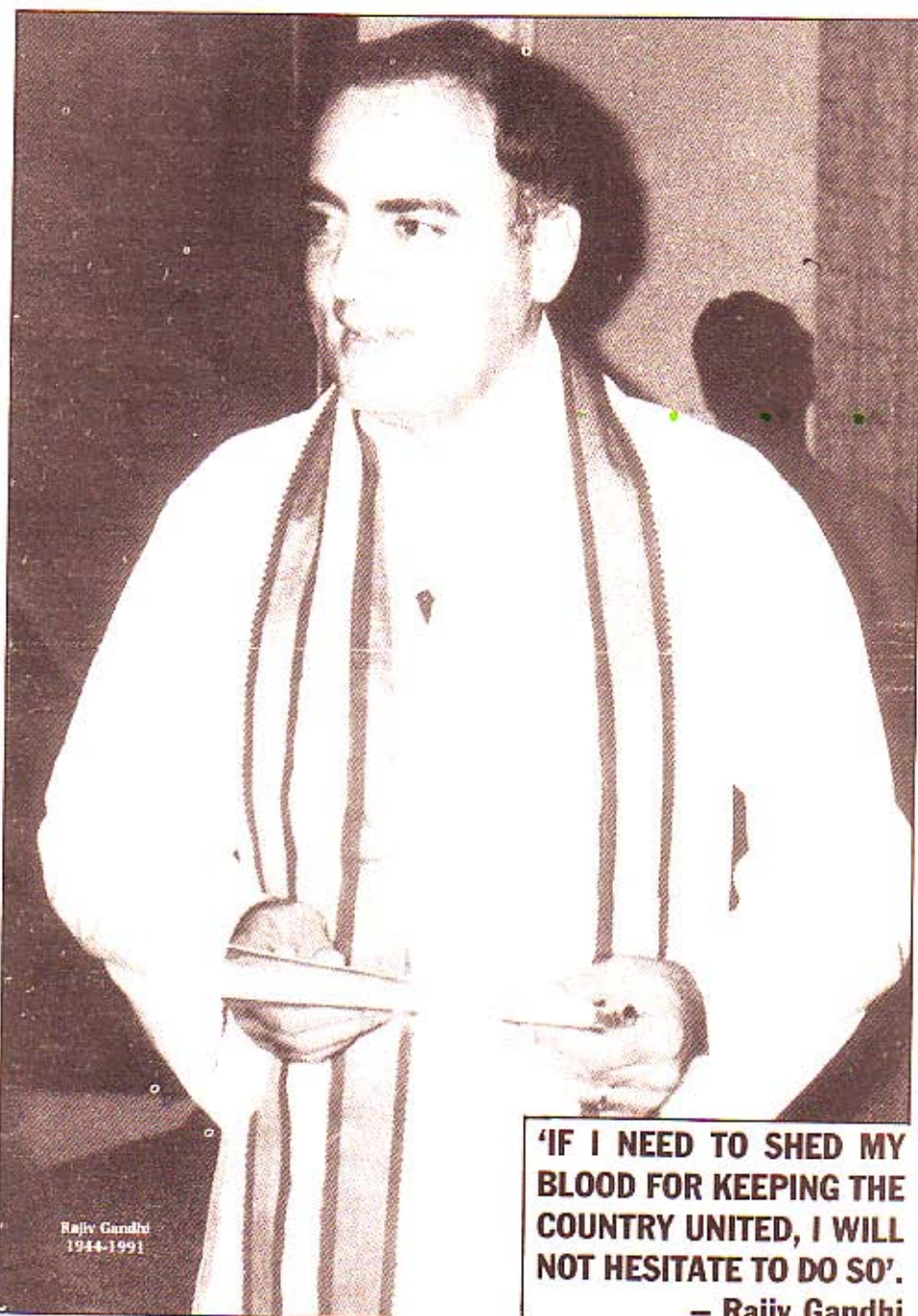


Tamil TIMES

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

— Voltaire

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Rajiv Gandhi
1944-1991

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NOT HESITATE TO DO SO'.**

— Rajiv Gandhi

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AN ACT OF UNVARNISHED TERRORISM

The tragic spectacle of 20 year old Rahul performing his traditional duty, witnessed by tens of thousands of weeping and wailing mourners including an imposing array of international heads of state and statesmen, of igniting the funeral pyre putting to rest his father, Rajiv Gandhi, one of India's best known and charismatic leaders, demonstrated the sheer cruelty of the crime committed at Sriperumpudur in Tamil Nadu on 21 May. Seven years ago, Rajiv Gandhi found himself in similar circumstances presiding at the funeral of his mother, the much loved Indira Gandhi, who was assassinated in an act of gross betrayal by her own bodyguards to whom she had entrusted her safety. This time a gang of pathological murderous conspirators had goaded a woman sick in her head to convert herself into a human bomb to perform the diabolical deed. The news of the dastardly assassination of Rajiv Gandhi sent shock waves across the world and numbed the entire Indian nation. The people of Tamil Nadu were shamed by the fact that this act of unmitigated brutality was carried out in their midst.

The murder of Rajiv Gandhi constitutes an act of unvarnished terrorism. If non-Indian elements were involved in the conspiracy and the commission of this crime, then it graduates into the realm of international terrorism, and those who master-minded it must be deemed to be and dealt with as international terrorists. And those who provide postfacto cover must be treated as accessories after the crime.

The cowardly character of the perpetrators of Rajiv's murder is demonstrated by the fact that they have had no courage to claim responsibility for their own act. They know that they stand condemned before the world and wait in the hope that they would never be found. But when they goaded the woman bomber to wear the belt packed with lethal explosives around her waist, they knew that she also would explode into bits. Having thus helped to kill one of their own in an act of odious savagery, the perpetrators have disowned her in a display of

characteristic disloyalty and ingratitude – for loyalty and gratitude are human values which such evil minds do not know or understand – and her unclaimed shattered remains lie embalmed in the corner of an Indian mortuary. Even her parents have not come forward to claim her remains.

The sophisticated nature of the technology used, the method employed and the precision with which the assassination was carried out provide evidence of a sordid plot conceived in secrecy and preparations made months in advance. The plotters struck when Rajiv engaged in a nationwide electoral campaign, an essential activity in a functioning democracy for a leader who wanted to be close to his people. Had he been concerned with his personal safety and surrounded himself with an impregnable security ring, he would be alive today. But he paid the supreme price for having chosen to go out among the people. The assassination of Rajiv dramatically illustrates the vulnerability of those who believe in open politics and democracy. It also demonstrates the utter contempt terrorists of the ilk who conspired to murder him have for open politics and democracy. It is manifestly clear that those who were responsible for his killing were frightened at the prospect of Rajiv returning to power through the electoral process and every indication at the time of his murder was that he would have become Prime Minister after the elections. By his murder they were desperately seeking to undermine the electoral process and subvert the democratic verdict of the people.

Very few countries in the third world remain committed to the ideals of democracy and democratic processes and India is an illustrious example. Indian democracy has been resilient enough to withstand many challenges and such tragedies in the past. One hopes that India and its people will emerge from their recent traumatic experience and continue to thrive as a vibrant democracy by defeating the dark divisive and evil forces who are seeking to subvert democracy and destabilise their country.

Peace talks recede after Gandhi killing

Rita Sebastian from Colombo

June 11 marked an year since fresh hostilities broke out between the Tamil Tigers and government forces. An year that saw one of the bloodiest phases of the north-east conflict with heavy casualties suffered, not only by the two warring sides, but by a civilian population trapped between the two.

Although there was, in the last weeks a feeling that the end of the war was in sight with the likely resumption of the peace dialogue, the assassination of Rajiv Gandhi and the alleged involvement of the Tigers has, as the Special Advisor to Premadasa on international affairs said, cast a shadow on any immediate talks.

The assassination has also caused considerable concern among the Tamil community in the island. They hoped that Gandhi would return as Prime Minister of India and that India would play a more activist role by creating conditions for the peaceful resolution of the country's ethnic conflict.

The government is now placed in a position of not really knowing how to proceed. Although the early expectation of the Sri Lankan forces, after fresh hostilities broke out in June 1990, was that they would be able to crush the Tigers militarily, the situation turned out to be more complicated.

Today there is a military stalemate with the Sri Lankan forces in apparent control of some of the principal towns in the eastern province, while the Tigers control most of the areas on the periphery. Several successful guerrilla attacks against the security forces have demonstrated in no uncertain terms that the Tigers are still a force to be reckoned with in these areas.

In the north, in recent weeks government forces have adopted a more offensive position, moving out of their camps, destroying Tiger bunkers and positions, and returning to camp.

The military strategy has shifted with the forces not interested in retaining territory, but in weakening the Tigers. But there are some within the government like Tourism and Rural Industrial Minister, S. Thondaman who have taken a strong position that government should cease hostilities and resume the political dialogue.

It was Thondaman's initiative that compelled President Ranasinghe Premadasa to set up a cabinet sub-committee comprising Minister Thondaman, Prime Minister Dingiri

Banda Wijetunge, Industries Minister Ranil Wickremesinghe, Justice Minister Shahul Hameed and Housing and Construction Minister Sirisena Cooray, to look into issues relating to the north-east, work out a timetable and the modalities for discussion and report back to cabinet. But the Gandhi assassination has put the Thondaman initiative into cold storage, at least for the present.

The assassination has also shattered the confidence of even the most vigorous advocates of the political dialogue.

The Tigers however have denied being involved in the killing. But political observers are quick to point out that the Tigers denied the assassination of Tamil United Liberation Front (TULF) General Secretary Appapillai Amirthalingam and politburo member Vettivelu Yogeswaran in July 1989.

It is significant however that the chief suspect in the Amirthalingam-Yogeswaran assassination was indicted in the High Court only this month, almost two years after the killings.

The assassination of the two Tamil

United Liberation Front politburo members took place in the heart of the nation's capital when the Tigers were engaged in peace talks with the government. The Tigers in a statement following the assassination called it a diabolical plot to disrupt the peace talks.

Subsequently however the LTTE leadership admitted that the death sentence on Amirthalingam had been carried out by the three assassins later shot dead by security guards.

The question of who killed Gandhi however is not going to help solve the island's national question. The government is aware that there has to be a cessation of hostilities and a return to the negotiating table. It is also aware that it cannot be postponed indefinitely.

Perhaps hopefully after a new leadership takes over in India the time may seem opportune for the government to initiate the peace dialogue. Its earlier intention was to get something going on the ground so that when a new government took over in India it would be supportive of the Colombo government's efforts.

What the government was trying to prevent was resentment in the south that the peace talks were at the insistence of India.

The feeling was that once the peace process was set in motion, and a new Indian government if dominated by Congress(I) would be supportive of the process and contribute to the resolution of the conflict within the broad parameters of the Indo-Lanka accord.

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Gladstone — the unconventional diplomat

by Rita Sebastian

Former British High Commissioner, David Gladstone, declared *persona non grata* by the Sri Lankan government, left Colombo a sad and disillusioned man.

He paid no official farewell calls for he had ceased to exist as the Queen's representative in the island. But there was no lack of callers at Westminster House. From some of the highest to the lowest in the land whose path the Gladstones, both husband and wife, had crossed, came to say their good-byes.

David Gladstone was that rare kind of British diplomat. During his four year tenure, his term was up this July, a refreshing breeze blew through the gardens of the spacious official residence. The legendary staid Englishman with the stiff upper lip had dis-

appeared. In his place had come a man with a special warmth for his host country and its people.

