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*"I do not agree with a word
of what you say, but I'll
defend to the death your
right to say it"*

- Voltaire



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Email: admin@tamiltimes.org
editor@tamiltimes.org
p.rajanayagam@btconnect.com
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CONTENTS

Stalemate continues	03
Peace Council meets	05
Playing a corrective role	07
Options for Sri Lanka	09
Fratricidal killings	13
Call to LTTE on human rights	15
Rise and fall of JHU	16
Remembering Rajini	19
News Track	25
Ananda Coomaraswamy	33
Classified	36

Cover Page

Several thousands took part in 'Ahimsa
Samadhi' - meditation for peace on 21
Sept 2004 in Colombo (above); LTTE
delegation led by S P Tamilselvan
leaving for Europe on 28 Sept (below)

Peace Talks Stalemate Continues

Given the contradictory manner in which the major political parties have behaved in the past while in government and in opposition, the idea of constituting a consultative process involving wider influential sections of society, including political parties, with the aim of forming national consensus on the ethnic issue and peace negotiations with the LTTE is a desirable and welcome one. Pursuant to this idea, President Kumaratunga had invited all political parties represented in Sri Lanka's parliament, religious dignitaries and cross sections of Civil Society to participate in the inaugural meeting of the National Advisory Council for Peace and Reconciliation (NAC). The President had also invited the current leader of the Opposition in parliament and leader of the main opposition United National Party (UNP), Ranil Wickremasinghe, to co-chair the Council along with the Prime Minister Mahinda Rajapakse. True to form petty parochial partisan political rivalry won the day. Not only did Ranil Wickremasinghe decline the President's invitation to co-chair the meeting, but also his party decided to boycott the meeting thereby seeking to seriously undermine the very purpose for which the NAC was convened.

Not surprisingly therefore that the Most Venerable Thibbotuwawe Sri Siddhartha Sumangala Mahanayake Thera of the Malwatte Chapter speaking at the inaugural meeting of the NAC expressed grave concern at the UNP's absence saying that he could not understand why the UNP leadership was keeping away from the forum.

While the previous government under Ranil Wickremasinghe must be commended for the way in which it helped to carry forward the peace process, it must be realized that the LTTE pulled out of peace talks in April 2003 when his government was in power. It is also well to recognize that many concerned individuals and organizations felt excluded from the then ongoing peace process that was being undertaken not in a transparent manner. The secrecy that surrounded the entire process raised exaggerated and unnecessary fears and suspicions among those who felt that they were being kept out.

In this background, one would have thought that the platform of the NAC would have provided an ideal opportunity for all stakeholders to put forward and exchange views with a view to forming a consensus on resuming peace talks with the LTTE taking account of what transpired during the previous 6 rounds of talks, LTTE's proposal for an Interim Self Governing Authority (ISGA), and generally on the type of political and constitutional solution which can lead to lasting peace in the island.

Many have blamed the absence of 'a southern consensus', particularly between the two major political parties - SLFP and UNP - as the main obstacle to reaching a political settlement to the ethnic conflict. The LTTE itself has called upon the 'southern parties' to 'speak with one voice'. Hence, the UNP and its leader are well advised to reconsider their boycott of the NAC and act with a sense of responsibility and contribute to its deliberations. If the UNP leader is genuine in his commitment to ending the conflict and seeking a negotiated peace, then he ought to accept the President's offer to him to co-chair the NAC and take full part in its deliberations.

There appears to be hardly any difference between the Govern-

ment's and the UNP's positions in regard to the resumption of peace talks with the LTTE. The President at the inaugural meeting of the NAC set out the government's position clear: "The LTTE insists that the government should agree to discuss at first only their ISGA proposals. The government's position has been that we accept the concept of setting up an Interim Administration in the interim period, whilst a permanent solution is negotiated and implemented. But, we require a commitment from the LTTE that the Interim Administration as well as the final solution would be based on the Oslo Declaration signed by the Government of Sri Lanka and the LTTE which declared that the Federal solution should be sought within the framework of a united Sri Lanka."

G L Peiris on behalf of the UNP told the press on 7 October, "The President during her National Advisory Council (NAC) speech indicated that she would start talks based on the Oslo Declaration. That is exactly our position." The UNP leader on 19 October addressing his parliamentary group said, "The Tokyo declaration stresses the necessity for an Interim Administration for reconstruction and development of the North East. Further, parties have agreed on a blue-print, a federal system in the areas of historical habitation of the Tamils, based on internal self-determination within a united Sri Lanka, for a political solution."

It is therefore clear that both the main political parties hold similar positions on the issue of resump-

tion of peace talks. The LTTE says that it is ready to restart talks which have remained suspended for the last 19 months. The question therefore is as to why the Norwegian facilitators are finding hard to get the parties to the negotiating table.

It is learnt that the LTTE insists that any resumed talks must be based only on its ISGA proposal without reference to the Oslo declaration in which "the parties agreed to explore a solution founded on the principle of internal self-determination in areas of historical habitation of the Tamil-speaking peoples, based on a federal structure within a united Sri Lanka. The parties acknowledged that the solution has to be acceptable to all communities." This agreement between the Government and the LTTE was reached during the third round of talks held in Oslo from 2 to 5 December 2002.

It is said that the Government's insistence on the LTTE reiterating its commitment to the Oslo declaration is that it is of the view that the LTTE's ISGA proposal does not accord with any known model of a federal structure, and therefore contrary to the Oslo declaration. In the Government's characterization of the ISGA proposal, it is a blueprint for a confederal structure, if not outright secession. Some within government circles go as far as to say that the condition put by the LTTE for starting the talks only on the basis of the ISGA without reference to the Oslo declaration not only represents a retreat from its previous commitment to a federal solution, but also gives away its hidden separatist agenda.

The Government also is keen to ensure that any interim structure that is set up should be part of a continuum leading to the final settlement, which, of course, will have to accord with the provisions of the Oslo declaration.

On the other hand, the LTTE is insisting that the talks should begin only on the basis of its proposal for an ISGA. It is refusing to allow any other proposal to be put on the table at the start of the talks. It says that after the talks start, the Government may move amendments to the ISGA proposal and come out with its own ideas. The LTTE has also made it clear that it will not be prepared at this stage to enter into any discussion on the core political issues for an eventual constitutional settlement. That, it says, can be taken up only after the ISGA has been set up, institutionalised and has worked successfully for an unspecified period of time.

So the stalemate continues. It is reported that the Norwegian Special Envoy, Eric Solheim and Japanese Special Envoy Yasushi Akashi are due to arrive in Colombo with a view to persuading the parties to agree on suitable agenda for the resumption of talks. There is also pressure upon the parties from the international community, particularly from the United States and European Union, to get back to the negotiating table. One hopes that this pressure and the efforts of these gentlemen yield positive results.

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National Advisory Council aims at national consensus

The inaugural meeting of the National Advisory Council on Peace and Reconciliation (NAC) proposed by President Chandrika Kumaratunga aimed at building a national consensus vital for implementing a negotiated political settlement to the ethnic conflict took place at the Presidential Secretariat on October 4. Mahanayake Theras, as well as religious leaders from all the religious communities and leaders of political parties represented in the Parliament barring the main opposition party the UNP, the Tamil National Alliance (TNA) and Jathika Hela Urumaya (JHU) attended the meeting. Also present were the leaders and representatives of the major non-governmental organisations promoting a peaceful resolution of the conflict and lasting peace in Sri Lanka.

President .Kumaratunga had invited all political parties represented in Sri Lanka's parliament, religious dignitaries and cross sections of Civil Society to participate in the inaugural meeting of the National NAC.

A media release issued by Sri Lanka President's office said, "The NAC will be a broad-based national forum that will provide a means for the people of this country to contribute towards a political settlement and work towards reconciliation. The NAC will comprise three standing committees namely, a political, religious and civil society, which is, expected to consult, so as to ascertain the widest possible spectrum of views on how to bring about a negotiated political settlement and peace with dignity and democracy."

Many who have been campaigning for a "bipartisan southern consensus" on the ethnic issue were dismayed by the decision of the main opposition United National Party (UNP) and its leader Ranil Wickremasinghe not to attend the meeting of the NAC. The UNP kept out of the inaugural sessions insisting there was no purpose in building a southern consultation or consensus until peace talks are first resumed with the LTTE.

The political head of the LTTE, Thamilselvan, speaking from Geneva, described the council as a "time-wasting tactic" and said stalled peace negotiations

could resume on the basis of the LTTE's proposal for an Interim Self-Governing Authority.

The Tamil Nationalist Alliance (TNA) boycotting the event had earlier stated, "The JVP, the government's main alliance partner, and the Jathika Hela Urumaya (JHU), a party represented in parliament stridently oppose the commencement of talks on the ISGA proposals. This must inevitable result in the proposed national Advisory Council on Peace and Reconciliation becoming an exercise in futility. It would only retard the recommencement of the peace process, in a meaningful way." The JHU too boycotted the meeting.

Prime Minister Mahinda Rajapakse who made the opening remarks said the Government is fully committed to a negotiated settlement of the ethnic crisis. He said the negotiations with the LTTE will be transparent and will be in consultation with all democratic political parties and all sections of the civil society.

The President in her address explained the purpose of setting up the NAC. She said: "We envisaged the NAC on the following terms: Firstly, as a national forum for consultation on the Peace process between the Government and the citizenry, mainly through their elected representatives and also through their religious leaders, as well as leaders of civil society.

This council will serve as a forum, where the Government will keep the country informed of the progress of the negotiations process, as well as measures undertaken for ethnic reconciliation and for reconstruction and development of the North East. It will also serve as a forum for its members to inform the Government of their views and concerns, with regard to the Peace Process and also for them to suggest approaches to move the process forward. It will be a forum for every one of the varied communities that constitute our nation, to have their voices heard on this most crucial issue. In addition, interested groups could be invited to express their views and concerns to the council. I also hope that this council would serve as a forum for dialogue and advise to the Government on measures

that need to be adopted for national reconciliation, unity and ethnic harmony."

She made it clear that the consultation in this national forum is not meant to be an alternate to the negotiation between the Government and the LTTE. "My government shall continue to engage the LTTE, who we recognise as the primary actor, in the process of negotiating an end to the conflict and attaining peace. My Government's dialogue with the LTTE will be a separate and priority process. But as a democratic, people's government, we are under obligation to keep ourselves properly briefed of the views and concerns of all our peoples. We are aware that many peace efforts have stumbled due to the non-inclusion of the major players of our body politic in the process. We believe that any peace process must be open, inclusive and obtain the participation of the people at various levels. If everyone is not willing to participate, we must endeavour to obtain at least, the inclusion of the majority of our peoples. This is why we believe that a forum or institution such as the NAC is essential for that part of the Peace Process which should include the participation of the country. We see the two processes as moving parallel. The Government will engage the LTTE and continue the dialogue with it, through the facilitators, whilst the Government will separately consult with the country through the people's representatives, within the framework of the NAC. The first process is not dependent on the second, neither is the second on the first," the President said.

On the contentious issue that is holding up the resumption of the peace talks, she said: "The LTTE insists that the government should agree to discuss at first only their ISGA proposals. The government's position has been that we accept the concept of setting up an Interim Administration in the interim period, whilst a permanent solution is negotiated and implemented. But, we require a commitment from the LTTE that the Interim Administration as well as the final solution would be based on the Oslo Declaration signed by the Government of Sri Lanka and the LTTE which declared that the Federal solution should be sought within the framework of a united Sri Lanka. The negotiations with the LTTE as well as the consultation within the NAC could work out the level and extent of devolution and other details regarding this."

She also indicated the kind of politi-

cal settlement needed to ensure ethnic harmony and permanent peace in the entire country. She said: "We believe that the solution lies in seeking alternatives to the concept of a monolithic, unitary State - to blend power with principle, to reconcile authority with freedom. We are looking at a form of power sharing with a high level of democratic participation in decision-making, law-making and governance by the regional authorities or the devolved units. We do not believe that the dismemberment of the Sri Lankan State, demanded by the LTTE through the employment of terrorist means, would in anyway be a solution to the Tamil peoples problems. We are seeking a compromise that would satisfy the aspirations of all the communities of peoples living within our State - a compromise that would be democratic and pluralistic."

President Chandrika Kumaratunga also urged UNP Opposition Leader Ranil Wickremesinghe to reconsider his decision to boycott the NAC. Emphasising the importance of southern consensus on a suitable structure for settling the conflict once and for all, the President quoted from the speech made by the LTTE leader Velupillai Prabhakaran on November 26 last year: "Whenever the party in power attempts to resolve the Tamil issue, the party in opposition opposes it and derails the effort. This mode of conflict continues even when the opposition becomes the ruling party and attempts reconciliation. This Sinhala political drama with its typical historical pattern has been staged regularly for the last fifty years."

The President further said that as a negative consequence of this chess game, in which the Tamils were used as pawns, several peace efforts had failed, several peace negotiations had collapsed, several peace agreements had been torn apart and several peace pacts had become defunct.

Ven. Thibbatuwawe Sri Siddhartha Sumangala Maha Nayaka Thera of the Malwatte Chapter in his speech said: "It is with the pure and noble intention of ushering peace to our mother land that I address this inaugural meeting of the National Advisory Council for Peace and Reconciliation that was formed to re-establish peace in this island of Sri Lanka. I wish to express our delight and blessings for Her Excellency the President's resolute endeavour to establish this Advisory Council to usher in peace."

"The winner creates hatred in the mind of the loser. The loser lives in sor-

row. One who lives in equanimity lives in tranquility by renouncing both victory and defeat. This is the eternal truth pronounced by Buddha that we have to be mindful of when we contemplate a peaceful resolution of conflicts in a realistic manner," the Venerable Mayanayaka Thera said in his address.

Later, he conveyed his regret over the UNP's decision to keep away from the NACPR to the delegates of various organisations who called on him in Kandy. He said that he could not understand why the UNP leadership was keeping away from the forum when President Kumaratunga had convened the NAC in a bid to raise a united voice to find a solution to the national problem. The TNA delegation was also urged by the prelate to participate in the NACPR together with the UNP when it explained to him the LTTE's position on the continuing stalemate in the peace talks.

The Archbishop of Colombo Rt. Rev. Oswald Gomis said if we were to usher in peace we must have the strength of mind to believe we need peace and that we must have peace. The Archbishop stressed that no peace can be achieved while having disputes among political parties and religions. "Our own past experiences prove that divided we fall, united we stand," he said.

Vidyanithi Brahmasri S Kuhananda Sharma who spoke on behalf of the followers of Hinduism praised the proposal of late Prime Minister S W R D Bandaranaike to establish regional councils, he appealed to President Kumaratunga to consider the establishment of the same. He said he believed that it would contribute largely in solving the ethnic issue. Urging the President to resume peace talks without any further delay, he said: "There may be hindrances to our target but we should not withdraw. That is the expectation we have of the President" he said.

Moulavi M H M Buhari, the Islamic religious leader said, "Islam considers working for peace - worship". He thanked the President for setting up the NACPR and said it has provided a platform to openly discuss grievances of minorities. With regard to the peace process he said 'the final solution should be acceptable to all'.

Foreign Minister Lakshman Kadirgamar said: "I earnestly request the Opposition Leader to think again." Referring to the face-to-face debate between US President George Bush and his op-

ponent John Kerry which he himself attended, he said though the debate was hard-hitting, they were cordial to each other. The minister said in a mature democracy dialogue and civility is important.

Janatha Vimukthi Peramuna (JVP) Propaganda Secretary Wimal Weerawansa in his speech said though the JVP was sitting on this council where there were different parties it did not mean that all shared the same opinion regarding the peace process. "We have differences of opinions but that should not be an obstacle for peace talks," he said. For some reason we as a nation have still not been able to correct the divide and rule policy bequeathed on us by the Colonial Era even during the post colonial period. "Since we had not been able to get over that trap and march forward, we have been faced with a grave national crisis today", he said. He observed, "Diversity of communities was a factor which helped to beautify a country or region. But unfortunately, this factor which should beautify our nation had led to its division on new cultural lines and boundaries. A great and onerous responsibility is cast on us all today to prevent our cultural and national identities from becoming boundaries that would divide our nation."

Minister Douglas Devananda, Secretary General (EPDP) said: "I am one of the many Tamil militants, who, after the signing of the Indo-Sri Lanka Agreement, convinced that our armed struggle had proved the point that the Sri Lankan State could not continue to deny the legitimate rights of the Tamil people, and that it would henceforth be possible for the Tamil people to live as equals with the Sinhalese and the Muslims within a united Sri Lanka, if substantial devolution of powers to the Provinces could be guaranteed by the Constitution."

Having spelt out from the standpoint on the EPDP, the salient features that the solution to the ethnic problem should contain and traced the history of the several failed attempts to reach a constitutional settlement to the conflict, he turned on to the present predicament of the Tamils in Sri Lanka. He said: "The concept of 'sole representation' is self-destructive. It precludes political pluralism and democracy. Consequently, it results in the loss of human rights." He fervently appealed to the LTTE, and its leader Velupillai Prabhakaran, "if you really have the interests of the Tamil people at

heart, if you do not want the Tamil people to suffer any more and, if you really desire a political solution to the ethnic problem within a united Sri Lanka founded on the federal structure as agreed to by your representative in Oslo in December 2002, please return to the negotiating table. Any further delay in returning to the negotiating table would be a betrayal of the Tamil people. Please grab this opportunity presented to you once again by the President."

SLMC Deputy Leader M.M. Shaheer was quite direct in his brief speech where he said a Muslim delegation should be an integral part of the peace delegation.

The National Peace Council (NPC) in a press release stated the NAC was "a start to a more broad-based peace process in which there is more dialogue and less unilateralism."

Indian High Commissioner in Sri Lanka Nirupama Rao is reported to have praised President Chandrika Bandaranaike Kumaratunga's decision to convene an all party National Advisory Council for Peace and Reconciliation as an excellent effort to usher peace into the country when she called on Tourism and Investment Promotion Minister Anura Bandaranaike at his Rosmead Place residence recently. She also said there is a manifest transparency and emphasis on regional cooperation in the Government's peace efforts and expressed confidence that the NACPR will receive the consensus of all political parties to find a joint solution to the country's ethnic problem.

Apparently, there are three different aims of the peace process that are reflected in the stands of the Government, the main opposition party the UNP and the LTTE/TNA on the NACPR. The President has throughout believed in a constitutional settlement to the national conflict, the UNP continues to stick to its strategy of keeping the LTTE engaged in peace talks with the view to expedite the development of the national economy through increased foreign assistance and the LTTE does not want the talks to deviate from its goal of setting up the Interim Self-Governing Authority for the North-East. Coincidentally, the UNP's strategy favours the LTTE in realising its goal directly or indirectly if a negotiated political settlement is not feasible.

The UNP previously having given

International community playing a corrective role

Jehan Perera

The LTTE's high level political delegation to Europe, led by political wing leader, S P Thamilselvan, appears to have run into problems they did not anticipate.

Their purpose in travelling to Europe was said to be to consult with international experts on their proposals for an interim self-governing authority for the Northeast. It was also to canvass the international community regarding their stance on resuming the peace talks on the basis of those ISGA proposals. But the LTTE delegation have been receiving other messages that they will need to seriously consider if they are to advance as a credible political organisation in the eyes of the world.

the impression that the Government should agree to resumption of peace talks on the basis of the LTTE's ISGA proposal now appears to have changed its stance. The leader of the UNP, Ranil Wickramasinghe, addressing a meeting of the UNP Parliamentary group on 19 October held at the Parliamentary complex said, "The Tokyo declaration stresses the necessity for an Interim Administration for reconstruction and development of the North East. Further, parties have agreed on a blue-print, a federal system in the areas of historical habitation of the Tamils, based on internal self-determination within a united Sri Lanka, for a political solution. The only way out for the Government is to start peace talks immediately. We are not pressuring anyone to accept the LTTE's ISGA proposals in total. The UNP's stance is that talks based on the ISGA proposals should be started. As discussions proceed, alternative proposals could be taken up. Delay creates severe strain on the economy as foreign assistance remains blocked." However, it is doubtful whether in fact the LTTE will be prepared to resume talks on the basis of the ISGA together with the Oslo and Tokyo declarations. □

The most important component of the peace process is the ceasefire agreement. There have been many occasions in the past two and a half years when the ceasefire has seemed to be seriously threatened.

The discovery of LTTE arms shipments by the navy, the movement of LTTE troops across government lines without permission and the initial government support for the breakaway LTTE faction headed by Karuna led to very tense and dangerous situations. But, the most continuous source of tension that had eroded public faith in the ceasefire has been the LTTE assassinations of their Tamil political opponents and of government informants.

During their stay in Geneva the LTTE's political delegation met with representatives of Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch and the International Commission of Jurists. These leading human rights organisations took up the issue of political killings and recruitment of child soldiers with the LTTE. Nicholas Howen, Secretary General of the International Commission of Jurists said that they expected the LTTE to respect international human rights standards. He added that they had "appealed to the senior LTTE leaders to show the world that they are both willing and capable of respecting the lives and rights of all Sri Lankans."

Loubna Freih, the Resident Representative of Human Rights Watch in Geneva said she objected to the LTTE's killing of "perceived Tamil opponents and recruiting child soldiers." Paul Splinter of Amnesty International said that the "climate of fear, especially in the east, will make it even more difficult to find a lasting peace in the country."

A joint press release by the three organisations also said that such victims included Tamil political parties not aligned with the LTTE, members of rival factions in eastern Sri Lanka, and sundry military informants reporting to the Sri Lankan government.

In addition Norway's Deputy Foreign Minister Vidar Helgesen who leads the Norwegian facilitation team to Sri Lanka met with the LTTE delegation in Geneva and impressed on them the need to end the political killings and other violations of the ceasefire that had negative implications for the peace process.

The Norwegian embassy put out a statement that said, among others, "Helgesen stated that Norway condemned the political killings taking place in Sri Lanka and appealed to the delegation that the LTTE does everything possible to stop such killings."

The Norwegians appear to be realising that unless the killings stop the peace process is unlikely to move forward and the government will find it difficult to establish an LTTE-dominated interim administration for the north east that has credibility among the people.

Addressing bias

After they signed the ceasefire agreement with the Sri Lankan government, the LTTE found themselves treated in a very positive manner by most of the international community. The international community was impressed that the LTTE, which had gained the reputation of being among the world's deadliest militant organisations, had turned towards a political process of conflict resolution.

Thereafter, the emphasis of the international community appeared to be a desire to engage with the LTTE by giving them economic aid and exposure visits rather than to criticise them. This has resulted in a widespread perception in Sri Lanka that the international community is biased towards the LTTE.

The Norwegian facilitators, in particular, have been accused of being biased towards the LTTE. As the facilitator, Norway has played the vitally important role of engaging closely with the LTTE, building up confidence and preparing the LTTE for dealing with the political process.

It is difficult for a party that is having a close relationship with another to publicly chastise or condemn the other. The more likely course of action would be to bring up disagreements in private. In the face of the LTTE's stubborn persistence in eliminating its rivals and other ceasefire violations, the facilitation of Norway has been easy to criticise as be-

ing unduly favourable to the LTTE.

The LTTE's actions over the first 28 months of ceasefire have left much to be desired. The records kept by the international monitors show that the LTTE have violated the ceasefire agreement 2439 times as against 111 times by the government.

Most of these have been incidents of child recruitment, but there have also been incidents where the monitors were themselves put into extreme danger by the LTTE. Further, the government has attributed 146 killings during this period to the LTTE. In this context any attempt by the Norwegian facilitators to be even handed in their public comments with regard to the conduct of the two parties is likely to be perceived as bias.

The Norwegian-led international monitoring mission has also been perceived as partial towards the LTTE and ineffective. This has been on account of its inability to stop the LTTE from violating provisions of the ceasefire agreement. The problem is that the LTTE has openly refused to heed the rulings of the international monitors.

A solution would be to strengthen the role of the international monitors. But this can only happen if both the government and LTTE agree to such a strengthened role. In the absence of a resumption of peace talks such an agreement is unlikely to materialise. German Ambassador Juergen Weerth's speech at the German national day celebration putting the responsibility for Sri Lanka's future on its political elite and people needs to be seen in this context.

