

# The Sri Lanka Monitor

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*SLFP quits Select Committee*

## India outlaws LTTE

INDIA proscribed the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) in May, almost a year after the assassination of former Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi. Announcing the ban in Parliament on 14 May, Indian Home Minister S. Chavan accused the LTTE of conspiring with collaborators for the separation of Tamil Nadu, posing a threat to the sovereignty and territorial integrity of India. Following the ban there were two bomb explosions in Tamil Nadu causing two deaths.

The Indian decision clearly resulted from the aggressive campaign mounted by Tamil Nadu Chief Minister Jayalalitha, who had been demanding a ban on the LTTE before the first anniversary of Rajiv Gandhi's assassination on 21 May.

Immediately after the ban, the Andhra Pradesh state government issued notice proscribing the naxalite People's War Front and seven other organisations alleged to have links with the LTTE. The Tamil Nadu police launched a massive flushing out operation and 20 LTTE suspects were detained.

Jayalalitha, who had earlier made statements supporting the LTTE, is said to have been perturbed over the extent of LTTE infiltration into the Tamil Nadu government and was extremely worried about her personal security. Critics of her authoritarian style of government say that she would not hesitate to use the ban to settle scores with political opponents.

The Indian government was reluctant to outlaw the LTTE, because such action may hinder investigations into the Rajiv Gandhi assassination and remove New Delhi's leverage in Sri Lanka. Prime Minister Narasimha Rao may have given the green light to ensure Jayalalitha's

continued support for the ruling Congress (I) party. Some observers say that the ban may be to ensure support and stability in the south, in view of Pakistan's gain over the deposing of the Najibullah government in Afghanistan, a strategically vital country to India's interests in the North.

The Special Investigation Team probing the Rajiv Gandhi murder, filed a 1,044-page charge-sheet before the special designated Madras court on 20 May. Tiger leader Velupillai Prabhakaran is the first accused and 28 other LTTE suspects have been charged under the stringent Terrorism and Disruptive Activities (Prevention) Act (TADA). Home Minister Chavan says that a request has been made to Sri Lanka for the extradition of the Tiger leader and LTTE's intelligence chief Pottu Amman.

The Indian ban on the LTTE and the request for extradition met varying responses in Sri Lanka. Presidential Adviser Bradman Weerakoon said that the question of extradition was a matter for the courts in both countries. Most political parties welcomed India's decision, but others feared that it may lead to a military solution to the Sri Lankan problem. The opposition urged the government to take steps to ban the LTTE in Sri Lanka as the earlier prohibition had become ineffective following the government's year-long negotiations with the militant group in 1989-90 and the recognition of the LTTE's People's Front of the Liberation Tigers (PFLT) as a political party.

Following government's refusal to make a statement on banning the LTTE

in Sri Lanka and to allow debate on the issues such as the Election Commissioner's critical report on the 1988 parliamentary elections, there was uproar in Parliament and 48 opposition MPs

staged a demonstration on 21 May against what they called "suppression of freedom of expression in Parliament". The main opposition Sri Lanka Freedom Party (SLFP) announced that it would boycott the Parliamentary Select Committee appointed to recommend a devolution package for Tamil areas. SLFP leader Mrs Sirimavo Bandaranaike said that five opposition parties have drawn their own peace plan.

The Select Committee, whose Chairman Mangala Munesinghe is a SLFP member, is placed in a difficult position by the ban on the LTTE in India and the boycott by the SLFP. Sources say the Committee had intended to accept the invitation extended by the LTTE to visit Jaffna. The ban may have little effect on the Tigers who have already faced the military might of India. Observers say that it is almost an admission of India's inability to capture and punish LTTE leader Prabhakaran. In the light of President Premadasa's hostile attitude towards India, cooperation with Sri Lanka in apprehending Prabhakaran seems difficult to achieve.

Indian High Commissioner in Colombo, N. Jha, told Sri Lanka in a veiled threat that the ban was a symbolic gesture with international ramifications and Sri Lanka must confront realities before embarking on a political solution. India may now intensify its campaign for a global move against the LTTE and the role of India in future peace negotiations is left in doubt. The LTTE has described the ban as a political trick designed to prevent Colombo from talking to them and said India would be the loser in the long term.

