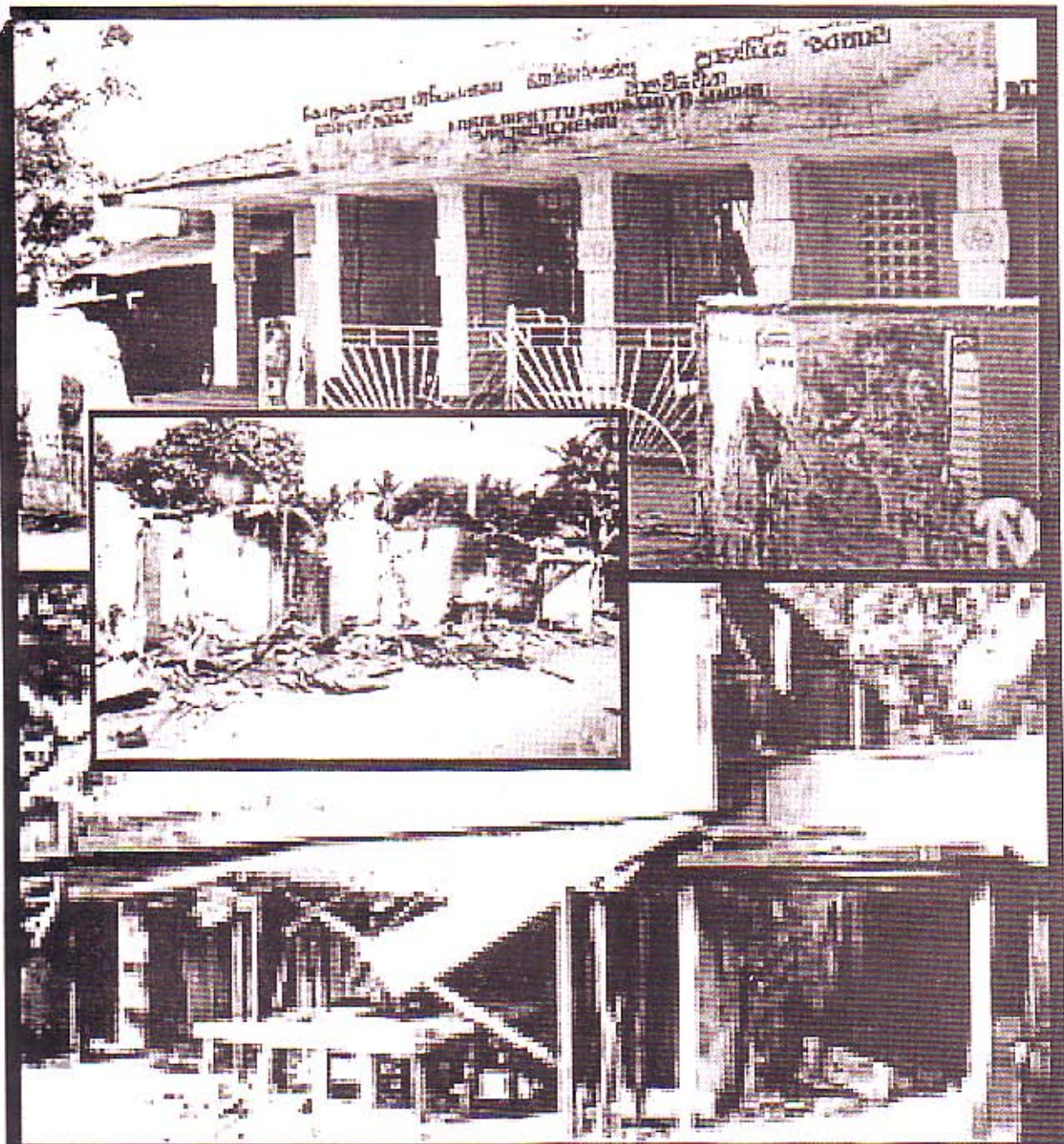


Tamil

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Destruction during recent Tamil-Muslim communal violence in eastern Sri Lanka



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of what you say, but I'll
defend to the death your
right to say it."*

-Voltaire

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Time for Direct Talks

Though the peace process has not gone off track, it must be conceded that it has been on a bumpy road in recent times. It cannot be doubted that the Tamil-Muslim communal violence that erupted in eastern Sri Lanka during the last two weeks of June has had an adverse impact. What these widespread incidents of violence between the Tamils and Muslims of the east demonstrate is that the conflict in Sri Lanka that needs resolution is not limited to the one between the Sinhalese and Tamil communities only. It also involves the Muslim community, the majority of whom inhabit the east of the country. Events that occurred during recent years have shown that the relationship between the Muslim and Tamil communities has at best been a fractured one. Without the recognition and acceptance of the interests, sensitivities and sensibilities of the Muslim people, this damaged relationship cannot be repaired.

Although they speak the Tamil language, it is essential to recognise the fact that the Muslims perceive themselves as having an identity that is distinct from that of both the Sinhalese and Tamils. In this context, rather than attempting to assert its dominance with superior might, it would be wise for the Tamil leadership to seek accommodation with the Muslims by giving them the opportunity of full participation in the peace process, including the proposed talks, through their elected and acknowledged leaders.

Another disturbing fact has been the large number of violations of the Ceasefire Agreement. The number of violations and complaints identified in the statement from the international Sri Lanka Monitoring Mission (SLMM) is staggering. As of 30 June, there have been a total of 380 total complaints of which 110 have been against the government and 270 against the LTTE. The largest number of identified complaints and violations have been from eastern Sri Lanka from where there has been a stream of complaints of harassment, extortion and enforced recruitment. What has been described by the head of the SLMM as "serious violation of the Ceasefire Agreement and a major blow to the trust of the SLMM in the LTTE" is the incident that occurred on 13 July in which two Scandinavian monitors were held against their will for more than six hours on board a trawler belonging to the LTTE and later released.

Although the much delayed meeting between the LTTE's chief negotiator Mr Anton Balasingham and the Norwegian team took place on 15 July, the outcome of which was described as 'cordial and constructive', it was later reported that there was no willingness to discuss any aspect of the proposed talks - dates or the agenda - until 2 August.

While the proposed peace talks have been disappointingly delayed, there is absolutely no doubt that the state of no-war resulting from the Ceasefire Agreement has led to many positive developments beneficial to the people.

Guns continue to remain silent and bombs are not exploding. Wanton destruction of property and indiscriminate killing of people have come to a stop. The barriers for the free movement of people and goods have been lifted. For the first time in years, Tamil people in their hundreds from the far North have begun go on pilgrimages to the Katargama temple in the deep South. And equally people from the South are making pilgrimages to Nagadipa Buddhist Vihare in Naainativu in the North. People are walking around without the fear of being taken into custody on mere suspicion. The North-South movement of thousands of people - Sinhalese, Tamils and Muslims - has become daily a routine. For the first time in many years the A9 Jaffna-Kandy road has been opened and is functioning as the main route between the North and the South. Recently, the A5 Batticaloa-Badulla Road in eastern Sri Lanka was reopened for use after several years. The UNHCR has confirmed that approximately 100,000 internally displaced people have returned to their home areas and more are in the process of returning. These are not mean achievements.

However, it is almost 6 months since the Ceasefire Agreement (CA) between the government of Sri Lanka and the LTTE came into effect. The expectation then and as weeks and months elapsed was that peace talks between the parties would commence quite soon. The predictions of talks taking place at Bangkok in May, then in June, thereafter in July have proved wrong. Now, even a date for the proposed talks to take place in August seems unlikely. Apart from the fact that this delay has stalled the momentum of the peace process, inexplicable delay in the commencement of talks is having the effect of eroding the confidence and trust the people have in the peace process itself. It also contributes to cynicism on the one hand and on the other offers time and space for anti-peace negative forces to emerge and question the very validity of the peace process. It is therefore time for the government and the LTTE to enter into face-to-face direct peace talks.

US Envoy Favours Federal System

The United States Ambassador for Sri Lanka, Ashley Wills, states the United States likes its federal system and recommends it when asked, to people around the world. In an interview with Lasantha Wickremetunge, Editor of 'The Sunday Leader' (23 June 2002), Ambassador Wills also said the United States will be comfortable with any negotiated solution as long as Sri Lanka is permanently at peace, is democratic and is united. Follows are excerpts of the interview dealing with issues relating to the ethnic conflict in Sri Lanka:

Q: The most important issue for Sri Lanka today is, of course, the ongoing ethnic conflict. The United States has publicly, on several occasions, extended its full co-operation to the Norwegian initiative and a negotiated settlement. One criticism is that the support is only confined to words. In real terms what sort of support can you give Sri Lanka to settle this problem?

A: I don't think it's fair to say that our support has consisted of words only. I mentioned earlier in this discussion that moral means are sometimes appropriate and frequently resorted to by the United States. We have used our moral authority as a significant international player to promote the idea of a peaceful outcome and we will continue to do that. We also have other possibilities that we can look at depending on the circumstances. We have a modest relationship between our military and the Sri Lankan military. It has developed over the years, and doesn't involve much in the way of equipment sales, but it does involve significant training of Sri Lanka's forces, and also training on the rules of conflict; how do you protect the human rights of civilians while prosecuting a military campaign against an opponent? That is another way in which we have helped and we will continue to help. We think this is an appropriate way for us to engage with Sri Lanka. We also provide economic assistance to the country.

It is on a more modest level than was the case 20 years ago, but it's still pretty substantial and we hope that we can offer somewhat more targeted assistance, not only at the areas affected by the conflict but throughout Sri Lanka. We think

there are victims of this war all over the country, and our assistance will be aimed at all segments of the population in the months ahead.

Q: There was some perception that the Acquisition and Cross Servicing Agreement (ACSA), which was proposed and which I understand the attorney-general of Sri Lanka has now approved from the government's side, that it could lead to military support for the government to combat the LTTE. There was some concern raised in Tamil circles in the south. And even those who were opposing the ongoing process welcomed it, though they have been critics of the United States. They view it as the support of the United States to fight the LTTE. Can you explain to us exactly what this agreement is all about?

A: It is a relatively low level agreement and it really extends the co-operation that we had for years. It isn't some dramatic departure or some entirely new phenomenon. It allows the militaries of the two countries, not just our military, to take advantage of local pricing, for example when oil or gasoline needs to be purchased. When one of our ships calls on your port here in Colombo, for example, the ACSA would allow that ship to re-fuel at the same price as a Sri Lankan ship would re-fuel here in this port. Similarly a Sri Lankan vessel calling at one of our ports would take advantage of our pricing. Spare parts for military equipment could be exchanged on a lower cost basis.

But this agreement does not allow for bases. We have no interest in military bases in Sri Lanka - and we hope that Sri Lanka has no wish to establish them in our country. It does not have anything to do with equipment sales at all. It's a relatively modest agreement of the sort that we have concluded with many countries around the world. I think the total now approaches 60 nations - that have this so-called ACSA agreement with us. It is just a way of easing the way for low cost military operations of a routine nature anywhere in the world. Nothing more than that.

Q: On the question of the de-proscription of the LTTE, Mr. Ambassador, the

United States has banned the LTTE as a terrorist organisation. The government of Sri Lanka has just announced that it will lift the proscription ten days before dates are fixed for the talks. At the same time, the LTTE leader, Velupillai Prabhakaran, at the press conference held in Kilinochchi said that the LTTE would use the lifting of the ban in Sri Lanka to canvass the withdrawal of its ban internationally. Now how would the United States see this? Would the United States take a cue from Sri Lanka, or would it only be guided by its own national security considerations?

A: Well, I've personally made a few comments on the subject, and much more senior officials in our government have also commented, that we will make our own decision about taking the LTTE off our list of so-called foreign terrorist organisations (FTO). So a decision by Sri Lanka to de-ban the LTTE will be noted by our government, but it will have nothing to do with our own sovereign decisions. We put the Tigers on our list of FTOs following our own analysis of the organisation. Similarly, we will make the decision to take the Tigers off the list based on our own assessment.

We have been pretty open about what it would take from the Tigers to qualify for being de-listed by the United States. Renouncing terrorism, renouncing the use of violence. These would be statements by the Tigers that would be favourably noted by our government. But then, this would have to be followed up by a period when we would match the LTTE's deeds with its words. At that future point we will make the decision one way or the other.

Q: You have been kept informed of the ongoing peace process, do you see any progress being made, do you believe that there is some lull at the moment, that the pace has slowed down?

A: I think perhaps the pace has slowed just a little bit. It is possible that the talks - this is our impression - may not begin in the next couple of weeks, or perhaps the next several weeks. But we think the slowing down, if one can call it that, might be a good thing, giving the two sides more time to sort out their positions as they approach talks. We look at this process with a very long term view. Its going to take a while, we are not distressed and we don't think that the government of Sri Lanka or the Norwegians are distressed about a slowing down. The main thing is to keep the cease-fire in effect and make sure its terms are implemented by both sides as much as possible, and then get to the negotiating table.

We think that this will happen. It's certainly our hope that it will happen.

Q: Talking of the negotiating table, Sri Lanka's Foreign Minister, Tyrone Fernando, in Washington recently called upon the United States to persuade the LTTE to come to the negotiating table. Do you see yourself playing that role?

A: We hope the LTTE will decide on its own to come to the negotiating table, and, as I said, we think that will happen. One of the new factors in the equation here in Sri Lanka is that the Tigers seem to have reached the conclusion that they will do a better job of representing the interests of Tamil people by pursuing a peaceful solution rather than by continuing the so-called armed struggle. I hope they have reached that conclusion, because it is our belief that the Tamil people are tired of this conflict. There is an opportunity for negotiations that will give them a respected, secure place in a united Sri Lanka. We hope that the Tigers recognise this and will use this opportunity of negotiations to push for such an outcome.

Q: Mr. Ambassador, from what you have seen and heard so far of the on-going process, do you think that Prime Minister Ranil Wickremesinghe and LTTE leader Velupillai Prabhakaran are both sincere in their efforts?

A: Well, I know that the prime minister is. I have no doubt that he is. And I have no doubt that President Kumaratunga is also committed to a peaceful outcome. In fact, I believe that it has been clear for about six or seven years that successive Sri Lankan governments were ready to make a deal to end this conflict, to find some way to devolve power in an acceptable way to some subordinate entity or entities, that would give Tamils a very substantial degree of self rule, while keeping the country united.

I think that this has been clear for a long time, as far as the point of view of successive Sri Lankan governments is concerned. I am less certain about the Tigers. I don't know what their intentions are. I hope that they have decided that they need to come to the negotiating table to do a proper job of negotiating on behalf of Tamil interests. One of the problems with the Tigers is that they have in the past taken advantage of legitimate Tamil grievances to pursue an extreme, separatist agenda, using violent means. This has brought international condemnation to them, the Tigers, and discredited the Tamil cause, which otherwise has merit. Now, we are convinced that the Tamils can have protection and find re-

Peace Support Group Urges Early Talks

The Peace Support Group comprising leading human rights and peace activists and academics has, in a statement dated 27 June, urged the timely implementation of Ceasefire Agreement and early commencement of direct negotiations between the Government and the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE). The statement said:

"We, the undersigned members of the Peace Support Group (PSG), are deeply concerned over increasing apprehensions that the peace process is beginning to run out of steam. This situation has arisen despite the fact that civilians on both sides

spect in a united Sri Lanka, and it is our fervent hope that the Tigers realise this too.

Q: One final question. Does the United States have views on what the new political system in Sri Lanka should be, assuming that the government and the Tigers successfully negotiate a peaceful resolution of the conflict?

A: It really isn't appropriate for us to say. That is an internal matter. We'll be comfortable with any negotiated solution as long as Sri Lanka is permanently at peace, is democratic and is united. Sri Lankans often ask me this question and they express curiosity about the federal system that we have in the U.S. We have had a lot of success with our federal system: it does a pretty good job at delivering good governance; it keeps as much local governing as possible, that is close to the citizenry; and it takes account of the fact that our society is diverse.

The key points about a successful federal model are that democracy is ensured in all parts of the nation, in other words citizens have their democratic and political rights protected wherever they live in the nation; that one gets the financial arrangements right, that is what the central government can tax and then pay for and what the subordinate units can tax and pay for; that one gets the balance of powers right between the central government and regional/subordinate units; and that the federal constitution specifies that secession is not possible. We like our federal system and recommend it when asked by people around the world. But it's not for us to say whether it is the appropriate model for other countries, including Sri Lanka.

of the ethnic divide have secured tangible benefits arising out of the Ceasefire Agreement (CFA) as indicated in UNHCR reports of the voluntary return of approximately 100,000 Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) and as manifest in the unprecedented flow of civilian traffic across the divide, as well as the gradual erasure of existential and psychological trauma associated with war. There is no denying, however, that a pall of uncertainty hangs over the peace process.

"This is largely due to recurring differences in perceptions between the Government of Sri Lanka (GoSL) and the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) as regards the interpretation as well as the implementation of the existing CFA. In particular, the problems relating to the CFA include contradictory reports as regards the mandatory withdrawal of the security forces from public buildings, schools and places of worship, instances of abductions and extortion by the LTTE, including child conscription, instances of threats and intimidation by both the LTTE and the security forces as a response to dissent, as well as other violations of International Human Rights norms.

"In addition, the peace process has been beset with problems pertaining to the commencement of direct talks between the GoSL and the LTTE on matters relating to interim arrangements and a just and an equitable political settlement to the Ethnic Question. Issues relating to the proposed direct negotiations in Thailand, include the timing of the de-prescription of the LTTE and the announcement of the dates for commencement of direct negotiations, the agenda for the peace talks, the specific role of Norway, the contours and powers of the proposed LTTE-led Interim Administration for the North-East, as well as the substantive issues that have a bearing on a comprehensive and a permanent political settlement to the ethnic conflict.

"There are also increasing fears amongst sections of the Sinhala and Tamil peoples that the two parties may well be preparing for war, while talking peace. Although these apprehensions have always been there whenever ceasefires and peace-talks took place in the past, the recent agreements on military cooperation between Colombo on the one hand, and Washington, New Delhi and

Beijing on the other, have created some suspicion amongst sections of the Tamil people as regards their timing. Likewise, the increasing recruitment, training and mobility of the LTTE cadres, backed by aggressive mass mobilizations by the LTTE in the North-East is causing apprehensions amongst sections of the Sinhala People that the LTTE is also preparing for war and is engaged in acts of provocation.

"These fears, maybe unjustifiable, need to be allayed. This can only be done by the speedy implementation of the CFA, observance of International Human Rights norms and the early commencement of direct negotiations on interim arrangements and substantive issues by the LTTE and the Government of Sri Lanka. The longer the delay the greater are the chances of these growing fears and apprehensions becoming a self-fulfilling prophesy.

"In this context, the recent visits to Kilinochchi by the members of the Peace Secretariat for direct face to face talks with the LTTE leadership to iron out some of these differences is timely and to be welcomed. We urge more frequent direct contacts between the GoSL and the LTTE in the run-up to the commencement of formal negotiations in Thailand. We also welcome the perseverance of the Government of Norway and its team led by the Deputy Foreign Minister Helgessen in keeping the peace process on track. Above all, we are happy that the guns have remained silent since the signing of the CFA and hope that they will remain so in the future as well. We recognize that that the road to peace is not going to be smooth, as nearly two decades of war and the accumulated distrust between and within communities it has generated cannot be eliminated within a few weeks.

"Mending war-torn societies takes time. While we recognize the need to move forward cautiously, stagnation of the peace process should be avoided at all costs. It is not our intention to be alarmist, but to flag an early warning so that appropriate measures may be taken to ensure that the peace process stays on track and does not get derailed."

The signatories to the above statement are: Sunila Abeysekera, Sunil Bastian, Radhika Coomaraswamy, Sunanda Deshapriya, Rohan Edrisinha, Ketheshwaran Loganathan, Jehan Perera, Paikiasothy Saravanamuttu, Jeevan Thiagarajah, Joe William, Javid Yusuf.

Amnesty International Visits Sri Lanka

29 June - A delegation of the London-based international human rights organisation, Amnesty International, in a statement issued on 29 June following a two week visit to Sri Lanka welcomed the positive engagement and co-operation from both the government and the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) on issues of human rights and the peace process.

"The current climate is one of pragmatic hope," Derek Evans, head of the delegation said. "The cease-fire agreement has made a significant impact in reducing human rights abuses in Sri Lanka. However human rights must be established as an integral part of the agenda."

"The reduction in killings, torture, and abductions seen since the cease-fire will only last if practical measures to protect human rights are discussed, negotiated and promoted now."

During the first week of the mission AI delegates travelled to the Vanni region to meet with members of the LTTE leadership, including the head of the political wing Mr Thamil Chelvan. "The LTTE were very responsive to an ongoing dialogue on human rights and committed to access and transparency," Derek Evans said.

The delegates met with LTTE officials responsible for the judiciary and police forces. They were able to visit a prison at short notice where they spoke with inmates and made recommendations for improvements. Discussions with the LTTE focused on the recruitment of child soldiers, executions, "disappearances", arbitrary detention, the return of internally displaced people, as well as the peace process.

In Colombo, delegates met with President Chandrika Bandaranaike Kumaratunga, Prime Minister Ranil Wickremasinghe, and various ministers to discuss issues such as impunity, the Prevention of Terrorism Act, torture and rape in custody, and the peace process. The delegation also met with members of Parliament, representatives of international agencies, and a wide

cross-section of civil society, including human rights groups, women's organizations, and business associations.

During its visit, AI urged both the LTTE and the government to seriously consider the human rights components of the peace process. "The move from conflict to normalcy requires the establishment of a clear and practical framework based on human rights," Derek Evans argued.

The Prime Minister and the LTTE both agreed in principle on the need for technical expertise on human rights to be made available at the forthcoming talks in Bangkok.

AI delegates engaged both parties on issues of truth and reconciliation, accountability and human rights monitoring, the protection of vulnerable groups and human rights standards for the interim civil administration in the northeast. In particular, AI discussed with the LTTE the training of police on human rights standards and the treatment of detainees. The organization recommended that the President and the Prime Minister launch a national initiative for truth and reconciliation as an integral aspect of the peace process. "Human rights in Sri Lanka have improved as a result of the cease-fire but the situation will remain vulnerable until the government and the LTTE take steps to guarantee a human rights framework for the peace process," Derek Evans concluded.

The delegation that visited Sri Lanka comprised: Derek Evans, former Deputy Secretary General of Amnesty International, currently working in the areas of conflict resolution and community reconciliation as Executive Director of the Naramata Centre for Continuing Education in Canada.

Claude Bruderlein, lecturer in international humanitarian law at Harvard University, currently specializing in the fields of peace negotiation and situations of political transition. Ingrid Masage, Researcher on Sri Lanka at Amnesty International's International Secretariat in London.

'Monitors held against their will'

In what has been described as one of the most serious violations of the ceasefire agreement, two Scandinavian monitors, one Norwegian and the other a Dane, were held against their will for more than six hours on board one of LTTE's trawlers and were later released after they were taken to Kilinochchi. According to a statement issued on 14 July by the international Sri Lanka Monitoring Mission (SLMM), the incident occurred on 13 July when the two monitoring team members, in the performance of their assigned duties, sought to carry out an inspection of a trawler manned by LTTE cadres under the Ceasefire Agreement between the government and the LTTE.

"This is a serious violation of the ceasefire agreement and a major blow to the trust of SLMM in the LTTE," Major-General Trond Furuhoode, head of the Mission, said in a statement adding, "After this irresponsible behaviour, it is clear that the LTTE will have a lot to do in rebuilding people's confidence in their organisation."

Captioned, "*Two SLMM Monitors held against their will onboard a LTTE vessel*", the SLMM's statement said:

"A serious violation of the Ceasefire Agreement between the Government of Sri Lanka and the LTTE, occurred on Saturday afternoon when two LTTE trawlers, at least one with an Indian registration number, entered Sri Lankan territorial waters in Palk Bay, south of Jaffna peninsula. The Sri Lankan Navy (SLN) intercepted the two trawlers at 17.45. One of the trawlers fled from the scene and managed to leave the SLN vessels and the other trawler behind by going through shallow water and go ashore close to Devils Point.

