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MGR LEAVES A VOID

SWORN IN AS CHIEF MINISTER



Mrs. Janaka Ramachandran

THE CHALLENGER



Jayalalitha



M.G. RAMACHANDRAN — Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu for a decade

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A VOID THAT CANNOT BE FILLED

M.G.RAMACHANDRAN, the matinee idol of the Tamil silver screen turned politician, became a legend in his own lifetime. He was the most popular Chief Minister Tamil Nadu has had hitherto. He was the single most dominant public figure in the whole of South India.

Although MGR was ailing for years, his sudden departure from this world following a heart attack sent waves of shock, sorrow and anguish across the entire length and breadth of Tamil Nadu. Millions poured out into the streets weeping and wailing uncontrollably, and some even committed suicide unable to bear the loss of their much cherished and loved leader. All transport grounded to a halt. Not a single shop remained open. In short, the entire State and its people were paralysed.

The President and Prime Minister of India with many senior central government Ministers, Chief Ministers of other States of the Indian Union and several leaders of the opposition national parties descended on Madras to pay their last respects to MGR. The gun carriage for the hearse was airlifted from Delhi. The Central Government declared a day of national mourning. Such was the stature MGR had assumed at national level.

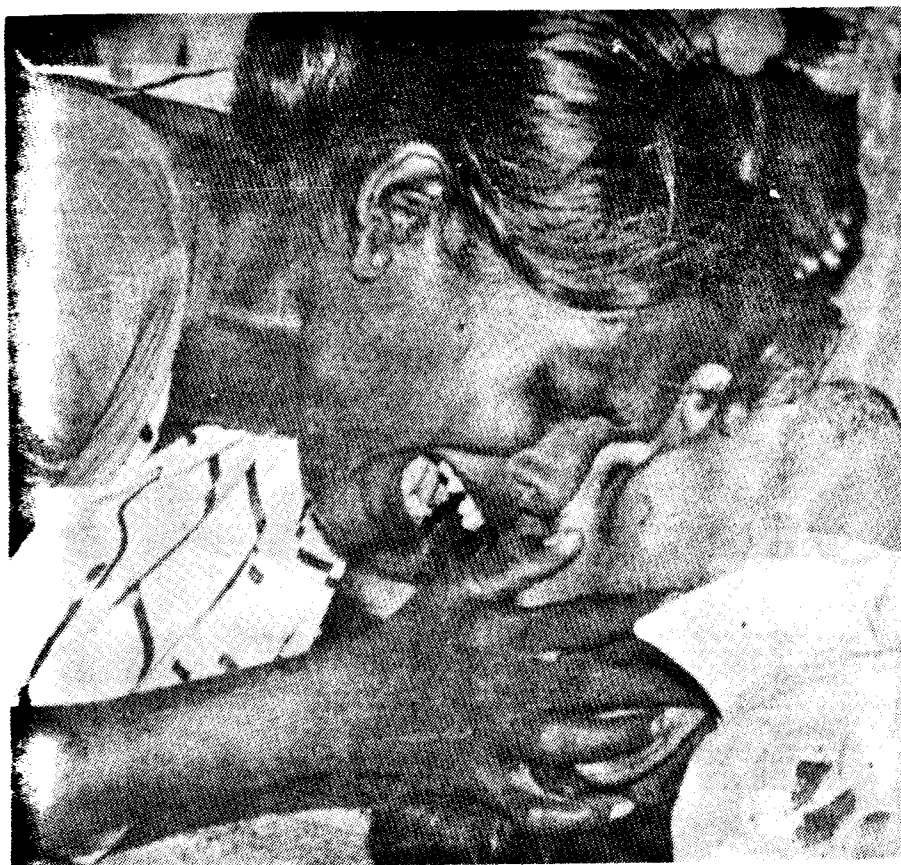
Perhaps MGR was the only Chief Minister of an Indian State to have played an international role. The ethnic conflict in Sri Lanka had overflowed into Tamil Nadu and MGR became a crucial factor in any move towards the resolution of the conflict. His attitude to the conflict largely contributed in influencing the Indian central government's approach to Sri Lanka and its ethnic problem.

MGR's contribution to the cause of the Sri Lankan Tamil community needs no emphasis or exaggeration. The Tamil community owes a gigantic debt to him for the timely assistance, ungrudging support and safe sanctuary given to the tens of thousands of Tamil refugees who flooded into Tamil Nadu following the July 1983 anti-Tamil violence in Sri Lanka. As his sustained support for the struggling Tamils of the island became well known, he became the convenient target for malicious attacks by every third rate Sri Lankan politician. MGR was determined to go to any lengths in assisting the Tamils of Sri Lanka to regain their rights. At the time the fighting between the Indian Peace Keeping Force and the LTTE broke out, MGR was in the USA for medical treatment. He returned only a few days before his death. But immediately upon his return to Madras, against all medical advice, he journeyed to Delhi to discuss the problem with Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi and express his concern about the tragic turn of events as far as the Tamils of Sri Lanka were concerned. Such was his commitment to the Tamil cause.

Most of all, MGR was a man of the people. And the people regarded him as the symbol of their power. His tenure of office as Chief Minister was marked by an abiding concern for the average man and the upliftment of downtrodden. Millions of unprivileged people benefited by his several welfare schemes and social programmes, the most noteworthy among them was the scheme for the provision of free mid-day meals for millions of school children.

Tamil Nadu and its people have lost a truly great leader. The Sri Lankan Tamils have lost a truly loyal friend. The void left by his departure is impossible to fill.

25 KILLED IN POLICE RAMPAGE



At least 25 people were indiscriminately killed on 24 December in the crowded Batticaloa bazaar in eastern Sri Lanka when the police rampaged through the bazaar shooting every one in sight. The rampage occurred allegedly in retaliation to the ambush by militants belonging to the LTTE in which two policemen in civilian dress were killed.

At the time of the police rampage, the bazaar was crowded with thousands of shoppers. Dozens of policemen from the nearby police station poured into the bazaar shooting and setting alight shops. Cyclists were asked to alight and shot at point blank range. People who scurried for cover from the blazing guns were shot on the run, their bodies slumping to the road. Some people were shot more than a quarter of a mile from the market area.

The Roman Catholic Bishop's house near the market was damaged in the firing. A church official said that people were dragged out of shops and shot by police.

According to hospital sources, 19 bodies were brought to the Batticaloa Hospital of which three were those of children under 14. Eighteen more injured persons were also admitted to the hospital of whom 9 were in a critical condition.

U.N.P. CHAIRMAN GUNNED DOWN

THE chairman of the ruling United National Party, Mr. Harsha Abeywardene and three others were killed on 23 December when unidentified gunmen sprayed bullets into the car in which they were travelling at Hampden Lane, Wellawatte in Sri Lanka's capital, Colombo.

Mr. Abeywardene was being driven to work with a bodyguard and colleague, when his car slowed down at the road junction and a man waiting at the roadside pulled out a T-56 automatic rifle and fired about twenty rounds at the car, while another man threw a grenade. All four people in the car died instantly.

Besides the UNP chief, the victims were his driver B. Sunil Ranjith, his bodyguard, a Police Sergeant A. M. Gunasena, and another person S. Liyanapathirana.

The assassins escaped on a bicycle. The police who arrived at the scene soon after the killing found a motor cycle abandoned nearby with its engine running. It is presumed that this motor cycle was to be the getaway vehicle of assailants, but in panic they had abandoned it and fled.

The suspicion for the attack has predictably fallen on the Deshapremi

Janatha Viyaparaya (Patriotic Peoples Movement — DJV), which is supposed to be the military wing of the proscribed Janatha Vimukthi Peramuna (Peoples Liberation Front — JVP). This organisation has been accused of several murders of members belonging to the ruling party since the Indo-Sri Lankan Agreement was signed by President Jayawardene and Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi in July last year.

Only a few days earlier, President Jayawardene had, in a much publicised speech, attacked the JVP as 'animals with a homicidal mania' and vowed to eliminate them in a few weeks. The assassination of the Chairman of the UNP, a person who is regarded as very close to the President, is widely seen as a direct and swift response to the President's attack on the JVP.

According to police sources, the murder of Mr. Abeyawardene in December and the Chief of the Counter Subversive Division and Police Superintendent Terence Perera in November were carried out by the same man with the same weapon, a T-56 automatic weapon, normally issued to be used by the Sri Lankan army. It is also said that it is one of the weapons allegedly stolen by the JVP in one of their many raids on army camps.

Action taken against 6 IPKF offenders

COLOMBO 16 DECEMBER — Major H. V. Singh of the IPKF in Northern Jaffna has told the acting magistrate in Jaffna, that action had been taken against all the 6 offenders who were identified by the victims of bodily assault and rape.

On November 15 at about 5 p.m. 6 unmarried girls and a married woman were subjected to rape, it was complained. An investigation into the complaint was conducted the following day by IPKF officers including Major Singh at the acting magistrate's residence in Kondavil. 6 persons were identified by the victims the acting magistrate, Mr. T. Shanmugarajah said.

Major Singh later told the magistrate that all those 6 identified as offenders were to be deported to India within 24 hours minus their pension rights and their uniforms. They have forfeited their right to join the Indian Army again.

The acting magistrate said that the announcement was well received by the public at large. The victims of bodily assault and rape are Mrs. Sushila Veerasingam, Miss Manjulu Nadarajah, Miss Mala Asaipillai, Miss Rani Subramaniam, Miss Rajani Subramaniam, Miss Thayalini Sundaram and Miss Syamala Rajaratnam.

FURTHER TOWARDS LASTING PEACE IN SRI LANKA

By

Professor Kopan Mahadeva

THIS article follows on the author's proposals of March 1987 for an International Mediation Council (Ref: Asian Times & Hindu). It explores certain urgent measures needed to be taken to promote the success of the welcome and well-intentioned but presently stalling Sri Lanka Agreement of July 1987 for Peace and Normalcy.

Understanding of Real Motives

It is firstly vital that each other's genuine motives and efforts be reasonably understood, in a co-operative spirit, by the main parties involved, for the peace process to succeed at all — not only to succeed soon — as hoped and prayed for by the people of Sri Lanka and well-wishers all over the world:

1) That India's principal motive in taking pains over Sri Lanka at enormous financial and other losses and risks is not to encompass and rule over her little neighbour but to ensure peace in the region and thereby minimise the influence of outside powers; 2) That president Jayawardene's intention evidently at this stage is to legitimise maximum autonomy to the Tamils — without jeopardising the rights of his Sinhalese people; 3) That the consistent aim of the Tamil fighters has been to win equal rights for self-rule in the Tamil homelands of the Northern & Eastern Provinces constituted into a single parcel called Tamil Eelam, without endangering any of the rights of the Sinhalese to rule and further develop themselves, nor to hurt, disgrace or embarrass India — their one-time hosts.

The Peace Agreement's Weaknesses

The Indo-Sri Lanka Agreement of July 29 was hailed in principle as a great achievement of the parties concerned and as a rare phenomenon in recent world history by all lovers of peace and Sri Lanka. But those who were then pleasantly shocked by its suddenly announced arrival, are now perplexed by its prospects of failure. Anyone perusing the Agreement impartially would soon discover a few vital weak links in the provisions, five of which are quoted:

1) The Agreement has been signed by the Governments of Sri Lanka and India, but the Tamils, whose rights form the crux of the present conflict and also the reason for the signing of

the Agreement have not been consulted thoroughly, nor brought in as signatories.

2) The acceptance of Tamil as an official language of the country is not seen to be genuine from the wording of the Agreement: 'The official Language of Sri Lanka shall be Sinhala. Tamil and English will also be official languages' (Clause 2.18).

3) Once the Northern and Eastern Provinces are, quite rightly, recognised in Clause 1.4 as 'areas of historical habitation of Sri Lankan Tamil speaking peoples who have at all times hitherto lived together in this territory with other ethnic groups', and once the decision has been made, with sound reasons, to allow the adjoining Northern and Eastern Provinces to form one administration unit with one Governor, one Chief Minister, and one Board of Ministers, there is no real need to have limited the above for a period of about a year in the first instance, pending a referendum (Clause 2.1 to 2.7). A critical sifting of these clauses raises many doubts in the minds of the readers as to their wisdom. No one would dispute that while providing for the due rights of the Tamils, the welfare of the Muslim and Sinhalese minorities in the above two provinces has also to be considered. The Tamils, who have suffered during the past four decades after independence as minorities in the whole country never failed to recognise this aspect. The fact that Muslims and Sinhalese have happily lived together with the Tamils in the above provinces for generations and participated peacefully in local government (before the recent racial hatreds grew) is enough insurance to rest assured that when left to themselves the three races will further co-exist in a Tamil dominated administration — as expected from the Tamil minority in the rest of Sri Lanka without any special provisions. Muslims, also speaking Tamil, have never had significant problems with the Hindu and Christian Tamils. Hence the linking of the Northern and Eastern Provinces could and should have been made permanent, once and for all, without complicating matters with a proposed referendum.

4) The Agreement when viewed with the exchanged Letters and recent events raises doubt to some if its aim was for India to help Sri Lanka to bring the Tamils under Government control, back in their own soil, in return for which India would benefit by joint ventureship on the Trincomalee oil tank farm project and an assurance that no foreign countries would be

permitted to use Trincomalee or any other ports or any broadcasting facilities in Sri Lanka for military purposes, as well as by a joint consultative mechanism for matters like unity, territorial integrity and security of both. A revised Agreement and strategy would rectify this.

