

# Saturday Review

## SRI LANKA

Vol. 4 No. 24

31st August 1985

AN IRA SITUATION  
DEVELOPING IN  
SRI LANKA

REMEMBER BOBBY SANDS ?

# FALSE MOVE BY RAJIV

A wave of indignation is building up against the Rajiv Gandhi regime among the Tamil people of Sri Lanka.

This indignation is born out of disillusionment that the Indian Prime Minister has not lived up to their expectations in tackling the ethnic problem in Sri Lanka.

After the Punjab and Assam accords, many of the Tamil people were inclined to believe that it would be plain sailing in Sri Lanka's case also.

But Thimpu I and II have come and gone and we are still nowhere near a solution.

Worse, the Rajiv regime has thought it fit to move against some of the Tamil militant leaders resident in South India.

The impression in Jaffna is that the Indian Prime Minister has been misdirected and misguided by his top advisers, Foreign Secretary Romesh Bhandari included.

The anger of the people was vented in a number of demonstrations in various parts of Jaffna throughout this week, protesting especially about the Indian Government's decision to deport Dr. A. S. Balasingham and Mr. S. C. Chandrasenan.

Thousands of people marched in these demonstrations shouting slogans against the Indian Government.

A partial hartal was also observed, with picketing outside Government offices and Corporations.

AT A HURRIEDLY SUMMONED PRESS CONFERENCE IN JAFFNA, REPRESENTATIVES OF THE EELAM NATIONAL LIBERATION FRONT SAID THE MILITANT GROUPS WERE THANKFUL TO INDIA FOR THE HELP GIVEN SO FAR IN THEIR STRUGGLE TO SECURE JUSTICE FOR THE TAMIL PEOPLE.

BUT, IF PUSHED, THEY WERE READY TO MOVE OUT OF INDIA AND CARRY ON THEIR STRUGGLE.

ONE POINT THE ENLF SPOKESMEN EMPHASISED WAS THAT THEY DID NOT TRUST IN ANY POLITICAL SOLUTION TO THE PROBLEMS OF THE TAMIL PEOPLE.

Not that the militant groups are not prepared for further dialogue and, if necessary, even for compromise.

But the record of successive Sinhalese — dominated Governments has been such that even if Mr. Gandhi manages to force a settlement on the very reluctant President Jayewardene, they were not certain it would be honoured.

As stated in that admirable booklet, "Dear Sri Lanka Ambassador" (written by Mr. S. Sivanayagam shortly after the July 1983 Holocaust) "For so many years they (the Tamil people) suffered racial discrimination, racial riots, plunder of their tra-

ditional homelands, Police and Army harassments and open state hostility. Through that period they raised their voices in Parliament, on public platforms, through the media and in international fora; they went before the courts of law; they staged protests, non-violent satyagraha campaigns; they entered into pacts and gentlemen's agreements with Sinhalese leaders which were dishonoured."

We wish to emphasise the words "which were dishonoured."

In the meantime Mr. H. W. Jayewardene, the chief Sri Lanka Government negotiator, has returned from Thimpu, via New Delhi, with a "working paper" prepared by officials of the Indian and Sri Lanka Governments.

Our information is that if President Jayewardene is amenable, the working paper would be a starting point for "fresh negotiations" with the militant leaders!

There is reportedly some reference to "provincial autonomy" in the working paper, with the

proviso that in the case of the Eastern Province, the Muslim and Sinhalese people could opt out of the arrangement if they so wished.

As we said in the SR of 3rd August, under the heading "INDIA CANNOT DICTATE", India cannot impose a solution on the ethnic problem that is not acceptable to them (the Tamil people)."

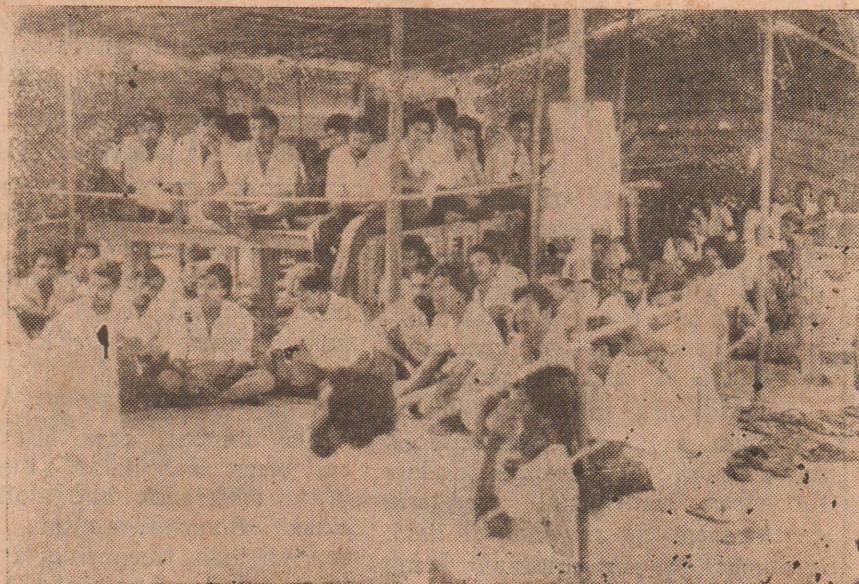
We also said, "the Indian Prime Minister has to contend not only with Tamil Nadu but also with the other Southern States of India where sentiment is strongly in favour of the militants' positions."

WHAT THE TAMIL PEOPLE OF SRI LANKA ARE CRYING OUT FOR IS JUSTICE. LET THE WORLD KNOW ABOUT IT.

## MIRJE Protests

The following is the text of a telegram sent to President Jayewardene by the Northern branch of the Movement for Inter-Racial Justice and Equality:

"While efforts are being made to arrive at a political solution through negotiations the reported atrocious behaviour by the State Security Forces in Vavuniya dispels all hopes of negotiations at Thimpu and bring in fear whether the Government intends resorting to military solution. We appeal to Your Excellency to ensure that the Security Forces do not indulge in these excesses which could impair the peace talks at Thimpu. MIRJE, Jaffna.



Jaffna University undergrads fast in relays in sympathy with Tamil political detainees on a death fast in Welikade (See Page 8)



## Saturday Review

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## Medical College Inaugurated

The inauguration of the North Lanka Medical Practitioners' College was held at 164, 4th Cross Street, Jaffna on 19th August.