Unfair criticism

Speaking on the occasion of the German day of unity, the German ambassador to Sri Lanka made a strong defence of Norway's role in the peace process. In recent months Norway has been coming under increasingly harsh criticism, even from sections within the government. A disturbing instance was when the Sri Lanka Broadcasting Corporation in late September carried out as its first news item a story that could be understood as an attempt to undermine Norway's credibility in the minds of the people. It cited some unnamed expatriate organisations from India, Philippines and Sri Lanka as having condemned Norway for being hypocritical in condemning suicide bomb-

ings in Iraq, but not elsewhere.

What was surprising about this news item was not that some expatriate organisations in some countries had indeed made such a criticism against Norway. Different organisations can have their own points of view. But what was surprising was that the state's own radio should have chosen to give this particular news item the top slot for the day.

The demonstrations outside the Norwegian embassy, including some by the government's coalition ally the EPDP, and the benign attitude shown towards them by the police, suggest tacit governmental approval. This is a matter of concern both to those who believe in the present peace process and to the international community that strongly supports it.

Ambassador Weerth made it clear that he did not agree with those who sought to blame the Norwegians for the present problems in the peace process. He said, "The responsibility for the future of your country lies in your hands or still is in the hands of the political elite and your people, and failure is their collective failing. We should therefore be grateful to the Norwegians for their role as facilitator and never blame them for the lack of progress in the peace process." There is a need to recognise and appreciate a simple fact. Peace talks between the government and LTTE have been suspended for nearly 19 months. Previously no ceasefire with the LTTE lasted more than 3 months. In fact at the outset of the ceasefire there were prophets of doom who predicted that the ceasefire would collapse with an LTTE attack after 3 months, which they thereafter revised to 6 months. The continuation of the ceasefire for 32 months, and for 19 months without peace talks, is a major accomplishment. At least a part of the credit for the continuation of the ceasefire and the no-war situation should go to the Norwegian facilitators and to the international monitors.

The reason that lines of communication remained open between the government and LTTE has been their presence in the country. The more outspoken they are to the parties about ceasefire violations, the more stable will be Sri Lanka's no-war situation which is the most important possession of the people. □

Options for Sri Lanka

Jayadeva Uyangoda

Re-working Autonomy - Part I

The JVP has begun a new mobilizational initiative in the Eastern province. Called *negenahira udawa* ('Awakening in the East'), it seeks among other things to marshal political pressure to de-merge the temporarily merged Northern and Eastern provinces. This campaign is also being organized to counter the LTTE's ISGA proposals that embody the Tamil nationalist argument that the Northern and Eastern provinces, despite the ethnic diversity in the Eastern province, constitutes a single, politico-administrative entity of the Tamil-speaking peoples. Securing the collective rights of the Tamils, the ISGA proposals imply, is contingent on the 'territorial unity' of the 'Tamil nation.' It is this proposition that the JVP seems to question.

Raising concerns of the Sinhalese people in the Eastern province, at a time when a political settlement to the ethnic conflict is being spoken about, is not a bad thing. The government does not seem to address their concerns. Even those civil society groups who campaign for a federalist power-sharing arrangement for Sri Lanka do not take up the concerns of the Sinhalese minority living in the Eastern province. The LTTE, which seeks the administrative control of the Eastern province, has no specific plans for the non-Tamil minorities there. The JVP is taking up the cause of the Sinhalese in the Eastern province in this specific context.

However, there are serious political limitations in the way in which the JVP, the JHU as well as sections of the SLFP and UNP have posed the question of the Sinhalese community in the Eastern province. In their reckoning, any power sharing arrangement with the Tamils will invariably result in the denial of the rights of the Muslims and Sinhalese communities in the East and therefore power sharing should be resisted. In this approach, either the unitary state system should continue so that the central government protects the Muslim and Sinhalese communities, or if there is devolution at all, the Eastern province should be de-linked from the North.

Old Thinking

The main fault of this approach is that it does not lend itself to any new constitutional innovation. It stays within the old and outdated constitutional thinking that is deeply suspicious of any deviation from the venerable unitarist constitutionalist model. To come out of the crisis of the Sri Lankan state, Sri Lanka urgently needs new constitutional directions. While such directions are seriously lacking, there is also a general crisis of constitutional discourse in Sri Lanka today. The crisis is manifested in the polarization of political visions in Sinhalese and Tamil polities with the Muslim polity caught in the middle. These visions are so mutually exclusive that they can hardly communicate with each other.

While the Tamil nationalist vision of the state has traveled beyond federalism, the finest minds of constitutional jurisprudence in Sinhalese polity are still grappling, with no success, with the elementary problem whether federalism would become the stepping-stone to separation. Actually, whatever advances that constitutionalism in Sri Lanka has made during the past three decades — as embodied in the 13th amendment, PA's reform package of 1995 and the draft constitution of 2000—are there despite the opposition from most of the great constitutional-legal powers in Sinhalese society.

Against the state of underdevelopment in the constitutional jurisprudence in Sinhalese society has now emerged a new constitutional vision for the Tamil polity in the form of the LTTE's ISGA proposals. Having remained itself within the narrow framework of constitutional unitarism, the Sinhalese nationalist discourse, in both its constitutional and political theory, has no categories to respond to the LTTE's proposals for confederal regional autonomy. Overcoming this huge gulf between two constitutional visions is indeed a new and difficult task in re-building Sri Lanka as a pluralist, multi-nation polity.

Conventional Federalism

Meanwhile, the federalist and confederal constitutionalism that has gained acceptance among some innovative con-

stitutional thinkers in the Sinhalese and Tamil societies also demonstrate a major limitation. It enunciates primarily the conventional federalist concept of 'spatial autonomy' which is based on the principle of territorial federalism. In this approach, the solution to autonomy demands of an ethnic minority or nationality is to grant them autonomy in the territory where they are concentrated. This arrangement makes a national minority a regional majority. A fundamental shortcoming of this territorial autonomy model is that it does not provide for the grievances of regional minorities, except through a bill of rights.

The fear of federalism that has been expressed by Muslim and Sinhalese communities in the Eastern province is essentially one that emanates from the inability of the territorialized autonomy to assure the minorities within that unit their own rights, safety and security. Muslims in the Eastern province have been particularly apprehensive about the possibility of a 'peace deal' between the government in Colombo and the LTTE at their expense.

But the Muslim political leaders have not been able to come out with an alternative to the eventuality of such peace deal, interim or permanent. They also need to breakaway from the conventional constitutionalist approaches to autonomy and power sharing and envision innovative options. However, in the absence of fresh political and constitutional thinking, the Muslim political leaders, as fragmented as they are, have been only allowing themselves, particularly of late, to be used by Sinhalese political leaders as pawns in their power struggles.

In the context of the contemporary political realities in Sri Lanka, the constitutional discourse on power sharing needs to be deepened in two areas. Firstly, in the Sinhalese society, the state reform agenda should decisively shift away from the framework of outdated unitarism and de-centralization, go beyond devolution and explore federalist and confederal options for regional autonomy. If this advancement fails to take place in the Sinhalese society, its constitutional thinking will continue to lag behind the constitutional thinking in Tamil society. Moreover, in the long run, secession, which all unitarists and decentralizationists dread to think about even as a distant possibility, might even become a constitutional reality.

'Minorities'

The second level at which the discourse on autonomy and power sharing

needs to be deepened is to address the concerns of all 'minorities.' Sri Lanka has many minorities. Our political understanding of identity communities needs to be reinforced by the recognition that the constitution of majorities and minorities is not always as simple as the nationalists alike would want us to believe. In the specific way in which the state power is spatially organized in Sri Lanka, the Sinhalese, for example, are both a majority and a minority. They are the national majority in the island and a regional minority in the Northern and Eastern provinces.

In a similar logic, the Tamils are a national minority and at the time they are the ethnic majority in the North and East. The conventional territorial principle of federalism gives power to the national minority making them a regional majority, but silent about that segment of the national majority which becomes a regional minority, as in the case of the Sinhalese in the Eastern province.

Other than 'national' and 'regional' minorities, there are local majorities and local minorities as well. The Muslim community in the Eastern province is a regional minority in the North and East. At the same time, they are a local majority in some distinct areas in the Eastern province while being a local minority in all districts in the North. The Plantation Tamils represent an equally complex picture. They are a major regional minority in the Central and Uva provinces, but a local majority in the Nuwara Eliya district.

Then, there is yet another construction of minorities as dispersed minorities. They are dispersed in small, yet significant, numbers in many provinces and districts. Muslims are a dispersed minority in many districts outside the Southern region of the Eastern province. The Northern, Eastern as well as plantation Tamils are also dispersed in a number of provinces.

Finally, there are 'marginal' minorities – Burghers, Malays, Telugu and Malayalam communities, as well as the Vedda people – who continue to remain small minorities, sometimes concentrated in certain localities. They are marginal in a double sense. They are not recognized as politically or electorally useful minorities. Therefore, in the democratic process, they continue to suffer marginalization. Similarly, deprived of political worth, they have no access as communities to the public goods which the state dispenses. In that sense too, they are marginalized from the domain of public resource distribution. The state at best

treats them as mere individual citizens.

Minority Concerns

Now, this picture of minorities in Sri Lanka can give rise to some novel ideas about power sharing arrangements in a federal polity. Before engaging in any new constitutional imagining, let us also delineate the grievances and concerns of all these minority communities that might better inform us what kind of institutions and arrangements could be envisioned anew. For analytical ease, we may group their concerns into the following four categories. (i) Recognition as political communities, (ii) security and safety, (iii) representation, and (iv) access to institutions of governance. Translated into the language of rights, they constitute four specific domains of rights, namely, recognition rights, security rights, representational rights and governance rights.

How should we design Sri Lanka's future political institutions to constructively ensure and guarantee these rights of the minorities who occupy a wide spectrum spanning from the Sinhalese to the Veddas? It indeed requires the deepening of not only our understanding of federalism, but also the idea of federalism itself. In other words, we need to redesign the political organization of a pluralist Sri Lanka in a new framework of 'deep federalization.' In the next week's column, I will present to the readers some of my own suggestions in this regard.

Non-Territorial Federalism – Part II

It appears that one dimension of the negotiation stalemate in Sri Lanka at present is that there is a deadlock in ideas as well. The UPFA government, the LTTE, the facilitators and international custodians of Sri Lanka's peace, the civil society actors at home and abroad, and the Sunday newspaper columnists—all appear to have run out of ideas as to how to advance Sri Lanka's peace process through the resumption of negotiations. This in a way provides space for those committed to democratic political change in Sri Lanka to explore some new ideas concerning a fresh re-organization of the state. In this article too, we will look into some options that go beyond our own conventional wisdom.

Asymmetrical Autonomy

Concerning federalism as regional autonomy, one challenge that the government will face in negotiations with the LTTE, sooner than later, concerns the translation into constitutional principles

the 'framework claims' made by the LTTE in the ISGA proposals. In fact, the ISGA proposals have baffled conventional federalists. The conventional federalism presupposes that all autonomy units should have more or less similar degree of competencies and powers. In this thinking, Sri Lanka's North and East should not be different in its range of competencies from, say the Southern province. But, the premise on which the ISGA is based is that the federal unit of the North and East should not be equated with other units of the 'federal' republic. It seeks a special status to accommodate Tamil 'nationhood' within one federated state that can also incorporate the parallel state structure that the LTTE has built over the years.

This indeed calls for a framework of what has come to the constitutional discourse as 'asymmetrical power sharing.' What it means is that one unit of autonomy, like Quebec in Canada, would be accepted as being entitled to a higher degree of competencies and powers than the other units, on the principle of 'distinctiveness' of the people who constitute the majority in that unit. Translated into Sri Lanka's political realities, asymmetrical federalism would presuppose that the North and East in which the Tamils constitute the majority would be recognized as a 'distinct' region in the sense that the autonomy there is designed to address the specific political aspirations of the Tamil people for self-determination within the state of Sri Lanka. In brief, the Tamil-majority North and East will have more powers than the Sinhalese-majority regions in the rest of the country.

There will invariably be objections to this model of asymmetrical autonomy on the premise that asymmetry itself will encourage secession. But actually, asymmetry is a framework that provides to the secessionist community a constitutional incentive to stay within the Sri Lankan state. It is the recognition of their 'special' or 'distinct' status that invites them back to the Sri Lankan state. The 'distinctiveness' accords their autonomous unit more powers than for the units of the majority community. That special status is also acknowledged on the premise of past discrimination and deprivations which the community has suffered. It also recognizes the bitter reality that during the war of twenty years, the process of state formation in the Tamil polity had developed in a direction of separateness that cannot be easily wished away. In this reasoning, the accommodation of separateness as well as rectifying

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past discrimination requires not secession, but special and legally sanctioned special status within the constitutional state.

Is devolving powers to the periphery within a federalist framework, in order to make the national minority a regional majority, adequate to address the possibilities for secession? The existing argument for devolution as well as federalism in Sri Lanka seems to say 'yes' to this question. It does not go beyond giving away powers to the periphery. The fear of federalism leading to separation is also largely linked to this 'giving away' approach to power sharing. This approach has also led to a situation where none of the proposals for ethnic conflict management in Sri Lanka contains ideas for reforming the power structure at the center. This position needs to be revised now. Instead, a package of state reform that combines autonomy to regions and at the same time linking regions back with the central government is necessary. A strong second chamber, representing the regions and with powers similar to those in other federal countries like USA and Germany, will be a useful institution to bring the periphery back to the center. This will also provide an effective mo-

dality to address the concern that the LTTE's ISGA proposals are weak in 'shared rule' while they are quite strong in 'self-rule.' We may note in passing though that the dominant constitutional discourse in Sinhalese society is weak both in shared rule and self-rule aspects of autonomy.

Non-Territorial Federalism

The institution of second chamber can also be creatively modified in order to combine territorial federalism with non-territorial federalism. The approach of non-territorial power-sharing is gaining particular attention among political scientists and constitutional jurists as one that can address the concerns of minorities in plural societies in an innovative way. As particularly developed in Belgium during the past two to three decades, the idea of non-territorial federalism creates assemblies called 'Community Councils,' the representatives for which are elected to represent their respective ethnic communities, who are either not confined to one territorial unit, or dispersed over a number of units. Indeed, the very notion of non-territorial federalism is designed to define the concept of right to self-determination of com-

munities from a non-territorial perspective. It seeks to empower members of an ethnic or cultural community, who subjectively profess a specific group identity and live either outside the boundaries of the so-called 'homeland' or even dispersed without having any claim to such a 'homeland.'

A creative application of the principle of non-territorial federalism in Sri Lanka will enable us to design institutions of representation at national, regional/provincial as well as local levels. At the national level, the composition of the Second Chamber could combine both territorial and non-territorial principles with weightage to the latter, or exclusively on the non-territorial principle, since the House of Representatives provides a representation on the basis of territoriality. A slightly different option would be to establish separate Community Councils at the national level for the main ethnic communities with specific powers over group specific domains such as culture, language, education, religion and social welfare. It will also provide an institutional mechanism to address group rights claims of the ethnic communities. Professor Yohan Galtung has proposed a set of cultural councils, on the basis of non-

territorial federalism, for Sri Lanka as an option worth exploring.

Federalism at Lower Levels

In this national level of broadening federalism, there is still the possibility of representation being confined to the main communities, by excluding smaller communities in the districts. There are two ways to prevent this possibility of exclusion. The first is setting up of regional or provincial institutions of non-territorial power sharing (Regional/Provincial Community Councils), to run parallel with the territorially designed Regional/Provincial Councils. The second option is to create mechanisms for representation for the numerically smaller minorities in the region/province who would not get representation under the existing system. This will require re-working of the composition of the councils with changes to the election laws to ensure that all minorities are fairly represented, despite their numbers or the absence of localities of their demographic concentration.

For example, the composition of the Southern Provincial Council can be defined in such a way as to ensure fair rep-

resentation to Muslims in Galle, Matara and Hambantota districts as well as the plantation Tamils in Galle and Matara districts. The electoral laws governing representation there can be modified to ensure fair representation, for example, to plantation Tamils in Matara and Galle districts, who would not stand to win at an election because of their numerical weakness. An option is to treat them as a single constituency within the Southern Provincial or regional council, although they live in two separate districts. What matters here is not the numerical strength of the community, but its numerical weakness as well as the commitment to empower them through guaranteed representation. The regional minority communities in the Western, North-Eastern, Central and Sabaragamuwa provinces will immensely benefit from an institutional scheme of this nature that combines territorial and non-territorial forms of power sharing.

There can still be exclusion of still smaller minorities from the assemblies of governance. For example, Malayalam and Telugu speaking working class cultural communities in Colombo, the Malay community in Colombo and Gampaha

districts as well as in the Hambantota's Malay Colony, will continue to remain unrepresented at the regional or provincial councils. Their numbers may be seen inadequate to make a community constituency adequate for separate representation at the regional level. To ensure their representation at a suitable level of governance, we need to design new institutions and mechanisms at local and municipal levels. There too, institutional innovation can go hand in hand with reforms in the electoral laws. Guaranteed representation, even falling short of a general qualifying cut off point, can be combined with re-working the composition of local or municipal bodies to ensure participation at local governance the marginal minorities.

Deep federalization, as a measure of further democratization of Sri Lanka's polity, requires federalization at three tiers of the state – central, regional and local/municipal – combining territorial and non-territorial principles. In a sense, Sri Lanka provides an opportunity to show the way forward for other plural societies in constitutional innovation in a context of civil war transition. □



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Fratricidal killings and the peace process

Dr. S Narapalasingam

The suspension of the protracted war under the Norway-brokered Ceasefire Agreement (CFA) reached on 22 February 2002 prevented further loss of thousands of valuable lives estimated to have mounted to around 65,000 by then. Despite the suspension of the peace talks in April 2003, the relative peaceful conditions continued to prevail. But, the killings resumed with the eruption of infighting between the breakaway faction led by the LTTE Batticaloa-Amparai special commander 'Col.' Karuna, who defected in March 2004 and the mainstream LTTE. In the ongoing internecine conflict Tamils are killing Tamils.

The internal conflict has exacerbated the divisions in the North-East within the Tamil community and between different ethnic groups. The conflict between the Muslims in the East and the LTTE intensified communal tension and has alienated further the two communities. The Sri Lanka Muslim Congress (SLMC) wants the authorities to provide adequate security in all Muslim populated areas especially in the Eastern region, following the recent killings of several Muslim civilians allegedly carried out by the LTTE in the Batticaloa and Polonnaruwa districts. The Muslim leaders are also insisting that a separate Muslim delegation must participate in future peace talks, since the apprehension and aspirations of their people are distinctively different and these need to be considered separately when deciding on the structure of political settlement to the North-East conflict.

Challenge to LTTE

The breakaway Karuna faction poses a direct challenge to LTTE's ideology, as their allegiance is firstly to the East, which has different demographic and economic features and socio-economic problems vis-à-vis the North. The renegades want regional powers to enable the people in the East to manage their own affairs. Importantly, the sporadic attacks in the East by Karuna loyalists challenge the authority of the LTTE there putting the LTTE

in an awkward position when the talks with the government resume. It has participated in the six rounds of talks between September 2002 and April 2003 as the sole representative of Tamils in the North and East. This is said to be one important reason for the LTTE's reluctance to resume peace talks, ignoring the advice of the international community to return soon to the negotiating table.

The formation of the political party, Tamileelam Makkal Viduthalai Pulikal (TMVP) under Karuna's leadership pledging to continue the freedom struggle 'according to the advice and aspirations of the Tamil people' and guaranteeing that 'the liberation of the Tamils would be based according to democratic principles' contrary to the authoritarian violent approach of the LTTE leader V. Prabhakaran has intensified the confrontation. In fact, Karuna's recent statement urging the Tamils to support his party indicates that the main reason for forming it now is his animosity towards LTTE's leadership rather than the realisation that there is no purpose in continuing further the armed struggle to win the legitimate rights of the Tamils. Moreover, the launching of a new political formation, Tamileelam Iykkiya Viduthalai Munnani (TIVM), jointly by the General Secretary of Eelam National Democratic Liberation Front (ENDLF), G. Gnanasekaran and the President of the recently proclaimed political party (TMVP), V. Muralitharan (Karuna) is another significant development in the internecine conflict.

In a joint statement issued jointly by the two leaders on October 15, they announced, "the purpose of uniting the two parties was to work together to achieve the aspirations of the Tamil speaking people in Sri Lanka." They have said in the statement: "Sri Lanka's tragic ethnic conflict continues to shed blood even after signing the cease fire agreement. The tragedy is that the Tamils are the pawns in the hands of LTTE, which claims the sole representative of the Tamils. The LTTE continues to massacre mercilessly

its opponents, where the Sri Lankan Government and the monitoring committee witnessing without uttering a protest. The Tamil speaking people's freedom struggle had taken a diversion, as for now they are to fight the terrorism within. The Tamil-speaking people were prisoners of the circumstances and had suffered enough in the hands of LTTE, and will tolerate no more the prolonging treacherous and barbarian act of Prabhakaran. The demand and content of the LTTE's ISGA only proves to continue without a mandate, leaving no room for democracy. A time has come for the Tamil to unite and fight against the terrorism, which exists in the name of liberating the Tamils." This is undoubtedly a serious charge against the LTTE leader.

Eliminating adversaries

Faced with the challenge to its 'sole authority' status, the LTTE has launched a violent campaign to eliminate the opposing Tamils describing all of them as 'para militaries' or 'informants'. In the internecine feud, not only the cadres of rival LTTE factions but also unarmed EPDP and EPRLF members have been assassinated. Despite the LTTE's assertion that it had no hand in the suicide bomb blast in Colombo on July 7 and the effort to implicate the rival Karuna faction in the incident, it was widely known that the suicide bomber was sent to Colombo by the mainstream LTTE. The intended target was Minister Douglas Devananda, the EPDP leader who escaped narrowly.

The EPDP leader has been considered by the LTTE leaders as a nuisance like a prickly thorn for quite some time. His stand on the North-East issue is undermining their claim for a separate state. The EPDP is against the creation of one-party authoritarian state in the North-East and has rejected LTTE's interim self-rule proposals. Although, the EPDP failed to win parliamentary seats in the east, the party is still active there. This is seen by the LTTE as a potential threat to its dominance. The LTTE considers all Tamil groups and parties not supporting its policies and nationalist goal as saboteurs.

Not only EPDP members but also activists of other rival Tamil parties are being targeted in the current campaign to eliminate the 'traitors'.

The Tigers are also at the receiving end in this violent feud. The attack on September 7 by a group of heavily armed

men on the Liberation Tigers' border post in Periya Pullumalai killing 8 and wounding 2 LTTE cadres was widely reported to have been carried out by the Tiger renegades. But, the LTTE said the attack was by Sri Lankan army commandos assisted by some armed paramilitary cadres. The Army denied any involvement in the attack. "The fight was between LTTE cadres and Karuna's men. The Army did not have anything to do with it," the Army spokesman said. The killing of Tiger cadres loyal to Wannu leadership by the renegade Karuna group even after the murder of the field commander Reggie continues in the Eastern province.

Tamil silence

While the cold-blooded murderous campaign of 'Tamil on Tamil violence' continues unabated, the Tamil community especially the expatriates settled in Western countries where there is freedom of expression have by and large stayed silent. Veteran journalist D.B.S. Jeyaraj speaking at the slain Balanadarajah's remembrance meeting held in Toronto, Canada said: "The right to life is the most important of all rights because all other freedoms are derived from this right alone. It is unfortunate that the entire Tamil community has not realized that the denial of life by eliminating people with other opinions should be stopped." The reluctance to condemn openly the current killing spree indicates the predicament of the Tamil community. The Tamil media both at home and abroad are also playing safe to the detriment of the future well-being of the community.