5) The provisions for the return of Tamil political prisoners and combatants back into national life are inadequate and ill-defined

The Need for a Review

There is an urgent need for the Governments of India and Sri Lanka to review the current situation, hold discussions with the Tamil leaders and make necessary changes in the Agreement and in the strategy of the peace process. The first and foremost goal for all the parties concerned is to take steps to prevent another single killing on Sri Lankan soil on any side. Neither the people of Sri Lanka and India nor the parties themselves could cope with any more deaths in such an unnecessary manner, since it is indeed possible to achieve everyone's objectives — which don't really contradict, if seen objectively. Talks have to be conducted in an atmosphere of equality and sincerity, with full appreciation of the real motives of one another and with mutual trust — always keeping the peoples' welfare at heart, in mind, and at the finger-tips.

Some Basic Human Considerations

Violence provokes counter-violence, surreptitious actions promote similar actions in the opposing camps, and acts of injustice always breed conflict and varieties of resistance. Violence, cruelty, cheating, injustice and similar practices are decried by all the world's religions including those of India and Sri Lanka. The parties to the peace process in Sri Lanka must remember this well.

Also, organised large groups and governments in power generally assume an air of superiority over minority groups, and their perspective of what is just and fair is usually obscured by their misleading senses of numerical strength, superiority and indestructibility. This seems to have happened in Sri Lanka too.

No race, nation or country likes to be ruled or dominated by another. And every individual, irrespective of his race, position or social group values his own language, religion, cultural heritage and freedom. Though most people may tolerate infringements in the above matters to differing limits, some particularly under severe and sustained deprivation and injustice, become hardened and prepared to defend such rights with their lives, although all persons are born equal, possessing

more or less similar levels of intelligence, desires, aspirations, self-esteem, bravery & so on. The above facts indeed apply to all humans including Sri Lankans.

The most civilised way in the long run, and the one which always causes least amount of strife and suffering all round, while ensuring dignity, self-respect, lasting satisfaction, and peace for all concerned, is to resolve grievances and conflicts through non-violent, frank and open-minded negotiations — and satyagrahic methods where necessary. Such methods promote international sympathy for the victims & minimise losses, whereas killings only create hatred, disrepute and indifference. Gandhi taught us this.

In today's world of fast and efficient communications, millions of intelligent, fair minded people all over the globe watch the actions of leaders of even small countries and groups almost every minute and make their own judgements on every action of the leaders irrespective of what their media and propaganda machines portray. Also, the leaders' people too can lose faith in them.

Sri Lanka is a literate country with potentials, made poorer now by the racial conflict. Thousands of lives and homes have been lost, industries, morale & infrastructure destroyed, disorder and confusion created, and the people disorganised and despondent.

It is hence vital that the peace process, on which some progress has been made, should be continued with adequate changes to incorporate considerations such as the ones described above and those given below, and a lasting peace built as soon as possible.

RECOMMENDED IMMEDIATE STEPS

- The joining of the Northern and Eastern Provinces as one administrative unit to continue permanently under the official name of Tamil Eelam — as a simple, sound and sure step towards real peace.

- The official languages of the entire country to be restated & confirmed as Sinhala, Tamil and English, with Sinhala to take precedence over Tamil in all other Provinces; Tamil to be given precedence in Tamil Eelam and all three languages to be taught in all the schools (with incentives for proficiency in two or three languages), and made usable in administration in all Provinces.

- No discrimination to be shown in job recruitments, promotions, higher education, etc, throughout the country on grounds of race, religion, caste, sex or any other similar criteria in any sector, but proficiency in languages may be a part of job specifications.

- Proportionate on-the-spot monetary rewards to be offered for arms and ammunitions surrendered to the IPKF at designated points in the country within specified dates and immediate amnesty to be granted to all

political combatants throughout the country, while releasing all the remaining political prisoners simultaneously.

- Dates to be fixed and publicised for democratic elections to all the Provincial Councils, for the Sri Lankan Parliament, and for the next Presidency; All political parties which are now banned to be brought into the democratic process, without exception.

- The Ministerial positions in the Tamil Eelam Provincial Council for its first term to be as per the already negotiated understanding; its first Chief Minister to be elected by the Ministers.

- The Home Guards, as well as the Sinhalese and Tamil political combatants to be offered enrolment opportunities in the country's armed services, police and prison forces, fire brigade, land army, etc, with due training, without any prejudices or discrimination.

- The IPKF to assist in reconstructing/repairing damaged public buildings, houses, roads and transport facilities, industries and other infrastructure; Indian Government to assist in obtaining co-operation, acceptance and funding of all the activities involved, from the international community, to create or strengthen the

executive instruments for the successful completion of the peace operation, and help to recommence full-fledged civil administration.

- The Prevention of terrorism Act and the national emergency to be withdrawn very early, on dates to be announced immediately.

- Only voluntary population movements to be permitted anywhere.

- All the above to be incorporated into a Revised Agreement, to be signed in Madras by Prime Minister Gandhi (on behalf of India), The President, Prime Minister, and Leader of the opposition (for the Sri Lankan Government), and representatives of the LTTE, TULF and TRISTAR (on behalf of all Tamil-speaking politicians and combatants) and the JVP (on behalf of all Sinhala militants). It will dispel unwanted fears if a date is also specified in the Revised Agreement by which all Indian personnel will leave Sri Lanka.

In conclusion, President Jayawardene & Premier Gandhi would deserve the Nobel Peace Prize when they thus bring speedy, lasting peace to entire Sri Lanka — of which they are indeed capable.

IPKF to stay till end of mission: Gen. Sundarji

GEN. K. SUNDARJI, Chief of Staff of the Army, said that the Indo-Sri Lanka accord was in the interest of both the nations and that the Indian Peace Keeping Force (IPKF) would continue its operations till the accord was implemented fully.

Talking to press persons, Gen. Sundarji said the peace-keeping mission in Sri Lanka was undertaken by the Army in the interest of India and to make sure that while the Tamil population in Sri Lanka got what was legitimately due to it the country remained united. Gen. Sundarji was in the city to take salute at the investiture parade of the army.

The General observed that an ultimate solution to the Sri Lanka crisis could be brought about only through political means. For a political solution one should create the right atmosphere in that country in which all the parties concerned cooperated he said. No self-respecting country could tolerate it if one of the parties involved resorted to terrorism and blackmail, he said referring to the activities of the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE).

Gen. Sundarji said every concession was given to the LTTE to lay down arms but instead of cooperating they started attacking the IPKF as well as the innocent Tamils. 'We did our best to disarm them without the use of force but were disappointed. Our aim still is to persuade them to give up arms in a peaceful way,' he said and expressed the hope that the tigers would even-

tually support the accord and join the mainstream of Sri Lanka society.

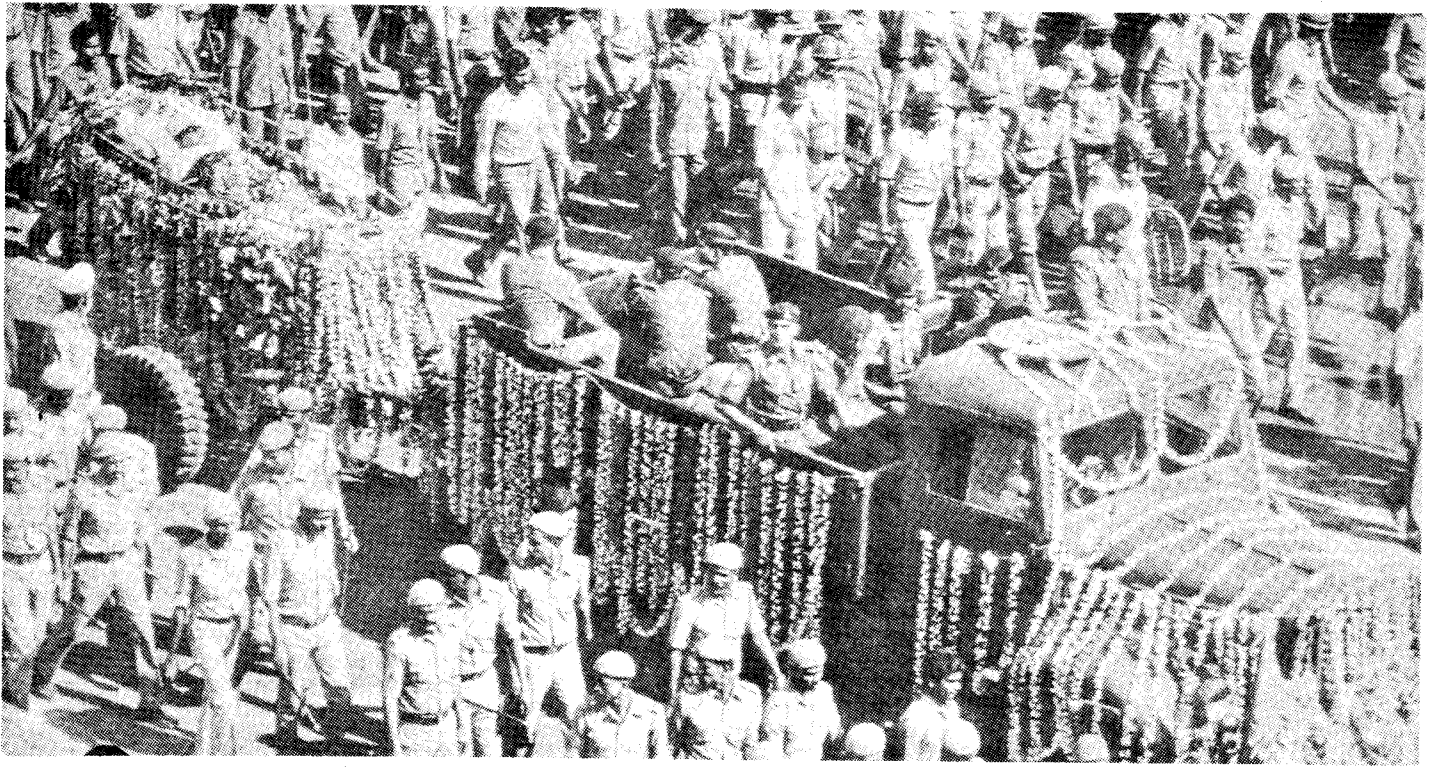
Answering a question on Indian involvement in the Sri Lankan crisis, Gen. Sundarji said it was in the interest of India that no unfriendly element remained in or operated from the Lankan soil. The IPKF was in Sri Lanka with a specific mission and it would remain there till the mission was complete, he said.

Gen. Sundarji said the crisis would end as soon as the LTTE men laid down arms peacefully. 'The present situation was forced upon our country by the adamant stand of the LTTE,' he said and added that there could not be any compromise on terrorism within or outside the country.

The General expressed satisfaction over the performance of Indian soldiers in Sri Lanka and denied that there was any failure of army intelligence. He also refuted the propaganda that the casualty of Indian soldiers was more than what was given out.

'True peace is not merely the absence of tension, but it is the presence of justice and brotherhood.'

— Martin Luther King



JANAKI TO SUCCEED MGR

MRS. JANAKI RAMACHANDRAN is to succeed her late husband, M.G. Ramachandran, as Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu. The Governor of the south Indian State of Tamil Nadu, Mr. N.L. Khurana, has invited Mrs. Ramachandran to form the State Ministry following her claim that she had the support of the largest number Members of the Legislative Assembly (MLAs) belonging to the All India Anna Dravida Munetra Kazhagam (AIADMK).

The Governor has given a period of three weeks to Mrs. Ramachandran to prove her support in the Assembly on the floor of the House. Until the new Ministry is sworn in, Mr. V.R. Nedunchezian who had been acting as Chief Minister prior to the death of MGR has been requested by the Governor to continue as head of the caretaker Ministry.

The succession of Mrs. Ramachandran to the mantle of her late husband was preceded by much wrangling within the AIADMK. Mr. Nedunchezian, in a letter to the Governor had questioned the validity of the meeting of 97 MLAs at which she was unanimously elected as leader. The man behind convening this meeting was R.M. Veerappan who made the move to forestall any possible counter-move by the Nedunchezian faction or the party's Propaganda Secretary, Ms. Jayalalitha, who enjoyed considerable influence and clout while MGR was living. All previous attempts by the Veerappan faction to sideline Ms. Jayalalitha did not come to fruition during MGR's lifetime.

The anti-Jayalalitha forces went into action immediately after the demise of MGR. She was not told about MGR's

deteriorating condition, and after his death she was barred from entering his residence even to pay her respects to the dead leader. Even at the Rajaji Hall where MGR's body was lying in state, Jayalalitha was pinched and ill-treated by family members of Mrs. Ramachandran. The ultimate insult was when she attempted to climb the gun-carriage to place a wreath on MGR's body, she was kicked in the head and pushed down by Deepan, a nephew of Mrs. Ramachandran.

However, Jayalalitha now has been elected General Secretary of the AIADMK, a post with considerable power held by the late MGR. The announcement of her election to this post was made at a press conference in the presence of several Ministers, including the acting Chief Minister, Nedunchezian, S. Ramachandran, Rajaram, K.K.S.S.R. Ramachandran, Thirunavukkarasu and several others. Jayalalitha is said to command considerable support at grassroot level of the party, and without the overwhelming support of the District Party Secretaries, she could not have been elected

to the post of General Secretary. It is also reported that the assault and the harassment to which she was subjected to at MGR's funeral has helped to draw immense sympathy at the rank and file level of the party.

