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# The Sri Lanka Monitor

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## Prime Minister to be Presidential candidate

SRI LANKAN Prime Minister R.Premadasa was unanimously nominated by the Working Committee of the United National Party (UNP) on 16 September as the ruling party's candidate for the forthcoming Presidential elections, reported to be scheduled for the third week in December.

Eight opposition parties including the militant Peoples Liberation Front (JVP) have said that they will support Sri Lanka Freedom Party (SLFP) leader and former Prime Minister Mrs Srimavo Bandaranaike, whose government crushed a JVP-inspired insurrection in

1971 throughout the south which claimed almost 10,000 lives. Observers say Mr Premadasa has been chosen to fend off the SLFP challenge because he shares with Mrs Bandaranaike an unfeigned dislike and distrust of the Indian presence in Sri Lanka.

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## Peace hopes dashed after IPKF ceasefire

FOLLOWING a series of political initiatives by the Sri Lankan government in early September to promote Provincial Council (PC) elections in predominantly Tamil areas of the island, New Delhi announced that the Indian Peace Keeping Force (IPKF) would observe a five-day unilateral ceasefire from 7am on 15 September in Sri Lanka's newly-merged Northern and Eastern Provinces.

IPKF Commander Lt.Gen. A.S.Kalkat called on the militant Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) to seize this opportunity to join the political mainstream and to surrender their weapons to the nearest IPKF Post Commander. Indian High Commissioner J.N.Dixit flew to Jaffna on 17 September as the fragile truce took hold, for talks with Citizens Committee representatives and Eelam Revolutionary Organisation of Students' leader V.Balakumar. LTTE posters appearing in Jaffna town the following day, welcomed the ceasefire and called for its indefinite extension and for the release of LTTE cadres in IPKF custody and those held in Tamil Nadu.

Since early September, the Sri Lankan press were voicing concern over Indian claims that the pacification of the North

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### no response from LTTE India says

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was complete and that PC elections could go ahead. While the merger of the Northern and Eastern Provinces by Presidential proclamation on 9 September, and the release of over 200 Tamil prisoners from Boossa detention camp a few days later were widely welcomed, a string of editorials cited two separate reports from independent journalists which suggested heavy Indian casualties and that Jaffna remained substantially under LTTE control.

Finally on 19 September, following the extension of the ceasefire for a further five days, a Presidential communique announced the holding of elections in the new Northern and Eastern Province using the revised 1982 electoral register and a general and unconditional amnesty to all militants who surrendered arms. Nominations for the eight districts would be received from 3-8 October, Elections Commissioner R.K.Chandrananda de Silva declared. As the ceasefire deadline expired on 25 September, Indian Defence Minister K.C.Pant announced that there had been no LTTE response to the ceasefire and that IPKF op-

erations would recommence. Citizens' groups from Jaffna and Kilinochchi had flown to Colombo to plead with Indian officials for a further extension of the truce but they had been unable to indicate that any change in the LTTE position was forthcoming.

In a statement appearing in India's *Sunday Observer* that same morning, LTTE Batticaloa commander Francis said that there could be no negotiations until India's leaders agreed to hold direct talks with LTTE leader Prahbakaran "without any preconditions whatsoever". The Indian High Commission in Colombo acknowledged Francis' statement but refused to comment. As IPKF checkpoints and foot patrols reappeared on Jaffna's streets, a massive *hartal* - commemorating Thileepan, leader of the LTTE's political wing, who died after a protest fast on 26 September 1987 - brought the civil administration and transport throughout the North and East to a complete standstill. A few days later a LTTE spokesman confirmed that they would be calling for a similar boycott of the PC elections.

## MPs question rehabilitation policy

CONCERN was expressed by a number of prominent MP's in early September over the lack of progress in providing relief assistance to refugees and displaced persons throughout the island. They were participating in a Parliamentary debate on a Supplementary Estimate of Rs3,044 million put forward by Rehabilitation Minister Lionel Jayatilleke as being immediately required for rehabilitation and reconstruction work.

Maharagama MP, Dinesh Gunawardena drew attention to the thousands of people seeking refuge in Vavuniya after IPKF operations in Mullaitivu last month. Community groups and NGO workers had been harassed and intimidated, the MP alleged. How could the government pretend rehabilitation work was possible under these conditions?

Batticaloa MP, R.S. Lebbe urged the Minister to provide assistance to fishermen and farmers in the Eravur and Kattankudy areas, many of whom had not been able to earn their living since 1985. Over 1,500 women who had lost their breadwinners in Batticaloa District were still waiting for relief, as a result of delays in enquiries and the issue of death certificates.