V. Anandasangaree, the TULF leader, openly warned of the peril in continuing with the internecine killings and self-centered approach to a negotiated political settlement long before Karuna and Gnanasekaran emerged on the political scene. In a statement released to the media he appealed to students and youths to come forward to rise against the atrocities committed by the Tamils on Tamils. **LTTE and the CFA**

Both the LTTE and its proxy the Tamil National Alliance (TNA) have been constantly accusing the government of neglecting the peace process. Gajendrakumar Ponnambalam, TNA parliamentarian from Jaffna district during his visit to the U.S. told an interviewer in Washington D.C.: "Our immediate concern at the moment is to try and save the ceasefire agreement. The Sri Lankan Gov-

ernment and the military are systematically trying to destabilize the east. The Karuna factor is being used by the Government to target prominent LTTE members as well as Tamil intellectuals. So in reality, the Government is in the process of waging a proxy war against the Tamil Nation. Therefore, under these circumstances our 'number one' priority is to save the ceasefire agreement as the ceasefire agreement itself is in grave jeopardy, and without the ceasefire, there cannot be a peace process at all."

This type of concern for the CFA emerged only after Karuna's revolt. This is because of the urgency and the need to disarm the renegade Karuna group. After the meeting with Norwegian special peace envoy Erik Solheim and Ambassador Hans Brattskar on September 16, Thamilselvan told the press: "We told the Norwegian facilitators that the Government of Sri Lanka should implement article 1.8 of the cease fire agreement (CFA) under which it pledged to disarm paramilitaries working with the Sri Lanka army and to remove them from the northeast. But it is yet to abide by this provision of the CFA". The government has been maintaining its stand that the renegade Karuna group is not a 'paramilitary unit' of the army but a faction of the LTTE, indulging in what is essentially factional in-fighting.

The LTTE had initially insisted that the government must not meddle in the Karuna affair, as it was an internal conflict within the organization. Importantly, obtaining government assistance would have undermined the LTTE's claim as the only politico-military authority in the North-East ready to take control of the region. But, when the leaders in Wannu found that some armed members of the renegade Karuna group were still active after the major assault launched on Good Friday, they raised the issue of the government disarming the renegades in terms of the ceasefire agreement. Recently the LTTE has in addition asked for government's protection guarantee for their cadres to perform 'political work' in the East.

Paradoxically, the swift attack launched against the Karuna faction by the LTTE on Good Friday would not have been possible, if the Norwegian-led truce monitoring mission (SLMM) had the powers to enforce the CFA. Sea Tiger movements from Mullaitivu to the East coast took place contravening the CFA. Moreover, thousands of cadres dispatched by the Wannu leadership crossed

government-controlled areas armed with everything from artillery guns to mortars. Since the newly elected government had instructed the military not to confront the LTTE in case this led to the full scale resumption of hostilities, the armed LTTE cadres were able to move swiftly into the eastern zone that was then under Karuna's control. Karuna recently accused the SLMM and the Sri Lankan government of aiding the LTTE in this operation.

The threat to the ceasefire comes from two sources: firstly the failure by the parties to strictly adhere to and comply with its provisions and the SLMM's reluctant and inefficient way in which it handles violations of the ceasefire; and secondly suspension of peace talks after 6 sessions of negotiations in 6 months. According to LTTE political wing leader S. P. Thamilselvan this was "time wasted". But interestingly, Karuna who was also a member of the LTTE team at the talks in a statement released to the press on October 13, has said that the LTTE's chief negotiator Anton Balasingham had told him when asked about the conclusion of the talks, the LTTE leader had wanted the team to drag the talks for five years! The Norwegian facilitators hoping an early negotiated political settlement drafted the MoU in the present form. They did not give much thought to all aspects of the conflict and the inherent problems that existed in finding a political solution acceptable to both sides and to all the ethnic groups in Sri Lanka. The main aim was to stop the fighting between the two adversaries, which was achieved at a price. Nevertheless, it gave hope to many both in and outside Sri Lanka of realising permanent peace. The international community too was delighted. All parties including the facilitators now feel the adverse consequences of dragging the peace process without any progress in negotiating a political settlement. An early settlement would have prevented the split in the LTTE and the internecine killings. A new front in the ongoing struggle has now opened for the LTTE under Prabhakaran's leadership.

Taking an enlightened view

In an open letter addressed to the LTTE leader V. Prabhakaran, the TULF leader V. Anandasangaree told him in the most kindest and politest manner to give up intransigence and accommodate pragmatic and practical approaches that could be acceptable to all the ethnic groups in

the country. The foreign and local media published the long letter on October 15 and 16. In his conclusion Anandasangaree has said: "I wish to tell you that we should now stop playing the same old record over and over again. The whole world knows what our problem is and what the acceptable solution would be (suitable federal structure). Hence without wasting time, conceding the fact that our people cannot and should not be allowed to suffer any more, take a quick decision to work out a solution with the support of the International Community without any further delay. You have ample opportunities even now to win over the minority Muslims and Sinhalese in the North and East. You must also convince your own cadres that those who fought very bitterly for freedom should not deprive others of their freedom and bring them under their subjugation whether they are Sinhalese Tamils or Muslims."

A senior politician who had been in politics for nearly half a century knows the dire necessity to take an enlightened view and consider the long-term welfare of the people in seeking a fair and just settlement to the ethnic conflict in a multi-ethnic country such as Sri Lanka. But the basic problem is that there are huge conceptual differences that cannot be reconciled by urging the ultra Tamil nationalists to abandon their ideologies when they have fought fiercely for more than two decades on the basis of their nationalistic beliefs. The conflict between the LTTE and the government is not just an ethnic conflict and the LTTE leader is not the typical Tamil politician of the bygone era who thinks along Anandasangaree's line. Nor is he a military commander who has captured power in a bloodless coup d'etat. It is true the conflict started as a straightforward ethnic conflict between the politically powerful majority Sinhalese and the powerless minority Tamils but since 1987 it had evolved as a violent power struggle in pursuit of a political project which is beyond the limits of any power sharing arrangement that is intrinsic to a federal system.

Meanwhile, the terror campaign to silence dissent seems likely to continue in the name of liberation and this is what should worry the discerning Tamils. What is happening now in the North-East will please the Sinhala ultra nationalists. Some may even look forward to bringing down further the Tamil population to a 'manageable' proportion. At the present time it is this destructive process that must be stopped as a matter of urgency while continuing with the peace process and returning to the negotiating table with the aim of reaching a political settlement. □

Rights Groups' call to LTTE

Oct 6 – In a press release dated 6 October, three leading international human rights organisations, Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch and the International Commission of Jurists stated as follows:

"At a meeting with a senior Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) delegation visiting Geneva, Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch and the International Commission of Jurists (ICJ) called on the LTTE to end political killings and the recruitment of child soldiers and demonstrate how they will respect international humanitarian and human rights law in Sri Lanka.

The LTTE delegation, headed by S.P. Thamilselvan, leader of their political wing, is visiting several European countries to consider the Tamil Tigers next steps in the stalled Sri Lankan peace process. International human rights organisations met with the LTTE delegation on Tuesday 5 October.

"We appealed to the senior LTTE leaders to show the world that they are both willing and capable of respecting the lives and rights of all Sri Lankans," said Nicholas Howen, Secretary-General of the ICJ. "We look to them to make a clear public commitment to international humanitarian and human rights standards and practical ways of putting them into effect," he added.

"At a time when we should be moving back to peace talks the LTTE seems to have dramatically escalated the killing of perceived Tamil opponents and is still recruiting child soldiers," said Loubna Freih, Geneva Director for Human Rights Watch.

Victims of killings have included activists from Tamil political parties not aligned with the LTTE, members of a rival LTTE faction in the east, and alleged Sri Lankan military informants. "This climate of fear, especially in the east will make it even more difficult to find a lasting peace in the country," warned Peter Splinter, Geneva Representative for Amnesty International.

S.P. Thamilselvan said in the meeting with human rights organisations that the LTTE denies responsibility for

such killings but that the LTTE would consider the development of confidence building measures to end killings that are threatening the peace process.

In the last two weeks reported killings have included: Valli Suntharam, a 61 year old trade union activist and member of the Eelam People's Revolutionary Liberation Front (EPRLF), shot dead in Jaffna on 27 September; Selvarajah Mohan, a 22 year old Eelam People's Democratic Party (EPDP) supporter, stabbed to death after being taken from his home in Jaffna district on 24 September; Rajadurai Sivagnanam, killed in Batticaloa district on 22 September; and Somasundaram

Varunakulasingham, a central committee member of the EPDP, shot dead in Colombo on 23 September. Recruitment of child soldiers also continues. UNICEF has documented that in May, June and July 2004 alone, the LTTE recruited 259 children, while releasing 106 – and UNICEF acknowledges that they learn about only a small proportion of child recruitment.

The human rights organisations also met with members of the North-east Secretariat on Human Rights, set up in July with the support of the LTTE. "Such human rights initiatives could be positive if they help to prevent serious human rights violations and give ordinary people a way of seeking protection and remedies," said Nicholas Howen. "We urge the LTTE to affirm publicly that they will cooperate fully with this Secretariat. The international community should assist any genuine moves towards a culture of respect for rights and the need for this new Secretariat to be independent and professional," added Nicholas Howen. □

For further information, please contact ISABELLE HEYER at International Commission of Jurists +41-22-9793800, LOUBNA FREIH at Human Rights Watch +41-79-2023285 or PETER SPLINTER at Amnesty International, +41-22-9069483.

The rise and fall of the JHU

Champika Liyanaarachchi

Blackmail, manipulations by the two principal parties and greed for material gain, have all contributed to the pathetic plight that has befallen the Jathika Hela Urumaya (JHU) — the dark horse of the April 2 General Election, which made quite a sensation by winning nine seats at its maiden outing.

The controversial idea of an all-monk party to contest the April 2 elections was ironically first proposed by Venerable Kolonnawe Sri Sumangala Thera, who tendered his resignation last Friday. He is now trying to withdraw his resignation for reasons best known only to him. Ven. Sumangala Thera first made his intention of contesting the polls known to Ven. Dhammaloka and Sihala Urumaya leaders, a few hours after President Chandrika Kumaratunga dissolved parliament.

The President dissolved Parliament at midnight on February 7, and the following morning Ven. Sumangala Thera was firing away calls to his bhikkus and lay friends claiming that he was going to contest the April 2 polls by converting his 'Bodhu Maga' (Buddhist way) campaign into a political party. He invited Ven. Dhammaloka Thera too to join him.

Interestingly, Ven. Dhammaloka Thera, by then, was known for his controversial resolution, passed in Anuradhapura in 2002, prohibiting monks taking to politics.

The declaration was made at the "Buduputh Maapiya Harasara Ulela" (ceremony to venerate parents of Buddhist monks) in the presence of Ven. Gangodawila Soma Thera, who by then had announced that he was going to contest the next Presidential election.

The resolution passed by Ven. Dhammaloka Thera at that point was deemed a slap on the face of Ven. Soma Thera and one engineered by the UNP to discourage the popular monk from contesting the Presidential race.

Many attribute the 'powder baby' reference by Ven. Soma Thera at several sermons following the Anuradhapura episode, as a manifestation of his resent-

ment of Ven. Dhammaloka's resolution. Yet, this very same Ven. Dhammaloka Thera, backtracking on his controversial declaration, jumped the bandwagon joining Ven. Sumangala Thera to contest the general elections.

However, there was a snag, with the Elections Commissioner telling the monks that only the parties registered at the time of the dissolution were eligible to contest. Thus, a party by the name 'Bodu Maga' became a non-starter.

By then the three Sihala Urumaya strongmen, Tilak Karunaratne, Champika Ranawaka and Udaya Gammanpala had made it clear to the monks that they did not think it prudent for the monks to contest the election. However, the monks were adamant that they somehow had to contest.

Their next step was to go looking for registered parties which would not contest the April 2 polls. On hearing that the Democratic United Lalith Front (DULF) was not keen on contesting the elections, the monks started negotiating with Ariyawansa Dissanayake of that party. The Sihala Urumaya leaders were shocked. So was Ven. Ellawala Medhananda, the leader of the Jathika Sanga Sammelanaya (JSS), the Bhikkus wing of the JHU. They never thought that the monks were in such desperation and realized that the venerable Theras would become the laughing stock of the nation if they made their electoral debut under the DULF - a party which was created for an entirely different purpose.

Ven. Medhananda Thera reprimanded the junior monks for trying to bring disgrace upon the Maha Sangha. He then said if the monks were to contest they should do so only under the banner of a party like Sihala Urumaya. If they cannot do that, the JSS leader said the monks should form a new party and wait till the next election. It was with the sole intention of avoiding a national embarrassment that the Sihala Urumaya leaders then took the decision to opt out of the election campaign to give the monks a chance to register.

That's how the Jathika Hela Urumaya (JHU) was born.

And we all know how the SU trio put their weight behind the monks - be it in mustering funds for the election campaign, organizing meetings, preparing their speeches and basically doing everything. All this, coupled with the new wave of nationalism that swept the country following Ven. Soma Thera's death saw the JHU getting 552,724 votes, which got them nine seats in parliament - a feat that stunned the two principal parties. This performance which made the JHU the third force in the South - initially put both major parties in an awkward position.

By then the SLFP and the UNP have mastered the art of buying over minority parties. But handling an all-monk party was an entirely different scenario, or that's how it appeared initially.

However, gradually the strongmen of the two parties used those who had already become patrons of the temples to reach the monks in order to 'strike a deal'.

The UNP bore a grudge. The party knew that the bulk of the 552,724 votes that went the JHU way, originally were earmarked for the UNP. These were the disgruntled and disillusioned UNP supporters who voted for the JHU.

If the UNP was to woo back those voters - either they had to dissipate the JHU or make the all-monk party really unpopular.

As for the UPFA minority government, the JHU appeared the easiest option to garner the badly-needed simple majority in parliament, given that monks like Ven. Ellawala Medhananda and Ven. Kotapola Amarakitti were known for their pro-SLFP stand. However, this was before they realized the strong hold the UNP had on the likes of Ven. Dhammaloka Thera. In addition there was this determination of the SU trio that the JHU should not align with any of the two main parties. The reason being that any alignment was likely to weaken the clout of the party.

Despite knowledge of the JHU acrimony over the cross-over of Ven. Kathaluwe Ratanaseeha and Ven. Aparekke Pannananda and the manhandling of Ven. Kolonnawe Sumangala Thera in the House, the UPFA strongmen started working on the JHU members.

By then, the party was on the fast track to self-destruction.

One ambitious young monk who was adamant that he be given the post of

Speaker in the House, declared his intention of becoming the JHU Presidential candidate after he failed to fulfil his first ambition. He made clear his intentions to a few of his friends. However, this reached the ears of another equally ambitious monk who was incensed over the whole issue and vowed to fight for the same position. This sharply divided both lay and clergy supporters. The disgusted SU supporters meanwhile distanced themselves from both.

The generally level-headed Ven. Athureliye Ratana Thera meanwhile shocked the party by signing a Memorandum of Understanding with the Ceylon Workers Congress, without informing anybody in the party, for reasons best known to him.

Meanwhile a respected senior monk MP from a rural area refused to stay in non-airconditioned rooms, claiming he too should have the comforts enjoyed by members who were junior to him.

In addition, the SU leaders were told, in no uncertain terms, to mind their own businesses and some like Ranawaka and Gammanpila had to go through the ordeal of being told, "you got only 50,000 when you contested. We have got 500,000. We know how to manage our affairs".

With all these reports - weaknesses of the monks and the disappointment of the SU leaders - reaching the UPFA and the UNP, both parties looked for opportunities to serve their own agendas.

The UPFA worked on the monks while the UNP worked on the lay strongmen.

And both succeeded. However, the UNP ended up with the prize catch. The Sinhala nationalists and the SU supporters are still to come to terms with Tilak Karunaratne's decision to re-join the UNP. Especially, given the fact that he previously left both the UNP and the SLFP when he could have easily become a Cabinet Minister during either regime. The SU supporters and the Sri Lankan constituency are yet to buy the excuse given by Karunaratne for the drastic decision - that it was quite late that he realized that one has to be in a main party to get the nationalist demands met.

Whatever the real reason - the outcome is clear.

The UNP which had a score to settle with the JHU for tapping its vote base, had caused a lethal blow to the country's

premier Sinhala nationalist force.

The move to woo Karunaratne back to the UNP fold has been a case of killing two birds at one go, for the UNP leadership had been on the lookout for a formidable Sinhala nationalist for the Kalutara district. In fact, some UNP strongmen had been very critical of the leadership, especially after the UNP's humiliating defeat at the last General Elections.

The Alliance, on the other hand was working on the monks. In August Ven. Kolonnawe Sri Sumangala Thera, who was walking along a parliamentary corridor with Ven. Uduwe Dhammaloka Thera, was in for a shock when Minister Jeyaraj Fernandopulle, who happened to pass by them, inquired from Ven. Dhammaloka, "How are the vehicles?" Ven. Dhammaloka Thera had replied, "They are in good condition".

After the minister went away, a baffled Ven. Sumangala Thera asked what the vehicles he was talking about were. It was only then that Ven. Dhammaloka Thera told him about the two controversial vehicles given to him. Ven. Dhammaloka Thera had later given one vehicle to party leader Ven. Ellawala Medhananda and the other to Kandy district JHU MP Ven. Udawatte Nanda Thera.

An understandably incensed Ven. Sumangala Thera had then rushed to the party room, wrote his resignation letter and had immediately handed it over to the then parliamentary group leader of the JHU, Ven. Athureliye Ratana Thera. After he handed over his resignation, he had explained the reason behind his rash move.

An angry Ratana Thera tore the resignation letter into pieces and told him that a resignation by him would not save the party from the humiliation brought on by others and that they should bring the matter before the party hierarchy immediately.

Interestingly, even by then, some of the lay leaders of the party knew about the transaction, and this was one of the reasons for their decision to distance themselves from the monks.

However, Ven. Kolonnawe Sumangala Thera and Ven. Athureliye Ratana Thera were ignorant about this.

Ven. Kolonnawe Sumangala Thera had been known throughout for his pro-UNP stance. A son of a former Kolonnawa Urban Councillor, both his brothers had been strong supporters of former Con-

sumer Affairs Minister Ravi Karunaratne.

The Venerable Thera started supporting the National Joint Committee (NJC) and National Movement Against Terrorism (NMAT) since the mid 90s and was the compere at many of their meetings, including its maiden meeting of NMAT held in Matara.

Ven. Dhammaloka Thera, on the other hand, had been a nationalist student Bhikku leader since the late 1980s, as an undergraduate of the Kelaniya University. At the university however he was deputizing for Ven. Hedigalle Wimalasara Thera - who later earned a name for his famous fast-unto-death campaign against the 2000 draft Constitution opposite the Pettah Bo tree.

Both Ven. Wimalasara and Ven. Dhammaloka were contemporaries of JVP strongmen and Ministers Vijitha Herath and Anura Dissanayake, who too were student leaders at the same university. Often the nationalist duo were pitted against the two JVP student leaders.

Ven. Dhammaloka Thera later made a name as a reputed preacher and as a result was bestowed with the honour of conducting the "Buddha Vandana" at the first convention of the Sihala Urumaya held in May 2000 at the Vihara Maha Devi Park.

Compared to them, scholar monk and party leader Ven. Ellawala Medhananda Thera was a novice to the nationalist movement. In fact he was brought to the limelight by the Sihala Urumaya leaders.

Immediately after the de-proscription of the LTTE in September 2002 by the Ranil Wickremesinghe government, the SU leaders decided to start a bhikku wing for the party to conduct a protest campaign throughout the country against the lifting of the ban.

The Jathika Sangha Sammelanaya (JSS) was born as a result and it was a SU member from the Ratnapura district who proposed the name of Ven. Medhananda when the SU leaders were looking for an erudite monk. Though he had earned a reputation for his vast knowledge of history and archaeology, it was only after he was appointed the leader of the JSS that the Venerable Thera got actively involved in the nationalist politics.

Ven. Ratana Thera's political record goes parallel with that of Champika Ranawaka - a senior JVP member in the

1980s who later joined the NJC, NMAT, SU and the JHU.

The Central Committee of the JHU moved to investigate into the vehicles issue by appointing a disciplinary committee on October 4. Four days later the Supreme Council of the party sabotaged the move by suspending the Central Committee. The wings of Champika Ranawaka, who had done so much for the party, were clipped and a clear message has been sent to the lay seniors by the monks that they do not need the services of the SU seniors anymore.

Ranawaka was known throughout for his non-aligned policy - that the JHU should not support any of the two principal parties.

Now that Karunaratne too had joined the UNP, Ranawaka is seen as the biggest obstacle by an influential group of JHU monks, in their efforts to support the government.

Udaya Gammanpila, a former JVP student leader turned nationalist, who has

set an unbroken national record in the Advance Level Commerce stream and later topped the batch at the Monash University, today is another disappointed man engaging in active nationalist politics.

While a handful of monks are moving at break-neck speed to join the government, the former SU, NMAT seniors and a majority of the disillusioned lay and clergy supporters of the party have put their weight behind Ranawaka. They are demanding that the Sihala Urumaya should be revived soon to bring all the intellectuals who left the party back to the fold and disassociate themselves totally from the JHU, since the monk MPs have made a mockery of nationalist politics.

The new wave of Sinhala nationalism - started in the mid 90s and which later made its way through Veera Vidahana, National Joint Committee (NJC), National Movement Against Terrorism (NMAT), Sihala Urumaya (SU)

and finally Jathika Hela Urumaya (JHU) - had its ups and downs depending on the size of the political vacuum created by the two main political parties in their quest to resolve the North and East conflict.

The last experiment of the nationalists - sending monks to parliament - has ended up a disaster and most probably this is the last time that the monks would contest elections as a party.

The victims are the Sihala Urumaya leaders - who were forced to lend the party as a vehicle for the monks in order to avoid a national humiliation. The SU leaders had to later go through the ordeal of witnessing how some of the leading monk parliamentarians brought disgrace to Sinhala nationalism.

The JHU today has rendered its parents asunder with Karunaratne joining the UNP, Gammanpila at home and Ranawaka left to start from scratch.

Daily Mirror, 13 Oct 2004



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Remembering Rajini Rajasingham Thiranagama

Sydney Knight

Death is a certainty. However, as we keep the 15th anniversary of Rajini Rajasingham Thiranagama's assassination, on September 21, 1989, one ought to reflect on her tragic death.

Walking through the corridors of time, one can picture the Sri Lanka of 1989. Violent Lanka is perhaps an apt description.

A few days before Rajini died, Gladys Jayewardena was gunned down. She was also very vulnerable.

To quote Charles Diskens, "Those were the days". It was gun culture: the late 1980s and the early 1990s. Only "man was vile".

In a reflection like this, one has to ask a number of questions. Primarily: when we human beings are not the source of life, although theologically we are considered to be co-partners of creation in a sense,

can any of us terminate anybody's life? What right have we?

Rajini in my estimation belongs to the category of persons who must be classified with Dietrich Bonhoeffer of Hitler's Germany. Bonhoeffer, in his classic "The Cost of Discipleship", says that if a mad man is driving a vehicle, that vehicle must be stopped and the driver removed from the seat.

Bonhoeffer, like Rajini after him, refused to leave Germany and at the age of 44 was a victim of Hitler's wrath. Rajini could have stayed in the UK but she opted to come back to Jaffna and teach in the new Medical Faculty there.

In "The Broken Palmyrah" that Rajini co-authored, there was a sense of hope. I read the manuscript before the book was published and in 1989 was full of hope that we Sri Lankans would soon solve our

problem. For in that book one sees the author's saying: since we are part of the problem, in us is the solution. There was the hope that we could solve our problems.

At the meeting we had at the Fort to celebrate Rajini's death, there was the commitment to carry on the struggle to solve our problems as tribute to Rajini.

What happened to all that? Thanks to the University Teachers for human rights, UTHR Jaffna we have a body of persons critiquing the brokenness and realities of today's Sri Lanka

In fifteen years, we seem to have in a sense forgotten the death of Rajini. Has life become so cheap? And death of this type so frequent that one could become cynical. I do not think Rajini died in vain. She has given us the courage to critique. Those who live by the sword will die by the sword. The world will never ever forget Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi, called the Mahathma, for he chose Ahimsa and paid the price for it. He was able to organise the Quit India campaign.