Gladstone had an extremely unconventional approach to diplomacy. It was a people to people approach rather than government to government. He established a wide range of contact with opposition groups and with the artistic and literary community.

He travelled the length and breadth of the island. He was one of the very few diplomats who travelled to the north and east of the island. He went as an ambassador of peace. He talked with the Tamil Tigers in the north-east and during the height of the Janatha Vimukti Peramuna (JVP) insurgency in 1989, did meet with student activists of the left wing rebel group.

He frequently met with security offi-

MURDER OF TULF LEADERS SUSPECT INDICTED

By Keith Noyahr

Hardly three weeks after the assassination of former Indian Prime Minister, Rajiv Gandhi, the chief suspect in the murder of TULF leader A. Amirthalingam, electronics engineer and teacher Vincent Mariyadas was indicted by the Attorney General on 7 June, in the High Court of Colombo.

Vincent William Mariyadas will face charges of conspiracy to murder the TULF leader Appapillai Amirthalingam.

The TULF leader, and the ex-MP for Jaffna V. Yogeswaran were killed while TULF President M. Sivasittamparam suffered serious injuries in the July 1989 attack.

The LTTE reacting immediately denied involvement in the slaying of the TULF leaders in a statement issued by its headquarters in London. The statement which expressed the LTTE's distress at the demise of the TULF leaders read: 'The LTTE is not in any way involved in the incident. Diabolical forces are at work to discredit our organisation and to disrupt the current peace talks between the LTTE and the government of Sri Lanka'.

Mariyadas, was arrested on July 15, 1989 at the Anderson Flats, Narahenpita and detained under the Prevention of Terrorism Act at the Narahenpita and Slave Island police stations.

The LTTE leadership which took Mariyadas into their confidence after years of association, reportedly gave him the role of informant to the party, which he performed from Colombo according to the prosecution.

The other persons allegedly involved in the assassinations of the TULF leaders are Rajalingham Aravinda alias Visu, Aloysius Leon alias Peter and Kandiah Sivakumaran alias Arivu, all of whom died in the attack despite elaborate plans to escape. All three assassins were shot dead by the security guards of Mr. Amirthalingham.

Investigators say, Visu who spearheaded the operation had allegedly informed Mariyadas long before the assassination that Mariyadas will, in the future be an important member in the organisation.

Mariyadas allegedly went to Chunnakam several times to meet the three assassins Visu, Arivu and Aloysius on various matters pertaining to the party investigators claim. Visu had further given instructions to Mariyadas to meet Jeevaratnam at the Welikada Magazine prison, who was involved in the killing of 13 soldiers in 1983. Jeevaratnam in turn had wanted Mariyadas to meet the imprisoned Manori, who was behind the 1987 Maradana bomb blast. He met her as well investigators claim.

They said Mariyadas Master originally came in touch with the LTTE through contact with Morali the Leader of the Students Organisation of Liberation Tigers, through which group he met Kajan, the Tiger leader in Chunnakam, Jaffna and Delipan, Kittu's deputy who died in the fast-to-death campaign.

After all this exposure in Jaffna he came over to Colombo, from which place he was able to perform his all important function of informant. Letters were exchanged through him and the party leadership. Later, Amirthalingam's assassins came down to Colombo following the party's decision to execute leaders of the Tamil parties.

The three assassins of the TULF leaders were in Colombo several months to plan out the modus operandi for their killing. One of them even allegedly stayed with Mariyadas and accompanied him for films and other entertainment for weeks, investigators claim.

Sketches, maps and other plans were drawn up by them to facilitate the execution of their plan. The would-be assassins even visited Yogeswaran days before the execution and had made an appointment to meet Mr. Amirthalingam on that fateful day.

The assassins who had arrived at Mr. Amirthalingam's Bullers Road residence in a trishaw had their meals there and were planning to proceed to an unknown destination before they began their 'final' mission. Investigators said involvement of a TULF member in the assassination, who was believed to have links with the Tigers is yet to be established.

(7)

cials at district headquarters in the provinces and reviewed the law and order situation and the rehabilitation effort.

Gladstone is said to have angered officialdom with his concern for human rights issues in the country. The first public manifestation of the government's concern over Gladstone's conduct came in the form of a virulent attack last year in Parliament by a ruling party backbencher D. Piyasiri who alleged that the High Commissioner was associated with well known drug pedlars.

The alleged offence for which Gladstone paid the extreme diplomatic penalty was that during the recent local government polls he went into a polling booth in Southern Matara and later filed a police report of possible election irregularities by ruling party voters.

The complaint was made in the constituency of ruling party MP, D. Piyasiri who had attacked Gladstone in Parliament. Piyasiri in complaining to the Party General Secretary, Sirisena Cooray, alleged malicious intent.

Cooray complained to the Foreign Office, Gladstone however was not summoned to the Foreign Office. Foreign Secretary, Bernard Tillekeratne flew to Britain to informally inform the British Foreign Office of the government's displeasure at Gladstone's conduct. The Foreign Office had intimated to Tillekeratne that besides international observers, Gladstone himself in his reports, had indicated to the British officials that the elections were fair and free. British officials did not feel therefore that the incident warranted Gladstone's recall.

Apparently the Sri Lanka government thought otherwise and Gladstone was declared *persona non grata*, the first diplomat of the rank of High Commissioner to be so declared.

Whatever the reasons for declaring Gladstone *persona non grata*, it is one which is likely to have serious repercussions. It could harden the position of donor countries by their becoming increasingly emphatic on the relationship between aid and the country's human rights record.

The next aid consortium meeting

scheduled for later this year, is going to be a crucial meeting from the point of view of budgetary support for Sri Lanka.

Political observers find it inexplicable as to why the government singled out Gladstone for public rebuke at a time when the country desperately needs the support and understanding of her friends, and Britain has been one of Sri Lanka's closest friends.

Gladstone paid the country and its people a lasting tribute when he said on the eve of his departure 'In Sri Lanka I met the warmest and most understanding people in the countries where I served', But Sri Lanka perhaps failed to understand Gladstone.

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INTERVIEW WITH INDIAN HIGH COMMISSIONER

Indo-Lanka relations, under severe strain during 32 months of Indian troop presence in the north-east of the island, has undergone a qualitative change since their withdrawal in March 1990.

Indian High Commissioner, Nagendra Nath Jha, who took office as new head of mission some months later has contributed largely to strengthening the traditional ties between the two countries.

In an interview with RITA SEBASTIAN, he answers questions on the future of Sri Lankan refugees in Tamil Nadu, the controversial Indo-Lanka Accord, and the possibility of India playing the role of mediator once again in resolving the island's ethnic conflict.

Excerpts from the Interview:

Q. During the visit of former External Affairs Minister, V.C. Shukla in January, it was agreed that arrangements would be made to furnish names and addresses of Sri Lankan refugees in India to facilitate their early return and resettlement in the north-east. Has any progress been made?

A. This issue came up again during the visit of Foreign Secretary, Bernard Tillekeratne to Delhi. We reiterated our assurance that it would be done, but thought we would leave it till after the elections.

Q. In the event of the LTTE being implicated in the Rajiv Gandhi assassination, do you see any problems for Sri Lankans in Tamil Nadu, specially the refugees.

A. I don't think the Sri Lanka refugees had anything to do with the assassination of Rajiv Gandhi. The government of India is fully aware that they are the helpless victims of circumstances. Even Tamil Nadu sentiment will not be directed against them.

Q. The Congress(I) manifesto reiterated its commitment to the Indo-Lanka Accord. In the event of a non Congress government taking over at the centre, would it still insist on the resolution of the Tamil question within the parameters of the Accord?

A. The Agreement of 1987 cuts across party lines. Foreign policy does not play an important role in Indian elections. India's Foreign Policy will remain unchanged whatever government comes to power. As I see it the government of Sri Lanka should, within the framework of a united Sri Lanka, meet the legitimate aspirations of the Tamil people. Otherwise there can be no long-term solution.

Q. How much did India pledge as financial assistance for refugees in the north-east, and how much of that has already been met?

A. Financial assistance pledged was about Rs. 250 million (Indian). Half of it has been already utilised but there has been no movement in that area for some time now.

Q. The thinking among certain sections of the LTTE leadership is that the military operation has to be pursued

so that the Sri Lankan government will reach a stage when it will be forced to resume negotiations. Would you comment?

A. Whatever the LTTE tactics are this approach is counter-productive. It tends to ignore the tremendous hardship the people are being put through. The prolonging of the conflict goes against the very concept of battling in the interests of the people. I am not a military man but the advantage on the ground can easily shift.

Q. In the pre-conditions laid down by the government for the resumption of the peace dialogue, one relates to other political parties, specially other Tamil groups being a party to any future dialogue. The LTTE which labelled other Tamil groups, first as 'quislings' of India and subsequently as traitors, for collaborating with the Sri Lankan government will not agree to any such participation. What do you feel about that considering that the first north-east Council was administered by rival Tamil groups.

A. I think it is unfair to label other Tamil parties as traitors or quislings. To the best of my knowledge if they had been pushed into a position of sitting in Colombo, while the conflict was on, was not due to the Sri Lanka government but due to the LTTE's attitude to them, the LTTE's refusal to accept their presence. The other thing which is overlooked very conveniently and unfortunately is that, for any political party or any political group which espouses a certain cause, to give it up and talk in terms of working within the framework of a united Sri Lanka, is a kind of sacrifice. It requires a tremendous amount of guts and courage to renege on your earlier stand and accept a new thing with all the uncertainty attached to it. So bravery is not confined only in a military or physical sense but the intellectual or loyal courage to do something is also a kind of bravery, and to call such groups traitors is the height of unrealism.

The North-East Provisional Council I think was not given a chance to take off either by the LTTE, or by the Sri Lanka government. The latter also misunderstood the role for which it was set up. That's past history and I

don't think it should stand in the way of the future.

Q. Would you say there has been a qualitative change in Indo-Lanka relations following the Shukla visit. Moving one would say, from a confrontational position to one of accommodation and understanding?

Q. What I keep repeating here is that there is no animus in India against Sri Lanka at the popular level. We can forget the few extreme elements here and there. They don't count for much. There is no animus at the top level against Sri Lanka at all. For any country to adopt a hostile policy, if it is to do so for the sake of argument, it must have some little popular base at least. Governments may function at a level which might sometimes be above the average man's thinking at times, because they have to work on a different basis and adopt a different approach, but they don't function entirely in a vacuum. There is no anti-Sri Lanka feeling in India so why should any Indian government seek to adopt a policy of hostility or confrontation with Sri Lanka, which is one of the countries with which, whether Tamil or Sinhalese we have the maximum rapport at the top level. All Sri Lankans, whether Sinhalese or Tamil are of Indian origin so why should we have any animus towards them. Similarly on the reverse side, since the question addresses itself to both sides, I sincerely appeal to people in authority that whatever may have been the viewpoints in the past, Sri Lanka may have at certain times misunderstood government of India's policy towards it, it is time to set those feelings aside and work on the basis of the traditional friendship that always guided our relationships.

And I must again emphasise that both Tamils and Sinhalese, both equally warm and hospitable to India have always looked upto India and wanted to be on the best of terms with India. What else can anyone ask for. But it would help to bear in mind the fact that India is Sri Lanka's only neighbour. Even if Sri Lanka was ten times bigger you would still have only one neighbour, all the others are far away. Even if it was bigger, Sri Lanka would still be one of seven neighbours of India. These are facts so why dispute it. So one should not, from the Sri Lanka government side or its people, think that India does not exist or does not matter. That would be the wrong approach. I am not saying anybody is doing it but it is something that should be at the back of one's mind. Essentially what I want to point out is that proximity must be converted to advantage. Both countries must make a sincere effort. Nothing can come about

by one side making the effort, and half hearted efforts by both sides is not enough.

