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UNP leader Ranil Wickremasinghe and Prime Minister Mahinda Rajapakse shake hands after nominations – Election Commissioner Dayananda Dissanayake in the centre; (below) the rival candidates seemingly seeking divine assistance



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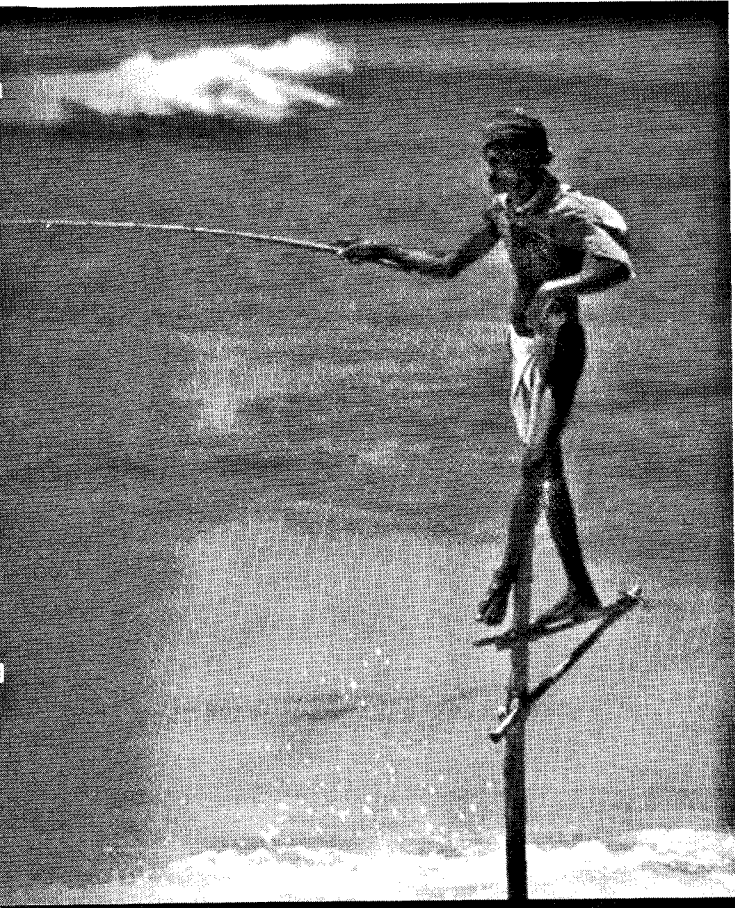
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"I do not agree with a word of what you say, but I'll defend to the death your right to say it"

- Voltaire



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Political Killings and Human Rights

While the rest of the country is experiencing a carnival of campaigning for the island's most powerful position, the executive presidency, in the run up to the November 17 poll, the orgy of politically motivated violence continues unabated in the Northeast. For the most part while the east has been the main theatre of political killings ever since the former LTTE commander, Karuna, defected from the LTTE in April 2004, the northerly move of this ugly phenomenon has now raised its head quite menacingly.

The brutal murders of two College principals - Principal of Kopay Christian College Mr Nadarajah Sivakadatcham, and the Principal of Jaffna Central College Mr Kanapathy Rajadurai - within twenty-four hours of each other on 11 and 12 of this month are as cowardly as they are reprehensible. Until their lives were so callously snuffed out, they were leading educationists, well respected members of the civil society they served, and much valued assets of the community as a whole. Besides being pure and simple criminal acts, such killing of unarmed civilians and non-combatants would have constituted gross violations of human rights, including the most fundamental of all rights, the right to life, even in situations of conflict and war. But what is most appalling and unacceptable is that these murders and other politically motivated killings have occurred at a time when it is claimed that there is a ceasefire in force. The sheer fear and the feeling of mental suffocation that grip the civilian population in these areas as a direct consequence of such killings and other intimidatory acts of violence are quite manifest.

It is a matter of record that Tamil-on-Tamil internecine violence has claimed more number of politically motivated killings during this period of ceasefire than during the immediately preceding period of war.

No peace process or a ceasefire can survive if parties constantly and frequently have recourse to the language of violence and killings. Peace talks have been stalled since April 2003. The ceasefire is now teetering on the brink. It is in this background the recent visit to Sri Lanka of Ian Martin, the advisor on human rights to the parties to the peace process, and his expressed views become relevant and timely.

During the last round of talks held in March 2003, the Government and the LTTE committed themselves to agree on a declaration of human rights and humanitarian principles, and Mr Martin was entrusted with drawing up such a draft declaration including a human rights roadmap. As the peace talks were suspended with the LTTE pulling out in April 2003, Mr. Martin's task also presumably remained suspended. Now there appears to be a new awareness among most stakeholders, including the international community, that a commitment by the parties to a human rights accord containing a declaration of human rights and humanitarian principles and making provision for an effective international mechanism for monitoring should underpin the Ceasefire Agreement if the ceasefire is to be sustained and the peace process is to be taken forward.

Commenting on the current state of affairs, Ian Martin said, "I think this is proving to be a situation where human rights violations are a serious threat to the peace process because they undermine the confidence of many different sectors of the population in the process of moving forward. Anybody who wants to see the process move forward must want to see human rights violations checked."

It appears that the lesson has now been learnt that progress on the protection of human rights is a sine qua non for any progress on the peace process. In Ian Martin's words, "I think it would have been positive if further commitments on human rights could have been agreed on even outside overall progress on the peace process... I think any progress in human rights is a positive factor in an overall process."

It is the expressed view of Ian Martin that some international investigative capacity, the neutrality of which might be accepted by both parties, might be useful if it could then command the co-operation of both parties in carrying out investigations to establish the responsibility for particular violations of human rights including political killings. He said that he would be presenting proposals to the government and LTTE on how they might proceed on the deteriorating human rights situation. One of these suggestions might include a plan for an international monitoring body.

A roadmap on human rights containing a declaration by all concerned parties on all fundamental human rights and humanitarian principles with provision for an independent international monitoring mechanism with adequate and effective investigative capacity is an absolutely essential and urgent necessity in the present deteriorating human rights context and if the peace process is to make any meaningful progress.

Killing of College Principals condemned

Oct 13 - Two principals of two leading Colleges in Jaffna in northern Sri Lanka were assassinated within 24 hours.

The principal of Kopay Christian College, Mr. Nadarajah Sivakadacham, was shot and killed Tuesday (11) night by unidentified gunmen at his residence in front of his family in Kopay. It is reported that the assassins came in a motor cycle to his residence, called him by his name, before shooting him on the spot.

Military sources said the 59-year-old principal N Sivakadasam was at his home in Kopay with his eight-year old child and wife when two gunmen who came in a motor cycle stormed into his house and shot him at close range. The principal fell dead on the spot.

Indications are that the fifty-nine-years old school principal's assassins might have belonged to the Eelam Peoples Democratic Party (EPDP) or the State's intelligence apparatus.

The fifty-nine-years old school principal was a known social activist and the Kopay Division organiser of Tamil Resurgence Task Force sponsored and supported by the LTTE. Mr. Sivakadacham organised the Tamil Women Resurgence Day events that were held in Kopay Monday (10). Two gunmen who approached Mr. Sivakadacham's residence in Kopay North shot at him and fled from the scene in a motorbike.

In the second incident, Jaffna Central College Principal, 53 year-old K. Mr. Kanapathy Rajadurai was shot and killed reportedly by gunmen belonging to the LTTE near the main entrance of the Veerasingham Hall around 3:45 pm on 12 October. He was admitted to the Jaffna Teaching Hospital in a serious condition and did not respond to the treatment and succumbed to his injuries.

Mr. Rajadurai had gone to the Veerasingham Hall on a motorcycle to attend a Cultural Show organized by the Jaffna District Secretariat. Soon after, he got off from his motor-cycle, gunmen fired three shots at him at point blank range in broad daylight. Eyewitnesses reportedly said there were at least four gunmen at the scene, but only one fired

the shots.

It has been reported that some time back, Mr Rajadurai had received threatening letters from the 2Eellalan force" accusing him of collaborating with LTTE opponents. Mr. Rajadorai had reportedly then visited Kilinochchi and explained to Tiger leaders that he was not attached to any political party and that he had only sought and secured financial assistance from the Government in which the EPDP leader was a Minister only for the purpose of carrying out improvements to the College. A TamilNet report described Mr Rajadurai as "a strong supporter of the EPDP".

The murder of the two well-respected leading educationists has appalled and shocked the Tamil community in Jaffna. These barbaric and ruthless assassinations of the Tamil scholars is said to have sent a wave of emotions amongst the mass of the people and the student population.

Hundreds of students of Kopay Christian College blocked the Jaffna-Point Pedro roads and Kaithady-Urumpirai road at Kopay junction from 12 noon Wednesday (12) and sat in protest condemning the killing of their principal Mr. Nadarajah Sivakadacham. Children and students sat down at the Kopay junction, "cross-cutting" Jaffna-Point Pedro Road and Kaithady-Urumpiray Road. The traffic has grinded to a halt. "We demand urgent investigation into our principal's murder and the perpetrators of the crime identified. Until then we will continue our protest," a students' spokesperson said.

TamilNet reported that the LTTE has posthumously conferred the title "Tamil national patriot" on the slain Mr. Nadarajah Sivakadacham, Principal of Kopay Christian College. The LTTE statement said, "We strongly condemn the murder of Mr Nadarajah Sivakadacham, principal of Kopay Christian College and president of Kopay Region Resurgence Consortium by Intelligence operatives of the Sri Lanka Army (SLA) and traitors from Eelam People Democratic Party (EPDP). Mr Sivakadacham rendered invaluable service towards education of Tamil

youths and for the social welfare of his community in Kopay. Above all, he worked until his death for the liberation of his people.

"We wish to convey our sympathies to his grieving wife, children and relatives who are devastated by his death. By murdering Mr Sivakadacham, enemies are seeking to dampen our peoples thirst for freedom. The historical truth, however, dictates that the incident will further ignite the fire of national liberation in our people."

Bishop condemns killings: The recent killings of two principals of two leading schools in Jaffna has shocked and saddened all peace-loving Sri Lankans, Bishop of Colombo Rt Rev Duleep de Chickera said.

In a statement issued following the two murders, the Bishop said, "These are the latest in a series of senseless and seemingly tit-for-tat political killings of civilians and are undoubtedly a clear violation of Article 2.1 of the Ceasefire Agreement. However, the international monitoring mission does not seem to consider it part of their mandate to probe such incidents. The Government simply cannot continue to avoid responsibility to prevent these killings, since these are Sri Lankans being destroyed by Sri Lankans. In the prevailing circumstances an independent Commission of Inquiry comprising competent and reputed persons - Sri Lankan, Asian and even other international persons - should be appointed to probe and identify groups behind the killings and to make proposals to end this senseless cycle of violence. It is only such a broad-based panel that can withstand local pressures and intimidations.

These killings are humiliating and destroying the Tamil community and it is imperative for Tamil political and civil society leaders and indeed all Sri Lankan civil society leaders, particularly the religious, to condemn and ensure that this self-destruction of the community is halted.

It is also most timely and appropriate for the two main Presidential candidates to publicly denounce these killings and to declare their stance. We cannot wait till the election is over. This stance will no doubt indicate the leadership they will offer after the election."

Peace Council condemns: The National Peace Council (NPC) said it is shocked and saddened by the continued killings in the North and East. "The lat-

(continued on next page)

Rights Commission office ransacked

An unidentified group broke-in into the five storey building of the Human Rights Commission of Sri Lanka office in Kynsey Road, Colombo, early on 12 October and ransacked the premises. It is suspected that the intruders had entered the building from its top floor and ransacked all four floors where files and documents were stored.

The documents and files had been thrown about and the intruders had poured kerosene on the documents all over the place. Police also found several match sticks scattered around the place. Mysteriously, the security personnel manning the premises had not been aware of the incident.

Sri Lanka's Human Rights Commission Chairperson Radhika Coomaraswamy the press that the intention of whoever behind yesterday's incident might have been to threaten the HRC. She said the HRC believed the motive for the act could have been to suspend an ongoing investigation of a case. Ms. Coomaraswamy in a statement yesterday said the HRC would continue to function to the best of its ability despite the disruption.

Cinnamon Gardens police Crimes Sub Inspector P A D S Addaragama said IGP Chandra Fernando had ordered a full probe into the incident and fingerprints of the intruders had already been taken by analysts.

Independent inquiry urged: In a joint press release, the well renowned international human rights organisations, Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch, have called for an independent inquiry into the attack on the offices of the National Human Rights Commission of Sri Lanka. The press release issued on 13 October states:

An independent investigation should be immediately launched into the attack on the National Human Rights Commission's (NHRC) headquarters in Colombo during the early morning hours of October 12. The NHRC's offices were ransacked, files were destroyed and newspapers were set on fire. Kerosene was poured throughout the offices. Although the identity of the attackers is not yet clear, the attack represents a serious threat to the work of the NHRC.

"This appears to be an attempt to intimidate the NHRC, which is the most important human rights institution in Sri

Lanka," said Natalie Hill, Deputy Program Director of Amnesty International's Asia-Pacific Program. "Such intimidation must not be permitted. The authorities must take all necessary steps to ensure that the NHRC is able to carry out its work independently and in safety."

While the police have begun an investigation into the incident, the human rights organizations stressed that an independent inquiry is needed. As the NHRC is empowered to examine violations of rights by state actors, including the police, it is critical to appoint a neutral and competent body to investigate the intimidation and threat against the NHRC.

"Given the sensitive nature of the NHRC's investigations, which include alleged abuses by the police, it is necessary to undertake an independent inquiry into the attack and make the findings public," said Tejshree Thapa, South Asia researcher at Human Rights Watch.

Sri Lanka's NHRC was established in 1997 to independently investigate human rights abuses. It has recently been involved in documenting allegations of torture and extra-judicial killings by the police. The NHRC has publicly adopted a "zero tolerance" policy against police torture, and has established a special judge to examine the extrajudicial killings. The NHRC has also taken a very strong stand against the LTTE's recruitment of child soldiers.

PAFFREL concerned on voting in NE

Leading election watchdog PAFREL has said independent elections could not be conducted in the Tiger-controlled North and East, due to the LTTE controlling all the votes in these areas and the inability of the main candidates to campaign in these areas.

Chairman of the People's Action for Free and Fair Elections (PAFFREL) Mr. Kingsley Rodrigo said on 12 October that the votes of 400,000 people in the North and East would be decided by the LTTE. He said independent elections cannot be held in these areas because neither Ranil Wickremesinghe nor Mahinda Rajapakse could campaign in these areas. "This is the reality", said Mr. Rodrigo addressing the media at the first official PAFREL press conference after nominations were handed in for the Presidential Election. As parties would not be

(continued from page 4)

But ones have claimed the lives of two principals of schools, one of whom engaged in peace programmes organised by NPC in Jaffna. These killings of civilians in a time of ceasefire are abhorrent. Principals of schools constitute a priceless asset to their communities who should be protected, not done away with in this brutal manner.

The impact of these acts on the psyche of thousands of schoolchildren belonging to Kopai Christian College and Jaffna Central College can only scar them for life.

There have also been several other killings of civilians in the recent past, including those belonging to Tamil politi-

cal parties opposed to the LTTE and to a relief organisation affiliated to the LTTE. The NPC totally condemns these killings of civilians.

In addition the NPC condemns the ambush of a convoy of LTTE cadre in Batticaloa in which several were killed and injured. The NPC sees the continuing killings as tragic evidence of a reliance on a military mindset in which violence is the ultimate answer.

It was unfortunate that the 2002 Ceasefire Agreement did not include a specific human rights monitoring mechanism. In addition, efforts by the Human Rights Advisor to the Peace Process, Ian Martin to formulate a Human Rights Roadmap were not acted upon.

The continuing inability of the Government and LTTE to sit together at the negotiating table indicates a fatal lack of vision in problem solving through peaceful means. There is an urgent need for political engagement, and for the development of an effective grievance mechanism in which both parties can feel confidence in.

We urge the international community to continue to demonstrate an active interest in the peace process. We call on the government and LTTE with the assistance of the international community to establish a Human Rights monitoring mechanism that will provide broad-based institutional support to the present inadequate monitoring provisions of the Ceasefire Agreement." □

willing to post their respective representatives in the polling stations in the North and East, he said that rigging would go unchecked in the polling stations in those areas. "It happened last time. It will happen again" he said.

Mr. Rodrigo also said that of the 13.3 million eligible voters for this year's elections, 2.2 million voters would not be able to vote because of being employed overseas especially in the Middle East. He said the current election laws provided no mechanism for these people who were earning money for the country to vote at elections. "In other countries there are provisions for citizens abroad to vote either through postal votes, absentee voting or through voting in the respective embassies," he said. PAFFREL met UNP deputy leader Karu Jayasuriya and Ministers Anura Priyadarshana Yapa and Douglas Devananda to urge more legislative support to amend such shortcomings in the current elections system.

PAFFREL at present has monitors in 22 districts and 160 local government offices. On elections day it will have 22,000 monitors on the ground, two each for every polling booth plus 2,000 mobile observers.

At present 24 international observers from the Non Violent Peace Force are working with PAFFREL and have been deployed to various districts for pre election monitoring activities. This is the first time foreign observers are operating so early and on elections day about 100 members from the International Monitoring Mission would be in the country. Representatives will be from the US, UK, India, Canada, South Africa, Ghana, Burundi, Japan, Egypt, Holland and South Asia. A further 25 foreign observers are working with the Centre for Monitoring Election Violence (CMEV) and about 50 are to arrive from the European Union. Elections Commissioner Dayananda Dissanayake has also invited monitors from SAARC countries and for the first time, international observers will have permission to enter polling stations.

'Military and LTTE in 'subversive war'

October 15 - Sri Lanka's military and the Liberation Tigers are locked in a 'subversive war,' visiting Norwegian envoy Major Gen. (ret'd) Trond Furuhoide said calling on both sides to exercise restraint.

"This is subversive war [and] both parties are involved in this," Reuters quoted Maj. Gen. Furuhoide, the former head of the international truce monitors in Sri Lanka, as telling the Foreign Correspondents' Association.

"The parties, as they are involved in a subversive warfare, have to show self-discipline. We believe that peace talks is an alternative which is very useful," Furuhoide said. "If they use force, they have to be sure whether it is necessary to use force and the kind of consequences it could bear, he added. "It is alarming. All war is alarming. This is dangerous for the ceasefire and for the country. ... There is no military solution to this conflict, that's for sure."

"We have seen similar warfare going on Iraq, the transformation of war into something else," Furuhoide added. "What we see now, it's not only criminal acts, it's also acts of war."

Scores of LTTE members, Army intelligence officers, paramilitary cadres and civilians have died in a cycle of violence which escalated last year in the wake of the defection to the Army of a renegade LTTE commander, Karuna.

The LTTE says Sri Lankan military intelligence is deploying five paramilitary groups in a concerted campaign of violence against its members and supporters in the eastern province. On the other hand, LTTE has been blamed for the killing of scores of persons belonging to other non-LTTE Tamil groups and security service personnel.

Norway Special Envoy meets Thamichelvan

October 13 - Norwegian delegation led by former Head of Sri Lanka Monitoring Mission (SLMM) and Norwegian Special Representative, Maj. Gen. (ret.) Trond Furuhoide met with an LTTE delegation led by LTTE's Political Head, Mr. S. P. Thamichelvan, in LTTE Peace Secretariat in Kilinochchi Thursday (13). Discussions focussed on the deteriorating situation on the ground and the urgent need to reverse the trend by strengthening the implementation of the Cease Fire Agreement, a report on TamilNet said.

"We explained in detail the existing situation and the escalating incidents of violence, and killings in the NorthEast to the Norwegian representatives. The activities of paramilitaries have increased after we recalled our cadres from Sri Lanka Government controlled areas due to harassment and concerns of security. We stressed the need to arrest this deteriorating trend and strengthen the peace climate," Mr. Thamichelvan reportedly said speaking to reporters after the meeting.

"The Norwegian delegations advanced the view the importance of both sides, the Government of Sri Lanka and the Liberation Tigers meeting directly to resolve the urgent immediate issues. We responded that we are ready as directed by our National Leader to meet at any neutral venue for direct talks. Our position in this regard has not changed," Thamichelvan said.

When asked on the possibility of any talks starting prior to the Sri Lanka's Presidential elections, Thamichelvan said, that Norwegian Government is working hard to make this happen but since the decision depends on the views of two parties, only the Norwegians will have a better insight into this matter. "We told the Norwegian delegation that activities of paramilitaries working in Government controlled areas under the protection of Sri Lanka Armed forces are the main cause for the increase in violence. This is against the Cease Fire Agreement and needs to be addressed urgently to bring a climate of peace where the peace process can be advanced," Thamichelvan said.

23 percent increase in defence expenditure:

October 5 - Sri Lanka's Finance Minister Dr. Sarath Amunugama on Tuesday, 4 October, tabled the Appropriations Bill for the next year's budget of the Government, which has made provision for the allocation of 69 billion Rupees for defence expenditure. This is an increase of 13 billion rupees (23.2 percent) compared to defence allocation for 2005.

The significant increase in the next year's defence expenditure is the highlight of the UPFA budget which is to be tabled in parliament on 8 November, nine days ahead of the presidential poll fixed for November 17. Of the 69 billion rupees, about 61 billion rupees are allocated for the recurrent expenditure and

8.4 billion as capital expenditure.

The Provincial Councils and Local Government have been allocated 88 billion rupees (54 % increase from the current year's allocation of 57 billion rupees).

The total projected expenditure for the year 2006 budget exceeds 586 billion rupees.

The sectors of health, education, highways and public administration have been allocated Rs: 36 billion, Rs: 33 billion, Rs: 36 billion and Rs: 43 billion respectively.

Agriculture Ministry will receive 11 billion rupees; Power and Energy Ministry will receive 10 billion rupees and Fisheries Ministry 4 billion rupees.

12 billion rupees have been allocated for the Ministry of Relief, Rehabilitation and Reconciliation and 5 billion rupees have been set-aside for the Ministry of Social Welfare.

JVP leader Somawansa slammed

Two former army commanders, a retired commander of the Sri Lanka Air Force and a former commander of the Joint Operations Command (JOC) recently wrote to President Chandrika Kumaratunga protesting about JVP leader Somawansa Amarasinghe's "disband the armed services" speech made at the Town Hall ground in the presence of Prime Minister Mahinda Rajapakse. They said they wanted to bring this matter to the president's notice as the Commander-in-Chief of the forces "for appropriate action."

The letter, signed by Gen. (Retired), Cyril Ranatuna who was head of the JOC, Air Vice Marshal Harry Goonatilleke, Lt. Gen. Denis Perera and Lt. Gen. Hamilton Wanasinghe noted that Prime Minister Mahinda Rajapakse addressed the gathering after Amarasinghe.

The letter written under the banner of the Sri Lanka Ex Servicemen'EDs Association said that Amarasinghe had claimed that the armed forces have been ineffective in safeguarding the country's territorial integrity and called on the prime minister on his election as president "to disband the armed forces."

"These statements have been widely condemned by a broad cross-section of the society, not least by the public, ex-servicemen and servicemen who have been permanently disabled in the line of duty," the letter said.