Martin Luther King found space in the US for the descendants of the African slaves who initially worked in the cotton

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Indo-Lanka Defence Pact

Oct 19 – It looks as if the much talked about Defence Cooperation Agreement (DCA) between India and Sri Lanka is to be finalised “within a few weeks” according to official sources in Colombo.

Three joint secretaries from the Indian Ministries of Defence and External Affairs have been in Colombo having discussions with their Sri Lankan counterparts on the DCA, purchases of armaments from India, and the question of Indian financial and technical assistance to upgrade the strategic military cum civil airfield in Jaffna.

A delegation from the Government of India met with Sri Lanka's Ministry of Defense officials and discussed matters related to bilateral defense cooperation, said a press release issued by Sri Lanka Defense Ministry in Colombo Tuesday, 19 October. The press release said, “A five-member delegation from the Government of India led by Mr. Ranjith Issar, Additional Secretary in the Ministry of Defence, held discussions with a team headed by Mr. Cyril Herath, Secretary of defence and comprising the service chiefs, senior officials of the ministry of Foreign Affairs and Mr. Nigel Hatch, President's counsel in regard to the proposed agreement between the Government of the Republic of India and the Government of the Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka concerning cooperation in the field of defence.

The meeting was held at the Ministry of defence on the 19th October 2004. Bilateral defence cooperation in the field of Military Training, Exchange of military Intelligence and information, Maritime surveillance to prevent illegal activities affecting both countries, official visits and bilateral meeting at different levels participation in training programmes, joint military exercises, etc. were discussed among other matters.”

India and Sri Lanka have been discussing the question of signing a DCA on and off after former Lankan and Indian Prime Ministers, Ranil Wickremesinghe and A B Vajpayee, decided to go in for it “at the earliest” in 2003.

But there had been delays due to various reasons including the change of governments in the two countries. Having settled down now, the new United Peoples' Freedom Alliance (UPFA) government in Sri Lanka, and the United Peoples' Alliance (UPA) government in India, are showing a renewed interest in realising the commitment made at the highest level a year ago.

“The team is here to do the finishing touches to the proposed Indo-Sri Lanka defense agreement,” Sri Lankan Defense Secretary Cyril Herath told the press. Herath held talks on the pact with Indian officials in New Delhi in February this year.

(continued from page)

fields of the Southern United States. King too was killed. But King said that the evil of our times is the silence of the majority.

If we are part of the “silent majority”, we cannot honour the life of Rajini. Rajini's father, now a widower for his wife Mahila died in August, Nirmala in the UK and Sumathy and Vasuki in the field of University education like Rajini, and Rajini's husband and children, can rest assured that Rajini did not die in vain. For she, with others, began and continued the process to create the space for the spirit of a plural society.

We must, all of us in Sri Lanka, together work for a society where every voice is heard without fear or favour. One cannot always be in a tunnel. The light should come. May it come soon, so that we can continue to be thankful for lives like Rajini's.

New anti-LTTE front

Chennai, Oct 16 - The Tamileela Makkal Viduthalai Pulikal (TMVP), a political party launched by LTTE rebel leader Karuna (Vinayagamorthy Muralitharan), and Eelam National Democratic Liberation Front (ENDLDF) led by G Gnanasekaran joined together and formed an umbrella organisation known as the Tamileela Iyikkiya Viduthalai Munnani (TIVM) “to save the Tamil-speaking people from the LTTE dictator's terrorism and to achieve the right of self-determination of the Tamils.”

In a joint statement, released here, Karuna and Gnanasekaran said the international community should put pressure on Sri Lankan Government to work towards finding a lasting solution for the ethnic issue. At the same time it should also ban all the activities of the LTTE, for it would never come forward to accept a peaceful and democratic settlement,” they said.

Accusing the LTTE of murdering more Tamils than the Sri Lankan Forces, the two leaders said the LTTE could not be the true representative of the Tamils. “Therefore the TVIM opposes handing over of the interim administration to the LTTE,” they stressed.

The two leaders also called upon all the countries that had given refuge to Sri Lankan Tamils not to send them back till a permanent solution was achieved. Tracing the history of the ethnic conflict, the leaders said though two years had passed after the ceasefire agreement between the Lankan Government and the LTTE was signed, both the parties had not shown any interest in finding an amicable political solution to the conflict. “The ceasefire agreement only vests power with the LTTE to act with impunity, leaving Tamils a hostage in their tentacles,” they said.

The current situation, they said, had allowed the LTTE to arrest anyone at anytime and detain him or her for any period or execute them without it having to cite any reason for its actions. “Extortion and kidnapping for ransom still continued and no one dared to interfere,” the two charged.

Compulsory NICs for elections

Sri Lanka parliament on October 7 passed by 191 votes the Elections Special Provisions Bill seeking to make the National Identity Card compulsory for voting but with an amendment agreed upon by the Government and the main opposition parties. None of the members present at the time of voting opposed the bill.

This was the first time since the UPFA government came to power in April, that near unanimity was achieved in Parliament on a vote for any Bill or Motion.

The Tamil Nationalist Alliance (TNA) parliamentarians who had earlier opposed the Bill were absent at the time of the vote though they took part in the debate up to the moment of the vote was taken.

The amendments proposed and agreed upon by the party leaders were presented by the Justice and Constitutional Affairs Minister W. D. J. Seneviratne. The NIC or any other identification document including a photograph certified by the Grama Niladhari of the area or a photograph certified by the superintendent of a plantation in plantation areas, both to be also countersigned and authenticated by the Divisional Secretary of the area concerned would be valid for a voter to cast his/her vote at an election.

A period of one year has been stipulated for the issue of NICs by the Commissioner for Registration of Persons while the new law becomes effective only after the Election Commission is constituted under the provisions of the 17th Amendment to the Constitution, Minister Seneviratne told the House before the vote.

Earlier in the day Minister for National Security and Buddha Sasana, Ratnasiri Wickramanayake, told the House that additional provision in a sum of 345 million rupees will be allocated to the Department for Registration of Persons which will be relocated in another building with additional staff and 250 computers to issue 15,000 new NICs on each working day. Wickramanayake said there were 2.8 million people who did not have NICs at present and the government estimated that all those who did not have NICs could be issued these in one year's time.

The enactment of the new law has been welcomed by civil society organisations. The People's Action for Free and Fair Elections (PAFFREL) which commended the new law said in a press release: "Passing the Bill for making National Identity Card compulsory in voting, by Parliament without a division after reading a unanimous consensus by all the political parties as a rare event in the recent political history for the purpose of safeguarding the democratic rights of the people, has to be admired by us as one of the landmark in the political scene of this country for upholding the voting rights of the people. We thankfully salute all the members of Parliament both in the govern-

ment and the Opposition for this step.

When we look at the history of elections in this country thus far, various malpractices that have taken place in the sphere of voting have to be considered as dark spots that we added to the political history of our country. As an organisation engaged in monitoring elections and standing to uphold the people's democratic rights PAFFREL had been agitating from 90 decade for making our official identity card compulsory for voting to reduce electoral malpractices and impersonations.

Therefore, casting a side political differences and making the identity card compulsory for voting by all the people's representatives in Parliament who are committed to a policy of good politics, is considered by us as an exemplary step towards safeguarding the citizens civil and political rights.

However, by merely passing this as an Act in Parliament will not accomplish everything, a realistic step has to be taken to issue identity cards without delay to all the citizens who do not have identity card at present. For that purpose all necessary physical and human resources have to be provided to the Department for Registration of Persons.

Similarly urgent solutions and alternative procedures have to be found for the practical problems that will be faced by the people in the process of getting identity cards. Action should also be taken to induce all the citizens to obtain identity cards. As an organisation committed is the protection of democratic rights of the people in this country we are ready to provide any assistance in this matter.

Muslim participation in peace talks

Oct 9 - SLMC leader, Rauf Hakeem, said an appointment has been sought with President Chandrika Kumaratunga to clarify the UPFA government's stand on the future of the Muslim community. "I am also looking forward to meeting NUA leader Ferial Ashraff for discussions shortly to work out a joint strategy to advance the cause of Muslims in future peace talks", Hakeem said.

He said he wants to cement relations between the Tamil and Muslim communities, especially in the Northeast, to win rights and aspirations unitedly. The SLMC Parliamentary delegation met their TNA Parliamentary colleagues in Parliament on 8 October to initiate cooperation. This meeting was held under the joint chairmanship of TNA Group leader R. Sampanthan and Hakeem. "We decided to meet every month to further our cause unitedly and iron out any differences that exist in our positions relating to the resolution of the North-East conflict", the SLMC leader said.

The task of working out the agenda for these talks is led by SLMC chairman Basheer Segu Dawood and TNA convenor Suresh Premachandran. "In bringing unity among the Muslim MPs, we have always cooperated towards bringing about a broad consensus", Hakeem said. The aim of this exercise by the SLMC is creation of a united political movement to speak in one voice", he said.

I would like to point out that when we were members in UNF government, similar meetings took place under the chairmanship of Minister. A. H. M. Fowzie at his residence. This was to moot an idea of an adjournment motion to highlight the

need for a separate Muslim delegation at the peace talks."

The SLMC has consistently demanded that the assurance given by the LTTE and the UNF government and the international community in this connection be fulfilled.

The SLMC has also responded to the president's letter where she had suggested working out a compromise solution as the LTTE is opposed to a separate Muslim delegation.

"We have pointed out in our reply to president that it is inaccurate to say that the LTTE is opposed to a separate Muslim delegation as the dispute relates to the timing of permitting a separate delegation by the Muslims", Hakeem noted. At the Bangkok Rose Garden sessions of the peace talks, the LTTE and the government delegation agreed that the Muslim delegation would be permitted to take part at an appropriate stage in the negotiations, he said.

It is the position of the UNP that a separate Muslim delegation should be allowed to participate in the negotiations when the proposals to establish an interim administration for the North East is taken up for discussion. The UNP in their proposals for a provisional administrative structure for the North-East had clearly stated that a separate Muslim delegation should participate and that the SLMC could also submit its alternate proposals for discussion on behalf of the Muslims, Hakeem said.

"In keeping with the position taken by the SLFP and all its constituent members in Parliament and outside, it is a moral obligation of the President to give the assurance that a separate delegation status would be given to the Muslims once the peace talks resume to discuss the ISGA proposals by the LTTE."

In its letter to president Kumaratunga the SLMC has requested for an appointment to discuss these matters further so that the party could consider its participation at the deliberations of the national advisory council for peace and reconciliation.

SLMM on Ceasefire Violations

Oct 9 - The Tigers have recruited 1,424 children, out of which 45 have been abducted during the last 28-month truce period ending August 31. They have also abducted 359 adults during the same period, a spokesman of the Sri Lanka Monitoring Mission (SLMM) said.

The SLMM's latest statistics reveal that from February 2002 to end-August 2004, from the 1,760 complaints recorded from all districts in the North and East, 1,424 had been ruled as ceasefire violations, categorised as 'Child Recruitment', broadly within the "Measures to Restore Normalcy" group.

Within the "Abduction" category for adults and children respectively, of 871 and 97 complaints recorded by the SLMM, 359 and 45 respectively, have been declared as CFA violations.

There had been 10 cases of torture, 28 of intimidation, 33 of extortion, 16 forced recruitment of adults and 4 assassinations ruled as violations, by the LTTE.

Within the "Offensive Military Operations" category, five cases of firing of weapons, three abductions of soldiers and cadres, eight instances of illegally carrying arms and a case of a military related abduction had been recorded.

Furthermore, ten cases on the construction of new positions, eleven on the movement of military equipment and an instance where weapons had been deployed have also been ruled and recorded as ceasefire violations.

There have been five complaints against the LTTE as to activities at checkpoints as opposed to one against the GOSL. 3 fishing restrictions by the GOSL is recorded. 10 instances where the LTTE has restricted the movement of the SLMM are on record. All these have been ruled as violations.

Overall, from 4,903 total number of complaints against the LTTE and 961 against the government, 2,439 violations against the LTTE and 111 against the government of Sri Lanka (GOSL) had gone on record, the SLMM said.

Meanwhile, according to a statement of the Presidential Secretariat, there had been 146 killings since February 2002 to September 30, 2004. These killings attributed to the LTTE had occurred after the ratification of the CFA.

The total number of atrocities reported were 1,746, which included 146 murders, 285 abductions, 190 robberies, 301-ransom demands, 161 harassments to parents of the abducted children, 164 violence against other political groups and 181 MoU violations.

Sethusamudram project, a boon to Jaffna?

Oct 5 - Amidst loud protests in Sri Lanka over India's plan to dig a shipping channel through the Palk Strait, a Tamil geographer of Jaffna University has come to its defence saying that the project will be a boon rather than a bane for the war-shattered economy of Jaffna.

"The fear that the digging of the channel will lead to an increase in the water flow, and that this will erode and submerge large parts of the western Jaffna coastline, is unfounded," says Dr Soosai Anandan.

He told Hindustan Times on Sunday, that the proposed channel was too far away from the Jaffna coastline for changes in the water flow to have any significant impact on the coast. "The Jaffna coastline is 40 to 50 kms from the alignment of the canal," he pointed out. "Water flow will be affected only up to a distance of about one kilometre from the canal," he explained.

"Increased shipping in the Palk Strait, will actually lead to prosperity both on the Tamil Nadu side and the Jaffna side. If the present minor ports on the Tamil Nadu will get a boost, so will the minor ports on the Jaffna coast. The presently undeveloped ports at Kayts, Thalaimannar, Kankesanthurai and Point Pedro will get a chance to develop," Dr Anandan said.

"Increased shipping will also lead to the development of the hinterland, currently ravaged by war. Trade and tourism will increase, and both the Sri Lankan North and South Tamil Nadu will benefit," he forecast.

The Government of India's Sethusamudram Ship Canal Project involves the digging of a channel in the Palk Strait, 12.8 metres deep and 300 metres wide, entirely within Indian waters. The channel will help fair sized coastal vessels to ply between India's western and eastern coasts, without having to circumnavigate Sri Lanka.

Presently, the shallow Palk Strait is navigable only for small fishing trawlers and flat-bottomed larger vessels. If the Palk

Strait is opened to fair-sized vessels, shipping costs for Indian coastal trade will come down.

Dr Anandan said that during the North East monsoon (October to February), the water flow would be in the southwesterly direction and during the South West monsoon (May to September), it would be from the south west to the north east. "But these flows will not lead to much coastal erosion," the geographer assured. However, he conceded that there was some merit in the concerns expressed by environmentalists in Sri Lanka. "These concerns should be addressed. The interests of the fishermen of the area should be safeguarded, especially. But I do not support the campaign to scuttle the project," Dr Anandan said.

"Any development work will lead to some adverse environmental impact. But we cannot halt development because of that. If a road has to be built through a forest, some trees will have to be cut," he argued. "It is my contention that the benefits of the Sethusamudram project, far outweigh the disadvantages," Dr Anandan asserted.

However, the Tamil sentiment in Dr Anandan came out when he pleaded that the project should be implemented only after the Tamil areas of the Sri Lankan North East acquired autonomy. "It is only when the Tamils here have an autonomous administrative system that they will be free to develop Jaffna peninsula and the ports here," he said. "Right now the ports in the Jaffna peninsula are designated as High Security Zones and are under the Sri Lankan Army and the Navy. With severe restrictions on the movement of people, these ports cannot be developed to serve the people of the area," Dr Anandan said.

Generally, the Sethusamudram project is opposed by the majority Sinhalese, as well as the minority Tamils of Sri Lanka, for environmental as well as economic reasons.

Both say that the digging of a canal in the narrow and shallow Palk Strait will increase the water flow from the Bay of Bengal and led to serious coastal erosion in North Sri Lanka, and also destroy the natural habitat of the marine species in the Palk Strait.

The Sinhalese and the Sri Lankan government have an addi-

tional complaint, which is that the channel will obviate the need to call at Colombo port, and this will affect the latter's business. Vessels in Indian coastal trade would not need to call at Colombo or any other Sri Lankan port en-route. It is also feared that the canal will hamper the development of the proposed ports in the southern tip of Sri Lanka. (Hindustan Times)

Environmentalists rejected the recent statement by Jaffna University Geographer Dr. Soosai Anandan and claimed that the proposed Sethusamudram project would jeopardise the envi-

ronment of the Jaffna Peninsula and the future of the Mannar Oceanic National Park. Lanka Hydraulic Institutes (LHI) Hydraulic Engineer, Dr. Malith Mendis pointed out that no one was in a position to accurately predict the changes to the water cycle in the Jaffna peninsula and its environs since there had been no study done on the subject. "We have suggested the postponement of the project until serious investigations were done to study the water cycle and soil structure of the peninsula," he said.

Conference to consider India's role in Lanka's peace process

The controversial Indian politician, Dr. Subramanian Swamy, appears to have taken renewed interest in the Sri Lankan ethnic conflict particularly in the context of the trajectory the Norwegian facilitated peace process is taking. Some observers view his intervention at this stage as reflecting the current official position of New Delhi which is said to be concerned about the prospect of an LTTE controlled self-governing authority being set up in the northeast of the island.

It is learnt that Dr Swamy is the key figure behind conference scheduled to be held in the Indian capital on October 30 at which Sri Lankan Tamil issue is set to receive much focus.

It has been reported that this international conference will consider and deliberate on the need for India's resumption of a role in the Sri Lankan peace process to find an amicable solution to the ethnic Tamil problem. The one-day conference is to consider the circumstances and conditions under which India may have to intervene in Sri Lanka to ensure a long-term democratic solution to the Tamil issue in harmony with India's national interest, according to Dr. Subramanian Swamy, former Law and Commerce Minister of India.

non-official conference Dr. Swamy, the moving spirit behind the, told the "Asian Tribune" here that the Sri Lankan Tamil issue is set to receive global focus at the conference scheduled to be held in the Indian capital on October 30.

According to Dr. Swamy, the one-day conference is a sequel to a meeting in Belmont, USA, this August, of a group of Sri Lankan Tamils with him. The group had reportedly requested him to convene a seminar by inviting scholars and public personalities from the countries concerned. As many as 35 delegates, most of them from India, will participate in the daylong deliberations, he said.

President Dr. Abdul Kalam has sent a special message for the conference wishing it success, he said, adding similar messages have been received from Defence Minister Pranab Mukherjee and Interior Minister Shivraj Patil. It has also been reported that India's National Security Advisor, J N Dixit, a former High Commissioner to Sri Lanka, who has had close and intimate interaction with both the Sri Lankan government and the various Tamil groups, has sent a paper outlining the salient features of India's current policy vis-à-vis the Sri Lankan Tamil issue. Though the proposed conference has been described as 'non-official', with so many messages from such highly placed individuals in the Indian administration, it does not take much to discern that the conference has the full backing from New Delhi.

Two scholars from China, one from Israel, and one each from Nepal and Bangladesh besides three representatives from the US embassy in New Delhi will be among foreign partici-

pants, Dr. Swamy said. Two representatives from Sri Lanka, including EPDP leader, Douglas Devananda, are also expected to attend the conference.

According to Dr. Swamy, now that the Norway-sponsored peace negotiations remain stalled, the conference will also examine whether there are any alternatives to the Norwegian peace initiative.

Elaborating, Dr. Swamy is reported to have said that the conference would consider the circumstances and conditions under which India may have to intervene in Sri Lanka to ensure a long-term democratic solution to the Tamil issue in harmony with India's national interest.

Discussions will also focus on the role of the international community, especially of the U.S, China, Israel and SAARC countries, he said, adding "that is why I have invited delegates from these countries, especially Israel and China."

People smuggling racket busted

A Sri Lankan employee under investigation for his involvement with human traffickers specialising in smuggling Sri Lankans to European destinations, had admitted that he helped them to send 14 Sri Lankans to the UK on British passports on August 1, according a report in the Colombo daily, "The Island".

A senior CID official said the airline worker had charged Rs. 50,000 each from the would be immigrants. The airport services agent played a pivotal role in the clandestine operation, the official said. He helped the passengers to obtain boarding passes and 'negotiate' whatever the obstacles within the BIA, the official said.

"We believe some of the 14 passengers were being held by British authorities. But we are yet to receive the confirmation," he said. According to him, three persons ran the clandestine operation. "We raided their houses in Colombo without success."

The racketeers had charged Rs. 1.4 million to 2.6 million from each. Some of the would be immigrants had promised to pay them after they reached their destination.

The official expressed serious concern over the peoples' readiness to depend on racketeers despite this particular offence being non-bailable.

The airline official's luck ran out when authorities arrested a group of Sri Lankans, 25 adults and six children, on September 16 when they were waiting to board a direct Sri Lankan airlines flight (UL 505) to London. The arrests were made at the transit lounge after the group had successfully passed the airline checking desk, customs, and immigration and emigration barriers on the pretext of taking a flight to the Maldives by producing genuine Sri Lankan passports.

The airline official was taken in shortly after their arrest.

(continued on page 25)



Are you an asylum seeker or refugee who is considering returning home?

If you are thinking about returning to your home country, the International Organization for Migration (IOM) can help you return and establish your livelihood. IOM is an independent organisation working with migrants worldwide. Further information is available from IOM and our partners around the country - 'Choices' at Refugee Action, 'Options' at YMCA Glasgow and NERS (North of England Refugee Service) in the north east of England.

Choices, Options and NERS offer local information, advice and support to asylum seekers and refugees who are considering return home or are exploring options to stay in the UK. This independent, confidential service can help you to make an informed decision whether to stay in the UK or return home.

If you decide you would like to return home, IOM can help you through the 'Voluntary Assisted Return and Reintegration Programme' (VARRP). This programme assists asylum seekers of all nationalities and has been running since 1998. IOM will:

- help you get the travel documents you will need
- arrange and pay for the flight to your home country
- meet you at the airport and help you with departure and arrival formalities
- assist with domestic transportation to your final destination
- offer reintegration support to establish your livelihood at home

Reintegration assistance is offered in your home country. It can cover vocational training courses, setting up a small business or access to education. Assistance is provided through IOM offices worldwide, and varies from country to country.

IOM London www.iomlondon.org

21 Westminster Palace Gdns, Artillery Row, London, SW1P 1RR
 Freephone: 0800 783 2332 Tel: 0207 233 0001 Fax: 0207 233 3001 e-mail: varrp@iomlondon.org

Choices www.refugee-action.org.uk

London Office

3rd Floor,
 The Old Fire Station
 150 Waterloo Road
 London SE1 8SB
 Tel: 0207 654 7700
 Fax: 0207 401 3699

Manchester Office

1 Tariff Street
 Manchester M1 2HF
 Tel: 0161 233 1200
 Fax: 0161 236 4285

Leeds Office

Suite 7, Floor C
 Joseph's Well
 Hanover Walk
 Leeds LS3 1AB
 Tel: 0113 244 5345
 Fax: 0113 243 5448

Leicester Office

Muslim Community
 Resource Centre
 Melbourne Centre
 Melbourne Road
 Leicester LE2 0GU
 Tel: 0116 261 4846
 Fax: 0116 251 1712

North of England Refugee Service (NERS) www.refugee.org.uk

19 Villiers St, Sunderland, SR1 1EJ
 Tel: 0191 510 8685 Fax: 0191 510 8697 e-mail: sunderland@refugee.org.uk

Options www.ymcaglasgow.org

33 Petershill Drive, Glasgow, G21 4QQ
 Tel: 0141 557 2355 Fax: 0141 557 0874 e-mail: options@ymcaglasgow.org

Safe Haven Yorkshire

Unit 1, Turner Business Park, Richmond Park Road, Sheffield, S13 8HT
 Tel: 0114 256 1033 Fax: 0114 256 1837



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NEWS TRACK

Senior EPDP cadre shot dead: Sept 18 - A senior member of the EPDP was shot dead by unidentified gunmen in Puttalam, north of Colombo on 18 September, Saturday around 11 a.m. Police said. The EPDP cadre, identified as Mr. Thambithurai Sivakumar, 42, was going home in Thillaiyadi, Puttalam when he was shot three times in the head with a handgun by gunmen riding a motorbike, according to Police. Mr. Thambithurai is from Tellipalai, Jaffna. EPDP has accused the LTTE of carrying out the murder.