"At the same time the second trawler was adrift close to Iranativu Islands in Palk Bay being closely monitored by SLN vessels. SLN requested the advice and assistance of SLMM Naval Monitors in Jaffna around 18.00. At 20.10, with the full approval of the LTTE's Political Leadership in Kilinochchi, two SLMM Naval Monitors embarked the

trawler. SLMM found communication equipment onboard the trawler, which was controlled by 4 LTTE cadres.

SLMM suggested to the SLN Admiralty, LTTE Political Headquarters in Kilinochchi and to the Commanding Officers involved in the incident that the LTTE cadres would be allowed to go ashore and the remaining trawler would be taken into the custody of SLN. That offer was rejected by LTTE leadership and the LTTE cadres onboard refused to disembark the trawler.

At 23.20 SLMM Headquarters received information that the LTTE cadres had started to move the trawler towards the shore of Vanni. SLN Officer and SLN sailor who were onboard the trawler at this time managed to jump onto a SLN boat that was moving alongside the trawler. At this time, the two SLMM Naval Monitors were held against their will by the LTTE cadres and physically hindered from leaving the trawler. The LTTE cadres then left the SLN vessels behind by moving the trawler across shallow water to the shore where they disembarked 2 Km South of Devils Point at 00.35. At this time the two SLMM Naval Monitors were released. Representatives of LTTE's Political wing brought them (the two monitors) to Kilinochchi where they finally got to the SLMM Liaison office in Kilinochchi at 05.40 Sunday morning.

According to Major General Trond Furuhoode, Head of SLMM, "This is a serious violation of the Ceasefire Agreement and a major blow to the trust of SLMM in the LTTE. This kind of behaviour is extremely counterproductive to the success we have had so far. Instead of relying on SLMM as impartial monitors working for both parties in solving disputes and ensuring the implementation of the Ceasefire Agreement, LTTE members decided to mistreat two SLMM Monitors. After this irresponsible behaviour it is clear that the LTTE will have a lot to do in rebuilding peoples confidence in their organization. I hope we will be able to find ways to keep walking towards peace and I hope that the LTTE is still ready to do

so."

Deeply regretting any inconvenience caused to the two Monitors, the LTTE in an official statement issued on 16 July from Kilinochchi in northern Sri Lanka "denied categorically that they held two members of the Sri Lanka Monitoring Mission (SLMM) as hostages during a confrontation with the government, last Saturday, in the Mannar seas."

The LTTE statement further said, "The Sea Tiger cadres brought the Sri Lanka Monitoring Mission members ashore in their fishing trawler to prevent any harm being done to them and to ensure their safety. We prevented them from jumping into the turbulent sea to reach the naval gunboat. We are disappointed to note that the SLMM members have assumed that they were held against their wishes. We deeply regret if any inconvenience has caused to them.

"The LTTE Political Head Office has also complemented the SLMM for its dedication, courage and commitment in executing their duties impartially to promote the cause of peace in the Tamil homeland. We pledge our co-operation and support for the monitors to carry on their admirable work."

The LTTE's press note vehemently criticised the Sri Lankan navy for deliberately creating hostile incidents to provoke the LTTE, particularly the Sea Tigers.

"The Cease-fire Agreement recognises the existence of the naval unit of the LTTE and strictly prohibits the Sri Lanka armed forces from engaging in hostile naval operations. The Sea Tigers should be allowed, without hindrance, to perform their activities along the coastal belt of the northeastern territories under their control. We have also requested the Head of the Sri Lanka Monitoring Mission to work out an agreement on the issue between the LTTE and the Sri Lankan Navy."

Sri Lankan authorities denied that the navy had either rammed or fired at the LTTE trawler. In the meantime Colombo has asked India to gather information on the trawler concerned. "We have asked the Indian High Commission to provide us with information on the trawler which carried a South Indian registration," Austin Fernando, Sri Lan-

ka's defence secretary said. The boat had the Indian registration RMS 512

"The trawler emerged from a flotilla of Indian fishing boats. As such we are curious as to how the LTTE cadres could be found on board what appeared to be an Indian trawler," Fernando adding that the trawler's registration number, RMS 512, and was named Meenachchi and was not on the Indian authorities' list of lost boats.

The Peace Support Group (PSG) expressed deep disappointment over the LTTE's reaction to the Navy on their interception of two LTTE trawlers on July 13. They claimed that the LTTE's accusation was by no means justifiable under any circumstances and went against the spirit of the ceasefire agreement. In a statement issued, the PSG said:

"We are alarmed by the manner in which the LTTE conducted itself during its stand-off with the Navy by virtually holding as hostages two SLMM naval monitors who were engaged in their official duty of not only inquiring into the incident but in also settling the dispute." The PSG called on all parties to strictly abide by the ceasefire agreement and assist the Sri Lanka Monitoring Mission (SLMM) in its monitoring functions. The statement however expressed satisfaction at SLMM head Trond Furuhodve's official media release which stated that the LTTE had accepted responsibility for the incident while tendering an apology. The PSG said "This is not the first time that the peace process has been tested in Sri Lanka's territorial waters since the signing of the agreement with periodic provocations from both sides. The recent incident underscores the urgency of evolving a mutually acceptable formula that would enable the legitimate logistical movement of LTTE boats between areas under their control, without in any way jeopardizing the legitimate task of the SLN in safeguarding the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Sri Lanka."

The signatories to this statement are: Sunila Abeysekera, Sunil Bastian, Radhika Coomaraswamy, Sunanda Deshapriya, Rohan Edrisinha, Ketheshwaran Loganathan, Jehan Perera, P. Saravanamuttu and Javid Yusuf had signed the statement.

Ceasefire Violations

July 8 - The Sri Lanka Monitoring Mission (SLMM) overseeing the observance of the Ceasefire Agreement between the government and the LTTE has in a press release issued on 8 July identified hundreds of violations by both parties as of 30 June. The largest number of complaints and violations identified are from eastern Sri Lanka from where there has been a continuous stream of complaints of harassment, extortion and enforced recruitment.

According to the SLMM' press release, of the total valid complaints that have been processed by SLMM, since the beginning of the Ceasefire Agreement, 270 have been made against LTTE and 110 against the Governmental side or a grand total of 380. Of these, already 56 have been ruled as violations of LTTE and 20 have been ruled as violations of the Governmental side. The most common violation is abduction/kidnapping by LTTE, or a total number of 21. Second most common violation is harassment by LTTE, or a total number of 11. Third most common violation is extortion by LTTE, or a total number of 7. After that comes the Governmental side, which has violated the Ceasefire Agreement with 6 cases of harassment, 6 cases of restriction of movement and with 5 cases of restriction on fishery. In addition to these ruled violations there have been made 44 complaints of LTTE's Forced recruitment/Recruitment of Children, 44 complaints of harassment by LTTE and 32 complaints of Abductions/Kidnapping by

LTTE. 23 complaints have been made against the Governmental side for harassment, 18 complaints have been made against the Governmental side for Occupation of civilian land and property and 16 complaints have been made against the LTTE in the cases of Missing persons.

SLMM is still inquiring into the above complaints and a special report is also being made on Occupation of schoolbuildings and places of worship. In Batticaloa district SLMM has received most complaints of possible violations, or a total of 182 complaints. Thereafter comes Trincomalee with 95 complaints and Ampara with 68 complaints made since the beginning of SLMM monitoring of the Ceasefire Agreement. The districts with the fewest complaints are Jaffna with 54 complaints, Vavuniya with only 34 complaints and Mannar with as few as 22 complaints since the beginning of the Ceasefire.

SLMM has sadly received reports of people being threatened with violence if they decide to use their right to complain about possible violations to SLMM.

Major General Trond Furuhodve, Head of SLMM, concludes: I urge all the people in Sri Lanka to change their focus from criticizing each other to that of keeping the peace and assisting the parties in implementing the Ceasefire Agreement. Responsible leaders of both parties should emphasize on living up to the expectations that the people have in their ability to create a lasting Peace in Sri Lanka."

Ceasefire Encourages Investors

Feizal Samath

Trincomalee, Sri Lanka - With the guns of war stilled and the prospects for peace bright, investor interest is again being drawn to the deep, calm waters of Trincomalee, one of the world's greatest natural harbors, on Sri Lanka's east coast.

"In the last six months, after the ceasefire came into effect, there's been a lot of interest in Trincomalee," says Gamini Chandrasekera, resident manager of the Sri Lanka Ports Authority (SLPA).

Most of the interest in the picturesque port, a former British base that protected the Royal Navy's Indian Ocean fleet during World War II, comes from India. Some of the investments that are in the pipeline would guarantee a permanent Indian presence in the area - and protect the Sri Lankan government's interests against Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) separatists using the port as a future base.

The inner harbour, surrounded by ridges and low hills atop which some of the fortifications built by the British can still be seen, once provided safe anchorage for merchant ships laid up and waiting charters before the outbreak of the ethnic conflict in 1983. The inner port has been neglected since then, largely because of the Tamil separatist war. But now that a truce is in place, the Sri Lankan government wants to make best use of the port's potential.

Peace talks between the government and the Tamil rebels, originally set to start this month in Thailand, are likely to get off the ground in July or August as both sides hurl accusations of ceasefire violations. Despite this, though, no shots have been fired by either side since December, making it the longest truce ever in the history of the 19-year-long conflict that has claimed the lives of more than



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The sheltered waters of the main harbor, home of the Sri Lankan Navy's biggest base and headquarters of its eastern command, eliminate the need to build expensive breakwaters. "The most distinct advantage of this harbor is that there's no need for dredging. We have the natural depth," points out SLPA's Chandrasekera.

The commander of the Eastern Naval Area, Rear Admiral Sarath Ratnakeerthi, agrees that there is a lot of potential to develop the harbor. "But first we need peace," he says while wary of the intentions of the Tigers, who have opened six offices in the town since the formal truce. Tamil Tiger guerrillas, he says, have been infiltrating cadres into the town under the pretext of doing political work while also studying military installations.

With peace in the air, potential foreign investors have been scouting around the area in recent months. There's plenty of land available in and around the harbor, with some 2,000 hectares of state land vested with the SLPA. The SLPA, which acts as the guardian of the land, is to release about 300 hectares for an industrial zone in Kappalturai, near the town's highway.

Dr Bandula Perera, chairman of the Industrial Development Board, said the IDB planned to set up an industrial estate on 40 hectares that have been allocated in Kappalturai. However, there are concerns from minority Tamil politicians about the speed with which the government is proceeding to attract foreign investment to Trincomalee.

R Sambandan, senior Tamil United Liberation Front member of parliament from the area, rejects

government plans, saying that whatever was being done should be initiated by the people of the area and that no big investments should come in until the peace process had moved forward. "Tamils who have suffered several decades of discrimination and unequal treatment are not prepared to trust anyone in a hurry," he said. "We want to decide our destiny, including our economic future, within the framework of a united country."

In the past, he pointed out, the beneficiaries of economic development, whether it be in agriculture, industries or fisheries, were not the Tamils but people from outside the region. "Trincomalee has great potential in port development, agriculture, fisheries, industries, tourism," Sambandan said. "But the present industrialization effort is totally ill-conceived. Development must be done in consultation with representatives of the region. We don't want this to be foisted on us from Colombo."

Trincomalee has a slightly higher percentage of Tamils than Sinhalese (the national majority community) or Muslims. Tamils, who mostly live in the north and the east of the country, claim that they have been discriminated against in job allocation, land use and education by governments run by the majority community.

Arjuna Mahendran, chairman of the state-run Board of Investment, also conceded that disputes could emerge if investment - decided by Colombo - proceeded before the planned interim administration was set up. The government has said it would like to create an interim administration with help from the LTTE to administer the north and east for about two years as an interim measure before a political solu-

tion was found to the long-running conflict.

"As far as the oil-tank farm is concerned, that is not a problem because it involves two parties with land in Trincomalee owned by the Ceylon Petroleum Corp [CPC]. The problems could arise if state land is demarcated for various investment before the interim administration is established," said Mahendran. He was referring to the biggest recent development in Trincomalee - an agreement to lease part of the CPC's 99 oil tanks, each with a capacity of 100,000 tonnes, to the Indian Oil Corp. The deal, signed in New Delhi this month, gives effect to some of the provisions of the 1987 Indian-Lanka peace accord that denied the use of Trincomalee to any power inimical to India and which gave India first choice in the use of the oil-tank farm.

The other major commercial establishments already in city include a flour mill owned by Prima Ceylon, a subsidiary of Prima Singapore, and the Tokyo Cement Co plant, a subsidiary of Japan's Mitsui. Among the new industries coming up in Trincomalee is a coal-processing plant that will produce coking coal for use in Indian steel mills.

During much of Sri Lanka's conflict, Trincomalee has played a key role in keeping troops and civilians in Jaffna farther north supplied with essential commodities and other requirements. Just like foreign investors, the rebels are also eyeing the city and its natural harbor as the capital of Tamil Eelam, the name of the Tamil nation for which the rebels have been battling for so many years. But the possible presence of the Indian Army to protect Indian interests may serve as a deterrent.

(Inter Press Services)

Vaiko arrested for backing Tamil Tigers

12 July - Police in Tamil Nadu arrested parliament member and Marumalarchi Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (MDMK) General Secretary, Y. Gopalasamy (Vaiko), 58, yesterday evening on his arrival at Chennai airport from Chicago via Mumbai, under the Prevention of Terrorism Act (POTA) for having spoken publicly in support of the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE), which is a proscribed organisation in India.

The bitter rival of Tamil Nadu Chief Minister and regional strongwoman Jayalalithaa was whisked away by road to Tirumangalam near Madurai where he is expected to be produced in a Magistrate's court today. Some 3,000 of Vaiko's supporters in Tamil Nadu were rounded up ahead of the arrest, which took place as he stepped off a flight from India's western commercial hub of Mumbai. Another 250 members of the MDMK party, which Vaiko heads, were detained when they tried to march on the airport at Chennai to welcome him, police and witnesses said.

"She is using POTA for political vendetta" Vaiko said at the airport. His arrest follows his speech supporting the banned Liberation Tigers for Tamil Eelam (LTTE) at Tirumangalam on June 29. Jayalalithaa in a letter to Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee on July 2 had stated that unless actions like Vaiko's were sternly dealt with, terrorism worldwide would be encouraged. On July 8, eight MDMK office bearers were arrested under POTA from different parts of Tamil Nadu on similar grounds. The return of Vaiko to Chennai from the U.S. and his arrest were on expected lines. In fact, Vaiko had advanced his arrival from July 14 to yesterday.

Chennai police are cooperating with the special team from Tirumangalam led by Super-intendent of Police Ayush Mani Tewari. A convoy of vehicles accompanied the van carrying Vaiko to Tirumangalam. In Mumbai, where he landed last night, and again on his plane to Chennai, Vaiko has been consistently unrepentant. Vaiko told reporters he would not be cowed down by the

"fascist" Tamil Nadu government. He told a television channel in an interview that he stood by his support to the LTTE as the organisation was standing by the Tamils of Sri Lanka.

He said that the DMK leaders had in the past strongly backed the struggle of the Tamils of Sri Lanka and it was his duty as a 'Dravidian' party to back the struggle. He said that while he did not support violence, he stood by the struggle of the Tamils of Sri Lanka and would continue to do so. He described Jayalalithaa's decision to arrest him as "fascist" and said that his party would fight against such "misrule". As far as the LTTE was concerned, he was sure that a solution to the 40-year old ethnic issue in the island nation would be impossible without that organisation.

After the arrest of the eight MDMK leaders on Monday, the State police had swung into action to take nearly 3,000 MDMK cadres under preventive custody pending Vaiko's arrest. The MDMK, meanwhile, has called for 'road roko' (blocking transport) throughout the state today.

On Wednesday and again yesterday afternoon Jayalalithaa was closeted with senior home ministry and police officials. The police are determined to put down any disruption of transport because of the MDMK agitation. So far as Jayalalithaa is concerned, the arrest - and there is speculation that Vaiko who has been arrested on a non-bailable warrant may spend quite some time in custody - is a message to the BJP to dump the other NDA allies in Tamil Nadu in favour of her AIADMK.

The BJP is caught in a cleft stick. It cannot stand by Vaiko's attitude to the LTTE against which it has just extended a ban originally imposed after the assassination of the late prime minister Rajiv Gandhi. Vaiko's regional party has two members in the council of ministers in the ruling federal coalition in New Delhi. BJP spokesman Arun Jaitley said that while the party did not support the LTTE, it was not happy about Vaiko's arrest. DMK chief Karunanidhi said that POTA was being mis-

used and that Vaiko was being arrested by Jayalalithaa, just as he had been the victim of her misrule last year.

The Congress supports the arrest but party chief Elangovan says that whether the state should have taken recourse to the POTA was arguable.

The reactions of the other apologists of the LTTE in Tamil Nadu have been muted, like those of PMK's Ramadoss and Nedumaran, suggesting that the LTTE which is waiting for talks with the Sri Lankan government, does not want to over-react.

It must be noted that the MDMK did not get a single seat in the last Assembly elections. Against this background, it is debatable whether Jayalalithaa's action against Vaiko will work in his favour or further marginalise the party, which is the main voice of the LTTE in Tamil Nadu.

The BJP will also have to decide whether it wants to go to the next general election - as and when it is held - with the motley crowd from TN or a single representative of the State, the AIADMK. Jayalalithaa's decision to arrest Vaiko is the opening salvo of a political declaration of war, since she believes that the AIADMK is here to stay - at least in the foreseeable future.

Mediamen kept away

Madurai, July 12: Police have virtually fortified the magistrate's quarters here, where MDMK leader Vaiko, arrested in Chennai under POTA, was produced. Presspersons were prevented from talking to the leader. Police said they were instructed by officials from Chennai not to allow the media meet Vaiko. Despite heated arguments between the police and the pressmen, the police did not allow the media to enter the magistrate's quarters. Police Commissioner Suriya Prasad said, "You can take photographs but definitely no press meet". The commissioner did not even allow in the advocates who wanted to represent Vaiko. "It is our basic right to represent our client. You cannot hinder us," they shouted. "We want to know whether our client is okay...alive and in good condition..you have been harassing him since yesterday," shouted Asai Thambi a lawyer.

As the lawyers kept on shouting, the Commissioner said any two of them would be allowed if Vaiko wanted their assistance. The lawyers were finally allowed in when Vaiko sought their

help. Meanwhile, MDMK partymen and lawyers described the police action as "torture", saying: "You can't ask our leader to travel another 400 km to Vellore after he travelled all the way from Chennai to Madurai (over 400 kms). They said Vaiko was already tired after his long journey from Chicago.

Vaiko shifted to Vellore jail

MDMK leader Vaiko, arrested in Chennai under POTA yesterday for his pro-LTTE utterances on June 29, was today remanded to judicial custody till August 7 and shifted to Vellore jail from Madurai central prison. City Magistrate (VII) Vanitha, who is in charge of the Thirumangalam magistrate court, remanded the MDMK chief to judicial custody for 27 days, rejecting Vaiko's written objection claiming that under Section 25 of the POTA a magistrate had no power to either issue a non-bailable warrant (NBW) or remand a person. After his remand, he was taken to the central prison from where he was moved to Vellore jail at the instruction of officials from Chennai, police said.

However, officials did not give any reason for immediately shifting Vaiko to Vellore jail. Earlier at about 0400 hrs, police officials, who were taking Vaiko to Vellore jail, returned after getting directions from the state headquarters. In a message sent through his lawyer, Vaiko said he was very happy to go to the prison for the welfare of the Sri Lankan Tamils. According to his lawyer, Vaiko also refused the offer of special class in the jail. "Whatever is eligible to me as an MP and income tax payer can be given to me, nothing extra... nothing special," Vaiko said. The magistrate ordered that Vaiko be lodged in the special room.

Karunanidhi Condemns

Chennai, 11 July - DMK president M Karunanidhi tonight condemned the arrest of MDMK general secretary Vaiko under POTA and said the AIADMK government's action had only "shattered" the promise given by Prime Minister A B Vajpayee that the Act would not be misused for political purposes. The DMK had already expressed apprehension that some state governments might misuse POTA and it has been proved right now, he told reporters, adding the provisions of the Act have been misused for arresting Vaiko. POTA should be used only to

curb the activities of terrorists and militants and should not be used for settling personal scores, he said. The DMK was of the firm view that only a negotiated settlement would provide Sri Lankan Tamils their due share in the island republic. He alleged that Tamil Nadu government was arresting political personalities only to divert people's attention from burning issues. "It was me last year. It is Vaiko's turn this year," he said in an obvious reference to his controversial arrest in June last year.

Ministers must be dropped

SALEM July 13 - Even while raising doubts over the need for invoking the Prevention of Terrorism Act (POTA) to arrest the MDMK leader, Vaiko, the general secretary of the Congress Jananayaga Peravai (CJP), P. Chidambaram, has called for the removal of those Central Ministers who continue to proclaim their support to the banned Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam.

Addressing a press conference, Mr. Chidambaram said that Mr. Vaiko's speeches backing the LTTE was condemnable, but whether it deserved the invocation of POTA was questionable. It had been the CJP's stand from the beginning that Act was a wrong law. However, when it came up in Parliament, the political parties such as the AIADMK, the DMK and the MDMK supported it.

At least now, he said, the MDMK would have realised its "folly" of having facilitated the passage of POTA. Armed with such a wrong law, the Tamil Nadu Government was emboldened to arrest an Opposition leader. There were other laws to deal with terrorism effectively.

Mr. Chidambaram said that by expressing solidarity with the LTTE, which stood convicted in the Rajiv Gandhi assassination case, the MDMK leader had hurt the sentiments of the Tamils here. If the MDMK Ministers in the Central Government continued to eulogise the LTTE, they should be dropped from the Cabinet. About the move to ban the MDMK, Mr. Chidambaram said the State Government could only effect the arrest and the power to ban a political party rested with the Centre.

It's misuse of POTA: Fernandes

Chennai, July 19. Defending the provisions of the Prevention of Terror-

ism Act (POTA) and the actions of the MDMK general secretary, Vaiko, at the same time, the Defence Minister and NDA convenor, George Fernandes, today claimed that POTA was misused in the case of Mr. Vaiko.

The pro-LTTE speech in Madurai did not attract the provisions of POTA and, therefore, this arrest was a violation, Mr. Fernandes said after calling on Mr. Vaiko at the Vellore jail.

"I do not think what has happened to Mr. Vaiko falls within the ambit of POTA. He should not have been here (in the jail). POTA has been violated in this case (the arrest of Mr. Vaiko). The NDA has already made its stand very clear that this was not the purpose of POTA," he told mediapersons in Vellore.

For now, the Centre had no plans to intervene in the issue. Nor was any action being contemplated against the Tamil Nadu Government, which, according to him, had misused POTA. "Mr. Vaiko is a revolutionary. He does not need our support or anyone's help."

Asked about corrective measures to prevent "misuse" of POTA, he said "I am of the opinion that at some point of time, the courts will have to decide on this."

Swamy flays TNA leaders

Chennai, July 15. Reacting to the statement made by Sri Lankan Tamil parties comprising the Tamil National Alliance (TNA) calling upon the Indian central government and the Tamil Nadu State government to release Vaiko, the Janata Party president, Subramanian Swamy, said: "The statement made by the five-party Tamil Alliance, which represents Tamils who have surrendered to the LTTE, has shamelessly appealed to the Tamil Nadu Government to free the MDMK leader, Vaiko, from prison.

These so-called Tamil leaders do not realise that in India, we value life a little more than Sri Lankans." In a statement released here today, Dr. Swamy said, "The LTTE killed Rajiv Gandhi on Indian soil, after having lived off Indian hospitality for years. We Indians will never forget or forgive that. They (the Tamil leaders) have shamelessly forgotten that their Presidents and several Ministers have been killed or attempted to be killed by the LTTE, not to mention the decimation of Tamil leadership by the terrorist organisation."