Although an immediate collision between the two ladies in the life of the late MGR is not anticipated, observers say that a confrontation is inevitable in the near future. While Mrs. Janaki Ramachandran would attempt to employ the not inconsiderable power and patronage associated with the position of Chief Minister to bolster up her base of support, Ms. Jayalalitha is certain to use her position as the General Secretary of the Party to strengthen her self and wait for an appropriate opportunity to make her bid for MGR's mantle.

As the warring factions within the AIADMK are mobilising their forces to fight it out, the former Chief Minister and arch-rival of the late MGR, Mr. M. Karunanithi is waiting on the sidelines observing a dignified silence to stage a comeback with the eventual breakup of the AIADMK which he predicts as inevitable.

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THE SIX-WEEK SIEGE OF JAFFNA

BY K.R. ANBAN

REPORTS continue to pour in, recounting in all their gory and gruesome detail, the devastation and destruction that Jaffna has had to experience once over — twice in the same year. Despite an effective blackout of news relating to the six week siege of Jaffna and the appalling conditions of the civilians herded into temples, churches and public buildings, the so-called information and data regularly dished out from interested sources had become so contradictory and unreliable that the exercise only served to heighten the anxiety for the life and limb of the unfortunate Sri Lankan Tamil civilian caught up in the terrible vice.

Ever since the 10th of October for a period of nearly one and a half months, Jaffna was subjected to a TWENTY FOUR HOUR CURFEW! It is impossible to imagine the life of a civilian population ordered into make shift camps not in their hundreds but thousands, and this for no greater reason than that the Indian troops, about twenty to thirty thousand of them, could not simply identify and hunt out a comparatively small band of some two or three thousand Tigers amidst a population of about five hundred thousand civilians in Jaffna.

No doubt they were searching for a needle in a haystack. Hunting for the guerrilla in his own terrain involved additional risks and pressures which, with the determined resistance exhibited by the Tigers, had been totally unexpected and perforce made the Indian Army spiteful. To let out the spleen on the innocent civilians was the least one would expect from a disciplined force and that from a Super Power of the region on a PEACE KEEPING mission!

India's move to hunt the Tigers surprised even the most inveterate pessimist of the Indo-Sri Lankan Accord. Only die-hard chauvinism of the Premadasa-Athulathmudali variety articulated outside Parliament by the J V P (its Mothers and Fathers fronts inclusive), could be seen to gloat over such an ugly turn of events in the North and East. Anywhere else this untoward development could hardly be considered the stuff that political sagacity or mature statesmanship is associated with.

Overtone of immaturity in under-rating the moral calibre and determination of the opponent, a callous indifference to the future outcome and grave consequences, when only personal pique seemed to matter, these tinged with an irreconcilable conviction in personal and or group glory — these seemed to be some of the obvious factors that outline the disaster that was in the making.

It is a crying shame that a militant

group like the Tigers, the pride of Sri Lankan Tamil nationalism, with a dedication synonymous with the movement itself and widely acknowledged as pursuing the only course (militancy) left available to a Nation bullied and terrorised into submission for thirty years or more, a movement that clearly demonstrated to the world that a people could not be ruled by dictatorial fiat enforced by armed power alone and equally proved the fact that the guerrilla movement could not have successfully subsisted without the cooperation and support of the Tamil community — a movement that had endeared itself to the hearts of the oppressed Tamils the world over; that such a movement should succumb to petty fogging rivalry among militant groups, some perhaps less dedicated than others and now appear dictated more by emotion than cold reason and logic in the hour of crisis of the community whom they represent.

Their lack of political foresight stands exposed. As a movement that could be relied upon to guide the destinies of a people through the machinations and intrigues of politics and subtle diplomacy, the Tigers have in fact been found inexperienced and wanting.

On the other hand, the pontifical wisdom of India, its much admired statesmanship (at least until recently) in the Asian region, its time honoured historical affinity with the Tamil problem and above all the democratic traditions of a super power almost internationally acclaimed as the arbiter in a dispute at its own doorstep — the injustices and inequalities of which she has long been intimately aware — that such a Nation should waywardly walk into a confrontation and proceed to impose its will on an already harassed people, without adequate consultation with the concerned parties on its proposed solutions, however just it may appear to the arbiter, is indeed regrettable. It is not surprising therefore, if not in fact ironical, that a benefactor of such calibre should become maligned and vivisected by irrational emotionalism and political opportunism almost overnight on a problem that had defied solution for nearly half a century now.

Polemics apart, the Tamils living in Jaffna have been subjected to unexpected atrocities and untold hardship ever since the 10th October. Coming from an Indian Army and that from the Peace Keepers, this seemed inexcusable to the citizen in Jaffna and more bewildering to the Tamil outside.

It has been established beyond any shadow of doubt that the Indian Army had run wild in Jaffna. Civilians had been shot at random irrespective of age or appearance and without questions asked and some by no stretch of the imagination could even remotely

appear to resemble a militant. Old people and young children had been shot at sight.

Corpses were left lying at the mercy of the elements and to be inevitably preyed upon by birds and animals. Dead bodies have been buried in improvised trenches dug up for protection against erstwhile bombs and buried in their back gardens, for fear of being seen outside.

As late as early December the skeletal remains of an abandoned corpse are said to be seen on the main KKS Road near the Jaffna Hindu College. Until Prof. Narandran arrived from Saudi Arabia the dead bodies of his 65 year old mother and his brother, who had been shot in their own house at Navat-kuli, were left to rot until ironically the Sri Lankan Army helped him to dispose of the remains.

Similar gruesome incidents are far too numerous to recapitulate. Indiscriminate shelling into residential areas like Annaicoddai, Kokkuvil etc, it is said at an average rate of 500 shells during the day and about 800 during each night, has wreaked untold damage to property and persons.

A whole series of houses down the Annaicoddai, Kulapiddy roads have been reduced to rubble. During search operations conducted by the Indian Army, when the inmates had been required to be away, houses had been forced open, damaged, property stolen and left in shambles. Why these searches were necessary and in the absence of the inmates, how the electrical items and other valuables, including jewellery came to be stolen and who is responsible for this type of theft and vandalism is a question for the officer of the Indian Army in Jaffna and for Human Rights activists to pose to the authorities in India and Colombo.

Descriptions of incidents, including organised rape, unheard of and unimaginable in any civilized society, perhaps not even in the worst riots in India, are being received only now and have been verified and unfortunately found true.

It is abundantly clear that the Indian Peace Keeping Force has obviously lost its discipline and quite exceeded its orders and must be brought to book by the authorities concerned. Besides this does not seem to be a matter confined only to the rank and file, some riff-raff who run wild with envy at ordinary middle class prosperity, absent back home perhaps. What have their superiors been doing?

Is it that they too had to succumb to the same feeling or had indeed lost their cool when the Tigers offered them resistance which had lasted more than the anticipated 'seventy two hours' allotted to them for a clear victory over the Tigers? The Tamil Community is indeed furious over this shameful conduct of the Indian Army during this blighting siege.

(Continued on page 10)

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THE INDO-LTTE CONFLICT

IT is a tragic paradox that the Indian Peace Keeping Force which arrived in the Tamil homeland with a mandate to maintain peace, to protect the life and property of our people, to foster cessation of hostilities between Sri Lankan troops and Tiger guerillas are now engaged in a full fledged war against the LTTE.

This war has brought disastrous consequences with a heavy toll of civilian casualties, immense suffering to our people with severe disruption of their socio-economic existence.

Having engaged themselves in a war with violence, brutality and terror the IPKF has lost its status as an instrument of peace but has assumed the role of a repressive invasion army, typically eliminating both the Tamil Freedom fighters and innocent civilians. The Indian military intervention has again shattered the peace in the Tamil region, shattered all civic hopes of return to normalcy and caused violence and bloodshed.

Along with the military offensives the Government of India has mounted a massive propaganda war to rationalise and legitimise her action. This propaganda campaign is vicious, malicious and distortion of truth, aimed to discredit our organisation in the eyes of the Indian and World public opinion. It is precisely for this reason, we wish to articulate our point of view on the developing of Indo-LTTE conflict and the consequences that followed.

In our talks with the Indian Prime Minister on the day before signing of the Indo-Sri Lankan accord, we expressed our reservations on certain vital issues, but pledged to support the implementation of the accord and uphold the interest of our people. We also promised to hand over our weapons on certain guarantees and assurances given by the Prime Minister of India. Recognising the pre-eminent role of India in the South Asian region, respecting India's Geo-political sensitivity and compulsion, we wanted to avoid any conflict with Indian interests. But at the same time we were sincerely concerned with the interests and political aspirations of our people.

We sincerely felt that the sections of the accord, which deal with the set of proposals for setting up a Provincial Councils fall short of the Tamil aspirations. We thought that the Government of India understood our position.

NEGATIVE DEVELOPMENTS

ONE of the assurances given by the Indian Prime Minister was the formation of an Interim Administration with the LTTE playing a dominant role. There was a delay in this matter. In the meantime, the Sri Lankan Govern-

ment had suddenly launched a programme of intensive colonisation of Tamil areas in Mullaitivu and Trincomalee districts. Further more, Sri Lanka has started opening up police stations in Tamil areas with the calculated plan of re-establishing its state apparatuses in Northern Sri Lanka. Alarmed over this development, we registered our protest, with India, but no action was taken.

V.PRABAKARAN Leader of the LTTE

What was more disturbing at that time, was the arrival of armed Tamil groups from South India, who with the patronage of the IPKF, established bases in the North and East and started harassing the LTTE as well as the public. We were rather shocked and surprised why the Indian Intelligence Agency 'RAW' has armed and despatched these men to the Tamil areas at a sensitive time, when the peace process was introduced, when disarming was taking place. This was one of the main reasons that led to our disenchantment with the policy of the Indian Foreign Ministry.

It is because of these negative developments, our movement launched a fast unto death campaign spearheaded by Mr.Thileepan, which soon expanded into a massive non-violent agitation with the active participation of the people. On the 9th day, when Thileepan was reaching the brink of death, the Indian High Commissioner Mr.Dixit arrived in Jaffna to listen to our grievances. At the first meeting, Mr.Dixit offered BIG assurances which failed to meet our 5 point demand. The fast continued and Thileepan died. It is after Thileepan's death that Mr.Dixit offered some concrete proposals for the setting up of an Interim Administration. If the Government of India had acted without delay Thileepan's life would have been saved. His death was a tragic loss to our movement and to our people. This tragedy further added to the estrangement of relations between India and the LTTE.

The Incident that dealt a severe blow to India-LTTE relations was the arrest and detention and the tragic death of our two regional Commanders and 10 senior members. Though they were arrested by the Sri Lankan Navy, they were kept in the protective custody of the IPKF at the Palaly camp, while negotiations were taking place, between Mr.Dixit and President Jayawardene in Colombo. Though Sri Lanka insisted on taking our leaders to Colombo for interrogation, we were given assurances by the Indian side that they would be released. The arrested Tigers had already warned

both Sri Lanka and India that they would swallow cyanide pills and kill themselves rather than facing torture and possibly death in the hands of the enemy. We argued with the Government of India that the arrest of these LTTE leaders and cadres constituted a serious violation of the agreement, wherein LTTE men were given General Amnesty. The two weapons they had were for the personal protection of the regional Commanders. We also insisted that the protection of the lives of our members, was the responsibility of the IPKF which assured the role of avoiding any clashes between the Sri Lankan troops and the Tamil guerillas. We also warned India of a possible outburst of violence if these men were massacred.

Our plea to secure the release of our leaders was a minor concession we demanded from both India and Sri Lanka; we had just entered into a major agreement with the objective of resolving the ethnic conflict. But J.R.Jayawardene was adamant, intransigent and belligerent. Mr.Dixit, was well aware of the disastrous consequences of the Sri Lanka's obstinacy, and his failing in his diplomatic endeavour. The result was a great tragedy. The massacre of 12 prominent LTTE men who were true heroes of Tamil Liberation has, outraged the Tamil sentiment. Pulendran, the regional Commander, Trincomalee and Kumarappa, the former regional Commander of Batticaloa, were highly respected leaders. Their tragic death sparked off spontaneous racial violence which resulted in the death of several Sinhala civilians. Sri Lanka accused the LTTE for the outburst of violence and killings. India too joined Sri Lanka in blaming the Tigers. What followed was a high level conference in Colombo between India and Sri Lanka in which a series of tough measures, including military action against the LTTE were decided upon.

DIPLOMATIC TRAP

THE decision to involve India in a war against the LTTE was a major diplomatic victory for Jayawardene. India, which has been hitherto accused of providing sanctuary and assistance for the Tamil resistance movement, suddenly took over Sri Lanka's military job of liquidating the Tamil freedom movement. A week earlier the LTTE was officially recognised by both India and Sri Lanka as the major representative organisation of the Tamils and was marked to form an Interim Government. But now the LTTE was banned, and the amnesty given to the movement withdrawn. The IPKF which played the role of a protector and Peace maker was turned to an instrument of Terror, of war. India, thus finally fell into the diplomatic trap of the Sri Lanka's racist ruling regime and turned the guns against the Tamils.

(Continued on page 10)

The LTTE, was left with no choice other than to fight for self-preservation and die with honour rather than surrender with humiliation and perish. Even in our wildest dreams we never contemplated a war with India. We never wanted to fight the Indian soldiers whom we regarded with great admiration and love. But the Indian leaders forced us into a situation which has left us to choose between honour and humiliation, between self-preservation and death; we decided to resist. Yet we pleaded with India to call off the unjust war against our movement.