EPDP blocks Norway embassy with coffin: Sept 20 - A large number of EPDP supporters yesterday brought the coffin of slain EPDP activist Thambithurai Sivakumar to Colombo and demonstrated opposite the Norwegian Embassy, burning effigies of LTTE leader Velupillai Prabhakaran and Political Leader S.P. Thamilselvan.

Protestors chanted slogans accusing peace broker Norway of supporting the LTTE despite the continuous killings allegedly by the Tigers. Protestors chanted slogans saying 'the international community has failed to protect Tamil democracy', 'Royal Norwegian Government, what is your response?'. 'Prabhakaran, Thamilselvan, Pottu Amman and Balasingham are all criminals'.

The protestors led by former Jaffna district EPDP Parliamentarian V. Sivadasan arrived at the Norwegian Embassy with the coffin around 10 am. They left the wooden coffin containing the remains of Thambithurai Sivakumar at the embassy's gate, demanding action from the Norwegian peace brokers. The protestors had also planned to hand over a memorandum to the Norwegian government urging it to adopt effective measures to control the LTTE. Mr Sivadasan later handed over the petition to embassy officials within the premises but journalists were barred from entering the area. After meeting embassy officials, Mr. Sivadasan told journalists that the officials had agreed to discuss the matter with

(continued from page 23)

The ongoing investigations have revealed the airline official fraudulently used another employee's passport to issue boarding passes to the passengers. He had handed over the boarding passes and 25 passports stamped with original British visas (14 M series and 11 N series) to the passengers while collecting their genuine Sri Lankan passports.

The detection prompted the Law and Order Ministry Secretary Tilak Ranaviraja to call an urgent meeting with representatives of a Malaysian firm responsible for producing the new N series passport. "They were here recently and were taken aback when we produced the tampered passports. We have never detected forged N series passports before."

"We believe the passports had been obtained from their genuine owners who appeared to have obtained genuine British visas and visited the UK before they gave away their passports. Subsequently their photographs had been expertly replaced with photographs of the would be travellers."

"It was a chance detection. We wouldn't have acted if the SriLankan airlines staff didn't inform us of their suspicion of some of the travellers," he said. The detection was the largest single one at the BIA of a group leaving for a European destination.

The CID has received the support of the British High Commission in investigating the fraud. With their assistance, the CID had identified the original owners of the altered passports. "We have so far recorded statements of nine. Some of them appear to have genuine reasons for losing their passports but we are in the process of checking their statements."

The official didn't rule out the possibility of more SriLankan airlines staff being involved in the racket. Replying to questions, the CID spokesperson said the arrested persons included a mother and her son. The remaining children were to travel as the offspring of some of the UK bound illegals. They were from the northern and eastern districts, Kandy and Kotahena.

the facilitators and the LTTE.

Mass meditation for Peace: Sept 21 - Hundreds of Buddhist monks and other religious leaders participated in a

peace meditation to mark Universal Peace Day on the Bandarnaike Memorial International Conference Hall (BMICH) grounds in Colombo, on Tuesday, 21 September. The meditation was organized by Sarvodaya and other civil society groups. At least 200,000 men, women and children clad in white took part in the meditation, called "Ahimsa Samadhi". The crowds stayed through heavy rain during the meditation. The objective of holding this campaign was to urge all peace loving people in the country to work hard to establish a peaceful atmosphere which is immensely needed for people to live without fear and also to continue with the future development activities.

Leaders of all political parties including Prime Minister Mahinda Rajapaksa, Opposition leader Ranil Wickramasinghe, United National Front Deputy Leader Karu Jayasuriya, NUA leader Ferial Ashraff and United People Freedom of Alliance Deputy Defence Minister Rathnasiri Wickramanayake also attended.

Canada's grave concern: Oct 20 - The Canadian government expressed its strong support for the Norwegian-facilitated peace process and showed concern about the continuing impasse that prevents a resumption of peace talks, a communique from the Canadian High Commission said.

The Canadian High Commissioner to Sri Lanka Ms. Valerie Raymond urged the LTTE to return to peace talks and show flexibility with regard to peace negotiations. In her meeting with the LTTE political head Thamilselvan in Kilinochchi, the High Commissioner conveyed to the LTTE Canada's "grave concern over the deteriorating security situation and ongoing political killings and urged them to also fully respect the Ceasefire agreement and to promote and respect human rights. She told the LTTE that Canada remained concerned over the reports of continued recruitment of children," said a press release from the High Commission.

The statement said the government should "continue its efforts to forge a consensus, within the governing UPFA coalition, to resume the talks as soon as possible," and to "seek bipartisan support for advancement of the peace process." It said Canada believes that a negotiated settlement, which satisfies the legitimate aspirations of all Sri Lankans, is the only way to secure a lasting peace.

Norway urged to act against LTTE: Sept 22 - EPDP leader Douglas Devananda has written to Norwegian Ambassador Hans Brattskar calling upon the Norwegian Government to adopt effective measures to control the LTTE which does not care for international opinion but kills, abducts and attacks civilians with the aim of becoming the 'Sole Representative of the Tamil People' by the process of elimination of political opponents. Pointing out that ever since the Ceasefire Agreement between the Government of Sri Lanka and the LTTE was signed in February 2002, the LTTE had been engaged in attacks, abductions and killing of civilians including political opponents, the EPDP leader said, "In recent times the LTTE has intensified its killings of members of the Eelam People's Democratic Party (EPDP), the only Tamil political party in the Sri Lankan Parliament that refuses to fall in line with the fascist goals of the LTTE. ... As we have stated before, the LTTE is concentrating on killing the top and second rung leaders of the EPDP. The LTTE is hoping to attain the status of 'Sole Representative of the Tamils' by this process of elimination. We call upon the Royal Norwegian Government to adopt more effective measures to control the LTTE. Appeasement of the LTTE will not help to preserve democracy, human rights and political pluralism among the Tamils of Sri Lanka."

JHU wants ban on slaughter of cattle: Sept 23 - The Jathike Hela Urumaya (JHU) moved an adjournment motion in parliament proposing to ban the slaughter of cattle in the country, and the Government promised to bring forth legislation to ban the slaughter of cows at least in the near future. JHU monk parliamentarian

Venerable Kolonnawe Sumangala Thera said that Sri Lanka with a large Buddhist population should not tolerate the cruel manner in which cattle are slaughtered. "We have a long tradition of compassion. A nation like ours, which was named the Dhamma Deepa, should stop inhuman practices like this. Or we will protest on the streets very soon," he said.

The Thera's views were supported by CWC member V. Puthirasigamoney, who said that September was a month during which the Hindu community refrained from the consumption of meat, and appreciated JHU monk MP for making the proposal during this month.

Karuna's brother killed: Sept 24 - Elder brother of LTTE breakaway former eastern commander, Karuna, 40-year-old brother Vinyagomoorthy Sivanesantherai alias Reggie, who commanded the cadres loyal to Karuna in Batticaloa after his brother left the area in May this year, was reportedly killed in an ambush by LTTE forces in the Maduru Oya sector on the Batticaloa-Polannaruwa district border in the early hours on Thursday, 23 September. An LTTE official said there was an operation by their special forces in the interior jungles northwest of Batticaloa against some elements of renegade commander Karuna's paramilitary, according to a report in the Tamilnet. Two senior associates of the renegade LTTE commander, Elilan and Thumilan, were also killed in the operation, according to the report.

According to unconfirmed reports five Wannu faction cadres - three women and two males - also were killed in the encounter between the two sides. Reggie who joined the LTTE in 1985 joined his younger brother Karuna leaving the LTTE challenging the leadership of Velupillai Prabhakaran. Reggie had launched several attacks on the Wannu cadres since his brother was virtually forced to leave the east after an LTTE crackdown against Karuna and his suspected supporters.

Contradicting to LTTE claims, security sources have been quoted in the media as saying that Reggie was killed by one of Karuna faction's members, Pushpan who is the brother of Ranjan, Karuna's former driver who was executed by Karuna in April this year on suspicion that he had passed information to the Wannu leadership. Pushpan appeared to have remained with Karuna despite his own brother's killing to take revenge. "He killed Reggie and two of his close associates and then surrendered to the LTTE, a security official was quoted as saying.

According to military sources in Batticaloa, the LTTE Wannu leadership has stepped up operations in LTTE controlled areas in Batticaloa after sending Bhanu from Kilinochchi to head the military wing in Batticaloa and Ampara replacing Ramesh who took over as military head following Karuna's defection. After Bhanu was airlifted from Kilinochchi to Batticaloa, a large number of LTTE fighting cadres from Wannu had reached LTTE controlled areas in Batticaloa from various entry/exit points in Batticaloa to assist their operations to flush out Karuna loyalists from the east. **Another EPDP senior member killed: Sept 24** - A central committee member of the EPDP was shot dead at the entrance to his home in Colombo on Thursday afternoon, 23 September. The senior EPDP cadre, Somasunderam Varunakulasingham, 39, was

being driven home in his car around 3 p.m. when unidentified gunmen shot him in Vihara Lane, Wellawatte, a predominantly Tamil suburb of Colombo. The victim's wife, Sandalakhshi, also suffered serious gun shot injuries and was hospitalised.

Warnakulasingham has been a long standing member of the EPDP. He is a father of three children. He was a confidant of the party leader Douglas Devananda and had worked with him for over 15 years. The EPDP claims the LTTE had so far killed around 130 EPDP activists altogether since the ceasefire was signed in February 2002.

Meanwhile, a former LTTE cadre known to be a close supporter of Karuna was shot dead while he was at his home at Manampitiya in Mananthota on Wednesday, 22 September. Polonnaruwa police Inspector L.H.Piyasena said the 22-year-old victim identified as Rajadurai Sivanathan alias Kutty had deserted the LTTE after serving it as an active cadre for about 7 years.

UNP demonstration: Sept 24 - United National Party (UNP) parliamentarians, thousands of party cadres and activists joined a mass demonstration to protest against the worsening economic situation under the United Peoples Freedom Alliance (UPFA) government in front of the Colombo Fort railway station for nearly two hours. Placards carried by the demonstrators protested against the increasing cost of living, wanted increase in salaries and demanded the UPFA to take steps to find a solution to the burning ethnic conflict. UNP Parliamentarians addressing the party supporters said, this is the first step towards toppling the UPFA Government. Leader of UNP and former Prime Minister Ranil Wickremasinghe and Deputy Leader Karu Jayasuriya did not participate in the demonstration.

Youth found stabbed to death: Sept 25 - Mr. Selvarajah Mohan, 22-year-old youth of Rajakiramam west village was found dead with cut injuries on his neck in Malusanthi area in Vadamarachi division in Jaffna district on Saturday, 25 September, according to the Police. The body of the dead was taken to Manthikai base hospital. Nellyady Police officer-in-charge Mr.J.A.Dharmadasa said no one had been arrested nor identified in connection with the murder and that investigations into the murder were continuing.

TNA MPs denied Canadian visas: Sept 25 - Four Tamil National Alliance (TNA) parliamentarians were refused Canadian visas to attend the pro-LTTE Pongu Tamil celebrations which was held in Toronto on September 25. The four MPs, Joseph Pararajasingham, Gajendra Kumar Ponnambalam, N. Gajendran and Mrs Padmini Sithamparanathan, applied to the Canadian High Commission in Colombo for visas but they were turned down on the basis that the applications came in too late. But some sources from the High Commission said the Canadian government had other reasons and did not wish to encourage people from other countries to take part in the controversial Toronto festival.

Conditions not right for refugees to return: Sept 26 - The Indian head of mission of the UN refugee agency, UNHCR, said conditions were not conducive for Tamil refugees to return to their homes in Sri Lanka. Lennart Kotsalainen, while speaking at a seminar in southern Madras city, added that much also depended on the peace process in the island. "It is anybody's guess how slow or quick the peace process will be," he said.

There are an estimated 150,000 Sri Lankan Tamil refugees in India - about 66,000 of them in different camps run by the Tamil Nadu state government, while the rest are on their own. The refugees fled to India over years of fighting between Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) and the Sri Lankan security forces. Kotsalainen said with its "limited contact" with the refugees, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) had been able to help repatriate about 2,500 refugees since mid-2002, though some 12,000 had managed to make their own way home. While a majority of them were prepared to return home only if conditions improved, "even now with the unsettled nature, there is a minority of refugees ready to go back," Kotsalainen said.

Fingerprints on passports: Sept 27 - Sri Lankan applying for passports will be forced to place their fingerprints when a proposal put forward by the Immigration and Emigration Department comes into effect with government approval. Controller T. Jinadasa said the move to include the fingerprint in the passport was proposed

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to the Ministry of Law and Order and Public Security for implementation as part of the plan to prevent the misuse of passports. He said under the new system the fingerprint would be included in an invisible manner minimizing the chances of tampering with it, unlike the present system where the photographs of the scanned photographs are changed. He said the decision had been taken in the wake of a series of fraudulent cases where passports had been tampered with and were being used for major human trafficking rackets.

Mr. Jinadasa also said they would be halting the system of issuing one-day passports with effect from October 1. The one-day service has been lengthened to three days, but the applicants would still have to pay the same rate of Rs. 5,000 for an all country passport and Rs. 2,500 for a West Asia passport. The one-day passport system was in operation for 13 years and netted huge revenue to the government. Under the new system, persons from outstations would have to travel to Colombo to hand over the application and return to collect two days later.

US funds projects in Batticaloa: Sept 27 - The U.S. Embassy inaugurated four projects in Batticaloa District aimed at improving the health and vocational skills of local residents. These initiatives funded by the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) included the donation of cardiac patient monitoring equipment and renovation of the water-sanitation system at the Batticaloa Teaching Hospital, provision of processing equipment and training for three inter-ethnic women's cashew cooperatives, improvements to a Sarvodaya training centre and the Manchanthoduwan Technical College, both of which cater to Muslim and Tamil youth. Together these four projects, which represent approximately \$138,000 of support and assistance from the United States, are expected to benefit more than 1 million Sri Lankans in the East.

Abductee found with his throat slit: Sept 27 - An ex-EPDP activist who was abducted on the night Friday, 24 September was found dead by a police patrol around mid-night at Arsady Junction, Pt. Pedro with his throat slit. Nelliady police inspector J.E.D. Dharmadasa said a man had come to the residence of Sellarasa Mohan around 8:00pm had wanted to hire out a sound system from Sellarasa for a wedding nearby and Sellarasa had gone with the man to install the sound system. Later a police patrol from Nelliady had found his body dumped on the road side. Inspector Dharmadasa said they suspected LTTE of killing Sellarasa.

Another coffin at Norwegian Embassy: Sept 27 - The Eelam People's Democratic Party (EPDP) placed yet another coffin bearing the remains of a slain member outside the Norwegian Embassy in Colombo demanding the direct involvement of the Norwegian facilitators to put an end to the killing of their members by the LTTE. The coffin carrying the remains of EPDP member Somasunderam Weerasingham, who was shot dead on 3 September, was placed outside the Norwegian Embassy in Colombo around 11 am along with wreaths. According to EPDP media spokesman Nelson Edirisinghe, Somasunderam Weerasingham was the 167th EPDP member killed by the LTTE following the signing of the ceasefire agreement. He told the media that in future they would place the body of every slain EPDP member inside or outside the Norwegian Embassy premises. "We will turn the Norwegian embassy into a cemetery if it fails to stop the LTTE's killing spree," he warned.

US funds Sri Lanka Police: Sept 28 - US Ambassador to Sri Lanka, Jeffrey J Lunstead, and Sri Lankan Inspector General of police Indra De Silva signed an agreement at the US Embassy initiating a two year program administered by the U.S Department of Justice where Sri Lanka Police will receive equipment and training worth \$250,000, a US embassy press release issued on September 28 said.

Several hundred policemen throughout Sri Lanka will soon benefit from new equipment and training offered by the United States under a program aimed to improve the performance of local community policemen. Valued at US\$ 250,000, the program will run for two years and is administered by the U.S. Department of Justice under the International Criminal Investigative Training Assistance Program (ICITAP). "We're proud to be able to offer this assistance to local Sri Lankan policemen as a tangible benefit of the peace process," said Ambassador Lunstead. "Hopefully this

program will lead to better public relations within the communities where they work," Lunstead added.

EPRLF member shot dead: Sept 28 - A member of the EPRLF(V) was shot dead allegedly by LTTE gunmen in Jaffna on 27 September, Monday afternoon, Police said. The man, identified as Valli Sundaram from the coastal village of Myiliddy was riding a motorbike on KKS Road between Maruthanamadam and Inuvil when two gunmen on a motorbike shot him with a handgun, according to Police. The victim V. Sundaram was a member of the Valikamam-North Pradeshiya Sabha.

In a press release, the EPRLF(V) said, "Comrade Valli Sundaram was a warm, hospitable and a genial man. When he was gunned down by the fascist goons of the LTTE at 2.30 p.m. on 29th September 2004 he was 61 years old. This frail old man was killed at Maruthanamadam while he was riding his motorcycle.

Com. Sundaram has long history of struggle for the rights of our people. He was a worker in the KKS cement factory and when he started working with EPRLF, he was an active trade unionist. He has been a courageous and outspoken critic of the LTTE fascists who has trampled underfoot every civilized value of the Tamil civil society. He steadfastly fought for democracy, human rights and social emancipation of the most oppressed sections of our society. Com. Sundaram has been a father figure for most of our young comrade. He has by word and deed taught us how to lead simple lives, to be true to our principles and to be resolute in our struggle for freedom and social emancipation. He has inspired confidence in hundreds of our cadres and won the respect of many more. The EPRLF expresses its deepest sympathies to Com. Sundaram's wife and to his two children.

This is yet another example of the callous and the barbaric character of the fascist LTTE, which has carried out a ruthless campaign of eliminating Tamil intellectuals, human right activists and political activists of other Tamil political organizations."

Youth shot, two killed in Ampara: Sept 29 - Unidentified gunmen shot and wounded a youth in Kiran, north of Batticaloa, on 28 September, Tuesday night, according to the Police. In another incident two Singhalese were found shot to death on the Akkaraipattu-Ampara road, south of Batticaloa, around 10 p.m. Police in Akkaraipattu said the two Singhalese were riding a motorbike when they were shot dead. The motive for the killing was not clear, they said. Mr.Kanapathipillai Vivekanandaras, 19, the youth who was shot in Kiran, told Police that he was not affiliated to any party or paramilitary and that he was a salesman. He said gunmen had come to the house in Kiran where he was staying and had shot him after calling him out. Mr.Vivekanandaras is from Manjanthoduvaai, a suburb on the southern outskirts of Batticaloa town.

Signature campaign against Norway: Sept 29 - Jathika Hela Urumaya (JHU), the party of Buddhist monks, launched a signature campaign in Kandy vowing to collect five million signatures against the Norwegian facilitation in the Peace Process. Venerable Omalpe Sobhitha Thera, the Deputy Leader of the JHU, addressing a meeting at the Central Market in Kandy, vowed that he personally would be campaigning for three days in Colombo, Kandy, Gampaha, Galle, Matara and Polannaruwa districts. "Norwegian envoys are the real enemies of people of Sri Lanka. They are sympathetic to Tiger demands," said Sobhitha Thera.

Ven. Pandit Madagama Dhammananatha Thera of the Asgiriya Maha Vihara said that the objective of obtaining the signatures is to pressure Sri Lanka's President to prevent the division of the country. Kandy district JHU parliamentarian Ven. Udawatta Nanda Thera said, "We do not need Norwegians support. If the our government needs any support to solve the ethnic problem, it should seek the assistance of India." The signature campaign is expected to last 30 days, according to JHU sources.

Karuna loyalist killed: Sept 30 - A man who was abducted from his home on 29 September, Wednesday night, by unidentified men, was found shot dead in Redd Barnapuram in Eravur, 14 kilometres north of Batticaloa, Police said. The body of the man, Dharmalingam Gopalakrishnan, 30, was found in shrub near his home with several gunshot wounds on his head on Thursday morn-

ing, according to Eravur Police. Police sources alleged that Gopalakrishnan was killed as he was suspected to be a loyalist of the Karuna faction.

Six Tigers killed: Sept 30 - A woman died at Panichchankerni around noon on Tuesday, 28 September, when LTTE cadres fired indiscriminately after being attacked by Karuna loyalists. Senior military officials based in the East and Colombo said LTTE cadres fired rocket propelled grenades and mortars at random for about one hour after Karuna loyalists mounted a commando-style assault on an isolated road block situated a few kilometres away from the Kadjuwatte army camp. The incident took place in the LTTE-held area. This particular point is manned by about six personnel during the daytime and about 12 in the night. The military believed at least six LTTE cadres were killed in the attack.

The LTTE moved reinforcements to cordon off the area to track down the attackers.

"Two women with shrapnel wounds were rushed to the Valaichenai government hospital shortly after the firing ceased. One of them succumbed to injuries and the other was subsequently transferred to the Batticaloa Teaching Hospital," an officer based in Colombo said. At least two others who had suffered minor injuries entered the government-controlled area, he said.

Muslims stage hartal in the east: Oct 1 - Life in the Akkraipattu town in eastern Sri Lanka was brought to a standstill on 30 September when residents staged a hartal, forcing shops to put up shutters. Old tyres were burnt on the roads while all government offices remained closed. Thousands of Muslims from Vattamadu, Thirukkovil and Akkaraipattu took part in the hartal in protest against alleged harassment by the LTTE of Muslim paddy farmers and death threats issued to them. During the past few weeks, a large number of Muslim farmers have complained to the police and the Norwegian-led monitors of LTTE excesses. They have said the LTTE was attempting to deprive them of their land as well as

livelihood.

Security in the town was beefed up with additional police personnel brought in to defuse tension and prevent any clashes. They said although they Muslims had pinned their hopes on the CFA thinking the LTTE violence against them would abate, the opposite had happened. Unless the SLMM and the international community heeded their plight and restrained the LTTE from unleashing violence, organisers said they would be compelled to take their protests to Colombo like the democratic Tamil parties.

Karuna cadre killed: Oct 1 - A close associate of former Liberation Tigers' commander Karuna was shot dead by LTTE's special jungle warfare units operating in Kulaththu Madu near Vakaneri, 40 kilometres north of Batticaloa, on 30 September, Friday night around 11 pm, according to a Tamilnet report. The dead man was identified as 'Ruben'. "At least two in Ruben's group were injured in the attack. Our units are now looking for them in the jungles", the report said quoting an LTTE source.

Businessman shot: Oct 2 - A businessman was shot around 5.30 p.m. on 1 October by unidentified gunmen near Punanai, 45 kilometres northwest of Batticaloa. The businessman, Mr. Poopalapillai Sivapragasam, 47, was returning from Welikanda on his motorbike on the Valaichenai-Polannaruwa Road when four gunmen who had trailed him on their motorbikes shot and wounded him, Police said. Mr. Poopalapillai runs his business in the Valaichenai bazaar. A Sri Lanka army convoy rescued him when he lay wounded on the roadside, they said. His assailants are reported to be Karuna loyalists.

Curfew in Mannar: Oct 2 - Police on 1 October clamped a curfew in Mannar after Muslims, irked over the killing of Muslim on Thursday, 30 September, clashed with members of the LTTE pistol group and set fire to two LTTE offices. Police said the curfew would be in force till 6.00 p.m. but would be continued if they found the situation still volatile.

The LTTE 'administrative offices' in Pesalai and Thalaimannar were burnt to the ground in the early hours by angry mobs. The LTTE cadres on duty at that time decamped to save their lives and the Special Task Force have been summoned to maintain law and order, police said.

The LTTE pistol group allegedly gunned down Faisal Salem (38), a resident of the Karasal village at Pesalai while he was returning home on his motorbike with one of his friends. The protest and agitation began on Thursday in the Karasal village and soon spread to the other nearby villages with scores of Muslims taking to the streets demanding the LTTE killers be brought to justice and an end to killings. A senior police officer said that mobs attacked the LTTE office on Moor Street when Salem's body was brought to the Mannar Base Hospital.

Two civilians killed in shooting: Oct 3 - Two civilians who came under attack by LTTE gunmen in the general un-cleared area of Valachchenai on Saturday, 2 October, died on the spot, a complaint made to the Police by a civilian stated.