'Criminal defamation' law scrapped: 19 June - Sri Lanka's parliament legislated on 18 June to scrap the nearly 120-year-old draconian criminal defamation law that was

used to stifle media criticism of senior politicians. Protests against the law, that had a jail term of up to two years for those found guilty, gained momentum in recent years after two senior editors were given suspended sentences for criticising President Chandrika Kumaratunga.

"This is a major step towards making a free society," Mass Communications Minister Imthiyas Bakeer Makar told parliament which unanimously votes to repeal the law.

Officials said defamation would remain an offence under a civil law where there was little scope for political interference. The amendment to the criminal defamation act is one of several reforms promised by the United National Party during its election campaign.

Govt-LTTE direct talks: June 19 - The senior-most Government official in charge of the Sri Lankan peace process flew to LTTE-held territory 18 June for the second time in a bid to resolve differences between the two sides amid diminishing prospects for early peace talks.

Bernard Goonetilleke, who heads the Prime Minister's Peace Secretariat, traveled to LTTE-controlled northern Sri Lanka for a meeting with its political wing leader, S.P. Tamilselvan, to resolve differences between the two sides on the implementation of the ceasefire agreement. The LTTE maintains it will not agree to direct talks till the provisions of the truce agreement are fully implemented. An official of the Norwegian Government, which is facilitating the peace process, accompanied Mr. Goonetilleke.

One of the main LTTE complaints is that the armed forces had not vacated public buildings, schools and temples in the northeast, though they should have begun doing so by the 30th day of the truce coming into effect.

A statement from the Peace Secretariat today said that following Mr. Goonetilleke's visit, the two sides had agreed on a joint team "of Government representatives, the Sri Lanka Monitoring Mission and other interested parties" to visit the buildings in question to ascertain the position. The two sides also discussed the still unresolved matter of public transport on the LTTE-controlled stretch of a recently reopened highway connecting northern Sri Lanka with the

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rest of the country.

"On the larger aspects of the peace process, views were exchanged on the deproscription of the LTTE, negotiations between the two parties and other confidence-building measures intended to further strengthen the confidence of the people in the peace efforts," the statement added.

Talks in the 'doldrums': June 19 - Formal peace talks between the Government and the LTTE are to be further delayed. Articles in pro-LTTE publications have made it clear that the talks would not take place according to the Government's calendar. On 17 June, the London-based *Tamil Guardian*, seen as an accurate reflector of LTTE views, said the Norwegian-facilitated process was in the "doldrums" because the Government had "renege" on its pledge to implement the truce agreement.

It accused the military of a "belligerent attitude" for not moving out of public buildings, schools and temples in the north-east, and said the argument that the troops needed time to construct alternative accommodation in the peninsula was "fallacious".

Arguing that the troops in the peninsula had been sent when the Government was at war with the LTTE, the weekly made a case for a complete withdrawal of the armed forces from the region. Accusing the Government of abandoning its "phased" approach to the resolution of the conflict, the journal has said that instead of concentrating on setting up an interim administration in the north-east, the Government was now talking of linking this to discussions on "core" political issues. The LTTE has made it clear that it does not want to talk of a final solution to the conflict at this stage, and all that it wants now is talk about an "interim administration" which would give it total control over the north-east.

"The rapid progress of the Norwegian peace initiative earlier this year was based on a common understanding that a permanent solution would require compromise and accommodation which would be difficult, if not impossible, at this stage of a peace process, and that an interim solution is therefore required to bridge the present with till such time as "core issues" can be agreed upon and discussed," the paper stated.

Govt too is 'not in a hurry' for talks: June 20 - Following repeated assertions by the LTTE that there would be no peace talks till the Sri Lankan Government implemented

the February truce agreement in full, the Government said today that it too was in no hurry to begin direct negotiations.

"The Government wants to emphasise that it is not in a desperate hurry. We are not interested in speed for the sake of speed," said G.L. Peiris, Cabinet spokesman and one of the Ministers directly in charge of the peace process.

He said the Government was "not unduly concerned" about the delay and that it was more important to ensure the stability of the peace process. The Government, which had first projected talks in May, had revised it to the last week of June or early July.

Tigers protest against attack: June 21 - The Liberation Tigers issued a statement today condemning the attack allegedly carried out jointly by the Sri Lanka Navy and the para military group Eelam People's Democratic Party. (EPDP) on two of their cadres, Mr. Semmanan, the political leader in the islands and Mr. Thayalan, a political activist.

The statement said, "Mr. Semmanan and Mr. Thayalan were brutally attacked Thursday (20 June) night at about 9 p.m. at the Velanai bus company junction by Sri Lanka Navy personnel and the anti-national element, EPDP, with the sole intention of killing them. The SLN personnel and the anti-national group fled from the scene when the people of the area raised cries and rushed to the scene.... The Velanai incident has proved that the Sri Lanka Navy is all out to suppress the upsurge and the freedom struggle of the Tamil people through arms." The LTTE has called for stern action against the attackers.

UNICEF saves 60 child soldiers: June 21 - A UN agency said that more than 60 children recruited as soldiers by the Tamil Tigers have been demobilised following its intervention. The UN agency for children, UNICEF, said the youngsters were released over a period of one year after it took up the issue with the LTTE. "The organisation's efforts have resulted in successful disengagement of over 60 children," UNICEF said in a statement. "However, much more needs to be done."

The LTTE has been accused of deploying a baby brigade despite 1998 assurances to UNICEF's Special Representative for Children in Armed Conflict

Olara Otunnu that no one under 18-years old would be used as a combatant. Last July, UNICEF's executive director Carol Bellamy accused the Tigers of breaking a pledge and continuing to recruit children, some as young as 10-years old.

UNICEF officials met with the LTTE members in the rebel-held northern Wanni region recently "to explore further opportunities to protect the rights of children affected by the armed conflict," the agency said.

"They have made a serious commitment to stop recruiting children," Isma-lebbe Zanofer, UNICEF's program officer, told reporters. "They have agreed not to use children under 17 in combat," adding that the verbal agreement was given by Pulithevan, a senior cadre in the LTTE's political wing, during a meeting held last week in the LTTE controlled Wanni.

Mutur LTTE office attacked: June 21

- A group of unidentified persons allegedly to be members of an auxiliary force destroyed the Mutur LTTE office today around 7 pm. At that time of the attack, the LTTE office had been closed for the day. Tension prevails in the Mutur town following the attack, residents said.

Peace process reached a hiatus: June 21

- Sri Lanka's main opposition party the People's Alliance (PA) said that the government's peace process with the LTTE has reached a period of hiatus. Former Foreign Minister Lakshman Kadirgamar told reporters in Colombo on that "We do not know where the process is heading." Commenting on the fact that a date for the talks had still not been fixed, Mr Kadirgamar said, "We do not know if the talks will not be held at all."

Stating that the PA has not been invited to associate with the government at the forthcoming peace talks with the LTTE, Mr Kadirgamar added, "The question of PA being associated with talks is premature because at this time the PA is in a position where it does not know what the shape and structure and most importantly what the agenda is going to be."

Kadirgamar said that even the government did not know where the process stood. "It may well be that the government is not really thinking about it. We cannot dig out information that does not exist and the government has not reached any kind of conclusion on the agenda," he said.

Saying that the LTTE and the government have started trading allegations, Mr Kadirgamar said "The process of allegations and counter allegations is taking centre stage. One cannot discount the

possibility that the parties will never sit down to talks. "We are now in a state of a hiatus," Kadirgamar said. "No one knows what is going on."

Kadirgamar said the de-proscription could be linked to bona fides on the part of the LTTE and that the opposition was not against the government's stand that the ban will be removed 10 days before the talks open. Kadirgamar said the opposition supported the idea of establishing an interim administration to run the island's embattled northern and eastern regions, but it should not be taken up in isolation of other issues. "Otherwise, there is a danger of the interim solution leading to a de facto situation that will become the permanent solution. That is a recipe for permanent disaster," Kadirgamar said.

British mine clearers in Jaffna: June 21

- A British mine clearing organisation, the HALO Trust has begun a five year project in the Jaffna peninsula, reports from Colombo said. Halo's activities will begin with a six month survey of northern Sri Lanka, the charity said.

HALO will help in the ongoing mine clearance activities to aid the resettlement programme in the Jaffna peninsula, Programme Manager, Richard Boulter said. HALO, which will begin clearing operations in government controlled areas with an initial staff of 40 de-miners and hopes to train 500 local people in the work, opened an office in Jaffna on Wednesday. HALO aims initially to deploy nine manual teams, three mechanical units, 3 vegetation cutters and employ a staff total of over 300.

"We have requested the assistance of the Security Forces and discussed the operation plans with the Defence Ministry," said Boulter. The initial program will cost four million US dollars. HALO is partly funded by the UK Government.

HALO says it is being supported by the European Community Humanitarian Office (ECHO) and Foundation Pro Victimis to undertake a mine and danger area survey of northern Sri Lanka. The survey is expected to last six months from June.

Probe into assault: June 23

- The head of the international ceasefire monitors in Sri Lanka, Major General Trond Furuhoide, has called on the government to appoint an independent commission into the assault of two members of the LTTE's political section in Velanai village on the Jaffna island of Kayts. "In addition to this, the Army, Navy, Police and LTTE will each do a separate thorough investigation on the alleged as-

sault," the Sri Lanka Monitoring Mission (SLMM) said in a statement 22 June. The SLMM also said it would establish a permanent presence in the islands.

Following the receipt of the request from the SLMM, the Navy commander today said he had appealed to his men to act with discipline and assured that steps would be taken to prevent such incidents in the future.

The Defence Ministry sent a senior Navy official, Rear Admiral Mohan Wijesekera, Chief of Staff, to carry out preliminary investigations. A statement issued by the Commander of the Navy said while the involvement of naval personnel in the incident had not yet been conclusively established, he would order an enquiry into the assault. In addition, the Navy has also requested the Ministry of Defence to undertake an independent enquiry through a committee appointed by the Government.

Addressing Navy personnel stationed in the islets, Admiral Wijesekera reiterated that the force would not tolerate ceasefire violations committed by its men. The Sri Lanka Monitoring Mission has decided to open an office at Kayts, the main islet off Jaffna, to enable a quick response to complaints in the area.

Mannar Bishop lauds PM: 23 June - Rt.

Rev. Dr. Rayappu Joseph, Bishop of Mannar, paying a glowing tribute to Prime Minister said that the Church would back him to realise his noble vision to bring peace to Sri Lanka. The Bishop of Mannar said this in welcoming the Ministers who had come to assist the Madhu Shrine which is in dire need of state assistance to keep the Shrine ready for the pilgrims attending the two great feasts on July 2 and August 15.

"Prime Minister Wickremesinghe in his own humble ways has shown that he has a noble vision to achieve peace. We are with him in his efforts to bring the two parities to the negotiating table to bring about peace. The blessings of Our Lady of Madhu is with the Prime Minister in his efforts."

Interior and Christian Affairs Minister John A.E. Amaratunga, who made a donation of Rs. five lakhs to the prelate, said that he last visited the Shrine when the IPKF was operating here and said thanks to the initiative of Prime Minister Ranil Wickremesinghe today the people were able to travel freely.

Minister Jayalath Jayawardene said that the re-opening of the Madhu Road was an extension of the hand of friendship and peace from the people of the North to the people of the South.

At a conference held at the Shrine the

discussion was centred round providing facilities and amnesties to pilgrims to Madhu Church. According to the Church officials they expect to have over 150,000 devotees at the two feasts on July and August. It is claimed that July feast would be the first feast to be celebrated after two decades of war with the participation of a big congregation, while the Memorandum of Understanding signed between the Sri Lanka Government and Liberation of Tigers of Tamil Eelam remain operative creating a peaceful atmosphere.

SLMC Calls for restraint: 23 June - As tension rose in Trincomalee and other areas in eastern Sri Lanka following a complaint by the LTTE that its office in Mutur had been attacked by unidentified persons, according to newspaper reports, the leader of the SLMC, Mr. Rauf Hakeem, who is also a cabinet Minister, held extensive talks with defence authorities to discuss the issue of tension that had built up in the Trincomalee district.

"Minister Hakeem condemned the sinister elements which attempt to disturb the prevailing cordial atmosphere between the Muslims and Tamils in the East which came about consequent to the discussions between the LTTE and the SLMC leadership," the Sunday Observer reported, quoting the Defence Ministry. "The SLMC requests all peace loving Muslims to exercise restraint and not to fall prey to these extremist groups whose agendas go against the principles of peaceful cohabitation," the state paper

said.

New TULF Leader: 24 June - Mr. Veerasingham. Anandasangaree, MP from the Jaffna district, has been elected as President and leader of the Tamil United Liberation Front (TULF) following the death of its previous leader Mr M Sivasithamparam. Mr Anandasangaree had held the post of Senior Vice President for several years. With his elevation to the post of President of the Party, Mr. Joseph Pararajasingham, a parliamentarian from the Batticaloa district, was elected as Senior Vice President.

The party also decided to appoint Mr.K.Thuraiatnasingham from Muttur-east as its National List parliamentarian to fill the vacancy created by the demise of Mr. Sivasithamparam. The decision was made after several hours of discussions at the party's Central Committee meeting on Sunday, June 23 in the party Headquarters in Colombo.

After the meeting Mr. Anandasangaree said he would do his utmost to secure the just rights of the Tamil speaking people of Sri Lanka and he said he would fulfil the aspirations of his late leader Mr. Sivasithamparam. He recalled that he was the one who performed the leader's duties of the party for the last several years while Mr. Sivasithamparam was in Chennai, Tamil Nadu during his long period of illness. Known to be in opposition to the election of Mr Anandasangaree as leader of the TULF, Mr. Mavai Senathirajah, another senior leader of the party, did not attend the meeting.

He announced earlier that he was going to push for postponement of the meeting since he did not agree with several other leaders in the party. He described Mr. Anandasangaree, as incompetent to run the party at this critical juncture. He said Mr. Sangaree disagreed with him in many ways during the last elections. He said further this is an ideal time to change the old guard and infuse new blood and ideas into the party hierarchy.

LTTE on recruitment of children: June 24 - The Tamil Tigers, who have been previously accused by human rights organisations of conscripting Tamil children, have given an assurance to a delegation from Amnesty International that the LTTE has set the minimum age for recruitment to their organisation at 18. The leader of LTTE's political section, Mr.S.P.Thamilchelvan, told the AI delegation when it met him on 19 June that the LTTE had made the policy decision following the adoption by the United Nations of a treaty on recruitment earlier this year.

The few members of the LTTE who are below 18 years of age at the time of adoption of the new policy had been returned to the custody of their parents or guardians and written statements of confirmation had been obtained from the latter, Mr. Thamilchelvan told the AI team during their 3-hour meeting. In discussions with Amnesty International on the rights of children and armed conflict, the LTTE had pointed out that it was maintaining a number of child

welfare centres in the war-devastated north and east and had complained that international humanitarian organisations were ignoring the plight of the youngsters, the sources said.

During its visit, the Amnesty delegation - which comprised Derek Evans, Claude Bruederlein, and Ingrid Massag - also met Mr. Balasingham Mahendran (Nadesan), the head of the Tamil Eelam Police Service, and Mr.Pararajasingham, head of the Tamil Eelam Judiciary, the sources said.

Derek Evans, a former Deputy Secretary General of Amnesty International, is currently working in the areas of leadership development, reconciliation and conflict resolution. Claude Bruederlein, former ICRC delegate and adviser to the UN

			
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on humanitarian affairs, is currently Program Director at the Harvard School of Public Health and Lecturer at the Harvard Law School. Ingrid Massagie is a researcher on Sri Lanka at Amnesty's International Secretariat.

General shut down in Trincomalee:

June 25 - The eastern port town of Trincomalee was brought to halt by a "hartal" staged to protest against the attacks on the political activists of the LTTE at Velanai in Jaffna district and the Mutur LTTE political office in Trincomalee district. Schools, business establishments, government departments and banks were closed, roads were deserted and with a few vehicles and people out. Muslim and Sinhala schools and business establishments also were closed. Tyres were burnt down in the town at important junctions. The police removed some of the burning tyres.

A large number of navy personnel were patrolling the Inner Harbour Road in the morning. Police personnel were posted near the Green Road in the town where the Trincomalee political office of the LTTE is located. Later the navy personnel were withdrawn. The police were also moved from some areas later.

Muttur town under curfew: June 25 - Mutur town in the Trincomalee district were put under night curfew from 12 noon Tuesday (25 June) following clashes between Muslims and Tamils which ended in several injured on both sides. Five people have been admitted to the Trincomalee hospital and two are said to be in critical condition. The clashes occurred in the context of the hartal organised to protest against the previous attack on the LTTE office in Muttur by unidentified persons.

As tension prevailed in the town some Tamil families have sought refuge in two Christian churches. Police protection has been provided to these churches following threats from anonymous persons, the sources said.

The police and army were sent to the town of Muttur in eastern Sri Lanka on 23 June to quell riot there following clashes between the minority Muslim and Tamil communities. At least five people were injured as the police used tear gas to bring the situation under control.

Police said that around 1,000 Tamils and an equal number of Muslims clashed around 9.30 a.m. local time following Sunday's attack of a political office of the separatist Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) rebels town. The attack on the political office was blamed on a group of Muslims.

Police said that members of the Scandinavian ceasefire monitoring team were also summoned to bring the situation under control where a Mosque had been set on fire in addition to an attack on a Catholic church. A large number of Tamils marched towards Pachchanoor from three corners-Killiveddy, 58th milepost and Mallikaitheivu shouting slogans and holding placards demanding the government to take immediate steps to arrest members "Osama" group who were behind the attack on LTTE Mutur office.

A memorandum was submitted at the end of the march at Pachchanoor to one of the members of SLMM in Trincomalee referred to three incidents for the situation that had arisen: (1) The serious attack on the LTTE political leaders in the Islands of Jaffna (at Velanai) by the EPDP and allegedly assisted by members of the Naval team on 20 June; (2) In Pachchanoor (64th mile) in Mutur on 20.06.2002 where thirteen of the cement built crosses belonging to the Roman Catholic faith were vandalized and desecrated by a group of designing individuals. The members of the Catholic faith who staged a sit in strike preventing traffic on the road on the 64th mile was peacefully dispersed by intervention of the police on 21.06.2002; and (3) The gang headed by one Hakim, the Jihad leader of Mutur who now calls his gang OSAMA GROUP, had at about 7.45 p.m. on 21.06.2002 went to Ayliady in Mutur where the LTTE political office is situated. He had got the electricity connection severed prior to the attack on the LTTE office. They had broken open the doors and caused damage to the office table and about ten chairs, the fan and other items in the said office. The memorandum alleged that these were not isolated incidents but were well planned and executed actions on the part of those who are against the Tamils who are awaiting a fair and just solution to their problems.

Over 100,000 heroin users in Lanka:

25 June - Over hundred thousand people in Sri Lanka are addicted to heroin and nearly 10,000 users are from Colombo urban area, director of Police Narcotics Bureau, Senior Superintendent of Police Pujitha Jayasundera revealed today. Jayasundera said that use of heroin was on the increase and heroin users spent nearly 500 rupees daily for their dose of heroin. He stressed the importance of prevention before detection and prosecution and appealed to all Sri Lankans to cooperate with the police in their campaign. Jayasundera also admitted that some police officers have not taken serious action against drug peddlers and drug users

in the past. The government has started a weeklong island wide anti drug campaign commencing 24 June to 30 June to create greater awareness on the ill effects of drugs.

LTTE announces its custom duties: 26

June - Through a formal advertisement in the Tamil daily "Sudar Oli" on 23 June, the LTTE announced its customs duty structure for goods being taken into Northern areas of Sri Lanka.

The duty ranges between 5% and 25%. But within strict limits, articles meant for personal use, could be brought in duty free. For example, a family can bring in one radio or a tape recorder worth not more than Rs.6,500. It could take one gas cooker, mixer and iron.

Interestingly, the announcement makes a distinction between "Sri Lanka" and "Tamil Eelam". It says that "Sri Lankan" government servants coming to "Tamil Eelam" on transfer, and those people coming from "Sri Lanka" or "other countries" with an intention to live in Tamil Eelam permanently, can bring their personal effects without paying duty.

Agricultural implements and fishing gear attract the lower duty of 5%. Some food items also attract 5%. But fruits and manufactured food items attract 10 to 15%. There is a Rs.1 tax on each egg and each coconut. Cigarettes are taxed at the rate of 35 cents per cigarette and match boxes at 25 cents per box. Betel leaves and betel nuts are also classified as luxuries and a 10% duty is levied on them. The tax on health, household and beauty products varies between 8 and 20%. Products made in aluminium or silver and even polythene shopping bags attract a duty of 20%. There is a 12.5% tax on cooking gas.

There is a 20% levy on calendars and office stationery. The tax on bicycles and tractors is 7.5%, but bicycle parts attract a levy of 15%. Baby foods, toys, and books and stationery meant for school going children have been exempted from duty.

'LTTE's only goal is Eelam' says JVP:

26 June - Mr. Wimal Weerawansa, propaganda secretary of the JVP, said Mr. Ranil Wickremesinghe had already acceded to almost all the unreasonable demands made by the Tamil Tigers even before the proposed peace talks scheduled to be held in Thailand. He said the LTTE had already widened their activities like collecting taxes, opening police stations, new banks and openly recruiting soldiers for Tamil Eelam Forces. Today the LTTE was trying to show to the

world that two separate states existed in this country. The LTTE's sole motive was to achieve four basic conditions required to form a separate state according to the Monte Vide convention accepted by the UNO. In a nutshell these 4 basic conditions were: 1. An army on par with the existing army of the lawfully recognized state. 2. A considerably large population of people in the proposed new or separate state. 3. Recognizable and marked borders for the proposed separate state. 4. To prove to the international community, the existence of a separate Tamil state for a long period of time.

Mr. Wimal Weerawansa claimed that LTTE by now has been capable of achieving three of these basic requirements to form a separate state of their own or in other words an 'Eelam' and they are yet to touch the most sensitive point for the people in the South, that of marking their borders. "We of the Opposition have now planned to educate the masses regarding the disastrous effects of this proposed secret pact between the LTTE and the UNF government and we would even go from house to house to reveal to the people the contents of this pact".

Violence rocks eastern Lanka: 27 June, BBC - Clashes between Muslims and Tamils have spread across eastern Sri Lanka, reportedly leaving one person dead and at least 50 injured in a number of separate attacks. The clashes which first began in Muthur town in Trincomalee district have now spread to the Valaichchenai area in Batticaloa district. It is still unclear exactly why they are taking place now.

A curfew has now been imposed in the Valaichchenai area but reports from Batticaloa say it failed to prevent a grenade attack late in the day which killed one civilian and injured about 20 people. This followed a number of small incidents in Valaichchenai earlier in the day where three buses were damaged in front of the police station and an ambulance attacked on its way back to the area from Batticaloa.

Journalists reported a grenade attack in the Valaichchenai market in the morning in which four people were injured and taken to the local hospital. As night fell, shops in Valaichchenai were reportedly still burning.

There are also reports that several shops belonging to Muslims were set on fire in another area and more minor injuries in separate clashes between the two communities.

Meanwhile, there were initial signs of trouble brewing in Ampara district in the morning but it appears the local au-

thorities have calmed the situation there. And in Muthur Town where the tension first started several days ago a high-level meeting of political and religious leaders was being held to try to resolve the problem.

Several theories have been put forward for why this is happening now. Some argue that Muslims as Sri Lanka's third largest community feel excluded from the current peace process between the government and Tamil Tiger rebels. Others say they are fed up with extortion and harassment allegedly at the hands of the rebels. Some of the media have suggested extremist Islamist groups with international links are involved, but Muslim politicians deny such groups even exist in Sri Lanka. But there are also fears being expressed about whether those who oppose the peace process in Sri Lanka might be helping to incite the trouble - though there is no proof that the frustrations being expressed are not local ones.

