

New Saturday Review

SRI LANKA

In Sri Lanka, we have many men of great talent but whose talent is recognised, if at all, only after death. But we do not subscribe to this bad old tradition. We believe even giving the devil his due while he is still active.

In this issue we feature two persons who, in their own way, have contributed handsomely to enhance the cultural life of Sri Lanka.

One is George Keyt, artist and poet. (see page 3) The other is H. A. I. Goonetilleke, librarian, bibliographer bibliophile, writer and critic. (see page 6).

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SNAP ELECTION? WHAT FOR?

After over a decade there is some sense of ease and peace in Sri Lanka, with the defusing of the Sinhalese insurgency in the South and the Tamil insurgency in the North, largely due to the efforts of President Ranasinghe Premadasa's United National Party Government.

But the causes gave which rise to the twin menaces and served to sustain them for so long, are still there.

Premadasa has recognised this fact by telling his party people (as reported in "The Sunday Times" of 22nd April) "If we don't act fast to give a contented life to the ordinary masses the ugly head of the subversives may come up once more within a very short time, of six months or so".

His solution: a snap general election in the hope of getting a two-thirds majority in Parliament which will give him total power.

This will enable him to make certain constitutional amendments, including the repeal of the Sixth Amendment, thereby making it acceptable for the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam to enter Parliament.

The Sixth Amendment requires Members of Parliament and Government officials to take an oath pledging loyalty to a unitary Sri Lanka, that is, no separation, no Eelam.

It forced the moderate Tamil United Liberation Front out of Parliament, creating a vacuum which the LTTE and militant groups

were soon to fill, in extra-parliamentary fashion, much to the detriment of the country as a whole.

Premadasa's fond hope is that if a fresh election is held he could come to an accommodation with the Tamil community, particularly sections of it led by the LTTE.

All sections of the Tamil community have to be consulted if there is going to be a lasting peace.

Who the hell is the LTTE to tell the Sri Lanka Government to keep its security forces confined to barracks (like during the Indian Peace-keeping Force presence) and that the policing powers in the North-East be granted exclusively to it?

We have seen the LTTE in action in the North at

very close quarters. Very good in some instances; very shameful in other instances.

Our considered view is that the LTTE does not have that measure of co-operation and support, as claimed by it, to carry on a fair administration.

If a free and fair election is held in the North East the LTTE may suffer the same fate as the Sandanistas in Nicaragua.

These are our own perceptions. Maybe we are wrong. But reading history, we find the same blunders made over and over again by leaders who think no end of themselves.

In all this scenario is a ray of hope. The Eelam Revolutionary Organisation of Students, now going under the name of the Eelam Democratic Front, has been

playing a democratising influence. Its leader V. Balakumaran is reported to have met the LTTE leadership, after a long time. This can be a sign of hope for the future.

But we wish to quote (from the Time Magazine of 9th April) that he has not given up the demand for an independent Eelam. Asked what are you talking to Premadasa for? How can you enter the democratic mainstream if you still cling to your separatist cause? His answer: "We are entering the political mainstream. Our demand for self-determination will not be an impediment for us to enter the political process".

We wonder ruefully whether Premadasa is being taken for a ride on the Eelam path?

We will leave it at that and quote an Indian journalist on her perception of the Sri Lanka situation-

Puliksey Writes

Who is the official spokesperson of the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam?

This is the intriguing question which now looms large over the people in the North and East. But one shouldn't rush to answer or one would think that the role of Dr. Anton Stanislaus Balasingham has been changed.

How come Mr. Ranjan Wijeratne, Deputy Minister of Defence could voice and perfectly articulate the interests of the Tigers in a way which even Dr. Balasingham couldn't imagine.

Recently at a press briefing, Mr. Wijeratne said that

the Tigers needed money; they had left the jungles and was in need of financial assistance, in the form of taxes! (Some prefer to call them "voluntary donations"). Well and good.

What do the people think? I met a wealthy farmer the other day. He has over fifty acres of cultivable land, off Mankulam. He has to pay a sum of one thousand rupees for each acre cultivated. "Is that too much for you?" I asked. "Not really, you see, the profit that I could make out of the fifty acres would be much more." However, this has not been the case with all other forms of taxation by the LTTE.

For instance, take petrol. One rupee up on a litre; diesel-fifty cents up on a litre. A sudden price increase on all items that need to be transported over a long distance. Beside, the shop owners and mudalalis are making hay, raising the prices of all items "imported from Sri Lanka after paying a creation amount as tax to the LTTE.

The current and popular anecdote has it that the *Puli* got itself transformed into *Varippuli*! (*Vari* in Tamil means tax as well stripes. The Tiger uniforms have also been changed into striped (*Vari*) ones.)

The sensational story in recent weeks has been Prabhakaran's dramatic come-

back. After two years underground The Tiger Leader finally surfaced in Jaffna. Everything was intact: dark busy moustache waistband with pistol, the smile playing on his lips and the small, piercing ruthless eyes.

He met the press people captivated them with his charisma and charm that no pressman and pointed questions to ask. He sounded resolute and confidence.

He pointed out that no hostile groups could come and operate in the Tamil provinces.

"We made a mistake", he said (in 1986). "We pardoned a lot of EPRLF members, to find that they

joined the IPKF, to go on rampage. This time we will not make that mistake."

Another point Prabhakaran made — a vital one for the survival of the LTTE — the question of arms.

Instead of asking them to surrender their arms the Government should remove the causes which made the LTTE take up arms, he said.

A couple of days before the New Year, the Tiger leader met artistes and literary people in Jaffna. His knowledge of literature and the arts surprised the invitees.

The supreme quoted famous authors and impressed the audience of writers.

(Cont. Page 2)

5,000 will be behind BARS for life — Ranjan. (Read all about it in "the Island" of 27th April)

Wonderful thinking and talking!

Vidya Silpa Goes Worldwide

Science lessons without bunsen burners and test tubes would strike most people as impossible, but that is the sad reality of many schools in rural Sri Lanka. The teachers are there but not the labs.

Only in the urban areas do most children have proper laboratory facilities. The usual price tag for setting up a laboratory with basic equipment, most of it imported, is one million rupees.

The state simply does not have that sort of money to spend for all the schools in this island nation of 17 million population.

Now, thanks to a venture by a Sri Lankan businessman, it no longer needs to. He has been able to produce a laboratory kit costing a mere 80,000 rupees per school—less than ten per cent

of the cost of the imported design.