Ehiliyagoda MP, Dr Wimal Wickremesinghe requested the Minister to allot funds for rehabilitation work in the south and suggested that Provincial Councils could assist with reconstruction. Attanagalla MP, Lakshman Jayakody said more detail should be given on how the money was to be spent and in the absence of peace in the

island, how the programme was to be implemented.

Replying, Mr Jayatilleke said that the Government was making every endeavour to provide relief for all displaced persons in the country. In the eight districts of the North and East, there were over 400,000 families displaced by the continuing hostilities. In Trincomalee 60% of those who had fled had returned to their homes and 35,000 families had been resettled in Kantale, the Minister said.

But other organisations, such as the Dharmavijaya Foundation working with Sinhalese and Muslim refugees in the Trincomalee area, have appealed to the public this month for financial assistance. They maintain that Government assistance to refugees in the area is insufficient, particularly in the housing sector.

On 11 September 2,000 Sinhalese, demonstrating in central Trincomalee, called for further assistance to displaced Sinhalese families and for the redeployment of Sri Lankan troops in the east.

■ Colombo was stunned by the killing of Rehabilitation Minister Lionel Jayatilleke on 26 September when his vehicle was ambushed by armed men at Niddangala, 40 miles from the city. Mr Jayatilleke was returning from a function at a Buddhist temple in his Kuliyaipitaya constituency. A Reserve Police Inspector and the Minister's chauffeur were wounded in the attack. Police have blamed the Deshapremi Janatha Viyaparaya, the military wing of the JVP.

### Secret talks stalled

Secret talks between the Government and the JVP underway for several weeks, were said by sources in Colombo in mid-September to have reached deadlock, after a member of the JVP delegation was shot and wounded. A JVP spokesman alleged continuing Government attacks on the group although they were no longer a proscribed organisation.

### Death toll

Acting Leader of the House, Major Montague Jayawickrema told Parliament on 22 September that during the period from 16 August to 15 September, 62 civilians and 19 security personnel were killed. Some 51 "political murders" and 99 "other murders" were said to have taken place during the same period.

### IPKF contempt

The Court of Appeal on 23 September, began contempt proceedings against IPKF Vavuniya commander Brig. Manjith Singh after his lack of response to several court summonses. Habeas corpus petitioner S Paramesvaran alleges that her brother Kenga, a Refugee Rehabilitation Fund volunteer was arrested on 5 April and taken to Vavuniya IPKF camp.

### Leader remembered

At a special meeting of the Central British Fund for Tamil Refugees in London on 25 September, a book was released paying tribute to the life and work of human rights worker K. Kanthasamy, who disappeared in Jaffna on 19 June. At the meeting Mr Kanthasamy was described as one of the leading figures of his generation.

## THE LAW

## HUMAN RIGHTS

## Outrage over southern attorney's death

THE DEATH in custody of prominent human rights lawyer Wijedasa Liyanarachchi in Colombo on 4 September has created widespread indignation amongst Sri Lanka's legal community, and unrest and riot throughout the south, observers say.

Mr Liyanarachchi, 35, who had filed over 100 habeas corpus applications on behalf of southern youths in the last two years, was arrested in Matara, removed to Tangalle Police station and was only subsequently brought to Colombo after representations by several leading lawyers.

Following his death in Colombo General Hospital, a Government communique alleged Mr Liyanarachchi was a

prominent JVP member implicated in the deaths of Vijaya Kumaranatunga, Harsha Abeywardene and others. The Deputy Judicial Medical Officer's post-mortem report stated that the lawyer had died of shock and haemorrhage caused by over 100 internal injuries.

The Bar Association of Sri Lanka declared an immediate two-day boycott of Courts as widespread protest and violence shook Colombo and the south. A bomb killed five people and injured 50 others in Colombo market area - the Pettah - and thousands of students in Hambantota, Tangalle, Matara and Matale boycotted classes and demonstrated outside school gates.

A number of bomb explosions in Tangalle coincided with the burning of buses and shops. Public and private transport ground to a halt and stores remained closed in Colombo and the principal towns of the south on 12 September - allegedly on JVP instructions.

The killing of 19-year old Uva student Pradeep Karunaratne on 13 September created further consternation and the Army closed down Matara District's 379 schools as well as many shops in the surrounding areas. Universities due to reopen on 12 September recorded a poor turn-out.

In Colombo the Bar Association declared that its members would refuse to defend Police personnel until those responsible for Mr Liyanarachchi's death were brought to justice - and that it would boycott the ceremonial opening of the Superior Courts Complex at Hulftsdorp by President J.R.Jayawardene on 17 September.

As a High Court Public Enquiry into the lawyer's death continued, on 20 September Tangalle Superintendent of Police K.Dharmadasa - already suspended from active duty - refused to answer a number of questions at the Enquiry and after an adjournment failed to reappear.