Officials say they hope they can prevent the tension from spreading but if it does there are likely to be serious consequences for the peace process.

Refugees awaiting return of normality: June 28 - Over 66,000 Tamil refugees staying in 111 camps in the State of Tamil Nadu in south India are willing to return home, but only after the "restoration of normality" in the island nation, the Sri Lankan Minister for Rehabilitation, Resettlement and Refugees, Jayalath Jayawardena, said today. The Minister, who visited the camps yesterday, was categorically told by the refugees that they would return only after a "safe environment is created" back home.

Tamil Nadu plays host also to 25,000 Sri Lankan Tamils outside the camps. The cash-strapped State spends Rs. 25 crores annually on providing food and shelter to the refugees, besides offering free education to students among them.

Though despatch of the refugees will relieve the Government of a huge financial burden, it is not in a hurry to send them back home, until after the return of peace on the island, say officials. "They do not want to become refugees again. They want to come back as citizens of Sri Lanka when the ground situation becomes normal and they feel they will be in a safe environment," Mr. Jayalath told the media, after meeting the Chief Minister, Jayalalithaa, at the Secretariat here.

"There are one million landmines in the northeastern region of Sri Lanka. Can we take them back to the landmines?" Hence, the resettlement would have to await the outcome of the Sri Lankan Government's proposed peace talks with the

Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam.

However, the Deputy High Commissioner here would visit the refugee camps periodically - once in three months - to facilitate the rehabilitation. A booklet on the documents required by the refugees to return home would be distributed in the camps. "The Chief Minister was very happy with this proposal," said Mr. Jayalath. The Sri Lankan Deputy Commissioner's office in Chennai would make arrangements to issue travel documents "within one day" to refugees wishing to return home immediately, he said.

NPC on overcoming violence: June 28 - The National Peace Council of Sri Lanka in a statement issued today said, "Incidents of violence taking place in the north and east have led to curfews being declared in some areas. Members of the LTTE have been targeted for violence in two such incidents in Kayts in the north and Muttur in the east. In addition there have been acts of arson that have affected businesses and clashes between Tamil and Muslim groups. The National Peace Council is especially concerned about the violence in the east as it has served to increase tensions between the Tamil and Muslim communities. We condemn these acts of violence that have taken place at a time when both the government and LTTE are experiencing difficulties in implementing the obligations they have in terms of the Ceasefire Agreement.

"We appreciate the LTTE's restraint for not reacting violently even in self-defence and hope for similar restraint in the future as well from both sides. We also appreciate the action of the government in speedily appointing a special commission of inquiry with a two week time frame to investigate the incident at Kayts. We further note that there are several mediating mechanisms in place to avoid future acts of violence, so that legitimate frustrations can be addressed and solutions be found non-violently. These mediating mechanisms include the Sri Lanka Monitoring Mission, the government's Peace Secretariat and the possibility of bilateral talks, as already demonstrated by the positive dialogue that the LTTE and SLMC have had with each other.

By and large the vast majority of people of all ethnic communities wish to, and would, live peacefully side by side with each other rather than be participants in inter-ethnic violence. It is important for the government, LTTE and civic groups to create an environment in which extremists will be marginalised and not rewarded or validated for their acts of violence and intransigence. There is a need to both strengthen the mediating mecha-

nisms in place and to create awareness among the general population about the need for patience and trust so that the mediating mechanisms in place can do their work of resolving conflict in a peaceful manner."

President wants human rights issues on agenda: June 28 - President Chandrika Kumaratunge met with a delegation of Amnesty International (AI) led by Derek Evans this afternoon presidential spokesman Harim Pieris told reporters. He said that the AI delegation briefed the President regarding their visit to LTTE areas and the President thanked the visiting delegation for their interest in the human rights situation in Sri Lanka. Pieris added that a discussion ensued on the importance of human rights within the context of the current peace process and the issue of LTTE's use of child soldiers was also discussed. The President had briefed the delegation on her proposal that human rights issues be on the agenda for talks with the LTTE and the measures that she as the President had taken in the past to strengthen human rights including the setting up of the Human Rights Commission and the National Child Protection Authority, together with other executive and administrative measures. Peiris said that Amnesty International delegation also expressed their concern regarding the recent reinstatement of police officers indicted for various human rights abuses in the past.

Tamils need their own army: June 29 - Joseph Pararajasingham, the newly elected Senior Vice President of the Tamil United Liberation Front (TULF) and a Tamil National Alliance (TNA) MP, told the visiting French and Dutch Ambassadors in Batticaloa on 24 June that the Tamil people needed their own army to secure and protect their rights in Sri Lanka. "The Tamil people believe that if they are to enjoy their rights, the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) should be a match to the Sri Lankan army," the Tamil daily "Sudar Oli" quoted him as saying. According to Pararajasingham, Tamil youth are joining the LTTE voluntarily and in large numbers, because of they believe that the Tamils need an army that can match the Sri Lankan forces.

LTTE calls for end to violence: June 29 - Mr. Thamichelvan, head of LTTE political wing, said he spoke to Mr. Rauff Hakeem, Minister for Port and Shipping and leader of Sri Lanka Muslim Congress about the riots that broke out in the southern Tamil Eelam early last week. He said he asked Mr. Hakeem to hold talks with LTTE local leaders in the region to bring

the situation under control.

Mr. Thamichelvan said the LTTE leadership was shocked and grieved over the violence continuing for full five days in Amparai, Maddakalappu and Thirukkonamalai. He said the LTTE leadership contacted government officials and Muslim religious leaders as well as politicians to find ways to end the riots. But the violence continued unabated due to misunderstandings on both sides involved in violence.

Cost of the war: June 29 - Sri Lanka has incurred a mind-boggling military expenditure of Rs. 128,148.5 million from 1995 to 2000, mainly to execute the war. The country spent Rs. 14,610.2 million on the three forces in 1995. This expenditure escalated to Rs. 38,285.5 million in 2000, an almost 170 percent increase. However, Sri Lanka is one of the poorest countries in the world with an annual per capita income of 830 US\$ (about Rs. 76,360), according to the latest Central Bank report.

The country's annual revenue for 2000 was Rs. 264.5 billion. This means 14 percent of that revenue was spent on the three armed forces which left practically nothing in the national coffers for development, after debt servicing, as the expenditure under these two heads almost exceeded the annual revenue.

The military expenditure for this five year period has cost every person a massive Rs. 7119 million. The entire Mahaweli program had cost about Rs. 67 billion which means that if this massive expenditure of Rs. 128 billion could have been saved, two similar development programs could have been completed. This is the cost of the war in money terms and does not take into account the price paid in terms of human life, human misery and loss of national assets.

The Central Bank has yet to evaluate the extent of economic loss from the war, including the cost of the attack on the Central Bank in January 1996 and the Katunayake airport in July 2001.

SLMC leader blames LTTE for violence: 29 June - The leader of the Sri Lanka Muslim Congress (SLMC), Mr Rauf Hakeem, who is also a cabinet Minister said Muslims feared that the Tamil Tiger were trying to ethnically cleanse them after clashes in the island's eastern province killed five people.

Four days of clashes between minority Tamils and Muslims have left four Muslims and one Tamil dead, injured more than 150 people and forced authorities to impose curfews to prevent any further violence.

Mr Hakeem, told a press conference today that the Muslim community in the

eastern province was under threat from the rebel Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE). "There is fear in the Batticaloa district (one site of the clashes) that there is an attempt to ethnically cleanse them (Muslims)," he said.

There is a history of animosity between the two communities with some 100,000 Muslims being chased out of the northern Jaffna peninsula in 1990 by the Tigers. Hakeem claims the Tigers have continued to intimidate and harass Muslim civilians in the east of the country.

Though a police curfew ensured the area was quiet through most of Friday, Hakeem said mobs had gutted the entire bazaar in the Valachanai town in eastern Sri Lanka destroying more than 100 shops. At least 90% of the shops he said belonged to Muslims.

He said five people had been killed in the four days of fighting while more than 150 Muslims and Tamils had been injured in the attack.

Mortars, which were fired in the town of Valaichchenai in Batticaloa district on Thursday (27 June), could not have fallen into the hands of the Tamils without the blessing of the LTTE, he said. "Muslims are fearing that there can be a 1990 Jaffna situation repeated in the east," Hakeem said.

"The LTTE claims they are the sole representatives of the Tamil people so it is important that they help maintain law and order," he said.

The incidents in the east posed "a substantial threat" to the ongoing peace process aimed at ending the country's drawn out separatist war, he added. Hakeem said that the LTTE had a responsibility to make the ceasefire agreement work by helping to maintain law and order.

In April Hakeem, who is also Ports Minister in the Colombo government, entered into a peace deal with Tamil Tiger leader Velupillai Prabhakaran that allowed thousands of Muslims to return to their homes. The LTTE also agreed to stop extorting money from the community. But Hakeem said the deal was being ignored.

Prison standoff ends peacefully: July 1 - A tense prison standoff involving about 400 inmates who took guards hostage in southern Sri Lanka ended peacefully on today according to officials.

The prisoners who raided the armoury of the prison, a Dutch colonial-era fort, agreed to lay down the guns they had seized during the uprising after being told their grievances would be looked into. A senior police official in sea-side Tangalla, about 150 km south of Colombo, said some of the prisoners were army deserters who had not been charged and were seeking a quick resolution to their cases. Some of the prisoners had

been held without charges for more than one year. There are an estimated 45,000 army deserters in Sri Lanka, which has a 120,000-strong army.

"They released the hostages and handed over the weapons," Interior Minister John Amaratunga told a news conference. He said the ministry had agreed to speedily bring charges against the detainees or release them and also transfer some of the prisoners to other jails.

An overnight curfew was slapped on the town after the revolt in which one policeman was injured and which caused intermittent shooting throughout the night. A government hospital next to the prison was also evacuated as a precaution with one doctor saying the beds were being kept vacant in case there was a shoot-out. The prisoners had demanded that the minister of justice and the attorney general should show up.

The revolt started when several prisoners overpowered two guards and then took 10 prison officials hostage. Strikes and riots are common in Sri Lanka's overcrowded prisons, but jailbreaks are rare. About 200 prisoners staged a hunger strike at a prison on the outskirts of Colombo in April, also demanding that their cases be heard quickly.

'Don't alienate Muslims' says LTTE

leader: 1 July - LTTE leader, Velupillai Pirapaharan has ordered his cadres in the East not to do anything that may alienate the Muslims from the Tamils and also to observe the MoU between him and the SLMC leader Rauff Hakeem in both letter and spirit. This was conveyed to the Muslims by the Amparai district LTTE organiser "Bawa" at a meeting organised by the SLMC MP, H.M.M.Harees, at Kalmunai on 27 June, according to a report in the Jaffna based Tamil language daily "Uthayan" today.

Bawa said that the LTTE was fighting not just for the Tamils but for the Muslims also. He said that Karikalan, the LTTE's political leader for Batticaloa-Amparai districts, was unhappy about groups competing with each other in organising hartals. He had said that frequent hartals were disrupting the life of the common man. In future, Karikalan said, hartals should be jointly called and should be organised only to serve common Tamil-Muslim ends.

Bawa said that the Muslims need not be afraid of the LTTE. It was not even necessary that they should come to see him. He would himself go and see them, wherever they might want him to go. "You can all gather in a mosque and I will come there. You can speak to me and discuss all your problems without the

slightest fear," the LTTE leader said.

Girl recruits flee LTTE camp: July 1 - At least six teenaged girls reportedly recruited by the LTTE in eastern Sri Lanka had fled their training camps and surrendered to Sri Lankan police, officials said on Sunday 28 June. The girls, all aged either 13 or 14, turned themselves on the previous day at a police post in Mahaoya, 346 km east of Colombo, they said. Police said the girls told them they were among 80 children being trained at a military camp run by the LTTE in the Sittandy area of Batticaloa district.

SLMM on protest hartals: July 2 - In a statement clarifying media reports in Colombo regarding its position in respect of hartals being organised in the north-east of the island, the Sri Lanka Monitoring Mission (SLMM) said that it "has not requested the LTTE leadership to stop Hartals and demonstrations, as might be understood from two separate news-reports today 2nd of July. Major General Trond Furuhojve, head of SLMM, met with the political leadership of LTTE in Kilinochchi on Friday and raised the issue of Hartals and demonstrations in general and the risks related to them."

The statement added, "General Furuhojve asked the LTTE to support the

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Government and the people on the East coast of Sri Lanka in calming down the recent unrest in the area. Mr. S.P. Tamichelvan, head of LTTE's Political Section reacted very positively to this request and promised that the LTTE would use their influence to calm things down and keep the situation under control."

"The Sri Lanka Monitoring Mission is not opposed to Hartals, demonstrations, meetings and other activity that can be considered as political and peaceful means of people to express their opinions. However the SLMM would like to stress that those who organize and participate in such activities must be responsible for keeping them under control and never let them lead to violent and tragic events where lives are lost and property damaged."

"The Government, LTTE, Muslim leaders and many other parties have co-operated quickly and successfully with the public in the last few days when stopping the unrest in Valaichenai and Mutur from escalating, and now the situation there is again calm and quiet. All parties can agree that such violent events only lead to escalated tension and human tragedy, that eventually harms all the people of Sri Lanka." "All people in Sri Lanka can make complaints to the SLMM if they believe they can point out a possible violation of the Ceasefire Agreement by the LTTE, the Sri Lankan Government or any other party," the SLMM said.

Curfew lifted: July 2 - The four-day long curfew clamped in the wake of the Tamil-Muslim clashes in the general area of Valaichenai - Oddamavadi 32 kilometres north of Batticaloa was lifted on 2 July morning. Tamil traders and businessmen were permitted to see the gutted remains of their shops and buildings in the Valaichenai bazaar. The area has been under curfew since Friday 28 June.

"We are ruined irredeemably because insurance companies do not pay for such calamities in the northeast," said a trader whose shop near the Sri Lanka army's camp in the Valaichenai fisheries harbour.

Robe robs monk entry yo bar: July 3 - A Buddhist monk in Sri Lanka has been barred from taking oaths as a lawyer as his saffron robes did not conform to the dress code stipulated by the island's highest court, an official said.

Supreme Court Registrar Bandula Atapattu said the unidentified monk was told he had to come for the swearing-in ceremony clad in either the national costume of sarong and high-collared long-sleeved shirt or in a Western suit.

"The robe is not the correct attire for someone wanting to take oaths as an attorney," said Atapattu who turned down the request last week. The monk's explanation that he would not practise as a lawyer but only wanted to formally end his education with the qualification did not cut any ice with the court officials.

Atapattu said this was the first attempt by a monk to be registered at the bar since another monk tried some 20 years ago. His robes, too, had robbed him of his rank.

Muslim-Tamil Peace Meeting: July 3 - A peace conference organised by Maj. Gen. Sunil Tennekoon, the General Officer Commanding of the 23 Division took place at around 3 p.m. on 3 July at Charles Hall in Batticaloa town. More than a hundred civil society activists and community leaders from the two communities attended the conference.

In his opening statement, Maj. Gen. Tennekoon said the purpose of the meeting was to develop confidence and understanding between the Tamils and Muslims and to discuss about the future.

"We, the Sri Lankan army and the Liberation Tigers, fought face to face in battlefields for 25 years. But today we are seated side by side as friends. All of us should explore the reasons why, while this is so, we, the Muslims and Tamils who speak the same language, are unable to live in amity," said Mr. N. Karikalan, a senior leader of the political division of the of the LTTE said.

"We are firm resolved that incidents such as the violence in Valaichenai should not happen again in the future. The SLA and we have decided that law and order should be established to prevent the recurrence of such incidents. There are some people who are trying to scuttle the peace process in a systematic manner. All the communities in this island will have to eventually suffer because of their actions. Our leader is not only negotiating peace with the Sri Lankan government but he has had discussions with representatives of the Muslims and the hill country Tamils. He respects the feeling of all the communities in this island," Mr. Karikalan said.

A senior leader of the Sri Lanka Muslim Congress and Deputy Minister Basheer Segu Dawood said: "There have been many peace conferences between the Tamils and Muslims since 1985. But this conference is particularly unique because, unlike in the past, the Liberation Tigers who are the sole representatives of the Tamil people are trying to bring about peace and harmony among the two communities and are directly involved in

the effort to re-establish good will among them. There are some youths among the Tamils and among the Muslims who have quick tempers. We believe that the Liberation can prevail on such Tamil youth. Similarly I believe that Muslim parties and leaders have the power to control quick-tempered youth among the Muslims."

Lt. Col. Anthoniz the SLA commander for Batticaloa, Mr. Visu, the head of the LTTE's political division for Batticaloa/Ampara, the Bishop of Batticaloa, Rt. Rev. Kingsley Swanpillai, Mr. Joseph Pararajasingham, Tamil National Alliance MP for Batticaloa and members of the Sri Lanka Monitoring Mission were also present at the conference.

Confession on journalist's murder: July 4 - According to reports from Jaffna, a person named Ponnambalam Tharmalingam, claiming to be a former EPDP member, surrendered at the special investigation unit of the Jaffna police on 3 July and expressed his willingness to make a confession to court in regard to the murder of Nimalarajan that took place in October 2000.

Mr. Ranjith de Silva, officer in charge of the special police unit produced Ponnambalam Tharmalingam before the Jaffna Magistrate under heavy security on 4 July. The Magistrate Mr. R.T. Vikanarajah recorded the confession from P. Tharmalingam in his chamber.

The confession may throw fresh light on the investigation into the much publicised murder of journalist, Mylvaganam Nimalarajan, legal sources in the north said.

Inquiry finds no evidence of assault: July 4 - A Sri Lankan Defence Ministry inquiry into the alleged assault of two senior political cadres of the Liberation Tigers on June 20 has concluded that there was no evidence to establish a case against any individual or person.

The Board of Inquiry appointed by the Ministry of Defence to inquire into the incident in the Jaffna island of Kayts "has concluded that there is no proof of evidence with regard to the alleged incident to establish a case against any individual or person," a Defence Ministry statement was issued on 3 July said.

The LTTE had earlier complained that Mr. Semmanan, their political leader in the islands, and Mr. Thayalan, one of their political activists, were attacked at the Velanai bus company junction on June 20 by Navy personnel and members of the Tamil political group, EPDP, wearing masks.

The Board of Inquiry was appointed

following the request by the head of the international ceasefire monitors in Sri Lanka, Major General Trond Furuhoed, to appoint an independent inquiry into the incident. But the two-member Board of Inquiry, which questioned 15 persons representing the LTTE, EPDP, civilians, Sri Lanka Navy (SLN), Sri Lanka Army (SLA) and Sri Lanka Police (SLP), comprised navy officials Rear Admiral L.B. Dharmapriya and Rear Admiral Mohan Wijewickrema.

The Defence Ministry statement added that the Board "has observed the contradictions between the statements made by the parties to the Police and the Board, lack of documentary evidence that could prove Navy involvement in the incident and the non-availability of categorical evidence to prove that any identified EPDP member had been involved in this incident."

Black Tiger day marked: July 6 - Several thousands people gathered in Nelliady in the Jaffna peninsula Friday July 5 to mark LTTE's Black Tigers day - the first time the event had been held here since 1995. July 5 is the anniversary of the death of the first Black Tiger, Captain Miller, who was killed destroying a Sri Lanka Army base located in the Nelliady Madhya Maha Vidiyalayam - the site of the commemoration this Friday.

Several thousands people marched in procession from Nelliady junction to the school to attend the event Friday evening. Mr. Arunan, head of the Liberation Tigers' political section in Vadamarachi, lit the traditional lamp to start the event. Ms Malvilzi of the LTTE hoisted the Tamil Eelam flag. The mother of Captain Miller, whose truck-bomb attack in 1987 killed scores of soldiers and stalled an SLA advance, also lit flame in remembrance. Mr. Paapaa, a senior official of the LTTE's political section, garlanded the portrait of Captain Miller.

Tigers kill 'spy': July 7 - The Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) last night allegedly killed a former militant, T. Premadasa, on charges that he was a 'spy' and was informing the Government of its activities, security sources said. Premadasa and his wife Pushparani were killed in a grenade attack on their house at a village in the Polonnaruwa district, about 230 km north of Colombo. According to security sources, about 20 LTTE rebels surrounded the house and attacked the residents.

The rebels have, in the past, killed civilians on charges of spying. However, the present killing comes at a time when the LTTE and the Government are observing a ceasefire aimed at ending the decades-long hostilities. The ceasefire

bars the two from fighting and has resulted in a process of deescalation of the military conflict. The LTTE, however, operates its police stations and courts in areas under its control and also levies its 'taxes'.

150 rescued in Red Sea: July 8 - The Saudi authorities said that they had rescued 150 people from a Sri Lankan fishing boat that was running out of fuel in the Red Sea.

Saudi Interior ministry officials said the vessel was found after an SOS call was picked up on Thursday 4 July. The 147 Sri Lankans and three Pakistanis aboard were said to be exhausted and hungry. A rescue ship towed their boat to the Saudi port of Yanbu about 900 kilometres west of the capital, Riyadh. It is not known where the fishing boat was heading for. The Saudi authorities have contacted the Sri Lankan and Pakistani embassies with a view to repatriating the group.

Visit to temple near airbase allowed: July 9 - The Sri Lanka army permitted devotees to visit and clean the premises of the Sri Rajarajeswari Amman temple near the Palaly military airport on 8 July. The temple is among more than hundred places of worship which fall within military occupied 'high security zones' in Jaffna's Valigamam North division. More than 2000 residents who lived in the temple's neighbourhood were evacuated by the SLA in 1987 and 1990 for expanding the defence perimeter of the Palaly military base and airport.

The visit to the Sri Rajarajeswari Amman temple was arranged by Sri Lanka's Minister for Hindu Affairs, Mr. T. Maheswaran. More than hundred and fifty devotees and the temple's priest were escorted by the SLA from Punna-laikadduwan to Kalamman Street near the Palaly military airport.

Mr. Maheswaran said that he explored the possibility of settling the priest's family in the temple premises. The SLA may consider allowing about ten families to resettle in the immediate environs of the temple initially, according to him.

The Government agreed to vacate temples occupied by the Sri Lankan security forces within 30 days of signing a ceasefire agreement with the Liberation Tigers in February this year. The LTTE, however, has accused Colombo of dragging its feet on fully implementing this clause of the ceasefire agreement.

Muslims discuss safety with PM: 9 July - The leader of Sri Lanka's Muslim Congress said he met Prime Minister Ranil Wickremesinghe on 9 July to obtain as-

surances of security for Muslims after violent clashes with Tamils in the east of the country during the last two weeks in June.

Rauff Hakeem said he wanted the government to reconsider the pullout of army camps from areas where minority Muslims live after ethnic clashes left at least 11 dead and hundreds of shops destroyed. "The government must rethink their strategy, the relocation of camps must be reviewed," said Hakeem.

Under a Norwegian-brokered ceasefire agreement between the government and Tamil Tigers that has seen the guns silenced after a nearly two-decade-long ethnic conflict, Sri Lanka agreed to pull its troops from schools and temples and other public buildings that were being used as barracks.

But clashes between Tamils and Muslims picked up last month, leaving Muslims worried that their safety would be compromised in the peace process as talks start in Thailand later in the summer.

"During the last so many months, the LTTE has breached many of the terms of the agreement," Hakeem said adding, "Through their diabolic actions they are trying to shift the blame on the government for everything."

But Hakeem, also a cabinet minister in the United National Party government, said his party supports the peace agreement and would not do anything to destabilise the government, but there is "a growing concern among the Muslims that their security has been compromised."

Ferial demands revision of ceasefire agreement: July 12 - The National Unity Alliance (NUA) has demanded a complete revision of the ceasefire agreement that has been signed by the Prime Minister and the LTTE leader. The NUA is one of the constituents of the main opposition People's Alliance (PA).