The former chief commanders made the point that not only was this statement an offence under Section 120 of the Penal Code, but they consider it a direct indictment on the president herself given her position as Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces.

"You know better than anyone the sacrifices the armed forces of Sri Lanka have made to preserve the integrity of our motherland. Over 20,000 servicemen have made the supreme sacrifice, while thousands more will carry the scars of battle with them for life," they said. "It is thanks to their efforts that Sri Lanka remains an united and sovereign state despite a bitter separatist war in the North and East, two brutal insurgencies in the south and widespread acts of terrorism aimed at the ordinary people and the public property in the recent past." They regarded Amarasinghe's indictment of the armed forces and the call on Rajapakse to disband them a direct affront to the safety and integrity of Sri Lanka.

"This must be viewed in the background of JVP, which Mr.

Amarasinghe leads, having launched a terror campaign against the government and the armed forces in the late 1980, and earlier in 1971 against the government headed by your mother brutally killing servicemen and their families, and calling upon them to desert their ranks," they said.

"We need to be mindful that the services did our nation proud, and unwaveringly went on to defeat that insurrection, restore normalcy and protect democracy in Sri Lanka. If not for the valour of the armed forces, there can be no doubt that the coups d'etat the JVP attempted in 1971 and 1980s would have succeeded."

Saying that Amarasinghe's demand to disband the army is an insult to the entire armed force in the country and their families, the former commanders said that "we believe that they need better treatment than this," an analyst noted.

Court Action seeking arrest of JVP leaders

October 10 - Sri Lanka's Court of Appeal issued notice on the Attorney General to appear in court on 25 October and state his position on a Writ Application filed by Dr. Kumar Rupesinghe, Executive Director of the Foundation for Co-Existence (FCE), seeking an order directing the Inspector General of Police to arrest and charge Mr. Wimal Weerasinghe, parliamentary group leader of the Janatha Vimukthi Peramuna (JVP) for alleged offences of criminal intimidation, insult and annoyance, legal sources said. FCE, though recently formed, has grown into one of the big NGOs functioning in Sri Lanka mainly undertaking work in respect of conflict resolution and peace.

The petitioner Dr. Kumar Rupesinghe has cited the IGP, JVP Propaganda Secretary Mr. Wimal Weeravansa, JVP General Secretary Mr. Tilvin Silva, and the Attorney General as respondents in his application.

According to the writ application, the petitioner has charged that Mr. Wimal Weeravansa made a speech addressing the meeting of the National Patriotic Movement in Maharagama on 6 April this year warning the non-governmental organizations, its subscribers and members with specific reference to Dr. Rupesinghe and his FCE, as "traitors" and its members as conspirators against the country.

The court issued notice on the Attorney General to appear and submit his position in regard to the writ application on the next date and fixed the inquiry for 25 October.

Dr. Kumar Rupesinghe in his Writ Application has also alleged that the omission on the part of the IGP and his servants in not prosecuting Wimal Weeravansa in terms of the Penal Law for whatever reason is discriminatory, arbitrary and unreasonable.

In his application, he charged that Wimal Weeravansa in his speech at a meeting held at Maharagama on April 6 organized by the National Patriotic Movement made an extensive speech warning and criticizing NGOs, its subscribers and members with specific reference to him and his Foundation as traitor organizations and its members as conspirators against the country. He stated that a few days after his said dreadful speech, Tamilnet journalist Sivaram (Taraki) was abducted in Colombo and murdered and his body was found on the Parliament Drive.

He alleged that the JVP utilized the State media or government concerned Media institutions namely the Rupavahini,

ITN, SLBC, and the ANCL to promote their ideology of suppressing all other NGOs.

He contended that the specific and provocative warnings by Wimal Weerawansa were explicitly life threatening, criminally intimidating, insulting and annoying. He notes that during the insurgency between 1987 and 1992, the JVP possessed automatic weapons, other arms and ammunitions illegally. However, although the JVP entered the political mainstream thereafter at no stage did the JVP hand over the weapons and ammunition to the government or to the relevant authorities, nor has the government called for the handing over of the same.

He alleged that the JVP Propaganda Secretary Wimal Weerawansa was in a campaign to defeat and ridicule, cause contempt and develop an element of hatred towards NGOs specifically those who were advocating a peaceful political settlement to the ethnic conflict.

He stated that the crux of Wimal Weerawansa's speech at Maharagama was that any organization or person involved in discussing and promoting peace without conforming to the JVP program were traitors, and as such, such traitors should be eliminated from society.

Elaborating on the previous conduct of the JVP, he claimed that during the period between 1987 to 1992, the JVP and its affiliated organs had jointly and severally committed 6,577 killings, caused tremendous damage to State property, in that 613 buses, 16 bus depots, 16 trains and 24 railway stations were destroyed and or set ablaze; further 294 Grama Niladari Officers, 73 tea factories, 79 Divisional Secretaries Offices, 680 post offices, 103 Govijana Seva centers, 8 schools, 16 cooperative society stores were destroyed.

He alleged that the killings included Vijaya Kumaratunga, Buddhist priests, public servants, politicians, journalists, trade unionists, professionals, professors, school principals, estate superintendents and intellectuals.

On inaction on the part of the police, he alleged that the police neglected or delayed in acting under the law for offences committed by the members of the JVP. They allowed confirmed criminals of the JVP access in and out of the airport mainly due to fear of reprisals from the government.

Freedom of expression at stake - FMM

September 22 - Free Media Movement in Sri Lanka has expressed its concern at the feeling of insecurity and intimidation some famous film-makers in Sri Lanka are subjected to in recent weeks. The FMM points out to reports of pressure on film-makers advocating conflict resolution in the country.

In its Press Release on 22 September 2005, the FMM speaks of a newspaper article tarnishing the image of prominent film directors who have, in their films, strongly advocated peace and national reconciliation in the country.

The FMM said an English newspaper article on 14 September 2005 has branded the anti-war films by Ashoka Handagama, Prasanna Vithanage, Sudath Makadivulweva and Vimukthi Jayasundara as, "New Terrorism," and "Foreign Funded Cinema." Although the four artistes have won laurels at international festivals and recognition at home, the article has accused them holding brief to the LTTE.

In its Press release, the FMM refers to recent meetings some senior military officers have had with two of these direc-

tors where the artistes have been subject to verbal abuse and intimidation. After the meeting, the artistes seem to have expressed fear of serious repercussions in case of a future war.

Emphasising that, "Artistic interpretation is an inviolable right of all artistes and media personnel and is linked to freedom of expression," the FMM says that it strongly upholds the right of artistic interpretation and commends the work of artistes who explore the ethnic conflict in Sri Lanka through arts and culture.

"We strongly call upon all parties to respect freedom of expression including the right to creative expression and media by artistes and film-makers. We urge the government and the Security Forces to uphold these rights," says the FMM in its Press release, insisting that the interests of national security cannot cloud basic human rights.

Lack of peace hampered tsunami reconstruction

October 13 - Visiting United Nations Under-Secretary-General (USG) for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator (ERC), Jan Egeland, believes that the tsunami reconstruction would end within next year, but peace is important element to achieve a progress in these relief and reconstruction works.

Speaking to media in Colombo on Wednesday, he said without peace the reconstruction works may be hampered or delayed. He pointed out that government's buffer zone ban was one of the key reasons for delay in the reconstruction activities in the Tsunami devastated areas. At present over 100 international NGOs and International Agencies are working with the government in the reconstruction works.

Commenting on the tsunami early warning system, he told that the UN expects to set up an early warning system with the help of foreign governments and the government of Sri Lanka. Jan Egeland pointed out "The last few weeks have again reminded us all of the power of nature to bring great loss, suffering and destruction to the people of the world."

The UN expressed its solidarity with the people of Pakistan and its neighbours India and Afghanistan following the devastating earthquake in that region, and with the people of Central America, following the catastrophic flooding and mudslides which have also resulted in the loss of many lives, he told. Jan Egeland said that at the 2005 World Summit many leaders offered their sympathy and support to the United States in the wake of the extensive loss of life and widespread destruction caused by Hurricane Katrina.

"It is hard to prevent most natural hazards. But we can work together to prevent so many of them from becoming natural disasters," he said. "This is an area where the people and governments have important responsibilities, and international action on all fronts is also often required," Jan Egeland said. Replying to media, Jan Egeland said that the UN needs the support of all the NGOs, International agencies and government to setup the early warning system in the Indian ocean.

He also commended the present progress of the tsunami temporary shelter programme initiated by the government of Sri Lanka and the NGOs. He appealed on behalf of the UN to the government of Sri Lanka and the LTTE to attend the peace process, as peace is an important element to solve the tsunami relief and reconstruction activities. □

The race for the Presidency

The campaign for the Presidency in Sri Lanka is gathering pace with thirteen candidates submitting their nominations entering the race.

The two main contenders in the November 17 poll are UPFA candidate Prime Minister Mahinda Rajapakse and UNP candidate Opposition Leader Ranil Wickremesinghe.

The other candidates in the presidential race are: Ashoka Suraweera, (Jatika Sanwardhana Sangamaya - coconut), Anura Sarath Silva, (United Lalith Front - swan) Anura Soyza (Ruhunu Janata Party - motorcar), Chamil Jayalath (New Left Front - Table), A. K. Jayaweera Arachchige (Democratic Unity Alliance - Two Leaves), Victor Hettigoda de Silva Wijedasa (Eksath Lanka Podujana Party - Cup) Wimal Geeganage (Sri Lanka National Front - Cricket Bat) Shantha Dharmadwaja (United National Alternative Front - Gate) and Siritunga Jayasuriya (United Socialist Party - Trishaw).

CBK in campaign

Amidst the continuing conflict over the party manifesto, President Chandrika Kumaratunga made a long-awaited appearance at a campaign rally of presidential candidate Mahinda Rajapakse on 12 October and reiterated that her party was committed to the devolution of power to end the country's ethnic conflict, notwithstanding any protest. Whatever the differences in policy, the President also threw her weight behind Mr. Rajapakse's campaign, saying he had the strength and potential to take the party forward and calling upon the people to support him in his bid for the presidency.

Participating in the first presidential campaign rally, President Chandrika Kumaratunga struck a strong note in favour of peace process leading to a negotiated political solution to the ethnic conflict through devolution of power.

Addressing a campaign rally at Wariyapola, and making a strong appeal to the public to extend support

to SLFP Presidential candidate Premier Mahinda Rajapakse to become the President, Mrs. Kumaratunga urged him to carry forward the vision and the policies adopted with great difficulties and pains by the Party without being influenced by others. The reference to "others" was obvious - to the JVP and JHU with whom Mr Rajapakse had earlier struck agreements, without the approval of his party, to protect the 'unitary character' of the country.

President Kumaratunga pointed out that her party was able to adopt a new vision to solve the ethnic conflict at a time when people had not heard of the word 'peace' in this country. The fact was that the ethnic conflict could only be solved through the devolution of power. This was the only alternative to stop the division of the country, she said.

"Some people may oppose this but more than 70 per cent of people are in favour of this solution as they see no other solution to it. It was that vision made us victorious at 11 elections out of 13 we faced after 1994. It was our party's greatest strength," she added saying, "It is a victory for us to see that Opposition and UNP leader Ranil Wickremesinghe too endorsing the vision of the SLFP to which he opposed once, when introduced."

The President did not fail to use the occasion to respond to Premier Rajapakse's recently reported statement that the SLFP was not a party owned by the Bandaranaiques. She turned towards the Premier and said: "The Prime Minister spoke the truth. Our party is not written to anybody. Neither to the Bandaranaiques nor to anyone else. It is a people's party." She further said that the SLFP was the model of democracy in the country, which sticks to democratic path whilst other parties resorted to violence.

Prime Minister Rajapakse in his speech was in a more conciliatory mood and pledged to safeguard party policies, and that he would not

breach the confidence reposed in him by President Kumaratunga and 23 other political parties. He believed the President should not retire from politics but should be there to guide the party. "The people of this country will not allow her to retire in her present age. We need her to guide us in politics in the future too," the Premier added.

Foreign Affairs and Tourism Minister, Anura Bandaranaike did not attend the rally. Significantly, there were no JVP leaders at the rally.

However, Anura Bandaranaike speaking to journalists in Colombo recently said the country could not be managed by implementing the economic policies advocated by the JVP and he believed that Premier and presidential candidate Mahinda Rajapakse should cancel the agreement with the JVP if it was detrimental to the country, and should follow SLFP policies on the ethnic issue and other important matters. Mr. Bandaranaike said he also would attend seven rallies where the President would be present and he would explain SLFP policies on the ethnic issue and economic matters.

He said the P-TOMS agreement signed by the government and the LTTE could not be cancelled just to please the JVP and the Prime Minister must remember it was he who presented the agreement in parliament. Mr. Bandaranaike said he and President Chandrika Kumaratunga held similar views on the peace process and would continue talks with the LTTE though the Tigers had violated the ceasefire agreement on some 3000 occasions, the worst being the killing of Foreign Minister Lakshman Kadirgamar. He said any statement saying there would be no talks with the LTTE was a virtual declaration of war and the people who held such extremist views would realize the value of the ceasefire agreement if bombs started exploding again.

In an apparent reference to the JVP leader's call to disband the security forces if they could not fight terrorism, Mr. Bandaranaike referred to how the security forces had quelled the insurrections of 1971 and 1988.

Ranil in joint efforts to end 'separatism'

The former Sri Lankan Prime Minister and presidential candidate, Ranil

Wickremesinghe, has said that he would work with his main political foes, the Sri Lanka Freedom Party (SLFP) to end the island-nation's long-running problems, if he were to win the November 17 poll.

"The two main parties must work together and that is what I aim to do," Mr. Wickremesinghe, one of the two major contenders for presidency, told a press conference in Colombo. "We have to come together and pull the country out of the mess it is in," he said. Mr. Wickremesinghe, who recently proposed populist measures including more jobs and a promise to check deficit financing in his manifesto, said one of the main problems was the rising cost of living. "The main issue are people's issues," he said. His manifesto, which he said was the "People's Agenda" has three key slogans - defeat hunger, end unemployment and prevent separatism. Prime Minister Mahinda Rajapakse from the SLFP is the other main contestant in the race.

The manifesto identified "irresponsible and limitless printing of money" as the reason for the rising cost of living. He promised not to print currency to meet deficits, while taking steps to "strengthen the rupee and reduce the increase in cost of living." He has also listed prices at which essential commodities such as milk powder and lentils would be sold.

Conflict resolution, he said, was "very high on the priority." The SLFP and the UNP had a "broad acceptance" on it including sharing of powers, he said. Mr. Wickremesinghe promised "ending separatism", recommencing the peace process and finding a lasting solution to the "north-east problem within a united Sri Lanka." His manifesto said an agreement between the Government and the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam and "between the two main parties themselves" was required to arrive at a "durable peace."

UNP fears abuse of Budget process

The UNP has challenged the government to spell out why it was insisting on presenting the 2006 Budget in Parliament on November 8, just about ten days before the Presidential polls.

The Government presented an

Appropriation Bill for 2006 recently in sharp contrast to the regular and conventional position where a Vote of Account should have been presented because of the upcoming election.

The UNP's finance spokesman Bandula Gunawardena said it was likely the government would allow the Budget (Appropriation Bill) 2006 to be defeated which would mean that the life of the current Parliament would be deemed dissolved - thereby advancing the date for the next General Election.

Mr. Gunawardane said the government might also use the Budget to give a series of election promises which would virtually be impossible to deliver. He said it was likely that there would be a series of welfare measures which would help the government convince the people that the Presidential election manifesto and the budget welfare measures overlap each other. "However, this is the first time an Appropriation Bill is presented in the House with an imminent Presidential poll," Mr. Gunawardane said.

He said, the Government should be aware that there existed a Fiscal Management (Responsibility) Act brought in by former Finance Minister K.N. Choksy as part of the Financial Sector Reforms Committee. That Act prevented ruling Governments from doling out goodies on the eve of elections as a vote catching gimmick.

This legislation which was binding on all Finance Ministers, ensured that all election related expenditure such as sudden salary hikes to public servants, sudden lowering of petroleum prices and costs of other essentials with these motives would not be allowed. This piece of legislation also specified that if there was an urgent piece of legislation regarding some benefits that had to be passed in the best of national interests at the time of an election, the incumbent Finance Minister would have to table a statement in terms of the policy in relation to the justification of such expenditure.

Sangaree's Plea

Claiming that the ceasefire agreement had not taken the country anywhere near a settlement to the North,

East conflict but had only helped the Tigers to stabilize themselves, the Tamil United Liberation Front leader, V. Anandasangaree, in a letter addressed to the two main candidates in the race for the presidency, appealed to the Prime Minister Mahinda Rajapakse and the Opposition leader and UNP candidate Ranil Wickremesinghe to give top priority to the settlement of the ethnic problem "which is far more urgent and important than any other issue we are facing today."

"We have had enough loss of life and property and can't afford to lose any more. Above all the people are living in constant fear and tension. No one wants things to go on like this indefinitely."

Saying that the Cease-fire Agreement (CFA) signed over 3 1/2 years back has not take us any where near the solution, but has helped only the LTTE to stabilize themselves in areas held by them and to bring under their control more areas held by the Government, Mr Sangaree says that the only consoling factor is that the war has stopped and that there are no more deaths at the battle front. But the killings go on unabated and the people in the LTTE held areas continue to live under the subjugation of the LTTE with no hopes of being liberated by the Government.

His plea to every political party involved in the campaign is to give full pressure to the Candidates whom they are backing to take the ethnic issue out of the Presidential campaign and to announce a solution based on a Federal Structure within a United Sri Lanka. Also to assure the country that everyone whatever section one belongs to, will be treated as equals and enjoy all rights without any discrimination on any grounds.

The fear that a Federal Solution will end up in the division of the country is baseless. There are a number of countries in the world where federalism has thrived and all the citizens living in peace enjoying all rights like the others. Furthermore the Indian stand that it will not support the demand for separation should allay the fears of those who think that the country may divide into two.

Mr Sangaree strongly urges that both the candidates should declare

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that a solution to the ethnic problem will be found jointly, by both agreeing to take it up soon after the elections irrespective of who wins.

Left Parties support Mahinda

"The working people must first examine the reason why we, five left parties, CP, LSSP, DLF, SLMP and DVJP decided to extend support to Prime Minister Mahinda Rajapakse and ensure his victory, as a victory for Mahinda will be a victory for the working people in Sri Lanka," General Secretary of the Communist Party of Sri Lanka and Minister Dew Gunasekera said.

He said that this decision was arrived at by the five parties after much deliberation even though there may be reservations about the MoU signed with other parties.

"There were four reasons why we decided to extend our support to Prime Minister Mahinda Rajapakse "The existing balance of forces in the current political situation in the country and we believed that through this victory we could change the balance in favour of the working class."

"When one looks at two main parties SLFP and the UNP the UNP is following neo-liberal policies being rejected throughout the world and Mahinda is committed to following a pro-people economic policy" he said when one takes the two principle candidates UNP opposition leader Ranil Wickramasinghe and Prime Minister Mahinda Rajapakse Mahinda is more accessible to all the people and he feels the pulse of the nation.

"So taking his experience as a parliamentarian and Minister since 1970 one will have to give more weightage to Mahinda as an individual. That is why left parties decided to extend our fullest support to Prime Minister Mahinda Rajapakse and ensure his victory. We have decided to have joint and other meetings throughout the country in support of Prime Minister Mahinda Rajapakse to obtain a mandate for peace and devolution against the neo-liberal economic policies of the UNP."

CWC support for Ranil

After keeping everybody in suspense, Ceylon Workers' Congress

Leader Arumugan Thondaman broke his silence at last. At a press conference held in Colombo, Mr Thondaman said that his party had decided to support Opposition Leader Ranil Wickremesinghe at the forthcoming Presidential election, but not without showering lavish praise on President Kumaratunga in whose cabinet he and his party colleagues had loyally served.

The CWC was undecided for a long time and had several deliberations with its members on whom it should support at the Presidential polls. The CWC had submitted 19 proposals to Prime Minister Mahinda Rajapakse and the Opposition Leader Ranil Wickremesinghe and held talks individually with them. Both the candidates had agreed to implement the proposals, Mr Thondaman said.

However, his party finally decided to support Ranil Wickremesinghe. One of the 19 proposals was that the community development function of the Estate Infrastructure and Community Development Ministry should be implemented through Savumiamoorthy Thondaman Memorial Foun-

dation, which is headed by Arumugam Thondaman, and allocations should be made to implement a three-year development plan prepared by the Ministry.

At the press conference Thondaman said the issue of Upper Kotmale was a 'closed subject'.

Though the CWC decided to support Ranil Wickremasinghe and its Ministers resigned from the cabinet, its leader Arumugam Thondaman in a letter to President Kumaratunga conveyed his "deep sense of gratitude and appreciation of myself personally and the members of the CWC for the encouragement, initiative and assistance to plan and implement various schemes for the uplift of the Indian Origin Tamil community in the Plantations," adding "Given your dynamic and charismatic qualities of understanding and leadership I have no doubt that you will play a clearly visible and constructive role in guiding the destinies of our nation in the years to come.

It is my belief and hope that the bonds of friendship that have characterized our relationship will continue unabated."

CWC breakaway for Mahinda

The CWC leader Arumugam Thondaman's decision to support the UNP candidate Wickremasinghe in the presidential election has triggered split within the CWC. CWC heavy-weights ex-MPs P. P. Devaraj, S. Sathasivam, T. V. Sennan and many others have broken away and formed the Ceylon Workers Alliance (CWA).

A delegation of the CWA had recently met Prime Minister Mahinda Rajapakse and extended their wholehearted support to ensure his victory.

At a press conference in Colombo on 11 October, CWA General Secretary S. Sathasivam said that as the CWC leader Mr. Thondaman had betrayed the poor masses and if someone was trying to gain power riding on the backs of the Indian Tamil population he should countered forthwith without any delay by the CWA.

He told journalists that consequent to the discussions they had with the Premier Mahinda Rajapakse, it was the candid view of the CWA that important issues pertaining to the Estate Tamil community must be addressed by incorporating them in the Mr Rajapakse's election manifesto, and hence they would be supporting the Presidential candidature of Mahinda Rajapakse.

Sathasivam said, "although a written agreement was not inked and exchanged between us, nonetheless there is a firm understanding between us, based on a mutual understanding and trust."

Elaborating on their proposals to Mahinda Rajapakse, Sathasivam said that the arbitrary arrests and detention of the Tamils should be stopped. The educational standards of Indian origin children should be uplifted with facilities for higher edu-

cation, vocational training among others. The appointments of adequate teachers and the establishment of a University for the hill country was proposed. The need for primary education too was stressed. Due to rampant malnutrition in the Plantation sector, the provision of a mid-day meal had been requested for school children.

In addition to the subsidy offered to flour, due consideration should be given to the rising cost of living, which aggravated the already poor living standards of the estate community. Immediate steps should be taken to re-negotiate the workers' Joint Collective Agreement between some trade unions and the Ceylon Employers' Federation, in this regard.