IPKF BEHAVIOUR

IN this war which has lasted more than a month and a half what has shaken our people is the brutal and ruthless manner the Indian troops behaved, with a war-weary population who had already suffered immensely at the hands of the Sinhala military. The war could not be confined to the LTTE but extended into a military action in comprising the entire Tamil masses with an intention of terrorising and subjugating them. In the early hours of 10th October, 1987, the day the offensive started, the Indian troops confiscated all the copies of two daily newspapers, 'Murasoli' and 'Eelamurasu', blasted with explosives the printing machinery and arrested the journalists and workers. On the same day LTTE's Television Station 'Nitharshanam' was also closed. This high handed action to silence the local media which functioned as the only voice of the Tamils, constituted a serious violation of the freedom of the press and expression. Our people were shocked to see that India, which claims to be the guardian of democratic ideals has adopted a totalitarian method to muzzle the Tamil media.

The military of the IPKF was callous and ruthless with total disregard for human lives and property. It appeared the resistance by the LTTE caused a good amount of material on board at the armoured column which opened up with the mortar and Artillery shelling on civilian areas, took heavy toll of civilian casualties. Aerial raid by helicopter gunships caused severe devastation. In several areas the troops went in, tortured and massacred innocent civilians. Tamil women were raped. Even elderly and the children were tortured. Houses and shops were plundered. Hospitals, schools and temples were bombarded. Troops stormed the Jaffna hospital and massacred a large number of sick and injured. In this offensive operation several hundreds of innocent Tamil Civilians were senselessly done to death and hundreds of them sustained injuries primarily due to indiscriminate shelling. Many of the injured died without treatment.

Our allegations of military brutality by the IPKF was rejected by India by a

full scale propaganda and the Government of India refused to allow the Indian and the International press to visit the affected areas and interview the public. The Colombo based journalists who witnessed the events of war in Jaffna for nearly two weeks had reported the horrors of military atrocities to Sri Lankan Government on the request of the Indian High Commission. Without communication link, there was a total black-out of news. In the meantime, the Government of India utilised the state controlled media to malign the Tigers and put out fabricated stories, about the war. We pleaded with India to send a team of observers from Amnesty International and International Commission of jurists to investigate the violation of human rights and extra judicial killings. The Government of India turned down the request.

The military offensive operation undertaken by the IPKF brought extreme hardships to the civilian population. The electricity and water supply were purposely cut off. The food and medical supply from the rest of Sri Lanka was blockaded. Public transport was halted. There was restriction on fishing. There was continuous round the clock curfew in Tamil areas for a month with occasional relaxation in certain specified areas. Because of these hard measures, the innocent civilians suffered immensely with the total disruption of their social and economic existence.

The LTTE leaders, pointing out the human tragedy brought about by this war, appealed to India for a cessation of hostilities and start negotiations to bring about peace and normalcy. But India continues to insist that LTTE should lay down the arms and surrender and accept unconditionally the Indo-Sri Lankan agreement.

It is surprising that the Government of India which had advised Sri Lanka for several years to give up the military option and solve the problems by peaceful negotiation is adopting the similar methodology of military offensive, terror and torture to impose its will on the Tamil people. India's attitude is unfair and undemocratic. LTTE, the main representative political movement of the Eelam Tamils, should not be denied the democratic rights of the freedom of decision and expression. In so far as the Indo-Sri Lankan agreement is concerned we reserve the right to articulate our view. In our view, the set of proposals envisaged in the accord for the settlement of the Tamil problem has serious limitations, therefore fall short to fulfill the political aspiration of our people. Hence, we pledge to extend our co-operation to the implementation of the accord in so far as it upholds the rights of our people. Therefore it is unfair and unreasonable for a democratic country like India to demand unconditional support for the accord at the point of a gun. We hope that the people of India would appreciate and understand our position on this matter.

ISSUES AND NON ISSUES

ON the question of surrendering arms, we pledged to handover our weapons to India and accordingly, LTTE was the first organisation which handed over a substantial portion of its arms, as a goodwill gesture towards the implementation of the accord. Furthermore, we agreed to handover the rest of the weapons according to modality worked out, in the minutes of the deliberations we had with the Indian High Commission. We wanted to co-operate with India on the question of arms. There was no need for us to possess arms once the ethnic question is amicably settled with adequate guarantee for the safety and security of our people. Now I feel the real problem is not simply, the possession of arms, but the crucial issue of the protection of life and interest of our people. Therefore we earnestly request the Government of India to abandon its military approach and engage in negotiations on the question of arms and other related matters.

In the presence of the journalists we released the 18 captured Indian soldiers unconditionally. This action is for purely humanitarian reasons and as a gesture of goodwill towards the people of India. We hope the Government of India will respond to our desire for peace and call off the offensive operations and open the door for peaceful negotiations leading to substantial benefits.

In India, it was the journalists, who have been preserving and protecting the concepts of democracy. To honour them we decided to release 18 captured Indian soldiers in the presence of Indian Journalists.

V.Prabhakaran
Leader, Liberation Tigers of Tamil
Eelam.

(Continued from page 7)

It has run beserk when its reputation was being put to the test by a small band of dedicated guerrillas obsessed with their ideology. To avenge it on the guerrillas themselves is somewhat understandable. But to hold the civilian hostage and plunder him is deplorable.

How and why India tolerated this state of affairs, which is a serious blemish on her military record and conduct, and that for as long as more than six weeks while the world was purposely kept in the dark, is a challenge to the cherished values that the Sri Lankan Tamils always associated with India and the gratitude they still entertain for the helping hand in their hour of need.

To throttle a Nation, an insignificant minority at that, that is fighting for its survival and already oppressed by its own State, is not merely playing the big bully but is tantamount to denial of the very human rights that India fought valiantly shoulder to shoulder with the Sri Lankan Tamil minority at the world forums until now.

WHO ARE THE 'THREE STARS'?

A new name, 'Three Stars' or 'Three Star Group' has figured in news reports frequently, particularly in connection with the infighting among the Tamil militant groups. Some have mistakenly believed it to be an umbrella organisation of three militant groups, namely the PLOTE, EPRLF and TELO.

However, the truth is that the 'Three Star Group' said to be another name for the Eelam National Democratic Liberation Front (ENDLF) and is led by its Political Secretary Canagaratnam, also sometimes known as Gnanaratnam, and among the militant groups as 'Paranthan Rajan'. The ENDLF is an amalgam of breakaway or expelled sections of the EPRLF and PLOTE, and

its flag depicts three stars, and hence has come to be known as the Three Star Group.

Canagaratnam in a recent statement (8 December) rejects that his group is an umbrella organisation of other Tamil militant groups. He states that 'the three stars in our party flag represents the major three nationalities of our country, Tamils, Sinhalese and Muslims. The stars in our flag also symbolise our slogan: Democracy, Socialism, Equality'.

The statement adds that in 'considering the internal and external developments we extended our wholehearted support to the Indian government to implement the Peace Accord'.

KITTU NOT ALLOWED TO LAY WREATH

SATHASIVAM Krishnakumar, better known as Kittu, the former Regional Commander of the LTTE in Jaffna currently under 'house arrest' in Madras was refused permission to attend the funeral and lay a wreath on the body of the late M.G. Ramachandran although he requested permission to do so.

However, in a statement issued by the LTTE leader V. Prabhakaran in Jaffna, the LTTE paid tribute to the enormous support given by MGR to the

Tamil people in their struggle and to the keen interest shown by him in regard to the aspirations of the Tamil people. The statement drew pointed attention to MGR's contribution to the LTTE's struggle in particular and said that MGR's memory will be cherished for ever.

Expressing deep shock and sorrow, the LTTE leader conveyed his condolences to MGR's widow, Janaki and the people of Tamil Nadu.

IF NOT FOR IPKF. . . !

THE Sri-Lankan President, Mr. J.R. Jayewardene, in a tribute to the Indian Peace-Keeping Force (IPKF), has appreciated the difficulties in which it is continuing activities to see that 'terrorism' is wiped out in the north and eastern parts of the island.

Addressing the annual general meeting of the Judicial Service Association here on Friday, the President said 'Almost 600 to 700 Indian soldiers have been killed in the past few months since the signing of the Indo-Lanka agreement'.

'We had lost about one soldier a day in our country in the last four years', he said. 'They (the IPKF) are fighting here on our behalf. I pay tribute to them for

helping us. If they are not here we have to go and fight', the President said.

'Since the signing the peace accord, not a single Sinhala, Tamil or Muslim Sri Lankan soldier has died. Their place has been taken by the Indians', he said.

Mr. Jayewardene, however added, 'I want to stop that (the death of IPKF soldiers) also as quickly as I can'.

The President also reminded the gathering that if not for the accord the Government could not have raised salaries of its employees even by one per cent.

'If not for the IPKF we would have to fight this war. We have to spend more than what we are spending for the salary increase'.

NEW GOC OF IPKF

MAJ. General Jamil Mehmood is taking over from Maj. Gen. R.P. Singh as the General Officer Commanding the Indian Peace Keeping Force in Sri Lanka's eastern province. Maj. Gen. Singh is returning to his position in one of the command Headquarters after completing his tenure.

In the meantime, four officers from the Indian Civil Service have been sent to northern Jaffna to assist the IPKF in matters dealing with the distribution of relief supplies and rehabilitation work.

Colombo editor attacked

UNIDENTIFIED attackers hurled two grenades at the residence of a prominent Sri Lankan newspaper editor on Saturday night, police said in Colombo.

Edmund Ranasinghe, Editor-in-Chief of the Upali newspapers group and family members who were inside their home at Bomiriya on the outskirts of Colombo at the time of the attack, however, escaped unhurt.

The first grenade did not explode while the second one went off slightly damaging Ranasinghe's house.

This is the first time that a newspaper

LTTE BANS PLOTE, EPRLF, TELO AND 'JIHAD'

IN a press statement dated 2 January issued in Batticaloa, the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) states as follows:

'LTTE was compelled to take strong action against a group of armed Muslim homeguards called 'JIHAD' which was formed and sponsored by the fascist Sri Lankan regime, to create tensions and divisions among the Tamil speaking Muslims and the Tamils in the Eastern province.

'This homeguards group was responsible for the murders of the Assist. Govt. Agent of Muthur Mr. Asique Mohamed in October '87 and the former M.P. (S.L.F.P.) for Muthur Mr. Abdul Majid during November '87. While, on the 30th December '87 at Kaththankudi, four innocent Tamils and an LTTE cadre Nazir were killed by this unholy group of Muslim homeguards going by the name of 'JIHAD'. These unacceptable and deplorable behaviour earned the anger and displeasure of the Muslim people in the area. Even though the people urged action to be taken against this group of homeguards, LTTE showed great restraint, to minimise any further development in tensions. The Muslim people clearly understood the LTTE's position and supported us. Increasingly large numbers of Muslim youths joined our liberation organisation, on whose representation, insistence and active participation, LTTE was compelled to launch attacks on this armed Muslim homeguards group, killing 30 of them on 30th December '87 at Kaththankudi and another 9 of the same homeguards group at Oddamavadi in November '87.

'LTTE has also banned PLOTE, EPRLF and TELO as these groups are also engaged in barbaric behaviour with the Tamil speaking Muslim people and are engaged in treacherous activities to create tensions and divisions among the people, for their own ends.

'LTTE wishes to state that it will continue to take strong action against all these elements who are agents of imperialism, who engage in destructive activities aimed to destroy the unity of our people and our peoples liberation struggle.'

er editor's house was attacked in the course of southern violence erupted since last July.

Intensive search is on for the attackers, but no arrests have been made so far, the police said.

The Upali group which publishes two of Sri Lanka's popular dailies. *The Island* and *Divan* recently came under severe criticism by some government speakers in parliament for what was described as its 'anti-government' attitude.

LETTERS

AT THE time of the Indian airdrop of food in Jaffna in June this year, your journal praised India's action and described Rajiv Gandhi as 'our white knight in shining armour (who) came to the rescue of the Tamil people. . . Mr Gandhi's kindness will be remembered and his name will be etched in every Tamil heart now and for generations to come' and that he 'soundly disciplined the deceitful President and conveyed the message to him that he must watch his step'. (Tamil Times, May 1987 p.4).

But your October issue can be summarised as concentrated venom against India, Rajiv Gandhi and their actions and motivations. You go so far as to accuse them of territorial ambitions on Sri Lanka. You charge the Indian P.M. of falling a victim of the cynical manipulations of Jayawardene and that his 'army has become President Jayawardene's cop on the beat'.

I have been a regular reader of your journal and am afraid that your recent display of cynical opportunism and lack of consistency or principle is truly disgraceful. By and large, the well ensconced expatriate Tamils suffer from this affliction.

R. Thayalan
Brentwood, UK.

* * *

TO CALL the Indian troops in Sri Lanka as a Peace Keeping Force is a misnomer. Under the Indo-Sri Lanka Agreement, India has underwritten and guaranteed the provisions and implementation of the accord.

The accord imposed obligations on the part of India, Sri Lanka and the Tamil militant groups, and provided among other matters for cessation of hostilities, surrender of weapons, general amnesty and release of political prisoners and of course the setting up of Provincial Councils with devolved powers.

The Indian troops arrived in the Island not to keep the peace between two parties in combat but to enforce the obligations of India as underwriter and guarantor of the implementation of the provisions of the accord. The decision as to whether any of its provisions has been breached or as to who is responsible for such breach and as to what remedial action is warranted are left entirely to the discretion of India. If either of the parties to the conflict, the Sri Lanka government or the Tamil militant groups, breach or obstruct the implementation of the provisions of the accord, it is open to India in its role as the underwriter and guarantor, to take whatever action deemed necessary to enforce strict adherence of the accord.