So Vidya Silpa (Science Craft), the invention of 52-year-old Premasiri Sumanasekera, is opening the doors to a proper science education for children in the rural areas. So far 300 schools have been equipped with the lab kits. Four thousand more schools need the equipment.

Sumanasekera has a science degree from the University of Sri Lanka and comes from a rural background himself. In his lab kits, he has provided all the essentials from bunsen burners and test tubes to more sophisticated equipment.

A water tank, glass-fibre sink, pipeline and tap, gas outlet for two bunsen burners (which use liquid portable gas), and heating

devices are included. There is also a mini-physics kit.

President Ranasinghe Premadasa was so impressed with the work done that he has given the state's blessings to Vidya Silpa.

Sumanasekera uses up to 70 per cent local raw materials to produce the components of the lab kits. The rest mostly electronic—are imported particularly from the United States, Britain, France, China, India, Singapore and Hong Kong.

He has just returned from a business tour of China, Singapore and Hong Kong, signing contracts worth about 10 million rupees. He found China to be the cheapest source of supply.

His factory, at Meetotamulla, a suburb of the capital Colombo, is producing at the rate of about 100 kits a year, but

has a potential production capacity of about 500 kits annually.

Some 150 young men work for Sumanasekera, and 'spin-off' employment benefit another 100 people.

The Vidya Silpa venture started with Sumanasekera's own meagre resources. Thence, impressed, the state's Development Finance Corporation stepped in with financial help.

The mild mannered and soft-spoken Sumanasekera began life as a school-teacher like his father and mother. It was as a teacher that he realised the difficulties of teaching science without labs.

He is keen to ensure that new generations of school children in Sri Lanka gain the harvest of knowledge from Vidya Silpa, and he is already looking to the time when his brain-child goes worldwide.

PULIKSLY WRITES...

(from page 1)

Prabhakaran appealed to writers that their literature should have a simple and direct approach, where the masses were concerned. They should write for the 'ordinary people'.

Several thousand attended a concert by Thenisai Chellapah, a singer 'imported' from Tamil Nadu by the LTTE, who sang Tamil consciousness-raising numbers.

After an entertainment-starved decade, the people of Jaffna had the opportunity of thronging in their thousands at *Muthaveli* where Mahendrarajah, alias Mahattaya, presented the singer with a gold medal bearing the tiger emblem.

The irony is that an Indian singer had to come all the way from Madras to sing songs of 'uprising' for the benefit of Eelam Tamils.

Interestingly, the story doing the rounds in Colombo say that the famous pop group, "Brotherhood of Man" which performed in Colombo, as scheduled to perform also in Vavuniya and Jaffna, To inspire the Tamil community about brotherhood!

With the 'normalcy syndrome' engulfing the Peninsula, people seem to be eager to visit temples and the beaches at Keerimalai, Casurina and holiday resorts.

The last bus from Jaffna town to KKS, point Pedro Palaly and Kayts, Leaves at 10.30 p.m. But how normal is 'normalcy'?

But rumours and stories abound: several people, some say, several hundreds have disappeared in the past two months.

In every village you hear that someone is 'missing', 'arrested' or 'taken into custody' by the LTTE. People disappear.

The LTTE has, officially a list of 1163 persons under detention.

The Peninsula Papers enthusiastically report that no bullet-riddled bodies are now found on the roads.

But one public servant put it: "The EPRLF at least dumped the bodies on the roads. Under the LTTE one never knows where the bodies go." May be they go to heaven.

May Day Greetings

This year's May Day marks the centenary of the international agitation launched by American workers for the eight hour day on 1st May 1890. Thereafter, May Day became the day of demonstrations and rallies by workers throughout the world.

In the latter half of the nineteenth century, workers began to recognise the need for international co-operation and after preliminary meetings the Second International was formed in 1889. At its first congress the International committed itself to a programme for worldwide legislation and support for the eight-hour day movement.

In the U. S. Labour Day is held in September and is a legal holiday.

In Sri Lanka the declaration of May Day as a public holiday figured in the demands of trade unions for many years. But the UNP, then also in power, pooh-pooed the idea as an "alien custom" but after the landslide electoral victory of the MEP in 1956, Mr. S. W. R. D. Bandaranaike's government declared 1st May as a public holiday.

May Day rallies and demonstrations will be held island-wide this time on 1st May.

The government and the opposition parties are finalising plans, as we go to press.

President Premadasa will address the UNP rally at Galle Face Green in Colombo, while the SLFP meeting at Cambell Park, Borella, will be chaired by the Leader of the Opposition, Mrs. Sirima Bandaranaike.

The United Socialist Alliance, the Sri Lanka Mahajana Party and the Mahajana Eksath Peremuna will hold their own rallies.

Twelve trade unions will also hold a joint rally at Newnham Park, Colombo, and the main themes they will focus on: defence of democratic and human rights as well as the living standards of the working people.

Lanka maritime border

The following report by the Press Trust of India appeared in "The Times of India" of 15th April.

CAN there be a well-demarcated maritime boundary between India and Sri Lanka as suggested by the Tamil Nadu chief minister, Mr. M. Karunanidhi, in the state assembly recently to guide Indian fishermen and save them from attacks from Sri Lankan navy and LTTE?

According to some senior officers of the country's three official agencies guarding the coast—the Navy, the Coast Guard and the Customs—here a clear demarcation of the boundary was impossible.

There was just not enough distance between the Tamil Nadu coast and Sri Lanka to strictly go by any parameters agreed upon in the law of the sea conference of the United Nations. What existed at present between the two countries was an imaginary line dividing the waters in equal measures, they said.

As per the understanding reached in the United Nations law of the sea conference

each country can claim exclusive economic zone extending to 200 nautical miles.

Besides, Indian laws declared that 12 nautical miles of water in the entire coast belonged to the state government of the region and the customs and coastguard were vested with powers to apprehend any foreign fishermen fishing within 24 nautical miles from Indian shores.

Officers said the nearest point in Sri Lanka from Tamil Nadu's Adam's Bridge is just 20 nautical miles. The nearest Indian coast from Jaffna in Sri Lanka's north-east is 40 nautical miles and the stretch of sea from Palk Straits to the Gulf of Mannar separating India and Sri Lanka 270 nautical miles.

"There is just no way we can demarcate the boundary for the fishermen's benefit" they said,

Sri Lanka's painter par excellence



George Keyt is a rare phenomenon in Sri Lanka's art world. Indisputably the island's leading modern painter, he is also a poet of renown.

