

## THANKS

My grateful thanks to the Most Sacred Heart of Jesus, Our Lady of Perpetual Succour, St. Theresa of the Little Flower and St. Jude for a special favour.

J.A.J.P.

## Quotable Quote

John Steinbeck on book-burning:

It is wonderful that even today, with all the competition of radio, television, motion pictures and records, the book has kept its precious character.

A book is somehow sacred. A dictator can kill and maim people, can sink to any kind of tyranny and only be hated. But when books are burned the ultimate in tyranny has happened. This we cannot forgive.

Sent by:

A. Puthumainayagam



# AI Replies Lalith

In interviews with the national and foreign press following the publication, on 10 September 1986, of the Amnesty International Report "Disappearances" in Sri Lanka, you have expressed regret that the report did not cover all aspects of the problem of "disappearances" in the country as it failed to take account of information the government had provided to the United Nations Working Group on Disappearances; you also suggested that Amnesty International should forward complaints regarding individual cases to the Inspector General of Police. Subsequently the Chairman of the Media Centre, Department of Information, said that Amnesty International should initiate legal action in the Sri Lankan courts about "disappearances".

I will respond to these suggestions below but first I would like to express Amnesty International's grave concern about the sorrow and anguish which the families of the "disappeared" continue to experience because the fate of their missing relatives, or their whereabouts, remain, to date, uncertain. One month after the publication of the report listing data on 272 cases of "disappearances" —most of which had already been drawn to the government's attention on previous occasions — none of these cases have been clarified by the Sri Lanka Government (although Amnesty International was glad to receive confirmation from other sources that two of them, Sittu Nagalingam and Karunakaran Subramaniam, alias Vadivel, are now held in Welikada Prison). You may recall that, since August 1985, Amnesty International had repeatedly asked to receive such information. Nor has an independent impartial investigation been established into the grave allegations that in all these cases there are strong reasons to believe that members of the Sri Lanka security forces have taken these persons away, subsequently to deny any knowledge of their arrest and whereabouts. This is especially disturbing since, after the publication of the Amnesty International report, over 30 more cases of "disappearances" have been reported to Amnesty International, details of which I will shortly be conveying to your office.

Allow me now, Your Excellency, to address the main issues which have arisen in public comments made by government officials. You may recall I have already sent a

commentary on some of the points initially raised by you in radio interviews of 10 September 1986. In view of queries our organization continues to receive about the various government statements made in respect of "disappearances" in Sri Lanka, and in order to clarify Amnesty International's position thereon, Amnesty International plans to make the information in this letter publicly available.

Amnesty International is greatly disappointed that, despite the detailed eye-witness testimony offered in its report, some of which has also been relied upon by the Sri Lankan courts, the government has dismissed some particularly well documented reports of "disappearances" out of hand. For example in a radio interview with the British Broadcasting Corporation of 10 September, you were asked about the "disappearance" on 17 May 1985 of some 40 young men, most of

killings took place. Amnesty International is concerned that the government appears to have disregarded the serious reservations which the High Court judge trying Paul Nallanayagam expressed about the case as put by the state counsel. The judge said he doubted that the state counsel could be believed when denying that the Special Task Force had made any arrests in the area on that day.

Amnesty International respectfully recommends that the government now order a review of the substantial evidence put on record during the trial of Paul Nallanayagam about the occurrence of "disappearances" in the Eastern Province, the area from which most "disappearances" are now reported. Available information should be put before a fully independent body to impartially investigate these and other reports of "disappearances" described in Amnesty International's report. I

**Text of the letter sent by Ian Martin, Secretary General of AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL, to Lalith Athulathmudali, Minister of National Security.**

them from Natpattimunai in the Eastern Province, alleged to have been taken away by Special Task Force personnel, ordered to dig their own graves, shot, their bodies subsequently being disposed of in secret. In response, you stated that the allegations were "utterly false" and suggested that the place where the men were allegedly killed was searched and nothing was found.

These observations, Amnesty International believes, contradict the evidence put on record and accepted by the High Court judge trying Paul Nallanayagam, the President of the Kalmunai Citizens Committee, who was recently acquitted of charges of making false statements and spreading rumours brought after he spoke to the foreign press about the incident. During his trial, several witnesses came forward to testify about the arrest of the "disappeared" by Special Task Force personnel — without their statements being challenged by the prosecution. Evidence was put on record that a police party and some of the parents had found an unidentified body and the shirt and identity card bearing the name of one of the "disappeared", Thambimuthu Packiarajah (case no. 213 in the Amnesty International report), at the place where the alleged secret

would like, respectfully, to reiterate that Amnesty International believes it is important that such a body be given effective powers to enforce the attendance and cooperation of witnesses, together with the means to protect them and to make on-site investigations. In accordance with Sri Lanka's obligations under relevant United Nations resolutions, the Government should, Amnesty International respectfully recommends, ensure the legal accountability of security authorities responsible for human rights abuses causing people to "disappear."

In a statement of 29 September, the Chairman of the Media Centre questioned the validity of the source material relied upon in the Amnesty International report, notably the value of sworn statements by relatives and others testifying to "disappearances". He suggested that Amnesty International should bring such cases to the courts in Sri Lanka, so that witnesses could be subjected to cross-examination by counsel for the government.