Hence the Indian troops are in Sri Lanka as agents or servants of an enforcement authority and not as a Peace Keeping Force.

S.T. Nathan
London SE23

* * *

IF THE governments of India and Sri Lanka think that they can find a solution to the ethnic conflict without the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE), they are sadly mistaken. Even though the LTTE may not match the combined military might of India and Sri Lanka, they will not succeed in completely defeating the LTTE. Operating from familiar territory, it can continue the guerrilla struggle and make it virtually impossible for both governments to restore normal administration in the Tamil areas of Sri Lanka.

It is up to India to make the move to bring an end to the present conflict by negotiating with the LTTE. A military approach is bound to fail.

P.S. Kanthan
Bromley, Kent.

* * *

I AM amazed at the rather spurious claim by Mr. S.S. Maniam in your journal (December 1987) that the LTTE has been the only group that fought the Sri Lankan forces on behalf of the Tamil people, and that the other militant groups should be disbanded. All the militant groups, including the LTTE, entered the struggle to fight on behalf of the Tamil people. They fought until the LTTE decided at one stage that it shall be the only one that should remain — so they liquidated the TELO, attacked and attempted to eliminate the EPRLF and the PLOT withdrew from the scene before it was attacked.

The LTTE banned all militant organisations of Tamils except the EROS (with which it has an uneasy opportunist alliance) and threatened anyone associated with the banned organisations with death, and this ban and the threat still continues. They have threatened the TULF leaders with dire consequences if they returned to the Tamil areas to resume political activity. That is how the LTTE gained dominance and prevented other groups from participating in the struggle.

The LTTE claims that it has the confidence and support of the mass of the Tamil people, but that claim has never been put to the test. If the other groups are as insignificant as Mr. Maniam claims, why does not the LTTE allow them to function?

The fact of the matter is that the LTTE fears that if the Tamil people are given the opportunity, the LTTE and its methods will be rejected by the people.

K. Thambiah
Hendon, U.K.

WE often receive telephone calls from readers commenting adversely and sometimes favourably concerning the contents or the manner in which views are presented in the columns of TAMIL TIMES.

We invite those critics or supporters to write in their point of view on any relevant issue in the form of articles (not more than 1100 words) or letters to the editor (not more than 200 words), and we assure publication provided they are written in a presentable style and in non-abusive language.

EDITOR

THE ACTIONS of those groups which are going around with the IPKF to indentify LTTE members and their hideouts are not only disgraceful but also treacherous.

Whatever differences or conflicts they may have had in the past, they should not drive these groups to engage in such actions at a time when the LTTE is presently facing a threat for its survival from a mighty force.

I agree with your editorial view that efforts should be made to bring about a reconciliation among all the Tamil groups to avoid betrayal and fratricidal war at this critical juncture.

S.S. Gnanam
London, SE4.

* * *

RECENTLY I saw on TV scenes of ordinary Palestinians, children and women included, taking to the streets in the occupied territories in protest demonstrations against the Israeli authorities and confronting the troops who were armed with lethal weapons. And when Israeli troops deal with such unarmed civilian protesters with extraordinary force, including shooting at them, sympathy for the long suffering Palestinians is universally roused.

A similar situation prevails in South Africa where thousands of black people frequently take to the streets in protest against the actions of the oppressive regime.

Although some people compare the Tamil people's struggle in Sri Lanka with those of the blacks in South Africa and the Palestinians in the occupied territories, it has never been the case that ordinary Tamil people have engaged in street demonstrations or civil disobedience campaigns against the policies and actions of the government or in protest against the atrocities committed by the armed forces.

The 'Tamil struggle' seems to lack mass participation. It gives one the

(Continued on page 13)

TO THE EDITOR FROM DAVID SELBOURNE

TAMIL DELIVERANCE NOT ROUND THE CORNER

TRAGIC error is heaped upon error in the perceptions of the Tamils — and of the **Tamil Times** — about what is happening in Sri Lanka. I have kept my silence, an increasingly horrified silence, for many months on these matters, but it is no longer possible, to do so.

Thus you speak in your December '87 editorial of the 'hope and expectation' aroused by the Indo-Sri Lanka Accord; yet, in the context of the majority community's fear and hatred of India, there was nothing but deeper trouble for the Tamil cause to be anticipated from the Indian invasion of Sri Lanka. Moreover, it was always an empty assumption that Rajiv Gandhi — India's politically frail and morally inadequate leader — wished well to the struggle of the Tamils for national independence.

These Tamil hopes, in the Accord had, and have, no substance. They are composed, instead, of one part cowardice, two parts wishful thinking, and two parts foolish deference to Delhi and 'Mother India'. For the IPKF is in Sri Lanka in order to remove from the shoulders of Colombo the burden — which Colombo could not itself discharge — of fighting Tamil separatism into the ground.

The LTTE's stated position of 'looking to India for a solution of the problems of the Tamils' is therefore equally absurd. Delhi, fighting its own battles in the Punjab, in the North-Eastern

states, and in West Bengal to maintain the integrity of India against sub-national separatist tendencies has far more in common with Jayawardene than it will ever have with the Tigers.

The truth is a harsh one: the LTTE and the cause of Tamil Eelam have no more legitimacy (and perhaps less) in the eyes of the Government of India than in the eyes of the Government of Sri Lanka. If at all, such legitimacy could only be gained by a comprehensive military victory by the militants over the Indian and Sri Lankan armed forces, a victory which they can never achieve; and by securing the broadest level of international support for their political claims and positions through the diplomatic and bargaining skills of the representative of the Tamils, followed by a UN-guaranteed partition of the island.

The militants, especially the LTTE, lack such skills, just as the TULF lacked them. (The Gandhian way is not available, since the Tamils have no Gandhi). And despite the valiant, but fragmented, efforts of expatriate Tamils, the Tamils' cause in consequence lacks such international recognition, both East and West. (The London School of Economics 'leftism' of the LTTE — a kind of Mickey-Mouse revolutionary Marxism, flexing its puny political muscles — will not help it, not even, or especially not, in Gorbachev's Moscow). In these circumstances, 'ultimata' and other such empty gestures and declarations from the LTTE to the IPKF, or to anyone else, are not worth the paper they are written on, or the breath spent in uttering them. What remains is what the Tamils are getting: mutual killing, stalemate, intra-Tamils hatreds, random murder, Indian Army rampages and endless obituary columns of lives — Tamil and Sinhalese — lost in vain.

Nor is it any consolation to the Tamils that Jayawardene has made, and is continuing to make, lethal political errors of judgement of his own. (Among these errors, the unconstitutionality of the 13th Amendment is a relatively trivial matter). For in the eyes of the Sinhalese — in particular of the Buddhist establishment, and the growingly powerful JVP — he has ruinously compromised the sovereignty of Sri Lanka by delivering a large part of the island into India's de facto control. And despite the fact that the invading Indian Army's role is to crush the Tamil militant movement, Jayawardene has failed to carry enough of his own people with him. Instead, he has provoked a Sinhalese backlash against the UNP, which has already claimed Sinhalese victims by

the hundred, and has maimed his own Cabinet members.

From this backlash, whether led — after Jayawardene has gone — by the JVP, the SLFP, the Army or anti-Tamil and anti-Indian UNP hardliners, the Tamils have a great deal more to fear in future. Moreover, the Accord itself is a flimsy document, and its proposals for devolution of little genuine political substance; the whole deal could easily be, and I believe will be, countermanded under pressure of a Sinhalese 'uprising' organized by Buddhist clergy and politicians.

Wishful thinking to the contrary, and well-intentioned as it may be, is the reflection of a chronic weakness of the Tamils, together with the jealousies and selfishnesses which have divided Tamil ranks from the outset. (It is even wishful thinking which led the Tamil Information Centre, in the belief that the worst was over, to shut down its operations in London at a time when it was never more needed!).

'How long can the Tamil people go on suffering in this way?', your editorial predictably asks. The answer is that they may have to do so for a very long time indeed, not least because it is **out of the question** that the Tamil militants will lay down their arms. But above all, the Tamils' suffering will be prolonged as long as they continue to rely on illusions about India; will be prolonged as long as they fail to create from their ranks a unified and mature leadership of statesmen, not brigands, who can command an audience outside Madras (or North London); and, will be prolonged as long as the just cause of securing genuine political autonomy and physical security for the Tamils of Sri Lanka **gains no real ground among the Sinhalese themselves**, particularly the younger generation, whose own insecurities are growing.

In the meantime, thousands more Tamil innocents may die, many in the naive belief that ultimate deliverance — whether by India, by armed struggle, by class uprising, by terrorist murder, by cyanide, by divine intercession or even by **Tamil Times** editorials — is around the next, or the next but one, corner. It is not.

2 January, 1988. David Selbourne

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(Continued from page 12)

impression of a struggle by some dedicated armed groups with their own stated aims — which may by and large echo the aspirations of the mass of the Tamil people — taking on the government and the security forces.

Members belonging to these groups attack or ambush the armed forces in various encounters and pull back to safe hideouts or disappear amongst the civilian population. The armed forces retaliate with unrestrained brutality against unarmed civilians and their property.

In this process, thousands of ordinary innocent Tamils have been killed in the streets or in their own homes without ever having participated in any action, peaceful or otherwise, against the authorities.

Why is there a general absence of participation by the general mass of the people in protest actions? Is it because that they are cowards? Or is it that the Tamil militant groups consciously follow a method of struggle in which the role of the masses is only to provide the material support needed by the groups in their struggle and to serve as cannon fodder when the inevitable brutal retaliation takes place?

T. Arulnayagam
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INDIA'S ROLE IN SRI LANKA HAS STRATEGIC ADVANTAGES

'I told my commanders that it was a very difficult mission, a very sad mission and also that we would do our utmost to be fair, humane and use minimum force even at the risk of accepting more casualties than we normally would. They were told that they were going in against their own people.'

General K. Sundarji, *INDIA TODAY*, February 1986.

THE first time Krishnaswami Sundarji issued those orders, it was as head of the Indian Army's Western Command. The mission: Operation Bluestar, the June 1984 army action to flush out terrorists from Amritsar's Golden Temple. On October 10, 1987, he found himself repeating exactly the same orders to his commanders, this time as chief of army staff. The mission: Operation Pawan, the Indian Army action to disarm the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) in Sri Lanka.

Both operations bear traumatic similarities — a battle with unfamiliar constraints: the emotional involvement of the civilian population; a congested, urban battleground; a highly-motivated and heavily-armed foe of the same ethnic identity. But there the similarity abruptly ends. Bluestar was a domestic operation. Pawan has for the first time, placed Indian troops on foreign soil to tackle the domestic problem of another country, and at considerable cost.

But in the eyes of South Block Operation Pawan will be worth every paisa — and the life of every Indian soldier lost in Sri Lanka. The immediate objective may be to ensure the implementation of the Indo-Sri Lankan Accord but there is also a broader diplomatic advantage inherent in the presence of the Indian Army on the island that is designed to finally — and firmly — establish India's pre-eminence as the regional superpower.

That may be a bit premature — the accord has a long way to go before full implementation — but the current air of elation and confidence in South Block has not been in evidence since the aftermath of the 1971 operations in what is now Bangladesh. The Indian Peace Keeping Force (IPKF) in Sri Lanka is seen as the cutting edge of the boldest Indian diplomatic initiative undertaken in recent years. Senior diplomats and army strategists refer to it as a 'turning point' in its regional and international ambitions.

In army headquarters be-medalled generals bandy phrases like 'We're living in exciting times.' Others claim 'We are in the process of changing the region's history. It is tragic that we are fighting Tamils but we must use it to advantage.'

In that sense, Operation Pawan (wind) is aptly named. The change in South Block, which houses the offices of the Prime minister, the External Affairs Ministry and the Defence Ministry, is remarkable — and palpable. At no other time has the Indian military and political leadership marched so closely in step and to the same drummer. What diplomats refer to as 'a projection of India's power', army generals translate as 'the higher direction of war'. The loss of lives in Sri Lanka, the financial cost and the fact that the enemy is of Tamil origin is seen as small sacrifice compared to the gains for India's long-term strategic interests. According to army sources the loss of 266 Indian Army lives (the official toll till last week) is the minimum price they expect to pay for establishing New Delhi's 'sphere of influence'.

Already, as Indian strategists point out, the effects are in evidence in one stroke of Rajiv's Parker pen, New Delhi has ensured that the only foreign military presence in Sri Lanka will be Indian. Statements by Sri Lankan ministers like Gamini Dissanayake that the accord does not bar Colombo from having Israeli 'experts', are seen as catering to a local constituency and not any climb-down on the accord.

More important, in South Block's view, is that Pakistan's military relationship with Sri Lanka has been permanently severed. Prior to the accord, Sri Lankan security forces were being trained by the Pakistan Army in Sri Lanka as well as in Pakistan. The Indian Army brass has also never forgotten that in the 1971 Indo-Pakistan war, Islamabad was allowed to use Colombo as a re-fuelling base for its aircraft. 'That situation will never be allowed to happen again' says a senior army officer. 'Pakistan's military involvement in Sri Lanka came to an end on July 29, 1987, and we intend to make certain it stays that way'. Officials also point to the fact that the strategic harbour of Trincomalee is now effectively in Indian control and no longer capable of becoming another Diego Garcia. 'If the Americans had been given Trinco as a R R (rest and recreation) base, we would have had no choice but to treble our naval force',

says an Indian admiral.