Many believe India's action would only drive the LTTE and its network of associates underground, exactly as it happened in Sri Lanka. The Sri Lankan government, unable to identify members of the militant movement, antagonised the Tamil community by labelling every Tamil as a Tiger. Analysts say troubles for India are only beginning.

■ Sri Lankan security forces launched an assault in the north on 28 May. Gunboats shelled the coastal Tiger stronghold of Valvettiturai in Jaffna and troops moved east from Palaly airbase towards Atchuveli. The Army is said to have advanced 8 km. Ten battalions moved against LTTE positions at Alampil in Mullaitivu District. According to defence sources over 300 rebels and 70 soldiers were killed. But Tigers say only 40 cadre died. See Page 2.



## The fall of Tellippalai

IN Operation *Chandamaruthaya* (whirlwind) launched on 28 May in the north, defence sources say, the key LTTE stronghold of Tellippalai, 3 miles south of Kankasanturai (KKS) has been captured and troops were marching on Mallakam, another town on the road to Jaffna. The Army also reached the Thondamanar bridge east of Palaly airbase and heavy fighting was reported in Atchuveli.

Using recently acquired Czechoslovakian tanks, troops advanced on Alampil, a strategic supply post for Tigers in the Mullaitivu District. By 1 June Alampil had fallen. Operation *Sath Bala* (seven forces) was launched in the east to prevent Tiger reinforcements to the north.

According to the Army the main objective was to destroy the Sea Tiger base on the Valvettiturai coast. Colombo sources say that the attacks were in view of President Premadasa's visit on 29 May to the Mobile Secretariat in Vavuniya. The LTTE killed two policemen and a soldier three miles from the Secretariat hours before the arrival of the President.

Shelling from Army camps in the Jaffna peninsula and bombing by the Airforce, damaged many buildings. Bombs fell on the Tellippalai Thurkaiaiman temple killing five refugees. Valvettiturai was pounded by the Airforce on 27 May and 12 civilians including three students were killed. Joint Operations Command says two Tiger bases were destroyed by naval vessels. Over 20,000 people fled Tellippalai and Atchuveli.

Twenty five civilians were killed and another 30 injured when the Army fired shells at the Vatrpalai temple in Mullaitivu District during a festival on 18 May. Temple authorities say the Army had been informed about the festival through the Mullaitivu Government Agent. Presidential Adviser Bradman Weerakoon said the Army had fired after receiving information that 200 Tigers were gathering near the temple. The Jayalath Committee enquiring into the incident has submitted an interim report to the Defence Ministry.

Eight soldiers were killed in a LTTE attack on the southern perimeter of the Elephant Pass camp on 11 May. The Tigers lost 28 of their own cadre. A day later 5 soldiers were killed in the Tantrimalai Army camp in the Anuradhapura District. The camp was attacked again on 24 May and 15 soldiers were injured. The following day six soldiers died in a Tiger attack on an Army post in Veli Oya.

The food situation in the north appeared to be improving, but Jaffna residents say people do not have the money to buy food. In the beginning of May Jaffna Government Agent said that 11,000 tonnes were in stock. But Essential Services Commissioner announced shipment of further 4,000 tonnes of food to Jaffna. Food was also sent to Mullaitivu and Kilinochchi Districts in 47 lorries. However, Jaffna doctors say that they are concerned about early births caused by malnutrition and shock.

### Aid

The United States has granted Rs 317 million (\$7.3 million) to Sri Lanka as project aid for the current year. An agreement between USAID and Sri Lanka will provide assistance to develop and expand private agro-enterprises. The IMF is expected to release \$75 million in loans following government's introduction of tough measures to contain the budget deficit this year.

### Abduction

Colombo university student Dilip Jayaweera, a candidate for the Law Faculty union elections was abducted on 20 May and released 48 hours later. Reports linked the abduction to the union elections. Earlier in the month students occupied class rooms in the university demanding hostel accommodation.