The Plan Implementation Committee of the proposed Medical College, which will be the first Board of Directors, consists of: Dr. T. Gengatharan, Dr. S. Vamadevan, Dr. I. T. Xavier, Dr. T. Naganathar, and Dr. J. B. C. Phillips.

Steps are being taken to incorporate the constitution of the College of Medical Practitioners in Parliament.

Steps are also being taken to recognise this institution according to the University Act No. 16 of 1978 and Ordinance No. 4 of 1980.

Details of academic and non-academic staff, physical resources including classrooms, libraries, laboratories and staff and student amenities have been prepared.

Out of 157 applicants, 80 students will be selected initially, sources said.

# Mandela : World's Conscience Stirs

Indian Premier Rajiv Gandhi has made a clarion call against apartheid and for the unconditional release of sixty-eight-year-old leader of the South Africans, Nelson Mandela, who has been languishing in jail for about twenty-two years since 1964.

Our memories are still fresh to recall that in not too distant a past, in 1956, this very same leader was charged with treason for quoting an extract from a speech of Rajiv's grandfather Jawaharlal Nehru.

In his young days, Nelson Mandela was expelled from the university for organising a boycott of examinations. Later he studied law and became an attorney-at-law. In 1944, at the age of 26, he joined the African National Congress and strengthened the youth wing of the Congress by championing the cause of the South Africans. He emerged as a national leader. He organised a movement to disobey all the laws of the land that were racial in character. About 8,500 volunteers disobeyed the draconian laws in a peaceful struggle under his leadership. The South African Government, which banned all processions and meetings, made an order that he must not leave Johannesburg. Thereafter his presidential address was read out at the convention of the National Congress.

It was in that memorable convention that Nelson Mandela quoted Nehru from an article that he had written at the end of the second world war. He quoted Nehru as saying it was no easy task for a people to become free; those who long-

ed for heroic freedom had to pass through the valley of death many times before they reached the ascent of freedom.

He defended himself at the trial that lasted for four years and he was acquitted in 1960. In the same year, the South African Government decided to conduct a referendum to seek approval for declaring that country as a republic. But this

by

V. Varathasuntharam

Government notorious for its apartheid legislations laid down that only the Whites could vote at the referendum. Mandela agitated strongly against this unfair racial discrimination in this civilized age. He was charged by the Government, and at the trial he defended himself and his political philosophy and commitments for four and a half hours. He was sentenced to life imprisonment in 1964 and he has been in detention since then.

South Africans and Negroes have been highly inspired and influenced by the Indian freedom struggle and by the writings and speeches of Indian leaders like Mahatma Gandhi, Nehru, Sarojini Naidu, Indira Gandhi and so on, and the Indian sub-continent has always naturally stood by these oppressed people at all their desperate hours.

In his appeal for a global boycott of South Africa, Rajiv states, "To struggle against the tyranny of apartheid is the natural and just

response of the oppressed people of South Africa and the man who personifies this struggle and its sufferings is Nelson Mandela."

Rajiv's appeal is undoubtedly an expression of solidarity of not only the Indian sub-continent but of the entire Non-aligned movement of which he is the chairman.

Australia, a member of the UN Security Council has announced anti-South African measures which include among many other things a ban on investment by the South African Government and its agencies, import of gold coins and the closing of its trade office in Johannesburg.

Moves are also afoot to present proposals against apartheid for a joint initiative at the meeting of the heads of Commonwealth countries scheduled to be held in Bahamas in October.

The international proletariat has also expressed its solidarity with the South Africans. The National Union of Seamen in Britain has appealed to the trade unions of the world to enable the imposition of the UN oriented oil embargo against South Africa.

South Africans are inspired that the international community in its entirety is with them at their hour of distress. The conscience of the world is stirred, but the South African Government is insensitive. It can hardly stand against the current of world opinion and retributive justice for long with its military power. That's a certainty.

## Singing for Africa

For decades hundreds of non-governmental organizations in the US and Europe have searched for a magical formula to arouse sustained concern — and money — from citizens in the advanced countries in response to Third World crises. Despite their altruism, however, few NGOs have generated enough funds to make a real difference.

Yet the latest in this noble genre, the USA Africa Foundation, seems to have accomplished what most of its predecessors have not: the key to evoking and sustaining — the generosity of millions of affluent citizens.

Formed only this year spring, the foundation may generate as much as US\$ 250 million dollars for African relief and long-term development by the end of 1985.

Further, its momentum is being channeled so that it has the capability for raising many hundreds of millions of dollars more next year and beyond.

The money will be stretched even further by the manner in which it will be given away. Though the processes for allocating its funds are just now being developed, they seem to represent the today's state of the art in international development assistance.

by Craig Smith

USA for Africa is one of a network of concerned musicians groups in advanced countries that have recorded songs evoking the human misery in Africa.

### British group

The impetus came last November when Bob Geldof, the leader of an Irish rock and roll group called Boomtown Rats, urged top British recording artists to gather as the chorus of "Do They Know it's Christmas?"

The song generated nearly fifteen million dollars US for the

English Band-Aid Project, which used it to send food shipments to Ethiopia. The event quickly spawned similar efforts in Canada, Australia and Germany.

But no one knew the vast potential of the strategy until 28th January when 46 American top pop artists gathered in a Hollywood studio for the all-night taping of "We are the World" — an event that brought the USA for Africa Foundation into being.

What set the American gathering apart is not really the song, the singers or the production methods but the way the star-studded gathering itself was marketed.

The full range of sophisticated high tech advertising techniques, typically reserved for the promotions of such commodities as Pepsi Cola or Julio Iglesias albums, were employed for the first time to promote a humanitarian cause.

The sales of the single record itself, as well as the full album that followed it, were only a small part of the "We are the World" phenomenon.

(Courtesy, UN "Development Forum")



# INDIA AND THE ETHNIC ISSUE

The Thimpu talks have stalled-but not for all time, we hope and pray.

Below we reproduce an interview given by the Indian High Commissioner, Mr.D.N.Dixit to the "Sun", which did a disservice by the reading public by not publishing it in full.

Correspondent : What do you think is the importance of Indo-Lanka relations, specially with regard to the ethnic question, for Sri Lanka?

High Commissioner : My basic reaction to this is that it is for the people and Government of Sri Lanka to judge. But I can identify certain factors which are fundamental to Indo-Lanka relations. The geographical location, being near to each other, historical evolution and contact, cultural affinities and economic characteristics - all these make it natural for Sri Lanka to feel that its relations with India are important. Because apart from other considerations, India happens to be a large neighbour. Of course largeness alone does not matter, what is of highest importance to Sri Lanka with regard to India is its closeness.