The appalling health conditions now prevailing in the plantations sector should be re-examined and steps taken to enhance infrastructural facilities, and hospitals provided with Tamil speaking nurses. The Tamil official language policy should be implemented and Tamil Grama Sevakas should be appointed to Tamil speaking districts. The Divisional and Assistant Divisional Secretariats should be manned by officers proficient in the Tamil language.

Adequate and proper housing and loan facilities for the same, should be provided for the estate workers, instead of the 'linerooms', which create a host of social problems.

An environment in which the Tamil speaking people could live with dignity and honour, in par with the other communities, should be created.

Mahinda Rajapakse had pledged to consider all these proposals hitherto and incorporate a separate chapter on the rights of the estate community, in his election manifests, Sathasivam added.

SLMC support Ranil

The Sri Lanka Muslim Congress has decided to support and campaign for the victory of the UNP candidate Ranil Wickremasinghe.

The Muslim National Alliance has also pledged its support to UNP leader and presidential candidate Ranil Wickremasinghe. MNA leader Hafiz Nazar addressing a news conference recently said his organization

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had decided to support Mr. Wickremesinghe, as he had agreed to their proposals on the peace process.

The MNA comprises six political parties namely, the United Muslim Party, the Democratic United Alliance, the Sri Lanka Muslim Party, the United People's Muslim Alliance, the North East Muslim Congress and the Ashraff Congress.

Mr. Nazar said most of the MNA proposals had been included in the UNP manifesto, including having a Muslim delegation at the peace talks, creating a Ministry for war-displaced persons, expediting tsunami relief operations, finding a solution to the ethnic conflict acceptable to all communities in the country, developing the South Eastern University, enhancing facilities at Olivil harbour, initiating housing schemes for Muslims in Colombo, providing employment opportunities for Muslims and improving the war ravaged infrastructure of the northeast.

Meanwhile, Former Deputy Minister and Airport and Aviation Services chairman M. L.A.M. Hisbullah has formally announce his return to the Sri Lanka Muslim Congress at a news conference held in Kattankudi in the presence of party leader Rauff Hakeem. He commended Mr Hakeem's efforts to sustain the party's impact on national politics and hailed the SLMC decision to back UNP presidential candidate Ranil Wickremesinghe as a prudent one.

Mr. Hisbullah, whose home base in Kattankudy, was a former deputy chairman of the SLMC and later deputy chairman of the National Unity Alliance (NUA) led by Mrs Ferial Ashroff. Another dissident, former Parliamentarian H.M.M. Harees is also expected to rejoin the SLMC shortly.

Mr. Hisbullah said continuous discrimination against the community made it obligatory for the country's Muslim leaders to unite under one umbrella and added he expected members of other SLMC breakaway groups to follow suit.

The MNA has put forward some demands which include: recognition for Muslims as a national race; identify the Muslims as a separate ethnicity; devolution of power to settle the ethnic conflict on the basis of Federalism; ensure the Muslims' right to

internal self-determination; and immediate implementation of the Constitutional provisions to conduct the referendum in the Eastern Province with regards to the temporary merger of the Eastern Province with the Northern Province.

Polling clusters in uncleared areas

Arrangements have been made to set up polling stations in the North and East on a cluster basis to enable the people in the LTTE held areas to vote in the upcoming presidential elections.

Officials of the Assistant Elections Commissioner's offices in Jaffna and Batticaloa told the media that necessary security measures would be put in place for the election under the instructions of the election commissioner.

Batticaloa district Elections Assistant Commissioner T. Krishnananthalingam said that out of 353 polling stations in the district 88 were in the "uncleared areas" (LTTE controlled areas) with 80,443 registered voters.

Transportation would be provided for voters from those areas at state expense as in the previous general election. Meanwhile, an official from Jaffna District Assistant Commissioner's office who preferred to be anonymous said that 103 polling stations including 95 in Killinochchi and 8 in Paruthithurai (Pt. Pedro) were in the uncleared areas comprising nearly 98,000 voters. The alternative polling station would be set up in Muhamalai for those voters.

Re-poll even for minor incidents

Elections Commissioner Dayananda Dissanayake stressing that he would not hesitate to nullify results of a polling station in the event of even a minor incident, has directed his deputies to be ready for a possible re-poll on November 19, an Elections secretariat spokesman said.

Hosting a meeting at the Elections Secretariat at Rajagiriya to outline pre-arrangements and the administrative duties during the upcoming presidential polls, Dissanayake said the State Printing Corporation was already printing the ballot papers to be used for a re-poll. The meeting was attended by District Returning Officers and Assistant Elections Commissioners.

Making a special statement after receiving nominations from 13 presidential hopefuls, the polls chief cautioned that he will go for a re-poll in any of the polling stations if any form of violence is reported by his officials. He urged the candidates and their supporters to act with restraint and honour the rule of law. Conducting election in the North and East was among the topics discussed at the meeting.

The Elections Commissioner also specified the guidelines and criteria to be observed by media institutions, specially the State media, in reporting Presidential election related information accurately and impartially.

The guidelines specified in the relevant legislation to ensure an impartial Presidential poll under secret ballot are as follows:

1. All information related to the conduct of the Presidential election on November 17, 2005 may be published correctly without causing injustice to any candidate.
2. During the period of election nothing should be published partial to any candidate. Any news, partial to any candidate, published in a foreign newspaper should not be reproduced in local newspapers.
3. The candidate concerned should be allowed to respond to any news published, provided the candidate thinks that the news had been published incorrectly or in a manner to defame him.
4. In the case of interviews all information related to the organization sponsoring the interviews, organization or the persons providing financial provisions, method of interviews etc. should be specified.
5. Head of State, Ministers and political party leaders should have the right to reply and explain matters relating to statements made by them in public meetings when such statement are published.
6. News and current affairs should be published correctly and impartially.
7. These guidelines are general and media institutions should observe codes of ethical conduct prepared voluntarily by them. □

Rights Expert, Martin in Sri Lanka

Ian Martin, International Human Rights Advisor to the Peace Process met with Jayantha Dhanapala, Secretary General of SCOPP on Monday, October 10. The discussion focused on the current status of the peace process and the need to address human rights issues as a matter of urgency within the current peace process.

During the discussions Dhanapala, indicated the need to move forward on the basis of the decision taken by the GOSL and the LTTE at the sixth round of talks in March 2003 in Hakone, Japan, which called upon Martin, to develop three aspects for a proposed human rights 'road map'. These aspects were:

- 1). The drafting of a declaration of human rights and humanitarian principles.
- 2). The planning of a programme of human rights training for LTTE cadres

and government officials, police and prison officials.

3). Proposals for the strengthening of the Human Rights Commission of Sri Lanka to enable it to develop the capacity for increasingly effective monitoring throughout the country.

Dhanapala, reiterated the commitment of the Government to decisions taken at Hakone, and indicated that the government was keen to move forward with a draft declaration on human rights and humanitarian principles. In this regard Dhanapala, presented proposals for inclusion in the draft declaration.

Martin recognized the need to address human rights issues and agreed to seek the views of the LTTE, after which he will present proposals to both parties for consideration. Martin emphasized the need for an effective monitoring mechanism, which the GOSL supported. Martin will be visiting, Kilinochchi on

13 and 14 October to consult the LTTE on these issues.

Ian Martin arrived in the island on 8 October 2005. He was invited by the GOSL and LTTE at the fourth round of peace talks in his personal capacity as an expert on human rights to assist the parties address human rights issues within the peace process.

He visited Batticaloa and Kattankudy on Sunday 9 October 2005, and met with the SLMM, civil society groups, Muslim representatives and international organizations in the area.

He will also meet with Minister of Defence and Law and Order Ratnasiri Wickramanayake,

Minister of justice John Seneviratne and the Commissioners of the Human Rights Commission of Sri Lanka, in relation to the other two elements of the road map that the parties have agreed on.

Martin meets LTTE: Mr Ian Martin, met with Head of the LTTE Political Wing, S P Thamichelvan, Head of Tamillelam Judiciary, Mr Pararajasingham and Head of Tamillelam Police, Mr Nadesan, separately in Kilinochchi on 13 October to discuss matters related to strengthening human rights structures in the NorthEast, TamilNet reported.

During the meeting at the LTTE Peace Secretariat around 12 noon, Thamichelvan expressed his appreciation to Mr Martin for his continued engagement and commitment to matters related to human rights in the NorthEast and pointed out the incorporation of Mr Martin's suggestions in the Interim Self Governing Authority proposals (ISGA), the report said.

Mr Martin reportedly told Thamichelvan that he was willing to be of assistance to the Tamil people in strengthening the instruments for safeguarding human rights currently led by the North East Secretariat on Human Rights (NESOHR).

Through Mr Martin, Thamichelvan extended invitations to other human rights activists to visit Tamil areas and to witness for themselves the living conditions of the people. Mr Martin then visited the TamilEelam Law College and complemented Head of Tamillelam Judiciary, Mr Pararajasingham, on the progress made by the judicial branch in incorporating provisions for protecting human rights in the penal code. He also met with Judges and attorneys and briefed them on the importance of legislation to strengthen human rights, the report added.

Earlier in the morning, at the NESOHR facility, Mr Martin witnessed the release of 26 underage youths who volunteered to join the LTTE to their parents. Following this event, Norwegian embassy officials, Ms. Solfried Lien, an Executive Officer at the Norwegian Foreign Ministry, and the Second Secretary at the Norwegian Embassy met with NESOHR officers, the TamilNet report said.

Govt stresses rights declaration: The government on 14 October stressed that human rights must take precedence in any peace process and should not be made subservient to the improved working of

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the cease-fire agreement. In a statement issued shortly after being informed of Ian Martin's discussion with the LTTE regarding the proposed declaration on human rights, the government's peace secretariat quoted Jayantha Dhanapala as reaffirming the government's commitment towards a human rights declaration as had been agreed by both parties during the last round of peace talks in March 2003.

During discussions with International Human Rights Advisor Ian Martin, the peace secretariat chief also emphasised the need for an objective monitoring process. He stated that effective monitoring was essential for meaningful progress on human rights.

Mr Martin met Dhanapala on his return from Kilinochchi, where he conferred with the political leadership of the LTTE. Martin conveyed to the government that the LTTE had wanted progress on a human rights declaration to be deferred until issues relating to the cease-fire had been addressed.

The advisor had agreed to continue his efforts with both parties in progressing beyond the decisions taken at the sixth round of talks in Hakone, Japan, in March 2003. During these deliberations he was requested to develop an effective roadmap to address Human Rights issues within the peace process. At the sixth round of talks in March 2003 in Hakone, Japan, the proposals under the roadmap initiative by Martin were reflected in decisions taken on human rights issues.

The government wants to develop three aspects for a human rights roadmap. These are the drafting of a declaration on human rights and humanitarian principles; the planning of a programme of human rights training for LTTE cadres and government officials, police and prison officials; and proposals for strengthening of the Human Rights Commission of Sri Lanka to enable it to develop the capacity for increasingly effective monitoring throughout the country.

Martin's media briefing: Addressing a media briefing, Mr Martin admitted that he had failed to secure

agreement from the Tigers on a vital human rights declaration. He also said that further commitment on human rights outside of the ceasefire agreement would have a positive impact on the overall peace process. The LTTE has maintained that progress on a human rights declaration would have to be deferred until talks start on reviewing the ceasefire agreement. "Certainly, I think it would have been positive if further commitments on human rights could have been agreed on even outside overall progress on the peace process," Martin told reporters at the end of his visit. "I think any progress in human rights is a positive factor in an overall process."

Commenting on the current state of affairs, Martin said, "I think this is proving to be a situation where human rights violations are a serious threat to the peace process because they undermine the confidence of many different sectors of the population in the process of moving forward. Anybody who wants to see the process move forward must want to see human rights violations checked."

Asked specifically as to who were to blame for a declaration on human rights not being reached, Martin replied: "The government have indicated that they would like now to discuss a joint declaration. The LTTE is saying that they think it should await the commencement of the review of the cease-fire agreement." He said that he would be presenting proposals to the government and LTTE on how they might proceed on the deteriorating human rights situation. One of these suggestions might include a plan for an international monitoring body, he said.

Asked whether the LTTE had been agreeable in principle to such a monitoring body, Martin said: "I was quite careful in the words I used. They said that this would be a useful suggestion but something to be discussed within the framework of review of the ceasefire agreement."

As for the State, Martin said: "The government... indicated an interest in considering proposals for strengthening monitoring with an additional international element."

The advisor had also discussed investigations into political killings with the two parties. "Anyone must deeply deplore the political killings that have been going on and, sad to say, have gone on in the course of my short visit," he emphasised adding, "The right to life is clearly the most fundamental of human rights."

The LTTE says most killings occur in government controlled areas and that they are attributed to the LTTE without proper investigations or evidence. The security forces counter that they are unable to pursue investigations into LTTE controlled areas.

"In that context, I raised the question of whether some international investigative capacity, the neutrality of which might be accepted by both parties, might not be useful if it could then command the co-operation of both parties in carrying out investigations to establish the responsibility for particular killings," Martin said adding, "That's something I'll continue to explore in the proposals I make following this visit."

Martin said he took up the issue of underage recruitment with the LTTE and said the Tigers should fulfil its commitment to stop recruitment, pointing out that it was a promise they had made on many occasions. He also said further initiatives should be taken to address the needs of the war displaced.

Ian Martin has visited Sri Lanka on two previous occasions, in March 2003 and May 2004, in his capacity as the human rights advisor to the peace process.

Ian Martin was the Secretary General of Amnesty International from 1986 to 1992. He was subsequently Director for Human Rights on the UN/OAS mission in Haiti 1993, 1994/5, Chief of UN Field Operations in Rwanda 1995-1996, Deputy High Representative for Human Rights in Bosnia and Herzegovina 1998-1999, Special Representative of UN Secretary General in East Timor 1999 and Deputy Special Representative of Secretary General in Ethiopia and Eritrea 2000-2001. Currently, Martin is the head of the UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights in Nepal. □

EU imposes travel ban on LTTE leaders

September 27 - The European Union has barred the Tamil Tigers from visiting its member states and said it was "actively considering" listing the LTTE as a terrorist organisation. Condemning what it referred to as the "continuing use of violence and terrorism by the LTTE," the EU said it wanted the Tigers "to take immediate public steps to demonstrate their commitment to the peace process and their willingness to change."

The full text of the EU statement released by the UK, which presently chairs the EU sated as follows:

"The European Union hereby declares its condemnation of the continuing use of violence and terrorism by the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE). The pursuit of political goals by such totally unacceptable methods only serves to damage the LTTE's standing and credibility as a negotiating partner and gravely endangers the Peace Process so much desired by the people of Sri Lanka.

The European Union repeats its condemnation of the shocking murder of Foreign Minister Lakshman Kadirgamar and of so many others in Sri Lanka in recent weeks.

The European Union is actively considering the formal Listing of the LTTE as a terrorist organisation. In the meantime, the European Union has agreed that with immediate effect, delegations from the LTTE will no longer be received in any of the EU Member States until further notice.

The European Union has also agreed that each Member State will, where necessary, take additional national measures to check and curb illegal or undesirable activities (including issues of funding and propaganda) of the LTTE, its related organisations and known individual supporters.

The European Union furthermore repeats its serious concern at the continuing recruitment and retention of child soldier cadres by the LTTE and reminds them that there can be no excuse whatsoever for this abhorrent practice to continue.

The European Union takes this opportunity to underline the State-

ment of 19 September by the Co-Chairs of the Tokyo Donor Conference calling on the LTTE not least to take immediate public steps to demonstrate their commitment to the peace process and their willingness to change.

The European Union calls upon all parties in Sri Lanka to show commitment and responsibility towards the peace process during the coming period of elections and to refrain from actions that could endanger a peaceful resolution and political settlement of the conflict."

Statement by Sri Lanka Co-Chairs

At an earlier meeting of the Co-Chairs of the Tokyo Donor Conference, who met in New York on 19 September reaffirmed their strong support to Norway as facilitator and a federal solution as a framework. The Co-Chairs called on the Liberation Tigers to end political assassinations, recruitment of under age youth and underlined the responsibility of the Sri Lankan government to "disarm or relocate" paramilitary groups from the NorthEast. They expressed fear that the Cease Fire is facing its "most serious challenge".

The Co-Chairs of Sri Lanka's donors, the US, EU, Japan and Norway, called on the Tamil Tigers and the Sri Lankan government to resume talks on the implementation of the Ceasefire Agreement. The Co-Chairs condemned the assassination of Sri Lankan Foreign Minister Kadirgamar in August and whilst not explicitly blaming the LTTE, said "this unconscionable act of terrorism casts profound doubt on the commitment of those responsible to a peaceful and political resolution of the conflict."

The Co-Chairs' meeting was hosted by Mr. Vidar Helegesen, State Secretary, Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and attended by EU Commissioner Mrs. Benita Ferrero-Waldner, Special Representative, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan Mr. Yasushi Akashi, US Assistant Secretary of State for South Asia Mrs. Christina Rocca, and Mr. Tom Philips, Director South Asia and Afghanistan with Britain's Foreign Office.

The full text of the Co-chairs' statement issued by the US Embassy in Colombo after the meeting stated as follows:

"The Co-Chairs of the Tokyo Donor Conference in support of the peace process in Sri Lanka met in New York on 19 September to discuss the current situation in Sri Lanka, following the assassination of Sri Lankan Foreign Minister Kadirgamar.

"The Co-Chairs reiterate their unequivocal condemnation of the assassination of the Foreign Minister. This unconscionable act of terrorism casts profound doubt on the commitment of those responsible to a peaceful and political resolution of the conflict.

"The Co-Chairs call on the LTTE to take immediate public steps to demonstrate their commitment to the peace process and their willingness to change. An immediate end to political assassinations by the LTTE and an end to LTTE recruitment of child soldiers are two such steps.

"The Co-Chairs believe that the peace process between the Government of Sri Lanka and the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) is facing its most serious challenge since the Ceasefire Agreement came into force in February 2002. The Ceasefire Agreement remains the essential anchor of the peace process and is put at grave risk by the continuing violence. Effective implementation of the agreement is the responsibility of the Government of Sri Lanka and the LTTE.

"The Co-Chairs commend the Government of Sri Lanka for its restraint following the assassination of Foreign Minister Kadirgamar and for its willingness to discuss the Ceasefire Agreement with the LTTE. The Co-Chairs are disappointed that the LTTE have not agreed to the proposed venue for talks with the Government of Sri Lanka about implementation of the Ceasefire Agreement. The Co-Chairs urge both parties to engage constructively with special representative of Norway, Major General Furuhovalde, during his planned visit in October to find practical ways of improving implementation of the Ceasefire Agreement.

"The Co-Chairs deplore the activities of paramilitary groups, which fuel the cycle of violence and unrest. The Co-Chairs underscore the responsibility of the Sri Lankan government under the Ceasefire Agree-

ment to disarm or relocate these groups from the north and east.

"The future of Sri Lanka lies in the hands of the people of Sri Lanka. The forthcoming elections are a time of political choice in Sri Lanka. It is natural that there will be vigorous debate on the best way forward in the peace process. The Co-Chairs look to all parties to refrain from violence and from statements and acts that could undermine progress toward the peaceful resolution of the conflict after the elections.

"The Co-Chairs hope that the peace process will be reinvigorated following the elections. The Co-Chairs reiterate that a peaceful resolution of the conflict can only be achieved through a negotiated political settlement that follows the principles agreed in Oslo in December 2002 to explore a solution based on a federal model within a united Sri Lanka, and which ensures democracy and full respect for human rights and the legitimate rights of all ethnic groups.

"Nearly a year has passed since the tsunami, and the Co-Chairs reit-

erate that the international community remains fully committed to implementing the pledges made for tsunami reconstruction. Cooperation between the Sri Lankan government, the LTTE and the Muslim community will be important for sustainable recovery in the north and east.

"Finally, the Co-Chairs wish to thank outgoing Norwegian Foreign Minister Petersen and Deputy Minister Helgesen for their tireless efforts at facilitating the peace process in Sri Lanka. We reaffirm our strong support to Norway as facilitator."

LTTE urges reconsideration

TamilNet reported that the Political Head of the Liberation Tigers, Mr. S. P. Thamichelvan appealed to the European Union for reconsideration of the recent decision made by the EU that "delegations from the LTTE will no longer be received in any of the EU Member States until further notice." At a news conference held at Kilinochi, Wednesday (September 28) evening, Mr. Thamichelvan pointed out that the EU's move was

ill-timed to coincide with the "anti-Tamil" campaign advanced through political propaganda platforms in the South.

He remarked that EU's decision would appease, and indeed would give moral support to, extreme Sinhala nationalists who were demanding the abrogation of the peace-talks and resumption of war. This was a serious setback to peace process, LTTE political head noted.

Mr. Thamichelvan recalled that EU's support was a key factor in the LTTE's decision to enter into negotiations

with the Government of Sri Lanka. "We urge the European Union to desist from being partial to one party and to rescind its recent declaration," Thamichelvan said.

In an interview with TamilNet, Warning that the European Union's declaration would be interpreted by Colombo as providing tacit support to its policies and therefore would likely harden Colombo's views and approach to the peace process, Thamichelvan, told TamilNet that the announced restriction on receiving LTTE delegations in EU countries, had ruined the trust Tamil people had in the EU, and had caused irreparable damage to prospects for peace.

He said that the EU "declaration is based on unsubstantiated charges by the Sri Lankan government. It is lopsided and issued without taking into consideration the opinion and the just arguments of the Tamils, an equal party to the peace process. The declaration has caused irreparable damage to prospects for peace and has ruined the trust the Tamil people had on the International Community.

The announcement effectively blocks the opportunity and facilities available to representatives of the Tamil people to present their case directly to the members of European Union and has denied international community access to truth."

"The European Union, instead of pressuring the political leaders of the South to negotiate in good faith, has chosen to penalise the Liberation Tigers, disregarding the feelings of our people. As an equal partner seriously committed to a peaceful negotiation, we are concerned that this will impact the future progress of the peace process. Also Colombo's views and stand on the peace process will harden as it will interpret the EU's declaration as providing tacit support to its policies."

He further said, "The declaration deprives us not only of a neutral venue, but also denies the Tamil side a respectable and symmetric position at the talks. It also denies an opportunity for us to meet the Tamils in Diaspora to exchange views and get their support. The EU Declaration is likely to cause Tamil people to lose faith in the peace process." □

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Presidential election campaign and some false options

Kethesh Loganathan

The Presidential Election campaign appears to have peaked even before the filing of nominations by the candidates, which is scheduled for this week.

Barring a switch at the last moment, the issues that are being placed before the electorate by the key contenders Prime Minister Mahinda Rajapakse and Leader of the Opposition Ranil Wickremesinghe have been projected in the media and knowingly or unwittingly fueled by the candidates themselves as a contest between three sets of options. They are:

- (i) Appeasement or War;
- (ii) Unitary or Federal;
- (iii) Closed or Open Economy.

It is this writer's contention that these are false options aimed at confusing and confounding the electorate and that the truth lies somewhere in the middle. Let me elaborate by going through these three options.

Appeasement or War?