Q. The oil exploration project off Mannar. Has agreement been reached to start operations?

A. There is no problem at all. Our draft is lying with the Sri Lanka government. They have told us it will take another six to eight weeks to respond. I hope it doesn't get extended further. If they have problems about the draft we are open for discussion.

Q. Do you still feel that India is the

most acceptable mediator in the north-east conflict?

A. We have to be equally acceptable to both sides, if ever mediation were required and we were approached. But more than that what I want to emphasise is that working on the basis of past experience, it is true of the LTTE right now that it feels India has no role to play, that India is an outsider or that India does not exist, is a highly unrealistic position. To put it succinctly we are not going to force ourselves as mediators, far from it because we would like the dispute to be resolved

amicably internally, which is essentially a Sri Lankan problem and I feel President Premadasa is on the right track. But it should be borne in mind that there is no point in assuming, as the LTTE has been trying to propagate in the last year or so that India does not exist so far as this unfortunate conflict is concerned. The action that is being taken in Tamil Nadu against LTTE cadres is one part of the argument I have advanced. You cannot say India does not exist and have a whole lot of cadres functioning in Tamil Nadu, causing law and order problems.

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Statutory Media Control Deplored

The recently installed Chairman of the International Press Institute (IPI) Cushrow Irani, is in Colombo on an urgent mission. A suave and outspoken Indian newspaper editor (he is Managing Director of the Statesman of Calcutta), Mr. Irani addressing a press conference urged the Sri Lanka government to put out the text of the proposed Media Commission Bill soon so that there could be a public debate. Delay would mean that the people would have no opportunity to discuss such a vital piece of legislation, he explained.

Mr. Irani said that he had met State Minister for Information A.J. Ranasinghe and the President's Advisor on International Affairs Bradman Weerakoon and urged the same views on them. 'I told them that the IPI is no busybody or travelling circus trying to advise them on Sri Lanka's internal affairs but that we are extremely concerned about the future of press freedom in Sri Lanka', he said.

He said that the most disquieting feature of the whole exercise was that no final draft of the Bill was ready. He had been told that the government had not made up its mind still. Further he had been informed that this Bill had

originated from the All Parties Conference. It seemed that the government was not taking responsibility for the Bill. From what he had been able to gather the Bill could not be used as an argument for a liberalisation of the media. 'It appears that the greatest threat to liberalisation of the media is interference by the government', he said.

Mr. Irani said that the freedom of expression was too important an issue to be left to politicians. That was why he was urging as wide a debate as possible. 'With great humility and seriousness I urge the government to release the terms of this Bill so that there can be a debate he said. He noted that the Sri Lankan press had been prevented from commenting on it because no final draft had been released yet. He added that the IPI expected to play a role in any such debate.

Mr. Irani also said that the Bill seemed to be modelled on the Second Press Commission in India in 1982 which the Indian Press had successfully resisted. In fact Mr. Irani is described as one of those who had been in the vanguard of that resistance.

This is the second time that he has been elected Chairman of IPI which

has a membership of 2000 editors and publishers worldwide. At its 40th Annual General Assembly in Kyoto in Japan in April the IPI adopted the following resolution on Sri Lanka.

The Fortieth Annual General Assembly of the International Press Institute, representing 2000 editors and publishers, deplores the introduction of legislation to set up a Media Commission designed to bring the print and electronic media in Sri Lanka under state supervision if not control.

Under the guise of concern for journalists, the government nominated Commission will severely inhibit the setting-up of new newspapers, weaken

Continued On Page 19

150 Indian scholarships

More than 150 Indian scholarships will be awarded to Sri Lankan undergraduates and post-graduates to pursue education in India with the Indian Government increasing the number of scholarships this year to facilitate the vast number of students affected due to some of the varsities being closed.

An Indian High Commission spokesman said that students with four simple passes in any Advanced Level stream and also a credit pass for English at G.C.E. (O/L) will be eligible to apply for these scholarships. Air passage, board and lodging, tuition and maintenance fees will be included

in the scholarship.

But students, who accept Indian scholarships will not be allowed to register themselves in local universities, the spokesman added. The Ministry for Education and Higher Education will also collaborate in this venture.

These scholarships will provide opportunities for undergraduates and post-graduates for studying Physics, Chemistry, Zoology and Botany, Mathematics subjects and also Geography, History, Economics, Psychology, commerce and business Management at selected Indian universities.

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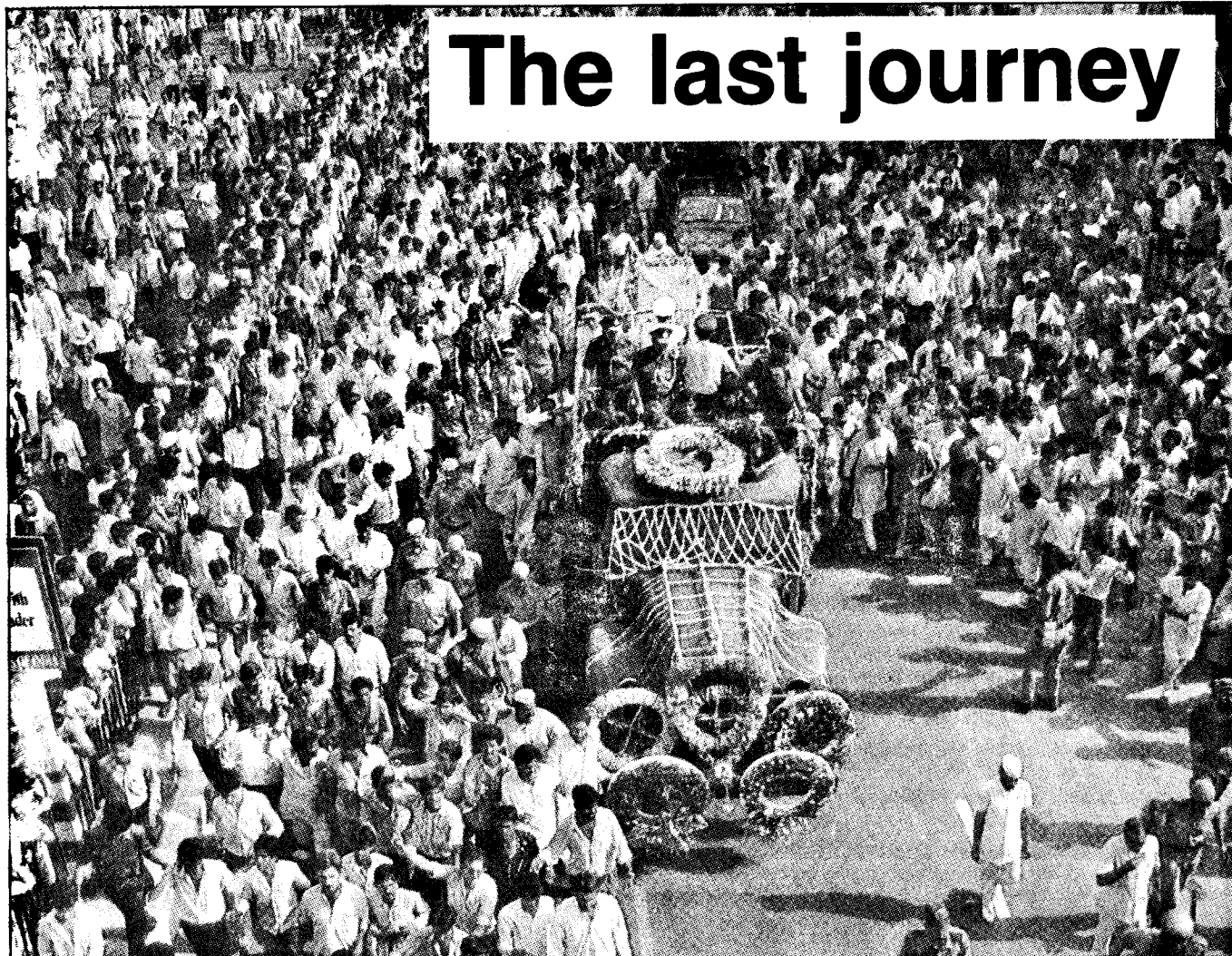
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The gun carriage inches its way along to Shakti Sthal, the people whom Rajiv loved follow, many lining the streets, for this would be the last time they would see their leader.

Farewell, Rajiv, Farewell

As India wept and the world mourned, Shri Rajiv Gandhi's mortal remains were engulfed by a wall of flames which turned into ashes the body of a man who strove to make India a better place than he inherited. It was on the sprawling grounds of 'Shakti Sthal' (Palace of Power), on the banks of the river Yamuna in New Delhi that the former Indian Prime Minister was consigned to the flames, under a heavy evening sky that Friday.

A shocked and aggrieved nation bade a tearful and emotional farewell to the felled 'scion of the Nehru-Gandhi dynasty'. And as the flames symbolic of the fires which burned within millions of grief-stricken people, consumed the rent body of India's youngest Premier and converted it into ashes, thousands of mourners raised a crop of fists in a final salute to the fallen hero and cried 'Rajiv, we will miss you'.

Life after the death of Rajiv Gandhi will never be the same for India again.

His brutal assassination will alter India's political agenda and the void left by his untimely and tragic departure will be difficult to fill.

Rajiv Gandhi who piloted the destiny of over 800 million people for five years, as the nation's youngest Prime Minister, was the voice and manifestation of democracy. His cruel assassination by a cowardly bomb blast in the

**Report by Suresh Mohamed
from New Delhi & Madras**

southern Indian state of Tamil Nadu, can be sadly dubbed as the 'passing of an era'. For 47-year-old Rajiv Gandhi, in the aftermath of the November 1984 grisly killing of his mother, Indira Gandhi, it was a tragic entry into politics. And as fate so decreed it turned out to be a tragic exit as well.

What remained of the tall, handsome, soft-spoken Rajiv Gandhi after the powerful bomb explosion that fate-

ful Tuesday at Sriperumbudur, 50 kilometres off Madras, was cremated three days later amidst the chanting of sacred Hindu hymns and with his distraught wife Sonia and daughter Priyanka looking on.

The sandalwood pyre was lit by Rajiv Gandhi's 17-year-old son Rahul at 5.25 p.m. in the midst of the wails of thousands of mourners. A galaxy of international dignitaries and national leaders attended the funeral held amidst a tight security blanket. 'Shakti Sthal', the cremation site of Rajiv Gandhi was a stone's throw away from 'Rajghat', where his mother, felled by a hail of gunfire from her two Sikh bodyguards in 1984 was cremated.

'Last Post'

As Army buglers sounded the 'Last Post' followed by the Rouse, the array of world leaders, kings, governors and Ministers stood up in silence to pay homage to the young and vibrant

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his life by that treacherous blast. Indian President, R. Venkataraman, Vice-President, Dr. Shankar Dayal Sharma, and Prime Minister Chandra Shekhar led the mourners while the Army, Navy and Air Force chiefs carried the body from the flower-decked, 25-pounder gun carriage. The President, Vice President and their wives were seen consoling members of Rajiv Gandhi's bereaved family near the specially erected platform, as the flames enveloped the slain leader's body immersed in a heap of sandalwood.