"The present form of the ceasefire agreement has number of shortcomings which can endanger the security of Muslims and Sinhalese in the east," Ms Ferial Ashraff, Amparai district parliamentarian and the leader of the NUA at a press conference held in Colombo on 12 July. Ms Ferial Ashraff said that the ceasefire agreement has failed to demarcate the boundaries of the State controlled areas and LTTE controlled areas in the North-east province, clearly. This has resulted in creating confusion in the minds of the people of the province and members of the security forces.

"The ceasefire now in force is one sided. It should be revised in such a way to provide justice to Muslims and Sinhalese in the east," said Ms Ferial Ashraff.

Three-member probe on Velanai incident: July 12 - A three-member committee has been appointed to probe the incident on 20 June in which, according to a complaint by the LTTE, its political activists Semmanan and Thayalan were beaten up by navy personnel and masked men believed to be members of a para military group Eelam People's Democratic Party (EPDP).

A Board of Inquiry appointed by the Defence Ministry found after investigation no evidence to substantiate the complaint against any person.

The committee comprising retired Air Vice Marshal Harry Gunatilake Mr. Oliver Weerasinghe and Mr. C.V.K. Sivagnanam has been empowered to inquire into the Velanai incident to ascertain those responsible for the attack and to recommend suggestions to prevent such clashes in future. The Committee has been asked to submit its report on or before 31st July this year.

Ratwatte to be indicted in HC: July 12 - The Attorney General has decided to indict all the eleven suspects including the former Deputy Defense Minister General Anurudha Ratwatte and his two sons Lohan and Chanuka in the Kandy High Court on seventy two counts in the Udathalawinne massacre case. The charges

include conspiracy to commit murder, aiding and abetting murder and murder. In this incident ten Muslim youths were killed on the parliamentary elections day-December, 2001 at Udathalawinne in the Kandy district.

State Counsel Mr. Achala Vengapuli submitted this to the Teldeniya Magistrate when ten suspects in the Udathalawinne massacre case were produced in court under heavy security. General Ratwatte has already been enlarged on bail. State Counsel further brought to the notice of the court that the Attorney General has made an application to the authorities concerned that this case should be heard before a three-member bench of the High Court without a Jury.

TNA calls for release of MDMK leader: July 12 - The Tamil National Alliance (TNA) has appealed to the Indian government and the Tamil Nadu state government to release Y. Gopalasamy (Vaiko), leader of the Marumarchi Dravida Munetra Kalagam (MDMK) and others who have been arrested and detained on charges of breaching the provisions of the Prevention of Terrorism Act by making speeches in support of the LTTE which is banned in India. "The arrest of Vaiko on the ground that he was supportive of the LTTE and his being

remanded causes deep anguish to the Tamil people in Sri Lanka," said a statement issued by the TNA on 12 April.

the failure to evolve an acceptable solution and that therefore there was justification for such armed struggle. "By reason of the ceasefire agreement signed between the Sri Lankan Government and the LTTE, the armed conflict in Sri Lanka has been terminated, and efforts are being made to commence negotiations towards peaceful resolution with the assistance of an international third party facilitator. The international community including India has extended their full support to these efforts. The vast majority of people in Sri Lanka irrespective of ethnicity are fully supportive of these efforts. The arrest of VAIKO in these circumstances on the ground that he was supportive of the LTTE and his being remanded causes deep anguish to the Tamil people in Sri Lanka. It would be relevant to note that the Tamil people in the northeast of Sri Lanka at the general elections overwhelmingly endorsed the policy that negotiations should only take place between the Sri Lankan government and the LTTE.

"We appeal to both the Indian central government and the Tamilnadu government to taken steps expeditiously to release VAIKO and others who have been arrested and detained. Such step would be a recognition of the ongoing peace process in Sri Lanka."

remanded causes deep anguish to the Tamil people in Sri Lanka," said a statement issued by the TNA on 12 April.

The statement signed by the parliamentary group leader of the TNA Mr. R. Sampanthan further said: "The TNA expresses its deep shock and disappointment at the arrest of Mr. Y. Gopalasamy - popularly referred to as "Vaiko" - the leader of the MDMK and a prominent members political leader in Tamil Nadu. Vaiko has frequently spoken up on behalf of the Tamils in Sri Lanka and demanded that there should be a just and durable solution to the Tamil question. He has also publicly articulated the view that the armed struggle in Sri Lanka was the consequence of

Abduction by LTTE alleged: July 14 - Sri Lankan police accused Tamil Tiger rebels of abducting at least six unarmed woodcutters in the northeast of the country in contravention of a ceasefire accord. Police in Aralaganwila, 230 kilometres (145 miles) northeast of the capital Colombo, said the villagers had been rounded up in the jungle on Saturday by armed members of the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE).

"They had gone into the jungle to cut timber when the LTTE members came and took them away. One of them was released later," said police spokesman H. A. Pushpakumara on Sunday.

He told journalists that the Tigers were demanding 140,000 rupees (1,470 dollars) for the release of the remaining five woodcutters.

Scandinavian truce monitors observing the ceasefire agreement between the government and the LTTE had been informed of the incident, as had the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), Pushpakumara said.

Under the February 22 truce between the LTTE and the Sri Lankan government, both parties must "in accordance with international law abstain from hostile acts against the civilian population, including such acts as torture, intimidation, abduction, extortion and harassment."

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A5 reopens after seven years: July 15 - The forty-kilometre stretch of road on the A5 highway, also known as the Badulla-Batticaloa road, from Chenkaladi to Maha Oya which goes through territory controlled by the Liberation Tigers has been opened to the public after seven years. The opening ceremony was held near Karuththapalam July 15 attended by senior LTTE officials and Sri Lanka Army officers. Batticaloa district Commander of the Sri Lanka Army, Major General Sunil Tennekon, Mr. Karikalan, Special head of the political section of the LTTE for Batticaloa and Ampara districts, Mr. Visu, head of the political section of the LTTE for Batticaloa and Ampara districts and Mr. Ali Zahir Mowlana, former district parliamentarian and presently the advisor to the Ministry of Policy Planning and Implementation attended the event.

Along the road, the Sri Lankan security forces have established two checkpoints, one at Chenkaladi and the other at Pullumalai. The LTTE has established two checkpoints, one at Kalikamadu near Chenkaladi and the second at Pullumalai. Sources said that the road is opened for twenty four hours without any restriction. Several bus depots have commenced their services to Batticaloa, Ampara, Badulla and other areas from Monday, sources said. The A5 runs from Batticaloa to Badulla.

Norway, LTTE discuss talks agenda: July 15 - The Norwegian Deputy Foreign Minister, Mr. Vidar Helgesen, met with the Liberation Tigers' chief negotiator and political advisor, Mr. Anton Balasingham, in London today and the discussions lasted from 10am to 1pm, according to LTTE sources. Mr. Helgesen was accompanied by Mr. Erik Solheim, special advisor to the Norwegian Foreign Ministry and Ms. Lisa Gold, an executive officer with the Foreign Ministry.

The meeting was intended to explore options with regards to taking the Norwegian peace initiative forward. The discussions included the agenda for peace talks in Thailand as well as the present political situation in the Sri Lanka, the sources said.

Except that the discussions were described as 'cordial and constructive', no details were given as to the possible date for talks between the Government and the LTTE. However, a Colombo-based Tamil daily, Sudar Oli, reported that the LTTE had told the Norwegians that it would not engage in any discussion on the modalities for talks before August 2 which is 160 days since the ceasefire agreement was signed between the two parties and is also the date by which the government has to meet several new com-

mitments. August 2 is the date by which the Sri Lankan army has to vacate all public buildings, temples and schools and despite the commitment made in the ceasefire, the government is under pressure not to implement this in full because of security concerns. It said that the LTTE's chief negotiator Anton Balasingham had reiterated the LTTE's position is that all terms of the truce should be completed before they can discuss matters related to the talks, including the date and agenda for the proposed negotiations in Thailand.

Balasingham had also strongly emphasised the need of the LTTE for a special sea lane to enable its cadre to travel from northern Sri Lanka to the eastern part of the island, a move the Navy is unsupportive of because it could facilitate the transportation of weapons.

SLFP power struggle goes to court: July 16 - The Colombo District Court today issued a restraining order on the senior leaders of the main opposition, Sri Lanka Freedom Party (SLFP) preventing them from suspending the party membership of Colombo district parliamentarian Mr. A.H.M. Fowzie. The District Judge said that his restraining order will be valid till 31 July this year. The SLFP is the major constituent of the main opposition Peoples Alliance (PA).

The District Court made this order after going through the petition filed by the former People's Alliance Minister Mr. Fowzie. In his petition Mr. Fowzie, the once powerful minister in the PA cabinet, stated that President Chandrika Kumaratunge in the capacity of President of the SLFP had sent him a letter seeking explanation on a statement he made advocating the formation of a national government. President Chandrika Kumaratunge has not been conferred with any power to expel members from the party without getting the consent of the executive committee. Mr. Fowzie said that he advocated the national government concept in the best interest of the country.

Mr. Fowzie has sought the court to issue a restraining order on Mr. Ratnasiri Wickremanayake and Mr. D.M. Jayaretna, senior leaders of the SLFP not to take any steps to expel him from the party.

'LTTE should stop discriminating the Muslims': 16 July - Outgoing Bangladeshi High Commissioner Ashraff-Ud Doula asked the LTTE to stop discriminating the Muslims in Sri Lanka. Doula said "The LTTE has been fighting a war for the last 20 years because of their perceived suppression. If the LTTE were to do the same thing to the Muslim minority it would be paradoxical."

Doula, a former Bangladeshi freedom

fighter and soldier who lost a limb during the war said, "When you talk about the Muslim crisis, it must be remembered that they are also a factor in the peace process in Sri Lanka because they are a sizeable community in this country. They have contributed towards the economic development of this country and become part and parcel of the country, socially, economically and politically. So, when you talk about peace you cannot keep them on the sidelines. They must be assured that they are also participants in the peace process and that peace will bring benefits to them too. It must be realized by the government of Sri Lanka as well as the LTTE that one cannot bring peace to the country without giving the right and the due share to the Muslims. It would be very contradictory for the reasons for which the LTTE is fighting a war; they will do the same thing to the Muslims. They should really look into this aspect and not give cause to the Muslims to feel unhappy and to feel discriminated against."

The High Commissioner showered praise on Prime Minister Ranil Wickremesinghe's efforts in the peace process. He said, "The chances of peace have never been brighter. This has been due to both internal and external factors. Wickremesinghe is very sincere in his effort to bring back peace into the country. He has already demonstrated his sincerity and walked more than half the distance."

Navy intensifies patrols: 17 July - Following the incident in which two foreign monitors of the international Sri Lanka Monitoring Mission (SLMM) were reportedly detained against their will in a trawler belonging to the LTTE on 13 July, Sri Lanka's navy intensified patrols yesterday as foreign truce monitors met with Tamil Tiger delegates to discuss the incident and India was asked to investigate the details of the trawler which apparently had Indian registration.

Following the alleged detention, the government has ordered the navy to beef up patrols to prevent any incursions into Sri Lankan territorial waters, the Defense Ministry said in a statement.

Hailing the services of the Scandinavian monitoring team for the manner they handled the mid-sea skirmish between the navy and the LTTE's trawler off the northern coast, the Government's Secretariat coordinating the peace process said "this latest incident has shown the true level of professionalism and courage displayed by these monitors". "They deserve our praise and our admiration for the work that they are doing to encourage peace to return our country", the statement said.

The Sri Lankan Navy stepped up its patrolling and surveillance to prevent illegal incursion into any part of the territorial waters of the country. The measure was taken after it was revealed that a trawler purported to be registered in India was involved in the skirmish. The vessel had been identified as "Meenachchi" bearing No: RMS 512. "We have asked the Indian high commission (embassy) to provide us with information on the trawler which carried a South Indian registration," Austin Fernando, Sri Lanka's defence secretary said.

'Uphold Ceasefire Agreement' - NPC:

17 July - The National Peace Council of Sri Lanka has in a statement issued today urged that the provisions of the Ceasefire Agreement signed by the government and the LTTE. The NPC statement said, "The National Peace Council expresses its concern about the incident involving an LTTE vessel that was boarded at sea by members of the Sri Lanka Monitoring Mission (SLMM). This was in pursuance of the monitoring role accorded to the SLMM by the ceasefire agreement signed by the leaderships of the government and LTTE. Instead of permitting the SLMM to perform its legitimate functions, two members of the international mission had been detained by LTTE cadre for several hours in the vessel. While there have been previous violations of the ceasefire agreement that have been acknowledged by the two sides, this would count as being the most serious.

In a context in which lack of trust between the government and LTTE has been high, unilateral actions that violate the ceasefire agreement could seriously endanger the peace process. Whatever may be the grievance, such unilateral actions should be avoided and the lines of communication should be kept open. We are aware that there has been a build-up of tension between the LTTE and government forces especially over the issue of freedom to move at sea. The SLMM had been playing a vitally important role in maintaining the ceasefire, and solving problems, between the government forces and LTTE. We believe that their presence and interventions on previous occasions in which tensions existed between the two sides has contributed significantly to the maintenance of peace.

We call on the LTTE leadership to take firm action to ensure that a recurrence of this type of action will not take place in the future. We are glad that they have expressed their regret to the SLMM over the incident. But it also important that the two sides should demonstrate their genuine commitment to the peace process by upholding the ceasefire agree-

ment. There are difficulties both sides might be experiencing with the ceasefire agreement, such as the freedom of movement at sea for legitimate purposes. These contentious matters need to be negotiated by the two sides without a violation of the ceasefire agreement. The viability of the peace process must not be compromised by actions that go contrary to the spirit and letter of the ceasefire agreement which stands as the country's most promising hope of enduring peace."

Probe into assault on LTTE members begins: July 17 - A Special Committee of Inquiry appointed by Prime Minister

Ranil Wickremesinghe today commenced sittings at the Jaffna Secretariat to probe an incident of alleged assault on two political members of the LTTE. The LTTE had alleged that the assault was carried out by Naval personnel who were assisted by masked men who belonged to the Eelam Peoples Democratic Party (EPDP).

The committee which is chaired by retired Air Marshal Harry Gunetilleke (former Commander of the Sri Lanka Air Force) has appealed for public support and sought the public's assistance to gather evidence for the conclusion of this inquiry.

As the sittings of the Committee began, statements of the Navy's Rear Admiral Weerasekera who is based in Jaffna were recorded as well as statements from the Jaffna police.

EU delegation meets LTTE: July 18 -

Ambassadors and Deputy Heads of Mission of six European Union countries visited the Vanni on 17 July, and held discussions with the head of the Liberation Tigers' political section, Mr. S. P. Tamilselvan. The delegation was headed by Mr. Salvatore Zotta, Ambassador of Italy and Chairman of the EU Heads of Mission in Colombo.

The other delegates were Mr. Juergen Elias, German Ambassador, Ms. Mary Pagnier, Ambassador of France, Mr. Peter Hughes, Deputy High Commissioner for Britain, Mr. Anders Ericson, Deputy Head of Mission for the Embassy of Sweden and Mr. Harry Van Vikj, Deputy Head of Mission for the Embassy of Netherlands. They met Mr. Tamilselvan at the LTTE political headquarters in Kilinochchi. The two hours of discussions which began at 10am were described as 'cordial and constructive' by LTTE sources. The diplomats expressed their full support for the Norwegian peace process. The diplomats also pointed out the necessity of commencing urgent development projects in the North and East of the island.

Mr. Tamilselvan is reportedly had re-

quested the diplomats to urge the Sri Lankan government to implement in full the ceasefire agreement signed in February, and discussed the establishment of an interim administration in the war torn areas of the north and east.

No revision of ceasefire agreement:

July 18 - The Sri Lankan government dismissed calls for its ceasefire agreement with the Liberation Tigers to be revised. "Although several political groups have requested for the revision of the ceasefire agreement the Government considers it a complete document," Minister G.L. Peiris said at a press conference held on 18 July to announce the cabinet decisions taken the previous day.

Following communal violence between Muslims and Tamils end of last month, Minister and President of the Sri Lanka Muslim Congress (SLMC), Mr. Rauff Hakeem, had requested the Prime Minister to effect changes in the ceasefire agreement 'that could provide safeguards to the interest of Muslims.'

The leader of the National Unity Alliance - a rival of the SLMC - and Ampara district parliamentarian, Ms Ferial Ashraff, also had slammed the ceasefire agreement as 'one sided' and demanded that it should be completely revised 'to protect the lives and properties of Muslims and Sinhalese living in the north-east province.' However, Sri Lanka's United National Front government has declined to accede to these calls. The government also expressed satisfaction with the progress of the Norwegian sponsored peace process. "No permanent decision has been taken on a date to commence peace negotiations at Thailand. However the Norwegian representative, Liberation Tigers and the UNF government are in the process of conducting lengthy discussions over the question of fixing the date for peace negotiation," Minister Peiris said.

Prime Minister leaves for US: 20 July -

The Sri Lankan Prime Minister, Ranil Wickremesinghe, left here early this morning for a five-day visit to the United States during which he will meet the U.S. President, George Bush, other senior officials and sign two agreements aimed at bolstering the economic ties. Mr. Wickremesinghe will also brief the U.S. President on the current peace process.

The Cabinet spokesman, G. L. Peiris, while pointing out that such a meeting between a Sri Lankan leader and the U.S. President is taking place after 18 years, said Mr. Wickremesinghe will also meet the U.S. Secretary of State, Colin Powell, Defence Secretary, Donald Rumsfeld, and the National Security Advisor, Condoleezza Rice.

Agreements to develop the Sri Lankan apparel industry as well as one on double-taxation avoidance will be signed during Mr. Wickremesinghe's stay. Sri Lanka has a Free Trade Agreement with India, has also expressed its keenness to move towards one with the U.S. Mr. Wickremesinghe, who is scheduled to meet top officials of the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund, will also deliver lectures at the Heritage Foundation, the Woodrow Wilson Centre, Prof. Peiris said.

The Prime Minister before beginning his crucial visit to the United States, in a late evening meeting on 18 June briefed President Chandrika Kumaratunga about the reasons for his U.S. tour where he would be calling on President George W. Bush and taking part in a series of other important meetings besides signing of trade related agreements between the two countries.

Wickremesinghe also briefed the President about the current peace process aimed at ending the country's prolonged ethnic conflict while making efforts to build up strained relations between the President and a section of his ministers.

Wickremesinghe's meeting also came in the wake of strained relations between certain ministers of the ruling

United National Front (UNF) government and President Kumaratunga where both parties have openly exchanged words at the cabinet meetings. Both Kumaratunga and Wickremesinghe are reported to have agreed that earlier arrangements of cohabitation between the UNF government and the President had run into serious problems.

But the prime minister is reported to have said that the problems were mainly due to certain presidential moves which affected the goodwill between the two parties. Wickremesinghe had said that every possible action should be taken to put the cohabitation arrangement back on track.

Defence Secretary Visits Jaffna: July 21 - Sri Lanka's Defence Ministry Secretary Mr. Austin Fernando accompanied by the Sri Lanka Army commander, Lt. Gen. Lionel Balagalle and Sri Lanka Navy commander, Vice Admiral Daya Sandagiri concluded his two-day visit to Jaffna district today. The aim of his visit was to look into the possibility of resettling thousands of displaced families in Valikamam north and Thenmaradchi sectors, sources said. He undertook this tour on representations made by the Tamil National Alliance to the Prime Minister that the displaced Tamil families should be allowed to re-

settle in their own villages in Valikamam north and Thenmaradchi as they now undergo untold hardships due to no fixed abode and income. Most of the displaced are farmers and their agricultural lands have been within the high security zones, TNA complained.

SLA officials in Jaffna have, however, said that resettlement in Valikamam north area would not be allowed at this stage due security reasons. The opening of Union College and Mahajana College at Tellipallai, which are also in the high security zone, could not be now, they said. Mr. Austin Fernando toured the Thenmaradchi division, and participated at a conference held at Chavakachcheri Hindu College.

Representatives of the displaced families told Mr. Austin Fernando that they should be allowed to resettle in their own villages and remove the military camps, enabling them to restart their cultivation in their agricultural lands, which fall within the high security zone.

The Defence Ministry Secretary told them that he would submit a report to Prime Minister on his return to Colombo. A final decision will be taken at a conference, which is scheduled for July 30 between the Prime Minister and a delegation of the Tamil National Alliance, he added.

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Meeting Tamil Aspirations Within a United Lanka

Dr. Rohan Edrisinha

Visuvanathan Rudrakumaran, a lawyer based in the United States has often referred to the need for the Tamil people's right to self determination to be recognised as part of a political solution: "The essence of self determination is the people's desire to be the active agents of their history. Tamils are endowed with objective characteristics, such as a distinct language, they are united by an intuitive sense of oneness, and they have a historical relationship to a clearly defined territory. Therefore, based on an analysis of who are the historical bearers of the right to self determination, and under relevant UN resolutions and the International Court of Justice's opinion in the Western Sahara case, Tamils constitute a 'people' and are the legal recipient unit of the right to self determination". In some of his earlier writings Rudrakumaran highlighted the distinction between internal and external self determination and argued strenuously for the recognition of the former as part of a viable political solution. More recently, however, he has argued that the Tamil people's right to self determination includes the right to an independent sovereign nation state.

It is submitted that Rudrakumaran's earlier position which focused on internal self determination offers a concept which may be possible to accommodate within a united Lanka.

Maximum devolution within a united country seemed to be the philosophy behind a proposal submitted both to President Kumaratunga and V. Prabhakaran Leader of the LTTE on 20 December 1995.

Framework Document

The framework document as it was called was prepared by a British firm of solicitors, Bates, Wells and

Braithwaite on the request of the Sri Lanka Peace Support Group which consisted of academics, professionals and clergy from the international community. The proposal basically provided for a confederation of the Union of Ceylon, consisting of two internally autonomous states, one for the primarily Tamil area (the north east of the country) and the other for the mainly Sinhalese areas.

Apart from foreign affairs, external defence and security monetary policy and currency, maintenance of relations between the states and a few other matters, each state would have the power to adopt its own constitution which would have to endorse certain core principles set out in the Preamble to the Constitution and entrenched clauses on human rights, while setting out its own structure of government, have its own Prime Minister and exercise complete autonomy in all other areas. It provided for a Central Council of the Union to exercise power with respect to the reserved subjects and to provide a channel of communication and co-ordination between the two states consisting of an equal number of representatives from the states.

The Council would appoint a President and Deputy President of the Union from amongst its members for a specified time with agreed alternation between representatives of each state. The citizens of the union would share a common nationality and have the freedom of movement and the right to reside and work in any part of the union. The proposal provided for a Constitutional Court consisting of an equal number of judges from each state and a suggestion that one or more non-Ceylonese judges of international repute be included as well. The main function of the Court would be to in-

terpret the Constitution and to ensure state compliance with the provisions of the preamble and the human rights provisions of the Constitution.

The proposal ended with a somewhat naive and impractical provision titled 'Referendum and Guarantees' which provided for each state to conduct a referendum if it wished 'to modify the powers of the Union affecting that State.' It also declared that the implementation of the Constitution and the maintenance of peace between the States would be guaranteed by the United Nations!

The proposal had several ambiguous provisions which suggested that the two states were independent sovereign entities. A provision in the Preamble for instance stated that relations between the States would be governed in accordance with 'generally applicable principles of international law and justice.' The provision on the referendum might have been naive or an indirect way of including a unilateral right to secession, in which event, as well be argued later, this will make it extremely difficult for the majority of Sinhalese to accept.

Thimpu Principles

A third option may be to attempt to accommodate some of the concerns and aspirations of the Tamil people as expressed in the often quoted Thimpu Principles. The four cardinal principles placed before the Sri Lanka Government delegation in July 1985 at the Thimpu talks by the six Tamil organisations represented there (the TULF, LTTE, EPRLF, EROS, PLOTE and TELO) were:

- (i) recognition of the Tamils of Sri Lanka as a distinct nationality;
- (ii) recognition of an identified Tamil homeland and the guarantee of its territorial integrity;
- (iii) based on the above, recognition of the inalienable right of self-determination of the Tamil nation;
- (iv) recognition of the right to full citizenship and other fundamental democratic rights of all Tamils, who look upon the island as their country.