As described above, during the trial of Paul Nallanayagam, several witnesses came forward to testify to the arrest of persons whose "disappearance" was also described in the Amnesty International report. Amnesty International believes it is

significant that on no occasion did the counsel for the state take the opportunity to cross-examine these witnesses on the evidence they had given about the arrest of the "disappeared" and thus make an attempt to question the validity of the statements they had made that they had seen "disappeared" persons being taken away by the Special Task Force. Amnesty International believes that sworn evidence by eye-witnesses is a credible and important source of information about "disappearances" in Sri Lanka, apart from the other sources Amnesty International has relied upon in order to cross-check the detailed information presented in its report about the 272 cases of "disappearances."

While welcoming the statement by the Chairman of the Media Centre that the safety of witnesses filing petitions in the Sri Lankan courts will be guaranteed, Amnesty International believes that the main reason why relatives have not felt able to approach the Sri Lankan courts is the widespread fear of repercussions they have expressed if they were to make statements in court implicating members of the security forces in the arrest of persons who subsequently "disappeared". Nearly all relatives or other witnesses who contacted Amnesty International or the United Nations Working Group on Enforced or Involuntary Disappearances have expressed fears of repercussions if their identities were disclosed and Amnesty International indeed believes they would face the risk of being arrested, tortured or themselves being made to "disappear."

As one example, we quote from a letter written on 10 September 1986 by one of the relatives of the fifty-three persons whose "disappearance" from the village of Cheddikulam on 2 December 1984 is described in the Amnesty International report: "Our several appeals to the government authorities had either been not replied (to) or they informed us that their forces did not take these men into custody. If an inquiry is held by any impartial person so that the witnesses will not be exposed to revenge by the state the whole village, men and women, including children, will give evidence to the effect that these men totalling over fifty-three were forcibly taken away by the army in (a) truck on 2.12.1984 from Cheddikulam".

Furthermore, in your statement of 10 September, you suggested that Amnesty International complain to the Inspector General of Police. Amnesty International wrote on 18 September to the Inspector General of

(Continued on page 5)



## FOREIGN VIEWS

Text of the editorial which appeared in THE HINDU (28th October, 1986).

The Government of India clearly expects its MGR-aided efforts to clinch a political settlement for the Sri Lankan Tamils to reach a decisive stage by the time the Prime Minister, Mr. Rajiv Gandhi, and the Sri Lankan President, Mr. J. R. Jayewardene, meet in Bangalore in mid-November during the summit of the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation. The spirit of urgency demonstrated at this point is commendable, given the tremendous human, political and economic toll taken by the Sri Lankan state's continuing war against the Tamils in which the armed militants have shown a growing capacity to hit back or retaliate. But the question is whether enough has been done to bridge the still formidable gap between the two sides or antagonists on some of the core issues. Mr. Rajiv Gandhi's recent breezy assertion, at a press club meeting in Sydney, that the official Sri-Lankan proposals were "quite good" even if one or two questions needed "clarification" suggests that the element of superficiality that has characterised his administration's handling of the Tamil question in Sri Lanka persists. The basic framework of India's post-1983 policy has been well construed: it remains committed to a political solution that offers a decent measure of self-administering opportunities to the Sri Lankan Tamils within the framework of a united Sri Lanka. But the point is that the alternative to Eelam—a politico-military proposition which democratic opinion in India definitely does not support—must be substantive, just and capable of being worked over a sustained period, if it is to be a solution at all. And in this context some lessons—from the recent past can be learnt. Annexure C, a sound general framework for a political solution which emerged in December 1983 following high-level discussions between Colombo and New Delhi, represents a positive model (that was shot down for no apparent reason, even self-serving, by Mr. Jayewardene) even as the document which surfaced in August-September 1985 as a result of the Rajiv-Romesh Bhandari diplomacy must serve as a lesson by negative example. At its lowest point in 1985, official Indian policy revealed superficiality in the approach to the core issues,

vacillation in the face of setbacks and obstacles, a dubious choice of official personnel to handle the issues on crucial occasions, and a tendency to compromise on the baseline in the attempt to find a quick solution. The lapse proved costly for the credibility of India's policy line and it took months to correct the framework of the exercise (with the Chidambaram mission to Colombo in April-May 1986 proving the substantive exercise that made the difference).

On the positive side stands the measurable progress made on the issues which were taken up in the two rounds of talks between the Sri Lankan Government and the Tamil United Liberation Front in Colombo and subsequently through India's good offices. The detailed documentation available to this newspaper on the package offered by

Tamil demand for a single linguistic region or unit to which legislative and executive power must be devolved. Unfortunately, Mr. Rajiv Gandhi in his policy deliberations, has seemed to undervalue the issue; at points in his handling of this vital detail, he seemed to be under some misconception that the northern and eastern provinces (which the Sri Lankan Tamils claim as their homeland) are non-contiguous, that is divided by some wedge of Sinhala territory. New Delhi must make a correction in its policy line on this point very quickly: the resolution of the unit of devolution issue cannot be postponed and made to wait on the implementation of the rest of the package; indeed the package must be expected to stand or fall on this question. It is not that the Government of India needs to take a rigid or dogmatic line on the merger issue: the point is that no package that does not resolve this question skilfully, to the

sponse: 'it's your constitution, therefore your problem. Related to this is the hardly subtle overloading of the reserved and concurrent lists in the Sri Lankan official package, at the expense of the provincial jurisdiction. A fourth issue that clearly worries the Tamils is the untrammelled nature of emergency powers which the executive president will retain in the package vis-a-vis the Tamil areas; given the track record of Sri Lanka where the state of emergency has seemed the rule rather than the exception, the sweeping enabling provisions are bound to be perceived as a Damocles' sword hanging over self-administering prospects for the Tamils.