C : How does the resolution of the ethnic crisis in Sri Lanka benefit India?

HC : A peaceful, harmonious Sri Lanka is very important to us, to our interests and it is very necessary for regional peace and harmony.

However, India has only a very marginal role in solving Sri Lanka's problems because the problems are essentially Sri Lankan. They are the internal problems of your country based on differences between two ethnic groups—both Sri Lankan nationals.

We are only involved because of a fall-out on us. We have approximately 100,000 Sri Lankan refugees in our country, some of whom come back to your country and create trouble for you in terms of militancy. We would like to be out of it. Helping you to solve your problem is not India's responsibility nor did India wish to intervene to solve Sri Lanka's internal problems as my Prime Minister has clarified time to time. Since some dissident leaders are in my country, the Prime Minister of India who has good relations with the President, has taken the initiative to bring these dissident Tamil leaders and your Government around the negotiating table so that they can negotiate a durable solution, re-establish harmony and overcome the controversies of recent years. Our Prime Minister has promised that he would assist from the

side, your Government to bring about the process of negotiations. We are actively interested in the negotiations between the Government and Sri Lankan Tamils and the success of these talks and negotiations are very important for us, for regional peace and stability. That is how restoration of peace in Sri Lanka would benefit both India and Sri Lanka.

C : Can a parallel be drawn between the Punjab settlement and what a settlement should be in Sri Lanka. In your Parliament it was stated that Sri Lanka should follow the example of the Punjab settlement and settle its ethnic problems speedily?

HC : I think you are referring to the statement by our Minister of State Shri Khurshed Alam Khan in Parliament soon after the Punjab settlement was reached. My interpretation of this statement is that the Punjab agreement could be an example to Sri Lanka in terms of the spirit of compromise and accommodation shown in arriving at the settlement. But in factual terms there is no parallel between Punjab and Sri Lankan problem. For example, there are no Sikh refugees who have left our borders and settled in other countries. We have a federal structure providing autonomy to all the states which have been formed on the linguistic—lines. Moreover the history of your problem, I believe, is longer than that of the concerns expressed by our Indian, Sikh community. Above all we have shown a determination to compromise so as to maintain the unity and integrity of our country and we pray for the same for Sri Lanka.

I get the clear impression that your President and leadership desires to solve the problem in a constructive spirit.

C : Has the memorandum of settlement on Punjab really solved the Punjab problem?

HC : My Prime Minister has expressed the confidence that it stands solved. In Punjab itself there is not only relief and acceptance of the accord but there is positive support for it as a means of restoring normalcy in Punjab. This is amply clear from the public opinion survey which was conducted by the prestigious Indian magazine "India Today" which found that 90% of people supported the accord. I have every confidence that it stands resolved.

C : Can you tell me something about the Thimpu process?

HC : The Thimpu process was the result of a very sincere and purpose-

ful effort made by Prime Minister and the President of Sri Lanka.

C : Are you hopeful about the outcome of the Thimpu talks?

HC : There has to be positive outcome to the Thimpu talks considering all the goodwill and interest which has been invested in the process.

C : How would the success of Thimpu talks benefit India?

HC : Anything that brings stability to a united, democratic and ethnically peaceful Sri Lanka is good for us.

C : It is felt in Sri Lanka that with Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi's coming into office, India's relations with Sri Lanka have improved considerably. What is your view?

HC : My Prime Minister is a dynamic leader. He has his perceptions on the values and traditions of our foreign policy. He has infused dynamism and friendly orientation in certain trends in our foreign policy which have always been there. In changed circumstances certain dimensions of his policies get attention and highlighted and make greater impact.

C : What if Thimpu fails?

HC : It is more important for Sri Lankans to think what would happen if Thimpu fails. We have done our best in taking this initiative for bringing about the talks. We earnestly hope and pray it will succeed.

C : If in spite of best efforts Thimpu talks fail . . . (High Commissioner interrupting). Why is there such an emphasis on the failure of the Thimpu talks. Do you want it to fail or is there any wide-spread feeling here that it will fail. Why this preoccupation with failure? Don't you think it would be more constructive to work for success than worry about the failure?

C : I wanted to ask you that question because there are certain difficulties and people would like to know what would happen just in case the talks fail and I want to ask you will there be internal pressure on the Indian Central Government for a military intervention?

HC : When the Prime Minister and my Government has assured that this will not happen we must go by that. My Prime Minister means what he says each time.

C : Would Indo-Sri Lanka relations break if Thimpu talks fail?

HC : This is a cynical question. I see no reason why they should break because it is Sri Lanka's problem. Of course there will be disappointment. But a break of relations is unthinkable. There will be disappointment on both sides but relations between India and Sri Lanka will continue. How they will continue, we will see.

C : If the Thimpu talks fail then what would India do?

HC : Our position is that Thimpu process should continue till it succeeds. You cannot afford to say "if Thimpu fails." It has to succeed however complex the problem.

C : What are your views on the call given by certain Opposition leaders recently to delay the Thimpu talks until certain internal problems are solved?

HC : We have no business in commenting on an internal matter. That does not mean that we do not have views. We have views which we do not express. However, as you are aware both the Foreign Secretary and I have been in touch with Mrs. Bandaranaike. We hope that the Opposition parties share the concern of India in the unity and welfare of the Sri Lankan people.

## Anthem For Doomed Youth

What passing bells for these who die  
as cattle?  
Only the monstrous anger of the  
guns.  
Only the stuttering rifles' rapid  
rattle  
Can patter out their hasty orisons  
No mockeries for them from prayers  
or bells,  
Nor any voice of mourning save the  
choirs,—  
The shrill, demented choirs of wailing  
shells.  
And bugles calling for them from  
sad shires.  
What candles may be held to speed  
them all?  
Not in the hands of boys, but in  
their eyes  
Shall shine the holy glimmers of  
good-byes.  
The pallor of girls' brows shall be  
their pall;  
Their flowers the tenderness of  
patient minds,  
And each slow dusk a drawing-down  
of blinds.

— Wilfred Owen



# THE TRAGEDY OF THE BLESSED ISLE

I write this as the news of the latest massacre at Vavuniya has come in and the prospects for the peace talks lie in doubt. The local media has done its stuff — "...number of terrorists have been killed" it says, as if children of four and five can be 'terrorists'.

Valvettiturai, Anuradhapura, Nainativu, Trincomalee, Vavuniya. Where next?