His 89th birthday fell on 17th April but he still maintains the vigour and vivaciousness of someone who is half his age.

He has more than 12,000 paintings, line-drawings and sketches to his credit plus volumes of poetry.

Born of Sri Lankan parents of Indo-Dutch extraction, Keyt spent most of his youth in Kandy, the capital city in the central highlands.

Kandy was the seat of the last Sinhalese kings before the island went under the British in 1815.

There are many Buddhist shrines in the city, the most famous of which is the Temple of the Buddha's Tooth Relic.

The distinctive Buddhist ambience of this picturesque city had a profound influence on Keyt's life, paintings and poetry.

He championed the cause of Buddhism, then in decline, in his many contributions to the national Press, even as he kept up his painting career, which began at the age of 26.

Sex has been a profound theme in his paintings and poetry, as in his own life. He has had three wives, the last of whom, Kusum, is his constant companion.

Some of his best paintings are at the Gotami Buddhist Temple in the heart of Colombo. Voluptuous in the extreme, with rounded bottoms of women stealing the show, no Sri Lankan painter had dared execute on such an artistic scale in a sacred place.

But he had justification, basing his work on the legendary life stories of the Buddha's past incarnations, accepted as fact by Buddhists.

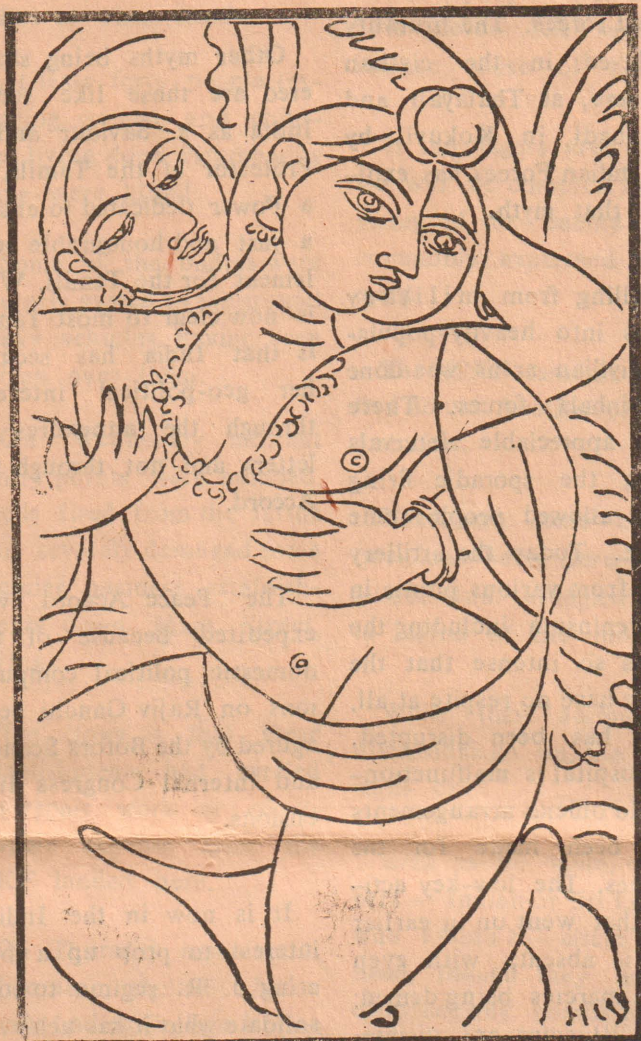
The tradition of temple painting in this Buddhist country is centuries old but the techniques and concepts that Keyt brought to Gotami were uniquely his own and strikingly modern, though strongly influenced by the classic frescoes of Sigiriya and Dambulla in the island's interior.

Keyt's greatness is that, as his biographer H. A. I. Goonetilleke recalls in the recently published book, "George Keyt - A Life in Art", "he turned his back on the stifling values of the Westernised milieu of the class into which he was born, and (began) to explore with fresh insight and a keener understanding and indeed delight, the comforting nuances and gentle folkways of life in rural Sinhalese society."

At 29 Keyt caught the attention of the Chilean poet and Noble Laureate Pablo Neruda, who was then his country's consul in Colombo. In an perceptive review, Neruda commented:

"Keyt, I think, is the living nucleus of a great painter. In all his work there is the moderation of maturity, the beautiful stability of achievement, qualities most precious in so young an artist."

"Magically though he places his colours, and carefully though he distributes his plastic volumes, Keyt's pictures nevertheless produce a dramatic effect, particularly in his paintings of Sinhalese people. These figures take on a strange expressive grandeur and radiate an aura of intensely profound feeling."



Drawing by Keyt

The Indian novelist, Mulk Raj Anand said of him:

"There is no question when one is face to face with the work of George Keyt there is a strange and uncompromising attempt to create a heroic art commensurate with the enormous potentialities of emergent Asia."

"A number of influences are absorbed to achieve this integral visions: the yellows preferred by this artist, may have come from frescoes in Ceylon, the reds trace themselves to Indian wall paintings; the earth colours are almost ground out of the stones used in folk painting."

Ian Goonetilleke says, Keyt's fame as a painter has obscured his significance as a poet. The three volumes of poems, entitled *Poems*, *The Darkness Disrobed*, and *Image in Absence*, have been published.

"The main symbolism in this body of free verse seems to express a rich sensual experience born of 'darkness' as opposed to 'light', a search for fulfilment, which anticipates in its evocative word pictures the vivid and penetrating imagery of his later pictures."

Now the grand old man works in a cow-shed converted into a studio at Thumbovila, a quiet suburb, 20 kilometres from Colombo.

He goes on painting and the nouveau riche descend upon his rural retreat to plead for a Keyt from the master to grace their parlour.

A George Keyt Foundation has been set up by his friends and admirers for the purpose of honouring the artist in his lifetime and perpetuating his name in the future. A fitting tribute to a man who has done so much for Sri Lankan arts.

A Big Thank You

Our thanks to the 'Sunday Island' of 8th April and the 'Forward' of 12th April for taking notice of the second resurrection of the 'Saturday Review' from March 1990.

The first resurrection took place on 1st February 1988 after the original Jaffna-based publication, started on 30th January 1982, had to cease publication with the intensification of the operations in the North by the so-called Indian Peace Keeping Force.

The last issue from Jaffna came out on 19th October 1987.

The last story of that issue under the heading "Old Scenarios" is reproduced on page 5.