These are the major problems that must be addressed non-superficially and resolved if a political settlement is to be given a genuine chance. Aside from this, the challenge of dealing with the aspirations and goals of the militant organisations—and especially the LTTE led by Mr. V. Prabhakaran—in a manner that takes them seriously as legitimate participants in this process and seeks to involve them in the implementation of a political settlement remains. Mr. M. G. Ramachandran, Tamil Nadu Chief Minister, and his key aide on the Sri Lankan question, the Food Minister, Mr. S. Ramachandran, do have constructive influence with the militant leaders; but they cannot be expected to perform *deus ex machina*, which is literally asking for a miracle. There can be no serious doubt in any of the world's capitals that neither side is capable of 'solving' Sri Lanka's ethnic crisis militarily; that the ugly bloodletting will continue till a solution is found, since a "ceasefire" does not usually work under such circumstances; that any sensible solution must be political; and that such a solution must be negotiated with India's active involvement and (if the negotiations are successful) implemented with its wholehearted support. Mr. Jayewardene at this point appears to be interested seriously enough in a political solution; the trouble is that he is also working against this by attempting to use the pressure of a failed, but not abandoned, military strategy to push down the negotiating level of the Tamils. It would be completely wrong for any Indian administration to go along with such a course. The key thing that Mr. Rajiv Gandhi must remember—and act upon—while meeting Mr. Jayewardene in Bangalore is that the Sri Lankan Tamils, moderates as well as militants, must be persuaded to accept a package by meaningful improvements in the package—not by anything that suggests forcing it down their throat. And since the time for qualitative improvement is short, he must make every effort to ensure that the very necessary Indian policy efforts on Sri Lanka are coordinated and fine-tuned in a way they have not been in recent weeks and months.

## SRI LANKA: RAJIV MUST GET HIS ACT TOGETHER

Colombo plus indications of what realists on the Tamil side hope to get by way of improvement suggest that Indian policy must persist intelligently, but without cutting corners, in its constructive endeavour of bridging the gap. In general, a worthwhile advance has been made on the broad constitutional and legislative arrangements relating to the devolution of powers to the provincial councils and on specific areas related to law and order, land and education. These aspects of the negotiations, and the competent and clear-sighted way in which the TULF appears to have steered the discussions towards the essentials of the reasonable demands and aspirations of the Sri Lankan Tamils, have taken the process forward in a significant way—despite some cynical attempts on both sides to belittle the progress. But a worrying gap remains on issues that are important. The main issues from the Sri Lankan Tamil standpoint relate to the unit of devolution—and here the separate provincial councils framework for the north and the east conspicuously falls short of the basic

reasonable satisfaction of both sides can be sold to the Tamil camp as a whole. A second issue that must be resolved to the satisfaction of those who are asking for devolution relates to the subject of land. The basic Tamil demand is that State land within a province other than the land used for legitimate Central Government functions must be vested with the province. The Government of India must appreciate the substantive as well as the emotive significance of this demand in a socio economic and political context where State-sponsored colonisation with a chauvinistic goal has been the long-term policy. Thirdly, the devolution of legislative (as much as executive) power on the Tamil areas must be real, in concept as well as practical detail. Allowing the central parliament overriding legislative powers even in relation to subjects in the provincial list—on the claim that the 'unitary' nature of the Sri Lankan constitution of 1978 mandates this—will make nonsense of the concept, and eventually the reality, of devolution. It also invites the alienated Tamil re-



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 493. Go National with English/ H.A.I. Goonatilleke. 2(10), 5-3-83: p.5.  
 494. Govt. changes not likely-they could rock the govt. boat/Gamini Navaratne. 2(7), 12-2-83: p.3.  
 495. Govt exploiting communal crisis (Statement issued by L.S.S.P). 3(12) 5-5-84: p.3.  
 496. Govt. misfires Blunderbuss (Editorial). 3(32), 22-9-84: p.1.  
 497. Govt.'s divergence in word and deed/Gamini Navaratne. 2(8), 19-2-83: p.3.  
 498. Govt.'s midsummer madness (Editorial): 3(42), 1-12-84: p.1.  
 499. The Great Betrayal (Gamini Navaratne. 3(4), 10-3-84: p.3.  
 500. Guarded approaches (India Today's Commentary by S. Venkat Narayan). 3(19), 23-6-84: p.3.

(To be continued)



I have stopped carrying my brief case when in Colombo. It is a damn nuisance to have to open it at every place one goes to, whether it be a Government office, a bank, a department store, a hotel or even the Y. M. C. A.

Just as some people connected to the Government have made mints of money by running employment agencies for jobs abroad, others also connected to the Government are running security agencies and minting more money.

What are the 'sentries' looking for? Bombs?

One day I walked into the General Post Office with a tin of Sustagen. The 'sentries' there wanted to open the tin and see what was inside: "Sustagen", I said, but they had never heard of the name. That is

# SECURITY IS BIG BUSINESS

the level of people employed in the security services today.

Bombs can be carried in many more ways than in a bag.

The Security business has provided employment to thousands of people, some of them in their dotage, and all working for a pittance while their employers dine and wine at five-star hotels.

The security men are really useless. Most of them would vanish at the first burst of a hand grenade.

But their bosses would like to keep the business going. For it means big money for them.

They also stand and stare, and even open old ladies' handbags. But they, and particularly their bosses,

do not serve the interests of their country.