Mrs. Sonia Gandhi attired in a white saree and with her head covered broke down as the pyre was set aflame. Priyanka Gandhi wearing a cream saree put her arm around her weeping mother as the last rites were performed. A nation's silent grief erupted as the flames licked the firewood covered corpse of the young former Prime Minister and leapt into the open skies. The scene of Rajiv Gandhi's remains engulfed in flames was too much to bear even to the international dignitaries present. Many of them were seen dabbing their eyes with handkerchieves as they witnessed the tragic departure of this great son of India who ruled the world's biggest democracy.

President Venkataraman looking pale and upset, hugged Rahul as he came down to the special enclosure to meet grief-stricken family members. Film star Amitabh Bachchan who is an old family friend and senior police officer Gautam Kaul, a relative of Mr. Gandhi, were at Rahul's side near the pyre and remained there throughout the religious rites.

Priests from the Hindu, Muslim, Christian and Zoroastrian faiths chanted hymns before the body arrived at 4.51 p.m. but after that it was performed according to Hindu Vedic rites.

The mutilated body of Rajiv Gandhi wrapped in linen and covered with rose petals was placed on a 45 cm. high, 3 metre square pedestal, with the head facing North. While the chanting of hymns was continuing Rahul sprinkled holy water on the pyre and then knelt in prayer by the side of it.

Maintaining a composed exterior, the bespectacled Rahul then went around the pyre three times, with a priest pouring water into the lad's open palms from an earthen pitcher. The ritual of smashing the pitcher onto the ground was then carried out. The body of the former Indian Premier was covered with 'haran samaari' (mix of ritualistic offerings) and incense. A round piece of thread was passed on by Mrs. Sonia Gandhi to her son Rahul to be placed over the head of the body. A helicopter which had been ejecting cascades of red rose petals onto the

body on the gun carriage during the funeral procession, swooped low once again to release another load of fragrant petals as the end was at hand.

The national flag covering the body was removed as the guard commander ordered 'present arms' and 'rest on your arms reversed'. The family members then untied the 'thread knots' assisted by the chief pandit in attendance. This was followed by the placing of pieces of sandalwood around the body by Rahul, Priyanka, Mrs. Sonia Gandhi and Gautam Kaul, cousin of the slain Rajiv Gandhi. As the chief pall bearers moved to their positions, three volleys were fired prior to the sounding of the 'Last Post' by army buglers followed by the Rouse symbolising the continuity of life. The binds were removed at 5.10 p.m. and preparations got underway for the final rites. More sandalwood and firewood were then stacked onto the body and about 20 kilogrammes of ghee poured all around. A distraught, but calm and collected Rahul, with a small burning piece of wood in his hands went slowly around the body seven times before setting fire to the pyre against the backdrop of an explosion of a people's grief which rocked India. He set aflame the pyre from the right side, near the head. A section of the grief-stricken mourners demanded that Rajiv Gandhi's face be shown before he was consigned to the flames. But little did they know that Rajiv's face had been blown off by the devastating blast.

Final round

After a final round of the burning pyre, the family got off the platform to be met by the Indian President, his wife and other VIPs before taking leave. The offerings for the pyre weighed about 50 kilogrammes. Over 50,000 mourners braved the scorching heat of the summer sun to catch a final glimpse of their dear departed leader. People beat their chests and wept like children as the procession moved closer to its final destination. At some points surging crowds broke barricades and smashed through barriers in a bid to reach the bier. The funeral procession left Teen Murti House where Rajiv Gandhi's body had been lying in state since May 22, around 1.30 p.m. and wended its way to the cremation site. Escorted by five platoons and 33 soldiers each both in the front and the rear the cortege carried by pall bearers reached 'Shakti Sthal' around 4.35 p.m. behind schedule.

Congress(I) leaders Chulam Nabi Azad, Moopanar, M.J. Akbar and Narasimha Rao were the first to enter the cremation site. They were followed by Mrs. Sonia Gandhi, Rahul, Priyanka and Amitabh Bachchan walking alongside the pall bearers. The body draped in the Indian tricoloured flag was then placed on the

specially erected platform supporting the funeral pyre.

Among the host of international dignitaries were Prince Charles of Britain, US Vice President, Danforth Quayle, Vice President of the USSR, Prime Ministers of Sri Lanka, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Nepal and Mauritius, King of Bhutan, former Pakistan Prime Minister Mrs. Benazir Bhutto, and PLO Leader, Yasser Arafat.

Emotional

Emotions ran high as the funeral pyre was lit by Rahul and agitated crowds shook their fists shouting slogans like 'Rajiv is eternal', 'He shall be avenged', 'Long live Rajiv' and 'Rajiv, you will be remembered for so long as there are the sun and moon', which rent the air. Among those who lifted Rajiv's body to the gun carriage was close friend, film star Amitabh Bachchan. A steady stream of mourners filed past the slain leader's remains and thousands more queued outside Teen Murti House, former residence of Rajiv Gandhi's grandfather, Jawaharlal Nehru, to pay homage to the fallen Congress I chief.

Mr. Gandhi's body was placed on the gun carriage decorated with flowers and wreaths, for the last journey at 11.15 a.m. while VIP mourners and Congress leaders and Mr. Sunil Dutt, R.K. Dhawan, Jagdish Tytler, Rajesh Khanna, Shashi Kapoor, Randhir Kapoor, Kunal Kapoor and several others stood beside it. The body was carried by the former Prime Minister's son Rahul, the three defence chiefs, Amitabh Bachchan and Suman Dubey his media advisor. The mourners particularly the women present wailed as the body was deposited on the gun carriage at Teen Murti House.

As the mortal remains were brought out the forces presented arms and then reversed arms. A low flying helicopter which made a timely appearance bathed the body on the gun carriage with rose petals. The gun carriage was followed by another flower-decked military truck and an open 'Gypsy' jeep with armed 'Black Cat' commandos wearing bullet-proof vests, and the cars of the three defence chiefs. Next in line was the grey Ambassador car carrying Mrs. Sonia Gandhi and daughter Priyanka followed by another Ambassador in which were Rahul Gandhi and Amitabh Bachchan. At the sight of the approaching gun carriage and the convoy of vehicles crowds lining up the streets along the procession route made a frantic dash towards it. They blundered down the streets, smashing through barricades and ran alongside the gun carriage and the cars. Thousands converged on the cortege and a sea of humanity moved with it. The crowds swelled with every step as more and more fought their way through despite vain attempts by

the police to keep crowds at bay. The streets were choked with a sea of humanity. The procession had to move at a snail's pace because of the surging crowds and was one hour late to reach the cremation site as a result.

Rahul's reaction

When the cortege was proceeding along Barakhamba Road, Rahul Gandhi took everybody by surprise by suddenly getting off the car and running behind the gun carriage. An armed 'Black Cat' commando also ran along with him, nobody jostled Rahul. Loudspeakers played hymns and devotional songs around the historic India Gate. Thousands of police, army and para military personnel were deployed at strategic points and supplemented the security dragnet thrown by the elite 'Black Cat' commandos. Shops, business establishments, central government and Delhi administration offices remained closed as a mark of respect to the late Rajiv Gandhi. The Delhi Transport Corporation (DTC) operated only a skeletal fleet as the procession route was closed for traffic.

Life in the Indian capital had come to a standstill as the nation plunged into mourning. Black flags fluttered

along the route and a cut out of the late Rajiv Gandhi had been put up at the Connaught Place-Barakhamba Road junction. Many people who attended the funeral wore black arm bands to express their grief at the great loss sustained. During the funeral procession hysterical crowds clung onto the edges of the gun carriage and had to be extricated by the army. Scores of kiosks had sprung up along the route used by the cortege to serve tea and water to the thousands making their way to 'Shakti Sthal' along the eleven-kilometre route unmindful of the blistering heat.

An unprecedented turn-out of journalists and television and radio crews from several countries were in Delhi to record the tragic event.

When I arrived in Madras that Thursday the city was virtually under siege. There had been violent eruptions with shops and buildings burnt. The situation was tense and nobody apparently took a chance to venture out as there had been a lot of police firing to quell disturbances and prevent looting by anti-social elements. The driver of the taxi who quite reluctantly agreed to take me to my hotel in Pallavaram (for I think, five times more than the usual fee) described the clashes and the police shooting with

bulging eyes. 'Lot of trouble, Sir. Too dangerous going like this. They might attack and we could die', he warned. As we did the seven-kilometre ride to my hotel along deserted roads and smouldering debris of what had earlier been shops and houses, he advised me to remain indoor as things were 'hotting up'.

During my two-day stay in Madras (before and after the funeral of Mr. Gandhi), I never disclosed that I was a Sri Lankan (except to places where the passport had to be forwarded), as all Sri Lankans were suspect and were open to attack at any time. There were also rumours doing the rounds that some Sri Lankan Tamils had been done to death in Madras after Mr. Gandhi's killing. The situation was volatile and as a hotelier told me, the violence could escalate any moment. Foodstuffs and other essential items were in short supply as shops and business establishments remained closed and public life disrupted as a result of the wave of violence. Several buses and other vehicles had been set ablaze by rampaging mobs. Pallavaram, where I stayed according to residents, was 'very dangerous' as the violence there had been more intense. Liquor outlets had been looted and even a hotel set on fire. (7)

The Last Interview

Barbara Crossette
New York Times Service

On the way to the rally 40 km. south-west of Madras, Rajiv Gandhi had been riding in the front seat, window open. A fluorescent light mounted on the dashboard of the Ambassador car played on his face so that people could see him in the darkness.

The people threw flowers and garlands as the car moved slowly by, their faces frenzied with happiness; the biggest smiles in India live in the gentle South. He tossed the garlands back at others, along with the shawls presented to him along the way.

At one point he stopped to greet a shy woman being jostled by the crowd. He placed a shawl around her neck and spoke to her. She covered her face with her hands and then clutched the cloth and held it close to her.

In the last election campaign, Rajiv Gandhi had been criticised for being too aloof, too insulated from the people he hoped to lead. This time, determined to carry his message directly to the people, he went on punishing road journeys, stopping at hamlets to shake hands and ask for votes as if he were a town council candidate.

'What else can I do?' he said in his

last interview as the car in which we were riding pulled away from Poona-mallee, a town along the route.

'I campaigned this way before I was Prime Minister', he said. 'I'm not Prime Minister now so I'm campaigning this way again'. As his convoy pulled into Sriperumbudur, he asked the local candidate, Maragatham Chandrashekhar, whose campaign he had come to boost, 'What shall I tell them here?' She said: 'Talk about village development', and they both stepped out of the bullet-proof car into the balmy night.

A minute or two later, Rajiv Gandhi was dead, killed by a bomb explosion. Maragatham Chandrashekhar survived and was taken to hospital.

Where have they taken the body? reporters asked the police. Rajiv Gandhi's driver, the first to the scene, said all that was left were his head and feet, still clad in a pair of expensive running shoes he had recently taken to wearing for long days on the hustings.

His security had been almost non-existent this night. A hundred times one of those hands that reached into the car to grab his arm or stroke his hand could have stabbed or shot him.

'I have been on the road 23½ hours a day almost every day since the first of May', he had said during the ride. 'At

the end, I am swollen and bleeding or have a cut arm. Here and in Kerala there is this cheek-pinching. And sometimes in Muslim neighbourhoods they kiss me - you know; one, two, three times, that special hug'.

Just five minutes before arriving at Sriperumbudur, Rajiv Gandhi had been talking to this correspondent and Neena Gopal of the *Gulf News* of Dubai. We were riding in the back seat of his car with Margatham Chandrashekhar and a local party official.