Colombo-based Peace organizations as well as the UNP have been castigating the demand for a redesign of the peace process, review of the CFA and Norway's role and sanctions on the LTTE as a recipe for war, since it is argued that the LTTE would find these positions untenable and provocative and therefore would opt for the only option it knows – namely, war. On the other hand, the Mahinda Rajapakse campaign, led by the JVP and supported by the JHU, (at least for the time being and for different reasons), has been focusing on the threat to Sri Lanka's sovereignty and territorial integrity brought about by the policy of appeasement pursued by the UNP whilst in power.

The campaign is focusing on the danger of the appeasement policy being advanced further if Ranil Wickremesinghe is elected, and the creation of conditions for secession by the LTTE with its ISGA proposals as the precursor. In other words the options placed before the Sri Lankan People (read: Sinhala) may be summed as follows: If war is to be averted one must continue with the offer of incentives to the LTTE or what could be

broadly termed the appeasement approach.

On the other hand, if the territorial integrity and sovereignty of Sri Lanka is to be safeguarded then what one needs is a belligerent defence policy as well as the marginalization of the LTTE.

In reality, what is ignored is that there is a range of options between appeasement and war, which is precisely what the candidates need to focus on instead of dabbling in false dichotomies. In fact neither appeasement nor war is tenable or desirable. The policy of appeasement has clearly failed to transform the LTTE, as manifest in the wake up call issued by the EU by imposing a travel ban and other restrictions on the LTTE, while reserving the option of listing the LTTE as a proscribed terrorist organization for its continuing terror killings and child conscription. That the State may be either directly or through proxies engaged in extra-legal and extra-judicial killings is no excuse to tolerate the culture of impunity that is masquerading in the guise of appeasement and incentives to the LTTE. Of course, that is no reason as to why the State should itself benefit from impunity if allegations of extra-judicial and proxy killings leveled against it by the LTTE are true.

Be that as it may, it is abundantly clear that war is not an option that the State or the LTTE would want to exercise at the given juncture. While international pressure and logistical and manpower constraints would make the LTTE think twice before going for a protracted war, it is equally clear that the State would think thrice before going to war. This is despite the clarion call by the JHU and armchair militarists that LTTE should if necessary be militarily annihilated. All indications are that the Sri Lankan State and the military machinery is neither psychologically nor materially equipped to wage a protracted war against the LTTE which perhaps may be what promoted Somawansa Amerasinghe to declare that if the security forces cannot defend the country then it should be dissolved! In any event, what we may end up with is a continuation of psy-ops and

proxy or low intensity hostilities by both parties. But then, this is precisely what has been going on from the time that the ceasefire agreement (CFA) was signed and is nothing new. It must be clearly understood that a peace process cannot be advanced through an endless process of appeasement of the LTTE without reciprocity or by holding the peace process hostage to the constant threat of war.

What is realistic however is to explore the range of options that lie between appeasement and war. This could be broadly termed as critical engagement of the LTTE on issues relating to human rights, humanitarian and interim solutions, while broad-basing and democratizing the peace process by bringing in other legitimate stakeholders like the Muslim polity and the Tamil democratic alternatives. Meanwhile, a concerted attempt should be made to evolve a package of constitutional and political reforms aimed at a permanent negotiated settlement to the unresolved National Question. Without such a package it will be nigh impossible to engage not only the LTTE, but also the Tamil democratic alternatives and the Muslim polity on negotiations on a durable and a just political and constitutional settlement to the Ethnic Question.

This brings us to the next set of options paraded in the on-going election campaign, namely, the Unitary or Federal dichotomy.

Unitary or Federal?

Again, it must be clearly understood that there is no single blueprint or system that epitomizes these concepts. There are unitary models which have incorporated substantial autonomy and devolution of power to the periphery and there are federal models where the State continues to jealously safeguard its centrality within the federal political system. This is something that any student of political science knows and is astonishing that the debate is presented as a straight cleavage between the two concepts. What is paramount is the formulation of a constitutional and political system that suits the Sri Lankan situation and addresses the primary contradiction at present, namely the National Question. Any solution must not only address the causes of the conflict, but ensure the acceptability and sustainability of the remedy. What is basically required therefore is a model or a system that ensures regional autonomy with substantial powers on matters that relate to iden-

tity, security and socio-economic advancement of the region and the people who inhabit it, in a manner that any future changes, for better or for worse, should be carried out only with the consent of that people and region. In this sense, it is clear that the existing unitary constitution is woefully inadequate, to put it mildly.

Human rights and democracy further should constitute the twin props on which these models are located. But, to argue that the debate in Sri Lanka is only between the existing unitary constitution and an abstract and undefined federal model is to engage in a false debate and a false set of options.

In this regard the Oslo Communiqué where the two parties committed themselves to explore a federal structure is exactly what it says and nothing more. It must be understood that the Roadmap to Peace or to a reformed and a restructured State need not be a single route. There are bound to be detours or alternative paths, but all heading in one direction. That ought to be the focus of the policymakers and the peace constituency – as well as the Presidential candidates, rather than engaging in a disingenuous play on words and concepts to confuse and confound the electorate. But, what-

ever may be the political and constitutional model, it will be reduced to naught if it does not lie on a solid economic foundation. Hence, we turn to the next set of false options being bandied about in the election campaign – namely, an open or a closed economy?

Open or Closed Economy?

It needs no gainsaying that there is no economy in the contemporary "globalised" world that is entirely open or closed. The advanced capitalist countries, which espouse neo-liberal economic policies based on liberalization and privatization could not have reached their present heights without going through a process of protectionism and State intervention - a process which in fact continues even in those developed economies.

The same would apply to the newly industrialized countries, including the "Asian Tigers". Likewise, import-substitution and export-orientation are not mutually exclusive, while privatization and liberalization aimed at reducing the role of an over-burdened State does not mean the total withdrawal of the State on matters relating to social welfare, human and infrastructural development.

What is needed in Sri Lanka is a path

of development that ensures equity with growth. While growth rates are important, a "fetish" ness may set-in where a high percentage growth rate is seen as the panacea for all maladies, disregarding the quality of the growth centres and the backward and forward linkages needed for sustainable and equitable development. Likewise the negation of growth and sole emphasis on equity will lead to a situation where there will be no cake from which one could cut a piece! This is how the wealth of nations soon get transformed into the poverty of nations. This then is the real challenge and not a sterile, hackneyed and irrelevant debate as to whether the candidates stand for an open or a closed economy.

In conclusion, it is this writer's fervent hope that the remaining period of the Presidential Election campaign is utilised to address these real issues rather than get bogged down in the quagmire of false options. Ultimately, the candidates must realize that it is the middle path that would capture the imagination of the electorate and not the clash of extremes.

(The writer is a member of the Board of Directors of the Centre for Policy Alternatives and Head of its Peace & Conflict Analysis Unit)

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A principal for a principal as shadow war moves north

D B S Jeyaraj

Twenty years after former St. Johns College Principal Charles Anandarajan was killed by the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam, again school principals have become targets of gun toting assassins again. Tuesday October 11th saw Kopay Christian College principal Nadarajah Sivakadatcham (54) being gunned down at his residence. In what seemed a tit for tat killing, Jaffna Central College Principal Kanakapathy Rajadurai (53) was shot dead outside the Veerasingham Hall the following day on October 12th. It was almost as if open season had been declared on eminent educationists in Jaffna.

It was night around 8.35 pm on the 11th when two men on a motor cycle arrived at the Kopay Christian College Principal's residence near the Kalaivani community centre and Library in Kopay north about 4 km north-east of Jaffna town. Calling out to the unsuspecting Principal, the assassins forcibly entered the house. Sivakadatcham who was watching television in the company of his wife and eight year old daughter got alarmed by this intrusion and abruptly stood up. One of the men trained his pistol on the principal at close range and fired away. Forehead shattered, a blood splattered Sivakadatcham fell down while his wife and child screamed. He was dead on the spot.

It was broad daylight around 3.40 pm when the Jaffna Central College Principal arrived at the entrance of Veerasingham Hall in Jaffna town. Rajadurai was the chief guest for the "Navarathri" (Nine nights) cultural ceremony organized by the Jaffna Educational Secretariat. Even as Rajadurai alighted from the motor cycle pillion he was riding, four waiting youths walked up to him. One of them whipped out a pistol and fired fatal shots at point blank range. At least four bullets entered the head, shoulder, chest and abdomen. The youths fled on motor cycles as Rajadurai

collapsed. He was taken to hospital but succumbed to his wounds at 4.25 pm.

Symbolic timing

Two principals of leading educational institutions had been murdered within twenty - four hours. Jaffna once known for the regard and respect shown to education and educationists is reeling from the twin shocks. The timing of the killings was symbolically cruel.

The "Navarathri" period is devoted to Durga, Lakshmi and Saraswathy the divine consorts of Siva, Vishnu and Brahma respectively. The first three days are for Durga or Malaimahal, the Goddess of valour and war. The middle three are for Lakshmi or Alaimagal the Goddess of wealth and blessings. The last three days are for Saraswathy or Kalaimagal, the Goddess of knowledge and arts.

In Jaffna where learning and education is given pride of place, the last three days and nights dedicated to Saraswathy are observed and celebrated in a grand manner. The assassins had chosen to kill two principals on the 8th and 9th days of Navarathri where special pooja is paid to Goddess Saraswathy.

Broad sections of the Sri Lankan media in Colombo were quick to condemn the "usual suspects" for both murders. Most journalists attributing blame on the Tamil Tigers for both killings had little information independent of the Police, Army and Tamil organizations based in Colombo. The Government too pointed the accusing finger at the Tigers for both the killings.

Cabinet Spokesman Minister Nimal Siripala de Silva told the weekly Cabinet press briefing that the Government protested strongly over the killings by suspected LTTE cadres and wanted Trond Furhovde and Ian Martin to take the incident seriously with the LTTE on their visit

to Kilinochchi. "We wanted them to highlight the human rights violations by the LTTE specially stressing the killing of two school principals", the Minister said. "According to circumstantial evidence so far unearthed by the Security Forces and the Police we believe that LTTE was behind the killing of the two school principals in Jaffna," the Minister added.

A puerile duel

Before Nimal Siripala de Silva came out with his revelations an interesting yet puerile duel was enacted over the airwaves of BBC Tamil services regular program "Thamizhosai". The LTTE's Jaffna political Commisar, Ilamparithi, now based in Pallai told the BBC that both killings were the work of the state military intelligence with the help of Eelam Peoples Democratic Party (EPDP) Leader of the EPDP and Northern Development Minister Douglas Devananda denied the allegation on the same program saying that the Central College principal was a "close friend". He also added that the Kopay Christian College principal was "a LTTE sympathiser until recently."

Both Ilamparithy and Devananda were trying to pin both killings on one party. The LTTE was accusing the security forces and EPDP of being involved in both killings. Devananda on the other hand was charging the LTTE of being responsible for both killings. The army information centre, Police, sections of the southern media and even the cabinet spokesperson were ardently toeing the "Douglas line". The "Ilamparithy spin" however was NOT echoed faithfully by Tiger and pro-Tiger media outlets like "Nitharsanam", "Puthinam" and "Tamilnet". Their reporting seemed to indicate that Sivakadatcham was killed by minions of the state while Rajadurai was murdered by the LTTE.

Inquiries made of informed circles in Jaffna by this writer over telephone and electronic mail resulted in an inescapable conclusion that two sets of killers had been responsible for the two murders. The intelligence apparatus of the state seems responsible for the Kopay Christian College Principal's killing. The LTTE was responsible for killing the Jaffna Central College Principal.

Though the LTTE had been killing people without restraint over the past years the killing of Rajadurai seemed essentially a tit for tat killing. What knowledgeable Jaffna residents were concerned about most was whether this spree of killings would further escalate. They feared greatly that the shadow war destroying the East had now come to the North. The killing of principals was seen as a harbinger of evil tidings.

Events of the recent past need a quick re-run to understand what is happening now. The LTTE entered the Government controlled areas in large numbers to do political work after the ceasefire. At the same time members of other Tamil groups described derisively as "para-military" by the Tigers were to be disarmed. This was done to a great extent by the Wickremasinghe government. The LTTE however observed the ceasefire in the breach by assassinating members, ex-members and suspected civilian supporters of non-Tiger groups in the N-E. The LTTE also targeted suspected informants and other members of the auxiliary forces.

The ceasefire expressly forbade such killings but the LTTE went on a killing spree with impunity. When queried the "ever-smiling" Tiger political Commissar Tamilselvan cavalierly dismissed the charges saying the army and Police were responsible for law and order in the Government controlled areas. The Tigers had nothing to do with the killings, he used to say. Tamilselvan even suggested that the killings were a result of internecine feuding within and among the Tamil groups. Sadly the Wickremasinghe government and Oslo seemed incapable of checking this staggered massacre. The non-Tiger outfits like the EPDP, PLOTE and an EPRLF faction reduced their presence in the N-E and became virtually non-functional in the face of the relentless Tiger onslaught.

The turning point

The turning point came with the LTTE Eastern Commander Vinayagamoorthy Muralaetharan alias "Col" Karuna's revolt. After suffering some reversals and withdrawing from the East, Karuna inspired his cadres to keep resisting the LTTE through hit and run attacks. Though his rebel-

lion was initially "homegrown", Karuna was constrained to collaborate with the Sri Lankan state apparatus for reasons of survival. Soon the tide turned. Karuna's cadres augmented by ENDLF men began dishing it out to the LTTE. The predator became prey. The LTTE has restricted its movements very greatly in the East now and is almost a non-presence in most of the Government controlled areas in the east. It must be noted that Karuna's ascendancy was made possible to a great extent by the covert logistical support provided by the state while denying it overtly.

It was however a different scenario in the North where the LTTE continued to target its perceived "enemies" without any problem. These included some members of the armed forces suspected to be military intelligence too. A high watermark of the LTTE's unbridled disregard for civilised norms was the brutal murder of "King" Charlie Wijewardene, the Jaffna SSP. This was followed by the Lakshman Kadirgamar assassination in Colombo.

It appears that some time after these killings the green light was given for an "unofficial operation" in the North too. It was felt that only an "eastern type" campaign would help cut the Tigers down to size in the North. The idea was to commence a violent campaign targeting LTTE cadres and their perceived supporters. Ultimately what goes around comes around. The chickens came home to roost in the LTTE coop.

Shadow war

The LTTE became aware of the plan and began initially a media campaign. It highlighted the fact that "persons" were being sent to the North to commence a shadow war. Nevertheless the blueprint for a shadow war went on as planned. According to an informed source a contingent of specially trained Sinhala, Tamil and Muslim security personnel are now in the north. They are guided by military intelligence personnel. They are assisted by some members of non-Tiger Tamil groups. The Presidential election also gave impetus to the shadow war campaign. It was resolved that the LTTE should not be given an opportunity like 2004

elections to manipulate polling. A countervailing force to check and counter the LTTE was needed. It is felt that intimidatory violence is necessary to curb the LTTE on the one hand and manipulate the electoral system on the other.

The shadow war commenced sometime in late September. Since every act of violence is inevitably linked to the LTTE few suspected that a clandestine operation had been launched. Initially all killings and violent acts in Jaffna were depicted as Tiger sponsored. But the LTTE obviously knew which was which.

The Tigers suspected that their political wing operatives were going to be victimised. It is said that quite a few Tiger operatives and agents had been abducted clandestinely. The LTTE keeps quiet about it for tactical reasons as well as pride.

The 30-year old video shop owner in Uduvil killed a few weeks ago for example was supposedly a Tiger agent. He was allegedly shot dead by an intelligence operative codenamed "Bandara". But the Southern media portrayed it as a Tiger killing while the northern media parroted the familiar 'killed by unknown persons' line.

The LTTE with peremptory caution moved its known political cadres outside the Government controlled areas. Ilamparithy now operates from Pallai near the Muhamalai border. The LTTE intelligence personnel and killer squads remain within the Government controlled areas. According to a news item posted in the EPDP website sometime ago the Tigers were allegedly targeting a list of 67 people in a pre-emptive bid to eliminate potential opposition. Some of the recent LTTE violence was directed against these targets.

Unfortunately for the Tigers the EU has banned travel and called for an end to assassinations. Yet the Tigers are caught up in a vortex of violence. If they are to continue their campaign of killing that will blacken prospects with the EU and the ban will continue. But from their perspective of self-preservation there is no way out. Even if they retaliate to some acts the overall blame will be on them. Already the escalation of violence after the EU ban has been noted. Furthermore agent-provoca-

teurs are likely to provoke the LTTE into more violence.

The state's security apparatus and its Tamil minions are no saints either. They too are capable of imitating the Tiger in every way. Jaffna seems to be on the verge of a shadow war. Let us also not forget that as far as Presidential elections are concerned aspiring candidates would like to get Northern votes but opt for other choices if they are not assured of a safe bloc vote. "If the votes don't come to me then see to it that nobody else gets them either" seems to be the operative credo.

Propaganda war

An important component of this shadow war is propaganda. There was a time when the LTTE dominated with its pioneering access to state of the art technology. The LTTE was first with the news and presented it according to their slant. Now the wheel has turned.

There is a plethora of anti-Tiger websites. Some are direct. Others are indirect. The LTTE controls most of

the Tamil media including TV, radio and printed journals, but there are a few journals, radios and websites combating them that constitutes the 'alternative media'. The continuous presentation of a solitary perspective, blacking out and distortion of news, tarnishing and vituperative attacks on individuals, sycophantic praise for Tiger leaders etc has eroded Tiger media credibility. The alternative Tamil media is believed more.

As far as the English language media is concerned the monopoly once enjoyed by the "Tamilnet" is over. Besides the website has become a caricature of its former self after "Taraki" Sivaram's death. Other pro-Tiger English language websites focus more on attacking independent individuals on one side and promoting mediocre toadies on the other. Meanwhile independent, non-Tiger websites like "lacnet" have greater credibility.

Thus the LTTE finds itself fighting a losing battle as far as the information war is concerned. It is belatedly recognizing that sophisticated

technology is no substitute for truth, accuracy, integrity and independence in the media sphere. The downside of this for the LTTE in this is that very often its version of events gets eclipsed by other versions. The Tigers usually rely on arms and force for everything. But the media war cannot be won by the force of arms. The long term success of a shadow war depends very much on the information war.

The killings of Sivakadatcham and Rajadurai have to be viewed against the backdrop of a shadow and media war. Contrary to propaganda being

dished out by the state and sections of the media, Sivakadatcham was and remained a strong supporter of the LTTE. He had at one time been supportive of the EPRLF but was now staunchly pro-Tiger like the EPRLF's Suresh Premachandran. It was only a few weeks ago that his nephew Nagulan was killed in Vavuniya. Nagulan, an EPRLF cadre, had quit politics and was living quietly with his wife and children in a Sinhala majority area. The killing was as usual attributed to the LTTE but there is some suspicion now that the actual killers belonged to the EPDP.

A soft target

Sivakadatcham was the General-secretary of the LTTE sponsored Tamil Resurgence committee responsible for organizing the Pongu Tamil demonstrations in Jaffna. He also was in charge of the 18th anniversary celebrations of Lt. Malathy who died during the IPKF battle on October 19th 1987 in Kopay. She was the first woman Tiger to die in battle. The first woman militant to die in battle was Shobha of the EPRLF who died in the attack on Naval base at Karainagar in 1985. Shobha was the sister of Douglas Devananda. There is some resentment in EPDP and EPRLF circles that the LTTE is distorting history by blacking out Shobha and promoting Malathy as the first woman martyr. The selection of Sivakadatcham by the anti-Tiger elements as a "soft" target in the shadow war against the LTTE can be understood if not condoned in this context. If the killing of a high-profile supporter of the LTTE was calculated to send shivers down the spines of non-combatant Tiger supporters, then the LTTE's response was prompt and predictable. An equally symbolic target had to be eliminated to demonstrate that the Tigers would not take these types of killings lying down. The retaliation was as brutal as it was quick. So Rajadurai was killed by the LTTE within nineteen hours of Sivakadatcham's murder.

Rajadurai was already in the LTTE's bad books. He was principal of Jaffna Central College where Douglas Devananda had most of his secondary education. Jaffna Central College founded by Methodist missionaries in early nineteenth century



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... of the oldest schools in the Country. Devananda as Minister shored the College with attention. Rajadurai as a dedicated principal cultivated the influential alumnus and got a lot of money for school development. Many new buildings, classrooms and laboratories were put up through Devananda's help. Rajadurai also allowed Central College students and premises to be used in the educational program "Kalvikkalam" broadcast over radio.

This perceived closeness to Devananda was resented by the LTTE and in May this year the Tiger front "Ellalan Padai" (King Elara's force) issued a leaflet warning Rajadurai. He was asked to stop all co-operation with the Government and Devananda or face the consequences. This was followed by the LTTE Tamil website "Nitharsanam" operating in Oslo with Norwegian funds threatening him as an EPDP "consultant".. The Nitharsanam also warned Rajadurai that his corpse would be found soon with a name-board around his neck.. Incidentally this writer and his photo has also been featured frequently in this website run by "Oothai Sethu", a man linked directly to LTTE intelligence chief Pottu Amman.

The "Nitharsanam" is also very much in the news these days after its bizarre question whether Mahinda Rajapakse would be able to celebrate his next birthday on Nov 18th. It is known for its vitriolic and slanderous attacks particularly on TULF president Anandasangaree. It even doctored photographs to show that Sangaree was addressing a security personnel meeting.

Troubled by these accusations and threats Rajadurai went to Kilinochchi and met Daya Master, Balakumaran and "Baby" Ilankumaran. He explained his position and said that he was not of the EPDP. Rajadurai also said that he was cultivating Devananda to get as much aid as possible for the betterment of the school. The LTTE told him not to worry and sent him back.

Rajadurai may have thought that he was safe. Indeed it may even have been so. But when a pro-Tiger principal was killed by suspected EPDP gunmen Tiger logic necessitated the

killing of a perceived pro-EPDP principal. It had to be prominent, quick and easy. Rajadurai fitted the bill. It was open knowledge that he was going to be at Veerasingham hall. That was that and his life snuffed out just like that.

The shadow war

While there is no doubt in most minds that Rajadurai was killed by the LTTE there is some doubt about Sivakadatcham. The security and Police circles along with Ministers Devananda and Nimal Sripala De Silva are trying to pin blame on the LTTE for this too. Sections of the media are swallowing this line either wittingly or unwittingly. The desire on the part of the security apparatus and its collaborator Devananda to blame the LTTE for Sivakadatcham's death is obvious For one thing the launching of a northern shadow war has to be kept unpublicised. The killing of a principal for whatever reason will not go down well with the Tamil public. Moreover Sivakadatcham's killing was the provocation for the second murder and therefore deserved greater condemnation.

Thus Devananda and the security sources are coming out with contradictory pronouncements. The trouble in all this is that Sivakadatcham was a known and publicly identified LTTE supporter. He was on a Tiger platform even a few days prior to his death. So Devananda tries to downplay this by saying that Sivakadatcham had arguments with the LTTE a few days ago. He had allegedly objected to student conscription. Other stories planted by security circles are about Sivakadatcham consistently opposing conscription of minors, a change of heart after the EU ban, resentment over his nephew Nagulan's killing and about LTTE anger over a poor show at the Pongu Tamil celebrations. The LTTE therefore killed him.