By the way, who are those people who are getting fat contracts to put up wire-meshing around Government offices in the South? The wire-meshing is not tall enough, because a bomb could be hurled over the meshing. I suggest a security net of at least 100 feet, preferably of concrete.

Then there would be more money for contractors. But still the bombs could come in devious ways unless an early settlement of the ethnic problem—the main problem in Sri Lanka today—is achieved soon.

In the event of a settlement, the security bosses and their proteges will be out of business. Then what?

—GAMINI NAVARATNE

## AI Replies....

(Continued from page 3)

Police submitting available data about "disappearances" detailed in its report, as you suggested, and is still awaiting the Inspector General's reply. Amnesty International is aware, however, that the Inspector General of Police carries no overall responsibility for the conduct of the Army, Air Force and Special Task Force, which are most often alleged to be responsible for "disappearances" in Sri Lanka. His powers to investigate alleged offences and institute appropriate criminal proceedings only become effective once alleged offenders have been identified. However, in Amnesty International's experience with the few cases of "disappearance" where the government has announced that investigations were carried out by the police or army, the outcome of such investigations was invariably not published. Neither did such investigations by the police or army into alleged abuses by their own personnel lead to a credible clarification of "disappearances" or to the identification of the individuals allegedly responsible.

Furthermore, for various reasons as described in Section 5 of its report, Amnesty International does not believe that existing legal remedies, such as filing Habeas Corpus petitions in the Sri Lankan courts, are an effective means to clarify what happened to the "disappeared" in Sri Lanka and provide prompt relief to the victims and their families. Amnesty International has confirmed that the Chairman of the Bar Council's Subcommittee on the rights of suspects in police custody to obtain the services of lawyers and connected matters has found, in his Interim Report, that "a habeas corpus application does not serve expedi-

tiously in obtaining relief where the police have exceeded the 24 hour rule of detention of a person without a charge." In fact, the Interim Report suggests that Section 440 of the Code of Criminal Procedure Act "should be suitably amended to empower a judge of the High Court or a magistrate to immediately inquire into any complaint regarding the custody and/or death of any suspect..." The Interim Report was accepted by the Bar Council in a meeting of 1986.

The failure of existing legal procedures to give relief to relatives searching for the "disappeared" was illustrated in the one case described in the Amnesty International report, that of a Sinhalese SLFP member, Ananda Sunil (case no. 2 in the report), in which a habeas corpus petition was brought and hearings completed. (An appeal is currently being heard). These proceedings failed to clarify what happened to Ananda Sunil after he was reportedly seen to have been arrested by the police on 27 July 1983. In fact, the magistrate found there was evidence that witnesses originally testifying they had seen him being taken by the Kotahena police had been subjected to intimidation in order to make them retract earlier evidence.

In international human rights law, the Sri Lanka Government has a responsibility, emphasized by the UN General Assembly in Resolution 33/173 of December 1978, to take immediate and effective steps to clarify the whereabouts of the "disappeared". Amnesty International therefore, respectfully urges the government to establish a fully independent and impartial machinery to investigate cases of disappearance and inform the relatives forthwith.

You have also stated that Amnesty International failed in its report

to take account of information the Sri Lanka Government had provided to the UN Working Group on Disappearances.

In our letter to you of 11 September 1986, Amnesty International explained that it could not include any such information in its report because this information had not been sent to Amnesty International by the Sri Lanka Government, and information governments supply to the UN cannot be made public unless the government authorises its release. Unfortunately Amnesty International remains unable to refer to information the Sri Lanka Government supplied to the UN Working Group with a mandate to investigate cases of "disappearance" because, despite Amnesty International's repeated requests made in urgent messages of 11, 18 and 26 September 1986 to your office, no such information has been received from the government so far. I would greatly appreciate your co-operation in making such information available to Amnesty International at your earliest convenience.

Amnesty International welcomes the invitation extended by the government spokesman of the Department of Information on 29 September inviting "anybody to investigate any matter in regard to terrorist or any other activity which refers to any violations of human rights," although Amnesty International understands from the statement you made earlier in the interview with the BBC that such an invitation may not be extended to Amnesty International.

As you know, our primary concern at present is that the families of those whose "disappearances" are described in the Amnesty International report, should be speedily informed of the whereabouts or fate of their missing relatives. The United Nations General Assembly has expressed

its deep concern about the anguish and sorrow experienced by relatives of the "disappeared" in the face of persistent failure by the authorities to acknowledge the "disappeared" are in their custody or otherwise to account for them: the international community has repeatedly emphasized that families have a right to know the fate of their relatives.

To that effect may I respectfully request that, pending the establishment, in Sri Lanka itself, of an independent and impartial machinery to carry out such investigations, the government considers inviting the UN Working Group on Enforced or Involuntary Disappearances to visit Sri Lanka. The Working Group has been invited by a number of governments of countries in which "disappearances" have been reported. Such an invitation would be an important response to the desire expressed by the international community through the United Nations that governments fully co-operate with the UN Group and could, moreover, substantially alleviate the sorrows of the families who, till now, have searched in vain for their relatives who have "disappeared".

Minister, I apologise for writing to you at such length. I thought, however, that the issues which have been raised in recent weeks in connection with "disappearances" in Sri Lanka required a substantial response. I hope you will find the suggestions made by Amnesty International to be a positive contribution towards the ongoing debate in Sri Lanka about how human rights can be effectively protected, of which the recent government statements are clear evidence. Amnesty International greatly appreciates that this debate continues even in the difficult circumstances prevailing in Sri Lanka at present.