Since 1985 nearly all Tamil parties including the LTTE have reiterated their commitment to these principles.

The first three principles were rejected by the Government delegation on the grounds that they necessarily implied the destruction of a united Sri Lanka.

The leader of the delegation, H. W. Jayewardene said, "... If the first three principles are to be taken at their face value and given their accepted legal meaning, they are wholly unacceptable to the Government. They must be rejected for the reason that they constitute a negation of the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Sri Lanka, they are detrimental to a united Sri Lanka and are inimical to the interests of the several communities, ethnic and religious in our country. Mr. Jayewardene assumed that they had an accepted legal meaning and that they would necessarily violate the sovereignty and unity of the country."

This need not necessarily be so. Recognising a Tamil nation, a traditional Tamil homeland, its territorial integrity and its right to self determination could certainly imply the recognition of an independent Tamil sovereign nation state. However, many of the terms have no fixed legal meaning and may be defined in such a way that the essence of these concepts is retained within the framework of a united country.

Keeping the Options Open

The skeptical explanation for the popularity of these principles among Tamil nationalist groups and parties is that the vagueness inherent in the key terms of the Thimpu Principles gives them a flexibility and manoeuvrability which is both convenient and keeps their options open.

The traditional Tamil homeland claim is one which arouses considerable emotion and is the subject of considerable debate among Sri Lankan historians. Since the scholarship and debate on the subject is inconclusive, I prefer to endorse the wording in the preamble to the Indo-Lanka Accord of July 1987 which recognises the distinct cultural and linguistic identity of inter alia the Tamils while also recognising that "The Northern and Eastern provinces have been areas of historical habitation of Sri Lankan Tamil speaking

peoples, who have at all times hitherto lived together in this territory with other ethnic groups". To this can be added that they have been the majority community in these regions.

Whether one accepts the homeland theory or not, I believe that the notion of a Tamil homeland and a merger of the north and a substantial part of the east must be accepted as a response to the present political reality in the country. Given the violence perpetrated on the Tamil people over the past forty years the Tamils are entitled to a psychological homeland consisting of the north and a large part of the east for their security and dignity. One can, therefore, support the homeland theory for reasons of dignity, security and justice even if one has doubts concerning the justification based on history.

The Tamil nation located in the north and east of the country cannot be mono-ethnic in composition. This will require ethnic cleansing which is unacceptable. Muslims from the north who were expelled by the LTTE in 1990 have the right to return to their homelands and the Eastern province Muslims have at the very least, the rights of national minorities under international law. Constitutional options presented by Tamil nationalist opinion and the Thimpu Principles do not spell out adequately the position of the Muslims and other minorities of the north east.

Is a political solution possible?

It is possible, but unlikely given the gulf between the two sides. On the one hand one has a Sri Lankan Government which has enormous difficulty defending a quasi-federal draft Constitution in the context of influential political forces, some of which are becoming increasingly militarised, committed to preserving a Sinhala Buddhist majoritarian, unitary state. On the other, one has a Tamil political force which has waged a long and costly struggle, captured a significant amount of territory which it administers and committed to principles that are ambiguous as they could connote an independent nation state of Tamil Eelam. There is also a genuine, not unfounded, fear that any

federal or con-federal compromise would only be a strategic advance in achieving the goal of Eelam. The bitterness and distrust on both sides and the skepticism of Tamil political groups due to the repeated betrayals of Sri Lankan Governments both with respect to the delivery on constitutional agreements and, in the few instances where this was done, with respect to the actual implementation of these arrangements, in the past forty years, hardly creates an atmosphere conducive to a constitutional compromise which must form a major part of a political solution.

Modified Thimpu Principles

1. The Tamil community constitutes a people with a distinct language, culture, tradition and identity. The Constitution should recognise the above in order to ensure that the Tamil people live with dignity and self respect.

2. The Tamil people have for centuries lived in the northern and eastern provinces and constituted the majority population in these areas.

3. There must be substantial autonomy in these areas, which is constitutionally guaranteed and secured. The people must have the right to determine their own affairs.

4. There must be complete equality particularly in the areas of race, religion and language.

5. The Constitution of Sri Lanka shall be supreme.

6. The Constitution shall enshrine basic values and principles. These shall include human dignity, equality, the promotion of human rights, non-racialism and non-sexism, the Rule of Law, universal adult suffrage and a multi-party system of democratic government, and a system of government that promotes accountability, responsiveness and openness.

7. The Fundamental Rights provisions of the Constitution shall conform to international human rights norms.

8. There shall be constitutional mechanisms to provide for effective power sharing at the centre.

9. There shall be provided in the Constitution, an autonomous canton/unit in the East to accommodate the aspirations of the people, particularly

the Muslims and Sinhalese, for a certain degree of autonomy. OR, There shall be separate Northern and Eastern regions with provision for the two regions to deliberate/work together in certain situations. The Apex Council idea developed during the deliberations of the Mangala Moonesinghe Parliamentary Select Committee could facilitate such co-operation.

10. Section 29 of the Soulbury Constitution of 1946 which was the main minority safeguard at the time of independence and considered by some to be 'the unalterable solemn balance of rights between the citizens of Ceylon and the fundamental conditions on which inter se they accepted the Constitution' should be reincorporated in the Constitution.

11. A provision similar to Article 235 of the South African Constitution shall be incorporated in the Constitution. "The right of the South African people as a whole to self-determination, as manifested in this constitution, does not preclude, within the framework of this right, recognition of the notion of the right to self determination of any community sharing a common cultural and language heritage, within a territorial entity in the Republic or in any other way, determined by national legislation".

Principles 5-9 and 11 will help considerably in making Principles 1-4 acceptable in the rest of the country, respond to many of the arguments put forward against autonomy, in addition to providing guarantees for human rights and devolution of power. Principle 10 it is hoped will be of strong symbolic significance; a revival of the social contract at the granting of independence.

Attempts to provide for substantial devolution of power without judicial review of legislation and power sharing at the centre are unlikely to succeed. One of the reasons why it was so easy under the existing devolution arrangements for the centre to encroach on powers devolved to the provinces was because there was no provincial voice at the centre.

Recognition of Substantial Autonomy

In nearly all country's where there is a desire to provide for devolution of power within a united country, there is provincial/regional representation at the centre in the form of a Senate or Council of Provinces. The rationale is the protection of devolution. The representatives of the devolved units act as watchdogs for the interests of the devolved units. There is a second rationale, however, that is relevant for Sri Lanka; the protection of national unity. It is important that the regional politicians and parties/groups are made to feel part of the whole, stakeholder in the nation. A second chamber can facilitate both these important objectives or rationales. Many constitutional commentators have indeed cited regional representation at the centre as an essential characteristic of a federal constitution. I find it quite amazing that Sri Lanka's constitution makers are seeking to promote substantial autonomy within a united country without regional representation at the centre.

There is also the vital need given the dominance of ethno-nationalism in the past three decades to forge a supra-ethnic authentic Sri Lankan national identity. This argument is not fashionable in the current Sri Lankan political discourse for a variety of reasons. This argument has recently been appropriated by Sinhalese nationalists as a convenient substitute for the recognition of autonomy and devolution of power. This is unacceptable.

The revival of a genuine Sri Lankan national identity must accompany the recognition of substantial autonomy. There is also the understandable scepticism of the Tamil community as to why this was not done in the immediate post independence era or, at least, when the country's first autochthonous constitution was adopted. Nevertheless, efforts to revive a kind of rainbow nation Sri Lanka identity must be part of a constitution making for conflict transformation initiative.

Ghia Nodia has remarked that - "Failure to tame the ethnic flesh of na-

tionalism can lead to chauvinism, racism or even fascism. Yet these manifestations of nationalism's ugly side arise not from excessive ethnicity but from the lack of a robust political expression of national feeling. When they have no political or institutional achievements to take pride in, people may boast instead of their inherited racial, linguistic or cultural identities".

It is only where the understandably dominant ethno-nationalism is at least complemented by civic nationalism, that the principle of unity in diversity may be realised. The existence of multiple or cross cutting identities must be recognised and fostered to act as a countervailing force to ethno-nationalism. Such a balance of juxtaposition of the national and the regional, the overarching civic or political and the ethnic is essential for the success of a constitution for peace and reconciliation. Striking such a balance is not easy.

Yash Ghai reminds us how important this task is: "Autonomy, particularly federal autonomy, is built around the notion that the people of a state are best served through a balance between the common and the particular. If the emphasis is too much on the particular, then separation may be the better option, notwithstanding the proliferation of states. The secret of autonomy is the recognition of the common; certainly it seems to be the condition for its success. Perhaps about thirty years ago, too much emphasis was placed on the 'common' and for this reason autonomy was narrow and contingent. Today we may be placing too much emphasis on the particular."

It will be seen from the proposal outlined above that the task of developing a constitutional model that meets the aspirations of the Tamil people within a united Sri Lanka is a daunting one. A new Constitution for conflict resolution must also conform to constitutional first principles and modern trends in constitution making. There is a need, therefore, for imagination, creativity, commitment and an ethos of compromise and generosity of spirit.

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Tigers, Taxes, and the Tamils

*Muttukrishna Sarvananthan**

The Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) have been levying various taxes from the civilian population in the North&East province for a long time. They justify these taxes by claiming that they govern a nation of people and in order to administer, develop and provide security for that nation these taxes are necessary. Nevertheless, these taxes are an intolerable burden on the Tamil masses.

First of all, the LTTE seems to have no proper list of goods and the tax rates applicable to them. However, in practice, most of the goods are taxed at a rate of 25%. Some goods do attract lesser rates. Twenty five percent is a very high rate, especially for the Tamil civilians who have undergone intolerable hardships as a result of displacement from their homes and economic sanctions by the Sri Lankan State.

Secondly, the Tiger taxes are levied irrespective of whether the goods are taken to their territory for trading or for personal/household consumption. The taxes on personal/household consumption goods are entirely unjustifiable. Food and clothing are taxed only if they are for trading, but other consumption goods and raw materials/inputs are taxed even if it is for personal/household use.


Taxes are two types - one is the 'ad valorem tax', and the other 'unit tax'. The ad valorem tax is levied as a percentage of the value of a good or service. The unit tax is levied on a unit of a good or service irrespective of the value. The LTTE applies both types of taxes. For example, LKR 5,000 is levied on new motorcycles (C90) and LKR 1,500 are levied on new bicycles. The spare parts of bicycles and motorcycles, television sets and their spare parts, chairs, tables and household furniture, etc are taxed at 25%. The Tigers also tax raw materials/inputs such as spare tyres for tractors, vehicle battery water, etc. The farmers who struggle to eke out a living under the economic sanctions encompassing fuel, fertilizer and pesticide are doubly burdened by the Tiger tax on spare tyres for tractors. Moreover, due to the prohibition on taking battery cells to the LTTE-held areas it has been a practice of the people to recharge their household battery cells with vehicle batteries. In this situation, where is the justice in taxing battery water?

Thirdly, the Tiger taxes are not based on the income of a person or household. Thus, the ability to pay, a fundamental tenet of tax policy, is not a criterion for Tiger taxes. That is, all

have to pay taxes irrespective of their income. Taxes are two kinds - direct tax and indirect tax. Generally, while the direct taxes are levied on the income of a person/household, indirect taxes are levied on the entire population (irrespective of their income) whenever goods and services are purchased. The peculiarity of the Tiger taxes is that everyone has to pay however poor one is. The farmers harvesting paddy, vegetable cultivators, households plucking coconuts all have to pay a share of their produce to the LTTE. This kind of a universal tax regime discourages the people from undertaking productive activities. The people who produce in spite of economic sanctions and consequent inflated prices of raw materials/inputs may be better off receiving the relief goods sent by the government and international relief agencies than paying a portion of their produce to the LTTE as tax in kind.

Fourthly, there is a likelihood of the same good being taxed twice in Tiger taxes. That is, when traders take goods to the LTTE-held areas they have to pay a tax at the point of entry. In addition, periodically traders have to pay a tax as a percentage of their business turnover. These create opportunity for double taxation of the same good. At the end it is the consumers who have to bear this double taxation. On top of this double taxation by the LTTE, the Tamils living in LTTE-held areas do also pay the Goods and Services Tax (GST) and the National Security Levy (NSL) of the Government of Sri Lanka, which are already incorporated in the value of goods that are taxed at the point of entry to the LTTE-held areas. As the Tamils living in the LTTE-held areas are already pauperised, the above mentioned double taxation further marginalises them.

Fifthly, taxes are levied by a government in order to run the public administration, build economic and social infrastructure, finance other developmental activities, and protect the society and the country from domestic and external aggression. Out of these governmental functions, except

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the protection of the Tamil society and nation, the LTTE do not seem to do any other function properly and comprehensively. The administrative division of the LTTE does not seem to be providing much public service to the people under their jurisdiction. Mostly, the LTTE uses the personnel of the Sri Lanka Administrative Service to run their administration. In order to assert their foothold in the LTTE-held areas the Sri Lankan government has allowed their public officers to function in those areas. These public officers are used by the LTTE for their administrative purposes as well. That is, these public officers work for the LTTE on the salaries drawn from the Government of Sri Lanka. These public officers include agricultural officers/extension workers, irrigation officers, teachers, medical officers, etc.

The LTTE has setup various institutions in the areas under their control. The Tamil Eelam Economic Development Organisation (TEEDO), Tamil Eelam Administrative Service, Tamil Eelam Transport Board, Tamil Eelam Police Force, Mines Clearing Division, Forest Protection Division are some of them. However, the real functions and services of these institutions are not openly known. In this circumstance, we wonder whether these institutions are just setup for namesake. Moreover, whether these institutions that are involved in public services are doing their duties and responsibilities properly and sincerely is suspect. For example, we may consider the bus services of the Tamil Eelam Transport Board. The bus services provided between Puliyanukulam and places like Killinochi, Puthukudiyirupu, and Mullaitivu are of very low standard. The buses plying these routes leak from the roof when it rains, and as a result the passengers are forced to hold umbrellas inside the buses. At the same time, the buses plying between Puliyanukulam and Muhamalai seem to be newer ones. Therefore, the people of Wannai are wondering why the Tamil Eelam Transport Board is discriminating between the passengers travelling to Jaffna and the Wannai. Besides, the rude

behaviour of the conductors of the buses towards their passengers has come under criticism from the people of Wannai.

The Tamil people are questioning whether the high tax rates of the LTTE are necessary for such a low quality of public service. In this circumstance, is it necessary for the LTTE to levy taxes in order to run their civil administration?

Sixthly, for a very long time the LTTE has been demanding that the Government of Sri Lanka withdraws the economic sanctions against their areas and that normalcy is restored for their people. It is regrettable that, even after the government unilaterally withdrawing the economic sanctions, the LTTE continues to impose explicit and implicit economic sanctions and restrict the free movement of people under their jurisdiction. For example, alcohol is still prohibited from entering LTTE-held areas from rest of the country. This prohibition is in place not because of any moral virtues; instead it is to protect the local producers of alcohol and the tax revenue accruing from them. Furthermore, the import taxes on goods by the Tigers are equivalent to self-imposed indirect economic sanctions.

In addition to the restrictions/prohibition on goods, the continued restrictions/prohibition on the free movement of people under their jurisdiction is unjustified. Though the checking and screening of people who enter their territory are justifiable (due to the fear of enemy infiltration), to impose restrictions, age limitations, bonds, and passes for people who would like to leave their areas is totally unjustifiable.

Seventhly, the LTTE is levying taxes at Muhamalai from people who are travelling to Jaffna via the A9 highway. The vehicles as well as the goods are taxed. The salient feature of this 'transit tax' is that this is only levied from the Tamils. The Sinhalese and the Muslims are exempted from this transit tax. This 'ethnic tax' is discriminatory and arbitrary. Would it not

be racism and pure exploitation for the sole representatives and protectors of the Tamils to impose such an ethnic tax on the very same people whom they represent and protect?

Eighthly, all governments publicly reveal their tax revenues and the public expenditures incurred from such revenues to the general public in their annual budgets. But, the LTTE has so far not revealed to the Tamil public the amount of tax revenue they collect from the Tamils (both inland and overseas) and their public expenditures out of that revenue. Today, the LTTE has graduated from being a liberation organisation to be the sole representatives and saviours of a nation. In this circumstance, the time is opportune for the LTTE to practice transparency, accountability, and maturity in their financial management. It is essential for the LTTE to publicly reveal their revenues and expenditures on an annual basis if they continue to expect the Tamils (both here and abroad) to pay taxes. It is absolutely essential for them to publicly disclose their tax revenues and public spending to the Tamil people if they are a duty bound, disciplined, and responsible protectors of a nation.

Taxes are of many kinds, and the Tiger taxes are unique. Historically, no Taxes have been popular in any society or country in any part of the World. The Tiger taxes are a major impediment to economic advancement of the North & East province. Neither the local investors, nor foreign investors, or foreign donors are going to accept the arbitrary tax regime of the LTTE. The Tiger taxes are stifling economic revival of the North&East province in the same way as the government's economic sanctions did in the past. The understanding of this fundamental truth by the LTTE would go a long way towards the realisation of the peaceful, equal, and prosperous livelihood of the Tamils.

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To Talk or Not to Talk

Dr Jayadeva Uyangoda

A particularly worrying aspect of Sri Lanka's current peace process is the continuing postponement of the proposed Bangkok talks between the government and the LTTE. When there is no official engagement between the two sides at the level of negotiation, as promised when the peace process was inaugurated, it leaves room for doubt and uncertainty. The absence of explanatory statements by the government or the LTTE has naturally led to various interpretations of the present status of the peace initiative are possible. Indeed, many of them are not positive assessments.

It is also not easy to make a clear characterization of what some analysts describe as an impasse of the peace process, primarily because of the fact that there is very little hard information forthcoming either from the government and the LTTE. The media reports on the peace process are quite inadequate to form any firm judgement about the emerging trajectories in the next few weeks. It seems that both the government and the LTTE deliberately refrain from briefing the media on this issue. As a result, speculations have begun to focus less on what has been actually happening in the peace front than on the negative developments in the post-MOU Eastern province.

Interestingly, both the government and the LTTE at present are not engaged in major propaganda exercises either. However, the LTTE, unlike the government, is implementing a politically significant media and public relations strategy. They appear to have launched a dual campaign designed to achieve different objectives.

at first, the LTTE leaders located in the Northern and Eastern provinces led by Thamilchelvam and Karikalan have been doing some effective public relations work. They have been meeting local and international visitors, giv-

ing media interviews and re-assuring the unconvinced that their commitment to peace should be treated with due respect. Most reports from these visitors are quite positive about the LTTE's determination to stay in the path of political engagement with the government. "These guys are willing to learn and make changes," seems to be the essence of these positive assessments.

On the other hand, Dr. Anton Balasingham, the London-based political spokesperson of the LTTE, has been projecting a different perspective that discloses a deep sense of dissatisfaction with the government.

Recent press interviews given by Dr. Balasingham and Mr. Sivanayagam, the London-based journalist very close to the LTTE leadership, indicate that the LTTE has not softened their pre-negotiation bargaining exercise. For several weeks, Balasingham has been refusing to meet with the Norwegian interlocutors to discuss the agenda for negotiations. He has also been insisting that the full implementation of the terms of the MOU by the Colombo government should constitute a pre-condition for negotiations. Informed analysts say that he has been expressing a great deal of frustration over what he believes to be the government's receding interest in a peace deal in the form of an interim administration.

Meanwhile, Sivanayagam, veteran Tamil journalist, in his interview has raised doubts about the commitment of the UNF government to the negotiation exercise. According to Sivanayagam, there are signs of a 'grand design' resorted to by the Colombo government to politically isolate and weaken the LTTE. Another perspective, emanating from some of the government sources, points that the delay to begin talks is due to the complex nature of preparations being made by the two sides. Ac-

ording to this view, it is the LTTE which has asked for more time for preparations. Government thus sees no reason to be concerned with the postponement of Bangkok talks.

Yet another perspective suggests that it would be better to postpone the Bangkok talks for some time to come, in view of the fact that a compromise between the government and the LTTE on many key issues is unlikely to emerge under present political constraints. This view is prevalent among the diasporaic Tamils who have begun to feel quite pessimistic about the capacity of the UNF government, caught up in a general political uncertainty, to work out a compromise with the LTTE and implement it. To some extent, the Tamil diaspora's views are shaped by the LTTE's propaganda and in the past they have often reflected, quite accurately, the strategic thinking of the LTTE.

Two points which the Tamil expatriate intelligentsia has been making during the past few weeks need serious reflection. The first is that it is doubtful whether the Sinhalese polity is as yet ready to grant autonomy to Tamils under the LTTE leadership. The peace process has not yet healed the rift between the Sinhalese and Tamil polities and it might take a longer period than initially expected for the Sinhalese people to grapple with the reality of regional autonomy under the LTTE.

Their fears and suspicions need to be allayed over a period of time. Secondly, even seven months in power, the UNF government is still struggling to overcome its major political hurdles. It has not been able to secure a mechanism to obtain the crucial two-thirds majority in Parliament. Neither has it succeeded in working out a government by cohabitation with the President or reducing her powers, particularly to prevent her from dissolving the parliament after December. In this reading, the LTTE leadership, quite attuned to the political realities in Colombo, might not see the proposed Bangkok talks as capable of being particularly productive or useful.

The delay of talks has in any case deprived the negotiation process much needed political momentum. The best

option for the two sides would have been to begin direct talks in May and then work out a schedule for future talks spreading over some time. In Sri Lanka's specific case, it is always better to begin the process of talks when there is public enthusiasm and goodwill and, more important, before the spoiler elements get activated. But, given the reality that Sri Lanka has not yet utilized that propitious moment for negotiations to begin, steps need to be taken to prevent prevarication from entering into the strategic behaviour of the two sides.

Meanwhile, recent developments in the Eastern Province and the way in which some politicians have been interpreting and handling the crisis there do not give much credence to the capacity of the unfolding political process to sustain the momentum for direct negotiations between the government and the LTTE. The mistake made by the government as well as the LTTE is that they have taken the post-MOU peace conditions for granted, not realizing the new contradictions generated by the conditions of relative peace could complicate the peace initiative.

New reports emerging from Muttur and Valachchanai now show how a variety of political forces have made alliances and interventions to gain control of the economic and political life there. It is time now for the government and the LTTE leadership to have a serious exchange of ideas about the Eastern province. They should conceive new political modalities to manage the continuing complexities in the province within a framework that can sustain the peace process. Otherwise, they might find themselves totally unprepared, as happened in Valachchanai, to react to sectarian violence that can be organized and executed with relative ease by spoiler elements.

If further postponement of Bangkok talks is the most prudent option, then the government will have to take inno-

vative steps to sustain the present peace process. A new initiative for political engagement and direct dialogue with the LTTE leadership is a crucial must. This has become all the more important in view of such recent developments as the visit to Colombo by the newly appointed Indian Foreign Minister and the impending visit to Washington, DC, by Prime Minister Wickremesinghe. Although the government might view and treat these as normal and regular diplomatic events, they are likely to be understood in the Vanni as signals of what Sivanayagam has termed as a 'grand design.'

Meanwhile, any government in Colombo that deals with the LTTE on a negotiation initiative ought to recognize that the LTTE has an essentially duplex character. At one level, it is a political entity seeking legitimacy, recognition and respectability. At a parallel level it is a guerilla force, a military machine, ready to take on the state even on a very short notice. It is the structural conditions of the conflict resolution process that will actually determine which particular character of the LTTE that might take precedence over the other. Presently, the LTTE's political self has taken primacy over its guerilla-military self. The government in Colombo has an unavoidable responsibility to work towards strengthening and sustaining the LTTE's political self and identity.

Suppose the Bangkok talks get postponed for a few more months to come. Such postponement of direct dialogue between the leaders of the government and the LTTE would be immensely detrimental to the prospects of an early breakthrough in Sri Lanka's peace process. Then, an option quite useful on the way to Bangkok would be the working out by the two sides a framework document which can contain a Declaration of Principles. In fact, such a framework document, jointly pre-

pared by the two sides, would be of immense value and even better than going to Bangkok with a potentially controversial agenda.