But a Tiger press release was issued stating that the LTTE had awarded Sivakadatcham a "Tamil national patriot" - "Nattruppattralar" - title posthumously. The Tamil National Alliance MPs Eelaventhan, Sivanesan and Gajenthiran organized and participated at his funeral. LTTE

intelligence helped organize a week-long transport stoppage by the Kopay Christian College students at the Kopay junction where the Point Pedro-Jafna road and Kaithady-Urumpirai roads intersects. A prolonged boycott of schools and university has begun. Also many leading education officials participated at the funeral. All this would have been impossible if people were aware that the victim was killed by the LTTE.

Devananda of course says that the LTTE is going through this charade to deflect blame away from them. If so why restrict it to Sivakadatcham alone? Why not apply the same deception to Rajadurai? After all the Jaffna Central College principal was more high profile and being blamed for that killing would be more harmful. Just as the students of Kopay Christian College are being instigated into demonstrating by the LTTE Centralites are being encouraged by the EPDP. This does not mean that the students and staff of either College do not feel sorrow or pain. Of course they do. But it is not possible for such feelings to be demonstrated publicly without instigation or protection from powerful forces.

Three factors

Three factors point to the hand of the security apparatus cum EPDP in the killing of Sivakadatcham. Firstly neither the Kopay Police nor an Army detachment in close proximity came to the scene quickly after the shooting. The man was shot at 8. 35 but the body was removed only after midnight. The authorities kept aloof. What kept the army and Police away for so long? Contrast this with the immediate response of the authorities after the Rajadurai shooting.

Secondly there is the phenomenon of Devananda and security sources straining every sinew to convince the world that the LTTE was responsible. Theories are bandied about. Hitherto undisclosed information is stated as gospel truth to buttress these views. The over zealous attempt to project an impression that the principal had quarrelled with the LTTE and was immediately victimised appears suspicious and infantile.

Thirdly the response of the anti-Tiger media and some anti-Tiger trade unions is indicative. Much mention is made about Rajadurai The teachers union for example condemns Rajadurai's killing but not that of Sivakadatcham. If both were LTTE victims then both killings should have been condemned equally. The perceived imbalance of the response shows that only one killing was by the LTTE.

The counterpoint to this is the LTTE media. There much is being made of Sivakadatcham though Rajadurai was more high profile. Rajadurai is virtually ignored. Though Jaffna is seemingly mourning for both principals, an undisguised divide can be seen. Both sides pay lip service to the dead principals but each side is more concerned about the principal of their choice. The students of each school are concerned about their principal but the student body at large is worried about the whole situation.

One is also able to detect a political motive in some of the reporting about the killings. The principals are

portrayed as people who stood up to the LTTE in resisting student conscription. There is no record of any Tamil principal collaborating with the LTTE in conscripting students. Few however defy the LTTE. The attempt here is to show that the LTTE killed them for resisting conscription. The aim is to blacken the already tarnished Tiger image further.

Another aspect is the move to depict the LTTE as being "anti-principal". It is an LTTE principle to kill principals is one such quip. The Tigers killed principals like Anandrajah of St. Johns, Jaffna, Kandasamy of Palugamam MMV, Batticaloa and Sithampanathan of Vikneswara College, Trincomalee. While these killings are to be condemned one must understand that the Tigers did so for particular reasons. They were not killed because they were principals. They were killed in spite of being principals for acts of commission or omission that the Tigers did not agree with.

As far as the recent killings are concerned the Tigers killed only one of the victims. So

the attempt to charge the LTTE with both killings is incorrect. It is only part of deliberate propaganda. This writer is no admirer of the LTTE's ruthless violence. No Tamil journalist writing in English has been openly critical of the LTTE as this writer. No Tamil journalist writing in English has been attacked as much by tiger propagandists as this writer. Yet this writer has to state the truth as perceived by him. What is missed in the frenzy to shower responsibility on the LTTE for both murders is that two sets of ri-

val killers are now running riot in Jaffna.

Competing violence

The "Thenee" Tamil website is run by critics of the LTTE in Germany. It is of high political standard and uncompromising in its criticism of the Tigers. One of its report about the killings of the principals has a heading "Sabaash! Sariyaana Potti" - "Wow! What a competition". In the film oriented popular culture of Tamils these lines from the film "Vanchikottai Vaaliban" (The youth from the fortress Vanchi) are etched in collective memory. It is the scene where two of the greatest danseuse actresses of the Tamil screen Vyjayanthimala and Padmini compete in a dancing performance before the hero Gemini Ganeshan and the villain Veerappa. Even as the dance hots up Veerappa edges forward and echoes the sentiments of all viewers by saying "Sabash. Sariyana Potti". By describing the killings as "Sariyana Potti" the "Thenee" has correctly assessed that there is the phenomenon of competitive violence in the North.

Northern violence has taken a qualitative turn. It is no longer going to be one-sided with the Tigers doing all the killings. Another force has also emerged. It may be entirely state sponsored or a reaction of non-Tiger groups aided by the state. The reality is that two entities are going to engage in violence against each other hereafter. The killing of two principals by two sets of killers indicates that. The mosaic law of an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth is executed in Jaffna as a principal for a principal! The phenomenon of competing violence is not a simple dance performance for people to enjoy and comment about the competition on the dancing arena. It is far more serious and sinister. Jaffna runs the risk of being engulfed in a wave of internecine violence. It does not matter whether there would be victors or not. The victims are all going to be Tamil regardless of their politics. Just as Eastern Tamils now, the Northern Tamils too will soon be victims in a looming shadow war. □

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The Choice is Federalism or Separation, not Unitary or Federal

Dr. S. Narapalasingam

Another phase in the peace effort in Sri Lanka has emerged with the current campaign for the Presidential election on November 17, 2005. But the confusion over the contrasting ways the two main contenders hope to secure durable peace has cast doubts on the feasibility of realising the national objective. Moreover, the wrangling over unitary and federal systems and the doubts whether a federal system can ensure a united Sri Lanka dispelling the fear of separation are also contributing to the uncertainty. In order to take a sensible path to peace, it is important to recognize the true nature of the bloody conflict in Sri Lanka that has destroyed about 65,000 lives. Many victims were young fighters and non-combatants caught in the aerial and suicide bombings. Although after the assassination of former Foreign Minister Lakshman Kadirgamar, no high profile politician has been murdered, political killings have not ceased in the East and North despite the directive of the international community to stop this abhorrent practice. The assailants' leaders only know what kind of peace they hope to achieve.

This writer in his previous articles have emphasized the distinction between - (I) the ethnic problem that originated with the adoption of the 'Sinhala Only' language policy in 1956, fuelled in later years by other discriminatory policies in education, employment and development; and (II) the subsequent armed conflict between the LTTE and the State. It is true the latter has its origin in the ethnic problem but as stated by one former Tamil politician, the issue for which the LTTE is fighting is not just the discriminatory practices that drove the Tamils to the status of second class citizens in their motherland but the creation of a separate state where the hegemony of the Sinhalese will not prevail. The LTTE has taken an extreme view that it is imperative to deprive Colombo any right to control the land in the North-East claimed as the 'Tamil homeland'. Liberating the land is the main aim of LTTE's struggle, regardless of the

number of Tamil lives sacrificed in the process. The cynics cite the statement made at the media conference in April 2002 in Kilinochchi by the LTTE leader V. Prabhakaran that the authorization given way back for anyone to kill him if he settles for anything less than Eelam still stands. Such is the commitment to the much desired goal. The pursuit for peace to succeed must take note of both the past developments that led to the present crisis as well as the present realities. A practical method of ending the conflict will also lay the foundation for building durable peace. It is abundantly clear from the events that have occurred since the February 2002 ceasefire that permanent peace has been sought by the parties to the conflict on their own terms, which have little in common.

2005 Election manifesto

The leader of the Opposition and UNP Presidential candidate Ranil Wickremesinghe launched his election manifesto on 27 September. It has two sections. The first has three themes - end to hunger and war on high cost of living; jobs for abilities; and defeat separatism. It is the third theme that is of interest here. Regarding the latter the manifesto states:

* We will bring about a permanent resolution to the ethnic problem through a political solution based on a United Sri Lanka.

* A consensus reached between the UNP and the UPFA on the ethnic problem, the agreement arrived at between the Government and the LTTE and the Oslo and Tokyo declaration, which guarantees the unity, democratic character and territorial Integrity of Sri Lanka, has created the framework of a solution acceptable to all communities of the country.

* Guaranteeing the security and protection of the Eastern province, while guaranteeing Muslim representation in the peace talks, we will also ensure that at all times, the views of the Muslim community are taken into consideration.

* I request from the people of Sri Lanka a mandate to reach a permanent political solution within this framework. I also request from the people a mandate to discuss and reach a consensus with the SLFP to proceed as above.

* We will create a separate Ministry for the war displaced people in the North and the East.

In the second section under "Problems in the East", the manifesto states:

* We will establish a mechanism that will ensure the peace and security of all people living in the Eastern province.

* A Muslim delegation shall be included in the peace talks and views of the Muslim population will be ascertained at all times.

* We will speed up the post tsunami reconstruction and rehabilitation of the East under the to-be appointed competent authority.

* We will improve the standard of the Eastern University.

* A road network linking the proposed Wellawaya airport and the Batticaloa district shall be built. We will also build a road linking Kandy with Kalmunai.

* We will establish free trade zones in the Eastern province to provide employment to the people of the area.

Although the stated proposals to tackle the problems in the East are intended to win the Muslim votes, these challenge LTTE's claim to a 'Tamil homeland' in the merged North-East. Peace and security are needed not only to the people in the East but also to the rest of the population. However, the problem in the East is severe because of the fighting between the LTTE and the breakaway Karuna group (Tamil National Force) and the hunting and killing of members of other Tamil groups and Tamil militants, who are perceived as collaborating with the security forces. The diverse ethnic composition in the East with Tamils, Muslims and Sinhalese each numbering roughly a third of the total population is also a crucial factor contributing to the current volatile situation there. The tension will not just fade away with the establishment of some ad hoc mechanism for ensuring peace and security. A permanent political arrangement is needed to safeguard the rights of all communities as well as their safety and security.

The manifesto does not explicitly mention that the UNP leader favours a federal solution but this is implied in the

reference to the framework of a solution acceptable to all communities of the country found in the Oslo and Tokyo declarations, which guarantees the unity, democratic character and territorial integrity of Sri Lanka. Another significant step mentioned in the manifesto is the "request from the people of Sri Lanka a mandate to reach a permanent political solution within this framework" and also "a mandate to discuss and reach a consensus with the SLFP to proceed as above". There is no reference to the resumption of the peace talks, the UNF government under his leadership had with the LTTE before the latter pulled out in April 2003 after six rounds dissatisfied with the 'progress' made. The LTTE submitted its own ISGA proposals 7 months later as the sole basis for resuming the talks. These were rejected by the Sinhalese and Muslim parties as well as by India. Some considered the ISGA as a subtle move towards the creation of separate state.

UNP Presidential candidate Ranil Wickremesinghe on September 29 invited President Chandrika Kumaratunga to build further upon the UNP and SLFP's platform of consensus towards the peace

process. In a letter to the President with the headline 'Proposals for Peace in Sri Lanka', the UNP leader said, "I have absolutely no doubt that despite our differences and disagreements, you believe, as I do, that the only way a just peace can be established is through a meaningful devolution of power. There has been unanimity between the UNP, the SLFP, the LTTE and the international community that devolution should be on the basis of a federal framework which will enable the power sharing between the Centre and the Region. The Oslo Communiqué has spelt out such a framework for a united Sri Lanka, and [was] found acceptable by all the parties mentioned."

Here the emphasis is on devolution of power within a federal framework, which was what the President mooted in 1995, 1997 and 2000. The UNP leader then obstructed her moves and tore the draft constitution presented in August 2000. This contained drastically watered down version of the 1995 devolution proposals. One cannot forget the contribution of Dr. Neelan Tiruchelvam to the 1995 devolution package, which was even acknowledged by Anton Balasingham, the

LTTE ideologue as significant, long after the Tamil intellectual and internationally renowned constitutional expert was assassinated for collaborating with the Sinhalese leaders to find a political settlement to the conflict in undivided Sri Lanka. The LTTE's willingness to consider a federal solution in Oslo turned out to be illusive when the LTTE's chief negotiator following its rejection by his leader announced there was no such joint agreement between the LTTE and the Government.

Prime Minister Mahinda Rajapakse who is the SLFP Presidential candidate has not released

his election manifesto. The agreements he has entered with the Sinhala nationalist parties JVP and JHU are at odds with the declared position on the ethnic issue of President Chandrika Kumaratunga, who is the leader of the SLFP. The agreements with the JVP and JHU insist on retaining the unitary structure of the State besides taking a hard line against the LTTE and rejection of the P-TOMS agreement. At the SLFP central Committee meeting held on September 30, President Chandrika Kumaratunga wanted the SLFP manifesto for the November 17 Presidential election to focus on a federal solution. The Sunday Times of October 2 reported that a nine-member Committee headed by Premier Rajapakse was appointed by the central committee to "co-ordinate with all parties supporting him at the upcoming presidential elections and carry out its campaign". This committee will also draw up the party's manifesto for the November 17 Presidential elections. According to press reports, Prime Minister Rajapakse has no intention of changing the commitment he had made earlier. He has also not mentioned about devolution of powers within the unitary system.

It is well known that the JVP is against devolution and advocates decentralization of power to the periphery. In hindsight, LTTE's rejection of the Provincial Council system introduced under the thirteenth Constitutional Amendment has been sensible as seen from the very limited powers devolved to the provinces. Devolution under a unitary system is not the solution to the vexed problem. It is completely unrealistic to expect the LTTE to come to the negotiating table on the terms announced by the Prime Minister. His statements that he, himself, would have direct talks with the LTTE supreme leader V. Prabhakaran to settle all the problems of the conflict cannot be taken seriously. It remains to be seen how the diverse views of government members on political solution to the ethnic problem will be reconciled in the manifesto, especially when the JVP is deeply involved in mobilizing support for the SLFP candidate Mahinda Rajapakse at next month's election. The leading campaigners and spokesmen for Prime Minister Mahinda Rajapakse are frontline JVP and JHU members Wimal Weerawansa (JVP propaganda secretary) and Udaya Gammanpila. According to some observers their role has made the Prime Minister appear more as the JVP-JHU Presidential candidate than of the SLFP. The partnership with

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the JVP and the JHU cannot attract many votes of both the ethnic and religious minorities. Both the CWC and the SLMC have declared their support to Ranil Wickremesinghe. It is uncertain whether this alienation will be more than offset by the swing expected from the Sinhala-Buddhist voters. The situation prevailing now is very different to that which enabled the late S.W.R.D. Bandaranaike to become the first SLFP Prime Minister, who successfully mustered the votes of the Sinhalese on the 'Sinhala Only' cry. There was no war and the country did not face any threat of destruction and separation then. People are desperate for peace and better living conditions denied by the prolonged violent disturbances and misallocation and mismanagement of resources.

If the Prime Minister's manifesto insists on retaining the unitary structure which is admitted even by many Sinhalese to have perpetuated the majority-minority division in multi-ethnic Sri Lanka, it will be a big blow to all yearning for just peace. Prime Minister Mahinda Rajapakse has repeatedly said in his campaign meetings that he will secure unity and 'honourable' peace, if he is elected as the next President. It is unthinkable how he can secure these without drastic changes to the present unitary constitution. The familiar parochial politics aimed at winning votes that has kept the country in turmoil with little progress has not gone away. Its destructive effects in the longer term to national progress, peace and prosperity were ignored by the power seekers. Sri Lanka has been driven to the present pathetic state by short-sighted political leaders. Sri Lanka is now on the verge of being branded globally as a failed state.

The two prominent Presidential candidates have claimed they have a political solution to the ethnic problem. Even the very uneducated person knows any viable solution requires changes to the present constitution. Major changes require two-third majority in the Parliament and the consent of the people secured through a country-wide referendum. These requirements can be met only if the political leaders take a joint enlightened view on national issues and co-operate wholeheartedly. They have also got to convince their supporters the imperative to accept the formula agreed by them. These tasks will be difficult, if negative ideas are given to the voters in the Presidential contest. If the campaign proceeds along their stated stands, namely federal

and unitary system, the chances of amending the Constitution are indeed bleak regardless of the outcome of the election. There are also other major issues such as the current Executive Presidential and electoral systems that need to be settled before drafting the amendments. Unlike in 1994, there is no assurance from any candidate to abolish the Executive Presidency. The JVP was then vehemently pressing for the abolition. Among the 19 conditions placed by the CWC for extending support to Ranil Wickremesinghe, one is the retention of the Executive Presidency and the present electoral system.

If the constitutional reform process gets stuck for whatever reason, the LTTE will certainly cite the inability to change the Constitution as a compelling case to secede. It is apparent from the conditions placed by the relevant parties for supporting either of the two main candidates that they are mainly concerned about their respective communal interests. To them peace should not be at the expense of sacrificing their separate interests. This is the consequence of the failure to forge a common national identity, which is another reason to abandon the unitary system. Because of the absence of shared Lankan identity among different ethnic groups, the national issues are being viewed from diverse communal perspectives.

Transforming the State

President Chandrika Kumaratunga in her address to the Asia Society in New York on September 14 on the topic 'For Larger Freedom: Pursuit of Peace in Sri Lanka' said: "We need to transform the State so it is more inclusive - equally reflecting the concerns of all communities. My view and the view of overwhelming sections of Sri Lankan society is that this will involve transforming the State from a unitary one to one that is plural and federal in nature. ... While a transformation of the Sri Lankan State from a unitary to a federal one may help include the Tamil community and the Muslim community, it alone will not bring lasting peace. To achieve peace we also need to deal with the second equally important, but neglected challenge - transforming the LTTE from a dictatorial and ruthless militant group that regularly engages in the use of terror, to a political force that engages with the State and does not resort to violence to make its arguments heard. This process needs to be analyzed and addressed in

a conscious and systematic manner together with the LTTE. And just as the LTTE has a stake in the transformation of the Sri Lankan State, all Sri Lankans have a stake in the transformation of the LTTE. The challenge of dealing with these dual transformations will not be easy for any single political party in Sri Lanka, however powerful. It requires a broad consensus and joint action between the major political parties and groups in the country."

The distinction between the ethnic problem and the conflict between the heavily armed LTTE and the State mentioned at the very beginning is also implicit in President's speech. The fact that transformation of the State from a unitary to a federal one requires a broad consensus and joint effort of the major political parties and groups has been recognized. This transformation must take precedence over the second, namely transforming the LTTE from "a dictatorial and ruthless militant group" to a political force that engages with the State and "does not resort to violence to make its arguments heard". Sadly before the violent uprising, non-violent methods failed to influence the governments in granting the legitimate rights of the Tamils. The thinking of those wielding power then was the powerless Tamils could be subdued by aggression. Paradoxically even the moderate Tamils will admit that if not for the violent confrontation against the State, the oppression and intimidation would have continued unabatedly and the Tamils would have lost the might to claim their due rights. Unfortunately, the aim of the armed struggle turned out later to be different from what was believed then. The need for transformation on two areas has arisen as a result of this development.

Addressing the UN General Assembly on September 16, President Chandrika Kumaratunga said: "More than 10 years ago, my Government launched a bold policy of a negotiated settlement in place of conflict, and a federal solution as against a separate State. With the support of a broad multi-ethnic coalition of parties I proceeded to talk with the rebel armed group the LTTE about ending the conflict, and discuss with all the parties in parliament about a new more inclusive, political Constitution that would share power with all communities. This policy shift laid the groundwork for a new approach to fighting terrorism and the peace process in my country that simultaneously addressed Security, Development

and Human Rights.”

There is a catch-22 situation with regard to “a new more inclusive political Constitution” as the present Constitution itself is an impediment to major change. Besides the stipulated conditions, it is preventing the emergence of a strong government. In 1972 and 1978 when the last two constitutions were introduced, the governments elected under the first-past-the-post electoral system had the required two-third majority. No government elected under the multifarious proportional representation system set in the present Constitution had been able to muster the two-third majority. Given the traditional partisan politics in which national interest is eclipsed by power-centered politics, consensus between the government and opposition on national issues has so far evaded.

In her UN speech, she mentioned the difficulty her government faced in seeking a negotiated settlement with an outfit like the LTTE. It must be noted here both sides were not keen to discuss the core issues and the talks could hardly be called negotiations. She said: “The challenge we face in Sri Lanka is not unique. Vulnerable democracies which have undertaken bold, political initiative to address the root causes of terrorism and seek political solutions by engaging ruthless armed groups, find themselves in a genuine dilemma as to how to develop a credible and acceptable approach to such negotiations.” The way to tackle this problem is to create conditions which make the main aim of the rebels appear unreasonable and unnecessary to both the resident Tamil people and the international community. Not only the failure to change the present Constitution but also the non-implementation of existing provisions and adopted legislations have prevented the creation of helpful conditions.

The co-chairs of the Tokyo Donor Conference (the United States, the European Union, Japan and Norway) met in New York on September 19 to discuss the current situation in Sri Lanka, following the assassination of Sri Lankan Foreign Minister Lakshman Kadirgamar. The statement issued after the meeting said, “the peace process between the Government of Sri Lanka and the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) is facing its most serious challenge since the Ceasefire Agreement came into force in February 2002. The Ceasefire Agreement remains the essential anchor of the peace process and is put at grave risk by the continuing

violence. Effective implementation of the agreement is the responsibility of the Government of Sri Lanka and the LTTE.” The joint statement also commended “the Government of Sri Lanka for its restraint following the assassination of Foreign Minister Kadirgamar and for its willingness to discuss the Ceasefire Agreement with the LTTE” and “are disappointed that the LTTE has not agreed to the proposed venue for talks with the Government of Sri Lanka about implementation of the Ceasefire Agreement”. The Co-Chairs called on “the LTTE to take immediate public steps to demonstrate its commitment to the peace process and its willingness to change - while urging that both parties to work out a federal solution within a united Sri Lanka”.

The following advice of the Co-chairs is relevant. “The future of Sri Lanka lies in the hands of the people of Sri Lanka. The forthcoming elections are a time of political choice in Sri Lanka. It is natural that there will be vigorous debate on the best way forward in the peace process. The Co-Chairs look to all parties to refrain from violence and from statements and acts that could undermine progress toward the peaceful resolution of the conflict after the elections.” Their view that “a peaceful resolution of the conflict can only be achieved through a negotiated political settlement that follows the principles agreed in Oslo in December 2002” is simplistic seen in the light of President Kumaratunga’s speeches in New York. The Co-Chairs may force the horse (tiger) to go to the pond but can they force it to drink the water? It is uncertain whether this is tactical or due to the lack of understanding of the true nature of the conflict in Sri Lanka.

Unitary or federal debate

There were some articles recently in national newspapers for and against federalism. Misconception and prejudices of the authors were evident in their arguments. Neither unitary nor federal structure guarantees that the country will be united. Unity depends on how the adopted system operates. Peace will prevail throughout the country only if the centre in a federal setup behaves reasonably as in the countries where the system is serving effectively as a unifying mechanism enabling them to be politically stable and prosperous.