# BATTICALOA UNIVERSITY: WELCOME MOVE BUT...

Editor  
SATURDAY REVIEW

At last the long - yearned for Eastern Province University is emerging at a time of strife and turmoil in the East. From the standpoint of the overall development of the Eastern region — this is certainly a positive move — a necessity and a concession to the people of the East. The doubt is that the State while showing this as a big concession to the people of the East, tries to use it as a tool to sever North-East unity. The communal politics of Sri Lanka has already demonstrated its success in severing North-South relations. Drawing higher education too into the political strategy of compartmentalism, the people of this island would only promote intellectual narrowness among themselves.

After all, everything depends finally on the right perception of the situation by the people and I wish they should seize this opportunity to develop the Eastern Province University in order to realise the lofty aims of education in the long run as against some of the narrow political interests of the time.

A.N. Ram

Kondavil

## MEA CULPA

Editor  
SATURDAY REVIEW

I have been chastised for having 'crucified' the Rev. Deogupillai, Bishop of Jaffna. A friend mentioned this in a letter to me, but I have been unable to get a copy of that critique. Nevertheless, because of the controversy sparked off by Bishop Deogupillai's speech, I would like both to amend and to add to what I wrote before.

There is a valid objection to my article of August 1986: that I unfairly singled out Bishop Deogupillai's speech for criticism. I did, and I regret it. I should also have been critical of the Catholic hierarchy's unresponsiveness to the problems confronting its Tamil flock.

When I wrote my article in July three facts were uppermost in my mind. First, the Government had finally made concrete proposals that, while short of Tamil aspirations, were substantial ones that the President himself recognized were a minimum that could be augmented. Second, the guerilla leadership had irresponsibly rejected them outright. And third, successive bus loads of

Sinhalese civilians had been blown up by landmines.

In this context, Bishop Deogupillai's speech highlighting the annihilation of innocent Tamils but making no mention of Sinhalese struck me as being singularly inappropriate. And it was. Regrettably, Archbishop Fernando's response was no wiser.

For there was another context. Two days before he made his speech, Bishop Deogupillai had conducted funeral services for thirtyfour persons killed in fishing boats by the armed forces. And just prior to that Bishop Deogupillai had encountered alienation: in the circulation by the Catholic Bishops of Sri Lanka of a statement condemning a one-sided statement

## LETTERS

by the Catholic Bishops of South India, but not incorporating Bishop Deogupillai's own views. According to the Tamil Times (Madras), the Sri Lankan statement disregarded the views of the Bishops of Jaffna, Mannar and Batticaloa. This news report may be tendentious. But it is still necessary for the Catholic Church to ask itself "Why are Tamil Catholics taking the positions they do?"

The Good Shepherd seeks out the lost sheep, even if it means a sojourn in the north and east. Therefore, Bishop Deogupillai should try to comfort the terrorized Sinhalese victims of guerilla violence. And so should Archbishop Fernando, shepherd of all the flock in Sri Lanka, try to comfort the terrorized Tamil victims of Governmental violence. Perhaps each bishop might do so, each by going on a pilgrimage to comfort the afflicted of both communities.

In the past, commonly held democratic values, social welfare ideals, economic and class interests, and religion bound the Sinhalese and Tamil communities together at various levels. Today most of these ties are severely weakened. When the need of the country is at its greatest, it is morally binding on the bishops to preserve at least the religious ties that link their communities. Scoring points at one another's expense is not worthy of their calling. The political leaders will doubtless emphasise conflicting interests; the religious leaders ought to emphasise common humanity. Certainly the Bible lays

a heavy burden upon them: "Behold, I send you out as sheep in the midst of wolves... and you will be hated by all for my name's sake".

Another objection to my article might be that I ought not to have criticized Bishop Deogupillai's speech at all, because it was the response of the oppressed. I reject that. Self-defence is legitimate, but vengeance is not.

Most Tamils will claim that the Tamil community is an oppressed one. Further, that the Sinhalese are the oppressors. The Tamils are oppressed because being a minority they cannot influence the policy of Sinhalese governments, even when government policy adversely affects them. The Sinhalese, on the other hand, are oppressors because they do influence governmental policy through their voting strength. Therefore, it is argued, in responding to governmental violence against Tamils, Tamil violence against Sinhalese is justified, especially since avenues for political redress are blocked to Tamils. Or if not entirely justifiable, at least not as bad as Sinhalese violence. But justifying violence on the basis of this type of distinction can lead to treacherous results. In the end, when dead bodies lie on the ground, it matters little that the bullets were fired by oppressed.

The Sinhalese who live in the north and east are an oppressed community. For, are they not a minority in relation to the Tamils in those areas; And are they not powerless in relation to the Government in Colombo? It is not the Sinhalese of the north and east who decide government policy. Nevertheless, it is they who constitute the bulk of the victims of guerilla violence.

Some Tamils will justify the killings of these Sinhalese by arguing that they belong to the oppressor community in the overall sense. The hidden premise is that "All Sinhalese are one." But it was this same logic that Sinhalese used in July 1983 when they attacked Tamils living in Colombo. "All Tamils are one", they insisted. And in their view, the hatred they displayed against the Tamils was the righteous anger of the oppressed against an oppressor who stretched beyond the Palk Strait.