South Block also points to the potential problem of having 1,20,000 refugees from Sri Lanka sitting on Indian soil indefinitely a figure that confidential military projections say could easily have doubled had India not intervened. 'What we are talking about is the prospect of another Bangladesh in Tamil Nadu. We just could not afford that to happen,' says a foreign ministry source.

These are of course, the obvious, immediate benefits for India. But in the high-security corner of South Block that houses the army top brass offices, the growing pile of secret position papers, prime ministerial briefs, tactical reports and long-term strategy papers all indicate the broader diplomatic profits from India's Sri Lankan thrust — and a newly aggressive policy which recognises the growing role of the army as a key element in that policy. Says a serving general, 'The Indian army is not the same as it was in 1962. It now fits into India's power projection.'

One such secret report points out that the primary military advantage is that 'you are fighting your battles outside your country' (unlike Bluestar), and this has a limited (Tamil Nadu only) domestic fall out. Army officials insist that Operation Pawan was part of carefully-crafted, longterm strategic planning which included the possibility of high casualties in the initial stages of the operation. 'Admittedly, we expected the LTTE to be less intransigent and more in our control. In that sense we miscalculate. But the prospect of the Indian Army having to take on the LTTE militarily was an option in our projection,' says a general. Adds Minister of State for External Affairs K. Natwar Singh: 'No government can go into an agreement of this nature without having tied up the obvious loose ends. We examined every possible option. There were no low-cost options available. If anybody can suggest a better alternative, we will gladly examine it.'

In fact, the secret army papers compare Operation Pawan with the British involvement in the Falklands and forcefully insist that Sri Lanka can 'under no circumstances' become another Vietnam or Afghanistan. In military terms the Indian army now believes that the LTTE is no longer a major threat and it is only a matter of time before the organisation, or at least a major part of it, surrenders. South Block also claims that in the event of an unconditional surrender by the LTTE, they will still be ensured accommodation in the subsequent political setup for the north and east.

Army projections do not, however, discount the prospect of the IPKF being in Sri Lanka indefinitely. In a secret briefing paper sent to Rajiv Gandhi, Sundarji has termed a pull-out by the IPKF as 'unacceptable'. Says one of his

key aides: 'We would like to change our nomenclature from IPKF to the Accord Implementation Force. That is our main brief — to ensure that the accord is fully implemented. Pulling out before that will be political and military suicide.' In the briefing papers on Operation Pawan, the army has detailed its short-term and long-term intentions which as one states, 'is to leave one unified Sri Lanka in which the Tamils are given their rightful status and Sri Lanka is not an adversary'.

The short-term plan is, as the paper says, 'To bend the LTTE without breaking it'. The LTTE still has plenty of arms though they appear to be running short of ammunition. Intelligence sources revealed to **India Today** that they are well funded by expatriate Tamils — the LTTE has recently bought a ship called the *Ilyana* in Europe with the intention of loading it with arms and ammunition, sailing it to smaller boats to try and slip through the naval blockade of the Palk Straits.

Army intelligence puts the current strength of the LTTE in Sri Lanka at 4,000 men, armed mainly with SLRs (Self-Loading Rifles), AK-47s, G-3 rifles and carbines, heavy machine-guns and RPG rocket launchers. They no longer have the ability to manufacture mines, mortars and grenades as they were doing earlier, except in very small numbers. The IPKF strength is currently 29,633 men. Palaly is the headquarters of the 54th Infantry Division which is responsible for Jaffna city, under the control of the 41st Infantry Brigade while the 91st Infantry Division has been entrusted with protecting the lives of the civilian population. The 18th Infantry Division has been deployed at Navatkuli and the 115th Infantry Brigade at Point Pedro. Under the 36th Infantry Division, headquartered at Trincomalee, is the 47th Infantry Brigade at Killinochchi, 72nd Infantry Brigade at Vavuniya, 340th (Independent) Infantry Brigade at Trincomalee and Muthur and 76th Infantry Brigade at Batticaloa. The IPKF also has one armoured regiment from 63rd Cavalry with T-72 tanks and air support from *Akbar*, the Indian name for Mi-24 helicopter gunships.

The troops involved have been deliberately chosen to represent as wide a cross-section of the Indian Army as possible and includes: the Brigade of Guards; Parachute Regiment; Para Commandos; Punjab Regiment; Grenadiers; Madras Regiment; Maratha Light Infantry; Rajputana Rifles; Rajput Regiment; Sikh Regiment; Sikh Light Infantry; Garhwal Rifles; Mahar Regiment and Gorkha Rifles.

According to army intelligence assessments of the situation in Sri Lanka, the fly in the LTTE ointment is not so much Pirabhakaran as his number two, Mahattaya, the man who surfaced last fortnight to orchestrate the handing over of the 18 Indian Army prisoners held by the LTTE. Mahattaya is now more of the hawk than Pirabhakaran who is perhaps still susceptible to influence from some like

(Tamil Nadu Chief Minister) M.G. Ramachandran. Mahattaya, and perhaps the more blood-thirsty of his followers, will still carry on the battle,' says an army source, adding, 'that means we may be there for some time in a situation comparable to Punjab today. We think India and the Indian Army is big enough to handle two Punjabs. That is the basis of our motivation.'

And of South Block's indirect game plan — to spread the message of the Rajiv Doctrine on the region. South Block points out that the military offensive has been matched by a diplomatic one. Rajiv's visit to the White House, they assert, was essentially to explain India's role in Sri Lanka, and its broader regional contours. The US Administration reportedly accepted that viewpoint and according to top sources, actually welcomed it. Washington may value its strategic alliance with Islamabad but it is also in their interests to have stability in the region. Only India can ensure that says the official.

That confidence is bolstered by the unspoken acceptance that the other superpower, the Soviet Union will back New Delhi to the hilt. Soviet Premier N.T. Ryzhkov in fact, took a public stance last fortnight in 'fully supporting' India's role in Sri Lanka. Obviously, it admirably suits Moscow to have India assert herself as the cock of the regional walk. The Indo-Sri Lankan agreement has also been supported at the recent Commonwealth summit, and by the European Economic Community (EEC).

That New Delhi has begun to assert her regional authority diplomatically is increasingly in evidence. During the recent border talks between India and China, New Delhi made it abundantly clear that Beijing's claims to Arunachal Pradesh would have to be discarded before any progress was possible. Indian officials say that the army now has the Chinese Army pinned down in Wandung on the border and will continue to apply military pressure to convince Beijing that New Delhi cannot be trifled with. That message may have gone home. The Chinese side was more accommodating than at any of the earlier border talks. Rajiv has been invited to Beijing by the Chinese leadership and a package border agreement could be in the anvil sooner than most people expect.

India has also let it be known to Nepal that it will no longer tolerate Kathmandu playing sides and has warned Nepal of the consequences of its recent intention to buy anti-aircraft guns from China. Bangladesh leader Ershad's capitulation on the Chakma refugee issue is another indicator. The Indian director-general of military operations recently informed his Pakistani counter part that the presence of 30,000 Indian troops in Sri Lanka should not tempt Islamabad into any aggressive moves as India was quite capable of handling any military threat from across the border. Says a senior diplomat; 'We want to maintain good

relations with all our neighbours and respect their unity and territorial integrity. But our size and the legacy of geography has given us a responsibility and a role that we cannot shirk.'

In Sri Lanka itself, the Indian Government has launched a new diplomatic offensive to win over, or at least convince of India's good intentions, the most aggressive critics of the accord. High Commissioner J.N. Dixit has, in the past fortnight, met with Sri Lankan Prime Minister Premadasa, the most rabid India-baiter in the Sri Lankan Cabinet. The meeting between the two — the first in almost 18 months — is seen in New Delhi as a major breakthrough. Dixit also met with anti accord opposition leader and former prime minister Sirimavo Bandaranaike with much more visible success. Bandaranaike's statements after the meeting show a greater appreciation for India's role in the island than at any previous time.

In the eastern part of the island, the IPKF, under a plan called Operation Cachet, is quickly consolidating its hold in the knowledge that the LTTE's writ does not run here as in the north. IPKF sources also say that they have a plan to prevent colonisation by the Sinhalese in the eastern province — one of the main fears of the Tamils. 'We are looking at the long-term implications of our involvement. Whichever way the dice falls, we have a contingency plan for it. Every move by the IPKF is approved in New Delhi. Only if there is a 50 per cent chance of success is the green signal given,' says one of the officials in charge of monitoring the Sri Lankan situation.

That is perhaps the most credible sign of South Block's intentions to see the accord through to the end — and ensure that India does not suffer in the process. In South Block, a core group of senior officers form the External Affairs Ministry and the army has been set of to monitor the situation virtually minute-by-minute. 'This is a serious issue and we cannot afford to be casual about it. There is pressure on us, there is tremendous pressure on the Sri Lankan Government. But we have the expertise to handle it so that our interests, those of the Sri Lankan Government and of the Tamils in Sri Lanka are met. That is the bottom line,' insists Natwar Singh.

Clearly, New Delhi has its sights set on a major diplomatic triumph and is pulling out all the stops to ensure that it is successful. But much will depend on the Sri Lankan Government and Jayewardene himself — and the unwritten agreements that have been hammered out since the accord was signed last July. The LTTE may be on the run and in disarray, but it will take a lot of convincing before the majority Sinhalese cease viewing the Indian Army as an occupation force. For Indian diplomacy, Sri Lanka represents perhaps the biggest challenge since 1971. Success will ensure that its regional status is commensurate with its size and geographical legacy. Failure

will circumscribe India's diplomatic and military role for decades to come.

Considering the daunting odds, is India's regional game plan workable? Obviously, like the green signal given in new Delhi for IPKF operations, the strategy, at the present moment, seems to have a 50 per cent success ratio. But New Delhi's new aggressiveness is also obviously correlated to the timing and the new rapport that Sundarji has established with the political high command. Not since the days of Sam Manekshaw have the armed forces wielded the kind of clout they now do in South Block. The main reason for that is Sundarji himself.

Sundarji wears his flamboyance as a badge of honour, and his powers of persuasion and oratory are legend. The office of the chief of army staff would be unrecognisable to its previous occupants. It bristles with high-tech gadgetry including laser projectors and disks that superimpose images of maps and charts to help plan military strategy and offer alternatives in different operational situations. On major exercises like Brasstacks, similar equipment stored in a special air conditioned trailer is taken along. His aides in adjoining offices operate on computers and word processors.

The overall effect is spellbinding and Sundarji's command of the language and his strategic thinking have obviously impressed the political leadership and given the military a major say in foreign policy. His critics, and there are many even within the army, see his ambition as a flaw and have branded him a 'death and glory boy', determined to secure his place in military history.

However, the army brass views him with something akin to awe and there is no denying that the man has tremendous charisma. Neither is he the maverick. General Patton-like character, his critics paint him to be. Before taking over as chief, Sundarji locked himself away in Goa to compile his personal strategic bible for the Indian Army. His briefs to the prime minister and the Cabinet are military masterpieces, brilliantly written. But there is also no denying that he could be prone to over-confidence. In looking at the regional woods, New Delhi may have missed the trees.

New Delhi's desire to flex muscle is all very well, but to accomplish that effectively also requires widespread public support. India's efforts in Sri Lanka can hardly be said to have that — only because New Delhi's explanations have not been convincing enough. And the reason for that is a crucial one — credibility, or the lack of it. If now Delhi is prepared to face the collective suspicion of the neighbours, handle domestic problems and public opinion, it cannot do so effectively without that vital ingredient. More important perhaps is the need for the image of a strong Indian leadership in the international context. Mrs Gandhi was re-

PLOTE CALLS FOR ANTI-FASCIST FRONT

THE formation of an anti-fascist and a national democratic front to ensure the implementation of the Indo-Lanka peace accord is one of the priorities of the People's Liberation Organisation of Tamil Eelam (PLOTE) its General Secretary Uma Maheswaran has told Southern left leaders, political sources said.

They quoted Maheswaran as having pledged to take part in parliamentary politics while at the same time retaining some of the PLOTE's arms for self protection.

His remarks were contained in a letter sent to Vasudeva Nanayakkara, leader of the Nava Sama Samaja Party (NSSP) on its tenth anniversary celebrations held last week, sources said.

They said Maheswaran noted the NSSP's stand on the ethnic problem and said it was the NSSP 'of all the parliamentary parties which not only accepted the rights of the Tamil people to self-determination, but went to the extent of accepting that right even to the extent of separation.'

'In the short term your organisation may have lost because of its courageous stand, but in the long term the courage of your convictions will undoubtedly pay rich dividends,' Maheswaran told Nanayakkara.

His letter also said that the PLOTE will 'be entering the political mainstream and will actively participate in all-island politics.'

'However, Maheswaran said, 'the existence of neo-fascist groups who are armed and intent on liquidating those whom they see as not being supportive of their narrow parochial vision has forced upon us the decision not to lay down what arms we have in our possession.'

He added 'today the fascist attack on progressive and democratic forces make it imperative that we keep arms for the people's protection and to defend the gains of the past.' Among the priorities on our list, his letter said, is the formation of a broad anti-fascist front as well as a national democratic front to ensure the implementation of the Indo-Lanka Peace Accord.

However, Maheswaran said that PLOTE does not hold itself responsible

spected by international leaders for precisely that and there was consequently less resistance to her regional policies. Without a strong leadership, domestic stability and public support, New Delhi will be seriously hampered in its regional efforts. The stakes in Sri Lanka may be high but so is the risk of failure. As one general soberly admits: 'If we fail, it will not be Rajiv's Waterloo but India's Waterloo.'

(Courtesy of India Today)

for the accord although they see 'a few positive features' in it.