### May Day

President Premadasa reaffirmed at the UNP May Day rally at Galle Face green that workers in state-owned enterprises that are being privatised will not suffer loss of any privilege. The joint opposition meeting at Campbell Park focussed on the issues on the Udugampola revelations about the *Black Cats*.

### Defence levy

The Sri Lankan government raised the defence levy from 1% to 3% from 1 May, to meet increased defence and refugee related expenditure. The Ministry of Finance says additional funds are needed to continue the war in the north-east. The increase is expected to raise Rs 7 billion (\$55.8 million) during this year.

## Alanchipothana: the aftermath

THE ATTACK on the Tamil villages of Karapola and Muthugala was carried out by Muslim Home Guards and villagers from Alanchipothana who escaped the Tiger onslaught on 29 April, according to the interim report submitted by the Jayalath Committee to the Defence Ministry.

The Committee, comprising former Appeal Court judge DG Jayalath, Major Gen Balaratnarajah and Senior Police Superintendent Abdul Majeed, was appointed to enquire into the killings of 58 Muslims at the Alanchipothana village and 85 Tamils in the two Tamil villages in the Polonnaruwa District.

According to the report 400 Tigers mounted the attack on the Muslim village,

but LTTE's Lawrence Thilagar denied involvement in a BBC interview on 5 May. Other sources say the Tigers struck only the police post and made off with captured weapons. The civilian killings were carried out by villagers from the adjoining Tamil villages which resulted in retaliation by the Muslims. But according to the Army *Anul* grenades used by the Tigers were found in the Muslim village.

Those killed included seven pregnant women and fourteen members of one family. Tension had been brewing, reports say, because of the abduction of Muslims by the LTTE and over business transactions between the Tamil and Muslim villages.

The EPRLF said in a statement that eight women were raped and 80 houses were burned in the Tamil villages. The 30 reserve policemen at Karapola when the Home Guards entered the village also participated in the attack, according to EPRLF.

Presidential Adviser Bradman Weerakoon told reporters on 28 May that the Committee had made recommendations relating to Home Guards and the defence of villages and government proposes to take necessary action. Muslim leaders in the east, however, are opposed to any attempt to disband the Home Guards. They say the Home Guards are their only protection from the Tigers.



*Refugees pay more for food*

## Killing in the East

FIFTEEN Muslim civilians were killed and another 25 injured when armed men alleged to be Tigers attacked a passenger bus at Komari in the Amparai District on 2 June. This massacre is the latest in revenge killings involving the Tamil and the Muslim communities in the east. Following the Alanchipothana massacre on 29 April, 13 Tamils including six children were abducted by Muslim Home Guards while collecting firewood in the Valaichenai jungle. A boy escaped with injuries, but the others are believed killed. A week later six more Tamils arriving from Colombo were abducted by gunmen at the Valaichenai railway station. MP Joseph Pararajasingham says that Tamils in the Eravur area spend the nights in the jungle fearing Muslim Home Guard attacks.

Following the discovery of three bodies tied in sacs in the Batticaloa lagoon, Mr Pararajasingham complained to the De-

fence Ministry that murders were being committed to instil fear in the minds of the people.

Heavy fighting took place in the Thoppigala jungles in the Batticaloa District and three Tigers and two soldiers were killed on 6 May according to Army spokesman Col Sarath Munesinghe. The following day at the coastal town of Vakara the LTTE ambushed an Army unit returning after destroying a LTTE camp and killing four Tigers at Kathiraveli, and shot dead eight soldiers.

Clashes continued in Vakara and transport was disrupted resulting in food shortage. People of the area walked 15 miles south to Valaichenai to buy rations. In a landmine attack on 9 May at Akkaraipattu two policemen were killed and five others injured. On the same day the Special Task Force destroyed a Tiger camp at Thirukovil.

The Tigers continued to target infrastructure in Army-controlled areas of Batticaloa. Twelve transformers were damaged in May disrupting electricity supply to several areas. The Army is using Tamil militant groups PLOTE and TELO cadres in search and destroy operations against the LTTE. In late May a PLOTE member was seriously injured by a landmine at Kurumanweli. Twenty nine soldiers and 12 Tigers were killed in a clash at Vakaneri on 29 May.