Bishop Laksman Wickremasinghe was one of the very few prominent Sinhalese who did not fall prey to this pernicious reasoning. He saw

that the line drawn was an improper one. It is morally impermissible that "All Tamils are one" or "All Sinhalese are one" for purposes of targeting violence. Rather, "All Sinhalese, Tamils and Muslims are one" or truer still, "All humanity is one."

Bishop Desmond Tutu stands as the symbol of oppressed black South Africans. He leads the assault on the social evil of apartheid. But he recognises the importance of individual conscience that makes every white a different person. Thus, he calls the whites his brothers and sisters. For blacks and whites belong to the one family of humanity.

Likewise, the great religious teachers knew that people resist seeing the humanity of those they deem to be outsiders. Therefore, they stressed that moral laws applied to all, even to "the stranger who dwells among you".

The present trap of violence is one we find difficult to extricate ourselves from. In part at least it represents the repeated failures of Sri Lanka's religious leaders to assert the common humanity of all of us. And partly our individual failures too. For the Koran says, "God will not change a nation unless the people themselves change."

U.S.A.

Jehan Perera

## BORED STIFF

Editor  
SATURDAY REVIEW

We feel bored reading your news about Merging of districts, Linguistic state, Autonomy and Federalism.

Please report about some interesting cases going on in the Rural Courts.

Jaffna

A Reader

Note by Editor:- What do you mean by Rural Courts? Tamil Eelam Courts? Or Kangaroo Courts?

## TIT FOR TAT

Editor  
SATURDAY REVIEW

It has become usual to see every Colombo newspaper cartoon depicting Tamils with holy ash and pottu on their foreheads. These are symbols of deep and auspicious significance to Hindus, who form the majority of our population.

Would our counterparts take a similar compliment in return? How about the clean-shaved head, and the time-honoured alms bowl?

K. R. Chellappah

Vaddukoddai



# ADAMPAN INCIDENTS

The Mannar Association for Relief and Rehabilitation has sent the following report about the recent incidents in Adampan (Mannar District):

There was an army operation and as a consequence it is reported that 13 people died in Adampan on 12th October.

## Justifying The Unjustifiable Hospital Committee Condemns Some Newspapers

The Jaffna General Hospital Committee which met recently, has condemned the attempts made by certain newspapers to justify the Army shelling of the Jaffna General Hospital.

The Hospital Committee members were fully satisfied that the Hospital authorities had taken all precautions to prevent the Hospital premises being used for any attack on the Security Forces.

The Committee discussed the situation caused by the stoppage of work by the Hospital Staff in the O.P.D. and Clinics.

The members expressed concern at the sufferings caused to the patients by this decision, while at the same time sharing the fears in the minds of the Hospital Staff as a result of shelling of the Hospital by the Security Forces stationed in the Jaffna Fort.

In a subsequent operation by the Armed Forces there it is reported that 11 died, 3 persons were seriously injured and 4 people were reported missing on 22nd October.

Consequently 3,622 families comprising 15456 persons have fled

from their homes and are presently refugees in the following places:

Thiruketheeswaram Temple, Parayakulam Mosque, Adampan Church, Chalampan Church, Pappamottai School, Vilankuli School, Kannatti

## AI (Sri Lanka) Appeals For 'Forgotten Prisoners'

### Out Of Sight, Out Of Mind

Text of a press release issued by AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL, Sri Lanka Section.

'Forgotten prisoners' are those that the world rarely hears about. Secrecy, silence, isolation, fear and repressive laws thwart attempts to find out about the invisible thousands of men and women in prisons and detention centres throughout the world. 'Forgotten prisoners' often come from small rural groups or other underprivileged minorities incapable of or unaware of the importance of communicating their plight to wider audiences. Sometimes governments want the rest of the world to forget these prisoners, and try to prevent information passing to their families and through them to national or international human rights organisations. In a number of countries laws prohibit the collecting and sending of information outside the country, and human rights groups which do so may be penalised.

It was the plight of the 'forgotten prisoners' that gave the initial impetus for the formation of Amnesty International. 25 years later, the problem is still with us, and so 'forgotten prisoners' is the theme chosen for this year's 'AI Week' which is observed by the movement each October. Amnesty International Sri Lanka has sent appeals to their respective governments regarding several such cases highlighted by the international movement in this campaign. The victims included a 22 year old woman accountant arrested by the army in Guatemala in 1982 whose fate remains unknown; a Lebanese arrested by Syrian security forces in 1970 and detained without trial ever since; five persons detained in Brunei for more than 22 years on account of their past political associations, and a Bulgarian Turk apparently arrested for resisting a government campaign to make the Turkish minority renounce their names in favour of Bulgarian names.

School, Andankulam Church, Thuvankerni Church, Vidaltivu Church, Navatkulam Church.

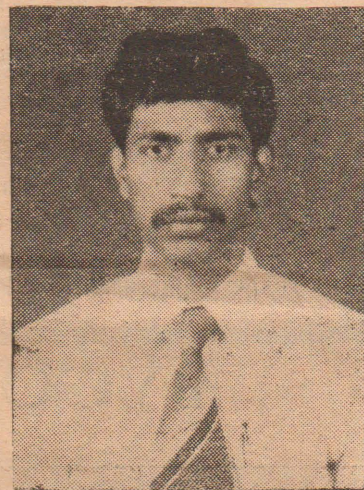
Investigations reveal that the Houses of 85 families have been fully burnt.

The displaced were given Dry Rations for 2 weeks by the Government Agent (except to those in Vidaltivu). The G. A with the approval of the Ministry of Rehabilitation, has arranged to provide the following as well.