His application for a suspension of the High Court proceedings until he could find legal representation was subsequently turned down by the Court of Appeal on 29 September. A large number of attorneys were said to be present at the hearing.

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### Indemnity Bill suspended after widespread protest

THE controversial Indemnity Bill offering security personnel immunity from prosecution for actions carried out between 1979 and 1987 under the Prevention of Terrorism Act, was suspended after a meeting of the Government Parliamentary Group on 6 September.

A communique issued by the Chief Government Whip shortly afterwards, said that the Prime Minister Mr R.Premadasa had told the Group that the Indemnity Bill could be wrongly interpreted by the people at a time when a lawyer Mr Wijedasa Liyanarachchi had died after being arrested by the police.

The Sri Lankan Press welcomed the move, pointing out that while the Bill had been presented in good faith to protect public officers engaged in anti-terrorist operations, it was unfortunate that the scope of the Bill was so wide as to be immediately understood by concerned citizens as a violation of human rights.

During the preceding weeks all opposition political parties, legal associations including the Bar Association of Sri Lanka, human rights organisations, prominent Buddhist clergy and the Catholic Church had condemned the Bill and had urged the Government to withdraw it.

## THE EAST

**Ampara: the forgotten frontier**

EIGHT Ampara colonists including five children were killed when militants - allegedly from the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) - attacked Colony No.16 of Ampara Central camp on 10 September. Four other colonists were critically injured. Three days later an LTTE landmine blew apart a police vehicle

travelling toward Pottuvil, killing a Sub-Inspector of Police, seven Constables and one civilian.

Ampara District with its thick jungles, isolated colonies of homesteaders and long ribbons of deserted road remains a frontier area in danger of being forgotten, its inhabitants say, by security forces and relief agencies alike. Reinforcements of Special Task Force units drafted into the district last month remain clustered in restricted areas, while Sarvodaya, the national relief and development organisation, is the only major voluntary agency active in the area.

On the more densely populated coastal belt conditions are equally unsettled. In Kalmunai, MP A.R.Munsoor says that around 30,000 people are jobless in the aftermath of the large-scale communal violence that destroyed much of the commercial sector of the town earlier this year.

The fishing community has been among the worst hit. In a memorandum sent to Fisheries Minister Festus Perera earlier this month, the fishermen of Thambiluvil, Tirukovil and Kolavil told the Minister that in the turmoil of the last ten years, boats and nets had been destroyed, houses burned down and people brought close to penury. Mr S.Kanagasabai, secretary of Thambiluvil Fishermen's Co-op told the press that while the Fisheries Cooperative Federation had offered relief and retraining to the fishing communities of other affected areas, Ampara remained neglected and in growing need of assistance.

**Trincomalee**

AFTER an alleged attack on Sinhalese fishing boats by an Indian naval vessel off Trincomalee on 28 August which injured 20 fishermen and destroyed nets and tackle, Sri Lankan Navy patrol boats were drafted into the area to increase off-shore surveillance.

*Satyagraha* demonstrations by the Sinhalese community throughout Trincomalee in early September have led to a report on the incident being forwarded to Indian Defence Attache Capt.A.D.Singh and the formation of an association - the Neganahira Janatha Viyaparaya - to protect the rights of Sinhalese in the Eastern Province.

The reinforcement of IPKF troops stationed in the port city has considerably increased tension in surrounding areas.

□ In the first major incident reported since the ten-day ceasefire ended on 25 September, three Indian soldiers were shot dead and four wounded by suspected LTTE militants in Trincomalee on 27 September. An IPKF foot patrol set off a Claymore mine and then came under small arms fire, military sources in Trincomalee said.

The SRI LANKA MONITOR is part of an information processing service set up by the British Refugee Council to keep Sri Lankan refugees in Britain, Europe and elsewhere, informed about the current situation in their home areas.

If you have any information you wish to share, or any enquiries you wish to make regarding developments in Sri Lanka, contact:

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**Batticaloa**

SEVERAL prominent citizens were kidnapped in Batticaloa town - reportedly by the LTTE - during the ten-day ceasefire. Millions of rupees in ransom payments are said to have been demanded. Many people in Batticaloa expected the LTTE to accept the ceasefire and to continue to negotiate. There is a sense of disappointment and apprehension. Medical provisions in the area have improved considerably since civilians have been allowed to use the IPKF hospital in the town. The IPKF unit at the railway station also has an out-patient department which is now seeing 150-200 people a day.

There are no passenger trains out of Batticaloa however, and public bus transport is overcrowded and private buses expensive. Local people reportedly say that Transport Minister M.H.Mohammed is delaying improvements in rail links for Batticaloa because the private bus companies are Muslim-controlled. Since the ceasefire ended three IPKF soldiers and several militants have been killed.