An EPRLF, TELO and EPDP team visiting refugee camps in Amparai District discovered that rice was being sold to refugees at a higher price in some camps. Government officials say that higher rate was charged to pay an outstanding Rs 4 million (\$93,000) to the local cooperative stores. Currently there are 20,498 refugees in camps and 10,447 living with friends and relatives in the District.

In the adjoining Batticaloa District, there are 9,826 refugees in 28 welfare centres and 66,098 live outside with the community. Forty persons in the Kalliyankadu refugee camp contracted chicken pox and have been separated from other refugees. The Government Agent says French agency Medecins Sans Frontieres supplies water to refugees in the municipal council area and refugees outside these areas have adequate water supply. But lack of sanitary facilities in many camps was causing concern.

## Illegal detention

THE Sri Lankan Supreme Court ruled on 4 May that the arrest and detention of Upcountry People's Front President Periyasamy Chandrasekaran and two officers of the union under emergency regulations were illegal.

The wives of the three men had alleged infringement of fundamental rights under the Constitution in habeas corpus applications. An order had also been sought for the transfer of the prisoners from the notorious "Sixth Floor" of the Colombo police headquarters where detainees are said to be regularly tortured.

The Supreme Court ordered the three men to be released if indictment was not served in the Kandy High Court on 18 May. Sources say the police defied an order of the High Court to transfer the prisoners to the Colombo Magazine prison.

The Hill Country continues to be troubled by arrests and disappearances, particularly in the Uva Province. Ceylon Workers Congress representative S Muthiah wrote to President Premadasa in early May alleging that 14 persons arrested by police last year have "disappeared". Around 30 plantation youths are still held in the Magazine prison.

Plantation workers on Ohiya estate in Badulla District staged a strike following the arrest of 11 persons by police on allegation of LTTE links in mid May and an arrest on Bovai estate in Haputale also resulted in a strike. Two more Tamil youths were arrested in Uva on 15 May. Four youths who returned from Jaffna in late May were taken into custody by the Madulsima police. An unidentified gang attacked Uva Highlands estate in Bandarawela on 12 May injuring residents and causing extensive damage.

## *Cholera epidemic in Mannar*

PANIC gripped Mannar Island when two children died of cholera in Pesalai and hundreds of people were treated in the hospital. The spread of the disease is attributed to insanitary conditions in refugee camps and lack of basic amenities. The population in the four welfare centres is increasing as many refugees arriving from Tamil Nadu are unable to proceed to their home areas. Social workers say that no organisation has come forward to construct permanent or temporary toilets. They have called on the authorities to improve camp conditions and medical facilities.

Returning refugees are paid Rs 2,000 as settlement allowance and Rs 4,000 towards self employment. Refugees in camps have been paid only Rs 1,000 and it is said that the balance will be paid when they return to their homes.

India began airlifting refugees to

Trincomalee and 12 flights are planned per week. Since January over 23,000 refugees have been returned. The refugee camps at Thandikulam and Vepankulam in Vavuniya District were overflowing with refugees arriving from Trincomalee, as the Army refused to allow them to go home into Tiger-held areas. Following representations from Vanni MP, KR Kuganeswaran to President Premadasa, refugees were permitted to travel to Jaffna, Mullaitivu and Kilinochchi.

Refugees in Vavuniya camps complained to visiting TULF MP, Mavai Senathirajah that they were forced by authorities to purchase stale rice at the local cooperative stores at a higher price while cheaper and fresh rice was available in shops. They also expressed concern over the delay before allowing them to return home and the arrest of two returnees by the Army.



# Freedoms and the Tigers

GLOBAL repercussions following the Indian ban on the LTTE are expected to further erode the international standing of the militant movement, observers say. Over a period of fifteen years the Tigers have grown from a ragged guerrilla outfit into a full military movement capable of engaging the Sri Lankan security forces in conventional battles. The Tigers have been described as an effective guerrilla group.