Utensils worth Rs. 1000-00-  
Wooden poles worth Rs. 3000-00  
and Tin Sheets worth Rs. 2000-00  
Lions Mannar distributed to the 85 families clothes received from Japan.

Mannar Association for Relief & Rehabilitation (MARR) supplied Relief milk food and medicines and is arranging to issue Dry Rations after the Government issue of rations is stopped.

## APPRECIATION



Annesley Chelvanayagam

A year has passed since the untimely and tragic death on 15th November, 1985 of Annesley Chelvanayagam.

As a student of St. Benedict's College, Colombo, he acquitted himself creditably both in studies and in Sports, especially in Basket Ball. He represented Sri Lanka at the Sixth Basket Ball Championship held in Bangkok and won the Sri Lankan Colours.

As an Accounts Supervisor at Messrs. Singer, Sri Lanka Ltd., he successfully represented his Firm in all sporting activities. By dint of hard work coupled with a pleasing personality he endeared himself both to the Management and his Colleagues. He is sorely missed by his Parents, Sisters, Relations, Friends and Colleagues.

A Requiem Mass will be sung at St. John's Church, Jaffna on 15th November, 1986 at 6-00 a.m. for the repose of his soul.

## The Caspersz....

(Continued from page 2)

act because it displaced English and gave prominence to the language of the majority. The minorities were of course alienated. But this is something the minority has to put up with and can be overcome with time. This view may have carried some credibility in 1970. But it has been thoroughly discredited by three race riots and the present rebellion.

In this their faith in history's forward movement may lead them uncomfortably close to condoning questionable means for desired ends and towards a lack of stringency concerning clear-cut principles. One is reminded of Popper's example of the Social Democrats of Europe who in the 20's and 30's helped Fascists like Hitler and Mussolini to come to power believing that they will prove an efficacious means of destroying capitalism, paving the way for good things to come as predicted by their mentors who derived their historicism from Marx.

The other element in their approach was to actively mobilise all

religious groups, peasants, workers and political groups on the basis of common concerns. The main thing here as they put it is not to quarrel with ideologies and beliefs but to call on each group to bring out the best in its aspirations. This approach has been fruitful in having brought into being the MIRJE. Its effectiveness in slowing down the momentum of sugar multinationals has also been noted. They however seem to believe that even those who blatantly thirst after power with no qualms about means can be dealt with in this manner — do not tell them whether they are right or wrong, but call for the best in them. I suspect that such a course may lead to serious misjudgements.

## IN RETROSPECT

The visit of Paul and Yohan which was sponsored by the MIRJE will be seen as a significant step towards restoring communal understanding. Those who heard them and spoke to them left with the feeling that they had met with people of great compassion and understanding. One member of the audience at St. John's asked them to convey to people of the South the message, 'Leave us Tamils alone'. Fr. Yohan's answer along the lines, 'I appreciate the speakers' feeling of deep alienation. But for any

just settlement you need the help of the Sinhalese —' left many impressed. At times their praise of the achievements of the Tamils bordered on flattery. Given the constraints of their visit where every conversation was conducted with an eye on the minute hand, their understanding was bound to be incomplete. The depth of the response of some Evangelical Christians to this crisis and the fervent non-violent convictions of groups of Christians like those around Fr. Jeyaseelan are likely to be little understood in the South.

Amongst the warmer moments was Fr. Yohan's evening with groups of youth from St. James' and St. John's parishes and from the University at St. James' parish hall. The questions of the youth were direct and pertinent. One young man needed a lot of convincing that Fr. Yohan would actually say in the South what he said here. For young people who have been long cut off from their Sinhalese brethren it was a pleasant encounter to know that there are also Sinhalese too who radiated human warmth and shared common concerns.



# Saturday Review

SRI LANKA

## EPRLF OVERRUNS ARMY CAMP AT SAMBALTHIVU

At a press conference held in Jaffna on 10th November, details of a major confrontation between the Security Forces and the Eelam People's Revolutionary Liberation Front (EPRLF) militants at Sambalathivu in Trincomalee district, were revealed.

On 30th October, the militants had launched an attack on the camp at Sambalathivu—a strategically vital point in the East.

Six other camps were also situated in the neighbouring area, within a range of nine miles.

In the three-hour battle that ensued, the militants had overrun the camp and destroyed a bridge that served the Security Forces, killed thirteen soldiers and seized a large

amount of arms and equipment and intimate personal possessions of the Forces.

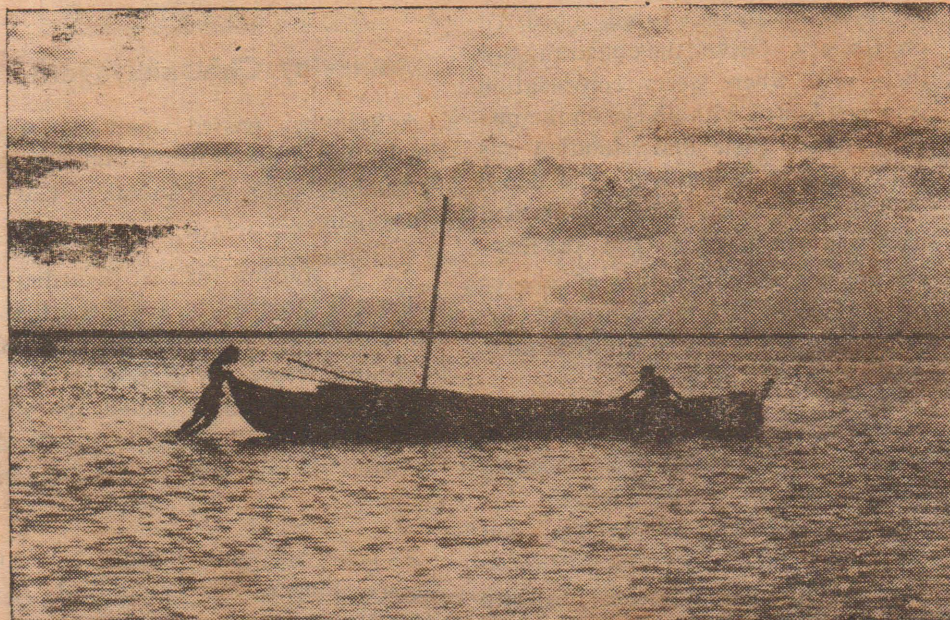
No casualties were suffered by the militants, except for minor injuries to two of them (who were present at the press conference).