The majority Sinhalese used the unitary system to wield authority over the minority Tamils. The system was in ef-

fect a mechanism to divide the society. It failed to promote the common national identity. Sri Lanka was united at the time of independence and during the initial period after independence under a unitary system. The Tamil people rejected federalism and opted to keep the unitary structure in the 1948 Constitution. The problem started when the southern polity manipulated it to serve mainly the majority Sinhalese ignoring the interests, needs and aspirations of the minority Tamils. The Sinhalese majority rule entrenched by manipulating the unitary system was the principal reason for the Tamils to lose faith. Had there been a truly federal arrangement their political rights, dignity, safety and security would not have been denied.

One columnist has said federalism is not a uniting mechanism but one in which is couched the right to separate and secede. Even any move to address some of the grievances of Tamils was resisted on the grounds that this would lead to separation. After going through painful period with enormous losses and lost opportunities to advance as other Asian countries, which were earlier trailing behind Sri Lanka (then Ceylon) and now emerging as stable ‘high income’ countries, it is shocking some continue to think along the same old line that has brought the country to the present pathetic state. One can see the re-emergence of the old fear expressed by many Sinhalese decades ago when federalism was proposed by S.J.V.Chelvanayagam, Dr. E.M.V.Naganathan, C. Vanniasingham and other Tamil leaders of the bygone era to tackle the problem of discrimination by the State against minority Tamils and the resultant split in the society along ethnic origin. Dr. Naganathan used to stress at various meetings that to federalize is to unite.

The entire world wants Sri Lanka to be a democratic federal state instead of two separate states. Federalism is the mechanism in the present situation to safeguard the unity, territorial integrity and sovereignty of Sri Lanka. Federalism is being recommended as an alternative to separation. It is the unitary system that has brought Sri Lanka to the threshold of separation. The stark truth is the widely sought durable peace cannot be achieved either by retaining the unitary structure or dividing the country into two separate Sinhala and Tamil states. The LTTE too must take a pragmatic stand for negotiated settlement by accepting the federal concept with adequate safeguards against

intrusion of the center in regional administration. The prospects for negotiated settlement will improve only when the LTTE categorically accepts federalism with adequate safeguards against intrusion of the center in regional administration as an alternative to independent Tamil Eelam.

The apprehension of the opponents of federal system seems to be based on the assumption that the North-East will permanently come under the control of "Tamil terrorists, chauvinists and ethnic-cleansers". Paradoxically, the Tamil nationalists consider some of the past Sinhalese leaders who influenced or took decisions

at the national level as chauvinists and ethnic-cleansers. The state sponsored colonization programmes that changed the ethnic composition of the Eastern Province following the settlement of Sinhalese in some key areas have been cited as a form of ethnic cleansing.

However, there is some justification in the conditions placed by some analysts for the majority community to agree to a federal solution. The assurance that the LTTE will give up their arms and claim for a state of Eelam is sought. Decommissioning weapons is not easy and will

require international guarantees for their safety. Another condition mentioned is any signed agreement (if and when it happens) with the LTTE accepting a federal solution must be accompanied by external guarantees especially India that both sides will abide by the terms of the agreement. This too confirms the mistrust that exists between the two sides. This is not surprising as both have resorted to trickery and painful acts in the past several years. The real choice now is not between unitary and federal system but between federalism and separation. It is high time the peace seekers accept this reality. □

Ex-PLOTE cadre killed in Vavuniya: September 19 - Motorbike-riding gunmen shot and killed Mr. Yoganadarajah Sellathurai, 45, an ex-PLOTE cadre, in Pattakadu, 3 km west of

Vavuniya town Monday (19) at 8:45 am. The victim, who was riding a bicycle, was shot thrice with a 9 mm handgun.

Vavuniya District judge, Mr. Manickavasagar Ilancheliyan visited the site and ordered the Police to conduct investigations into the killing. Vavuniya Police Head Quarters Inspector Mr. A.M.C. Abeysinghe Bandara is heading the investigations. Twenty-six persons have been gunned down in Vavuniya district since the killings began to escalate, police added.

Three injured in grenade attack: September 22 - Unidentified attackers lobbed a grenade at a Sri Lanka Army and Police joint foot patrol wounding three SLA soldiers and a policeman near Iruthayapuram public market, 2 km north of Batticaloa town, Police said. The incident took place around 12:30 pm on Wednesday (21). The injured SLA soldiers Mr. A. M. Ajithkumara, 36, Mr. S. Santhana, 32, Mr. A. M. Sanjeeva Adigari, 35, and the police constable Mr. A. M. Somasri, 22, were rushed to Batticaloa hospital.

Police sergeant killed: September 22 - Police Sergeant Mr. Wimalaratna, 57, who was shot and wounded by two motorbike-riding gunmen, succumbed to his gunshot wounds while he was being transferred from Akkaraipattu Hospital to Amparai Hospital in serious condition, hospital sources said. The sergeant was shot Thursday (20) at 6:30 pm in Akkaraipattu, 64 km south of Batticaloa town. The police sergeant, shot while walking on the road, was rushed to Akkaraipattu hospital with serious wounds, police said.

Youth shot dead in Batticaloa town: September 24 - Two gunmen who came in a motor-bike in Sri Lanka Army (SLA) held Batticaloa town shot and killed 25-year old Mr. Velu Kishorkumar near Anthoniar Road at 7:15 pm on Saturday (24), Batticaloa Police said. Mr. Kishorkumar, a tailor originally from Kandy, lived in Kumarathan Kovil Road in Jeyanthipuram. He worked in a tailor shop in Batticaloa town. Kishorkumar was married only a week earlier. The victim received six gunshot wounds in head and chest.

Tamil language training for police: September 25 - "Ma-

NEWS TRACK

majority of the people in the Trincomalee district are Tamil speaking. The police serving in the district should learn Tamil language to promote better understanding with Tamil speak-

ing people and to discharge their duties effectively," said Mr. Raja Collure, Chairman of the Official Languages Commission of Sri Lanka, when inaugurating the Basic Tamil Language Training Programme for police personnel in the district. "Of about 64 thousand police personnel currently serving in Sri Lanka, about 17 thousand have been posted to the northeast province. There are very few Tamils in the police service. As Tamils are not willing to join the Sri Lanka Police Service it is the duty of Sinhala police personnel to serve Tamil speaking people by learning Tamil," Mr. Raja Collure added.

The Sinhala only legislation brought in by the Sri Lanka government in 1956 was the root cause for the current crisis in Sri Lanka. Now the Official Languages Commission is taking action against those officials who fail to implement the Official Languages Act passed in 1987, making Sinhala and Tamil as official languages of Sri Lanka, said Mr. Raja Collure.

Norway's Rs.23.9 million for Muslim Peace Secretariat: September 26 - The Norwegian government has granted 23.9 million rupees in support of setting up a Peace Secretariat for Muslims (PSM), according to a press release issued by the Norwegian Embassy in Colombo. The PSM will facilitate dialogue and build consensus among Muslim political parties and interest groups, in order to develop a co-ordinated position for Muslims as input to the implementation of the cease-fire agreement and in future peace negotiations, added the press release.

The press release added that the Peace Secretariat for Muslims would also function as a resource centre, and aims to undertake research and develop frameworks for peace building and constitutional questions as well as contribute to capacity building among Muslim representatives in connection to the peace process.

"We consider the PSM a positive and constructive initiative for creating a common Muslim platform for promoting Muslim interests in the ongoing peace process in Sri Lanka and we are happy to support it's important work", said Norwegian ambassador Hans Brattskar.

Woman shot dead: September 27 - Jeyarasa Leelavathy, 37, from Oddumadam, was shot dead around 6.30 am on Tuesday

(27) by unidentified gunmen when she was reportedly coming out of the Sri Lanka Army (SLA) camp located in the outskirts of Jaffna town. According to the eye-witnesses, two masked men were seen talking to Leelavathy, before she suddenly started to run. The men followed her into an abandoned housing area near Pomma Velu, shot and killed her before disappearing, TamilNet reported. The deceased had received five shots to her head. It is learnt that Mrs Leelawathy was killed for her alleged links with army personnel.

India to train Sri Lanka Police: September 27 - Government of India is to spend nearly US\$450,000 in training up to 400 Sri Lanka police officers in the areas of crime investigation including cyber crimes and bank frauds, a press release issued by the Sri Lanka Information department on Tuesday (27) said. Full text of the press release follows:

“As part of ongoing cooperation between India and Sri Lanka in the area of law enforcement, nearly 400 Sri Lankan police officers would shortly begin training at institutions in India. 385 officers of the rank of Inspectors and Sub-Inspectors would be trained in suitable batches in advanced techniques of crime investigation and scientific aids to investigation including of cyber crimes, bank frauds, etc. One of the training courses is for police dog handlers.

In all Government of India would spend Indian Rupees 20 million or approximately US\$ 450,000/- on these training courses. The courses would translate into reality a commitment made by India at the meeting in Colombo in June 2005 of the bilateral Joint Commission headed by the External Affairs Minister of India, Mr. K. Natwar Singh and the late Sri Lankan Foreign Minister, the Hon'ble Mr. Lakshman Kadirgamar.”

Batticaloa auto-rickshaw driver shot dead: September 27 - Mr. Tennakoon Mudiyanalage Sunil (46), an auto-rickshaw driver and resident of Iruthayapuram was shot and killed Tuesday (27) at 12:30 pm at Kallady in Batticaloa, police said. The three wheeler driver whose mother is a Tamil and the father is a Sinhalese, was shot by two gunmen who came in a motorbike.

The incident took place close to Thiruchenthur Murugan Temple at Kallady in Batticaloa. Mr. Mudiyanalage was returning to his home in after a hair-cut in Navalady when he was shot. Navalady is located 3 km east of Batticaloa.

TRO office attacked, one dead, two injured: September 28 - A 70-years-old store-watcher was killed when two motorbike-riding men lobbed grenades at the Tamil Rehabilitation Office located on Station Road near Batticaloa Railway station around 8:30 p.m. Wednesday, police said. TRO in a news release said that the attackers fired with automatic rifles for 35 minutes at their office where the watcher was killed and two TRO's Technical Officers were injured. The attackers had lobbed at least three grenades at the TRO office, according to the Police. There are two Sri Lanka Army sentry points within 100 meters from the TRO office. The dead man was identified as Mr. Thambyappa Velauthappillai. He was working as store-watcher at the TRO office. The injured officials were admitted to the hospital. Mr. Velauthappillai is a resident of Boundary Road, Batticaloa.

The previous attack at TRO Batticaloa District Office took place on June 13, 2005 at 8:50 p.m. and occurred in a similar manner with grenades and automatic weapons fire, TRO observed adding that the Wednesday's attack is the 4th attack on

the TRO's Batticaloa District Office since the Ceasefire Agreement between the LTTE and the Government of Sri Lanka. The organisation has urged the Sri Lankan authorities to fully investigate the attacks.

Newspaper distributor killed: September 30 - Two unidentified gunmen shot and killed Mr. Yogakumar Krishnapillai the distributor of the Batticaloa-Eelanatham newspaper. The killing took place in the heart of Batticaloa town on Central Road in front of HNB Bank, a high security area of Sri Lanka Army, Friday (30) morning around 7:30 am. Batticaloa Eelanatham, the only newspaper in Batticaloa, is printed in the LTTE held Kokkadichholai. On 10 September, Sri Lankan Special Task Force soldiers blocked the sales of the Eelanatham paper in SLA controlled areas of Batticaloa and Amparai districts.

Mr. Krishnapillai, a 38-years-old father of 3 children, was riding in a motorbike distributing paper to the shops in the town Friday morning when he was shot and killed. The body was handed over to the mortuary in Batticaloa Hospital by Police.

US defers Sri Lanka's \$40m debt: September 30 - U.S. Ambassador Jeffrey Lunstead and Sri Lankan Treasury Secretary Dr. P.B. Jayasundera signed an agreement allowing 2005 funds previously allocated for debt payments, for a total value of \$40m, to be used for relief and reconstruction activities in tsunami affected areas, a press release issued by the US embassy in Colombo said..

The press release added, “The United States has reached an agreement with Sri Lanka to restructure its bilateral debt with the U.S., thereby freeing up millions of dollars for tsunami reconstruction projects. In a signing ceremony held today, September 30, at the Ministry of Finance and Planning, U.S. Ambassador Jeffrey Lunstead and Sri Lankan Treasury Secretary Dr. P.B. Jayasundera sealed the agreement allowing 2005 funds previously allocated for debt payments to be used for relief and reconstruction activities in tsunami affected areas.

The value of the total debt deferred is US\$40 million. This one year restructuring will free this amount for tsunami relief and reconstruction activities. The U.S. debt treated by this agreement is held by the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) and the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID).”

Two shot dead, one wounded in Valaichenai: September 30 - Two electrical wiring workers working at Pillayar Temple in Valaichenai were shot and killed around 11:45 pm on Friday (30). One person was rushed to Valaichenai hospital and later transferred to Batticaloa Hospital in critical condition. Valaichenai is located 32 km north of Batticaloa town. The two persons killed in the gunfire were identified as Mr. Mahadevan Umathan, 23, a resident of Valaichenai and Mr. Thillainathan Mathivathanan, 23, a resident of Navatkudah in Batticaloa. The injured person is known as Balu.

4 arrested by the navy near Naval Base: October 3 - The Sri Lankan Navy arrested four persons who they claimed as “sea tigers” belonging to the LTTE near the naval base on Saturday (01) while they were allegedly hiding behind a building and filming the Trincomalee Naval Base using a video camera. They are reported to have had in their possession a modern video camera, a sophisticated telescope, 4 mobile phones, cash Rs.10,

900 and 4 tiger identification cards.

The arrested 4 'sea tigers' were identified as: Sivagnanam Sundaram Vijayakumar (29) of Illavalai, Kopay, Jaffna; Selvakumar Shanmugarajah (36) of Puthukudiyiruppu, Mullaithevu; Ranjith Xavier (33) of Suruvil, Jaffna; Latchumanan Aravindan (21) from Killinochi. The four arrested were handed over to the Police and they were produced in the Trincomalee court on Monday (3) and were remanded for 14 days.

Father of Karuna cadre killed: October 3 - Unidentified gunmen, suspected to be Tamil Tigers, shot and killed a 45-years old man, a father of a cadre from the Karuna Group, at his house in Kudapokkuna in Polannaruwa district, Welikanda Police said. The victim's wife was injured in the incident that took place Sunday (2) around 9:00 pm. The dead man was identified as Mr. Kandiah Ponnurasa. His son was discharged from the paramilitary Karuna Group a few months ago, Welikanda police said. Ponnurasa's wife, K. Leelawathy, injured in grenade explosion, was admitted at Polannaruwa Hospital. Kudapokkuna, a border-village between Batticaloa and Polannaruwa districts, is located 15 km north of Welikanda and 70 km west of Batticaloa.

EPDP member shot dead in Jaffna: October 3 - Mr. Krishnan Parameswaran (40), was shot and killed Monday (3) morning around 6:30 am. by unidentified men who came in a motorbike. The incident took place at Puthu Road in Anaikodai area in Jaffna district when the victim was returning home after leaving his wife in the bus stand, police said. EPDP sources in Jaffna have claimed that Mr. Krishnan was an EPDP member and accused the LTTE of killing him.

University student killed in Jaffna: October 3 - A Jaffna University student and a driver of a Canter ELF truck was killed on Monday (3) morning in the Vadamadachi area, Police said. Mr. Karthikesu Senthoochelvan, 22, of Varany, Thenmaradchi area was the victim of the unknown attackers. The victim, involved in illegal sand business, was loading sand from a sand dune between Vallipuram and Manalkadu at the time he was killed. The motive for the killing is not established, but police sources suspect that the LTTE would have targeted him because of the victim's alleged "illegal sand business".

Jewellery shop owner shot: October 3 - A jewellery-shop-owner in Chunnakam, Mr. Ponnuthurai Subenthirakumar, 32, was shot and wounded at Kantharodai in Chunnakam while he was returning home from work around 6:45 pm., Chunnakam Police said. Two unidentified gunmen shot at the victim on Subramaniyam Road in Kantharodai in Chunnakam. The victim was rushed to Tellippalai hospital with serious wounds. Chunnakam, a busy market town in the Jaffna peninsula, is located 10 km north of Jaffna town.

Music teacher shot dead: Krishnan Parameswaran (43), a music teacher at the St. Mary's Vidyalayam was shot down by the LTTE at Anaikottai in Jaffna while he was on his way to the school around 7:30 am on 3 October, the EPDP stated. Krishnan has been a music teacher since 1985 and had been a member of the EPDP.

Gunmen fire at Police Jeep: October 3 - An unidentified

group of armed men fired at a Sri Lankan Police Jeep near Mandur in the east around 7:30 pm on Monday (3) wounding the Mandur Sub-Inspector of Police, Mr. S. Vickrama, 42, police sources said accusing the LTTE of being responsible for the firing. The sub inspector was rushed to Kaluwanchikudy Hospital. Four policemen riding with the Sub-Inspector escaped from the gunfire and returned fire at the attackers, police said. The policemen were returning from Palaimunai to Mandur, and the attack took place near Palaimunai School in Mandur 35 km southeast of Batticaloa.

Court remands Tamil youths: October 3 - Trincomalee Magistrate, S. Ramakamalan on Monday (3) ordered remand till 14th October for the four Tamil youths who were arrested by the Sri Lanka Navy (SLN) when they were allegedly video-taping the Trincomalee naval headquarters. The arrested youths are from Kayts, Kopay, Mullaitivu and Uyilankulam, and their ages ranged from 19 to 29, a TamilNet report said.

The soldiers of the SLN arrested these suspects aboard a dinghy in the high security zone in the Trincomalee Sea on October 1st evening around 6.45 pm. The SLN recovered cash of about ten thousand rupees, four cellular phones, a video camera and other electronic items in possession of arrested youths, police said.

Grenade lobbed at sentry point: October 4 - An unidentified bicycle-riding man lobbed a grenade into a Sri Lanka Army sentry and road-block, police said accusing LTTE of staging the attack. The incident took place at Mankerny in Valaichenai Monday (3) around 9:30 pm. An SLA soldier sustained serious wounds and was rushed to the Polannaruwa Hospital.

The wounded SLA soldier was identified as Mr. Saman Priya Sananayake, 32. The sentry is located on Valaichenai - Vaharai main road. Four SLA soldiers were on duty while the bicycle riding attacker lobbed a grenade into the road block in Mankerny 42 km north of Batticaloa.

Gunmen waylay prison van and abduct prisoners: October 4 - Unidentified gunmen Tuesday (4) morning around 10.55 am waylaid a government passenger bus bound for Muttur town at 59th mile post on Muttur Batticaloa highway and abducted four suspects two Tamils and two Muslims who were being taken by prison officials from Trincomalee remand prison to be produced in the Muttur Magistrate Court in connection with criminal cases.

Later the two Muslims suspects were freed but unidentified men took the Tamil suspects, Muttur Police said. The names of the Tamil suspects are Mr. Kanapathipillai Vinayagamoorthy and Mr. Kanapathipillai Jeyanathan. The names of the freed Muslim suspects are Mr. Mohamed Cassim Fahir and Mr. Mohamed Farhan. All the four suspects were manacled - each pair comprised a Tamil and a Muslim. However Muslim suspect in each pair were freed by unlocking the manacle forcibly, police said. A prison guard Mr. Sukunakumar who tried to prevent the abduction received gunshot injuries in his legs in the gunfire, police said. Muttur Police and prison officials immediately brought the abduction incident to the Muttur Magistrate Mr. M. Ganesharajah.

Coconut trader shot dead: A Muslim Coconut trader was shot dead allegedly by the LTTE near Amparai - Kalmunai market at about 6.45 am on 5 October. The deceased

Seenimohamed Wahab (34) of No. 86 Beach road, Kalmunai 3, was shot dead near the market while he was proceeding to market from his house. He died at the spot.

Sulaiman Lebbe Jeinu (26) of No 93/1, Sinnathamby Lane Kalmunai 3, who accompanied Wahib was admitted to the Amparai hospital with severe gun shot injuries. In view of this accident Kalmunai town was in a tension. The public pelted stones at the vehicles in order to show their objections. All the business establishments were closed for business. After the police and army were called to the place, the situation was brought to normal.

Shop owner shot dead: October 5 - A video shop proprietor was shot dead Tuesday (4) night at Dutch road, Uduvil in Jaffna by unidentified gunmen. Rasarathinam Rajavinothan, 30, was returning home from his shop when he was waylaid by gunmen who shot him in his head. Jaffna police who rushed to the scene handed over the body to the mortuary at the Teaching hospital, Jaffna. Local residents suspect that the victim was killed because he had said that he could not afford to pay the large amount ransom demanded from him.

Teachers trained as LTTE auxiliary force: October 5 - The passing out parade of the first batch of academic staff of schools in the LTTE controlled Muttur east area, who underwent military training as part of the LTTE auxiliary unit, was held Tuesday (4) evening at Sampoor. The unit consisted of ninety two members, a TamilNet report said.

LTTE Trincomalee area commander Vasanthan lit the flame of sacrifice. Colonel Sornam, LTTE Trincomalee district military commander hoisted the Thamillelam national flag. Colonel Sornam, Mr. Kuyilinpan, Amparai district LTTE political head and Mr. Semmanan, Trincomalee district deputy political head addressed the members of the auxiliary force. Principals and education officials delivered speeches congratulating the new recruits, the report said. The passing out parade of the first batch of 120 civilians who underwent military training was held last August in Ganeshapuram in Muttur east in eastern Sri Lanka.

Time bomb explodes in EPDP vehicle in Colombo: October 6 - A time-bomb placed inside a vehicle of Eelam People Democratic Party (EPDP) official Mr Anthonipillai Jeyaraja, a personal assistant of EPDP leader Mr. Douglas Devananda, exploded around 7:45 am Thursday (6), Police said. The explosion occurred at No. 16 Nelson Place Wellawatte, south of Colombo. A clerical staff member of Devananda's Ministry, Mr Sudarsing Vijayakanth, 26, sustained minor injuries in the explosion. The injured person was admitted at Kalubowila Hospital.

The vehicle, a four wheel Toyota Town Ace, was parked outside the residence of Jeyaraja at Nelson place Wellawatte and the explosive was believed to have been planted during the previous night, Police sources added. The explosion also occurred a few meters away from the Thinamurasu weekly office located at Nelson place. The weekly is published by the EPDP. The LTTE has been blamed by the EPDP leader Douglas Devananda as being responsible for carrying out the bomb attack. It was a powerful bomb and the vehicle was completely destroyed and the office of Thinamurasu was also damaged badly.

EPDP member shot dead in Trincomalee: October 6 - Unidentified armed men shot dead Mr. Kingsely Weeraratne (34), alias 'Suriya', a senior member of the, EPDP, at Palaiyootru, a suburb in Trincomalee town, around 10.45 am, Thursday (6). Two persons waiting near a private communication centre shot the victim when he was returning home passing through the road. The death was instantaneous, police said. Trincomalee EPDP spokesman said 'Suriya' was shot dead when he was going to deliver copies of Thinamurasu weekly to shops in Palaiyootru. The father of the victim is a Sinhalese and the mother a Tamil, Uppuveli Police said. He is father of two children. The EPDP accused the Tamil Tigers as being responsible for the killing.