The car had stopped about 25 metres short of the platform. As Neena Gopal and I paused to talk to Suman Dubey, Rajiv Gandhi's campaign press adviser, who wanted to know if we had had enough time with the former Prime Minister, and if we would make way for other reporters, Rajiv Gandhi went on towards the steps to the dais.

As Neena Gopal and I followed there was a burst of what sounded like firecrackers and then a large boom, explosion and a cloud of smoke that scattered people all around. It was all over in seconds. The crowd at first froze and then began to stampede.

A few minutes later Rajiv Gandhi's driver pushed me, Neena Gopal and another reporter into the car and started driving quickly towards Madras. It was only when we were out of town that he said he had feared that someone might try to attack the car,

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recognising the licence plate. Along the route, however, it was clear no one had heard of the assassination. It took the news agencies nearly an hour to begin telling the people that Rajiv Gandhi was dead.

In that last interview, I had asked if he had any special regime, any vitamin supplement or diet to sustain his energy, particularly in the intense heat. He laughed.

'Most of the time I get nothing to eat at all', he said. In the car, there were a few bottles of water and a flask of tea or coffee — we never found out which.

Rajiv Gandhi had spoken philosophically about India and where its political turmoil was leading it — in between impromptu whistle stops. He remembered the last unanswered question as the car hit a stretch of empty road again. 'Now, where were we?' he would say, 'Oh, yes, it was...'

He admitted that for him this was a 'tough election in every way'. But he agreed that the growth of strong new political parties was an indication of a democratic coming-of-age in India, where one party could no longer expect to have a monopoly.

'But I feel these are the wrong kind of parties', he said, referring specifically to the Bharatiya Janata Party. The rise of the BJP has had a lot to do with increased tensions during the election

campaign and in the voting that began on May 20.

'A tremendous frustration is building up in the people, which is causing these swings from one party to another', he said. 'They are frustrated the system is not delivering, not meeting their aspirations'. He thought the problem went back to the late 1960s, after the death of Jawaharlal Nehru. In the early years after Independence, expectations were high that the country would grow and prosper quickly.

Rajiv Gandhi said the Congress had tried to bring those aspirations down to a kind of realistic level.

At the airport earlier, he explained why he was against holding elections in Punjab and said there was every likelihood that the people would elect an administration that would pass a resolution in favour of autonomy or independence.

Asked how he thought he would get along with Pakistan's new Prime Minister, Nawaz Sharif, who is pushing through economic liberalisation policies that Indian politicians including the Congress party talk about but never put into practice, Rajiv Gandhi said he had never met Nawaz Sharif and could not judge what kind of relationship they would have.

'But I know who could have solved these problems with us', he said. 'General Zia. We were close to finishing an agreement on Kashmir,

we had the maps and everything ready to sign. And then he was killed'. As Prime Minister from 1984 to 1989, Rajiv Gandhi had had a good working relationship with Zia.

Rajiv Gandhi said there was evidence that Zia, who was killed in an unexplained plane crash in August 1988, had been murdered, but he would not say more. Neena Gopal asked him if he did not think that some outside power had decided to upset the development of better relations with Pakistan. He said he thought that was likely. She asked whether Indian leaders might not be targets as India had taken on a larger role in the region. He agreed. He said the danger would not come from the Soviet Union, however, which was too busy with its own problems.

'Are you talking about the United States Central Intelligence Agency again?' I asked him. Indira Gandhi used to say she feared the CIA would kill her. Rajiv Gandhi smirked.

In the end Indira Gandhi was shot in 1984 by her own bodyguards, four months after she sent troops into the Golden Temple in Amritsar.

Now her son, who had many enemies among disaffected Indians, not the least the separatist groups, has followed her into martyrdom, and no one may ever know who is to blame for the crime. (P)

EMOTIONAL FAREWELL

NEW DELHI, May 24.

Amidst the chanting of vedic hymns the mortal remains of the former Prime Minister, Rajiv Gandhi, was consigned to the flames with full State honours at Shakh Sthal this evening. The funeral pyre was lit by his son Rahul Gandhi at 5.24 p.m. The bugles were sounded and guns boomed in salute.

It was an emotional farewell as thousands of countrymen braved a beating sun to attend the last rites of one of their most adored leaders who was assassinated at an election meeting at Sriperumbudur near Madras on May 21. A galaxy of Indian leaders and top ranking foreign dignitaries were present. The atmosphere was both solemn and poignant.

Shortly before 5 p.m. the gun carriage carrying the body pulled in at Shakti Sthal. A helicopter pattered overhead showering flower petals on the gathering. The body, wrapped in the national tricolour, was then eased from the gun carriage and brought to the platform by the three service chiefs. As the body was placed on the side of the pyre, passions ran wild. The crowds in the enclosure surged forward

and burst into cries of 'Rajiv Gandhi amar rahe'.

Last rites

Soon after, the body, with the head facing north, was placed on the pyre and stripped of the national tricolour by the pall-bearers. As vedic hymns recited by the Arya Samaj Ved party, spilled from the microphones Rahul Gandhi began the last rites of his father. Other family members looked on. Those on the platform included Mrs. Sonia Gandhi, Ms. Priyanka, Mr. Amitabh Bachchan, Mr. Gautam Kaul and other close family friends.

For young Rahul it was perhaps the most agonising moment. Clad in a white kurta pyjama, he followed every instruction of the Acharya to the minutest detail, in keeping with the solemnity of the occasion. With the sacred thread across his shoulders he went round the body pouring water from an earthen pot before breaking it on the ground.

The 'kriya karam' was performed in accordance with the vedic traditions. It was a touching sight as Rahul and Priyanka picked up sandalwood logs and placed them over the body. In between Priyanka put her arms across

her mother's shoulder and consoled her. All appeared composed as they took turns to place logs and pieces of sandalwood on the body. In all one quintal of sandalwood and nine quintals of ordinary wood, besides 20 kg of ghee and 50 kg of other ingredients were used to light the pyre.

Foreign dignitaries

The President, Mr. R. Venkataraman, and his wife Janaki Venkataraman, the Vice-President, Dr. Shankar Dayal Sharma and his wife and the Prime Minister, Mr. Chandra Shekhar, besides former President, Mr. Neelam Sanjiva Reddy and Giani Zail Singh, and a host of other leaders arrived at Shakti Sthal well in advance. A large number of foreign dignitaries, representing as many as 45 countries, placed wreaths on the side of the platform.

Prominent among them were: Prince Charles, Mr. Yasser Arafat, Mr. Nawaz Sherif, Mr. Edward Heath and Ms. Benazir Bhutto. Many of them were heading the delegation of their respective countries and had specially flown in to attend the cremation.

Soon after reaching Shakti Sthal, the Prime Minister, Mr. Chandra Shekhar, accompanied by the Union

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THE GORY END

Reported by
V. Jayanth
M. Prakash
T.S. Subramanian

INDIRA GANDHI was devoured by the never-ending Punjab crisis which turned malignant some time in the 1980s; her tragic end, which came on October 31, 1984 at the treacherous hands of her armed bodyguards, showed that she stood no chance whatsoever against the furious forces of fundamentalist enmity and hatred and fanatical, extremist determination which had been unleashed, partly by a deeply flawed Punjab policy.

In much the same sense, her son and successor, 47-year-old Rajiv Gandhi – who hoped to win back the Prime Ministership he had lost in November 1989 and campaigned for it freely, heedless of security barriers or warnings – was devoured by Sri Lanka's ethnic crisis into which India had been drawn involuntarily in 1983 and which, in turn, had been affected by India's activist and deeply flawed policy.

While Indira Gandhi clearly apprehended that there were powerful forces determined to kill her, Rajiv, by all accounts, was laid-back or perhaps even philosophical – he did not seem to bother at all about the danger, or lose any sleep over it. Else, there can be no explanation for what happened on the night of Tuesday, May 21, in Sriperumbudur. According to the latest intelligence, it could easily have happened elsewhere on the campaign trail – had the assassin failed to strike near Madras. Both the factional disarray and the state of the Congress party organisation, and the confusion and ambiguity which marked the design of the official security arrangements, made it extremely unlikely that Rajiv could have been successfully protected against this type of suicide mission assassination plan, which seemed to have an awesome element of 'over-kill' built into it.

Rajiv fell victim – in a crime of unimaginable brutality, enormity, dare-devilry and cool expertise in execution, which shook the world – to the inability of two neighbouring societies



to find a peaceful and reasonable solution to the ethnic conflict, which has meant an unending civil war in the north-east of the island. This much is established by all that is known about the grisly assassination carried out in Sriperumbudur by the 'belt-bomb woman' and the investigation into it.

The Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) and State police investigations have obtained vital evidence on *how* the assassination was carried out, its *modus operandi* and the agent or agents who executed it for a resourceful organisation. Two photographs of the woman alive, moments before the assassination (from a frame of colour pictures taken by a photographer who died in the explosion); other clues concerning her movements and associations before the crime; information available on a youngish man in white kurta-pyjamas who reportedly made use of the professional services of a young photographer, made an effortlessly easy entry into the enclosure, had the advantage of mobility and whom the police are looking for; and various other bits and pieces of information, including claimed intelligence about a larger squad of killers who were stalking Rajiv, leave little doubt about the highly sophisticated, highly resourceful, semi-military character of the crime.

In other words, nobody seems to have any doubt that the Sriperumbudur assassination and massacre are the work of Sri Lankan militant hands, waists and minds. Top on the list of real suspects (following some initial confusion and disarray in the investigation) is the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE). Also under ex-

At Sriperumbudur on the fateful night, the suspected assassin, garland in hand, stands flanked by Kokila and Latha Kannan; seconds before the blast, as the suspected assassin, flowers in her hair, waits for her chance.

amination are theories and speculation suggesting that someone in the Sri Lankan official establishment could be involved and that the assassination was executed merely through the agency of some Sri Lankan Tamil militants; or that some other 'foreign hand' is involved; or that there might have been individually-conceived 'revenge' motives or fringe element plots. A week after the assassination, the CBI investigators and intelligence assessments had virtually ruled out the hand of pro-Khalistan extremists (in this kind of terrain and given this mode of killing) and the involvement of far-out, fringe or 'drop-out' elements.

The *needle of suspicion* – to recall a tragic phrase culled from a controversial inquiry into the assassination of Rajiv's mother – has magnetically swung towards the Tigers, who have vehemently denied any involvement (from London and elsewhere). What is quite clear a week after the crime is that *specific evidence linking the crime and its agents with the organisation most suspected has not been obtained* – not withstanding the claims made by Subramaniam Swamy & Co. But the investigators were hopeful of making a breakthrough, despite some indications that there were lacunae, gaps and tardiness in the investigative efforts featuring the State police as some kind of junior partner of the CBI

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— the central agency which has been given the responsibility.

Agonisingly, democratic India is also attempting to come to terms with the irrefutable information available on an intriguing development of some political and policy significance. On March 5, 1991, starting 4.30 p.m., Rajiv Gandhi held a one-to-one meeting of approximately 45 minutes with an authorised LTTE representative in his home in New Delhi; and a second meeting with an LTTE sympathiser who came from London on behalf 'of the Sri Lankan Tamils'. The news of the first meeting was reported by *The Hindu*, on its front page, on May 25. After an incredible denial by Pranab Mukherjee, the Congress(I) spokesman, the story has been completely confirmed. The meetings went well, according to information available from both sides. This intriguing development is a matter of obvious interest to the investigation as it seeks to unearth the suspected killers' motives and political background.