To keep the name of the paper alive, and the causes which it exported—the publication was resumed from Colombo. But it was a short-lived operation. Eight issues

were brought out from February 1988, the first two in photo-copied form and the other by off-set printing. But soon we ran out of funds and suspended publication in March 1989. The headline in the last issue said "I. P. K. F. — Go... Go... Go... Please go home."

Also reproduced on page 4 is an article by D. B. S. Jayaraj published in the last issue from Jaffna.

Many Myths Destroyed

This is a reproduction of an article published in the 17th October 1987 issue of the "Saturday Review" — at the height of the I P K F operations in Jaffna.

by D. B. S. JEYARAJ

Let us begin with a grandmother's tale. There lived a wicked man, a cruel tyrant. The people hated and cursed him.

Lying on his death-bed, he repented and called his son, "I have behaved badly, caused much hardship to the people and incurred their hatred. Promise me that through your actions, you will make amends thereby earning me a good name".

The son promised. After the father's death, the son started behaving atrociously. This cruelty and tyranny soon, exceeded the father's sins paled into insignificance when compared to the son's. The people of the village began to mutter "what a good man the father was, and what a bad man the son is". So the dutiful son fulfilled his promise and the father's name was cleared.

Ever since the Indian Peace Keeping Force shattered the short-lived Peace in Jaffna, many myths are being destroyed. Starting with the media, there was a myth that only the state-owned and controlled media in the South distorted and blacked out news about the North. Now we find the Indian media's "See, hear and speak no evil" campaign about the IPKF role here equally and perhaps more reprehensible.

The Sri Lanka Government silenced the independent media through methods like censorship, or a publication ban under the Emergency etc. The Indians have not only arrested journalists and employees of the "Eelamurasu" and "Murasoli" but have also destroyed machinery thereby rendering them ineffective.

Earlier we thought that civilian killing was a unique feature of the Sri Lankan Armed forces. The brutality displayed in the civilian massacre, at Thalayali and Pirambadi in Kokuvil by the Indian Forces has exploded that myth.

Shelling from military camps into heavily-populated civilian areas was done by Sinhala forces. There were appreciable intervals during the sporadic firing which allowed people some respite. Today the artillery firing from various points in the Peninsula including the Fort is so intense that the people have no respite at all. Power has been disrupted. The hospital is malfunctioning. No official arrangements have been made for the refugees. The low-key activity that went on in earlier days is absent, with even small mercies being denied; more illusions are disintegrating.

Aerial bombardment and strafing we thought was the prerogative of the Sri Lankan Forces. Today we find it continuing. A hair-splitting argument could be made that it is the Sri Lankan forces who are operating the aircraft and artillery and therefore the Indian forces are not culpable. The moral and legal obligations placed on the IPKF to ensure the protection of the Tamils is a sacred trust tantamount to a Social Contract.

Whatever the antipathy New Delhi may have towards the Tigers, India's primary responsibility of safeguarding civilian life, limb and property cannot be discarded lightly. Also in the popular Tamil perception all violence being unleashed right now is attributed to the Indian and not the Sri Lankan forces.

The current situation is best described by the Tamil Proverb "Veliye payirai meyuthu" (The fence is eating the crops) and the emotions of the people is illustrated by the saying "Ventha Punnile vel" (Piercing the unhealed wound). The Tamil feeling of betrayal by India is very high.

Other myths being shattered are those like seeing India as a Saviour and a Protector of the Tamils, as a Power dedicated to ensure a just and honourable settlement for the Tamils. What is now clear to most Tamils is that India has secured her geo-political interests through the annexures of letters and not through the Accord.

The Peace Accord was expedited because of the domestic political compulsions on Rajiv Gandhi beleaguered by the Bofors Scandal and internal Congress dissensions.

It is now in the Indian interest to prop up a tottering J. R. regime to consolidate what it has achieved in terms of Indian interests. Thus the Tamils will be short-changed once again with an imposed settlement that will fall far short of their legitimate aspirations. The LTTE which would be the most effective deterrent to this type of settlement and has manifested in the past virulent nationalism that has rocked the corridors of power in Delhi has to be destroyed.

This would appease racist elements in the South and strengthen J. R.'s hand. So the witch hunt for the Tigers is on.

The irony is that India which admonished Colombo time and again on the folly of waging war against a guerilla movement fighting for a national goal with a strong element of popular support is now committing the same error.

The political naivete of Rajiv Gandhi in saying that only "2000 Tigers are against the Accord" and foolishly boast that the North and East have been joined together have been undermined by current events like the interim provisions in the draft Provincial Councils Act and the on-going hostilities in Jaffna.

The longer India prolongs this conflict situation in a bid to decimate the Tigers, the greater the sufferings of the people. People will be more alienated from India and the whole exercise will be counter-productive like winning a battle and losing a war.

The analogy between the Sri Lankan forces and Indian forces does not mean the former is better than the later. If one is tweedledum, the other is tweedledee.

The crucial difference is that the average Tamil could understand the motivation and repression of the Sri Lankan forces who were, from their point of view, fighting to preserve the territorial integrity of their country. That perception was understood but not done or

accepted. But in the case of the Indian forces, it is a case of external power considered as a benign Protector and Saviour, a power which nourished and nurtured the Tamil struggle, a power which came to salvage the Tamils after the ravages of Vadamarachchi. When a Peace Keeping Force transforms itself into an army of aggression and indulges in savagery, then the psychological impact cannot but be tremendous.

The shattering of myths was referred to earlier.

There is one myth that will never be shattered. It is the myth created in Colombo, now shared by New Delhi, that the Tamil people could be forced into accepting any settlement through force of arms.

The dogged determination displayed by the Tamils in the past for achieving equality, the tenacity and consistency of a 31 year old struggle, both non-violent and violent, bear testimony to this.

This is not idle rhetoric but a reality proved by the "blood, sweat, toil and tears" of our people. The sooner the reality is accepted, the greater are the chances of a lasting, honourable place and end to the anguish and suffering.

MUCKING IT UP

The rich nations, with their environmentalists flexing their muscle, are under increasing pressure to get rid of harmful wastes.

Poor nations, on the other hand, are so starved of foreign exchange that they will accept these dangerous wastes — for a fee!

According to Greenpeace, 3.7 million tonnes of wastes of all kinds were shipped from industrial to developing countries between 1986 and 1988, while attempts to dispose of another 17.5 million tonnes were foiled.