Three injured in grenade attack: October 6 - A Sri Lanka Army soldier, a police constable and a civilian were injured when unidentified persons lobbed a grenade into the checkpoint which is located in the heart of the Trincomalee town along the Sea View Road, around 8.30pm on Thursday (6). They were immediately admitted at the Trincomalee general hospital and are reported to be out of danger, Trincomalee Police said. Security forces, who blamed the LTTE for the attack, immediately cordoned off the Sea View road and blocked all traffic and the movement of pedestrians and began intensive search operation in the vicinity, civil sources said. Meanwhile, residents in Trincomalee said another explosion was heard in the town around 9.30 pm the same day.

Policeman, 11 civilians injured: A Police Constable and 11 civilians were injured when a hand grenade was thrown at a water bowser of the Sri Lanka Army which was passing Valachchenai town towards Kalkudah, Batticaloa Division SSP D.D. Ranasinghe said. No damage has been caused to the Army water bowser. A Police Constable who was on his way to Kalkudah after arriving in Valachchenai for duty was injured in the incident. Eleven injured civilians were admitted to the Valachchenai hospital. They are not in a serious condition, SSP Ranasinghe added.

Hindu Cultural Ministry official shot dead: October 7 - A forty year old man was shot dead, Friday (7) morning, while returning home after dropping his son at school. Kanthasamy Senthilkumaran was on his motorbike when he was attacked on the Sebastian Road around 9:15 a.m, near Bishop's House, Jaffna. Senthilkumaran, from Kolumbuthurai was attached to the Ministry of Hindu Cultural Affairs from the days T. Maeswaran was the Minister. He continued his service in the same ministry, after Douglas Devananda, EPDP, took over. He returned from Colombo for weekend, police sources said. Jaffna Police is conducting the investigations into Senthilkumaran's death. The body of the deceased was handed over to the mortuary in the Teaching Hospital Jaffna.

School re-opens in Thenmaradchchi HSZ: October 7 - Eluthumaduval North Government Tamil Mixed School located in the high security zone of Thenmaradchchi in Jaffna reopened in its own buildings, after six years. Students, teachers and well-wishers led by the Principal entered the school buildings Thursday (7) and cleaned the class-rooms.

The entire population from Eluthumaduval and Mirusuveli Educated Women Colonization Scheme fled to other safe areas following military operations of the Sri Lanka Army in 1999.

The school was also shifted and temporarily combined with another school in the government-controlled area. The SLA following the ceasefire agreement allowed resettlement of displaced in parts of the Mirusuvil Educated Women Colonization Scheme but continued to occupy the school buildings. Now the SLA has allowed the recommencement of the school in its own buildings due to pressure by resettled families that they needed the school re-opened for their children to study, sources said.

Two killed, eight wounded: October 7 - Two Tamil youths, one of them a 14 year old boy, were killed and eight others were seriously wounded when unidentified gunmen opened fire and threw a grenade at them Friday (7) around 6:45 p.m. in Valaichenai in eastern Sri Lanka. The victims, a group of young carpenters and masons, were attacked when they went to collect their daily wages at a retail shop at Fourth Cross Street at Vinayapuram, 32 km north of Batticaloa town. The attackers fled the area on push bicycles, according to a report in TamilNet.

Selvarajah Selvakumar (14) and Arumugam Paramanathan (26) died on the spot. S. Thivakaran, 16, M. Sabesan, 17, N. Kangalingam, 18, R. Seelan, 20, K. Baskaran, 21, P. Thayanantha, 23 and P. Anantharajah, 23, were seriously injured and rushed to Valaichenai and Batticaloa Hospitals.

TRO releases tsunami report: October 7 - Tamil Rehabilitation Organization (TRO), a Sri Lanka Government registered NGO working exclusively in the NorthEast, released its six-month report this week on TRO's tsunami activities. TRO was praised by many international relief organizations and media for its effectiveness in attending to the people affected by the disaster.

"The tsunami aftermath has been a testing time for TRO offices all over the world. Six months on, the relief work is far from over but made a little easier due to the hard work and assistance of the 3,500 TRO permanent staff and thousands of volunteers, donor agencies, partner organisations, the Government of Sri Lanka, the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) and private assistance. TRO wishes to thank all those who assisted in responding to the disaster and acknowledges the time and effort put forward by countless individuals from all over the world," the report said in its introduction.

"Whilst there has been a shift of emphasis in TRO's activities post-tsunami, the immediate relief and rehabilitation needs of the war affected are also being carried out. This report excludes projects pertaining to the war affected, yet TRO wishes to acknowledge their presence as significant and note the important work still being carried out in the NorthEast to assist those who have been affected by the war," the report said.

Two LTTE cadres surrender: October 7 - Two LTTE members surrendered to Naval troops deployed at Norway island in Trincomalee harbour around 1.30 pm on Thursday (6), Navy sources said. The LTTE cadres were 18 years and 14 years old and they were residents of Trincomalee town area, they said adding that the identity of the two boys was withheld with obvious security reasons. The boys had allegedly divulged to the security forces that they were among a group of boys abducted by the LTTE while they were returning home from the school. They had been forced to work as supportive cadres for the senior fighting cadres until their training commenced, they told the forces. The Navy later handed over the two surrenders to the Trincomalee Police.

Anuruddha indicted on bribery charge: October 8 - Former

Deputy Defence Minister General Anuruddha Ratwatte was served indictment on bribery charges on 7 October before the Colombo High Court. Security was beefed up in and around the Court as Ratwatte had previously asked for additional security due to an LTTE threat on his life. The Bribery Commission had filed indictment in Colombo High Court against Ratwatte for failing to explain the sources of money and property, worth 55 million rupees, he owned. His counsel had informed Court that on security grounds, he needed sufficient protection to come to Court. The Court had fixed yesterday for Ratwatte to appear with the necessary security provided. Counsel Rienzi Arsekularatne, appearing for Ratwatte, pleaded for a fast trial as it had taken a long time since the investigations commenced in 2002. He also pleaded the Court to take up the case on day-to-day basis. After the indictment was served on Ratwatte, the Judge Upali Abeyratne ordered Rs. 5 million personal bail. The Judge further ordered the accused be finger printed. The trial was fixed to February 21, 2006.

Demand to resurrect Sankilian memorial: October 8 - President of the Nallur Sankilian Community center, K Pulendrarasa, and more than one hundred members of the public met with Commissioner of the Jaffna Municipal Council C Sivagnanam in the community hall in Nallur Jaffna to discuss the lead role the Council should take in implementing community projects including the resurrection of the memorial for the Jaffna's last king Sankilian, a TamilNet report said. The public also demanded the Municipal officials to implement the needed rehabilitation work to the Jaffna's Main Open Grounds so that cultural events can again be held there. The Municipal Commissioner assured the audience that he will give priority to the two requests and asked for co-operation from the public.

Two persons abducted, one dead: October 9 - Mr. Muthulingam Chandrakumar (24) of Alvai North was found Sunday (9) early morning with injuries and his hands tied in an abandoned land in Vadamaradchchi area in Jaffna, a TamilNet report said. Nellyady Police on receipt of information rushed to the site and removed the youth to the Point Pedro Base Hospital, police said. Police have provided tight security to the ward where he is warded, sources said. Preliminary police investigation held Sunday revealed that the injured youth had been abducted by an unidentified gang on Friday night and attacked with pointed weapons.

In another incident, unidentified persons had abducted Mr. Gnanapiragasam Kirubairatnam (57) of Puttur Friday night and later he was found with injuries in a lonely spot. Jaffna Police said he succumbed to injuries on Sunday after admission to the Jaffna Teaching Hospital.

Meesalai Spiritual Refuge attacked: October 10 - Rev. Rajkumar Swamigal (34) of Sri Gayathri Kamakodi Pedam Hindu Ashram (monastery) in Meesalai, 19 kilometres east of Jaffna was abducted by a group of masked gunmen on Saturday (8). They had earlier demanded a ransom of Rs 1.5 million from him. They had claimed that EPDP leader Douglas Devananda had helped obtain Rs 1.8 million from the Ministry of Rehabilitation for renovation work to his monastery. He had been tortured, his limbs broken and the priest had been dumped in a state of unconsciousness at Inuvil. Civilians in the area had later despatched him to the Jaffna hospital from where he had been airlifted to Colombo for treatment. The Army alleged that his monastery had later been set on fire by the Tigers on 10 October.

TamilNet reported that the Spiritual Refuge was constructed

with funding from Eelam Peoples' Democratic Party (EPDP) leader Mr Douglas Devananda's Ministry at a cost of Rs 15 lakhs, local sources said. Swami Rajkumar recently had organized a function honouring Mr Devananda's contribution to the Spiritual Refuge.

Accused in Richard de Zoysa killing acquitted: October 9 - Colombo High Court Judge Rohini Perera ordered the acquittal of all the accused in Richard de Zoysa murder case. The three accused ASP Lal Priyantha Ranchagoda, OIC Anuradhapura B. G. Devasurendra and Sergeant M. W. Sarachchandra were thus released from all the charges.

Journalist Richard de Zoysa was kidnapped and murdered on February 17, 1990. The three accused were charged with the kidnapping and murder of Zoysa. Delivering the judgment, the Judge stated that the evidence led by the prosecution was contradictory and not credible. The evidence of the only eye witness A. W. Karunaratne was questioned in the Judgement. He had told the CID on the day after the alleged kidnapping, that though he witnessed the incident, he could not identify the suspects as he was in a state of a shock. Later, giving evidence before the Court he had said that he could identify them. Judge Rohini Pepera acquitted and released the accused saying that the prosecution had failed to prove the case beyond reasonable doubt.

EPDP Pottuvil Head killed: October 10 - An unidentified gunman shot and killed the Pottuvil organiser of the Eelam People's Democratic Party (EPDP) Monday (10) around 5:00 p.m. Mr. Abubhakar Sagabdeen, 43, who had gone alone to a cafe without his usual police escort, was gunned down by the attacker who was riding a bicycle. The killing took place in front of the old Post Office building on Pottuvil main road. Mr. Sagabdeen has been a resident of Kalappukattu in Pottuvil which is located in Amparai district, 112 km south of Batticaloa. The EPDP blamed the LTTE for being responsible for the killing.

EPDP member shot and killed in Pothuvil: Abubakar Sahabdeen (41) of Pothuvil Main Street in Amparai was shot and killed by the LTTE pistol gang around 4:45 pm in front of the Old Post Office on Pothuvil Road. He is a father of 7 children. It should be noted that only yesterday the UN Expert on Human Rights, Mr. Ian Martin visited Batticaloa and held talks with various organizations. He is in the country to look into the Human Rights violations of the LTTE in the country.

LTTE cadres ambushed: October 11 - A group of men, suspected to be from the Karuna faction of the LTTE, had launched an ambush on an LTTE convoy in Vavunathivu, 5 kilometers west of Batticaloa Monday (10) night. While TamilNet quoting LTTE reported that three of LTTE cadres sustained injuries in a counter-strike, other reports from Colombo said that at least 8 LTTE cadres were killed with many others injured and several vehicles damaged in the ensuing battle. The clash took place at the entrance to the LTTE controlled area in Vavunathivu around 10:00 p.m. on Monday. Vavunathivu is located 5 km west of Batticaloa. Around 15 heavily armed men moved beyond the no-man zone in Vavunathivu attempting to target the

LTTE convoy moving along the border.

Meanwhile, Sri Lanka Army sources, denying their involvement alleged by the LTTE, said that the ambush was presumably carried out by the Karuna faction targeting LTTE's Special Commander Col. Bhanu, who was also in the LTTE convoy. According to army sources, soldiers had heard several claymore mines going off and the sound of small arms fire. The explosions had taken place about a kilometre from their camp and were heard even in Batticaloa.

The Tamil National Force (TNF) - a para-military group under the joint command of the leader of the Tamil Eela Makkal Viduthalai Pulikal (TMVP), V. Muralitharan ('Colonel Karuna') and the Eelam National Democratic Liberation Front (ENDLF), has claimed responsibility for the attack on the LTTE convoy.

The fate of Colonel Bhanu (43yrs), LTTE's Special Commander for Amparai - Batticaloa district is unclear. Meanwhile reports from Colombo confirmed that the LTTE sought and secured assistance from the Government through the SLMM to transport by airforce helicopter an injured LTTE leading figure for urgent treatment in a Colombo hospital. It was later reported that it was LTTE's Batticaloa district intelligence chief Keerthi who was airlifted to a Colombo private hospital where is undergoing treatment.

EPDP member abducted and killed: October 11 - Mr. Sivalingam Vilvarajah alias Senthil (35), member of the Eelam Peoples Democratic Party (EPDP), was found dead with gunshot injuries Tuesday (11) morning at Aathimodda junction located about 10 km off north of the Trincomalee town along Trincomalee-Kuchchaveli main road, Uppuveli Police said.

On receipt of information the Uppuveli Police rushed to the site and removed the body of the victim to the Trincomalee general hospital. Reportedly a gang of unidentified persons had abducted the victim on Saturday (9). His wife had been told by the group not to inform the incident to any one, as he would be released after an inquiry. The EPDP has accused the LTTE for the abduction and murder.

Sivaram murder - Court orders final police report: October 11 - Ms Champa Janaki Rajaratne, Kaduwela Magistrate directed the Colombo Crime Division (CCD) of the Sri Lanka Police to submit a full report on the investigation held into the murder of well known journalist and senior editor at TamilNet, Mr Dharmaretnam Sivaram, without any excuse being offered on the next date, October 25. The only suspect Mr. Sriskandarajah arrested in connection with the murder was not brought to courts when the case was taken for further inquiry on 11 October. A PLOTE cadre, wanted in connection with the killing of Sivaram is reportedly evading arrest amidst reports he might have even fled the country, police detectives said. They said the suspect was believed to be the person who allegedly fired the shots that led to Mr. Sivaram's death.

The Magistrate further directed the Secretary General of the Sri Lanka's parliament Ms Priyani Wijesekera to submit a report on the ownership of the vehicle, which according to police investigation belonged to a former parliamentarian and PLOTE leader Mr. Dharmalingam Siddarthan. The court on an earlier date ordered the release of the vehicle to Mr. Siddarthan.

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However Mr. Suddarthan had so far not collected the vehicle from the custody of the court because of the ownership issue, court was told. According to police investigation, the vehicle had been used for committing the offence.

Mr. Sivaram was abducted as he came out of a restaurant on April 28 this year and his dead body with gunshot wounds was found early morning next day. Mr. Sivaram had been gagged and shot in the head, according to investigation conducted by the Police.

Sivaram killing: PLOTE cadre evading arrest

LTTE's auxiliary force cadre shot dead: October 12 - A cadre of LTTE's National Auxiliary Force, Mr. Rasalingam Pugalenthiran, was shot and killed Wednesday (12) at 1.00 pm by a group of men wearing military uniforms, according to Batticaloa District Political Head of the LTTE, Mr. Ilanthirayan (Marshall). The gunmen had moved beyond the no-man zone and fired at Pugalenthiran, Ilanthirayan told TamilNet. The cadre was on duty at the time of the incident, he added. The incident took place at the Mayilavedduvan, 3 km west of Sithandy in Eravur.

EPDP loyalist killed: October 12 - An EPDP supporter was killed on Tuesday (12) at Nilaveli in Trincomalee by an unidentified group. Uppuveli police said the body of Sivalingam Vilvarasa (32) was found in shrub jungle near the Adimotai junction at Nilaveli on Tuesday morning. The EPDP blamed the LTTE for the killing and said that the incident had been reported to the SLMM.

Soldier shot dead in Eravur: October 13 - A Sri Lanka Army (SLA) soldier, shot and wounded when unidentified attackers fired at an SLA convoy patrolling at Santhiveli jetty Eravur around 9:00 pm. on Thursday (13), later succumbed to his gunshot injuries at Polannaruwa hospital. The soldier, identified as T.M. Dilanka Dissanake (25), was from Maha Oya and was attached to the SLA camp in Santhiveli. Santhiveli is located 24 km north of Batticaloa. According to army sources, the LTTE had launched this attack from the direction of LTTE controlled area across the Santhiveli lagoon.

Lance Corporal abducted: October 14 - A Sri Lanka Army (SLA) Lance Corporal was missing, presumably abducted, from his sentry post at Kiran in Eruvur since Monday, October 10, police said. Lance Corporal S. M. Milton, 28, was attached to Kumburumoolai SLA camp located in Valaichenai in Batticaloa district. Two Tamils, a 27-years-old man, Mr. Krishnapillai Uthayarajah and a girl from Kiran, yet to be identified, were arrested later for inquiries. The Lance Corporal had been armed with a T-56 at the time of his abduction by unidentified attackers.

Two civilians shot in Eravur: October 14 - Two unidentified gunmen riding a motorbike fired at two civilians Friday (14) around 1:00 pm in Kiran, 27 km north of Batticaloa, police said. Mr. Kanapathipillai Raju, 34, and Mr. N. N. Krishnapillai, 60, were admitted to Batticaloa Hospital. Mr. Raju is in a critical condition according to hospital sources. He is being treated in the Intensive Care Unit

Policemen shot in Jaffna, one dead: October 14 - Two unidentified gunmen riding a motorbike shot and wounded two Sri Lankan policemen at a restaurant 50 meters away from the Nellyyady police station in Jaffna around 9:45 pm Friday (14).

The wounded policemen were rushed to Palaly Military Hospital. One policeman later succumbed to his wounds at the military hospital, Sri Lanka Army sources said. The restaurant is located in front of a petrol station along the Jaffna-Point Pedro road. Policemen at the Nellyyady police station opened fire at the gunmen escaping from the scene. However, the speeding motorbike-gunmen managed to escape.

SLA soldiers, gunmen clash in Eravur: October 15 - A group of unidentified gunmen, alleged by the army to Tamil Tigers, and the Sri Lanka Army soldiers exchanged gunfire for more than fifteen minutes in Kaluwankerny, an SLA controlled village in Eravur, 20 km north of Batticaloa. Meanwhile, Eravur Police said SLA soldiers had rushed to the village when a Sri Lanka Police Jeep was confronted by the gunmen. More than 5 armed men were reportedly involved in the clash. The gunmen who fled the scene had reportedly left behind a T-56 rifle,

Buffer zone revised: October 15 - The Government has decided to revise the 100/200 metre buffer zone implemented for the coastal belt of tsunami affected areas following the December tsunami with immediate effect, the Government Information Department said. Under this new set of rules envisaged by the Government, this buffer zone has been reduced to a range between 55-25 metres in the Southern districts and 100 to 500 metres in the North East.

Soon after the tsunami, Government declared a 100/200 metres strip of land as a "no build zone" along the coastal belt of Sri Lanka. But District Secretaries and Divisional Secretaries had requested the Government to revise this Buffer zone to accommodate special projects and those involved in fisheries related activities so that they can continue their livelihoods without much difficulty. The Urban Development Ministry on the instruction of the Prime Minister Mahinda Rajapakse held discussions with relevant authorities including the affected families perceived that the 100/200 metre Buffer zone, identified along the coastal belt could be revised under the exceptional circumstances. Accordingly the recommended stand of the Buffer zone in the district of Colombo, Kalutara, Galle, Matara and Hambantota has been reduced upto the minimum of 35 metres in certain Divisional Secretaries Divisions. The 200 metre earlier Buffer Zone introduced in the districts of Ampara, Batticaloa, Trincomalee and Jaffna has been reduced upto a minimum of 50 metres.

Cambodia to stop arms smuggling: October 15 - Cambodian Prime Minister Hun Sen admitted that weapons had been smuggled from the kingdom to rebel groups in Sri Lanka, the Philippines and Myanmar in recent years. Hun Sen made the admission while addressing a forum of business leaders and government officials, promising to increase screening of containers at the country's borders from next week. Cambodia aims to screen 100 percent of all containers imported and exported through its international checkpoints to fight against terrorism, smuggling and drug trafficking, Hun Sen said.

Only 60 percent are currently screened, according to the prime minister. "We have to make sure that drugs won't be taken out of Cambodia to other countries, and we also have to make sure that weapons won't be smuggled out of Cambodia to other countries", he said adding, "Because in past years, Cambodia used to be a place where weapons were taken to Sri Lanka for the Tamil Tiger group, to Philippines' Mindanao Island and for the Karen in Myanmar. We have some documents about this". The government has to date destroyed nearly 160,000 seized weapons, Hun Sen added. □

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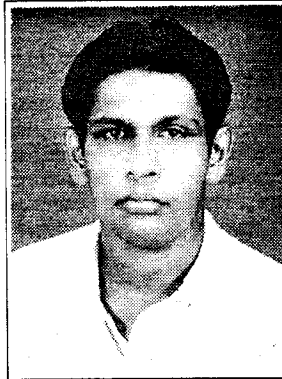
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ABOUT PEOPLE AND EVENTS

OBITUARIES



Mr. Thambiah Anandaratham, Retired teacher, Jaffna College, Vaddukoddai; beloved husband of (late) Naku-lambikai; loving father of (late) Nirmaladevi, (late) Niranjanadevi, Sushiladevi and Sivaranjini (Sri Lanka); loving grandfather of Sivaram and Umaram; brother of (late) Gnarnaratnam, Arumugaratnam and Nithyaratnam (Sri Lanka); loving brother-in-law of (late) Shanmuganathan, (late) Vivekanathan, Kama-lambikai, Dr. Sarvanathan (Malaysia) and Jokambikai (UK); father-in-law of Dhayan and Sivarupan (Sri Lanka) passed away peacefully after a brief illness on 16th September 2005 in Sri Lanka. The funeral took place at Vaddukoddai, Jaffna.

He will be greatly missed and fondly remembered by his loved ones, relatives, colleagues, friends and many of his students in Sri Lanka and abroad. Members of his family wish to thank all those who attended the funeral, sent floral tributes and messages of sympathy and assisted in many ways during the period of sorrow. We regret our inability to thank you all individually.

- Dr. & Mrs Jayaratnam,
31 Lord Avenue, Ilford,
Essex IG1 0HP.



Dr. Kumaran Ratnasingham, Staff Associate Specialist in Anaesthesia in Royal Infirmary Hospital, Edinburgh; born in Colombo on the 18th of August 1953, passed away in Glasgow, Scotland on the 1st of September 2005 after a brief illness. Kumaran was the loving son of the late Mr. and Mrs S.J.Ratnasingham; loving brother of late Chandra Rajan; eldest and most loving grandson of late Mr. and Mrs. S.K.Rasiah and late Mr. and Mrs. J.C.Sabaratham, (both of Tellippallai); most loving nephew of Mrs. Ruby Ratnasingham, Satkuna Singham (both of Colombo) and Thevaranee Rasiah of London.

The funeral took place in Glasgow on 10th September 2005.

Thevaranee and all members of the family wish to express their sincere thanks to all those who comforted them during their time of tremendous loss, sent floral tributes, supported and assisted them in numerous other ways.

- Thevaranee Rasiah,
64 Jessup Close,
London SE 18 7HB.
Tel: 0208 311 9967.