One of the victims, Tambiah Mannavan (32) of Umaliyavadu, Madurankulam, Valachchenai was a farmer and talking to a section of LTTE breakaway members in his compound when armed LTTE gunmen of the Wannai faction stormed the place and shot indiscriminately, a news release from the Sri Lanka Army said. During the shooting, another unknown member of the LTTE breakaway group who was present at that time received gunshots and died on the spot, according to the complainant, Kumara Muttu Gurashi (30) of Umaliyavadu, Madurankulam, Valachchenai. Those armed LTTE assailants afterwards brought a tractor and took away the remains of the victims towards un-cleared areas in Vakara. The complainant who was an eye-witness to the incident had further alleged that the group of assailants comprising about 100-150 armed LTTE men showed up at the location when the firing took place. The Valachchenai Police have kept the Sri Lanka Monitoring Mission informed of the incident.

Tigers want prisoner swap: Oct 3 - The LTTE has sent a letter to the Sri Lanka Monitoring Mission (SLMM) in Trincomalee with the names of ten LTTE cadres whom they want in exchange for the two home guards who are presently in their custody. The 10 LTTE men have been in detention having been remanded by the courts..

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The ten LTTE cadres are those who had been taken into custody in Batticaloa on two occasions. Their real names and the names used by the LTTE are indicated in the letter. The eight LTTE cadres who had been taken into custody on July 14, 2003 while they were bound to Karadiyanaru by a vehicle are as follows: Sivanathan Thiruman Vanam alias Thamilisai, Vinayagamoorthi Shyamala alias Sudarwili, Navarathnam Manjula alias Thilakadevi Navaratnam Pumidamalar alias Nerkochai Kadiresapilai Rajikumar alias Rajjigan, Kopalasingam Dayanandan alias Daya, Sridharan Sudakaran alias Kannan, Thyagarasa Muralidaran alias Kankalan. They were arrested with the firearms they had in their possession. The other two who were taken into custody on July 7, 2003 while they were riding a mobike at Valachchenai, Ottamawadi with a hand bomb in their possession. They are Sandiridasa Jayaweera alias Piyos Rajendra and Wadivel Sandira Kumar. The place of arrest and the offence committed are indicated in that letter.

Tigers have indicated that they are agreeable to release the two home guards with their fire arms if the ten Tiger cadres are released with fire arms and hand bombs.

Norway condemns political killings: Oct 5 - The Royal Norwegian Embassy in Colombo said that the Norwegian Deputy Foreign Minister, Vidar Helgessen had conveyed to the LTTE's political wing head Thamilselvan, when they met in Geneva on Monday, 4 October, his country's growing concern over the LTTE's breach of the ceasefire agreement and had made it clear that Norway condemned the political killings carried out by the Tigers.

The Embassy said: "Deputy Minister Helgessen communicated to the LTTE delegation Norway's growing concern regarding continuing breaches of the ceasefire agreement. Helgessen emphasised the negative implications of ceasefire violations for the peace process as a whole and underlined that such violations also make the work of the Sri Lanka Monitoring Mission difficult."

"Helgessen stated that Norway condemned the political killings taking place in Sri Lanka and appealed to the delegation that the LTTE does everything possible to stop such killings," said the embassy.

US urges LTTE to end violence: Oct 5 - The United States has called upon the LTTE to end violence against political opponents and to cease the recruitment of child soldiers. In a statement, US State Department spokesperson Richard Boucher said, "The US is committed to supporting the peace process launched after the 2002 Cease Fire between the Government of Sri Lanka and the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam or LTTE. President Kumaratunga has shown flexibility in her proposals to renew discussions with the LTTE. Further delay in restarting negotiations can only damage the interests of all Sri Lankans who stand to gain from a return to real peace. We urge both parties to return to the negotiating table as soon as possible to bring peace to the island," Mr. Boucher said.

"Only a negotiated settlement according to the agreed terms of the Oslo Declaration can achieve an equitable and long-lasting resolution to the bloody conflict that has divided the nation for too long. The people of Sri Lanka deserve an opportunity to live in peace. Any settlement must preserve the territorial integrity, unity and national sovereignty of Sri Lanka. Both sides have to take steps to ensure that all provisions of the Ceasefire Agreement are adhered to."

SLMM on home guards issue: Oct 6 - The SLMM in a press release stated that the SLMM did not find acceptable acts of apprehending persons in order to put on pressure for release of detainees of either party to the CFA. Moreover, the SLMM Head of Mission noted that there is no logic in connecting the two completely separate cases of the current detention of the two Home guards and the list of names put forward by the LTTE, citing ten cadres arrested by the GOSL more than a year ago. The cadres were duly processed through the judicial system in accordance with National Law.

Furuhovde explained that the SLMM has engaged itself intensively at the local level in Trincomalee in trying to persuade the LTTE to release the detained Home guards, even though they had been apprehended carrying firearms within LTTE controlled area. Furthermore, the SLMM has also taken up this issue with LTTE Political Wing leader Mr. Thamilshelvan at top-level meetings in Kilinochchi. The SLMM urges the LTTE to re-examine its posi-

tion on the issue of the two detained Home guards and hopes for their release.

Two Muslims shot dead: Oct 6 - Two Muslims, Mohamed Noor Mohamed Sedu Mohamed (45) a teacher and K.M.Kuddoos (aged 42) a farmer were shot dead allegedly by the Tigers on 5 October at about 7.00 p.m. at Athugala, Welikanda in eastern Sri Lanka, on their way back home from the mosque. Muslim people are becoming restless and frustrated about the LTTE as their attacks and killings have turned towards the Muslims, sources said.

Police prevent building LTTE memorial: Oct 7 - Sri Lanka Police arrested four workers who were constructing a memorial in Mannar town for 'Victor' (Mr. Marcelin Fuselus), a senior commander of the Liberation Tigers who was killed in battle with the Sri Lanka army in 1986. The masons and their assistants were arrested when they were starting work on the memorial at the roundabout in Bazaar Street in the heart of Mannar town around 7.30 p.m. Sri Lanka army and Police stepped up patrols and deployed more troops in the town following the arrest.

'Victor' was LTTE's Mannar district commander in 1985-86. He was from Pangkatukottil, a coastal village near Mannar town. Police said they arrested the four workers as they had no permission to build the memorial at the Bazaar Street roundabout.

Life sentence quashed on appeal: Oct 8 - Sri Lanka's Court of Appeal quashed the life sentence imposed on a Tamil youth, Mr. Mylwaganam Wijeyaratnam, who was charged under the Prevention of Terrorism Act (PTA) and acquitted him from all charges indicted by the Attorney General. He was indicted for causing death to a group of soldiers of the Sri Lanka Army at Kaddumrippu in 1995, based on the confession made by him under the PTA. The Colombo High Court which heard the case in the year 2002 found the accused guilty on all charges and imposed life sentence on him. The accused appealed against the life sentence imposed by the HC that he was not given a fair trial. The defence took up the position that the conviction based on the confession of the accused during the course of police interrogation was not a voluntary one but obtained under duress.

Mines threat in North and East: Oct 8 - The UN Mine Action Report on Sri Lanka for 2004 says that nearly 500,000 people in 405 villages in the North and East are believed to be threatened by mines. Civilians in Jaffna, Kilinochchi, Mannar, Mullativu, Vavuniya, Batticaloa, Trincomalee and Ampara are at risk, the report said.

The UN report has been issued in anticipation of the Nairobi Summit on a Mine-Free World, to be held at the end of November. It states that landmines, unexploded ordinance (UXO) and improvised explosive devices (IED) stemming from almost two decades of armed conflict are causing between 15 and 20 casualties daily. Mines and UXO in Sri Lanka have been assessed as 'containable', provided that the present peace process continues and donor funding for capacity building and operations meet the current demand for expansion and procedural demining. The report stressed the necessity for continued coordination and quality management in demining operations, gathering and dissemination of data, and management on mine action. The annual expenditure for mine action in Colombo is nearly US\$ 16 million and includes the clearing of nearly 3,000 minefields and 700,000 landmines.

Sri Lanka officially became a party last month to the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons (CCW), which also prohibits the indiscriminate use of landmines and their intentional use on civilians during a war. However, Sri Lanka is yet to ratify the Convention on the Prohibition of Anti-Personnel Mines or the Mines Ban Treaty. As of June 30, 2004, 143 states had ratified the convention, which came into force on March 1, 1999.

Abducted and killed: Oct 7 - Six suspected armed LTTE cadres, clad in military-type uniforms abducted and killed a civilian in the general area of Sevanapitiya in Welikanda on October 6 Wednesday night, Police reports said. The victim's bullet-riddled body was found abandoned on the banks of a rural tank. The 37 year old victim, Dharmalingam Sathyalingam, whose house at No. 114 of Mutugala, Sevanapitiya was stormed by the six armed men at about 9.00 p.m. before he was taken away to an undisclosed place, according to information given by neighbours. The Mutugala Police post was informed of the murder by neighbours.

Muslim MPs seek separate representation at talks

Oct 9 - Muslim Members of Parliament belonging to different political parties who met at Environment and Natural Resources Minister A. H. M. Fowzie's residence on 7 October agreed to act together in the common interest of the community, particularly at a time when a solution for the ethnic problem was being actively pursued, a Ministry media release said. SLMC leader Rauff Hakeem, NUA leader Minister Ferial Ashroff, UNP Members Kabir Hashim and Myown Musthafa, CWC Faizer Musthafa, National Muslim Congress Chairman Anver Ismail, Media Deputy Minister and NUA Secretary General Cegu Issadeen, SLMC Secretary General M. T. Hassen Ali, MPs Rishard Badiuddin, N. A. Majeed, Ameer Ali, Nijamudeen and Hussein Bhaila were present.

At the meeting, the members had resolved to seek for an independent delegation to be included to participate in the political negotiations for resolving the ethnic problem. They held the unanimous view that all Muslim Parliamentarians should act collectively in common national issues.

After paying attention to the security situation of the country they unanimously adopted the following resolution: "We the Muslim Members of Parliament, fully appreciate and welcome the efforts taken by President Chandrika Bandaranaike Kumaratunga to resume Peace Negotiations with the LTTE, and in that context we do express our sincere hope that the talks will result success. In the event of the resumption the peace talks, we do hereby resolve to request the President to accommodate an independent Muslim delegation to safeguard Muslim interests and to achieve their political aspirations."

STF kills killer of LTTE activist: Oct 9 - A political activist of the Liberation Tigers was shot dead by a gunman suspected to belong to the Karuna faction of the LTTE in Akkaraipattu, 64 kilometres south of Batticaloa, Saturday 9 October, Police said. The gunman was later shot dead by a Special Task Force (STF) patrol that pursued and cornered him in a house. "We pursued the gunman when he saw him fleeing the scene of murder. We had to open fire when he attempted to evade arrest by attacking us," said an STF officer in Akkaraipattu. STF is the elite counter insurgency arm of Sri Lanka Police.

The driver of the passenger van in which the LTTE activist was about to board was injured when the gunman opened fire, Police said. The LTTE political activist was identified as 'Jude'.

Muslims want equal partnership: Oct 9 - Sri Lanka Muslim Congress has urged the government to make clear its stance on the issue of North-East Muslims and to ensure an 'equal partnership' status to the Muslim Community in the future peace talks, if the government wishes its participation in the National Advisory Council on Peace and Reconciliation.

"We want to know where we stand," said the Party General Secretary Hasan Ali. SLMC was invited among other political parties to be a member of the NAC, but the Congress wanted certain issues to be cleared before sending their representative, Ali said. Speaking on the issues on which the party demands clarification Ali said, they would want to know how the government will assure the rights and the aspirations of the community are safeguarded, if an interim authority is set up as was demanded by the LTTE.

"We are an important stake holder in this process, we have lost over 17,000 lives, acres of lands were taken forcibly and millions and millions worth of properties were destroyed, we have burning issues that need urgent attention," he said. The party which went before the public with an election manifesto talked mainly about its stand on the peace process would support the move if their demand on equal participation is met. "What we will have to say in the NAC would also be the same as those we stated in our election manifesto which was accepted by the Muslim Community," he added.

Tamil scholars honoured: Oct 11 - Three day North East Tamil Literary Festival concluded in Jaffna conferring Governor's Award on eight Tamil scholars and releasing videocassette on the life and literary works of veteran Tamil Professor K.Sivathamby. Earlier a cultural pageant, which commenced from the Nallur Kandasamy Temple, arrived at the venue, Jaffna Hindu Ladies College where the three-day festival was held.

R.Sadachcharadevi (Kunthavai), S.L.M.Haniffa, V.Sivasubrama-

nian, M.Kanagasabai, K.S. Sivakumaran, Kulanthai M.Shanmugalingam, P.Stanislaou and K.Sellathurai were the recipients of the Governor's Award for the year 2004.

Governor's Award were handed over by the NE Provincial Council Chief Secretary Mr.Rangarajah and literary awards for the year 2003 by Professor K.Sivathamby. Mr.R.Thiakalingam, Secretary to the Provincial Ministry of Education, Cultural Affairs, Sports and Youth Affairs presided over the final evening session. Mr.S.Rangarajah, Chief Secretary of the North East Provincial Council (NEPC) was the chief guest and Professor K.Sivathamby was the Guest of Honour. Messrs: S.Sivanandan, Senior Assistant Secretary in the NE Provincial Education Ministry, Dr.T.Kamalanathan, and Head of the College of Education, Mr.P. Vickneswaran, and Jaffna Zonal Director of Education participated as distinguished guests.

Wickremesinghe's Indian visit: Oct 12 - India's Minister of External Affairs Natwar Singh and Sri Lanka's Leader of the Opposition Ranil Wickremesinghe met during the latter's visit to India and held wide ranging discussions, said a press release issued in Colombo.

The press release issued by the Opposition Leader's office stated, "India's desire to see a speedy solution to the ethnic conflict of its closet neighbour, Sri Lanka was expressed by the Indian minister of External Affairs Mr. Natwar Singh, at a wide ranging discussion held with the Sri Lankan opposition leader, Mr. Ranil Wickremesinghe. Mr.Singh demonstrated a keen interest to learn the current situation of the peace process. Mr. Ranil Wickramasinghe described the consistent stance taken by the United National party with regard to the peace process and the peace talks. The opposition leader emphasized that either in power or out of it his party is committed to a negotiated political solution for the conflict.

In addition to the peace process, strengthening of Indo-Sri Lanka relations was also discussed at length during the meeting Mr. Singh was of the view that both countries should strive more to expand relations in all aspects, as this would be mutually beneficial and make great contribution in the sphere of development. Mr. Wickramasinghe said that he is fully aware of this fact and his government while in power took various steps to expand and strengthen trade, cultural and other relations ships between the two neighbours."

Grenade attack inside Chinabay: Oct 13 - A grenade attack took place targeting a leading private sector cement factory which is located in Chinabay, about 9 km off Trincomalee town. Prima Milling Complex, Ceylon Petroleum Corporation refinery, airport and Fisheries Corporation office are also located in Chinabay.

According to a police report, a person who came from the seaside had thrown the grenade and it fell inside the premises of the factory and exploded. Army officials rushed to site on receipt of information and had collected the clip of the exploded grenade from the site. The SLA and Police immediately launched investigation into the incident, sources.

Four policemen named in assault case: Oct 14 - Four policemen of Jaffna Police, T Dhanapala, Pushpamali Fernando, Asela and Ariyasinghe were identified at the identification parade held in Jaffna Magistrate's Court in connection with the alleged assault on Mr.Ruwan Chandrasekara, regional co-ordinator of the Human Rights Commission of Sri Lanka (HRCSL) and his associate Mr.S.Feroz on 27 September, according reports from Jaffna.

Ruwan Chandrasekara and Feroz identified the policemen as being among the group that allegedly assaulted them when they went to inquire about an arrested Tamil youth and kept in the police custody. About 46 policemen were produced for the identification parade along with about 322 laymen. The Magistrate R T Viknarajah allowed the applications made the suspects applications to for bail and for permission to leave Jaffna peninsula.

Hostage taken in lieu of escapee: Oct 13 - Chandrasekaram Ramesh Prabakaran (aged 16) of 9th Colony, Kokkaddicholai who was with the LTTE since 2001 had reportedly escaped from the LTTE and disappeared. The LTTE cadres came in search of him and failing to locate the whereabouts of Ramesh Prabakaran had taken hostage his brother-in-law. They have instructed the wife of this man to produce her brother if she wanted the release of her

husband. The woman is said to be confronted with two difficult choices, whether to save her husband or betray her brother.

Karunas cadres killed: Oct 13 - Two Karuna faction cadres were killed while another six were badly injured when a member suspected to be from of the LTTE Wannu faction hurled a hand grenade and opened fire at them on 12 October at Welikanda in eastern Sri Lanka.

Military spokesman Col. Sumedha Perera said that according to information, an LTTE cadre from Wannu had reportedly made overtures to a group of breakaway LTTE men for some time and suddenly detonated the hand grenade before firing at this group of LTTE men who were reportedly at a house in the area. The injured LTTE men of the breakaway group carrying their two dead friends, had reported the matter initially to the Nagastenna Police post after the incident. The injured were admitted to the Welikanda hospital and later transferred to the Polonnaruwa base hospital since their conditions grew worse, he said.

SLMC wants enhanced safety: Oct 14 - Sri Lanka Muslim Congress Leader (SLMC) Rauff Hakeem is to urge Defence Ministry authorities to heighten security in all Muslim populated areas especially in the Eastern region, following several killings of Muslim civilians allegedly carried out by the LTTE. Hakeem will also submit his request to the Chief of Security Staff shortly. He will request for special security measures to the Batticaloa and Polonnaruwa districts, sources said. The SLMC leader who recently visited the Eastern Province after the killings assured the Muslim population that he would work towards establishing a safety measure in all Muslim populated areas, after discussing the matter with relevant defence personnel.

JVP supporters hold demo: Oct 14 - A group of supporters of the Janatha Vimukthi Peramuna (JVP), a constituent of the ruling United Peoples Freedom Alliance (UPFA) held a demonstration in front of the Trincomalee office of the Sri Lanka Monitoring Commission (SLMM) Thursday, 14 October, around noon demanding the release of two Sinhala home guards who are reported to have been taken into custody when they strayed into LTTE controlled area on September 27.

Police and army soldiers provided tight security to the SLMM office, which is located along the Inner Harbour Road facing the Trincomalee harbour. The main gates of the SLMM were closed and guarded by security forces to prevent protestors entering the office premises, sources said.

A spokesman of the group addressing the gathering appealed to the SLMM to take immediate step to release the two Sinhalese home guards to reduce the tension in Trincomalee where all three communities live. He warned that some elements are working to create chaos in Trincomalee to meet their own ends using the current volatile situation.

Abduction fisherman in Jaffna: Oct 14 - A fisherman had been abducted and another was injured when an unidentified group, alleged to be LTTE cadres, aboard a fishing boat assaulted two fishermen engaged in fishing in Manakadu in Jaffna on 13 October and abducted one of them. Military sources said these fishermen attached to the St. Anthony Fishing Association in Jaffna were at sea when they gagged the men assaulted and abducted the fishermen. The escaped fisherman had reported the matter to the Fishing Association and sought admission to the Mannai hospital because of the injuries inflicted on him by assailants, sources added.

Senior LTTE cadre killed: Oct 15 - A senior member of the LTTE's intelligence unit and close confidante of the LTTE's intelligence chief Pottu Amman, was reportedly killed in an ambush attack in the Pancichankerni township in the Batticaloa district. The victim was identified as Ravindran. Another intelligence unit member, Suthagar, was severely wounded in the incident. Former LTTE cadres who are loyal to Col. Karuna are believed to have carried out the attack. In a statement issued in the east after the incident, LTTE blamed the Sri Lankan army helping Karuna loyalists to carry out attacks. However, in a recent interview to the media, Karuna said it is the Wannu LTTE leadership who gets help from the Sri Lankan army. Karuna pointed out that the LTTE military leaders travel with Sri Lankan army protection, and use transportation provided by the Sri Lankan armed

forces.

Indo-Lanka direct link: Oct 17 - Telecom connectivity between India and Sri Lanka entered a new phase on 16 October with the Indian Minister for Communications and Information Technology Dayanidhi Maran inaugurating a direct communication (microwave) link between the two countries. The inauguration was a simultaneous affair, via video conferencing, with Sri Lanka's Minister for Posts and Tele-communications D M Jayaratne opening the link in Colombo. Expressing confidence that the connection would benefit people of both countries, Maran said this was yet another step in strengthening Indo-Sri Lankan ties.

Former Black Tiger killed: Oct 17 - A former LTTE cadre, reportedly a Black-Tiger, who had left the LTTE, was killed when he came under a grenade attack during the night of 16 October while at his home at Boundary Road, Putur, Batticaloa. Military sources said that the victim had been identified as 27 year old K. Sinnavan Maheswaran. The victim was at home asleep when the grenade-carrying assailant, alleged to be a relative of the victim, stormed into the house and threw a hand grenade at him. The victim was rushed to the Batticaloa hospital but he was pronounced dead before being admitted.

Vaiko confident of lifting LTTE ban: Oct 17 - MDMK leader Vaiko, has expressed confidence that the Union Government would lift the ban on LTTE. He was responding to reporters' queries here on what he thought about the LTTE spokesperson Tamilselvan's plea to the Indian Government to lift the ban on the organisation, at a time when the peace negotiations were on. Vaiko pointed out that he had for long endorsed the view that the ban should be lifted when peace negotiations were on.

On the BJP-Shiv Sena's defeat in the Maharashtra elections, he said "the defeat for the Sangh Parivar will continue."

Referring to the 'Golden star of honour and dignity award' given to Chief Minister Jayalalitha by the International Human Rights Committee, he said it was not a recognised body of the UN. "The award is nothing but a mockery, when crimes against women are on the increase in Tamil Nadu," he said.

He described as "natural and justified" fishermen's fears that implementation of the Sethu Samuthiram project would affect their livelihood and that fish wealth would be depleted in the Gulf region. The Government should create awareness about the project and how it would actually benefit them, he said.

IGP wants Tamil language fluent policemen: Oct 18 - The new Inspector General of Police Chandra Fernando said that police personnel fluent in the Tamil language would be deployed to all police stations in the Jaffna peninsula. He made this statement during a brief visit to Jaffna on 18 October. This was his first official visit to the Peninsula since assuming duties as the new IGP recently. He also held talks with area police officers and found out their shortcomings. The IGP also discussed ways and means of improving public-police relationship in the future. He also met Jaffna Sri Lanka Monitoring Mission representatives and inquired about the ground situation in the area.

Illegal entrants spark terror-scare: Oct 18 - Airport security officers were scrambled to meet an Air Canada jet carrying seven illegal immigrants from Sri Lanka and the Dominican Republic. They were travelling on false documents and were suspected of being terrorists. Officers waited outside Terminal 1 and then escorted the men off the flight. They were detained for several hours for questioning.

Air Canada spokesman Laura Cooke said seven people were detained for lack of documents on Flight 1849 from Puerto Plata, in the Dominican Republic. Airport officers said the flight crew became suspicious of the men. The Sri Lankan men, who couldn't speak English or French, had Canadian passports issued to them under French names. Mugshots of the illegal immigrants were imposed over photos on the documents, police said. Alien smugglers are now using French Canadian passports to smuggle Sri Lankans and Indian nationals to Canada, police said.

UNP demonstrates in Colombo: Oct 19 - United National Party (UNP) parliamentarians including hundreds of party cadres and activists joined in what is dubbed as "Kitchen Revolution" on 19 October, Tuesday in various locations in Colombo.

Placards carried by the demonstrators protested against the

increasing cost of living, demanded increase in salaries and asked the United Peoples Freedom Alliance (UPFA) to take immediate steps to find a solution to the ethnic conflict. The demonstrations are aimed at "opening the eyes of the Government", said the organizers of the protest. People are undergoing immense suffering due to economic slump caused by the inaction of the Govt. in regard to the peace process, the protesters said.

UNP Parliamentarian Dr. Rajitha Senaratne addressing the party supporters in Kollupitya junction said, "We will surround the President palace and send home the UPFA government in March of next year. After that UNP will build up new North-South government." Many UNP parliamentarians and former Ministers participated in the protests, but the UNP leader Ranil Wickremesinghe was a notable absentee. UNP organizers said that a people's campaign is to be launched in November and also that additional campaigns will be held this month in other parts of the country.