The mini-camp at Sambalathivu, with less than a hundred soldiers, had been serving as a link to other camps in the area.

According to the EPRLF, the soldiers at one camp had shouted "PLA stop firing".

"Two soldiers came out with upraised hands indicating surrender. But we suddenly found that they had small Israeli hand grenades hidden in the palms of their hands, which they were about to unclip.

## BYGONE DAYS



This photograph by a talented youngster, Damayanthi, captures a typical Jaffna scene—typical, that is, before the Government virtually banned fishing in the North through its proclamation, of surveillance zones, prohibited zones and what not.

An Exhibition featuring 200 of his photographs, opened yesterday (14th November) at Chundikuli Girls' College.

The Exhibition closes at 4 p.m. today.

## EXERCISE MATURE JUDGEMENT

—USTA

Text of the resolution passed by the University Science Teachers' Association of the University of Jaffna at an emergency meeting held on 11th November.

The disappearance of A. Vijitharan, a third year commerce student

We were then compelled to shoot them", said one spokesman.

According to official reports, on 10th November five soldiers and one Special Task Force (STF) personnel were killed and eight STF personnel injured in two separate incidents which took place in Periyapullumalai, Amparai district and Pulmoddai in the Trincomalee district.

The EPRLF has stated in a press release in Jaffna that 12 soldiers were killed at Pulmoddai, when their armed wing the People's Liberation Army (PLA) ambushed a vehicle.

## The Week....

(Continued from page 1)

then shelled the shore. There were casualties on both sides and a Naval boat was reportedly damaged.

On the 2nd day however, despite fierce LTTE resistance, the Navy had managed to land some men and materials at the VVF Camp under cover of helicopter strafing and using a private trawler—which was fishing in the area—and the fishermen on board as hostages.

On Tuesday (11th November), the Vadamaradchchi area (Pt. Pedro, Munai, Thampalai, Varathuppalai Vallipuram, Arthiyadi, Thambaciddy, Mayakkai, Viyaparimoolai, Gandhiyoor, Alvai, Kurumpacitty, Manthikai) was the target of a three-pronged attack. Helicopters and bombers strafed and bombed the area while Naval boats and army personnel in the camps mortar-shelled it. Six people were killed and forty injured.

On the same day, helicopter-borne troops landed at Vallai—an open, arid plain lying between Atchuvai and Pt. Pedro. Apparently, their objective was to pitch camp there. Simultaneously, troops from the Pt. Pedro, Thondamanar and VVF camps attempted to move out under cover of aerial bombardment and naval shelling.

Tenacious militant resistance—spearheaded by the LTTE's Kittu, who suffered a minor injury on his left arm—successfully foiled all these

is a most disturbing event. We share the legitimate and grave anxiety of the student community in this matter and endorse the concern expressed by the Vice-Chancellor on behalf of the administration. We also share the anxiety of Vijitharan's parents and of other students who are far from home. Their well being is the responsibility of the staff and authorities of this University and of the people of Jaffna. We appeal to whoever has knowledge of his disappearance to expedite his safe return and restore to Jaffna its good name.

Whatever ambitions and ideals the students cherish can bear fruit only if the work of learning continues and the University can hold its respect in the eyes of the world. We appeal to them for mature judgement in the exercise of their rightful social concerns without interrupting the work of learning.

attempts. The exact casualty toll is not known but reportedly there were losses on both sides.

On Wednesday (12th November), helicopter-ferried troops landed at Vallai once again and blew up a culvert close to the Vallai bridge.

The military strategy seems to be to cut off Valvettithurai and Pt. Pedro from Jaffna and then launch a 'search and destroy' operation (a three-pronged one, of course).

Political observers also underscore the timing: the Security Forces have unleashed their fury on the eve, as it were, of the 'mini-summit' between Indian Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi and President J.R. Jayewardene before the SAARC Conference, which begins on 16th November, in Bangalore.

An attempt to arm-twist the militants into accepting the Lankan Government's devolution package taking advantage of India's sudden clamp-down on the Madras-based militant leaders? Or something more sinister? Only time will tell.

So the week that began with smiles and an exchange of pleasantries ended with the crackle of gunfire and the burst of mortar shells. Even the Jaffna Fort Army Camp seems to have caught the infection: since Tuesday (11th November), there has been intermittent mortar shelling and gunfire from the Fort.

The battle rages on in Vadamaradchchi.

Meanwhile, protest demos against India's 'arrest' and 'humiliation' of Tiger leader V. Prabhakaran are snowballing throughout the North.