We may recall that in the Northern Ireland negotiations, the British and Irish sides first negotiated a framework document which provided the conceptual contours within which the subsequent negotiations and compromises were to be worked out. In 1994-1995 negotiations in Sri Lanka, the PA government and the LTTE should have first negotiated a framework document. Although the idea was discussed in Colombo, it was not adequately pursued.

The value of a framework document or a Declaration of Principles is multi-dimensional. To begin with, it will facilitate the much-needed and fresh political engagement between the top leadership of the government and the LTTE on key issues concerning the settlement process. It will also set out a mutually acceptable framework within which their strategic behaviour and conduct would be governed. A framework document can also incorporate concerns and commitments about human rights and democracy. Equally important is the possibility within a framework declaration for making the two sides committed to peaceful settlement of conflicts that are likely to emerge on the way to a settlement.

The framework can surely be a creative synthesis of the positive gains of the peace process and future possibilities for greater commitment and shared responsibilities. Finally, the framework document can be a provisional political charter in terms of which the government and the LTTE could jointly conceptualize the future trajectories of the conflict resolution process.

It will hopefully prevent them from entering into the actual negotiation process with incompatible goals and contradictory outcomes in mind.



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Political power over ethnic identity

Ram Manikkalingam

The civil war in Sri Lanka consists of three distinct conflicts. Most observers focus on the ethnic conflict between Tamils and Sinhalese, or the armed conflict between the Sri Lankan state and the rebel Tamil Tigers. But they pay scant attention to the political power conflict among the three main forces that currently have a stake in political rule in Sri Lanka - the Tamil Tigers, the United National Party (UNP) and the People's Alliance (P.A.). While the Tiger desire for absolute power in the Tamil areas has kept the war going, the competition for political power between the P.A. and the UNP has prevented the war from ending.

Conflict over power among political parties is a vital element of democracy in any country. It prevents the state from becoming an oligarchy or, worse, a tyranny. While the power conflict between the UNP and the P.A. is good for democracy, it is bad for resolving the ethnic conflict. Ending political competition between the two major political parties is not required for them to work together to resolve the civil war. The political competition for power between the two political parties should be channelled so it does not undermine efforts to end the war. By voting for Chandrika Kumaratunga as President and Ranil Wickremesinghe as Prime Minister, the Sri Lankan people have called on the two leaders of the main political parties to do precisely this.

The ethnic conflict between Tamils and Sinhalese is commonly considered the hardest to resolve. Most descriptions of Sri Lanka's ethnic conflict (or for that matter any ethnic conflict) are variations of the hate-and-greed explanation. These descriptions depict Tamils and Sinhalese as either hating each other, because of conflicting nationalisms, or competing with each other for resources because of greed. Where the nationalism comes from -

ancient history, myth, or recent acts of violence - is less relevant than that it exists and manifests itself in mutual hostility between Tamils and Sinhalese. Similarly, where greed comes from - individual interests, group solidarity or nationalist passion - is less important than that it ultimately leads ethnic groups to get into conflict.

While this explanation - that Tamils and Sinhalese are enmeshed in a conflict over ethnic identity and material resources - may have had some relevance in the past, it is becoming less and less plausible today. Most Tamils and Sinhalese desire an end to the war. They have come to realise - whether enthusiastically or reluctantly - that a solution to the conflict will require the Central government dominated by the Sinhalese to share political power with other ethnic groups, particularly the Tamils. Whatever the various solutions proffered, they invariably converge on some form of federalism. Except for some Sinhalese and some Tamils, the majority of the people in Sri Lanka are beginning to accept such a solution. Even those who are critical of federalism are less concerned that it will give more rights to Tamils than they deserve, than that it will enable the Tigers to consolidate their power and establish a separate Tamil authoritarian state.

The proposals presented by President Kumaratunga in July 1995 form an important basis for pursuing a political solution. The proposals, presented after the Tigers violated the ceasefire, go beyond a unitary state. They acknowledge the discrimination that the Tamil people faced at the hands of the Sri Lankan State since Independence and seek to redress it through regional autonomy. The point is that there is no mystery about what the outlines of a political solution to the ethnic conflict will look like. While most academic and journalistic observers continue to focus primarily on the ethnic

conflict in Sri Lanka, this is probably the least challenging obstacle to peace today.

Addressing the ethnic conflict is complicated by the armed conflict between the Tamil Tigers and the Sri Lankan State. Although the armed conflict is generally viewed as stemming from the ethnic conflict, it is also distinct in character. States claim a monopoly over the legitimate use of force in a given territory. So any state will repress those who seek to oppose it by force. It matters little to the state that those who oppose it do so on the basis of democracy, ethnicity or regionalism. And when it comes to suppressing an armed rebellion, it matters little whether the state is capitalist or socialist, authoritarian or democratic. All states have acted with varying degrees of violence and repression in stemming armed rebellions. So also have rebel groups opposing states. There are two ways armed conflicts between states and a rebel group can end - when one side defeats another or when both sides concede that they cannot defeat each other. It is not clear if this has happened in Sri Lanka.

The current ceasefire agreement between the government of Sri Lanka and the Tigers is an attempt to resolve the armed conflict. Prime Minister Wickremesinghe and the Tiger leader signed it. The previous P.A.- led government was involved in drawing up key elements of it, such as the list of items to be lifted from the embargo. The Sri Lankan State has conceded that the cost of defeating the Tigers is one that it does not wish to bear. The Tigers have yet to do so. They are either bluffing, that is, they have admitted it among them but do not wish to do so to others. Or they are simply buying time. Whatever the drawbacks to the ceasefire agreement (and there are many), it is still an attempt at resolving the armed conflict between the Tamil Tigers and the Sri Lankan State, without granting either side a decisive military victory.

Addressing the armed conflict is complicated by the political power conflict among the main contenders for political power in Sri Lanka - the ruling UNP led by Prime Minister Wickremesinghe, the Opposition P.A. led by President Kumaratunga and the Tamil

Tigers led by their leader V. Prabhakaran. There is a distinct power conflict among these three contenders that is derived from competition over the business of rule. The UNP and the P.A. compete over who gets to rule the Sri Lankan State, while the Tigers seek to rule a separate Tamil one.

This competition cannot simply be reduced to varying ideologies of nationalism or competing policies over how to resolve the ethnic conflict or, for that matter, different socio-economic policies. Political parties are built around the express intent of securing political power. They may have different ideological leanings or social bases and therefore wish to carry out different programmes. Still, one of their central goals is to rule, simpliciter, not only ruling in order to do something else. Clearly, all three parties - the UNP, the P.A. and the Tigers - do not contend for power the same way. The P.A. and the UNP do so through more or less democratic means. The Tigers do so through more or less violently anti-democratic means. Yet, an important part of what they all contend for is power.

The position taken by these parties in elections over the past two years helps illustrate the distinction between policy on the ethnic conflict and political alliances to secure power. During the last two parliamentary elections and the most recent presidential elections, the UNP opposed the P.A. government's political proposals for resolving the conflict - saying that it had granted too much autonomy to the Tamils. At the same time, the UNP supported talking to the Tamil Tigers, who were asking for a separate state.

This seemingly contradictory position - opposing Tamil autonomy, but supporting a dialogue with the Tamil extremist Tigers - can be reconciled. The UNP as a political party seeking to run the state was seeking Tiger support to obtain Tamil votes in areas under Tiger domination, while keeping its Sinhala base satisfied. Similarly, the Tigers seeking a separate state were implicitly supporting a political party that sought to dilute measures granting autonomy to Tamil areas. The Tigers expected the UNP to be more conciliatory towards them than the P.A. would be.

The point here is not that the UNP (or Tigers) is opportunistic and the P.A. is not. Nor is it the point that there are no differences of opinion among members of the UNP and the P.A. as a whole about the ethnic conflict.

In fact, historically, the P.A. has tended to be more Sinhala nationalist than the UNP. Rather, it is that apart from all the claims and counter-claims about the conflict based on ethnicity, there is a competition between the political parties over who gets to rule Sri Lanka that is quite distinct from the ethnic conflict.

And this competition adds to the complexity of resolving the civil war. All Sri Lankan governments have sought to, for better or for worse, address the ethnic conflict through regional autonomy and the armed conflict through ceasefires and/or military confrontation. Other than sporadic efforts, they have all paid little if any explicit attention to addressing the political power conflict among the main parties.

The proposal to set up an interim administration under Tiger control in the Northeast of Sri Lanka is an attempt to address the desire for political power of the Tigers. The UNP-led government hopes to entice the Tigers by granting them de facto rule over the Northeast. Human rights groups are concerned that the Tigers will use the interim administration to violate the rights of people living in the Northeast, engage in ethnic cleansing, and prepare for war. Others argue that an overall political settlement needs to be worked out prior to setting up an interim administration. The interim administration will then become a means to a clear political goal, rather than a halfway house that both parties haggle over until conflict breaks out. Whatever the validity of such criticisms (and they are all valid), the UNP-led government's proposal to set up an interim administration constitutes a pragmatic recognition that the political power conflict with the Tigers is distinct from the ethnic conflict with the Tamils.

Even as it is addressing the political power conflict with the Tigers, the UNP-led government, however, is failing to address the conflict over political power with the P.A. The political power conflict between the P.A. and the

UNP is harder to resolve (though not bloodier) than that between either one of them and the Tigers. This is because, even in the worst case where the Tigers control the Northeast or even establish a separate state, the P.A. or the UNP can still rule from Colombo. However, if either the P.A. or the UNP controls all political power in Colombo, the other party is automatically excluded. Thus the P.A. and the UNP are more reluctant to share power with each other than with the Tigers, although they are both ideologically closer to each other than each is to the Tigers.

Recent efforts by the UNP to weaken the constitutional authority of President Kumaratunga are an example of this unwillingness to share power at the Centre. The UNP is rushing through amendments to the Constitution that will prevent the President from dissolving Parliament. The President of Sri Lanka wields the power to dissolve Parliament a year after it is elected under the present semi-presidential system. When the President and the Prime Minister are from the same party, this power does not differ significantly from that of the latter under the parliamentary system. However, when they are from different parties, these powers provide a critical source of authority for a President without a parliamentary majority. With the threat of dissolution hanging over the government, a President can cajole the ruling party to act in ways that take the interests of the Opposition are taken into consideration.

The political rationale presented by the UNP for amending the Constitution to limit the President's powers is to prevent her from jeopardising the peace process by dissolving Parliament. But as Sri Lankan political columnist Tissanarane Gunasekera has astutely observed, this amendment is either unnecessary or counterproductive. It is unnecessary if the peace process is working, that is, there is no resumption of war and the negotiations are proceeding steadily. In such circumstances, even if President Kumaratunga were to dissolve Parliament, the UNP is likely to come back to power with a greater majority, not a lesser one. On the other hand, if the peace process collapses, this amendment is not going to protect the UNP from a serious political setback that may even cost them their majority

in Parliament.

The efforts to weaken the constitutional authority of the President are counterproductive in yet another way. They jeopardise rather than strengthen the peace process. By aggravating tensions between the P.A. and the UNP further, they reduce any incentive on the part of the P.A. led by the President to support the peace efforts of the Prime Minister. And if these tensions continue after the collapse of the peace process, they will weaken the Centre's capacity to defend itself from a Tiger onslaught.

There is a great deal of common ground in the approach of the two political parties to addressing the civil war. Both argue that a political solution to the ethnic conflict will require regional autonomy in predominantly Tamil areas. Both parties hope that negotiating with the Tigers through Norwegian facilitation might lead to a reduction in the armed conflict. Still, they emphasise slightly different approaches. The President has argued in favour of a political solution to the ethnic conflict throughout her career as a political activist and leader of the country. She presented the most extensive devolution package ever drafted by a Sri Lankan government. She has consistently acknowledged the grievances of the Tamil people and has sought to mobilise support for political devolution at a moment when it was hardest to do so - in the midst of war. The President, who called for "maximum devolution" to the Tamil people in her policy statement to Parliament at the beginning of the previous peace process, has gone much further than the Prime Minister who calls for "extensive devolution". The President has both the political courage and the charisma to provide leadership to the country in devising a political solution to the ethnic conflict.

Through the ceasefire agreement the Prime Minister has demonstrated that he has the confidence to take a number of risky steps to reduce the armed conflict. While he may never have been associated with previous

calls for a negotiated settlement, he has also never obstructed efforts to do so. When President Kumaratunga presented wide-ranging devolution proposals in July 1995, then Opposition leader Wickremasinghe criticised it in Parliament, but he did not oppose it outside. He made an important break with the Sri Lankan tradition of the Opposition always mobilising Sinhala nationalists against any political concessions made to the Tamils by the government. More recently, he supported President Kumaratunga when she initiated indirect talks with the Tiger through Norwegian facilitation. In the past few months he has worked hard to diffuse opposition to the peace process with the Tigers. The Prime Minister has shown that he has the skills and the patience to negotiate an end to the armed conflict with the Tigers.

There is a natural division of political labour between the two main political parties in Sri Lanka that can help the country wend its way towards peace. Sri Lankans can encourage the two parties to compete with each other for power by pursuing two parallel but complementary aspects of a peace process - addressing the armed conflict and the ethnic conflict - rather than obstructing each other's effort to do so. If the political moment is ripe and the proper political incentives are created, this collaboration can be institutionalised in a bipartisan negotiating council as peace negotiations proceed.

The negotiating council can be co-chaired by the President and the Prime Minister, who together can appoint its members. The negotiating council ought to have two subcommittees - one to deal with the armed conflict and the other with the ethnic conflict. The Prime Minister can chair the subcommittee that deals with the armed conflict, an area where he has already made some headway. The President can chair the subcommittee that deals with the ethnic conflict, an area where she has been more forthcoming. The role of this committee will be to advise and guide the negotiating team representing the Sri Lankan government. Ultimately,

who has more influence in shaping the peace process will depend on the relative power of the two political parties among the people. While there is no assurance that the negotiating council will ensure that the two political parties co-operate with each other, it can provide an institutional framework that will enable the two major political parties to collaborate better in negotiating an end to the war.

Clearly none of this will guarantee that the peace process will succeed, particularly if the Tigers believe they have more to gain by going to war than working towards peace. Peace processes rarely succeed, even when both parties negotiate in good faith. When one party has consistently demonstrated nothing but bad faith, it is even less likely to do so. To counter the possibility of failure, the best that the President and the Prime Minister can do is make preparations for war together, just as they ought to make preparations for peace together.

If there is unity in peace, there is likely to be unity in war. However, disunity in peace, will invariably lead to disunity in war.

In the past few years, rhetoric aside, the P.A. and the UNP have come a remarkably long way towards a common position on resolving the two central conflicts that plague Sri Lanka - the ethnic conflict and the armed conflict. The people of Sri Lanka by voting for two political parties to rule them together have called on their leaders to set aside partisan differences that obstruct the peace process. Both parties must come to realise that an end to the civil war will ultimately benefit them both. Because whichever political party wins the competition to rule Sri Lanka, it will still have to deal with the ethnic conflict, on the one hand, and the armed rebellion of the Tigers, on the other.

(The writer is a Fellow of the Open Society Institute and an Assistant Director at the Rockefeller Foundation, based in New York. This article expresses his personal views and not those of either of the institutions).

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Inflammable East: Of Nationhoods and Neighbourhoods

Lakshman Gunasekara

July, for Sri Lankans, used to be the start of 'danger' season, the most memorable being July 1983. The worst ever pogrom against the Tamil people that broke in Colombo on the 24th of July that year and lasted the week was the turning point in the Eelamist secessionist campaign. It has never looked back since or, rather, that is one of its main inspirational moments it always looks back on as it has marched forward in bloody, heroic, cruel, struggle.

The other dark memories of this part of the year hark back to July 1987 when the country suffered the multiple traumas of foreign intervention, an imposed 'peace accord', an extempore, ridiculously half-hearted, assassination attempt against a visiting foreign leader (Rajiv Gandhi) and, the escalation of a second major insurgency, in the South, to complement the on-going one in the North-East. And if that is not enough of a recollection, one can always recall the trauma of the July 1980 General Strike and general sacking of over a lakh of workers with the use of Emergency Powers.

Today, however, after more than thirty years of post-Independence violence of various sorts, virtually every month of the year is a commemoration of violent incidents: be they massacres, political repression, rebellions, military battles, or assassinations. Ultimately, violence is so cruel that, in these past decades, Sri Lankans have been killed, detained, or tortured not because they were Tamil, Sinhala, Muslim, LTTE, JVP, UNP, SLFP, insurgent, soldier, trade unionist, journalist, or social activist or because of any other affiliation, but simply because they happened to be there as passers-by or by-standers or passengers or residents.

The more the violence is allowed to occur without action to manage situations or engineer solutions to causal problems, the greater the danger of such tragedy, of haphazard occurrences, of

flashpoints and of provocations.

Recent incidents

The recent incidents of communal violence in the East are an example of this danger. These incidents in the Trincomalee and Batticaloa districts were the result of simmering inter-ethnic tensions that, in turn, were the result of the uncertainties of the current cease-fire arrangement and the numerous aspects of the conflict that were left unattended by the 2002 Cease-fire Agreement. Just as much as the final spark that ended the 1990 negotiating process was probably due to a minor social squabble in Batticaloa (a dispute over a love affair, according to one writer), the recent communal disturbances between Muslims and Tamils in the East were the result, not of political machination or military manoeuvre, but of a minor local dispute.

The onus for the subsequent management of the situation, however, lies with those in political control of the areas in which the communal confrontation spread. And in the East, where the faultlines of the secessionist insurgency have always been the most blurred, this 'political control' is also equally blurred.#

Classical overlap

Political control in the Eastern districts have always followed the classical overlap of military and political hegemony that is the hallmark of insurgency. The State military may seem in control of an area, but the insurgent movement, in this case the LTTE, exercises political-ideological hegemony - partly through political mobilisation and partly through coercion over the local populace in the very area supposedly 'controlled' by the State forces. The same scenario was enacted in the course of both JVP insurgencies. This is the classic structure of 'dual power' that is a hallmark of any successful in-

surgency.

In the case of the Tamil insurgency, this political overlap was even more dichotomous because of the ethnic loyalty of the populace to the insurgents in opposition to the dominating State forces. In the case of the JVP the State forces were always able to undermine the insurgents' hegemony due to the homogeneity of the population and the dominating State forces.

But in the East, there has always been yet another complication which sometimes made the overlap three-cornered. The areas of disputed control are actually an ethnic mosaic. It is not simply a case of virtually totally Sinhala State forces dominating an area populated by Tamils and infiltrated by the Tamil insurgents (LTTE). Rather, the areas under State forces' domination include a complex mix of Tamil, Muslim and, in some parts, Sinhala settlements. Indeed, in some minor towns, there is a veritable patchwork of different ethnic neighbourhoods of differing strength of numbers.

Often, this difference in numbers becomes the cause of tragedy with those in the minority becoming the easy victims of spontaneous social anger of those in the majority. Thus, even if members of an ethnic minority in a particular area are the culprits responsible for the original dispute, the responding violence by the majority ethnic group so overwhelms the minority that they become the victims of the larger conflagration.

Then, the communication of local communities comes into play literally communication by word of mouth - and the news spreads rapidly of this victimisation. Immediately, people of the victimised community in areas where they are in a majority feel emboldened to take revenge on the perceived 'enemy' community. It is a veritable chain-reaction of violence spreading outwards from the original site of conflict.

To go back to our recollections of July 1983, a most stark poignant memory is that of the violence meted out against neighbour by neighbour. People literally attacked their next door neighbours over the boundary fence or wall. The hot blooded youth of a neighbourhood belonging to one community turned on individuals or whole families of another community in that same

neighbourhood. 1983, as well as numerous other communal riots before and after, have been so much a conflagration of neighbourhoods prompted by the aspirations, rivalries, hatreds and paranoias of nationhood.

In the East, under the current Cease-fire dispensation, the responsibility for law and order has been completely blurred by the semi-legitimation of that overlap of political control. The distinction between the 'cleared' and 'un-cleared' areas (to use the State forces terminology) has become even more unclear (if you don't mind the pun).

Cease-fire Agreement

During insurgency, the insurgents' social-political hegemony was completely covert, illegal and, in formal terms, illegitimate while the State forces' control was overt, legal and legitimate. In this post-hostilities situation, the Cease-fire Agreement has enabled the LTTE to legally, overtly and legitimately extend its political control directly into areas once overtly and legally under the control of the State forces. At the same time, the LTTE enjoys greater legitimacy in its control over the areas it directly controls.

On the one hand this has resulted in the further weakening of the State forces' authority even in the areas that they control in the conflict zones of the North-East, especially in the East where there has been this overlap of control. On the other, it has increased the LTTE's political responsibility for affairs in these same areas (areas technically outside their 'territory').

Perception by the Muslims

No wonder then the perception by the Muslims that the rioting was engineered by the LTTE in an effort to 'ethnically cleanse' these ethnically mixed areas in order to make them purely Tamil-populated areas. The reality of course is quite different. In fact, there is considerable evidence that LTTE high command had quickly moved to mobilise Tiger units in those riot-affected localities to curb the mobs. Telephone 'hotlines' became active between North and South and the LTTE high command is understood to have spoken to the national level Muslim leaders and reassured them that the LTTE was acting to bring the situation

under control.

But in a region where both major military forces the State forces and the LTTE have manipulated the various ethnic communities and the patchwork neighbourhoods for purposes of both insurgency and counter-insurgency, and trauma and tragedy has been the experience of all communities these past two decades, tensions and suspicions are rampant and it will probably take decades before they are eased. Till the 'authorities', whoever they might be, establish structures of law and order that are legitimate in the eyes of the whole populace of the region, these multi-ethnic neighbourhoods must live in such tension and uncertainty.

Unfortunately, the Cease-fire Agreement has not been followed up with a continued process of negotiations that address the various core aspects of the ethnic conflict, and the problem of mixed ethnic localities, and ethnic minorities within the combined North-East region is a critical issue with immense potential for igniting further hostilities. These columns have warned repeatedly of the dangers of not taking steps to address these core issues and has specifically pointed to the inflammable situation in the East particularly due to the ethnic plurality there.

In fact these columns have also pointed out the danger in leaving unresolved the issue of military frontlines pointing out the tensions that will remain between the rival military forces as long as the frontlines are improperly demarcated and the areas of control stay blurred.

On the other hand, this second issue of frontlines, may be best kept unresolved. Perhaps it is useful to keep the territories of control unclear and unmapped precisely because the current peace initiative seems to rely so much on spontaneous, informal and elemental processes for the resolution of some fundamental issues;

But while such a spontaneous process may sound ideal to those who idealise 'natural' dynamics over 'social engineering' and is also convenient to those in power who want to avoid various political complications within their immediate political constituencies, it is fraught with danger precisely because social management is so necessary in these times of large, complex and con-

tinuously inter-active societies.

That is why these columns had earlier urged the LTTE to proceed unilaterally with negotiations with Muslim and Sinhala communities in the East rather than wait for Colombo to get its act together or for some elements in Colombo to intervene in the East with their own political agendas.

Challenge LTTE must face

This is the challenge that LTTE must face if it is to be convincing in its assumption of political power in the North-East. As the LTTE becomes semi-legal and legitimate and overt in its presence even in areas beyond its direct military control, the Tigers become politically and socially responsible for those populations.

The Tamil aspiration for nationhood is being fulfilled, albeit partially, in a possibly confederal sense, and that is a victory for democracy in Sri Lanka. But that nationhood must immediately begin fulfilling its promise of democratic governance if that victory is not to be hollow. The newly envisaged nationhood must fulfil its responsibility to all its citizens, otherwise it will suffer the same fate and the same illegitimacy that was suffered by the hegemonic nationhood it is escaping from.