Former TNA MP shot dead: Oct 19 - Mr.Kingsley Rasanayagam, who was elected at the April 2004 election as Tamil National Alliance MP for Batticaloa, and later resigned from Parliament at the request of the LTTE high command, was shot dead on 19 October, Tuesday evening around 6.20 in the eastern town by unidentified gunmen. He was shot in his car near Kalliyankaadu Cemetery in Batticaloa town. Mr. Rasanayagam was believed by the LTTE to be a close associate of renegade Liberation Tigers commander Mr. Vinayagamoorthy Muralitharan (Karuna). A Policeman who was providing security to him was injured when the gunman riding a motorbike opened fire, Police said. Mr. Rasanayagam is from Periyar Kallar south of Batticaloa. He was a former bank officer and later worked with the LTTE.

Dead body found chained: Oct 19 - Mr.Thambipillai Pakkiar-atnam, aged 26, was found dead with gunshot injuries on head and chest along Trincomalee-Batticaloa road about three km off Vellaikuttu junction. His both legs were found chained, and there was evidence that the victim had been tortured. He was a native of Karaveddy-Navatkadu in Batticaloa district. According to relatives of the victim members of the LTTE's intelligence wing, are alleged

to have kidnapped Mr. Pakiyaratnam the day before.

Tiger supporter killed: Oct 19 - Mr.Kathirgamathamby Ganeshamoorthy, aged 43, was shot dead by unidentified men Tuesday, 19 October, early morning around 3.30 a.m in his house located in the village Iyankerny in Eravur division in Batticaloa district. He was a supporter of the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) and the assailants are suspected to be members of Karuna group.

Security forces foils abduction: Oct 20 - Security forces at the Black Bridge entry/exit point in eastern Sri Lanka reportedly rescued a civilian while he was being allegedly abducted by two LTTE cadres from Kiran in Eravur. Military sources said that the civilian, identified as 22 year-old N. Nallarathnam of Kiran was being forcibly taken to an LTTE-controlled area in a lorry when troops found him. Later, the victim was handed over to the Eravur Police for investigations

Ex-military intelligence officer shot dead: Oct 20 - An ex-military intelligence officer of the Sri Lanka army was shot dead in Colombo by unidentified gunmen on 19 October, Tuesday night, Police said. The ex-intelligence officer, Mr.Mohammed Suresh Casim, was found dead in his car in Dehiwela, a southern suburb of Colombo. Mr. Casim had worked in Trincomalee during the war, Police sources said. He was discharged from military intelligence for alleged atrocities against civilians, according to a media reports..

Youth shot dead in Trinco: Oct 21 - A youth, named Krishanaraja Lokithan (aged 26) was shot dead at about 9.00 p.m. at Anbuvalipuram, Trincomalee in eastern Sri Lanka. It is reported that this youth was from Kokkaticcholai, Batticaloa and had sided with the Karuna faction during the split in the LTTE, but he later left the movement and had been staying with his relatives at Anbuvalipuram.

SLTTA donates sports equipment: Oct 21 - Sri Lanka Table Tennis Association (SLTTA) donated more than sixty thousand rupees worth of Table Tennis tables and other accessories to Trincomalee district sports unit of the LTTE to introduce and develop Table Tennis sport in the LTTE controlled Muttur east villages in eastern Sri Lanka. SLTTA President, Mr.Daya Samaraweera, who is also Superintendent of Police in Trincomalee, handed over the sports equipments to Mr.Theepan, Trincomalee district head of the sports division of the LTTE Wednesday, 20 October, a ceremonial event held in the premises of the North East Provincial Education, Cultural Affairs, Sports and Youth Affairs Ministry. "We are prepared to go to Sampoor village in the LTTE controlled Muttur east to conduct coaching camps for students and youths," said Mr Samaraweera who has been promoted and transferred to Moneragala district as Senior Superintendent of Police. He added the Police and LTTE have joined hands to promote goodwill and peace through sports in the district. The question of whether cleared or uncleared areas would not arise for the development of sports in the district, Mr Samaraweera added.

Schoolboy abducted: Oct 21 - A student, Govindan Prakash (aged 16) from Umammil Street, Chankaladi, and Batticaloa is reported to have been abducted on his way from school. His elder brother, Govindan Viji, is alleged to have been suspected by the LTTE to be a supporter of Karuna faction and had gone in search for him twice and failed to locate him. It is reported that the younger brother had taken into custody by the LTTE to bring pressure on the elder brother to surrender.

Undergrads on murder charge on bail: Oct 21 - Jaffna High Court Mr.K.P.S.Varatharajah ordered bail for Mr. Jeyabalasingham Thushikanth and Mr.Ratnasingham Thavaseelan, both undergrads of Jaffna University. They were among the eight suspects remanded in connection with the murder of Arunasalam Muththiah of Punnailaikadduwan on 9 September this year. Of the eight suspects six including two undergrads were detained in Jaffna prisons on the orders of Jaffna Magistrate. The HC Judge allowed two undergrads on cash bail of ten thousand rupees each and two hundred thousand rupees surety bail. Bail applications on behalf of the other six suspects were rejected by the High Court. the sources said. Jaffna University Students Consortium and other Student Groups had earlier demanded the release of these two undergrads, as they have to prepare for examinations. □

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Ananda Coomaraswamy: 127th Birth Anniversary

The erudite scholar, recondite thinker and distinguished linguist

New Coomaraswamy volum: Once again, a collection of Ananda Coomaraswamy's writings has been published in the United States and marks the anniversary of his birth in Colombo 127 years ago on August 22, 1877.

*A magnificent set of three volumes - one of them a biography - was published many years ago to mark his Centenary by the Bollingen Press of Princeton University. The present volume, edited by his son, Dr. Rama Coomaraswamy, is called *The Essential Ananda K. Coomaraswamy* and contains selected extracts from his most important writings.*

Coomaraswamy's life story has been told in some detail by Roger Lipsey in a model biography, sympathetic but clear-eyed and critical, painstakingly researched but not burdened with trivial detail, shunning any half-baked psychologising, narrated in elegant prose, and attuned to those aspects of the *oeuvre* to which Coomaraswamy himself would have wished attention to be drawn.

Here we shall concern ourselves less with biographical matter than with an introduction to Coomaraswamy's ideas and writings. We will focus on certain intellectual and spiritual contours in Coomaraswamy's development, isolate some of the landmarks, and offer a few remarks about the influence and significance of his work. It should be said plainly at the outset that nothing less than a full-length study could do justice to the scope and depth of his work nor to the manifold influences issuing from it. By the end of his life Coomaraswamy was thoroughly versed in the scriptures, mythology, doctrines and arts of many different cultures and traditions. He was an astonishingly erudite scholar, a recondite thinker and a distinguished linguist. He was a prolific writer, a full bibliography running to upwards of a thousand items on geological-studies, art theory and history, linguistics and philology, social theory, psychology, mythology, folklore, religion and metaphysics. He lived in three continents and maintained many contacts, both personal and professional, with scholars, antiquarians, artists, theologians and spiritual practitioners from all over the globe.

We can discern in Coomaraswamy's life and work three focal

points which shaped his ideas and writings: a concern with social and political questions connected with the conditions of daily life and work, and with the problematic relationship of the present to the past and of the 'East' to the 'West'; a fascination with traditional arts and crafts which impelled an immense and ambitious scholarly enterprise; and thirdly, an emerging preoccupation with religious and metaphysical questions which was resolved in a 'unique balance of metaphysical conviction and scholarly erudition'. Allowing for some over-simplification, we can distinguish three 'roles' in Coomaraswamy's intellectual life: social commentator and Indologist, historian of Indian art, perennial philosopher. Each of these roles was dominant during a certain period in his life: 1900 to 1917, 1917 to 1932, and 1932 to 1947 respectively. The three strands eventually became interwoven in Coomaraswamy's life and his work.

Born in Ceylon

Born in Ceylon in 1877 of a Tamil father and an English mother, Coomaraswamy was brought up in England following the early death of his father. He was educated at Wycliffe College and at London University where he studied botany and geology. As part of his doctoral work Coomaraswamy carried out a scientific survey of the mineralogy of Ceylon and seemed poised for a distinguished academic career as a geologist. However, under pressure from his experiences while engaged in field work, his interests took another turn. He became absorbed in a study of the traditional arts and crafts of Ceylon and of the social conditions under

which they had been produced. In turn he became increasingly distressed by the corrosive effects of British colonialism.

In 1906 Coomaraswamy founded the Ceylon Social Reform Society of which he was the inaugural President and moving force. The Society addressed itself to the preservation and revival not only of traditional arts and crafts but also of the social values and customs which had helped to shape them. The Society also dedicated itself, in the words of its Manifesto, to discouraging 'the thoughtless imitation of unsuitable European habits and custom'. Coomaraswamy called for a re-awakened pride in Ceylon's past and in her cultural heritage. The fact that he was half-English in no way blinkered his view of the impoverishment of national life brought by the British presence in both Ceylon and India. In both tone and substance the following passage is characteristic of Coomaraswamy in this early period:

How different it might be if we Ceylonese were bolder and more independent, not afraid to stand on our own legs, and not ashamed of our nationalities. Why do we not meet the wave of European civilisation on equal terms? . . . our Eastern civilisation was here 2000 years ago; shall its spirit be broken utterly before the new commercialism of the West? Sometimes I think the eastern spirit is not dead, but sleeping, and may yet play a greater part in the world's spiritual life.

Prescient words indeed in 1905!

In the years between 1900 and 1913 Coomaraswamy moved backwards and forwards between Ceylon, India and England. In India he formed close relationships with the Tagore family and was involved in both the literary renaissance and the swadeshi movement. All the while in the sub-continent he was researching the past, investigating arts and crafts, uncovering forgotten and neglected schools of religious and court art, writing scholarly and popular works, lecturing, and organising bodies such as the Ceylon Social Reform Society and, in England, the India Society.

In England he found his own social ideas anticipated and given forceful expression in the work of William

Blake, John Ruskin and William Morris, three of the foremost representatives of a fiercely eloquent and morally impassioned current of anti-industrialism. Such figures had elaborated a trenchant critique of the ugliest and most dehumanising aspects of the industrial revolution and of the acquisitive commercialism which increasingly polluted both public and private life. They believed the new values and-patterns of urbanisation and industrialisation were disfiguring the human spirit. These writers and others like Thomas Carlyle, Charles Dickens and Matthew Arnold, had protested vehemently against the conditions in which many were forced to carry out their daily work and living. Ruskin and Morris, in particular, were appalled by the debasing of standards of craftsmanship and of public taste. Coomaraswamy picked up a phrase of Ruskin's which he was to mobilise again and again in his own writings: 'industry without art is brutality'. This was more than a facile slogan and signals one of the key themes in Coomaraswamy's work. For many years- he was to remain preoccupied with questions about the reciprocal relationships between the conditions of daily life and work, the art of a period, and the social and spiritual values which governed the civilisation in question.

We can catch resonances from the work of the anti-industrialists in a passage such as this, written by Coomaraswamy in 1915:

If the advocates of compulsory education were sincere, and by education meant education, they would be well aware that the first result of any real education would be to rear a race who would refuse point-blank the greater part of the activities offered by present day civilised existence ... life under Modern Western culture is not worth living, except for those strong enough and well enough equipped to maintain a perpetual guerilla warfare against all the purposes and idols of that civilisation with a view to its utter transformation.

This articulates a concern with the purposes of education which was to remain with Coomaraswamy all his life. The tone of this passage, ardent, vigorous, sharp-edged, is typical of Coomaraswamy's writings on social

subjects in this period.

Later in life-Coomaraswamy turned less often to explicitly social and political questions. By then he had become aware that 'politics and economics, although they cannot be ignored, are the most external and least part of our problem'.- However, he never surrendered the conviction that an urbanised and highly industrialised society controlled by materialistic values was profoundly inimical to human development. He was always ready to pull a barbed shaft from his literary quiver when provoked. As late as 1943 we find him writing to *The New English Weekly*, again on the subject of education, in terms no less caustic than those of 1915:

We cannot pretend to culture until by the phrase 'standard of living' we come to mean a qualitative standard... Modern education is designed to fit us to take our place in the counting-house and at the chain-belt; a real culture breeds a race of men able to ask, What kind of work is worth doing?

Coomaraswamy's work on social theory has, as yet, received scant attention. It has been overshadowed by his work as an art historian and as a metaphysician. This is right and proper but it should be remembered that Coomaraswamy was profoundly concerned with social questions throughout his life. These came to be situated in a wider, and from a traditional viewpoint, more adequate perspective but his concern for a qualitative standard of living runs like a thread through his work. Here we have only touched on his social thought. However, a close inquiry into his fully developed ideas about education, literacy, social organisation and government would make a fascinating study.

Coomaraswamy's significance as a social commentator is not fully revealed until his later work when the political and social insights from the early period in his life found their proper place within an all-embracing traditional framework which allows him to elaborate what Juan Adolpho Vasquez has called 'a metaphysics of culture'. The seeds sown by Coomaraswamy in India and Ceylon, at first with his early writings and later through his mature work, have been a long time germinating. The harvest, if

it does come, could be none the less rich for that. We should not imagine that because he at first received a lukewarm or even unfavourable response from his compatriots (an attitude which in some measure persists to this day) that this betokened any kind of failure but rather that his ideas were then, just as his later writings are now, from one point of view, 'ahead of their time'. Ultimately Coomaraswamy's most important function as a social commentator lay in his insistence on relating social and political questions back to underlying religious and metaphysical principles. In this respect he anticipates some of the more percipient of present day social critics who realise that our most fundamental problems derive from a progressive etiolation of authentic moral and spiritual values.

This period of Coomaraswamy's life is important for the ways in which some of his ideas and attitudes-later to be assimilated into a traditionalist vision, took shape. Coomaraswamy was impelled by the contrast between the traditional and the modern industrial cultures of the two countries to which he belonged by birth.

The second refrain which sounds through Coomaraswamy's life is closely related to his interest in social questions and became the dominant theme of his public career—his work as an art historian. From the outset Coomaraswamy's interest in art was controlled by much more than either antiquarian or 'aesthetic' considerations. For him the most humble folk art and the loftiest religious creations alike were an outward expression not only of the sensibilities of those who created them but of the whole civilisation in which they were nurtured. There was nothing of the art nouveau slogan of 'art for art's sake' in Coomaraswamy's outlook. His interest in traditional arts and crafts, from a humble pot to a medieval cathedral, was always governed by the conviction that something immeasurably precious and vitally important was disappearing under the onslaught of modernism in its many different guises. As his biographer remarks... history of art was never for him either a light question - one that had only to do with pleasures - or a question of scholarship for its own sake, but rather a question of setting right what

had gone amiss partly through ignorance of the past. 'Coomaraswamy's achievement as an art historian can perhaps best be understood in respect of three of the major tasks which he undertook: the 'rehabilitation' of Asian art in the eyes of Europeans and Asians alike; the massive work of scholarship which he pursued as curator of the Indian Section of the Boston Museum of Fine Arts; the penetration and explanation of traditional views of art and their relationship to philosophy, religion and metaphysics. Again, for purposes of convenience we can loosely associate each of these tasks with the three main phases in his adult life whilst remembering that it was in the middle years (1917-1932) that he devoted himself almost exclusively to art scholarship.

In assessing Coomaraswamy's achievement it needs to be remembered that the conventional attitude of the Edwardian era towards the art of Asia was, at best, condescending, and at worst, frankly contemptuous. Such an artistic illiteracy was coupled with a similar incomprehension of traditional philosophy and religion, and buttressed by all manner of Eurocentric assumptions. Worse still was the fact that such attitudes had infected the Indian intelligentsia, exposed as it was to Western education and influences.

From the early days of his fieldwork in Ceylon Coomaraswamy set about dismantling these prejudices through an affirmation of the beauty, integrity and spiritual density of traditional art in Ceylon and India and, later, in other parts of Asia. His work on Sinhalese arts and crafts and on Rajput painting, though they can now be seen as formative in the light of his later work on Buddhist iconography and on Indian, Platonic and Christian theories of art, were nevertheless early signs of a prodigious scholarship.

As a Curator at the Boston Museum Coomaraswamy performed a mighty labour in classifying, cataloguing and explaining thousands of items of oriental art. Through his professional work, his writings, lectures and personal associations Coomaraswamy left an indelible imprint on the work of many American galleries and museums and influenced a wide range

of curators, art historians, orientalist and critics - Stella Kramrisch, Walter Andrae, and Heinrich Zimmer to name a few of the more well-known.

Here we shall not rehearse Coomaraswamy's complex vision of traditional art but will only stress a few of the cardinal ideas. Traditional art, in Coomaraswamy's view, was always directed towards a twin purpose: a daily utility, towards what he was fond of calling 'the satisfaction of present needs', and towards the preservation and transmission of moral values and spiritual teachings derived from the tradition in which it appeared. A Tibetan tanka, a medieval cathedral, a Red Indian utensil, a Javanese puppet, a Hindu deity image, a piece of Shaker furniture - in such artefacts and creations Coomaraswamy sought a symbolic vocabulary. The intelligibility of traditional arts and crafts, he insisted, does not depend on a more or less precarious 'recognition', as does modern art, but on 'legibility'. Traditional art does not deal in the private vision of the artist but in a symbolic language.

Modern art, which from a traditionalist perspective includes Renaissance and all post-Renaissance art, is by contrast, divorced from higher values, tyrannised by the mania for 'originality', controlled by 'aesthetic' (sentimental) considerations, and drawn from the subjective resources of the individual artist rather than from the well-springs of tradition. The comparison, needless to say, does not reflect well on modern art! An example:

Our artists are 'emancipated' from any obligation to eternal verities, and have abandoned to tradesmen the satisfaction of present needs. Our abstract art is not an iconography of transcendental forms but the realistic picture of a disintegrated mentality.

During the late 1920s Coomaraswamy's life and work somewhat altered their trajectory. He became more austere in his personal lifestyle, partially withdrew from the academic and social worlds in which he had moved freely over the last decade, and addressed himself to the understanding and explication of traditional metaphysics, especially those of classical India and pre-Renaissance Europe. His later work is densely textured with references to Plato and Plotinus, Au-

gustine and Aquinas, Eckhart and the Rhinish mystics, to Shankara and Lao-Tse and Nagarjuna. He also immersed himself in folklore and mythology since these too carried profound teachings. Coomaraswamy remained the consummate scholar but his work took on a more urgent nature after 1932.

The vintage Coomaraswamy of the later years is to be found in his masterly works on Vedanta and on the Catholic scholastics and mystics. Some of his work is labyrinthine and not easy of access. It is often laden with a mass of technical detail and with linguistic and philological subtleties which test the patience of some readers. Of his own methodology as an exponent of metaphysics Coomaraswamy wrote,

We write from a strictly orthodox point of view... endeavouring to speak with mathematical precision, but never employing words of our own, or making any affirmation for which authority could not be cited by chapter and verse; in this way making our technique characteristically Indian.

However formidable some of Coomaraswamy's later writings may be they demand close attention from anyone seriously interested in the subjects about which he wrote. There is no finer exegesis of traditional Indian metaphysics than is to be found in Coomaraswamy's later works. His work on the Platonic, Christian and Indian conceptions of sacred art is also unrivalled. It hardly matters what one picks up from the later period: all his mature work is stamped with rare scholarship, elegant expression and a depth of understanding which makes most of the other scholarly work on the same subjects look vapid and superficial. In this discussion of Coomaraswamy we have referred only briefly to some aspects of his work. However, it will be clear enough that he was a man of wide interests and achievements. From a traditionalist point of view we can unhesitatingly ratify Coomaraswamy's own words: 'I have little doubt that my later work, developed out of and necessitated by my earlier works on the arts, Indian philosophy and Vedic exegesis, is really the most mature and most important part of my work.'

Courtesy of The Island, 22 Aug 2004

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laysia), late Baby (Malaysia); loving mother of late Thillainadesan, late Sugirthamalar, Sambasivam (Retired Manager, Peoples Bank), Dr. Paramathasan (Swindon), Mahadevan (Consultant Engineer, Nuwara Eliya), Vimalendran (Accountant, Croydon), Indranee (Canada); mother-in-law of late Pushpamalar, Mangayakarasi, late Mailvaganam, Saro, late Maheswary, Ratna, Jayapathy (Canada). Grandma will be fondly remembered and missed by her grandchildren Sivakumar, Dr. Gowri Manohari, Premkumar, Dhamayanthi, Thabotharan, Niruba, Dr. Dhanushan. Myura, Balamayuran, Vijitha, Rathees, Dhayani, Shiya, Dharshana and 14 great grandchildren. Funeral rites were performed at the family residence at 'Sugirtha Mahal', at 1st Mile

Post, Uduvil and the cremation took place at Pipili Cemetery, Manipay on Tuesday, 21st September 2004-10-04.

The members of the family wish to thank all friends and relatives who attended the funeral, sent floral tributes and messages of sympathy and assisted them in several ways during the period of bereavement.

A Remembrance Poo-

jah will be held on Sunday, 7th November 2004 at Highgate Murugan Temple, London N6 followed by lunch. All friends and relatives are cordially invited.

-13 Sandacre Road, Nine Elms, Shaw, Swindon SN5 9UU. Tel: 01793 871435/ 17 Tindale Close, Sanderstead, South Croydon Surrey CR2 0RT. Tel: 0208 651 6129 (UK).



Mrs Vimala Nadarajah of Kokuvil, Jaffna beloved wife of Mr. P. Nadarajah; daughter of the late Sivasambu and Nagasowpackiam of Sandilipay; daughter-in-law of Ponnampalam and Sellamma; loving mother of Harindran (UK), Darshidaran (Dubai), Nihaldaran (UK), Sharmina (New Zealand) and Jamuna (UK); mother-in-law of Rahini, Subathira, Lingeswary, Sivashanmuganath-

han and Jeyakumar; grandmother of Sanjiv, Aneesha, Theevia, Satheesan, Abama, Shivani, Shivagar, Darshan and Keeran; sister of Thirugnanaselvam, Mrs. Rajeswary Gunaratnam, Mrs. Parameswary Thiagarajah, Mrs. Vigneswary Kanagarajah and late Kulasabanathan; sister-in-law of Mrs. Thangamuttu Nagalingham and late Mrs. Valliammai Seenivasagam (Malaysia) passed away on 17th September 2004. The funeral rites were performed at her residence at 64 Temple Road, Kokuvil and the cremation took place at the Kokuvil Hindu crematorium.

The members of the family wish to thank all friends and relatives who attended the funeral and send messages of sympathy. - 65 Beaminster Gardens, Ilford, Essex IG6 2BW. Tel: 020 8550 9972

OBITUARIES



Sivayogamalar - Mrs Ratnam, Uduvil. With deep sadness, the family announces the passing away on September 17th 2004 of **Mrs Ratnam Sivayogamalar**, beloved wife of the late Ratnam (Retired P.W.D. Overseer); sister of Patkunamalar (Ma-

Third Year Remembrance



In loving memory of **Mr. S.**

Sivagnanasekeram on the third anniversary of his passing away on 4th October 2001.

Sadly missed and lovingly remembered by his ever loving wife Gnanadevi, sons Ranjan, Mohan and daughter-in-law Pavithra. You have never left our hearts and our thoughts as we remember you in our daily life. We will treasure your love, wisdom and beautiful memory forever.

- **Mrs Sekeram, Ranjan, Mohan and Pavithra**

Land for Quick Sale

Just over 3 Larchams prime land with existing old building, available in Nallur, Jaffna. Excellent location.

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Reply to E 91, c/o Tamil Times.