It was the shuttling of a shipment of incinerator ash from Philadelphia from port to port across the world that provoked the environmental lobby to introduce the Basel convention on the movement of hazardous wastes across national boundaries.

This UN-sponsored treaty seeks to prevent industrial countries from disposing of toxic wastes in the Third World.

OLD SCENARIOS

The North enjoyed a respite - alas, it turned out to be temporary - from shelling bombing and strafing for a little over two months after the signing of the Indo-Lanka Peace Accord on 29th July.

On Friday (9th October) Indian Defence Minister Pant met President Jayewardene in Colombo and assured him India would keep its part of the bargain and help to stamp out militant violence in the North and East. President Jayawardene announced the LTTE was banned and the amnesty offered to its members revoked.

On Saturday the Indian Peace Keeping Force (IPKF) launched Operation Flushout.

As a prelude, the IPKF raided the office of two Tamil dailies - Eelamurasu and Murasoli - in the early hours of Saturday, a little before the curfew ended, arrested the employees and took them away. A few minutes later there were big blasts which damaged the equipment and offices of the two dailies. Around the same time the IPKF seized TV equipment belonging to the Tigers.

On Saturday, around noon the IPKF moved out of the Jaffna Fort and up to 2nd Cross St. Junction.

Then began the direct confrontation between the IPKF and the Tigers.

The exchange of gunfire was followed by intense shelling - the likes of which Jaffna has never heard before - from the Jaffna Fort. This continued throughout the night.

This was a replay of an old scenario familiar to Jaffna over the last few years.

A curfew was clamped down from 2 p.m. on Saturday till 6 a.m. on Tuesday (13th October).

The intense shelling continued on Sunday peaking around 5 p.m. when several shells - including ear-drum shattering artillery shells - fell near and around Kailasapillayar Kovil. One shell fell on a passenger van parked opposite the Kovil, killing a man on the spot. A private medical clinic near the Kovil was damaged. The Kovil itself too was damaged. One shell fell near the office and printing establishment of the Tamil daily 'Uthayan'.

On Monday morning (12th October) around about 1.15 a.m. helicopters which carried out a preliminary strafing dropped paratroops in a crematorium near the Medical Faculty of the Jaffna University.

They were encircled and a fierce battle broke out. Twenty nine Indian commandos were killed as they tried to enter the Medical Faculty Building.

Some commandos escaped and holed up in Pirambaddy Lane, Kokuvil, near The Jaffna Technical College.

On Monday evening, around about 5 p.m. Marchetti bombers circled the sky, but did not drop any bombs.

On Tuesday morning a helicopter strafed several areas in the Jaffna Town at random; one person was killed at Mulhirsanthi Junction.

A while later, marchetti bombers screamed overhead dropping at least 20 bombs.

The result?

The Physics, Chemistry and Mathematics Blocks of the University of Jaffna were badly damaged.

The micro-computer complex housed in the Maths Block of the Jaffna University was given a severe shaking-up.

The Library, especially the South Asia Section, which has valuable books on India, was turned up-

side down with, all the books hurled on the floor.

A rescue operation was mounted to rescue the Indian para-troopers.

Armoured vehicles came along rail tracks and the para troopers were rescued.

But at what cost?

At least forty people (including women and children) living down Pirambaddy Lane were killed.

Some of the bodies were literally pasted to the ground heavy vehicles having been driven over them.

On Wednesday militant sentry points were bombed. Shells fired from the Jaffna Fort severely damaged some premier business establishments down Main Street, Jaffna.

The irony is that these establishments had carried out repair work at considerable expense after the IPKF landed here.

On Thursday morning, a helicopter shelled Jaffna Hindu Ladies College killing a lady who had taken shelter there.

Jaffna Hindu Ladies College was one of the officially named places of refuge.

At 6 p.m. on Thursday heli strafing killed 4 members of a family who had come from Pallikudah (near Mandaitivu, Jaffna) to seek medical treatment. They were killed at sea near Passaiyoor, Jaffna. Five others were injured.

Their names: Trons (15), Henricus Maryin (17), Mrs. Benedict Theresammah (40). Early on Friday morning there was a tremendous explosion: it seemed as if the refugees at Nallur Kandaswamy Temple had been bombed.

Fortunately, no such thing happened.

Apparently, shells had been fired: they had hit a Vairavar Kovil in Thinnevely.

As we go to press today (17th October 1987) bombers fly menacingly overhead.

To sum up:

Jaffna has so far never experienced such continuous intense shelling.

The people of Jaffna have never felt such an intense sense of betrayal.

If the Tigers aren't here we will be completely at the mercy of the enemy is a commonly expressed sentiment.

The IPKF came do to all this to us? Another common question.

These are some of the questions being fiercely discussed and wrangled over in Jaffna at the moment.

While these acrimonious discussions go on, the battle rages on.

Even as we write, bombers - Indian or Sri Lankan who knows? - circle overhead, though they haven't dropped any bombs so far.

The Tigers claim that they have knocked out 19 vehicles and have commandeered 5 IPKF vehicles.

They also claim that they have twenty (20) Indian Peace Keeping Force personnel (IPKF) in their custody.

One of them is reportedly from Tamil Nadu.

Today (Friday 16th October) the seventh day of the war, the people of Jaffna are more dazed than ever before. They don't know whether they are coming or going.

Or in which crematorium or graveyard they'll end up anonymously.

As we go to press, the SATURDAY REVIEW learns that over 130 weapons (assorted) and nearly 35,000 rounds of ammunition have been seized.

The militant casualties are not known: about 30-50 of them may have been killed, with about the same number injured.

The official figure of IPKF casualties as at Friday morning, are 59 dead and 117 injured.

According to information available to the SATURDAY REVIEW, more than 100 civilians have been killed in Operation Flush-Out and at least 150 civilians injured.

At this point of time, for understandable reasons we are not in a position to give exact facts and figures.

We have to publish them in the forthcoming issues of S. R., provided we can do so.



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Gamini Navaratne

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H. A. I. Goonetilleke

Of Ian Goonetilleke, Mr. Christopher Van Hollen, American Ambassador Sri Lanka in the early 1970s, has written :

"I first met Ian Goonetilleke in late 1972 when, shortly after my arrival in Sri Lanka, I called on him at his office on the Peradeniya Campus..... (He was then Librarian of the University), "I found Mr. Goonetilleke a congenial and high-spirited man, an admirer of fine books, as every good librarian should be, and a person of wide-ranging artistic and literary tastes....."