Prof. P. Chandrasekharan, Director of the Tamil Nadu Forensic Sciences Department, is a highly respected scientist, one of the solid pillars of the investigation. For his initial accessibility and good natured courtesy to the press, he has been harassed and warned by the State Government and illiberal sections of the bureaucracy. He said the woman waiting to garland the former Prime Minister could have bent forward as if to touch his feet and could have activated the timer, triggering the explosion.

The explosives were probably tied to her back, going by the complete disfiguring of Rajiv Gandhi's face and the extensive damage caused to the back of the woman's head. That the back of Rajiv Gandhi's head and the face of the woman were not damaged beyond recognition also confirms this theory or reconstruction.

Prof. Chandrasekharan said the abdominal belt had sticking to it shreds of the orange-and-green *salwar kameez* which the woman wore. Some pieces were also found near the body. The build and other physical characteristics, hinted strongly that the woman was a Sri Lankan Tamil, although this obviously needed to be confirmed. While all the other bodies had been mutilated or charred, the woman's face and legs were intact though the trunk had been torn apart.

Prof. Chandrasekharan said experts were examining the teeth and hair of the woman to determine, if possible, her nationality or origins. Anthropological tests are expected to throw more light on the racial or ethnic type. Some experts in DNA-testing have also arrived to check her post-mortem examination report.



This man appears in the photograph recovered by the police from the scene of the crime. In the full frame he stands beside Latha Kannan, the 'belt-bomb woman' and Kokila. His picture was originally withheld for investigative reasons. The CBI is looking for him.

The 8 cm wide, 65 cm long belt with steel ribs, worn by the 'live bomb', resembles the ones used by patients suffering from back pain. At least three steel ribs had been removed and the chambers stuffed with explosives. The experts have also collected from the scene a switch, a time-delay device, parts of detonators, some wire and a foreign-made 9 volts battery with two switches. The woman probably wore a vest jacket to keep the explosive intact for detonation. She probably used her right hand to switch on the explosion.

According to the experts, the explosive was similar to that used by military authorities. Known as C1, C2 and C3 combination, its major constituent is RDX (cyclotrimethylenetrinitramine). The assassin employed the 'Claymore effect' to inflict maximum damage. This was done by fixing hundreds of 2 mm spherical pellets of uniform size in the explosive packed round the waist; some were recovered from the scene and many were found on Rajiv Gandhi's body.

The plastic explosive is highly malleable and can be easily placed in the belt. It cannot be traced by conventional metal detectors. The blast in Sriperumbudur was nowhere as powerful as the military-style explosion that blew up Sri Lanka's Minister

of State for Defence, Ranjan Wijeratne, in Colombo on March 2 this year. But it was so powerful, a body was found on top of the pandal over the dais while parts of some bodies were found quite some distance away from the scene.

The forensic team has ruled out the possibility of a remote-controlled device like the one speculated about in connection with the assassination of Wijeratne (that devastating explosion in Colombo ruled out any chance, let alone of survival, of identifying the remains). If a remote-controlled device had been used to detonate an explosive planted at the site, the legs of all the victims would have been blown to bits. Ruling out also the possibility of a bomb in a garland or a flower basket, the experts said in that case the bomb would have left a crater.

Ten hours after the blast, one could see at the spot a bizarre reminder — a basket with jasmynes. These were intact as also was most of the red carpet. This further supports the belt bomb theory.

Prof. Chandrasekharan said that in his 30-year experience in forensic science, he had not come across such precision work. 'This is the first time I am seeing a belt bomb although we have seen letter and transistor bombs used by militants in India and elsewhere', he observed. 'The finesse with which the explosive was stitched into the denim belt proves the involvement of professionals'.

It is not known whether the suspected Sri Lankan Tamil woman came to the spot by herself or with someone else. A picture shows her comfortably placed between Latha Kannan and Kokila, both belonging to the Congress(I) fold in Arakonam. The 'eye-witness' accounts of how the 'belt bomb woman' managed to sneak into the line of party workers — supposedly cleared with security in advance — and how the kurta-pyjama man 'penetrated' the enclosure, vary.

K. Sulaiman, a party worker from Sriperumbudur, identifying the woman with the help of the published picture, told the press she was seen at the spot some five hours before the arrival of the VVIP. He said she came in a 'light blue Ambassador car' along with a 16-year-old girl described as 'good-looking'. 'When questioned, the other girl said something in English and when I told her I could not follow the language, she switched to chaste Tamil much different from the one spoken by the people in this region. She sought permission to garland Rajiv Gandhi. When asked where they were coming from, the girl said Kanchipuram'. This is Sulaiman's account.

The quality and reliability, of the various eye-witness accounts and recollections will be subject to a rigorous

test eventually – if the case comes up for effective prosecution. At this stage, they have provided helpful clues and supplementary information, but *they have not been able to throw light on the next link in the chain.*

Rajiv Gandhi landed at the old Madras airport at 8.26 p.m. on that fateful day and in less than two hours he lay faceless and heart-rendingly mangled near a stage in the temple town where he was supposed to address an 'unnecessary' election meeting. Apparently, the highly factionalised State party organisation bossed over by Vazhapadi Ramamurthy and affected by the manoeuvres and confused plans of individual bigwigs was in two, or several, minds about the necessity of the Sriperumbudur meeting on a site concerning which security officials had expressed their objections. Nevertheless, Rajiv Gandhi felt morally obliged to campaign for a balanced short list of party candidates, beginning with a veteran, Maragatham Chandrasekhar, who rose to some political prominence from a Scheduled Caste background.

What a dramatic, awful transformation it was in just 120 minutes, or even in those few minutes after he reached the venue of the meeting in a convoy! Rajiv Gandhi, hopeful of returning to power within the next 10 days or so, was in high spirits and noticeably relaxed. He was free with the people all night through his drive of over 40 km. from Madras.

And this new style, the desire to get back to the people brushing aside security measures, was what everyone talked about endlessly. This new approach was daily and obsessively reported in the national press and, indeed, in his last interviews and exchanges with the press, Rajiv was pointedly asked about this style and the risks involved. The trust he placed in the people who surged and pushed forward to meet and greet him did not just turn out to be fatal; it seemed, in retrospect, to give him no chance, this time or the next, against this kind of assassination plan.

The pictures, published first in *The Hindu*, reproduced and shown all over the world and published in revealing colour, tell the story far more powerfully than any words or analysis can. A youngish woman, estimated to be in her thirties and tentatively identified as a Sri Lankan Tamil, waits to garland Rajiv (with a sandalwood garland) as she stands between 15-year-old Kokila, and her 35-year-old step-mother, Latha Kannan – a Congress(I) worker from Arakonam who was keen on her daughter reading a poem to Rajiv Gandhi in his praise. The unidentified woman looks cool and credible in her heavy, 'garish' make-up; she looks so different from the rest that it might have been assumed, psychologically,

that she was cleared by someone in the Rajiv entourage, or by the organisers. The man whose picture has been circulated round the world through Interpol and Indian missions also stands out from the rest in his white kurta-and-pyjama, but the point is that he is yet to be traced or accounted for.

Kokila, the young, talented girl to the left of the 'belt-bomb woman' and Latha, her step-mother, are believed to be innocent victims. Certainly, they did not know about the 'belt-bomb' or the assassination plan. Whether they knew the 'belt-bomb woman', rendered any kind of unwitting help to her or were used by her in some way, is under CBI and police investigation. But it is also suspected that the dead photographer, Haribabu, whose camera recovered by the State police gave us this dramatic pre-assassination evidence, was used by the mysterious man.

Circumstantial evidence aside, an experienced journalist based in Madras has provided information to the investigators that the photographer introduced the kurta-and-pyjama youngish man to him; the man, who did not utter a word, is believed to have attached himself to the photographer and this gave him mobility inside the enclosure, since both would have passed as part of the press, allowed freely (by the nature of the arrangement) to cover this meeting. The photographer who died did not know what was in store – that much seems clear.

The final moments of Rajiv Gandhi are recorded in a rare picture, also taken by Haribabu (whose frame of nine colour pictures, not all released, includes a shot of a part of the explosion). This photograph, of dramatic human interest, was also first published by *The Hindu*.

In this picture, Rajiv Gandhi is greeted enthusiastically by Kokila, whose double plait is clearly recognisable from the back; he affectionately places his left hand on her shoulder and accepts her poetic tribute. There are others (including security personnel) crowded round him in the photograph, which reveals that the line within the enclosure broke. But behind the young girl stands the 'belt-bomb woman', with flowers in her hair.

Moments later came her turn to greet Rajiv Gandhi – with her garland and her humble gesture of bending low before him and apparently falling at his feet. This we know, not from any picture, but from varying or confused eye-witness accounts and attempted reconstructions of what happened.

Here is where the forensic evidence comes in decisively. The investigators have pretty much pieced together what obviously happened at the moment of assassination. The woman, bending low, blew herself up and directed the force of the blow at Rajiv's

unguarded face like a missile. In one of the most grisly assassinations recorded by contemporary history, Rajiv Gandhi was scooped out from the front above the waist, but the shell of his back – including the back of his head – was relatively intact and recognisable, and so were his brand new walking shoes. Incredibly, the woman's head, severed from a body torn to pieces (which have been reassembled by the forensic experts), was hurled away from the scene of devastation and was recovered relatively intact. It is a vital item of evidence, but the question is: will the next link in the chain of the crime be discovered, since this is a case of self-destruction?

A notable feature of the investigation is the fact that all the items of evidence – including the vital photographs of the 'belt-bomb woman' and the others taken by the photographer who died – were not handed over to the CBI promptly by the State police authorities. In fact, the CBI investigators came to know of the sensational photograph of the woman, standing between Kokila and Latha Kannan, through its publication in the press. The CBI obtained prints of this, and other photographs taken by Haribabu, only on May 24; even a few days later, it had not succeeded in obtaining the original negatives, which would be vital evidence in the investigation. Evidently, it was the well-known problem of jurisdiction, inter-force or inter-organisation rivalry over turf, that helps to explain this state of affairs.

Back to the scene of the assassination on the night of May 21, and on the run-up to it. It is ironic and touching that Rajiv Gandhi spoke at his last press conference at the Madras airport on poll violence, on his changed campaign style and on his party's confidence about returning to power in New Delhi. 'There is a difference between campaigning as Prime Minister and merely as a party president, I am now able to mix more freely with the people, that is all', he told journalists who asked him specifically about the sudden change in his approach.

And now for those final moments in his life:

It was 10.10 p.m. when the convoy stopped at a statue of his mother, Prime Minister Indira Gandhi, near the venue. Rajiv got down to garland the bronze statue. He spent about five minutes exchanging greetings with the people who were rushing to the meeting from the town on hearing the noise of the convoy's arrival. He then drove to the venue of the meeting.

His car stopped short of the red carpet which had been laid out from the stage. D. Pandian, the candidate for the North Madras Lok Sabha con-

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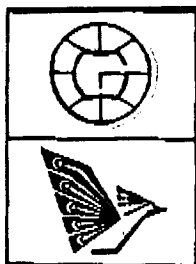
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A Question of Motive Was it the LTTE?

D.B.S. Jeyaraj

The popular leader of the most powerful political party in the world's largest democracy has been slain. A former Prime Minister who may possibly have been a premier in the future has been ruthlessly silenced in the prime of his life.

In the dock is the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE), the most powerful guerrilla organisation fighting for a separate state for the Tamils of Sri Lanka. Although the accusing finger has been pointed at the LTTE, there is no sign of any evidence at the time of writing that the Tigers are responsible for the demise of Rajiv Gandhi.