ABOUT PEOPLE AND EVENTS IN MEMORIAMs



Mr PONNUDURAI NARENDRANATHAN, most dearly beloved and adoring husband of Gnanambal; dearest loving and proud Appa to your children, Dr Thrinayani Jegathambal, Prof. Mrs Sowmya Wijayambal, Sobhana Meenambal, Dr Mrs Priyadarsani Brahathambal, Adhithya Thrilochanan, Mrs Vasutharini Girijambal, Agasthya Ponnambalam and Ambika Dhakshayani; father-in-law of Dr P Arulampalam, T Ilangovan and R Srikanthan and Dr Meera Narendranathan; darling dearest Thaththa to your grandchildren, Abhirami Janani Raveendran, Amarnath Thirumadhavan Raveendran, Nirmala Arulampalam, Janaki Saruhasini Srikanthan, Janarthanagan Ragavan Ilangovan, Dhivya Saraswathy Ilangovan, and Divani Kruthika Narendranathan.

Dear Appa, in our mind ... a constant thought; in our heart ... a silent sorrow; but always remembered with love and pride. Ever present, ever missed, ever loved, especially on this the tenth anniversary of your passing away on the 24 September 1994. You are greatly missed but never forgotten; always in the thoughts of your family and friends. God Bless.

(Address: 53 Crossways, South Croydon, Surrey, CR2 8JQ)

Thaththa

Thaththa we wish you were here today,
For there are many things we wish to say,
Where did the time go? Ten years it's been,
Oh how it felt like your time here went by so fast.

Although some of us have not met you,
And although some of us do not remember you,
We can tell what kind of man you were,
For you left an everlasting impression
on a vast amount of people's lives.

Giving us joy, care and most importantly love,
You definitely made a place in all of our hearts.
Oh Thaththa how we miss you so much
We will always keep thinking of you,

And will love you more and more each day!

By Janani & Amarnath

(on behalf of all the grand children)

FORTHCOMINGS EVENTS

Nov. 1. All Saints Day

2. All Souls Day

5. Iypasi Velli (3)

8. Krishna Eekathasi

10. Pirathosam

11. Deepavali

12. Amavasai; Skanthasha-

shi starts; Keethara Gowri

ends; Iypasi Velli (4)

15. Sathurthi; Feast of St.

Albert the Great

17. Shashti; Soorasamkaram

18. Thirukkalyanam

21. Feast of the Blessed
Virgin Mary

22. Sukkla Eekathasi;

Kaarthigai Somavaram (1)

24. Pirathosam; St. Arumuga

Nawalar Guru Pooja

26. Full Moon; Karthigai;

Sarvalaya Deepam

27. Vinayaga Viratham

Starts

29. Kaarthigai Somavaram (2)

30. Sankadakara Sathurthi;

Feast of St. Andrew

Medical Institute Of Tamils (MIOT)

Fund raising evening of Classical Music and Dance

MIOT is organising a fund raising event (South Indian Classical Music and Dance) on **Saturday, November 6th 2004 starting at 6.30pm.**

This will be held at **Harrow Arts Centre, Uxbridge Road, Hatch End, Middlesex, HA5 4EA** performed by Senior Artists from London.

Programme

□ **Music Orchestra** by Sri Gnanasundaram (Violin), Sri P Gnanavaradhan (Venu), Srimathi Malini Thanabalingam (Veena), Sri Karaikudy Krishnamurthi (Mridangam), Sri Bangalore Prakash (Gadam)

□ **Bharathanatyam** by Srimathi Indumathi Srikumar with Sri Aravindhakshan (Vocal & Nattuvangam)

The money raised through this programme would be sent for developing educational needs in Vanni and for the Annai Illam project, a centre of excellence in counselling the war victims (PTSD - Post Traumatic Stress Disorder) at 87, Kanahambihaikkulam, Kilino-chchi near A9. MIOT has been supporting this project since its inception i.e., for the past 06

years.

We want to develop Annai Illam as a rehabilitation centre, which would be in a position to train the war victims, to be able to earn a living for themselves and lead an independent life.

The health care professionals in UK founded MIOT in 1988 and have been supporting the health care projects in Tamil homeland; taking up human rights issues with various organisations involved with human rights and supported an orphanage in Batticaloa.

Research project: MIO-T's latest venture is a joint research project with Department of community medicine, Jaffna Medical College.

This project aims to study the prevalence of diabetes among people aged 25+ and suggest methods of prevention, control and management of this condition which remains undiagnosed in mainly 50% of the cases.

Research in Primary care

There are 2 pilot projects (one in Main street, Jaffna & another in Chav-akachcheri) to provide free primary care consultation (with facilities to refer to secondary care, if need arises) is being worked out and hope to be functional by January 2005. It is hoped

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that patients who cannot afford would benefit. If this pilot project succeeds the model would be implemented in several villages where there is an urgent need for basic primary care.

MIOT is working in close association with the Centre for Health Care (CHC), Kilinochchi in education and training of AMP/RMP and other related paramedical personnel.

In 2004, MIOT has helped to fund the shortcoming in funding of staff at Jaffna medical school. Over £2500 have been donated to the Pathology department to meet the basic needs. MIOT donated £22000 for the purchase of motorised autorickshaws to the para-

lysed war victims in Vanni. £10000 for the learning centre in Kilinochchi. The learning centre will continue to train RMPs, AMPs and related health professionals.

We have appointed a coordinator in Jaffna to coordinate the MIOT's activities with the medical institutions in the North & East. This would enable those interested to help in the field of medical needs (equipment, teaching, training, etc..) to coordinate via MIOT with the medical school and make the most use of their visits to North East in order our people would benefit.

Dr P Kukathasan
Overseas Secretary

Vocal Arangetram of Selvi Pairaviy Rajendran

Some years ago, one might have been concerned in regard to the position and future of Karnatic classical music in Britain. But the work of Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan's UK centre – the largest Indian cultural centre outside India, has ensured the position of the Indian performing arts in Britain as central to our mainstream traditions.

None could exemplify this better than Selvi Pairaviy Rajendran who, at age 14, gave us her South Indian classical



music debut at the Beck Theatre on Saturday July 24. She is one of the foremost vocal – and Vina – students of Smt. Sivasakti Sivan-esan, Bhavan's Resident Karnatic Music Teacher. It is indeed the devoted and tireless work of our Sivasakthi over many years that has played so vital a part in securing Karnatic music's place in our British Asian heritage.

Pairaviy's programme was beautifully introduced by her 9 year old sister, Shargary, who indeed spoke of Karnatic Music "in our adopted country". The compere for the evening was Sitalakshmi Nandakumara, whose thoughtful and informative introductions to each piece added to one's enjoyment.

Pairaviy began her performance with the Bhairavi varnam Viriboni which gave her the opportunity of demonstrating her range – especially in the lower register, mandrasthayi. These followed Vandisuvudadyali, with words by Purandaradasa, melody in Nata raga. Herein, Pairaviy established for us one of her really strong

fortes, Manodhama (Improvisation). She revealed her utter confidence in kal-pana svaram, and her rhythmic dialogue with Bhavan's Resident Teacher of Mridangam, Sri M. Balachander, was a joy to witness.

There ensued Dikshitar's Sarasvatimanohari, a short piece in medium tempo Adi tala which, despite the Raga signature (ankitam) in its title, was given as in Kannada raga. Pairaviy's good prefatory alapana showed her great purity of tone.

Again, her svaras were excellent. These followed one of Tyagaraja's magnificent kritis, Dudugugala, in Gaula raga interestingly, interposed 11/2 lines of the pallavi in between each svara / sahitya rendering of the many charanams.

Her main piece in the first part of her programme was Papanasam Sivan's Saravanabhava in Madhyamavati raga, adi tala. It was pleasant to hear this raga in a principal position in a concert. Usually it forms the mangalam at the end! Pairaviy's alapana was beautiful and melodious, and her violin accompanist Sri Baluraghuraman rose so creatively to the challenge Pairaviy posed. The slow tempo of the piece opened the way for Pairaviy to give us wonderfully extensive passages of slow kalpana svaram, followed by fast passages of progressively shorter length in gopucchha - sequence. These followed a delightful Tani solo percussion passages by all three rhythmic accompanists. Apart from Sri Balachander, we welcomed our old friend Sri Bangalore Prakash on Ghatam, and one

of Sri Balachander's most outstanding sishyas, Pirashanna, on Morsing. In "Balanna's" second mridangam – solo passage so syncopated and complex was his playing that it seemed as if two mridangams were at work! The eye contact of all three with Pairaviy – as throughout the concert – was a joy to witness.

After the Chandrakauns piece that followed the interval, Pairaviy sang her other main piece, the Ragam, Tanam Pallavi in the 59th Melakarta Dharmavati. In the Alapana she showed a wonderfully lyrical inventive power in all three sthayis and toward its close, was not afraid to remind us of Dharmavati's most famous Janya raga, Ranjani. Again, Sri Baluraghuraman gave a superb violin alapana.

Pairaviy's maturity of voice was shown especially well in her superb tanam, wonderful pulsating invention adorned with brilliant brigas. She showed once again that she was not in a hurry, one of the hallmarks of her youthful talent.

The Pallavi in Khanda tripudra was set by T.V. Gopalakrishnan. Beautifully leisured melodic variations here gave full scope also to Sri Balu and the three percussionists. Svaram was again a delight, and the manner in which she progressively shortened her phrases in a nine beat rhythm to 4 1/2 then 2 1/4 beats showed her mathematical talent!

The Chief Guest of the evening was Padma Vibhushan The Hon. Dr. M. Balamuralikrishna, and it was a privilege to have him among us. He then spoke warmly and with humour of Selvi Pairaviy's achievement and talent. Dr. Saraswati Sundaresan also spoke.

Pairaviy resumed her programme with a piece in Latangi, the 63rd Melakarta, by the late lamented N. Veeramani Iyer, Guru of our dear Sivasakthi. This was followed by Varuvay, Varuvay, a Ragamalika to the libretto of Subramanya Bharati. An unusual piece – a Kavadihindu or Pilgrims' song – then followed. It was in Chenchurutti, and composed by Periyasami Turan, and was so lively, and a further change for some spirited percussion!

Your reviewer then spoke, emphasizing Pairaviy's inventive skills.

Pairaviy then addressed the audience, seemingly not the least fatigued after so wonderful a performance, and thanked those concerned – particularly her Guru, Smt. Sivasakti Sivanesan, beautifully. She concluded her Arangetram with Tillana by the Chief Guest, Dr. Balamuralikrishna, followed by Tiruppukal and Mangalam.

Truly this was an evening not easily forgotten, and one will watch Selvi Pairaviy Rajendran's future with eager interest.

- John R. Marr

ARRTHI : A Star is Born

Those who were fortunate enough to be present on the occasion of the Carnatic Vocal Arangetram of Selvi Arrthi, daughter of Dr. & Mrs Pangayatse Ivan, at the Ashcroft Theatre, Croydon, on the 18th September 2004, will remember this splendid concert for a long time to come. Arrthi has a fine melodious voice. This has been honed by years of hard work and dedication under the tutelage of her Guru Ms. Yasotha Mithiradaas and it was evident throughout the three-hour concert.



the highlights of Arrthi's performance. From Varnam to Mangalam, there was never a dull moment and it was hard to believe that this was her first concert.

Arrthi received wonderful support from Sivaganesh (Violin), Balachandar (Mridangam), Prakash (Ghatam), Pirasanna (Morsing) and Lavaniya (Thampura).

Mrs Gibbs, Headmistress James Allen's Girls' School, impressed by Arrthi's inspired performance, recalled her many-sided talents including drama, elocution, etc.

Prof. T.V.Gopalakrishnan, the renowned musician from Tamilnadu, was the Chief Guest of the evening. He complimented Arrthi on her excellent debut and praised her for giving lie to the belief that one should have been born on the banks of River Cauvery to master Carnatic music. Even Thames water can nourish a natural talent!

Whether Arrthi chooses to become a professional musician or has a different career keeping music as a hobby, we can look forward to years and years of soul-stirring music from this gifted artiste.

Dr. Ram (Crawley)

The concert got off to a flying start with the Varnam 'Viriboni' in Bhairavi raga and this was followed by compositions by Muthaiya Bhagavathar and Saint Thyagarajah. After the intermission came the main piece of the concert 'Ragam Thanam Pallavi' in Kalyani raga. Arrthi also sang popular lyrics like 'Ramanukku' (Arunachala Kavirayar) and 'Chinan Chiru Kizhiye' (Bharathiyar)

Arrthi's rich and trained voice brought the emotive content of the alapanas. The classical purity of the ragas, clarity of the lyrics, the grace and elegance with which she delivered the neravals and sangathis at the right speed - these were

My Tribute to Mr. Henry Balasingham



My memory runs as far back as 1967, when I was a young undergraduate of the University of Ceylon and had joined the Ceylon Public Service, where I met Mr. Henry Balasingham in the Labour Department. He was the Head of a Branch of the EPF Division of the Labour Department at that time. He was

like a father to me, giving his fullest support for my higher studies. He helped me a lot to pursue my University education and provided all the protection I required as a young man from the village. He taught me the required behaviour of a Public Servant and the basics to lay a good foundation for me in my career.

He was a very kind person loved by every one. He always had an innocent and pleasing smile and was helpful to every one with whom he associated. Mr. Balasingham did not show any difference what so ever in his dealings with us and there was no question of our looking upon him as a Tamil alien and his treating us as Sinhalese aliens. There was a strong binding relationship between us.

We lost touch with each other for 30 years and with great difficulty I located him last year. If not for the prevailing unfortunate conflicts, we would not have been separated in this manner. When

MUTUAL HARMONY AT DUSK

In a quiet corner with memories there
They relax at leisure and reminisce -
So content that they, no joys did miss
In life together, with the love they share.
They speak but with eyes and smiles,
Their hearts always entwined in love
Sitting in a flowers and fruits grove.
Their love is treat, their love is sweet
Tho' they've plodded miles and miles.

RECOLLECTIONS

You came but once in our life,
and left too soon
by the back door, just like the mid-
winter's sun.
While you stayed, you were jolly
and jelly-like
bubbly, bouncy with care-free learning
and fun;
were pregnant with prolific thoughts
and grace,
frothing, broiling in creativity, honesty,
equality
and generosity, with ethereal ideas
and ideals -
immune to worries, pains, diffidence
or anxiety;
shed vainglory-lights on vague,
exciting futures
charmed with sweet sound of
hearts' entangling
explored the world on wild hobby-
horse dreams
laughing, running, dancing, playing,
frolicking..
And suddenly left us stunned stone -
like, vexed.
Kids! Here one second; in memory -
banks, next.
- Professor Kopan Mahadeva

we met, I can remember how long it took for him to recognise me and how delighted he was to see me again. He could not speak at that time, but indicated his warm feelings and joy meeting and listening to my career achievements. Possibly, he would have felt that he, himself had contributed a lot towards these achievements during the earlier days. I very gratefully endorse it. I was moved to tears to see him in his sick bed. He will be remembered for ever.

Mr. Balasingham has left three precious children to follow his footsteps
As a Buddhist I wish that he attains Nirvana.

S.Wirithamulla
Secretary, Ministry of Trade,
Commerce and Consumer Affairs.

Bharatha Natya Arangetram of Smruti Sinmyee, gracefully in Vazhuvoor style

I am happy to write this appreciation of the Bharatha Natya Arangetram of Smruti Sinmyee of Nadana Bramam Vazhuvoor School of Dance, which took place at the Sutton Secombe Theatre on 4th September 2004.

The performance began with the invocatory song on Ganesha and was followed by Thodaya Mangalam - Sri Gnana Sabesar Sthothram, the traditional introduction of a Vazhuvoor Dance recital, and it was rendered with reverence. Smruti Sinmyee no doubt was the centre of attraction. Everybody's eyes were focussed on her as she appeared, smart and bright. It will not be an exaggeration to say that she kept her poise and high standard she had been trained to perform, right from the onset.

Bharatha Natyam being a devotional dance form, has elements of worship in its presentation and the role of music cannot be over emphasized. The accompanying artists - vocalist 'Kalaimamani' 'Kural Isai Chelvar' Sri Manickam Yogeswaran, the violinist 'Sangeetha Vidwan' Sri L. Kothandapani and Flutist 'Venuganamani' Sri P. Gnanavarathan, all senior and experienced in their respective fields, beautifully orchestrated the music to support the dancer. Young Selvan Kirthi played the Mridangam skilfully and with a good sense of maturity. Ahalya Pushparaja was a well-expressed compere.

In the first half of the program, Smruti Sinmyee presented Ganesha Pancharathnam in the Raga Veena Vadhini, Alarippu in the Raga Nattai, Jatheeswaram in the Raga Kalyani and Murugan Kavuthuvam in the Raga Shanmugapriya. While Alarippu and Jatheeswaram are traditional crisp items of Bharatha Natyam, the Pancharathnam and the Kavuthuvam are of religious themes.



An intricate piece of work that Smruti Sinmyee was to perform that evening was the celebrated Dhanyasi Raga Varnam. The Varnam is usually referred to as a test for the dancer since this item combines pure dance and expression, and requires presentation of all aspects of the Bharatha Nataya art form. By far, it is also the longest single item in which Nattuvangam plays a key role. The suppleness, which Smruti Sinmyee was able to impart to her movements is

an ability acquired through training. Smruti Sinmyee's Varnam was thus a beautiful centrepiece. The beauty of Bharatha Natyam and the Vazhuvoor Style were well brought out. The non-aggressive recitation of the rhythmic syllables, the avoidance of any stridency and gently yet most effective Natuvangam gave finesse to the whole item. Young Kirthi played the Mridangam with feel for tone.

In the second half of the programme, three padams, a special Navarasam presentation and Thillana in Desh Ragam before concluding with the Mangalam. It was evident that Smruti Sinmyee did enjoy herself very much when she danced the Padam, 'Nan Oru Villai Atu Pommaiya' in the Raga Navarasa Kannada - it was done sprightly and was most enjoyable to watch. The Sloka and Padam - 'Ramanama Smaranam' and 'Enakunarul Illaiyah' in the Raga Vijeyanagari referred to the episode in the Ramayana - Sita's abduction. The presentation required depth of feeling and Smruti Sinmyee rose up to it. Navarasam, depicting the nine moods was an artistic presentation and she did it very imaginatively indeed. The synopsis of the Varnam, Padam and the Sanchara Bhavam that Smruti brought out were very beautiful.

The practice of striking picturesque poses was really started by Vazhuvoor Ramiapillai after he studied the sculptures in the Thanjavur and Chidambaram Temples. Such poses were incorporated in Smruti Sinmyee's Thillana. The Mangalam brought to a close an enjoyable evening and a beautiful programme. In the course of the evening, Smruti Sinmyee earned the encouragement and blessings of the Chief Guest Smt. Pushkala Gopal, the artistic director of Mudralaya, and the commendation from her school.

Smruti Sinmyee's performance was based on the Vazhuvoor Style, the hallmark described as "fluid grace and a deep yet subtle feel for abhinaya". It would suffice to say that Smruti Sinmyee combined the essential components of Bharatha Natyam - expression, melody and rhythm, and her performance was graceful and a joy to watch. The auspiciousness of the occasion, comparatively simple stage setting, classical music, Varnam and Padams and orthodox Bharatha Natyam, all these brought to mind Girija's own successful Arangetram in Jaffna, Sri Lanka. Here it is appropriate to mention that Girija's love and devotion to the Vazhuvoor style had its beginning in the intensive training she had from her guru in Jaffna Smt. Thiripurasundari Yoganantham, a premier disciple of the late Natya Kalakesari Vazhuvoor B. Ramiapillai.

I would be truly reflecting the response of the audience of friends, relatives and art lovers when I say that they were unanimous in their heartiest congratulations to the entire family of Mr and Mrs Varothayasingam for their presentation of a beautiful programme of Bharatha Natyam in which gifted members of the family harmonised. The quiet person behind the scenes, Smruti Sinmyee's father, whose encouragement and support, which made the programme possible, deserves special mention.

My Prayers that the family will develop further the artistic gift they have been blessed with.

- Viji Cumarasamy



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-SOUTH INDIA
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SriLankan Airlines present Silver Jubilee Award to Taprobane Travel

SriLankan Airlines and its main agent in Britain, Taprobane Travel celebrated their quarter century association with a grand party at the Hyatt Regency Church Hotel. The party, hosted by SriLankan Airlines, was in honour of Taprobane Travel and a tribute to its Chairman and Managing Director Mr Gamit Ameresekere and Director Mrs Kamini Rodrigo.

The champagne party was one in the series of events and promotions launched by SriLankan Airlines to celebrate its 25th anniversary and the evening took off with its Manager for UK, Ireland and



(From L to R) Mr. Gamit Ameresekere, Managing Director, Taprobane Travel and from SriLankan Airlines, Mr. Manoj Gunawardena, Manager UK, Ireland & Scandinavia, Mr. Jeremy Soertsz, Sales & Marketing Manager, UK and Ms. Marie Rix, Sales Manager.

Scandinavia, Mr Manoj Gunawardena, while detailing what really took place

during the hard years, complimented Mr. Gamit Ameresekere for playing his part with honour and placing his country before every thing else in all his dealings. He paid tribute to all professional travel staff that represented Taprobane Travel over the years, which gave the agency its reputation for professionalism. He extended his special thanks to Mrs Kamini Rodrigo and congratulated Mr. Gamit Ameresekere for piloting the splendid group of staff over the years.

Mr. Gamit Ameresekere, replying, thanked SriLankan Airlines for their thoughtful gesture in hosting the Silver Jubilee party to celebrate the 25-year partnership. He mentioned with pride that during this period, his company had flown 65,000 of their clients on SriLankan Airlines and contributed £ 27 million in revenue. He thanked the clients for their support, staff of SriLankan Airlines and his own staff for their contribution towards what had been achieved.

Australian Newsletter

Melbourne is a city with a population approaching 4 million, but in the world of insects, it is something quite different. Research shows Melbourne is a giant, 100-kilometre-wide super-colony of invading Argentine ants. Listed as one of the world's worst 100 biological invaders, billions of these tiny black creatures have, over the past half a century, made almost every part of the city's urban sprawl their home. At just three millimetres long, the Argentine ant is a well-known and apparently harmless household pest, although it may, through sheer weight of numbers, threaten native plants and animals. The ant was first found in Melbourne's suburban town of Balwyn in 1939, possibly the result of just a single stowaway queen and a few loyal worker ants.

Australia is one of the most sparsely populated democracies in the world, where there are 13 million voters spread over 8 million sq km and the electorates range from the 28 sq km Wentworth in suburban Sydney to the 2.1 million sq km Kalgoorlie, which takes up most of Western Australia and covers an area the size of western Europe. Federal elec-

tions were held on the 9th of October to elect 150 seat House of Representatives and half the places in the 76-member Senate. International issues have been low on the agenda in a campaign fought predominantly on domestic issues and the six-week long campaigning has been unusually vigorous. Just before the elections were announced Prime Minister Howard seemed assured a place in the pantheon of Liberal leaders occupied only by Sir Robert Menzies with just the formality of a fourth straight victory to be accomplished. Tampa – the Norwegian ship that came to symbolise Howard's stand against asylum seekers, Iraq War and Australia-US Free Trade Agreement shed an element of negativity on Howard government during the campaign. Yet, Prime Minister Howard was leading in opinion polls just days before polling. After three defeats in a row, Labour was utterly keen for government and the electorate also seemed prepared to contemplate a change. But it would appear that Labor struggled to provide a sustained case in its favour and the opinion polls were not showing Labour in good light. Indeed, Labor failed to reconstruct policy around the economic prosperity created by its reforms of the 1980s. It tacked down the middle when a better option was to sus-

tain an aggressive economic reform agenda while using its social policy credentials to provide an innovative and generous safety net. Even losing a third election can be justified if the government is cohesive and the economy strong. But failing at the fourth attempt and beyond is poor form, indicating an inability to shape the policy agenda and to instil confidence by way of sustained political dominance of the government.

Australia began the search for protection even though it faces no current threat from long-range weapons and has recently joined a long list of countries - including South Korea, Japan, Britain and Israel - which are currently working with US on missile defence shield. Canberra and Washington declared sharing "deep concerns about the proliferation of ballistic missiles capable of carrying weapons of mass destruction". The programme that will cost about \$50bn over the next five years, is in its early stages and eventually will have the ability to track and destroy incoming ballistic missiles through advanced radar systems. Opponents to the project in Australia argue that the development of a defensive shield could have a destabilising effect on the country's Asia-Pacific neighbours.

- Sivasupramaniam Sitsabesan

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