He said that the positive aspects of the accord are that it 'halts the march of US imperialist penetration of our country and secondly, the accord, though it does not solve the problem facing the Tamil people, creates an opportunity for commencing a dialogue — a first step towards reaching a political solution to the problems facing the Tamil community.'

His letter also rejected PLOTE's position that they have always been opposed to foreign intervention in the affairs of this country.

He says the IPKF's continued presence in the country can only lead to a build up of greater mistrust between the two people in the long run.

'The only persons who stand to gain from this are the ruling cliques, irrespective of which party they belong to, the losers are the toiling masses,' Maheswaran said.

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A MAN OF THE MASSES

FEW personalities entered the Tamil Nadu political scene with so much suddenness and rose so meteorically as MGR did. Hardly five years after founding his party — the All India Anna DMK — Marudu Gopalan Ramachandran was in the saddle as Chief Minister of the State. He began exerting extraordinary influence in the State's politics and with the politically conscious electorate.

MGR (as he was called endearingly) was really a man of the masses, for the masses and made by the masses. Various called as Makkal Thilakam (darling of the people) and Puratchi Thalaivar (revolutionary leader), the late Chief Minister was one of the most popular Indians in contemporary times with a phenomenal following among the common people. The crowds that used to assemble to hear him (or see him) were certainly as vast as those that turned up to listen to Gandhiji, Pandit Nehru, Annadurai and Indira Gandhi.

Extraordinary Charisma

With his extraordinary charisma, the movie star turned politician was certainly not an instance of a film actor 'clicking in politics'. Indeed, he was as shrewd as a politician could be and was trying to match every one of the DMK's claims to Dravidian heritage. He was socially conscious and implemented such worthwhile programmes as the nutritious noon meal scheme to remain unbeaten by his arch political foe, Mr M. Karunanidhi, DMK President. He exploited the film medium to drive home his message and to mould the public opinion. In the latter years of his career, he did develop political abilities and showed awareness of where his strength lay.

MGR knew his mind but it was not easy to make him speak out his mind. He was not an orator. Nevertheless he had developed a habit of making very long speeches, often vague and unclear. This was so until the latter half of 1984 when he fell ill with a stroke which left him with a major speech disability.

Clean Govt.

Very early in his career as Chief Minister, in some of his speeches he pledged to banish corruption and establish a clean administration. To what extent did he succeed? Students of history of this period pointed to his failure to achieve his objective. In fact, they cited how his erstwhile Revenue Minister, Mr. S. D. Somasundaram, left the party 'in protest against the rampant corruption in the administration.' (Mr. Somasundaram, however, failed to make a dent in the AIADMK party and returned to the organisation some time later and was made a party functionary by (MGR).

One criticism by the DMK was that MGR being a Malayalee, could not be expected to serve the interest of the Tamil culture and language. To meet

the criticism, he worked overtime to show himself and his party as the true inheritors of the Dravidian glory and began doing all kinds of inexplicable things in the name of protecting the Tamil language and Tamil culture. Nevertheless he did recognise that the present Tamil community was made up of heterogeneous groups and sects — ethnic, religious, linguistic and cultural — and believed in a future for the Tamils in a united India. To that extent he showed himself to be a nonparochial, cosmopolitan person. He thought the label, All-India, affixed to ADMK lent national dignity to the party.

Born of Malayalee parents on January 17, 1917, at Kandy (Sri Lanka), MGR had to endure hunger, poverty and squalor in his boyhood days. His mother, Sathyabhama, with her two sons — Chakrapani and Ramachandran — moved to Kumbakonam in Tamil Nadu but could not find a living. The boys could not go to school and Sathyabhama admitted them to the Madurai Original Boys Drama Company to be trained as stage artistes. Movies were still a far away novelty.

Young Ramachandran struggled hard to make the grade as an actor. He knocked at all doors and finally got his first role in a talking picture ('Sathi Leelavathi'). He gradually began to make an impression on Tamil moviegoers. His good looks, his wiry physique, his skill in conducting orchestrated fights and personal magnetism, marked him out as a man destined to go up the ladder. He scaled dizzy heights in the film world. He got the Government of India award 'Bharat' for best actor in the country.

During the Fifties, many changes were taking place on the Tamil Nadu political scene which were to have far reaching consequences. Men like Congressman-turned atheist social rebel, E.V. Ramaswamy, and rustic mannered scholar, silver tongued orator and savant, C.N. Annadurai (endearingly known as Anna) developed a huge following, stirring the masses with their writings and speeches. Anna's Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam was on its way to be coming a major political force in the State. The party received a big boost by MGR joining it.

In fact, MGR exploited the party's appeal as much as the party exploited his popularity. It was thus beneficial to both. When finally the DMK came to power, MGR was content to be acting and making movies his medium for projecting his do-good philosophy. His films were always commercial extravaganzas. The stories were simple, clear and moral-orientated. He played the roles of a do-gooder, a dutiful son, or a person fighting the idle rich or the vulgar, the greedy, the unscrupulous and the anti-socials.

Differences with Karunanidhi

It was October 1972, when Mr Karu-

nanidhi was the Chief Minister, that serious differences developed between the two. MGR accused his old friend of gross corruption, nepotism and much else. In a retaliatory move, Karunanidhi suspended MGR from the DMK. The masses were stunned. Political thunder clouds rolled, MGR founded his own party. Anna Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (later re-named as All India Anna DMK), and within five years, the party under his leadership was swept to power and he became the Chief Minister (June 1977). Many were wondering what a film actor was going to do as the Chief Minister.

Mr. Karunanidhi, in fact, erred in imagining that MGR could never convert his film popularity into political strength. In the initial stages, no day passed without some agitation or the other, often inspired by the Opposition parties, creating problems for MGR. Mr. Ramachandran survived not only his own shortcomings but also the onslaughts of the Opposition parties, notably the DMK.

When his party was defeated at the parliamentary elections in 1980 by the Congress (I)-DMK combine and his Government was subsequently dismissed by Indira Gandhi, he did not lose heart but waited patiently for the Assembly elections six months later when he went to the people as the aggrieved party and exploited that feeling to secure a resounding success at the polls.

Relations with Indira Gandhi

In the next four years, he cultivated Mrs. Gandhi and her party so closely, after some political fence-mending, that she made an airdash to Madras to see him when he fell ill with a stroke in October 1984, and arranged to fly him to New York and provide him the most sophisticated treatment available in the United States. He was almost given up when he left the Indian soil, but made a remarkable recovery in the New York hospital that surprised even the doctors attending on him. The doctors said that more than the medicines, it was his extraordinary will power, determination to live, and the grace of God that were responsible for his recovery. It was then the State of Tamil Nadu witnessed a strange phenomenon of all sections of the population joining together and offering prayers for saving the life of one man, their leader.

At the Down State Memorial Centre, Brooklyn, New York, MGR underwent a kidney transplant and got treated for his stroke. He had a miraculous recovery, but was left with a speech impairment.

During his stay in New York, the 1984 general elections came off, and from his hospital bed MGR led his party to a smashing victory. The Congress (I) aligned itself with the AIADMK this time and this combination continued in the following years.

At the end of the three month medical treatment in the United States MGR

(Continued on next page)

EPRLF CALLS FOR FULL IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PEACE ACCORD

ALTHOUGH, five months have now lapsed since the signing of the Indo-Sri Lankan Accord, the expectations of our Peoples that the Accord would pave the way for peace, restoration of the democratic process and meaningful devolution of power to the Tamil-speaking people, remain a distant dream. In fact, the present reality that face our Peoples is one of despair, deprivation and death.

On our part, we, the EPRLF, which extended its critical support to the Accord, are finding it increasingly difficult to demonstrate to our People, in concrete and tangible terms, the gains of the Accord. What our people see, instead is the process through which only those conditions favourable to the Sri Lankan government are being satisfied. In addition, our own expectations that the Accord would serve to create those conditions that would pave the way for the fusion of broad, democratic Sinhala, Tamil and Muslim consensus remains to be fulfilled.

We give below certain specific cases of non-implementation of the Accord, which in our opinion, constitute the major obstacles to the realization of peace, democracy and unity which today comprises the main political slogans of EPRLF and the rationale behind our supporting the Accord:

1. The abrogation of the General Amnesty Clause: — There are, at this moment, around 1,250 Tamil political

prisoners who are still incarcerated in prisons (ie the New Magazine Prison, the Booza Army Camp and the Pelawatte Transit Camp). This constitutes a flagrant violation of the General Amnesty Clause that speaks of General Amnesty to all political detainees, including those accused, charged and convicted. In addition, there are over 1,000 persons listed as missing.

Furthermore, the General Amnesty Clause has been deliberately misinterpreted by the Sri Lankan government so as to exclude all those (Sinhalese as well as Tamils) who have been charged or convicted under the Prevention of Terrorism Act for alleged offences committed outside the Northern and Eastern Provinces.

We are, in particular, concerned over the plight of members of a group called the Vikalpa Kandayama ('Alternative Group') who now face trial under the Prevention of Terrorism Act (PTA) and Emergency Regulations — one of the charges being conspiring to overthrow the government in collusion with the EPRLF. These are persons who had the courage to place the democratic demands of the Tamil People before the Sinhala People, despite the fury of Sinhala Buddhist chauvinism which they had to confront. Incidentally, the members of Vikalpa Kandayama who are incarcerated in prison took an open stand, published in the Colombo newspapers, in support of the Indo-Sri Lankan Accord.

of either meeting the people or working shoulder to shoulder with the Prime Minister in the cause of the Tamils in Sri Lanka.

Even during his stay abroad, he had met Mr. Rajiv Gandhi who was then on a visit to New York and discussed the Tamils issue with him. After his return, MGR kept himself in constant touch with the Centre. In spite of his indifferent health, he flew to Delhi on December 16 — just a week before his death — and reviewed the Sri Lanka situation with the Prime Minister.

Staunch nationalist, lover of peace

A staunch nationalist and lover of peace, he had a great regard for Jawaharlal Nehru. He was keen in installing a statue of Nehru at an important junction in Madras and wanted it to be unveiled by the Prime Minister, Mr. Rajiv Gandhi. After a long wait he got his cherished desire fulfilled on December 21 when the Prime Minister unveiled the statue at a grand function. At this function an enthusiastic MGR spoke for almost 15 minutes unmindful of the tremendous strain on his health.

Mr. Ramachandran is survived by his wife, Mrs. V.N. Janaki.

The Hindu (IE) 2.1.88

2. Devolution of Power: — The 13th Amendment to the Constitution and the Bill pertaining to the powers that would devolve to the Provincial Councils, as well as its structure, fall far short of the just and democratic aspirations of the Eelam People (ie the Tamil-speaking People of Sri Lanka). In fact, the unilateral move by the Sri Lankan Government in pushing through the relevant amendment and the Bill, is a clear case of bad faith and goes contrary to the terms of the Accord which explicitly states that all 'residual matters' be resolved in consultations with the Government of India. However, the devolution 'package' excludes completely the contents of the earlier three rounds of talks between New Delhi and Colombo with the TULF being consulted in 'proximity talks'. In fact, both, Delhi as well as all Tamil organisations (including the TULF) have expressed their total dissatisfaction with the devolution package unilaterally pushed through by the Sri Lankan Government. . . We, therefore, demand that negotiations be re-started on the devolution package in accordance with the terms and spirit of the accord. We demand that the process of consultations include all Tamil organizations which took part in the Delhi talks.

3. Plantation Tamils: — We have, right from the beginning, taken a position against Clause 16(d) of the Accord which seeks to link the repatriation of Plantation Tamils of Sri Lanka to India to the sending back of Tamil refugees in India to Sri Lanka. Our position is that both are unrelated. Firstly, as far as the question of statelessness is concerned, the Plantation Tamils who toiled to develop the plantation economy and who have lived in Sri Lanka for over 4 generations, have every right to call Sri Lanka their homeland. Thus, all those who wish to be citizens of Sri Lanka should be given citizenship, unconditionally. As far as the refugees from Sri Lanka are concerned, their resettlement in Sri Lanka can only be initiated once there is some semblance of normalcy and guarantee to their physical safety and security. No such condition exist today — 5 months after the signing of the Accord.

4. Annexure in the Accord: —

Contrary to the elements in the Annexure to the Accord, the Sri Lankan Government has so far failed to terminate the presence of external military intelligence agencies which were involved in the militarization of the Sri Lankan armed forces in their pursuance of a military solution. It is our stand that the demilitarization of the ethnic conflict cannot be one-sided to include only the disarmament of the Eelam resistance — as things have been proceeding so far. We, therefore, demand that the Annexure to the Accord be implemented. In addition to the above, we are greatly concerned with a problem that immediately face our people, arising directly out of the armed hostilities between the IPKF

(Continued on page 21)

(Continued from p.19)

returned to Madras on February 4, 1985, to a rousing reception. From then on, despite his speech disability, he carried on the administration of the State and continued his hold on the masses, particularly those in the rural areas and more particularly among the women. However, he remained a sick man and had to go to the U.S. every year for check-up and treatment.

The last time when he went to the U.S. for the annual check-up in early August, he stayed there almost three months to enable the experts at the State University Health Services Centre, Brooklyn, to carry out various tests and prescribe alternative formulations to bolster up his health which had earlier shown signs of oedema.

Looking better than a year ago, a cheerful MGR returned to Madras on October 31, only to strain himself in dealing with a dozen pending problems, chief among them being the Sri Lankan Tamils and the Vanniyars who were agitating for a special reservation in jobs and higher education.