As far as the assassination is concerned, two of the three M's weigh the scale in favour of the argument that the LTTE is in fact responsible. *Motive* and *method* seem to bear all the hallmarks of an LTTE action. There is, however, a tremendous grey area in terms of *motive*.

The LTTE has built up a reputation for explosive innovations. Indigenous ordnance factories churn out formidable devices of destruction ranging from the giant-sized 'Paselan 2000' mortar to the pocket-sized 'Johnny' mine, both named in memory of Tiger leaders. The application of 'appropriate technology' into the combat arena is a distinct Tiger trait. The explosive device or devices strapped to the alleged killer's body appears to have been a simple, yet lethal contraption that has proved highly effective in achieving its objective. The encasing of highly lethal explosive in a simple device seems to have 'LTTE' written all over it. Yet the LTTE has no patent or copyright on this technology.

The charge against the LTTE gains more weight when it comes to *method*. The 'suicide killer' phenomenon has been, in recent times, essentially an LTTE mark in this part of the world. What the 'kamikaze' was to imperial Japan, the 'cyanide-capsule guerrilla' is to north-east Sri Lanka although the motivations in both cases are different. The ongoing conflict with the Colombo Government has also seen several instances of 'Panther' attacks. Many of these have been woman cadres.

Against this backdrop, the view that the woman suicide killer was an LTTE militant gains wide currency. Who but a 'Tigress' would have sufficient motivation to indulge in this type of self-destruction?

The counterpoint to that would be that some other individual or member of a particular group could have per-

formed this task. The fact that no other militant group or politically motivated individual has indulged in a 'human bomb act' does not rule out the prospect.

It is on the third point, namely *motive*, that more doubt occurs. Conventional wisdom, as portrayed in some sections of the media, holds the view that the killing was an act of vengeance. The signing of the Indo-Sri Lanka Agreement on July 29, 1987, from an LTTE perspective, was a betrayal of Tamil interests. The Indian Army action against the LTTE brought in its wake a trail of death, destruction and despair. The Western media has played up the woman suicide killer angle by drawing attention to the incidents of rape during the IPKF period, as documented by various human rights organisations. The image of wronged womanhood seeking revenge is temptingly melodramatic.

At the tailend of the IPKF presence, there were moves in Tamil expatriate circles to charge Rajiv Gandhi as a

election campaign period when Rajiv Gandhi was caretaker premier.

The decision to de-induct was a realistic move made by Rajiv Gandhi himself. It seems highly improbable that Rajiv would have deployed troops again to finish off the LTTE.

The second point is that of ignoring the 'political evolution' of the LTTE itself. Speaking of a revenge-killing by the LTTE smacks of a coloured view that the Tigers are ruled more by the heart than the head. That is a view which is not entirely true. The heart rules only in terms of the vision of Eelam, the separate state. The emotion-oriented motivation of self-sacrifice is there. However, the methods employed in many instances are deliberate and calculatively rational. The Tigers have acquired some degree of political sophistication that has adulterated their earlier puritanical rigidity. The 'pragmatism' displayed in initiating talks with the Premadasa Government as a necessary prerequisite for the departure of Indian troops is a case in point. Earlier, talking to the 'Sinhala enemy' would have been an impossibility. If the LTTE could have been pragmatic, or crassly opportunist in the eyes of its critics, it could have easily resumed

'If the LTTE's involvement is proved, the ultimate losers will be the beleaguered Tamil people. The Tamil cause may turn out to be a lost cause'.

'war criminal'. Later Rajiv Gandhi, along with Jayalalitha, was seen as a prime mover in the dislodging of Chief Minister M. Karunanidhi from the seat of power. Again, the reason cited was the alleged LTTE presence in Tamil Nadu. So, this viewpoint contends that the LTTE considered Rajiv Gandhi a mortal enemy who had to go. His elimination was regarded by the organisation as an act of 'necessity' not only for 'vengeance' but also to prevent his return to power. A new Congress government with Rajiv Gandhi at the helm would steer a strong course on foreign policy. Rajiv may even send troops to complete the half-finished task of 'destroying' the Tigers. So the Tigers indulged in a pre-emptive strike. In that case, the LTTE had the motive too for the killing.

The proponents of this view however fail to take into account two things. The first relates to the role of the IPKF. A contemporary myth is being propagated that it was V.P. Singh's Government that 'brought' the IPKF home. On the contrary it was the agreement of September 20, 1989 during Rajiv Gandhi's tenure of office that provided for the phased-out de-induction of the IPKF. The first batch of troops left Amparai district before the 1989 elections were announced. The next batch left during the hectic

talks with Rajiv Gandhi again. It seems unlikely that it would have followed a course of vendetta politics. A closer perception of the LTTE's recent politico-military approach would have revealed that the Tigers have only 'permanent interests' and neither 'permanent enemies' nor 'permanent friends'.

The recent campaign against the LTTE presence in Tamil Nadu conducted overtly by Jayalalitha and Ramamurthy had the tacit support of Rajiv Gandhi. Karunanidhi was branded as the patron of the Tigers. His government was dismissed on the pretext that he had 'failed' to maintain law and order, largely because of his alleged links with the LTTE.

Superficially the scenario is starkly clear with the DMK and the AIADMK-Congress combine having drawn lines on the LTTE issue. There is more to it, however, than meets the eye.

Contrary to popular belief, DMK-LTTE ties have never been particularly strong. When LTTE supremo Velupillai Prabhakaran was the blue-eyed boy of former Tamil Nadu Chief Minister, M.G. Ramachandran, the Tigers spurned Karunanidhi's offer of Rs. 50,000. The Tigers released a statement praising MGR to the skies and criticising 'opportunist politicians'.

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Karunanidhi was perturbed over the decimation of the TELO by the LTTE. When Sri Lankan military operations were at their highest, Karunanidhi showed a marked reluctance to speak out vociferously.

The turning point came when the IPKF engaged in combat with the LTTE and MGR passed away. Karunanidhi and the LTTE drew close. The DMK chief spoke about Tamil Eelam before the January 1989 Assembly elections. But upon becoming Chief Minister, he displayed a marked restraint and was avowedly keen to avoid confrontation with the Centre headed by Rajiv Gandhi. He even curbed the activities of V. Gopalaswamy the Rajya Sabha member close to the LTTE. He could not persuade the National Front Government to forge a new approach to the Tamil question. In the LTTE perception, Chief Minister Karunanidhi failed to assert himself positively in favour of the Tigers.

On the other hand, the LTTE has also realised that its earlier reliance on the Tamil Nadu factor has failed to pay dividends as far as New Delhi was concerned. The domestic factor has not been powerful enough to influence the foreign-policy imperatives of New Delhi. Realisation has dawned that while Tamil Nadu played a positive role once, it has now lost its utilitarian value. Any further progress the LTTE hopes for can be brought about only at the New Delhi level.

So while the general impression has been that of a Rajiv Gandhi hostile to the LTTE, the Tigers have, in turn, opened their channel of communication with him. Two emissaries from the LTTE have, in recent times, met with Rajiv Gandhi.

One is the well-known Tamil poet Kasi Anandan who is also the propaganda secretary of the LTTE. Kasi Anandan's meeting with Rajiv Gandhi was reportedly cordial. Although no promises were made, Rajiv Gandhi had apparently agreed to 'let bygones be bygones'.

The second emissary was the London-based Tamil professional, Dr. Arjuna Sittampalam. He met Rajiv Gandhi with the blessings of the LTTE's international secretary-general, the former Jaffna military commander Sathasivam Krishnakumar alias Kittu. This meeting too was 'fruitful'. The LTTE seemed to gain the impression that although the election campaign would be conducted overtly on different lines, Rajiv's return to power would be beneficial to them. Kittu's statements saying the LTTE desired India's involvement is attributed to the success scored in talks with Rajiv. Kittu himself told *Frontline* that the discussion with Rajiv was a great step forward.

So the scene seemed set for a fresh approach to the whole issue if and when Rajiv Gandhi came to power. It looked as if the LTTE was also prepared to do business with Rajiv Gandhi. He was the strongest Prime Ministerial contender on foreign policy. Besides, he also had a firm commitment towards the realisation of Tamil aspirations. The problem between Rajiv Gandhi and the LTTE seemed solved. Also, in practical terms the LTTE was the only dominant force. Ground realities deemed it necessary that New Delhi do business with the LTTE. Former TULF parliamentarian, Dr. Neelan Tiruchelvam, who has extensive contacts with South Block, told *Frontline* that the Indian officials were veering around to the point of view that the LTTE had to be accommodated in any possible course of new action. The election of a strong government with a Prime Minister concerned with foreign policy would have given impetus to it.

It is because of these factors that the theory ascribing motive to the LTTE seems confused. The recent developments, particularly the covert meetings between LTTE emissaries and Rajiv Gandhi, seems to suggest that the Tigers had more to gain if Rajiv came to power, thereby implying a lack of motive for the killing. Likewise, the Premadasa Government and some Tamil militant groups had a greater motive in eliminating Rajiv. The method of execution, that is the 'human bomb' factor, waters this down considerably as these agents seem highly unlikely to acquire the motivation necessary for a suicide killing. If the LTTE was indeed responsible, why did it literally and metaphorically blow up a pretty good situation?

From another perspective it may be possible that the LTTE did in fact assassinate Rajiv Gandhi despite its official denials. LTTE critics who express this view are sceptical of the talks with Rajiv Gandhi. 'The talks may have been a ploy. The real intention all along would have been assassination', is one view. Others hold that the talks may have projected wrong signals to the LTTE leadership. Another view is that the LTTE was fearful of a 'volte-face' by Rajiv despite his assurances and so struck in a pre-emptive exercise. One view is that while LTTE leaders like Kittu may have been genuinely attempting to forge a new relationship, the LTTE hierarchy in Jaffna may have had its own deadly, hidden agenda.

Some observers of the Sri Lankan scene suggest a sinister possibility namely the Amirthalingam-Yogeswaran syndrome. Apparently an LTTE cadre 'Sivakumar' had come to Colombo in late 1987 stating that he had quit the movement. After building up great rapport over several months

with the TULF leaders, he had hatched the plot to assassinate them. The LTTE had by then started talks with Premadasa. Sivakumar, according to these sources, did not maintain any contact with the LTTE leadership and had acted on his own. He had set his own time and pace to achieve his goal. This theory holds that a similar operation may have been launched earlier to assassinate Rajiv Gandhi. The 'agent' nominated for this task would not have had any contact with the LTTE leaders. That agent would not have been affected by the new rapport between the LTTE and Rajiv. So that agent accomplished his or her task at the appropriate juncture.

Speculative theories may abound for quite some time. Only a speedy and efficient investigation would elicit the truth. The full truth may prove LTTE guilt; it may exonerate the LTTE. A lot of people may look foolish if that happens. If, on the other hand, the LTTE's involvement is proved beyond doubt, the ultimate losers will be the beleaguered Tamil people. The Tamil cause may turn out to be a lost cause.

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stituency, was with him. They walked down the carpet towards a line of women and men who were waiting to garland him or place shawls around him. These people had reportedly been checked and cleared by the security machinery at the venue.

The weaknesses in security have been widely discussed; the failure of intelligence from the keypoint agencies is equally glaring. The J.S. Verma commission of inquiry will no doubt probe this.

As Rajiv was accepting the garlands and the shawls, there were cracker bursts at the far end of what was once a lake - and then, a loud noise near the stage. Some of the journalists accompanying the politician initially took it for another of those fireworks. Some reported seeing a tongue of flame going up and then a column of smoke.