No one else bears more responsibility for such social management than the force that claims 'sole representation' of that nationhood the LTTE. It is up to the LTTE to adapt to the new reality, to transform itself, and to deal differently with other forces in fulfilling this responsibility. That is the only way it can stay out of the dustbin of history. In terms of the larger Sri Lankan State, the Government in Colombo remains responsible for ensuring that regional actors are provided the space to fulfil their regional responsibilities.

That is why there is a need to move beyond informal, ad hoc processes at some point and to take up core issues if not in some grand operative 'conference', at least in limited stages but with a clearly managed programme.

Social management at regional level cannot succeed unless there is social management at national level. Unless nationhoods are just and democratic, neighbourhoods cannot remain in peace for long.

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Indian Malayali Lady, 40, well employed in London, divorced with one grown up child seeks Tamil or Malayali partner. Please send details M 1298 c/o Tamil Times.

Jaffna Hindu parents seek professional groom for science graduate daughter, 30, senior executive in reputed firm, interests Bharatanatyam, sports. Please send horoscope, details. M 1299 c/o Tamil Times.

Jaffna Hindu parents seek professional partner for British-born daughter, 28, doctor. Please send photo, full details. M 1300 c/o Tamil Times.

Sri-Lankan parents in UK seek professional partner for daughter, 34, professionally qualified with MBA in good employment in London, horoscope available, religion immaterial. M 1301 c/o Tamil Times.

About People and Events

WEDDING BELLS

We congratulate the following couples on their recent wedding. **Siva Arul son of Mr. & Mrs S.T. Ramalingam (Retired Teachers) of 712, Jln Rasah, Seremban, Malaysia and Sumitra daughter of Mrs. Pathmavathy Nadarajah of 81 Jln Setiakasih 9, Bukit Damansara, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia and late Mr. S. Nadarajah on 2nd June 2002 at Kalamandapam,**

Brickfields, Jln Scott, Kuala Lumpur.

Vijayakanthan son of Mr. & Mrs. Vijayapalan of Uyarapulam, Anaicoddai, and Jayanthi daughter of Mr. & Mrs. K. Kailalingam of Anaicoddai, Sri Lanka on 5th June 2002 at Sri Manikka Pillaiyar Temple Wedding Hall, 359 Galle Road, Colombo 4.

Kalaimahal, daughter of Mr. & Mrs. N. Ramanathan of 262 Wricklemarsh Road, Blackheath, London SE3 8DW and Aravinthan son of Mr. S. Vethasantharam of 45 Engleheart Road, Catford, London SE6 2HN and the late Mrs Vethasundaram on 22nd June 2002 at Sri Muthumari Amman Temple Wedding Hall, Tooting, London SW17 7EJ.

Srikantha son of Mr. & Mrs. Thavapalasingam of 52 Essex Road, Willesdan, London NW10 9PD and Mona daughter of Mr. Bhaban Man & Mrs. Neera Shrestha on 23rd June 2002 at The Clay Oven - The Banqueting Suites, Wembley, Middx, UK.

Shyamsundar son of Mr. V.S.-Sockalingam, Retired General Manager, C.T.B., Jaffna and Mrs S. Sockalingam, Deputy Principal, Vembadi Girls' High School, Jaffna and of 479 Navalar Road, Athiyady, Jaffna and Sivarangini daughter of Mr. & Mrs. K. Mohanarajah of 151 Main Street, Trincomalee on 29th June 2002 at Hotel Ranmuthu, Colombo3, Sri Lanka.

Ramanan son of Mr. & Mrs Mahadevan of 3, The firs, Milton Avenue, London E6 1BH and Kanjhana daughter of Mr. & Mrs. Selvaratnam of 16 Impasse Marettte de Guillerval, 91000 Evry, France on 30th June 2002 at Sri Muthumari Amman Temple Wedding Hall, Tooting, London SW17 7EJ.

Jeyagoban son of Mr. & Mrs.-Kulasingam of C/25/1/1 Soy-sapura, Moratuwa, Sri Lanka and Sri Janani daughter of Mr. & Mrs. Manoharan of 18/4 Union Place, Hill Street, Dehiwala, Sri Lanka on 7th July 2002 at Sri Manicka Pillayar Kovil Wedding Hall, Galle Road, Colombo 4.

Arunan son of Dr. V & Mrs M. Balasegaram of 'Annai Illam', 54 Marlborough Drive, Clayhall, Ilford, Essex IG5 0JW and Ranitha daughter of Mrs M. Dayalakumar of 360 Thorold Road, Ilford, Essex IG1 4HJ and the late Mr. S. Dayalakumar on 7th July 2002 at 'The Decorium', Woodgreen, London N22 6UH.

Jeyapragash son of Mr. & Mrs. Balakrishnar of 2 Ramakrishna Avenue, Wellawatte, Colombo 6 and Suganya daughter of Mr. & Mrs. Sahadevan of 45 Brockham Drive, Barkingside, Essex IG2 6QW on 13th July 2002 at McEntree School Hall, Walthamstow, London E17 5DP.

Senthuran son of Dr. & Dr.-(Mrs) Sivagnanavel of 282 Coombe Lane, West Wimbledon, London SW20 0RW and Lakshmi daughter of Dr. & Dr.-(Mrs) Ramalingam of 4 Kensington Court, Kippa Ring, Queensland 4021 Australia on 14th July 2002 at 'Shangri La', Wynnum West, Queensland, Australia.

son of the late Mr. & Mrs Jaya-Ratnam; son-in-law of the late Mr. & Mrs R.M. Gunaratnam (Hartley College, Point Pedro); loving husband of Sajo; father of Darrell and Dushy; father-in-law of Mythili and Prajeev (all UK); brother of Freddy (Sri Lanka), the late Festus (UK), Gerry (Germany); Ananthan (Canada), Dharman, Joy (both of Sri Lanka), Gracie (Canada), Yoges (Sri Lanka) & Ruby (Canada) passed away on 9th June 2002. The funeral was held in St. Matthew's Church, Chadderton, Durham, UK on 15th June 2002.

The family wish to thank all friends and relatives who attended the service, sent messages of sympathy and assisted them in various ways during the bereavement - 12 Rookwood, Irkvale, Chadderton, Oldham, Lancs OL1 2TU



Mrs Nallamma Balakrishnan, the dearly loved wife of the late Ahamparam Balakrishnan; sister of late Kanagaratnam and Maheswary; much loved mother of Dr. Bobby Somasundaram (Consultant Psychiatrist, UK) and mother-in-law of Chitra and grandmother of Sanjeevan (Medical Student at Guy's) passed away peacefully on 14th June 2002 in Colombo aged 82 years. The cremation took place at Galkissa Cemetery, Mount Lavinia on 17th June 2002.

The members of the family wish to thank all relatives and friends who sent messages of condolences. - 32 Copperfield Road, Cheddle Hulme, Cheshire SK8 7PN, UK. Tel: 0161 440 9533.

OBITUARIES



Joseph Sripalan Williams Jaya-Ratnam, retired Consultant in Accident and Emergency, Thameside General Hospital, Ashton-Under Lyne, UK,

In Memoriams

In loving memory of **Mr. Justice Aiyadurai Sivanandan** on the first anniversary of his passing away on 25th July 2001.



Greatly missed and fondly remembered by his loving wife Pushpavathy; children Sivaraman, Sri Lakshmanan and Umayal; daughters-in-law Bahirathy and Kumuthiny; grand children Aarabhi, Krishna, Akhilesh, Abhilash and Kanna; sisters Pathmawathy Jayaseelan, Thilakavathy Wijayaratanam and Ankaiyatkanni Sivapiragasapillai



In loving memory of **Mrs Mangay Sivasampu** on the twelfth anniversary of her passing away on 2.8.90.

Sadly missed and fondly remembered by her two sons – 15 Wolsey Road, Chessington, Surrey KT9 1XG

In Cherished memory of **Mr. Chinnathampy Rasiah** on the eighth anniversary of his passing away on 24.04.94.

Deep in our hearts you will always stay
Loved and remembered every day.

Greatly loved and deeply missed by his sorrowing wife Gunamany; beloved children Rajan and Rajini; loving daughter-in-law Janaki; son-in-law Lakshman; grandchildren Thabojan, Prasanth and Sulakshan; sister-in-law, nephews and nieces. – 14 Greenbriar Avenue, Wheelers Hill, Melbourne, Vic 3150, Australia./ 7 Sessions Road, Laffayette 94549, California, USA.

**Ranga Cumarasamy****First Anniversary Remembrance**

"The best and the most beautiful things in the world cannot be seen nor touched but are felt in the hearts"

Helen Keller

Everything we do echoes with the laughter and the voice of you. You are in every corner. Every turn and twist, every old familiar spot whispers how you are missed. Yours ever loving, Jamuna Cumarasamy (wife), Darshan (son) and all family members.

**In Loving Memory of our**

Aiyah
Sayambunther Vyramuttu Rattinam

Born: 30.03.1922
Rest: 30.03.1997



Amma
Vyramuttu Rattinam Selvanayaki

Born: 04.09.1920
Rest: 09.05.2001



Sadly missed and fondly remembered by sons Pathmanathan, Ramanathan and Loganathan; daughters-in-law Vasuki, Vijeyaladchumy and Thanaledchumy; grandchildren Vijayaluxmi Thevakumar, Senthooran, Bhavan, Kugan, Asha-Vidhya and Sathian; great grand daughters Krishni and Vishala
3 The Orchard, Wickford, Essex SS12 0HB, UK.
Tel: (01268) 766624.

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

- Aug 1** Feast of St. Alphonsus
Aug 2 Karthigai
Aug 4 Krishna Eekathasi
Aug 6 Pirathosam; Feast of the Transfiguration of the Lord, Jesus Christ
Aug 8 Aadi Amavasai; Feast of St. Dominic
Aug 10 Aadi Puram; Feast of St. Lawrence; South London Tamil Welfare Group (SLTWG) Trip to Worthing. Tel: 020 8542 3285
Aug 11 Sathurthi
Aug 13 Shashthi
Aug 14 Aadi Swathi
Aug 15 Feast of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary
Aug 16 Varalakshmy Viratham; Thiruvillakku Pooja
Aug 18 Sukkla Eekathasi
Aug 20 Pirathosam; Feast of St. Bernard
Aug 22 Fullmoon; Aavani Avittam
Aug 24 Feast of St. Bartholomew; SLTWG Drop In Tel: 020-8542 3285
Aug 25 Feast of St. Louis
Aug 26 Sankadakara Sathurthi
Aug 27 Feast of St. Monica
Aug 30 Karthigai
Aug 31 3 p.m. – 11 p.m. Saiva Munnetra Sangam (UK) celebrates its **Silver Jubilee** at the Walthamstow Assembly Hall, Forest Road, Walthamstow, London E17 with Puja at Katpaka Vinayagar Temple and procession to hall, speeches by renowned Saivites worldwide, distribution of gold medals to winners of prizes for speaking and singing, cultural programme, refreshments and dinner finale. All welcome.
At Bhavan Centre, 4A Castle-town Road, London W14 9HQ. Tel: 020 7381 3086/4608
Aug 9 7 p.m. and **Aug 10** 6 p.m. Summer School Finale Concert – Music & Dance
Aug 17 & 18 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. A two-day Yoga Exhibition & Seminar
Aug 19 to 22 and **Aug 26 to 29** 6.30 to 8 p.m. Vedic Astrology Course by Mr. Geoffrey Pearce
Aug 31 5.30 p.m. Sri Krishna Jannamashtami - Bhajans, Puja and Prasad. All Welcome.

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Post Vacant

Srishti's School of Dance is urgently looking to employ a karnatic vocal musician to work as a teacher, composer, vocalist for performances. Qualification from a recognised music institution essential. Experience of working with bharathanatyam and familiarity of Tamil and Telugu essential. Working knowledge of Sanskrit and Hindi required. £ 13000 per annum. Send in your application to Nina Rajarani,

1 Newlyn Gardens, Rayners Lane, Harrow, Middlesex HA2 9TA.
Phone: (020) 8868 7746. Closing Date: 15th August 2002.

ANANDANATHAN FETED BY ALMA MATER



Mr. R. Ananthanathan of Charter House Avenue who had been resident in the UK with his family for the last 35 years took the opportunity of his recent holiday in Sri Lanka to visit his old school St. Mary's College, Chilaw where he was captain of the Cricket team in 1955. He had also captained the Soccer and Athletic teams. He had been keen to visit the school and as his visits to Sri Lanka had been during the school holidays, he planned a visit during term time and placed a note in the national press regarding his wish to meet his mates in school. To his surprise he received several calls stating their wish to meet him. Meanwhile, the secretary of the Old Boys' Association, invited him and his wife Mano to be present at a school assembly on 10th June 2002 to which in addition to the staff and pupils several old students and local members of the public were invited. The Head Master said that he was proud to receive an old boy who had contributed so much to the school and extolled the pupils to follow his example and 'do well in school to shine in life wherever they go'. The secretary of the Old Boy's Association, the MP for Chilaw, the President of the local Cricket Association and others spoke, their central theme being that 'a lone Tamil boy from Jaffna could become the Head Prefect of a school where the majority are Sinhalese'.

Mr. Anandanathan expressed his thank for the reception organised and made a donation towards the Cricket Pavilion Building Fund.

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An Appeal for Assistance

Cancer is one of the most feared diseases in the world. Patient with cancer undergo enormous psychological and physical trauma wherever they live, whether in a developed or developing country. But the cancer suffering in the war torn area of North and East Sri Lanka is of an unimaginable magnitude.

Cancer Aid for North and East Sri Lanka, CANE is an organisation founded in the UK in 1993 and was registered as a charity by the Charity Commission in 1995. Its aim is to provide medical, financial and other assistance to cancer patients. Funds are collected through monthly subscriptions from members, voluntary contributions from well wishers, till collections and through fund-raising events.

The association has with the generous assistance of the people, collected and distributed £ 20,000 to date sponsoring treatment and continuing care of most needy cancer patients from North/East Sri Lanka. All accounts and details of beneficiaries are available on request.

As part of this year's fund raising effort, a raffle and classical concert is to be held on 8th September 2002. The programme will consist of a Carnatic Vocal Recital by Mr. Rajkumar Bharathy, renowned exponent of Carnatic vocal music from Madras and classical Bharatha Natyam by senior students of Ragini Rajagopal. The evening commences at 6 p.m. at Sir James Hawkey Hall, Bromhill Road, Woodford, Essex IG8 0BG.

We appeal to everyone to contribute generously to this worthy cause, to alleviate the hardship of these desperate and deserving patients.

For further information please contact
Dr. J. Namasivayam Dr. N. Indrasenan
Chairman or email: nji@tesco.net
Tel: 020 8505 4725

CHILD SPECIALIST FOR JAFFNA UNIVERSITY TEACHING HOSPITAL

The Medical Institute of Tamils sponsored a Child Specialist for the Jaffna University Teaching Hospital, which is the only General Hospital serving a population of around 450,000 and has been starved of basic necessities due to the ongoing war. Their healthcare has suffered due to the shortage of doctors, paramedical staff, technology, drugs and basic facilities. There were no qualified child specialists in the hospital. As a result, not only was the healthcare of children affected, but also the training of the medical students at the university.

This led to the Sri Lankan Medical Council threatening to withdraw the recognition of medical degrees awarded by the University. This would have been another body blow for citizens impoverished and deprived of their basic right to health care and education.

In response to an appeal made by the Academia of Jaffna University, efforts were made by the Medical Institute of Tamils, Thames South Region, to recruit a Paediatrician from the UK or South India, by inserting an advertisement in medical journals. Professor David Southall OBE, MD, FRCP, DCH, Consultant Paediatrician and Medical Director of Child Advocacy International (a well known charity fighting for deprived children worldwide), responded to the advertisement in the British Medical Journal.

He very kindly went to Jaffna on a brief assignment as a clinician and teacher, and did a need assessment. His trip was partly sponsored by MIOT. On his return he recruited a Paediatrician, who took up the post for six months as Paediatrician and Lecturer in the Jaffna Teaching Hospital in May this year. MIOT hopes to continue to fund this project for at least one year. It expresses its special gratitude and heartfelt thanks to Professor Southall for his selfless and tireless effort to improve the plight of those in need.

Those who wish to contribute towards this project are kindly requested to sent their cheque to The Treasurer, Medical Institute of Tamils, South Thames Region, 15 Tall Elms Close, Bromley, Kent BR2 0TT.

BOOK REVIEW

"Early Tamils of Lanka – Ilankai"

by N. Parameswaran

In this book, the history of the early Tamils of Lanka (Ilankai) is traced from pre-historic times to about the 10th century. The early history of the Tamils portrays the extent of Dravidian and Tamil penetration and settlement of the island from pre-historic and early historic times. It leads to the influential role played by the Tamils in the commercial, cultural, political and military affairs of the island during this period South India exerted profound and enduring influence on Lanka from ancient times. Hence a study of those times are better understood in the wider

geo-political context of the South Indian mainland and Lanka. From the time they gained mastery over South India, establishing their Kingdoms, they began to influence the course of the island's history as this book clearly brings out.

The ancestors of the vast majority of the Sri Lankans of today are of Indian origin. Almost all of them have come to the island from the southern parts of India. These people have thus started out from a common ethnic and cultural base in the distant past. However, in time, a pluralistic society emerged with differences in religion, language and culture giving rise to separate identities.

The Tamils to this day, share a common religion, language and culture with the Tamils of South India. They have how-

ever, evolved a distinctive subset of that culture based on their historical traditions. A proper and in-depth understanding of the early history of the Tamils of Lanka is essential, particularly to a Sri Lankan of the Tamil community which is at present dispersed all over the world and growing. It needs to be aware, more so, that it is heir to a rich Tamil heritage.

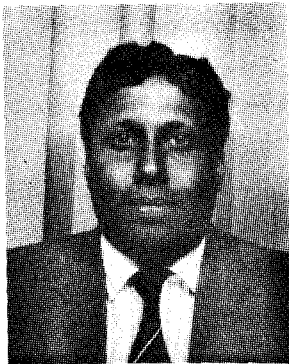
The book draws from different and diverse sources to seek to establish and present the facts based on historical evidence. Its object is to trace the ancient history of the Tamils of Lanka from a broader Tamil perspective overlooking both Ilankai and South India. In the process, as seen certain myths and misrepresentations in the recorded traditional histories of Lanka are demystified to arrive at the truth. As may be observed Sri Lanka

is referred to in the book as Lanka and Ilankai as it was called in ancient times.

The book in presenting a different perspective and interpretation of the facts in an analytic manner comes out with a history of the Tamils in ancient Sri Lanka which makes for interesting and absorbing reading. It should have a wide appeal to all those interested in knowing about the Tamils' ancient past in Sri Lanka.

The author Mr. N. Parameswaran served in the Ministry of Commerce, Sri Lanka and with UNCTAD. In his retirement, he has researched the history of the Tamils in Sri Lanka and published this book. He is presently working on the medieval period of their history as a sequel to this book, which is priced at £ 10 plus postage. Copies could be had by contacting the author at 75 Walpole Road, London E17 6PS. Tel: 020 8520 5442

Dr. B. Rabindra An Appreciation



The Medical Institute of Tamils is in a state of shock with the sudden death of one of its founder members, who devotedly participated in its activities until his untimely death. **Dr. B. Rabindra** (Robin to everyone who knew him) passed away peacefully in the early hours of 26th June 2002 after a cardiac event in the presence of his beloved wife Kethees.

Robin was born on 30th October 1951 to Mr. & Mrs Balasubramaniam and had two sisters Usha and Roopa. He was one of the bright stars of St. John's College, Jaffna and studied medicine at Peradeniya University, where he fell in love with Kethees, married her and they were blessed with two lovely daughters. After graduation as a Doctor in 1977 he worked in various hospitals in Sri Lanka until 1981.

The political situation in our motherland forced him to emigrate to UK, but he always felt that he was one of those in the struggle and would have worked with his heart and soul to achieve the Tamils' ambition. He worked in several hospitals in UK, has been an ophthalmic medical practitioner for several years and earned a very good reputation for himself and his profession by his dedicated and hard work.

His hallmark of good character, capability and excellence at whatever he did earned for him many sincere friends in MIOT and within our Tamil community. He was a keen cricketer. He could not fulfil his ambition of visiting the seven wonders

of the world with Kethees. He was always there to help those in need, full heartedly. He was so gentle that he left as few disturbances as he could.

He leaves behind his loving wife Dr. Ketheer and two lovely daughters Gaythri and Meera. They would like to take this opportunity to thank all those who gave support to them and to those who attended the funeral in a large gathering.

May his soul rest in peace in the hands of Lord Muruga.

Dr. P. Kukathanan

Ariachandran Tennis Champion at 70



Mr. Kanagaratnam Ariachandran (Arichu), retired Financial Management Specialist of the World Bank and a former Sri Lankan Davis Cup player celebrated his 70th birthday recently winning the two prestigious titles at the following veterans' tournaments.

1. Men's 70 Singles at The British Open Veterans' Claycourt Tennis Championships, held at Bournemouth, England from June 1st to 8th 2002 defeated Paul Drake, the British No 1 in the finals - 6/2, 6/4.
2. Men's 70 Singles at the Scottish Veterans' Open Tennis Championships held at Bridge of Allan, Scotland from June 9th - 15th 2002. Defeated Brian Fairclough in the finals 6/2, 6/1.

In the fifties/sixties, Arichu also played representative cricket. He played for Royal College, Colombo and later represented the University of Ceylon, the Tamil Union and Bloomfield in the then premier Sara Trophy Cricket Competition. Arichu was also a nationally ranked

table tennis player.

Mr. Ariachandran who now resides in Maryland, USA is the third son of the late Dr. K. Kanagaratnam who was the Medical Superintendent of the Colombo Group of Hospitals and the late Kanmani Ammal.

MALLARI

That Mallari is normally played when the deity is taken out in procession is known to all. But as in other areas of karnatic music Mallari has also taken new garbs. Gambiranaatai, a five swara scale alone is used and this goes well with the "pancha vakraja" as Thyagaraja described Shiva in his Chittaranjani kirthana "Nada tanum anisam"

The practice of playing Mallari during a temple festival procession has special significance. The music has to be dedicated to the Supreme is realised in full literally in the nearness of the decorated deity to the strains of the nadaswaram. The devotees can easily fix their eyes on the presiding deity and tune their ears to the Mallari. Another facet of the temple ritual is that Nadaswaram is the only instrument that can be heard over a long distance and in that respect it stands for the pervasiveness of Nada Brahman. Secondly the nadaswaram vidwans playing from late in the night to the wee hours of the morning were the main sources of musical education in the south. Goes with it the insight into aesthetics.

In Bhakti rasa, the beautifully decorated deity with his consorts standing in all majesty and glory at Gopura entrance, the towering temple spire in the background. The oil soaked torches shedding light, the stillness of the light and the gentle breeze wafting the strains of music in waves induce the people around the temple town to imbibe the nuances of music while turning their thoughts to God.

Even today, in war torn Jaffna, Mallari is played and heard at every season of temple festival from the smallest to the largest by ten to twelve sets (2 nadas-warams and 2 thavils each set) of "Mela-kootam" leading the procession of the Deity. Oh! What a sight and sound! What piety!

Sri Lanka Railway Past Employees Welfare Association (UK)

The Seventh Annual General meeting and the "Get-together" of the above Association was held on 8th June 2002 at John Innes Youth Centre, South Wimbledon, London.

The following were elected Office Bearers for the year 2002/2003.

Patron: Mr. A. Manikkam, **President:** Mr. C. Kannuthurai, **Vice President:** Mr. P. Gnananandan, **Secretary:** Mr. M. Selvanayagam, **Asst. Secretary:** Mr. K. Ramasamy, **Treasurer:** Mr. P. Chellathurai, **Committee Members:** Mrs. K. G. Alwis, Messer N. Paratharajah, T. Satkunanathan, Mrs. P. Arulampalam and Mrs. G. M. Mariadas.

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3 August - ETA 24 August
17 August - ETA 7 September



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