"...three years later when our Embassy was making plans to commemorate the American Bicentennial in Sri Lanka, I wrote Mr. Goonetilleke to ask whether we might draw on his knowledge of American visitors as part of our 200th anniversary celebrations."

The result: a book on American visitors to the Island during the 19th and 20th centuries: *Images of Sri*

Lanka through American Eyes, published in 1976. In addition to his commentaries ("deftly sketched on each writer") Mr. Goonetilleke wrote the introductory essay, "a vividly written historical overview and assessment of the evolving American associations with Ceylon".

Goonetilleke, with his wife spent a year in the US in 1974, (according to Goonetilleke "so pleasantly and rewardingly a sabbatical year 1974, through which she and I were enabled to sample the very special attributes of New York, and to undertake a Greyhound peregrination of 6,000 miles through 25 states of the American Union, in which the journey and not the arrival mattered."

His greatest work is *A Bibliography of Ceylon (Sri Lanka)* five volumes of which have been published between

1970 and 1983. Further volumes are in preparation.

He joined the University of Sri Lanka at Peradeniya as an Assistant Librarian in 1953; promoted Librarian in 1971, he held the post until he retired in 1979.

He holds post-graduate degrees from the Universities of London and Madras. At the London University he won the Cowley Prize and participated at various international conferences. 1973-74 he was a Senior Specialist Fellow of the John D. Rockefeller III Fund.

Goonetilleke published E. F. C. Ludowyk's "Those—Long Afternoons—Childhood in Colonial Ceylon" last year. This charming memoir on the little world of Galle was prefaced by Ludowyk's long-time friend Ian.

This quote is from the blurb in "*Lanka, their Lanka — cameos of Ceylon through other eyes*" published by Lake House Bookshop and reprinted by Navrang, New Delhi, in 1984 :

"H. A. I. Goonetilleke, bibliophile and librarian, the author has acquired an international reputation for the style and content of his bibliographical research. He is best known for *A Bibliography of Ceylon (Sri Lanka)* of which five volumes have been published so far, more volumes are in preparation. An earlier collection of travel tales was published under the title *Images of Sri Lanka through American Eyes* in 1976 and has been reprinted twice, in 1978 and 1983.

"Attached to the University of Peradeniya, Sri Lanka for 27 years, he retired as its Librarian in 1979.

"He has written extensively within and outside his professional interests and belie-

ves in the adage that he travels furthest who travels alone."

Excerpts from the Preface (by H. A. I. G.) - *In Lanka their Lanka* :-

"Arm-chair travelling, no less than actual foot-slogging, turns up unexpected treasures of serendipity. To the sedentary, desk-bound voyager, cloistered by force of vocation, charmed magic case-ments open out only onto serried library shelves."

"Travel, of all sorts, is time-honoured therapy for escape from the human tangle, the riddles of the enmeshed ego, and the web of self-alienation. I was bitten as a young schoolboy, by the travel-bug in the beguiling shape of the late Herbert Keuneman, raconteur extraordinary and incomparable guide to the hidden vistas of our land. He taught me in those bright, elysiac days on Richmond Hill, Galle, to treat each journey, however humble, as a pilgrimage to the secret places of the heart and the lost centres of innocence."

Home is the Soldier

by SEEMA GUHA

WHAT WENT wrong with the Indian army that people's perceptions changed so drastically in less than three years? The troops landed in Sri Lanka in a blaze of publicity as the saviours of the Tamils, the good guys as opposed to the bad, epitomised by the Sinhala army. The glory was short-lived, and the fourth largest army in the world has returned home dispirited, much of its shine having worn off, and its reputation as a fighting force sadly tarnished.

Now that the last Indian soldier has finally left, it is time to take a long hard look at why this happened, was it the fault of the army, the politicians or the bureaucrats? Did the government of India have a clearcut

perception on Sri Lanka, or did it just react to events triggered off by the Liberation Tigers or Colombo? The fact is that the policy planners in New Delhi failed to look beyond the immediate future, they could not foresee that one day they might have to take on the LTTE.

Yet was immediately clear to all journalists who were in Jaffna just after the Indo-Sri Lanka accord of 1987, that the Liberation Tigers as well as the ordinary civilian wanted the Indian army to do a Bangladesh here. LTTE leaders like Mahatya, Thileepan (who went on fast and finally died) and Yogaratnam Yogi, all felt that the Indian army should liberate the Tamils, fight the Sri Lankan forces, create an independent

Eelam and leave, considering that this was what the Tamil people really wanted, it would have been fair to anticipate an eventual clash between the IPKF and the Tigers, as Delhi was pledged to uphold the unity and integrity of Sri Lanka.

General Harkirat Singh and his men came into Sri Lanka totally unprepared for action. It was almost like a picnic for the army. The warmth of the welcome, the adulation of ordinary citizens and the fact that there was no administrative machinery worth the name, combined with the rapport they shared with the LTTE, had the Indian army bristling with confidence. Its Sri Lankan counterpart was the butt of cruel jokes for being held at bay by a group of "boys" Many of the senior officers in Palaly felt that if they had to fight it would be against the Sri Lankan

army. They boasted that it would take them less than 72 hours to take over the island state. Meanwhile they courted the LTTE. Tiger flags fluttered from Indian army jeeps, the LTTE and IPKF were in and out of each others camps, they shared meals together and our men were taken by them on guided tours of Jaffna.

Enhancing the relaxed "touristy" image was the fact that our army went to a wild shopping spree, buying up televisions, video cassette recorders, two-in-ones three-in-ones and four-five, six-seven else. Worse, all these goodies were sent back to India by IAF planes, beyond the radar of Customs rules.

While the Indian army was having a ball, the LTTE despite the prevailing honeymoon realised that it

wouldn't last, and a time would come when they would have to cross swords with their current cronies, the Indians. I can clearly recall Yogaratnam Yogi's remark "President Jayawardene will ensure that the Indian troops will eventually fight against us".

Meanwhile General Harkirat Singh gave the LTTE permission to take an IAF helicopter to shoot a video film of all strategic military installations in Jaffna port and Palaly, where the Indians were encamped. However, the IPKF itself gathered little intelligence not even on the terrain, so, when the fighting finally began the force was clueless. Not only did it have no real idea of the strength of the militants, the didn't even know the lay of the land. The LTTE's prepa-

(Cont. Page 7)

Home is the Soldier (from page 6)

redness was something else. They had meant business right from the start. They had observed the Indian army at close range, and knew how it functioned. When the moment arrived, the Tigers were "armed" to the teeth.