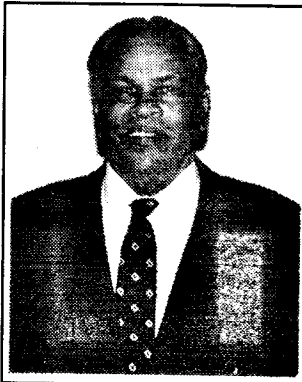
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IN MEMORIAM

The Sixth Year Remembrance

Treasured Memory of
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*Years on years may roll along,
Time may fly without a song,
But everlasting memories
Of one with a Golden Heart
Will not be wiped away.*

Sadly missed and fondly remembered by his devoted wife Nancy Saraswathyarani, children and family.

Forthcoming Events**November**

1 Amavasai; Keetharagowri Viradham ends; All Saints Day

2. Skanthashashti Viradham

starts; All Souls Day

4. Iyppasi Velli (3)

5. Sathurthi

6. Shashti; Soorasamharam

8. Thirukalyanam

Fourth Year Remembrance

In loving memory of Mr. S. Sivagnanasekeram on the

fourth 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 for ever.

Mrs. Sekeram, Ranjan, Mohan and Pavithra.

10. Feast of St. Leo, the Great
11. Eekathasi; Iyppasi Velli (4); Feast of St. Martin the Great

13. Pirathosam

15. Fullmoon; Feast of St. Albert the Great

16. Karthigai; Feast of St. Edmund of Abingdon

19. Sankadahara Sathurthi

21. Kaarthigai Somavaram (1)

22. Feast of St. Cecilia

23. Sri Arumuga Navalar Guru Poojah

27. Eekathasi

28. Kaarthigai Somavaram (2)

29. Pirathosam

30. Feast of St. Andrew

Wedding Bells

We congratulate the following couple on their recent wedding.

Vathany, daughter of Mr. and Mrs Vijayaratna and **Christian**, son of Dr. and Mrs P.A. Neelaranjitha Rajah on 10th September 2005 at The Grand Ballroom of the Hilton on Park Lane, London W1.

Mr. K.Sivaramalingam

**Deputy Principal (retired) Jaffna Hindu College
– An Appreciation**

The sudden demise of our respected GURU and a fatherly figure of Jaffna Hindu on the 25th of August has created a void in our community that cannot be easily filled. He was a full fledged product of our Alma Mater having spent well over six decades within the portals of the College first as a student and then as a teacher and retired as the Deputy at the helm of affairs.

After graduating under the tutelage of Principal Boyd at the Madras Christian College he joined as a young and promising teacher at Jaffna Hindu in 1950. It was very unfortunate that within months of his marriage he had a severe stroke which made him a handicap; yet it was a proud and bold achievement that he faced all challenges in life with a smile and always in an optimistic mood. As a young hosteller at Jaffna Hindu he escaped death and was one of the survivors in the Pannai causeway tragedy in 1942 when a boat capsized swallowing a few young buds early in life. His handicap never prevented him from being a



successful teacher, a forceful and convincing orator and a literary figure of note in Sri Lanka. The countless number of his students who are in the forefront of literary activities on a global level is sufficient proof of his masterly guidance at Jaffna Hindu over the decades.

It was a fitting tribute for a veteran pedagogue that he was the Chief Guest at the Kalaiaras festival of the JHC OBA in London in June 2004. The grand finale of his career was the Vivatha Arangam in May 2005 under his chairmanship at the Silver Jubilee celebrations of the Illangai Kamban Kazlagam held at the Wellawatte Ramakrishna Mission hall where he was at his best among the global exponents of great values. There he was very emotional, poured his heart out and his literary talents hit the best - may be coming events cast their shadows early.

When Kambavarithi Jeyaraj and Sri Prashanthan flew into Seychelles for a series of lectures they were blessed by our GURU over the phone prior to their departure but when they arrived here the next morning our respected GURU was no more. Let us all, his students at Jaffna Hindu, carry his mission further and further on a global level.

**V.Sivasupramaniam,
Former Student and Colleague, Seycheles.**

BHARATHANATYA ARANGETRAM OF ABIRA SHRI SATKUNASINGHAM



The Bharathanatyam Arangetram of Abira Shri Satkunasingham took place at the Beck Theatre, Hayes on 28th August 2005. I have attended many Bharathanatyam Arangetrams, but Abira is easily one of the best performers of Bharathanatyam. She is blessed with good looks, the right stature, is not too tall or too short. Her beautiful complexion, all which enhance her talent. As Bharathanatyam is an art that requires divine gifts as well as attaining a certain high standard of performance which

can only be achieved by rigorous training and practice. This was very evident in every item of the programme.

Abira dedicated her first dance Pushpanjali to Lord Shiva followed by Alarippu. The audience were absolutely spellbound. Her expression in Varnam was absolutely perfect and her beautiful eyes spoke it all. The appropriate song 'Arupadai Veedu' did her credit. The artist very ably portrayed paalkada vaasavan in the Patham and changed the whole tempo to fast and perfect movement in the Keerthanam 'Anantha Koothadinar' and breathtaking performance in 'Mookuthi Minnuminuka'. Before Thilana she performed Aandal Thirrupavai looking absolutely stunning and beautiful in the Aandal costume. Her helper in the dressing department did her proud. The colourful costumes and beautiful colour combination made up for any carelessness at the beginning of the programme.

Abira is lucky as she is not only gifted, beautiful, expressive and danced with feeling, as she understood the meaning of the words of the songs, she had the support of her Guru Smt Nalayini Rajadurai, who is an outstanding exponent, choreographer and teacher with many years of experience. The choice of songs and choreography cleverly selected to suit the dancer has introduced a touch of modernism into a very classical graduation ceremony. Her very strong Nattuvangam was very well supplemented by the sweet melodious voice of Smt Ambika Thamoatham. I was pleasantly surprised to hear Smt Ambika, who is a very well known and talented Karnatic musician introducing some variations in her singing in keeping with modern demands and to suit the dancers rhythmic movement.

Abira's dance was enhanced by the talented Mirudangist Sri Balachandar who supported the dancer's movement perfectly. Abira was also lucky to have the accompaniment of Shri Thyagarajah Raghavaraman on the flute supplemented by Gadam and Kanjeera by young Sairam Ramesh and the melodious violin player Shri Dura Balasubramaniam.

Abira's parents, Mr and Mrs Shri Satkunasingham, should be complimented for their dedication and love of this ancient art and through Abira it should be maintained and promoted so that our future generations of Tamil children will proudly learn and follow our culture and traditions.

Best wishes for a bright future.

Mrs Mano Anathanathan
B.A.(Cey) Dip in Ed (Lon) M.A.(Lon).

Expectations Excelled

Once again, the 'Arangetram' season has arrived in London. Although there are a fair number of Arangetrams, only a few artistes pursue their interest. **Thusan**, student of Sri Somasuntharam Desigar or 'Somu Master' as he is popularly known and son of Sri and Smt. Tharmathurai of Ilford had his Miruthangam Arangetram on 17th September 2005 at the Beck Theatre.



When I saw Thushan on the stage, I wondered whether this small child could play an instrument that demands lot of energy and stamina. I remembered seeing him playing in Somu Master's 'Rasikapriya' programme. I recalled Saint Thirugnana Sampanthar's lines, "Panal vayoru palan eengivan enru neer pariveithidel" meaning, "Do not think that I am still a small child and sympathise for not been weaned off mother's milk."

The main artiste of the evening was Smt Mala Chandrasekar, disciple, daughter and niece respectively of the very popular flute duo sisters, Sikkil Neela and Sikkil Kunchamani. Smt. Mala started the concert with Lalgudi Jayaraman's Varnam in Raga Nalinakanthi. The ease with which Thushan played for this piece made Smt Mala comfortable, acknowledging with a smile Thushan's play all the way through the concert. The main piece of the concert was the Ragam, Thanam and Pallavi in Dharmavathi. Smt Mala also played Deekshidar's Maragatha valeem in Kamboji. There were other compositions set to different Talas as well to add variety and provided an opportunity to exhibit Thushan's dexterity. The selection of compositions was apt and excellent. Smt Mala played them very well.

Thushan's fingers were so versatile that he was able to express what his mind was saying, on the instrument. He was oozing with confidence and never faltered. In the 'Thani Avasthanam' Thushan showed the Karaikudi style with Nadai (tempo) variations. He was very well supported by Sri R N Prakash on the Gatam, Sri Balaji on the Ganjira and Selvan Senthuran on the Morsing. Sri Gnanasuntharam played the violin. He is another quality product from Lalgudi School. His raga alapana was very soothing. His Kamboji deserves a special mention.

"Thushan's playing made me feel that I should get on the stage and sing a few songs" said the Chief Guest, Maharajapuram Sri Ramachandran. "You can memorise the lessons the teacher teaches you. It is another thing to bring it in your fingers" said Mruthanga Vidwan Karaikudi Krishna-moorthy. To get such genuine praise from famous musicians is in itself a great credit which Thushan truly deserves. The Tharmathurai family and Somu Master can be very proud of their achievements. The London music lovers have another young talent to delight them.

- Hindolam

Tamil Schools Sports Festival at Southall

On August Bank Holiday, 29 August 2005.

Dates for 2006 :

Bank Holiday Monday, 01/05/06
Sunday, 09/07/06

FOOTBALL TOURNAMENT
SUMMER SPORTS FESTIVAL

Tamil Schools Sports Association (TSSA) consisting of more than fifty Old Students Associations of Tamil Schools in the UK, held their 14th Summer Sports festival on a grand scale at the Warren Farm Sports Centre, Southall on Bank Holiday Monday, 29 August 2005. The day was filled with glorious sun shine, perfect for a day of sports.

The main sponsor of the event was none other than the Fast Cash – a member of the MCG group of companies, a household name in many Sri Lankan homes for sending door to door remittances to Sri Lanka. Amongst their many activities, they have become sponsors for promoting sporting activities amongst the Sri Lankan Community here in the UK. Therefore, it was no surprise that Mr Mike Cooke, the Managing Director of MCG readily agreed to be TSSA(UK)'s main sponsor for the first time this year. A grand Raffle Draw was also organised with return air tickets to the Far East, Colombo and Skywards points, all sponsored by Srilankan Airlines. Carlton Leisure (UK) Ltd. and Vision were the other sponsors.

There were competitions for all ages and over one thousand participants competed in the events – Cricket for the Over 40s, Cricket & Netball for the Adults, Under 16 and Under 14 and Football for the Under 10s. The very young ones were not left out either and they enjoyed a day of Athletics. Volleyball and Kili Thattu were also prominent events for the Adults. This is a clear demonstration of TSSA's effort to promote sporting skills and talents amongst the younger generation of Sri Lankans.

The Chief Guest for the event was Mr Rasathurai, Principal, Jaffna Central College, (one of the oldest schools in Jaffna, with a large student population), who came especially for this occasion. For the first time in the history of a Tamil Community event, five Mayors (three of whom are Tamils), Mayor of Ealing, Cllr Elliott, Mayor of Kingston-upon-Thames. Cllr Yoganathan, Mayor of Gedling, Cllr Dr Raj Chandran, Mayor of Stockport, Cllr Shan Alexander and Mayor of Guildford, Cllr Baker were in attendance. Other dignitaries included Member of Parliament, Hon. Steve Pound.

The opening ceremony of hoisting the TSSA(UK) flag was performed by the Mayor of Ealing, Cllr Elliott ably supported by Hon Steve Pound, MP and Mr Mike Cooke of MCG Ltd. followed by the OSAs raising their own college flags. The Chief Guest, Mr Rasathurai, in his speech, commended TSSA's involvement in the development of sports in the North East, re-establishing JSSA in Jaffna after fifteen years, re-introducing and sponsoring football and netball competitions amongst the Jaffna Schools at Zonal level and for organizing



a prize-giving ceremony for all winners in the district. He also praised TSSA's involvement in the Sports Academy for NorthEast (SANE) project at a cost of over £2,500,000. The day concluded with the raffle prize draw and the prize-giving during which the winners received their trophies from their distinguished guests. The much coveted, TSSA(UK) Challenge Trophy for the Adults Cricket was won for the third successive year by Kambarmalai Maha Vidyalam team and they received their trophy from Mike- Cooke, the main sponsor of the event.

The results of the other competitions are as follows:

Cricket – Over 40	St Johns College
Under 16	Mahajana College
Under 14	Urumpirai Hindu College
Netball - Adults	Chundukuli Girls High School
Under 16	Tamil Association of Brent
Under 14	Kingston Tamil School
Football - Under 10	Mahajana College
Volleyball	Kandeepan Club
Killi Thattu	KumaraNagar Eluchchi

The first, second and the third prizes from the raffle draw were won by ticket numbers 6057, 0538 and 6061 respectively. Once again, TSSA(UK) have made their mark amongst the Tamil Community and attracted thousands of visitors to their biggest event of the year.

It is worthy of note that TSSA(UK) is expanding its activities in promoting sports amongst the younger generation - demonstrated by their recent trip to the NorthEast with a netball team consisting of Sri Lankan Children born and bred in the UK. They played several matches with the schools and made donations towards their sports development.

TSSA (UK) is an independent, charitable, collective organisations of OSAs in the UK serving Tamil Schools in Sri Lanka and it is run by volunteers under formal rules and constitution. The President and the Executive Committee deserve our special praises for their sheer commitment and hard work for the community. Their effort in promoting sports amongst the younger generation both here in the UK and in our homeland should be applauded, appreciated and supported. We invite all Tamils to join hands in supporting TSSA (UK) in all their activities!

Long live TSSA!!



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PROFESSOR THURAIAPPAH SENTHEYVAL

It was with great sadness that I received the news that Professor Thuraiappah Senthayval had passed away on 18/08/05. He was 73 years old. He was affectionately called Senthay by his friends and colleagues.

Senthay and I were close friends for over 35 years. We were also colleagues for over 10 years in the Auditor General's Department of Sri Lanka. When I visited him in August last year I was shocked to see him in a poor state of health.

Senthay was an intellectual and academic. He had a passion for higher studies. He got his B.Sc. (Econ) London degree at a young age. He was awarded a scholarship by the Government to follow the Sri Lankan Chartered Accountancy course. He completed the final examination well within the scholarship period and was admitted as a Chartered Accountant by the Institute in Sri Lanka. He was also awarded an Audit related scholarship to USA by the Government of Sri Lanka. Senthay was well known in the fields of accounting and auditing in Sri Lanka.

He joined the Auditor General's Department of Sri Lanka in 1966. Senthay's wide knowledge and competence in accounting/auditing were well recognised in the department and earned him high reputation. Successive Auditors General had entrusted important audit assignments to him and nominated him to represent the department in various high-powered committees and forums (local and international). He was also assigned the task of training audit staff. He ably assisted the Auditor General in preparing his annual reports to Parliament. He was selected to the post of Deputy Auditor General amidst very keen competition.

Senthay was one of the best lecturers in accounting and auditing in the country. He lectured on these subjects to the students preparing for various accountancy examinations both foreign and local including Chartered Accountants' Examination. Several hundreds of students greatly benefited from his expert handling of these subjects in his lectures. He was also a part time lecturer in accounting at the Briton Institute from 1972 till 1978. He served in a number of committees of the



Institute of Chartered Accountants. He was also an examiner for some of the Accountancy examinations.

In 1978, Senthay was awarded a "Commonwealth Assignment" in Papua New Guinea in the Auditor General's Department. After a spell of 10 years in that department he relinquished his services while holding the post of Deputy Auditor General to join the Faculty of Commerce at the University of Papua New Guinea. Senthay was appointed 'Professor of Commerce' at the university which post he held for many years. While at the University, he wrote books on Taxation and Consolidated Accounts, which are widely used. After retirement from the University, he was appointed the Managing Director of PNG Polytechnic Training Institute.

In 1999, he co-founded with his son, Senthil-Kumaran, 'TSK International', a Consultancy firm and 'The International Training Institute'. The latter was established to teach and train accountancy and computing students. Thus, he had done a yeoman service to the accountancy student population, which is really a positive contribution for development of that country.

Professor Senthay was a person of sterling qualities. He was very simple and humble. He had an irresistible sense of humour and maintained a cool temperament, even in the midst of a crisis, but with strong conviction. He was a true friend, guide, and adviser to many and was very generous in helping those who sought his assistance. He helped a number of Sri Lankans in finding employment in Papua New Guinea.

Senthay was a person of such strong will and determination that he was able to manage his failing health during the last few months of his life. His beloved wife Inthirani took great care of him. She, their son Senthil Kumaran and daughter Sri Gowrie were a great source of strength and consolation to him. He was a loving husband and a devoted father. He was gratified by the laudable successes achieved by his children. The son is an Accounting graduate and a Master in Information Systems. The daughter is a degree holder in Visual Arts and Teaching.

The demise of Senthay was a great loss to his wife, children and family. I have lost my dear friend and the accountancy profession one of its eminent members.

May his soul rest in peace.

K. VELAYUTHAMPILLAI

(Retired Director, Treasury)

His Worship, The Mayor of Gedling, Nottingham, Cllr Dr. Raj Chandran and Lady Mayoress Dr. Qudsia Chandran are both GPs in Sutton-in-Ashfield. They have three grown up children. Dr. Raj Chandran was appointed Commissioner, Commission for Racial Equality in 1992 and served for eight years and was the longest serving Commissioner ever. He has been a Police Surgeon for the Nottinghamshire Constabulary, has served Her Majesty as Major in the Royal Army Medical Corps and has worked in the Military Hospitals in Singapore, Gan Islands, Cy-

Dr. Raj Chandran Elected Mayor of Gedling



prus, Germany, Belgium and Belize.

He is a Fellow of the Royal Society of Medicine. As Fellow of the Royal Society of Arts, he and Qudsia were presented to the Queen at the Garden Party held recently, under the patronage of the Duke of Edinburgh to celebrate 250 years of the

Royal Society. As Mayor, he has chosen D.A.R.E. (Drug Awareness Resistance Education) for schools in the Gedling Borough as his (Mayor's) Charity for the municipal year. He believes that the fabric of our society is being eroded by drug taking and wants to nip it in the bud in schools.

Miss Saranya Ravindran's Vocal Arangetram

Ashcroft Theatre, Fairfield Halls, Croydon - 1-10-2005

An Arangetram is always a momentous event for the student - whether in music or dance - the teacher and the parents and family.

Once in a while, one is aware of sheer luminescence in a singer, instrumentalist or dancer. I think I can speak for us all in saying that Saranya's radiant recital at Croydon on October 1, 2005 was an inspiration and joy to us. She not only sang impeccably, but exuded in her presence a sense of calm joy and deep devotion and commitment. She is a star pupil of Smt. Sivasakthi Sivanesan, resident teacher of Karnatic Music - Vocal and Vina- at Bhavan UK's premises in London.

Saranya commenced her studies with 'Auntie', as Smt. Sivasakthiji is affectionately known by us all at the Bhavan, when she was six and, from the start, made steady and committed progress in her studies both in Practical and in theory. Teaching the latter, your reviewer had therefore the privilege of also seeing Saranya's talent and application, and appreciating her sheer quality as a human being. What an asset to the world of music, both Karnatic and Western (she is going for Grade VI) she is!

Her talent inspired wonderful accompaniments by supporting artistes. Sri Balu Raghuraman, Bhavan UK's resident Violin teacher, performed beautifully and with great tenderness. The Mridangam playing of Sri M. Balachander, resident Mridangam teacher at the Bhavan complemented Saranya's performance most eloquently. Sri R.R. Prathap from Bangalore, gave a scintillating commentary with his Ghatam. Most welcome too was Sri Kandiah Sithamparanathan, giving inimitable and delightful accompaniment on Morsing. All were kept to the disciplined Sruti of Miss Jananee Sivagnanasundaram, Saranya's Cousin.

After the opening Varnam, **Nera nammiti**, in Kanada raga, Ata tala, Saranya gave us the Hamsadhvani piece by Lalithadasar, **Ganapatiye Niye**, set to Ada tala. We had herein our first taste of her great way with Alapana, truly a test of a budding artiste's creativity. She excels in what musicians term "attack" - and this was especially heard in her svaram for Hamsadhvani. These followed an impeccable rendering of the first of Tyagaraja's Pancharatnam kritis - **Jagadanandakaraka** in Nattai, unique among these in being triply "signed" by the composer.

Next, Saranya performed Dikshitar's **Hiranmayim Lakshimim**, in Lalitha raga, Rupaka tala. For me, this was one of the most moving passages in her entire performance, radiating tenderness and devotion as it did. These then followed the main piece before the interval, **Nannu Palimpa**, in Mohanam, Adi tala, by Tyagaraja. In

alapana, Saranya's creativity was mirrored beautifully by that of her violinist, Balu Raghuraman. Again in the field of manodharma, she gave us an impressive Niraval, followed by svaram of great mathematical precision. There ensued a Tani by the percussionists that would more accurately be termed Trio! Quite delightful!

After the interval, during which we were hospitably refreshed by Saranya's dear parents, Sri and Smt. Ravindran, the Arangetram re-commenced with a Purvikalyani piece by Nilakanta Sivan - **Anandanatamaduvur**. Saranya then regaled us with **Ragam, Tanam and Pallavi** in Charukesi - a wonderful choice! The eloquence of her Alapana was a sheer delight, lyrical and inventive. She did full justice to Tanam, wherein her brigas were really impressive. The tala for the Pallavi, Khanda Tripata, gave Saranya full opportunity to demonstrate again her mathematical skills, both in the sahitya - position and in the svaram, wherein she deftly divided the avarta into two equal halves of $4 \frac{1}{2} + 4 \frac{1}{2}$ beats!

I was particularly impressed by her choice of pieces after the Ragam, Tanam and Pallavi. Sometimes these tend to be somewhat trivial, as I recall over many many years, but not so with our Saranya! First was **Amarndu aranum**, in Kharaharapriya, Adi tala, composed by Sivasakthiji's revered Guru, Yalppanam N. Veeramani Iyer. How moving and tender this was! Then we heard a rare piece, **Bhavayami**, in Yamuna Kalyani and Khanda Chapu, by Annamacharya. This again had all

the tenderness and calmness of a lullaby. Subramanya Bharathi's **Sollavallayo** in Kiravani then followed.

Saranya's brilliant solo debut concluded with **Tillana** in Revati, Misra Chapu, by Lalgudi Jayaraman and verses from **Thiruppugazh** in Desh.

Before the Tillana, we had the privilege of hearing the Chief Guests, the renowned Violinists Sri R. Ganesh and Sri R. Kumaresh. They spoke warmly and in an illuminating manner, of Saranya and all the musicians, and it was a delight how they spoke - as they play - as a duo!

Also present as a Guest of Honour was Smt. Patricia Rozario, O.B.E., the renowned Opera singer hailing from Mumbai, who is also the principal solo exponent of the devotional music of Sir John Tavener, the renowned British composer. Present with her husband, Mark Troop, Patricia spoke with warmth and professional appreciation of Saranya's talent. Your reviewer was also privileged to speak on this joyous occasion.

The compeering by Smt. Anandarani Balendra was excellent, and the lighting and sound ably supervised by Sri Sivashankar.

My wife Wendy, my sishya from Bangalore Rajani and I, together with all of us privileged to be at the Ashcroft Theatre that day, thank Sri and Smt. Ravindran for their wonderful kindness and hospitality. We congratulate and bless dear Saranya on her sheer talent and artistry, and thank her profoundly for the glimpses of that world beyond that she shared with us.

- Dr. John R. Marr



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