The guardians of civilised values in this country remain, as usual, chatting in drawing rooms, debating as to whether the blame lies here or there — the militants, the State, the army? Time has stood still for them. It is long past the time when people, Tamils and Sinhalese, should be clear in mind and voice about where the eradication of this evil should begin.

"Because sentence against an evil work is not executed speedily, therefore the heart of the sons of men is fully set in them to do evil" (Ecclesiastes 9-11). This is the crux of the message of an eminent Sinhalese scholar, Dr. Nihal Jayewickreme, in his manifold articles. The blame lies with the rulers of the nation, who undertook the solemn task of good government, and have shown persistent disregard for the rule of law.

David Selbourne's article gave us a glimpse of how small and cynical our rulers are, despite the promise held out by their education. This would have been of small import if our civil and religious institutions had showed less pusillanimity and greater wisdom. A democratic society does not depend crucially on its nominal rulers, for its well being.

Even on questions of elementary justice our religious leaders seem mixed up. It was painful to read the British M.P. Kilroy Silk's comments on the Anglican Bishop of Colombo and the Papal Nuncio. The Roman Catholic Church, too has come out poorly. Their forthright condemnation of the killing of a Japanese Buddhist monk in Jaffna on the basis of provenly unreliable information supplied by the Government compared with their hedging over the murder of Father Bastian by the Security Forces where information provided by the Bishops of Mannar and Jaffna, looks shoddy indeed.

The 'free press' in Colombo has been faithfully and uncritically playing to the Government's tune blaming all the ills of this country on the "Northern Terrorists."

The poor Rip van Winkles wake up from their slumbers to harp on lamp post murders in Jaffna, forgetting what the State did to the Tamil people hundreds of times over.

The *Saturday Review* has been criticised for not adequately reporting what Tamils do to Tamils. Indeed Tamils have done terrible things to Tamils and to Sinhalese. We are in a state of brother against brother — Tamil against Sinhalese, Sinhalese against Sinhalese and Tamil against Tamil. Evil, whatever the source, infects the body like a cancer. Purity of

do this their right to free information must be protected.

I recall a case where some Scottish highlanders serving in Northern Ireland, did to death an Irish farm labourer. Six years later one of the men, discharged from service, racked by a bad conscience and dreams reported the matter to the Birmingham police. The police quietly pursued with investigations and brought all the men to trial.

These are the standards in an, albeit flawed, democratic society. This is how it should have been in Ceylon. But is it even remotely possi-

rest thorny problems in Punjab and in Assam, and is now giving a new and hopeful direction to his country. It consists of taking into confidence and treating as equals leaders of minority communities. India's erstwhile master, Britain, is now being urged by the British press to make a similar approach to the Irish question.

Rajiv's achievement is all the more remarkable considering the pressure he was under from sections of the Indian establishment to take a martial approach to the Sikhs. (An editorial in the *Hindustan Times* read, 'they - the Jat Sikhs - only respect strength'.)

A young Sinhalese Methodist clergyman who had become disillusioned with this government over the last two years told me, 'this Government does not stand for truth'. These are the words, I suspect, Christ would have used, if He were here. If we do not cease to be lukewarm about truth and justice, the day will come when we can have no more comfortable discussions in our drawing rooms.

Like South Africa, it can be said of Sri Lanka that the power of the National Security State increases in inverse proportion to its effectiveness.

As John Donne had said in one of his poems ("Ask not for whom the bell tolls...") suffering (and evil) have a universal dimension. Even the International community is not exempt from it. The *Le Monde* reports that Colombo has become a new and major source of heroin. If a hapless man in Vavuniya or Trincomalee has lost his possessions and family and has no money to flee abroad for safety, who can blame him if he becomes victim to a shark who gives him a one way ticket to Paris in return for conveying a bag with a false bottom?

This is not to say things are hopeless. There are still Sinhalese with exceptional integrity and courage. They have kept their heads and dedication to truth in the most trying of circumstances. May God bless them all.

by

Rajan Hoole

purpose has become a struggle for all of us. We are in the situation of a vicious propaganda war. Telling the whole truth has ceased to be a simple issue. If our telling the whole truth enhances someone else's big lie, we are not serving the cause of truth. If even a section of the Press in Colombo had been committed to integrity, our situation and the situation in the country would have been very different.

It is instructive to have a look at the British media when Mrs. Thatcher in a press conference rejected the carefully considered findings of the New Ireland Forum consisting of political parties in Eire, the *Guardian* attacked this snub to Prime Minister Fitzgerald as 'pigheadedness', adding that, 'it is better to concede gracefully what cannot be retained by force', and that by rejecting a chance for a fair settlement one day British civil servants may have to sit down to sign away all influence in Northern Ireland. There have been open discussions in the British media, including the BBC, about the workings of the Prevention of Terrorism Act. Statistical evidence on the basis of numbers detained and the numbers charged has been produced to argue its ineffectiveness.

Even during the conduct of the Falklands war, large sections of the media and the University community in Britain remained sceptical. The BBC's journalists struck work when the governors caved into government pressure and decided not to screen the 'real life of Mc Guinness' — a known IRA man. The journalists and the media have argued that a democratic society ultimately depends on the public being able to make informed judgements, and to

ble here? What is justice for a farm labourer or child in Vavuniya who gets killed wantonly by an agent of the State, the repository of law and order?

Every Briton must consider, that when Mrs. Thatcher identified Sri Lanka as a democracy like Britain threatened by 'terrorism', she, their representative, betrayed a profound ignorance of the achievements of civil society in Britain.

We cannot be accused of having had anything like a passion for truth and justice. We have let demagogues play with these. Now we cannot see untruth and injustice even when these stare at us in the face. Our society and its guardians have failed. We have rested content in an inordinately high estimation of ourselves.

As is typical of this attitude, in one of our coteries of power, having Oxford and LSE men, it was asked of Rajiv Gandhi, 'What has this grounded pilot to teach us?' Indeed, it is this grounded pilot who is teaching this world to fly. He is being hailed as the world's greatest statesman who has laid to

## Undergrads' Solidarity Campaign

A successful picketing campaign, organised by students of the Jaffna University to show their solidarity with the Tamil political prisoners still in custody under the Prevention of Terrorism Act, shut down all Government Offices, Banks and State Corporations on Thursday, 22nd August.