The crux of the problem was that right from day one the Indian army was over confident. When 17 LTTE men, including two of their top leaders Pulendran and Kumarappa, committed suicide, and the tigers, repudiating the Indo-Sri Lanka accord, went on a rampage, killing every Sinhalese in sight in Jaffna and attacking Sinhala settlers in Trincomalee. Soon after this crisis Brigadier Fernandez of the IPKF declared with bravado, 'The Tigers do not know who they are taking on. The Indian army is not the Sri Lankan force. We will overrun them in a day or two'

The brigadier found out soon enough how he and his colleagues underestimated the LTTE's tenacity and fighting prime. The Tigers were prepared, their defences were excellent, they had a modern communication system, and a network of underground channels that were impervious to aerial bombing. More important, they have mastered mine technology almost to the point of an art, and used it extensively especially in the first days of the war.

It took three weeks for the Indian army to take Jaffna town, and many more before they could actually establish control. What had seemed like a walk-over, soon turned into a nightmare for an army unused to fighting in the thick of built up areas. The Indian column lumbered along with its heavy machinery, its armoured personnel carriers, in constant dread of the faceless sniper behind the concrete wall.

In the first two days of Operation Pawan, the Indian casualties were unconscionably high, 13 officers were

killed while more than 20 jawans lost their lives.

Then the military strategists in Palaly decided on the flashy move of air dropping jawans near the LTTE headquarters opposite the Jaffna university. Every one of these 30 brave men was shot dead by the Tigers who, long before the operation began, had ensured that an armour plating of guards would make their headquarters impenetrable. The IPKF generals, had visited the Tiger office innumerable times before and they should have known this instead of dropping their men to certain death. Such foolhardiness could not continue. Delhi had also gone into paroxysms over the flak on account of time taken by the IPKF to capture Jaffna. As a result General Harkirat Singh was summoned to Delhi and kept cooling his heels there for over ten days. General A. S. Kalakotia took over, and has been in charge ever since.

EVENTUALLY THE IPKF did take control of all towns and major villages in the north and east. Despite the fact that, in the past year, it was hard hit the LTTE gave the IPKF a run for its money. The Indians were fighting an elusive enemy, in alien territory with a hostile population that had clammed into a uncommunicative mood. The Tigers mingled with the civilians and hit out when least expected, notching up instant successes, both military and in terms of morale. The IPKF, used to conventional warfare took too much time to the adjust to the guerrilla tactics of the LTTE. It lumbered along, bogged down by heavy weapons, moving in highly visible columns, proclaiming its intentions for all to see. The LTTE, on the other hand carried light sophisticated arms, operated in small groups, and moved swiftly and silently across the jungles which they knew like the back of their hands. The element of surprise so vital for this type of warfare, was always theirs, always missing on the side of the Indians.

While battling, the LTTE posed more problems than the army had presumed.

The political task before it was even more formidable. The army was also saddled with the administration of the north-east. The conquering of men's minds which was included in the action plan, ensuring that the Tamils remained pro-Indian, was not part of the IPKF's training. And it showed. To make matters worse, the military and political strategies too often clashed.

All the goodwill the IPKF earned through working for the civilians was immediately lost when house-to-house searches were conducted, road blocks were set up and all passengers travelling by public conveyance were subjected to thorough—and often humiliating—scrutiny. From the military point of view the army had to do this, but it was also natural that the civilians would be up in arms against such 'harassment'. The confusion was confounded by the failure of communication at the primary level; the majority of our jawans could not speak or understand Tamil.

On the other hand, especially in the Jaffna peninsula, the local population was clearly on the side of the LTTE. They sheltered them in their homes and concealed their weapons for them.

After a successful LTTE operation, when Indian soldiers were killed, the entire village had to pay for the loyalty of a few sympathisers. Excesses were committed, houses were searched young men arrested but it would be unfair to say, as many Sri Lankan army officers and LTTE supporters claim, that the Indians massacred innocent civilians. This was generally never done wilfully never sitting in an Indian camp in Nelavelai last year Father Peter, a staunch Tiger supporter, explained the set up: "The IPKF is worse than the Sri Lankans would kill all those they arrested, but the Indians beat and maim them which is much worse." I asked him if he would have dared to sit in a Sri Lankan army camp and criticise their army, in front of the officer as he was doing now in front of the Indians. He was frank enough to admit he wouldn't have the guts.

The army, it is clear made a large number of mistakes, the tactics used to combat the Tigers should have been modified and altered to suit the special conditions in Sri Lanka. The army failed in this mainly because it is so steeped in the bureaucratic strait-jacket that it has little adaptability. But why blame only the army? They can hardly be held responsible if Delhi thrust upon it a quasi-political role for which it was in no way equipped.

Above all there was lack of coordination between the three agencies embroiled in Sri Lanka—the Ministry of External Affairs and the intelligence wing (RAW).

Still, at the end of it all, the army can get satisfaction from the fact that, ultimately, it was the relentless pressure that they had kept up on the Tigers, which forced them to seize the opportunity of direct negotiations with the Sri Lankan government. Unwittingly the IPKF had helped temporarily to bridge the gap between the Tamils and Sinhalese—in their common hatred of the IPKF both protagonists understood that they belonged on the same side.

One of the last tasks performed by the Indian jawans before they left Jaffna was to build a small memorial to the dead. As many as 1,500 men were killed in Sri Lanka, another 4,000 were injured and will be handicapped for life. In Sri Lanka, the Tamils, Muslims and Sinhalese are all happy to see the last of the army, in India there is general indifference about the IPKF and its three-year-long struggle. The force has come home quietly to lick its wounds, to nurse its bitterness in silence. The question every one of its men might ask—aloud or to himself "What was all this in aid of?" As at the end of most wars, there is no satisfactory answer.

(Reproduced from "the Times of India")

ENVIRONMENT DAY

Two hundred million people throughout the world celebrated Earth Day on 22nd April, with rallies to promote environmental awareness.

In Sri Lanka, clean up and collection campaigns were conducted island-wide. All parks, zoos, and museums observed a free-entrance "open day" to make more people aware of their environment.

In addition, 5th June has been declared as Environment Day.

People are being encouraged to sign a pledge—A Vote for Environment—dedicating themselves to protecting the environment.