But to many, mere militarism would be inadequate to achieve goals and the Tigers seem to be afflicted by political impotency which is proving an obstacle to becoming an internationally recognised liberation movement. Analysts say the LTTE lacks political vision and is more intent on suppression of freedoms. Genuine commitment of the LTTE to international humanitarian standards is questionable.

The fundamental rights of freedom of association and expression which are essential ingredients in a democratic society have almost become non-existent

in north-east Sri Lanka due to persistent and co-ordinated suppression.

Effective guerrilla movements have by consistent political and military action forced governments to negotiate with them or have achieved international status. The Palestinian Liberation Organisation (PLO), for example has observer status in the United Nations and the Sandinistas were able to take over power in Nicaragua.

Reports indicate since Rajiv Gandhi's assassination the Indian government has sought by diplomatic manoeuvres to exert pressure on the LTTE in other countries. But some observers contend that India wishes to avoid a protracted confrontation with the LTTE. The ban on the LTTE is imposed under the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act in terms of which the government decision must be examined by a Tribunal. The ban becomes effective only if approved by the Tribunal and will be in force for two years. The fact that the ban is not under the harsh Terrorism and Disruptive Activities (Prevention) Act

indicates India's "soft approach" towards the LTTE.

International lobby for recognition is an important intermediate stage in the development of a guerrilla group which would culminate in the acquisition of territory or result in compromise. Preoccupation of the LTTE with the control of the community and the lack of credible lobby of its own has affected the momentum of the effective international campaign for rights launched in earlier years.

LTTE supporters dismiss the criticisms outright. They say the memory of the international community is short and point out that Israelis who were decried as "terrorists" in the years of the Israeli struggle for nationhood hold high positions in government and have even become recognised as statesmen. Despite the "soft approach", the Tigers have sent clear signals to India to keep out of Sri Lankan affairs. LTTE philosophy seems to be that if you are tough and have your objectives in sight you will achieve your goals.

## Taming of the press

ARTICLE 19, the London-based international centre against censorship has protested to President Premadasa over charges brought against editors of Sri Lankan newspapers *Aththa*, *Yukthiya* and *Rajaliya* for publishing statements of former Deputy Inspector General of Police Premadasa Udugampola alleging prominent politicians may have been involved in the killings by the paramilitary group the *Black Cats*.

The editor of *Aththa* W Dharmadasa and publisher LB Wanigasekara were charged under emergency regulations in April with bringing the government of Sri Lanka into hatred and contempt. *Yukthiya* editor MS Deshapriya and *Rajaliya* editor D Landewela have been indicted in the Colombo High Court under the Ceylon Penal Code. Sources in Colombo say number of journalists have been intimidated and harassed by the police and politicians.

Article 19 denounced government action as a violation of the freedom of expression and information and has called for the immediate withdrawal of the charges.

International concern over Sri Lankan human rights record continued. USA-

based human rights agency Asia Watch in a report released on 31 May titled "Human Rights Accountability in Sri Lanka", says even with the creation of many agencies by the government to protect human rights, Sri Lankans faced serious difficulties in attempting to protest against violations by the state. The 78-page report welcomes government initia-

tives and provides a detailed analysis of the reforms undertaken in the human rights field since October 1990. If citizens succeeded in filing charges against members of the security forces it was by no means certain that they would be tried. The report says that even in rare cases where security forces are found guilty, their sentences are not often enforced.

A Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs delegation visited Sri Lanka in the first week of May to ascertain the human rights situation. The team examined the possibility of setting up a human rights centre in Batticaloa.

Sri Lankan human rights organisations are concerned over continuing human rights violations. A detainee at the Pelawatte detention centre was shot dead by guards allegedly while trying to escape. The Organisation for the Families of Detainees has appealed for an independent inquiry into the shooting. During May a large number of Tamils were arrested in Colombo and Negambo.

The Colombo press continued to report on robberies by members of security forces. Two reserve policemen were shot dead at Pannala on 18 May while committing a robbery.

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

The Sri Lanka Project  
The British Refugee Council  
3/9 Bondway  
London SW8 1SJ  
Tel: (071) 582 6922  
Fax: (071) 582 9929

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