The demands put forward by the picketers are: release the youths who have been kept in custody for more than 18 months under the

Prevention of Terrorism Act or bring them to trial; grant political prisoner status to all detenus taken into custody for political activities; stop torturing the detenus; stop subjecting female detenus and male detenus to sexual violations and sexual perversions; stop the murder of detenus in torture camps and prisons; publish the names and other details of all political prisoners murdered in torture camps and prisons.



# EASTERN PROVINCE: TRADITIONAL TAMIL HOMELAND

(Continued from last issue)

The Sinhalese and Tamil peasantry had never mixed or met. The large mass of the two populations lived in separate concentrations—the Sinhalese in the South and the West and the Tamils in the North and East. Of course in almost every Sinhalese village and certainly in every town there have always been Tamils, but they were there for the specific purpose of running a kiosk or provision store or pawn-broker's shop. Or they were public officials employed by the Central government or local authority. Likewise in predominantly Tamil districts, there were Sinhalese who had drifted there for specific purposes, though in much smaller numbers than the Tamils in the Sinhalese areas. This is easily explained by the fact there were more economic opportunities in the relatively fertile provinces in which the Sinhalese predominated.

The physical separation of the large mass of Sinhalese and Tamils was a major factor in the prevention of racial rivalry for many hundred years. The Sinhalese and the Tamils were also insulated by the vast forests and the scrub wastes that lie between the concentrations of population.

In ancient times it was otherwise. When a Sinhalese Kingdom was centered in Anuradhapura, the proximity of the Sinhalese to the Tamils in the North the ideal setting for race warfare, and the agrarian wealth or the wealth of the region provided the motivation for the economic competitiveness that inevitably led to open conflict, between the two elements. But when the forest swept over, this region and the centres of gravity of the population moved towards Kandy and the West Coast, separating the two major races, their internecine slowly died down.

Looking at recent events from this point of view, it is not surprising that the cleaning of the jungles and the resettlements of the people in contiguous racial groups in the North-Central Province led to a reawakening of the old fires of communal conflict. "The tension of terrorism at Padaviya, Polonnaruwa, Hingurakgoda and Dambulla seems to contain an element of historical inevitability.

Indeed the Tamils of Trincomalee, Batticaloa and Amparai Districts have been the unfortunate victims of the historical inevitability and the tension of terrorism that Vittachi is speaking about in the successive waves of racial onslaught by the Sinhalese colonists in the heartland of the Tamils in Kantalai, Kiliveddi,

Muthur in Trincomalee District and Gal Oya in the Amparai District to the South of Batticaloa and Vadamunai in the north of Batticaloa District. These racist onslaughts have increased with subsequent years in intensity and in its naked inhumanity. With the Colonists is the added factor of the Sinhala forces, the soldiers and the police as well as the Sinhala politicians overtly supplying the rationale of

Indeed the minimum basic that prevails in India politically is the linguistic grouping of the country into various states. We repeat, it is a linguistic division and not a division organised on the basis of religion. That is exactly what we the peoples of the Eastern Province ask and want, short of Tamil Eelam.

by **Fr. J. Joseph Mary S. J.**

Sinhala-Buddhistic expansionism in the traditional Tamil homeland of Trincomalee and Batticaloa and Amparai Districts and intent upon the genocide of the peace loving Tamil populace.

We, the people of the Eastern Province hailing from Trincomalee, Batticaloa and Amparai Districts for our homeland therefore, reiterate that the Eastern Province in Sri Lanka is still predominantly a Tamil speaking Traditional Tamil Homeland. We, who are, for the most part refugees and exiles, breathing the air of freedom in foreign lands raise our voice and speak equally for our Tamil brothers and sisters in the Trincomalee, Batticaloa and Amparai Districts.

On behalf of them and of us we urge upon the Indian government and all those taking part in the Thimpu talks to hammer out a lasting political solution to the ethnic problem of Sri Lanka. We appeal as well to all people of good-will intent upon solving the Tamil problem in Sri Lanka and we categorically state that TRINCOMALEE, BATTICALOA and AMPARAI DISTRICTS in the EASTERN PROVINCE are very much part of the Tamil question and as such it must be brought to the negotiating table of Tamil Eelam at the Thimpu talks in Bhutan.

The Prime Minister of India, Mr. Rajiv Gandhi is on record as having stated :

No, I have never said that the Tamils cannot ask for it. What I said was we will never support the stand which asks for more than what prevails in India."

He was answering a question posed to him at a press conference in Madras on the 15th of July. The question was:

Can't Sri Lanka Tamils ask for more autonomy than what prevails in India?

atedly that by religion they are Mu-lims but by language they are Tamils. Mr. Majeed, a long-standing leader of the Muslims from Trincomalee District has said time and again :

வழியால் நாங்கள் இசுலாம்  
மொழியால் நாங்கள் தமிழர்

Therefore we of the Eastern Province appeal to those negotiating the Sri Lankan Tamil issue at Thimpu that the Eastern Province be recognised and politically accepted as one single unit forming one Traditional Tamil Homeland together with the Northern Province which in fact it has been historically prior to the invasion by the European conquerors and prior to the Sinhala-Buddhist expansionist colonisation policy of the successive Sinhala Governments.

## ROAD TO FREEDOM

*There was an announcement  
"No development programme  
No, not for the North!"*

*And when every vehicle  
Bounced along the road  
The passengers said their prayers.  
"To whom shall we go?"  
They asked in dismay.*

*And then one day  
Rather, one night,  
It happened.*

*The people got together  
"Let's repair our road".*

*There were no appointments  
No orders  
No estimates  
No funds  
No authority  
No inspection  
No time schedules  
Not even the semblance of a Government.*

*They came from nowhere,  
They got together  
On equal terms  
For a common cause.  
They built their road  
Despite of a government  
Despite the armed forces  
Who too would use it.  
The builders vanished  
But the road remains.*

— Shri Pathmanatha Ganeshan



# JAFFNA UNIVERSITY UNDER SIEGE

Editor

## SATURDAY REVIEW

Professor Hoole's letters from America on the Jaffna University appear to have stirred up a real hornet's nest. It is questionable whether we should wash our dirty linen in public, specially at this time. It is only fair by the University at Jaffna to consider the 'trying circumstances' under which it is functioning.

Conditions in this part of the world has been anything but conducive for education for the last few years. It is to the credit of the Jaffna University that it has survived and kept functioning, kept its head above the water as it were against all odds. We owe a great debt to a few dedicated staff who have carried the weight of the institution on their shoulders amidst the chaos; and to the students who have courageously persevered despite the fear, uncertainty and risk to their lives. It would be only fitting if these students are to receive on graduation in addition to their academic degree, an honours degree in survival of equal standard to any in the world.