We invite our readers to complete the coupon below and mail it direct to: The Sri Lanka Environment Congress, 145/18, Dutugemunu Street, Kohuwala, Nugegoda.

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HANDS OFF THE PRESS !

The Sri Lanka Press has had a long and chequered history. The first English newspaper, the weekly "Government Gazette" was started in 1802; the first Sinhala newspaper, the weekly "Lankaloka," in 1860, and the first Tamil newspaper, the "Morning Star," a bi-monthly in 1841.

Since these early times, the press as a whole has made vast strides until today it can hold its own, in editorial and technical production, with the Press in any developing country.

But since about 1960 there had been a dangerous trend with successive governments attempting to tame the Press or even take over sections of it.

The biggest attempt was made in 1963, with the appointment of a Press Commission by Mrs. Sirima Bandaranaike's Sri Lanka Freedom Party Government to suggest ways and means of ensuring the existence of a free Press. Its final report, issued in 1964, makes very interesting reading.

The whole exercise was devoted to breaking the monopoly Press, then dominated by the Associated Newspaper of Ceylon Ltd. (Lake House Group).

Thirteen draft bills were prepared to take over Lake House. The final draft was defeated in the House of Representatives in December 1964, with the defection of 13 SLFP MPs led by the late Mr. C. P. de Silva, deputy leader of the party at the time.

Mr. J. R. Jayewardene, then in the opposition, played a key role in organising the defections. He was also a shareholder of Lake House.

Mr. Dudley Senanayake, leader of the United National Party, who became Prime Minister after the subsequent general election, described the defeat of the SLFP regime as "a big victory for democracy."

Mr. Esmond Wickremasinghe, then Chairman of Lake House, was awarded the Golden Pen by the International Press Institute for his efforts to keep the flame of Press freedom burning.

Mrs. Bandaranaike got her own back in 1973 when under her new dispensation Lake House was converted into a "people's company".

What we are worried now is about an offshoot given birth through the Press Commission's report: a Government-controlled Press Council.

One of its prime tasks was to ensure high professional standards. But never have there been any professionals of standing in the Council.

Now we have come to a situation where the Press has been virtually asked to shut up, where Government affairs are concerned, invoking the draconian provisions of the Press Council Law of 1973.

No mention can be made of Cabinet discussions or decisions unless with prior approval. Bull-shit.

The Press will go on, no matter how panjandrums of the day try to control or manipulate it.

The Press is a reflection of the mirror and mood of the People.

Let politicians who try to tamper with the Press look at their own faces in the mirror.

We are very sad that President Ranasinghe Premadasa, who during his election campaign promised the democratisation of Sri Lanka society, should lend his support to a blatant

attack on Press freedom by the Minister of Housing and Construction, Mr. Sirisena Cooray in reference to a political commentary in the "Sunday Times"

"Hard on the heels of this Ministerial salvo came a sobering reminder from the Presidential Secretariat" as the "Sunday Island" of 8th April put it, that "deliberations of the Cabinet came under classified information which newspapers are prohibited to carry. This prohibition is enforced under the Press Council Law".

Good Government is open Government. Anyway, what has the present Government to hide from the people? May be, some politicians may have some things to hide. That is another matter to which we hope to pay some attention later.

But the Government as a whole must take the people into its confidence and tell them what it is up to. The people have a right to know. This is no basic fundamental and human right. There is no other way in which consensus and reconciliation in national politics could be achieved. Vigilantes cannot perform this mission.

Let us conclude with a quote from the submissions made on behalf of Mr. Jayewardene by his lawyers before the Constitutional Court of Sri Lanka opposing the Press Council Bill:

"THE FREEDOM OF THE PRESS IS THE ESSENCE OF LIBERTY AND THIS IS THE SOURCE OF ALL OTHER LIBERTIES, IF THIS FREEDOM IS SUPPRESSED, RESTRAINED OR CONTROLLED, THEN THE FOUNDATION FOR AUTOCRACY IS LAID..."

COOKING ONE'S GOOSE !

Expectant mothers warded at the Polonnaruwa hospital have been compelled to do their own cooking because of an acute staff shortage. For the same reason, the toilets remain uncleaned for long periods resulting in an unbearable stench. Worse, the freezers in the mortuary have been defective since August last year and the bodies decompose. ("The Island", 10th April)

SIRA HONOURED

A meeting was held at the Public Library auditorium, Colombo, on 6th April to commemorate the 60th birth anniversary of the late Mr. B. A. Siriwardene, one of Sri Lanka's most courageous journalists who for many years was Editor of the Sinhalese daily, "Aththa".

BHARAT RATNA FOR AMBEDKAR

Thirty four years after his death, Dr. B. R. Ambedkar, the champion of the depressed castes of India, has been awarded the Bharat Ratna by the Indian Government.

Dr. Ambedkar was one of the architects of the Indian Constitution. The framers borrowed liberally from other constitutions, including fundamental rights from the American model.

To him, Article 32 of the Indian Constitution which ensures enforcement of fundamental rights and spells out constitutional remedies, was in his words, "the very soul of the constitution and very heart of it." Dr. Ambedkar saw the constitution as an instrument of social change. Hence the framers included measures such as the right to work. (Article 41)

SAARC IN MALDIVES?

Despite all Sri Lanka's all diplomatic efforts, the next summit of the South Asian Association for Regional Co-operation is likely to be held later this year in Male, not Colombo.

Sri Lanka refused to host the summit schedule for mid-1990 until all the foreign (Indian) troops on its soil were withdrawn.

The I. P. K. F. has gone, so also Sri Lanka's chance to hold a prestigious meeting which would have served to boost its international image.

Sri Lanka, according to the "Sunday Times" has refused to attend the summit if held in the Maldivian capital. This would be great pity.

SADHU, SADHU

Sinhalese pilgrims from the South have again begun visiting the historic Nagadipa Vihara, on Nainativu island, a few miles off Jaffna's western coast after a seven-year lapse.

This is an index of the return to normalcy in the North after years of war.

However, the Naga Vihara in Jaffna town, which was razed to the ground in 1983 remains an empty waste.

MEDIA REVOLUTION

A private television station started operating in the Yugoslav capital from March putting an end to the 45 year monopoly of state owned news media.

The new TV station is part of the Studio B. Radio a cooperative from belonging to its workers, due to be transformed into a shareholding company open to both home and foreign investors.

Studio B is running ahead of the legislation currently in force.

(Courtesy, 1 PS)