Keenly interested in ensuring an honourable place for the Tamils in Sri Lanka MGR had never allowed his physical limitations to stand in the way

DEVOLUTION OF POWER, A MUST TO COUNTER AUTHORITARIANISM

THE Movement for Inter-Racial Justice and Equality (MIRJE) welcomed the Indo-Sri Lanka Peace Agreement on two grounds; it promised to bring to an end the violence that has marked ethnic relations in Sri Lanka over the last decade; it also provided a framework for the evolution of a negotiated political settlement that would recognise the plurality of Sri Lankan society.

Developments since the signing of the agreement have unfortunately belied these expectations. All parties to the agreement have been responsible in varying degrees for the debacle. The Sri Lankan government was tardy in setting up the interim administration; it tried to re-establish its police powers in the northern province and announced plans for recruiting and inducting new officers to the force in these areas; it moved ostentatiously to prepare plans for long-term rehabilitation and to obtain funds for such plans; it appeared to place greater emphasis on the re-settlement of Sinhala refugees in the eastern province.

These acts led to fears that the central government was trying to preempt the choices open to provincial administrations and aroused suspicions among the Tamil people of the government's commitment to devolution.

The Tamil militant groups entered into a violent struggle for power among themselves, resulting in a large number of deaths. Then the dominant LTTE, after obtaining a commanding majority of seats on the interim administration and promising to co-operate fully in implementing all provisions of the agreement, went back on its commitments.

(Continued from page 20)

and the LTTE. It is imperative that the Government of India should take all necessary steps to ensure that the civilian casualties and the extreme economic and psychological deprivation of our People, be kept to an absolute minimum — or avoided altogether. As an immediate task we call on the Government of India, to initiate the political process, as delineated by us above, and not allow the acts of provocation by the LTTE to distract it from implementing the Accord to the full. We also call on the LTTE to subordinate its narrow, parochial ends to the wider and long-term interests of our people and join the mainstream of the struggle for Peace, Democracy, Unity and social Progress.

It indulged in abhorrent acts of extreme brutality, killing hostages in its charge, managers of the cement factory, a television crew and a large number of Sinhala peasants in the eastern province. It then embarked on a futile battle with the Indian Peace Keeping Force.

The IPKF role has also been much less than praiseworthy. It stood by passively while the militant groups killed each other; it was also inactive while communal conflict assumed violent proportions in the East and while Sinhala and Muslim peasants were being slaughtered and forced to flee from their homes. This led many in the south to assume a tacit collusion between the IPKF and the militant groups in ensuring Tamil demographic dominance in the eastern province.

Subsequent events forced the IPKF to attempt to disarm the LTTE; this action has now turned into a virtual assault on the Tamil people of Jaffna. Civilian life has been totally disrupted; civilians, particularly in the Jaffna peninsula, have been subject to continuous curfew; nearly the entire population of Jaffna has been forced out of its homes into the uncertain security of refugee camps; and have suffered from lack of food and basic amenities.

Reports also speak of large numbers of civilian deaths and enormous destruction of property; it is also being stated that the IPKF has been insensitive to the plight of civilians. The IPKF is now involved in chasing, capturing or killing remnants of the LTTE and will no doubt extend this process into other groups in other areas as well.

The present situation cannot be allowed to continue. We cannot stand by and see the beginnings of another prolonged guerilla war which will make a mockery of the peace that was anticipated by the Tamil people and also lead to further de-stabilisation in the south. In this context we call upon all concerned parties to arrest this alarming process of deterioration and to get back to negotiations that will lead to peace.

The LTTE must accept the fact that the struggle for Eelam has been brought to an end by the agreement of July 29th.

Its present tactics, differing totally from the stand adopted by its leader in accepting the Agreement and from their position as indicated to the Indian authorities on September 28th, are futile and not in the best interest of the Tamil people.

We call upon the LTTE to declare

SAYS MIRJE

anew its support for the co-operation in implementing the Agreement, to give up its present tactics of violent confrontation and enter into negotiations leading to peaceful participation in the political processes that must be set in motion soon.

We call upon the Sri Lankan and Indian Governments to review the present situation and take whatever steps are necessary to get back to a negotiated political solution which was after all the objective of the Agreement.

For this purpose, we believe it necessary that the present offensive be halted and discussions begun with the LTTE as well as all other groups to make a reality of the intentions of the Agreement, that is, surrender of arms, a cessation of conflict and a democratic process of transition to provincial councils; such discussions will necessarily have to recognise the relative strengths of the various groups.

We believe that this is the only way of avoiding a long drawn out guerilla war which will probably prevent the establishment of democratic political structures in the north and east, at least for some time. The Tamil people at large must also actively contribute to such a process.

There is another responsibility that the Sri Lankan Government appears to have abdicated. The Government and the President cannot leave total responsibility for matters in the north to the IPKF or the Indian authorities.

The Government must move in swiftly, restore civil administration and take all steps necessary to relieve the distress of the people. It must move in adequate food supplies, restore common amenities, reactivate hospital and medical services, etc. Its very commitment to the unity and integrity of Sri Lanka can only be vindicated by such action.

We are aware that among the Sinhala people there is a great deal of opposition to the Agreement. Such opposition may be based on a variety of genuinely held views that look on the provisions of the Agreement as well as the present regime that is attempting to implement it with extreme disfavour.

We do not wish to comment on all these issues in this statement; nevertheless, we would like to remind them that the institution of provincial councils all over the country and the devolution of certain powers to such councils may well be one of the best means of countering the present authoritarian and repressive tendencies of the government.

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JAFFNA, Tamil Christian parents settled in Australia seek groom for daughter, 24 years, 5'5", fair complexion working and doing further studies. Reply with full details including date, time and country of birth, to Box M208 C/O Tamil Times.

OBITUARY



R. BHUVANENDRAM (Former Director of Industries and later Consultant, Ministry of Fisheries, Sri Lanka) beloved husband of the late Krishnathai, father of Bhuvanambikai (Sri Lanka), Dr. Indrambikai (U.S.A.), Bhuvanakrishna (Grant Thornton), Dr. Indrakrishnan, father-in-law of Lucky (Sri Lanka), Dr. Sriram (U.S.A.), Dr. Sivamathi; grandfather of Keshani & Arulram, expired in London. Cremation took place on 31st December. at Croydon Cemetery, 154 Whitehorse Lane, South, Norwood, London SE25.

K.N. JEYASEELAN, Retd. Div. Agricultural officer and of Haycams Ltd; Mrs. Rukmany Jeyaseelan and son GnanaEaswaran were shot and killed by the I.P.K.F. about the 23rd October 1987 in their home at Kondavil Jaffna. Mr. Jeyaseelan is the father of Mrs NagaEaswary Sivapalan, Mr. LingaEaswaran (London), Father-in-Law of Dr. Sivapalan (Wales), brother of Dr. N.T. Sampanthan (Moolai), and brother-in-Law of Chief Justice S. Sharvananda, Colombo.

GOWRI wife of Tharmaratnam (World Bank), mother of Nandini, Mythili and Vyjayanthi, daughter of the late C. Loganathan died on 2.1.88 Washington D.C. USA, — 2 Derbyshire Court, Bethesda, Maryland, 20817, USA.

IN MEMORIAM

REV. FR. LOPPUPILLAI AMIRTHANATHAPILLAI SINGARAYER O.M.I.; M.A. (Lond) Former Director, St Joseph's Teachers Training College, Colombogam. Rector, St Henry's College, Ilavalai, Professor, Papal Seminary, Ampitiya Born: 27th October 1906. Ordained Priest: 21st December 1931. Called Home: 20th December 86.

'And the tear that we shed,
Though in secret it rolls,
Shall long keep his memory,
Fresh in our souls'
Our Lady, Queen of Holy Rosary,
Pray for him.
Amirtha-Villa, Mathagal.

PERSONAL

DR. K. SIVALOGANATHAN has taken early retirement from the post of Senior Lecturer in Civil Engineering at the Coventry Lanchester Polytechnic. The Polytechnic has conferred on him the status of Honorary Research fellow, in recognition of his research work and publications in the field of 'Numerical Computation of Flows in Storm Sewers and Open Channels'.



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Ethnic Questions in U.K. Census

THE British government is planning to include a question on racial origins in the next census, 1991, although it was forced to drop all such references in the last census in April 1981.

In the 1981 proposal people were asked to choose between 10 alternative racial groups. This time the question is simpler. People will be expected to tick one of three boxes — white, black or Asian. For Asians there is a further choice of boxes, to indicate Indian, Pakistani, Bangladeshi, Chinese or other. There is to be a separate category for people from any other race or ethnic group.

Officials say the question is essential for the correct planning of special programmes for ethnic minority groups. They assert that the question would help determine allocation of government funds to local authorities who make special financial provision for ethnic minority groups.

In areas such as health, social services, employment and social security, they say, the information would enable the government to set up programs better suited to the requirements of ethnic minorities.

However, before the 1981 census there had been widespread anxiety about the possibility that immigration authorities would use the information to track down illegal immigrants. A test survey in the London borough of Haringey showed that just under 50 per cent of the respondents were willing to disclose their origins.

Some Opposed in Principle

Surveys held more recently show that most people from ethnic groups would agree to disclose their origin. But some people, especially those from the West Indies, are still opposed in principle to such a question.

Meetings are to be held early in the new year by officials from the Office of Population Censuses and Surveys, and the Commission For Racial Equality, to convince the leaders of minority groups that the question of race origins does not pose any threat.

An information paper published last month by the Office of Population Censuses and Surveys says: 'Census data on identified individuals will not be passed to any person or organization outside the Census Office. This includes the police, immigration authorities, the local and health authorities.'

The paper says that because the government wishes to eliminate racial discrimination it needs accurate data on the ethnic population on which its policies may be based. It adds: 'An ethnic origin question would help the government and others to monitor these policies and assess their effect, both nationally and locally.'

A White Paper due to be published before next summer is to contain the proposals for the 1991 census. Parliament will take the final decision on whether to include the proposed question on racial origins.

If the question is included in the census, the Office of Population Censuses and Surveys plans to introduce a publicity campaign 'designed to remove groundless fears about the way the information would be used.'

PLAN TO LIMIT MPs POWERS

THE Tory government is to introduce new guidelines to severely restrict the right of Members of Parliament to intervene in regard to problems faced by immigrants.

The new Home Office proposals to be placed before Parliament this month envisage that: (a) the MPs should raise immigration problems of their constituents straight with nationality or immigration officers and not, as they do at present, with the Minister; (b) instead of seeking intervention while an immigrant is still going through the appeal process, MPs should leave their representation until the process is complete.

The aim of these proposals, according to the Home Office, is to halve the total of nearly 14000 cases a year now being referred to Ministers.

The JCWI and other immigrant organisations have severely criticised the new proposals. Roy Hattersley, the Shadow Home Secretary, said that the Labour Party would fiercely oppose the proposals.

COURT RULES ON ADOPTION BY IMMIGRANTS

A child under 18 can be admitted to Britain as the adoptive child of someone settled here under immigration rules even if that child was adopted without legal procedure, the court of Appeal in London has ruled.

The ruling could be significant for hundreds of families who are trying to gain entry for children.

Appeals Panel Overruled

Lord Justice May dismissed an appeal by the Immigration Appeals Tribunal against a decision of Justice Hodgson earlier this month that quashed a tribunal decision refusing entry to an applicant.

The case concerned an application for an entry certificate in 1982 from the dependent adopted son of the sponsor who settled in Great Britain in 1970. When the applicant's father was dying in 1975 in Bangladesh, the sponsor, to whom he was related, promised to look

VIJAYAMBIGAI'S CREATIVE EFFORT



Dr. Seergazhi Sivachithambaram, the illustrious son of Dr Seergazhi Govindarajan, who accompanied his father as co singer in their recent tour of Europe & UK, participated in a novel dance creation of Vijayambigai Indra Kumar, an illustrious dancer, choreographer & dance teacher. Vijayambigai's innovation saw Jesus Christ as the Lord of the Dance in the Creation of the World, his life, Crucifixion and Resurrection, combining it with the rhythms of a Thillana. The lyrics were in English and Dr Sivachithambaram was invited by Vijayambigai to compose the music in Carnatic classical and sing it. Vijayambigai choreographed the dance in Bharata Natyam.

She danced, the item in the course of a brilliant 3 hour recital she recently had at the University of London Goldsmiths College, presented by Vijayanarthalaya (Academy of Indian Arts). Speaking at the occasion, Revd Charles Watson, Minister in Charge of INTERCOM Ministries (an ecumenical inter community organisation of the Methodist Church), commended Vijayambigai's efforts at interlinking East-West traditions and building bridges between communities. He said that many priests had witnessed the dance and had requested Vijayambigai to perform it at Church Services. Vijayambigai has to be admired for taking Bharata Natyam into the Churches in a form gratifying to their milieu. Vijayambigai's of Bharata Natyam, Kuchipudi & Kathakali was not only first class entertainment but was of tremendous educational value to students of the dance and aspiring dancers.

Paul Dharmaraj

after the applicant after the father's death.

When the applicant applied for entry clearance, an immigration officer refused on the grounds that there was no provision for adoption in Bangladesh or under Muslim law. The decision was upheld by the Immigration Appeals Tribunal.

Rationale for Ruling

However, Hodgson had held that even without a legally recognizable adoptive process there could have been an adoption procedure sufficient under immigration rules where there had been a permanent assumption by the adopter of all parental duties.

May said that the tribunal should also have considered the applicant's case on the basis of whether he should have been admitted as a relative of the sponsor. The tribunal's appeal, he said, would be dismissed on the ground.

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