Staff is in very short supply, the best having left for one reason or another. Some important Departments are completely defunct and the lecturers have to come from other campuses to complete a year's syllabus in a couple of weeks by lecturing for 3-4 hours at a stretch daily. Basic amenities and facilities are not available. For example, typing paper was in short supply for a long time. If Dr. Hoole could only sit back for a minute and imagine what would happen to Drexel University if there was no paper, let alone other materials.

Or, take the 3 storey Medical Faculty building which was to have been finished in 1981. The contractor and architect have been taking the university for a merry song and dance, and continue to do so, and nobody is able to do anything about it. Meanwhile the whole Faculty continues to be crowded into one floor with only one lecture room. The lecturers have to play musical chairs trying to get this one room and frequently have to wade through ankle deep water to deliver their lectures. Some Departments are going from pillar to post to find accommodation for their office and a place to put a table and chair for the Professor, not to mention the other staff.

On the question of letters of recommendation, the procedure still followed by the Dons is a legacy of the British Colonial days, where

the relevant facts are stated in a formal, cool manner without embellishments. The liberalism that swept the Western campuses in the late 60's is yet to catch up with us.

In regard to the marking system, every country has its own standards and a foreign University is expected to take this into account. It is understood that the U.K. and U.S. marking system is different. If more 1st and 2nd classes are to be given to keep up with the Jones's, it's just a matter of increasing the present marks by 10 or 20 points. In the U. S. they usually standardize the mark on a gaussian or normal curve so that a specified number will get A grade, and the average for the class as a whole will fall around C grade and so on.

We have to agree with Dr. Hoole that the whole educational system, and not just the marking system, has to be revamped. The way it stands now, the emphasis is on memorising a given set of notes and regurgitating it out at the exams. The system stifles the intelligent and creative student. If he has somehow managed to cross the 'A' level hurdle, where he was required to mug up a lot of irrelevant and boring material from morning to night, he is faced with more and worse at the University. Although lip service is paid to wider reading including text books, in practice the pressure is to memorize the lecture notes, because this, and only this, will be asked at the examination and he may even be penalised for other controversial answers. Hardly any student reads the prescribed text books, unless absolutely necessary, and rarely refers to outside sources. Some farsighted Professors require library reference work, research projects, problem-based analysis and thesis writing as part of the overall curriculum. In this connection one should mention that this attitude starts in secondary schools where libraries are kept locked up, and any student wishing to go into the undisturbed, dust laden room, is looked upon as a nuisance.

The spoon — feeding from 'O' level (or earlier) onwards, conditions our students to depend com-

pletely on notes. It is a familiar sight in classrooms to see the students immediately go for their exercise book and pen as soon as the lecturer opens his mouth, almost as an automatic reflex. Recently, as an experiment, students in a class were requested to refrain from taking notes but to listen attentively to the lecture. It was soon found they just couldn't do it, and became completely disoriented. Some started talking to their neighbours, some didn't know what to do with hands and started fidgeting, others went to sleep, so much so that the lecturer couldn't proceed!

It may not be quite correct to say that all the 'creme de creme'

## LETTERS

is coming to the Jaffna University. Excluding those already knocked off by the 'A' level (a marked discrepancy can be shown between Sri Lanka 'A' level results and other equivalent exams held elsewhere for any one student), some of our brighter youth are opting out for training in other fields including the military type and others are going abroad.

Decrying the fate of graduates who get 'only secondary school (teaching) jobs at best' needs special mention. In most other countries (i.e. U. K., U. S., India) secondary school teachers are graduates or have diplomas in education. The task of educating and moulding the future generation is a delicate and important one. There can be no higher calling in a society. Our local village master or miss of old, whatever be their economic standing, had a very high and respected standing in society.

Only of late, probably due to the large exodus of the more able teachers to greener pastures abroad, has the younger generation suffered and turned to tutorials for their education.

As a whole, we should be thankful the Jaffna University is still standing and continues to function (touch wood!) through this trying times thanks mainly to a few selfless and dedicated individuals. There is hardly any 'com-

placent' or any other elite left in their homeland, most have flown abroad. In fact, our society is running around in circles like a hen that has had its head chopped off. If anything, we urgently need our more illustrious sons to come back to shore up the Jaffna University and raise it to 'international norms' and put it on the world map, in addition to stabilising and leading our society at this critical juncture.

Jaffna

Soma

## AT BAY

Editor

## SATURDAY REVIEW

The holding of Peace talks and Thimpu Parleys is not going to take us anywhere.

Violence is one which the Tamils never knew. They had been at the receiving end always.

But when brought to bay even a lion falls at the hand of a buck. These are the rules of nature. When it comes to life or death, God gives the courage to the Buck to retaliate and retaliate with a vengeance. Do or die is then the command of the Almighty.

That is the position in Sri Lanka today. Are we going to save the lion and the deer or destroy them both? Or is it going to be the survival of the fittest - the law of the jungle.

Fitness does not depend on numerical strength but on courage and firm determination.

K. Pathmanathan

Chavakachcheri

## BETTER LIBRARY, PLEASE!

Editor

## SATURDAY REVIEW

The sad and bad thing about the Kokuvil Public library run by the Kokuvil branch of the Jaffna Development Council is that it is ill-equipped in every respect. It is not up to the required standard. It is sited in a place which gives it an all-important position. It is close to the two most important premier institutions in the whole of the North - viz. the University and the Polytechnic. But it doesn't have all the facilities meant for a library that is close to a University and a Polytechnic.

The Kokuvil Public Library is not well equipped with reference books, not well furnished, is poorly ventilated and not properly lit, even though it caters to a comparatively large reading public. It is the only one catering to the reading public of Kokuvil, Kondavil, Thavady, part of Anaikoddai, Thirunelvely, Nachimarkovilady etc. The other two closest libraries are nearly 5 to 7 miles away.

Will the authorities please take note?

S. S. R. Subramaniam

Kokuvil



# 'PENSIONERS SHOULD BE SHOT'

"Saturday Review's" roving reporter sighted a long-winding queue down Beach road last week-end. Many thoughts flashed across his mind. Could it be that the 'Army' had taken over the distribution of Arrack which is in short-supply in Jaffna, since the "Vavuniya incidents"?

Could it be the 'Fathers' Front' as a counterpoise to the "Broomstick March" and the "Mothers' Front" sponsored by the "Saturday Review" not so long ago?

Or could it be "War veterans" waiting to see the Brigadier or protesting against protracted detention without trial of alleged militants?

The queue was composed of sexagenarians and septuagenarians interspersed with ladies, girls and boys who were presumably chaperones for the veterans.

To boot it all "Saturday Review's" letter on the "Plight of The Poor Pensioner" was being circulated from hand to hand.

Yes, the long-awaited Pensions Day had arrived after a week's postponement, much to the heartbreak and heart burn of the pensioner. The conversation among the pensioners was enlight-

ening and stimulating. One could gather that there were office assistants, chief clerks, supervising officers who had held reins of office at the Jaffna Kachcheri elsewhere and even the Pensions' Branch.

One could hear how a cheque had been given dated "1984" and no apology was subsequently tendered for this "oversight" by the Kachcheri!

Another story was that the officer had prepared initial payment of two pensioners to find that the workings had been spirited away only to be brought back after a prayer to 'Nallur Kandan'.

Payment of pensions still appears to have loose ends.

It was also revealed that the payment system is to be computerised next year.

In the meantime, we also heard that some pensioners had been pronounced "dead" due to the misplacement of loose sheets. One poor pensioner had to make a pilgrimage to the Kachcheri to tell them that he was alive and kicking and produced his identity card to draw his current pension.

The restoration of full pension seems to be delayed but work was in hand. When the declaration of the civil status was handed over at the Branch, one officer quipped that these pensioners have created a lot of trouble that they should be shot.

By and large the payment of pensions went smoothly up to about 11:30 a.m. when suddenly one bank official came out to count how many heads there were yet to be paid, as there was a likelihood of some being turned away for lack of funds. There was a panic because some pensioners were already in the queue for more than two hours in the hot sun. Anyway it appeared that there were sufficient funds to pay all who were in the queue.

The problem with the Bank was that one cannot go twice to the 'Fort' to draw funds. Somehow, there appeared to be enough money to meet the "obligations" and so the pensioners breathed a sigh of relief, for otherwise it could have been 'so near and yet so far', as some of the pensioners were virtually at the barrier.

So it was "All's well that ends well."

## APPRECIATION

P. NADARAJAH

Mr. P. Nadarajah, a distinguished son of the village, Meesalai and one of the much loved old students of Drieberg College, Chavakachcheri, passed away on July 15, 1985, at the age of 60.

He had his entire secondary education at the above college (then Drieberg English School), where his abilities in studies and his high standard of proficiency in English and Tamil languages were very much appreciated by the students and teachers. As a student he took a prominent part in the activities of the senior literary association of the college.

He was recruited to the General Clerical Service in the middle part of the forties. He was one of those deeply discerning men who never wasted their time in unprofitable pursuits or discussions which were of little use to anybody. He followed the Diploma in Accountancy Course at the Ceylon Technical College and when there was a delay in recognizing it for the purpose of employment under the Government or in the private sector, he gave up his course in the final year and made a determined effort to pass the highly competitive examination - the Limited Competitive Examination for recruitment to the Sri Lanka Administrative Service, and got through it.

When he retired from the Government Service in October 1984, he was employed as an Asst. Food Controller at the Jaffna Kachcheri, where also he fully earned the love, goodwill and respect of all his brother officers as well as his subordinates. Prior to that he was the A. G. A. of the Islands where also he proved to be a much loved administrative officer who mostly settled the disputes among the people through his persuasive explanations. He was a dedicated worker and a very kind hearted gentleman.

He was one of those whose lives were very much influenced by eminent thinkers and philosophers whose books he avidly read in his leisure time. He always had a high admiration for balanced thinkers who dealt with problems in an objective manner without any prejudices.

May God give solace to his wife, children, brothers, sisters and friends, May his soul rest in peace.

T. Selvadurai

## Singapore Economy at a Standstill

The following Reuter report published in "The Times of India" recently must provide some thought for those Sri Lankans who have been enamoured by the Singapore model of economic development:

Singapore has moved too fast, too soon in its efforts to join the developed world and landed itself in trouble.

For the first time in 20 years, the island's economy has come to a standstill. Foreign investments have declined and many businesses are in a quandary over spiralling wages and other costs.

All key business sectors—including property, construction, manufacturing, ship building and ship repairing, and oil refining—have been badly affected. Many companies, including a few multinationals have started laying off staff.

The Prime Minister, Mr. Lee

Kuan Yew's elder son, Brigadier-General Lee Hsien Loong, has bluntly told the 2.5 million Singaporeans that the coming years will be grim. Painful adjustments are needed to nurse the ailing economy, he said.

The younger Lee, who is Minister of State for Trade and Industry and potential candidate to succeed his father, heads a newly-created special committee to review and chart an economic programme for the rest of the decade.

Mr. Lee said Singapore recorded zero economic growth in the second quarter and its five to seven per cent growth target for the whole year must be revised.

The message came as a shock to many Singaporeans, accustomed over the years to hearing their leaders reel off statistics to show the impressive advances the island was making.

## Appreciation

K. VYTHILINGAM

To refuse the crown calls for undaunted courage rarely evinced in lesser mortals. Even Caesar succumbed in due course they say.

Teachers in Jaffna especially of the older generation were a tribe apart. They were the real leaders of Jaffna. Their presence is felt only in their class rooms. Otherwise they were self-effacing even to the extent of being relegated as nonentities. One such noble individual who departed recently is Mr. K. Vythilingam, Vice-Principal Emeritus, Vaitheeswara College, Jaffna. He could have and he was offered but he preferred not to don the Principal's cloak. Not that he was not fit enough but he preferred to be a teacher, a noble professional, rather than a Manager of a school or as some teachers put it a glorified pen-pusher.

His managerial capacity was well manifested in his traditional cottage industry kept alive and handed over for generations. He preferred to

be a teacher till the end, learning and teaching and continuing to learn.

Mr. Vythilingam has faced life like a man, not like the popular anti-hero who arrogates everything to himself. To get a clean bill from his closest relations is the real test of man's greatness and he got it.

K. Kalvalaiseyon

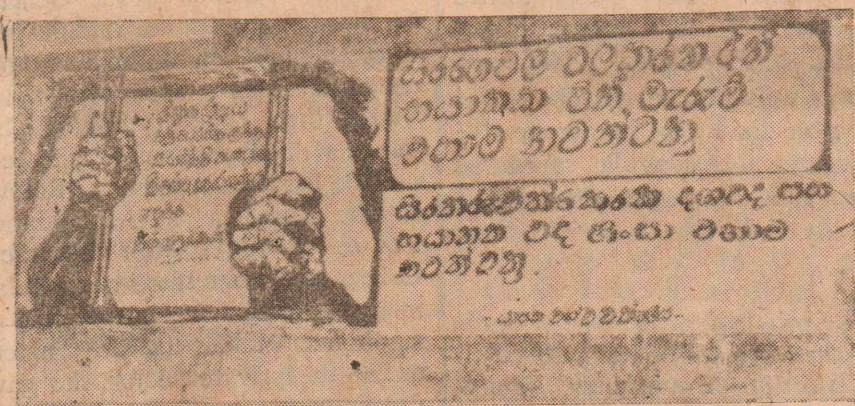


# Saturday Review

## SRI LANKA

Welikade Death Fast — 24th day

## Undergrads' Sympathy Fast



Fasters say it in Tamil and Sinhala

Undergraduates of the Jaffna University began a sympathy fast on Tuesday, 27th August, to express their solidarity with the Tamil political detenus in Welikade Prison who began a death fast on 8th August demanding their release or trial. (See SR of 24th August).

The undergraduates will fast in relays till the demands of the Tamil political detenus are met. On Tuesday, 20 undergraduates, including four girls, began the fast inside the University premises. On Friday, a second batch of undergraduates took over. Members of the public too have joined in the fast. Among them is the mother of Suresh, one of the detenus on a death fast at Welikade.

The undergraduates have sent the following telegram to President Jayewardene: Jaffna University students began sympathy fast 27th August in support Tamil political detenus in custody over 18 months who began

death fast on 8th August demanding release or trial. Undergraduates will fast in batches for three days. Relay fast will continue until detenus' demands met. Sympathy fast campaign extended to villages.

SATURDAY REVIEW learns cables have been sent to Indian Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi and others urging them to use their good offices to persuade the Sri Lankan Government to grant the just demands of the Tamil political detenus.

The Jaffna Branch of the Movement for Inter-Racial Justice and Equality (MIRJE) has sent the following telegram to President Jayewardene: "MIRJE Jaffna appeals to Your Excellency to grant just demands of Tamil political detenus on death fast in Welikade. Detenus in custody over 18 months without trial contrary provisions Terrorism Act. Urge immediate intervention to prevent deaths."

## U J T A Statement

Excerpts from the press statement of the University of Jaffna Teachers' Association on the death fast at Welikade:

The Government has chosen to ignore the fast launched on Gandhian lines at Welikade Jail by Tamil youths who have been detained for over 18 months, without being indicted. This goes against all the values of the civilised world. These youths have been compelled to launch a fast unto

death as a last resort, since they are being kept in detention contrary to even the provisions of the Prevention of Terrorism Act under which they were taken into custody.

Though fundamental human rights have been guaranteed under the constitution, in practice they are being violated, as this fast and the recent killings and military excesses in Vavuniya, Trincomalee and Batticaloa prove.

## An Ailing Hospital

BY A STAFF WRITER

That water supplies are a problem at the many refugee camps that now dot the Northern, Eastern and North Central Provinces is not a surprise.

Not only are the number of people rendered homeless fairly large but the camps are make-shift affairs mostly school, temple and church premises.

But how do you account for the fact that water is a problem at the Jaffna General Hospital, too?

For the last several months, the premier hospital in the Northern Province, has been functioning without an adequate supply of water.

The problem has nothing to do with the unsettled conditions in the North.

The old water pumps at the hospital pack up so frequently and repairs take a long time causing grave problems of sanitation.

The solution is to instal a new set of pumps but those in the Health Department in Colombo who hold the purse strings don't seem to care.

Water is not the only problem at the Jaffna Hospital, which is also a teaching hospital.

According to the inventory there are three X-Ray machines at the institution. The ages of the machines should be a pointer to their usefulness—one is 20 years old, the second is 15 years old and the third is three years old!

Even the "youngest" machine is not fully functional.

The staff must be complimented on managing with these machines for so long.

Once the X-Rays are taken, they are hung out to dry inside a room because there is no dryer. This results in delays in making diagnoses.

Most of the other electrical equipment also give constant trouble. Poor maintenance by the Ceylon Electricity Board is one major cause. The gravest problem, however, is the shortage of medical officers. After the July 1983 Holocaust, the Jaffna Hospital was over-staffed as many doctors from the South migrated to the North. Now most of them have gone abroad, leaving the institution short staffed.

The specialities of Orthopaedics, Dermatology, Neuro-surgery, E.N.T., and Eye Surgery are the most affected.

The health Ministry should at least make acting appointments or employ retired specialists because patients in the North have nowhere else to go for treatment in these specialities.

There is also an acute shortage of nursing staff. The cadre is 382

nurses, but at present there are only 242.

For long, the hospital was short not only of vital drugs but also of such basic items as cotton wool and bandages. This was mainly due to the frequent disruption of transport. After the cease-fire came into operation, the situation eased considerably, with lorries bringing in urgently needed supplies.

The main kitchen at the hospital needs urgent overhauling. Some of the steam-cooking utensils are broken and without lids. All of them are decades old.

The food for patients is taken out without being covered.

The irony is that enough funds are available to purchase most of the items needed for the kitchen but bureaucratic lethargy and red tape are standing in the way.

The hitch is that the stewardess in charge of the kitchen is serving on a casual basis even after two years of her appointment. And the regulations forbid the Medical Superintendent from handing over any equipment to a temporary appointee. The simple remedy is to confirm the appointment—but this has not been done after repeated requests.

Most of the hospital buildings are old and some of the roofs are leaking. Most affected are Ward Nos. 19, 20, 22 and 23. Complaints to the Buildings Department have had little effect.

The stock answer is: wait for the new five-storeyed building to come up!

The foundation for this building was laid on 11th December 1982 but construction was deliberately delayed by the Government as part of its policy to penalise the people of the North for the depredations wrought by a certain section.

Now the Government has relented and given the green light to the project, which is estimated to cost Rs. 29 million. Construction work is expected to begin next month.

All the deficiencies in the Jaffna Hospital have been brought to the notice of the Hospital Committee by the Medical Superintendent, Dr. C. S. Nachinarkiniar. The Committee in turn has referred the complaints to the relevant authorities.

But the wheels of officialdom grind so slowly, especially in relation to Jaffna which for many people in the South is a foreign country!

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