One of the pictures published in the press shows Moopanar putting his hand under Rajiv's face to turn him over, only to discover that there was no face left. It was left to the Inspector-General of Police, R.K. Raghavan, to turn the body over as others reached the scene. The journalists who were there discovered to their horror and disbelief that the face was just a hollow, the chest had been consumed by the explosive, and the intestines had been thrown out. Rajiv's front had been scooped out waist above, leaving the shell from behind.

A brief, but highly notable chapter in India's political history had been brought to a heart-rendingly mangled, ghastly end.

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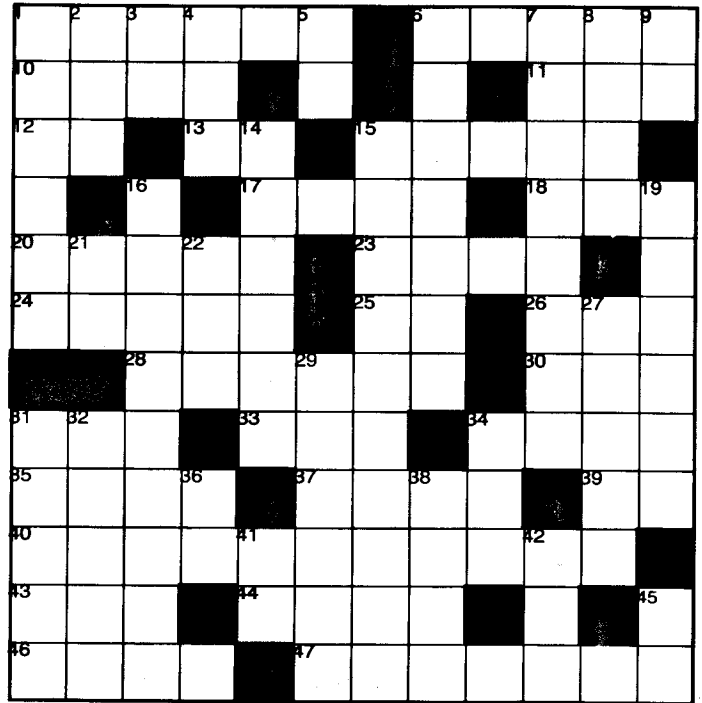
All entries should be sent to: Tamil Times, P.O. Box 121, Sutton, Surrey SM1 3TD, UK.

Across.

1. Preserver in the Hindu triad (6)
6. Armed with a flaming sword, he will ride a white steed (5)
10. God's little piece, truly blessed (4)
11. Alfred, affectionately (3)
12. Indicates the subject in consideration (2)
13. With BS a healing professional (2)
15. Hurt pride (5)
17. In Javanese mythology, the tree that can kill (4)
18. Increase an engine's revolution (3)
20. The prayer that was 'granted' (5)
23. Mother of Zeus in Greek mythology (4)
24. View or feelings expressed (5)
25. When prefixed to ion is negatively charged (2)
26. Ground-based missile for air-targeted attack (3)
28. Saudi Arabian province (2,4)
30. Force committed to a particular political action in Western Europe (3)
31. Indian unit of distance (3)
33. Sky god in Babylonian mythology (3)
34. Mental suffering can be a careful effort too (4)
35. — and Thummim, worship ornaments of a High Priest (4)
37. Loyal and faithful (4)
39. Chemical symbol for calcium (2)
40. The avatar of the perfect hero (11)
43. Master of surgery (3)
44. When prefixed to god is partly divine (4)
46. Usually but not always, a Sri Lankan maid (4)
47. Hindu saviour in his marine life form (7)

Down:

1. The divine boar, another Vishnu avatar (6)
2. Natural to the tundra regions (3)
3. Short senior (2)
4. Restrict movement (3)
5. World body committed to peace and development (2)
6. The Divine Shepherd (7)
7. Vast continental area that broke to form North America, Greenland, Europe and most of Asia (8)
8. Paul the Swiss painter (4)
9. Kipling's great thoughts rendered in verse (2)
14. Was he the 9th avatar of Vishnu (6)
15. Rama with the axe, a saviour's concern expressed in this earthly form (10)
16. Incarnation in lion-man form (9)
19. Heavenly being short of stature (6)
21. Twin of Pacific's Gilbert Island, abb. (2)
22. Religion briefly (3)
27. Chilean port and an outlet for Bolivian and Peruvian trade (5)
29. Scripture-based choral composition (6)
31. Vishnu avatar in the tortoise form (5)
32. Capacity to express oneself (5)
34. Prefixed to ant, a person concerned with insignificant detail (3)
36. Mother dear (2)
38. A part of a complete whole (4)
41. A recent product in magnetised recording (2)
42. Narrow inlet of a sea coast (3)
45. Daddy darling (2)



Quiz Crosswords – 3: Solutions.

Across: 1. Navajeevanam. 12. Anacondas. 13. Va. 14. Isle. 15. Ait. 16. Dev. 17. Nee. 18. MCC. 19. Toni. 20. AR. 21. Puttur. 22. Gd. 23. Tiger. 25. Aped. 27. Ine. 28. UA. 30. Sutra. 31. Ven. 32. Groom. 33. Edam. 35. Madhu. 38. Gran. 39. Rasher. 40. UNA. 41. DNA. 43. Ara. 45. Puliyanakulam.

Down: 1. Nainativu. 2. Anserine. 3. Vale. 4. Ace. 5. Jo. 6. Enact. 7. Edicts. 8. VAT. 9. As. 10. Avenger. 11. Maviddapuram. 16. Do. 18. Murugandy. 19. Traumas. 21. PE. 24. General. 26. PT. 29. Arm. 30. Soma. 34. DA. 36. Dhal. 37. Hera. 38. Gnu. 39. Ran. 40. UP. 42. Na.

Winner: Miss S. Jeyanthi, 2/15 Oakes Avenue, Clayton South, Victoria 3169, Australia.

'Male Plotters' Released

All 33 PLOTE members involved in the abortive coup against the Maldivian government in 1988 have been released on a special directive by the Defence Ministry in Colombo and they are now in battle against the LTTE in Vavuniya, a senior Defence official said.

Thirty-three PLOTE rebels had been handed over to the Lankan government in December last year following representations made by Colombo. The PLOTE members were serving sentences ranging from 11 years to 36 years in the Maldives at the time they were released to the Sri Lankan Government.

According to Defence officials the PLOTE prisoners who were kept at the Mahara prison for five months were released on a special directive from the Defence Ministry.

According to senior prison officials who confirmed the release, the 33 men had been set free in batches after signing a special bond.

Leaders of the Democratic People's Liberation Front (DPLF), political wing of the PLOTE declined to comment on the release or the present role of the 33 suspects.

However, officials of the party said they had been negotiating with the Sri Lankan Defence officials about their release.

Meanwhile, Defence sources said the PLOTE leaders were now planning to negotiate with the government to secure the release of the remaining 35 Tamil rebels who were convicted on similar charges and are still being held in the Maldives.

When the 33 PLOTE members were handed over to the Sri Lankan authorities, the government said it would be taking legal action against them.

Attorney-General Sunil de Silva, at that time pointed out that legal action could be taken against persons committing offences, which were a threat to Sri Lanka, even if the offences were committed in another country.

Prison sources said the 33 prisoners were well looked after. They said the prisoners complained of being assaulted in the Maldives.

PLOTE members, in November 1988, attempted to overthrow the government of President Abdul Gayoom acting as mercenaries but the attempt was thwarted with the assistance of India.

Continued from page 7

the ownership patterns of existing publications, and generally by a wide variety of regulatory powers, make the expression of opinions unfavourable to the government a hazardous occupation.

The Bill is modelled on the recommendations of the Second Press Commission in India, which were successfully resisted by the Indian Press.

The Sri Lankan Government needs to be reminded that the press does not create a crisis, it merely reports it. The IPI supports the Press in Sri Lanka in its struggle against the Bill and calls upon the government to abandon it altogether.



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Minister Thondaman Offers to Mediate

'NEGOTIATE TO END THIS SLAUGHTER'

(Cabinet Minister and President of the Ceylon Workers Congress, Mr. S. Thondaman was recently in New Delhi following the assassination of Rajiv Gandhi to attend his funeral. On his return to Colombo, in this exclusive interview with the Editor, Mr. Thondaman assesses the extent of the loss caused by Rajiv's death and expresses his frank views on the current conflict in Sri Lanka)

Q: Minister, you have just returned from New Delhi after attending Rajiv Gandhi's funeral. Can you assess the extent of his loss?

A: Rajiv Gandhi came into politics under tragic circumstances after the death of his brother and following the cruel assassination of his mother. At that time he was not that experienced in politics. He had served as Prime Minister, won elections, got defeated, served in the opposition and functioned as Opposition Leader, in the process, he had acquired a lot of experience and maturity. Had he lived, he would have turned out to be one of the greatest leaders India ever had. To that extent his loss to India is irreparable.

No one could have doubted his international standing. As far as India's international image is concerned, I do not think that there is any other leader in India today who can replace him. After Jawaharlal Nehru and Indira Gandhi, Rajiv was the best internationally known Indian leader. Even though he was in the opposition at the time of his death, he was better known and respected by world leaders.

As for Sri Lankan Tamils, he is one person who was so committed and had gone all the way to win for them what they regarded as their legitimate rights. Most of the previous leaders applied conventional and diplomatic caution in dealing with the problem facing the Tamils. But Rajiv went across such caution and was prepared to do all he could to help the Tamils. They have lost their greatest friend.

Sri Lanka as a whole and its people have lost an invaluable friend. Whatever others might have said about not involving in the 'internal affairs' of other countries, he had deep commitment to the interests of Sri Lanka as a whole. Taking account of India's and regional interests, he never wanted the island to be divided and was committed to its territorial integrity.

All round, everyone has lost by his untimely death - India and its people, Sri Lankan Tamils, the government and people of Sri Lanka and the world.

Q: What will be the impact of Rajiv Gandhi's death on Indian elections?

A: Normally one would expect a sympathetic wave to emerge in support of Congress(I) of which he was

leader. His wife, Sonia, has declined to accept the leadership. A leader has to be elected without delay. If that happens, Congress(I) would benefit from the sympathy factor. If there is delay or bickering about the leadership, that factor may soon evaporate.

Q: So far the Congress has failed to produce a successor and there appears to be some confusion.

A: True the Congress(I) should not drag their feet too long. But no one was prepared for this eventuality. Rajiv was a young man in his forties, and no



Mr. S. Thondaman

one would have ever thought of a replacement and most people would have expected him to be at the helm for years. One can understand the confusion and delay following an unexpected tragedy of this type.

Q: Would his death have an impact on the future of the Indo-Sri Lanka Agreement of July 1987?

A: Following this Agreement, the multi-ethnic and multi-cultural aspects of Sri Lanka have been accepted for the first time in the history of Sri Lanka. The positions set out in this Agreement have been accepted. There have been many previous agreements between government leaders and Tamil leaders which were of no avail. It is the Indo-Sri Lanka Agreement that has, in clear terms, accepted the principles of multi-ethnic and mul-

ti-cultural character of Sri Lanka, and Rajiv was very much committed to this concept. Now it is for those who are living to ensure to follow these principles and put them into practice.

Q: Both the chief architects of the Agreement are no longer in office - J.R. Jayawardena is not in office and Rajiv Gandhi is dead. There are some who cast doubts about the Agreement's future course.

A: Experience has shown that even when both were in office, there were difficulties in the implementation of the Accord as in the case of the many agreements entered into between previous governments and the Tamils. That was the case even in respect of matters concerning Tamils of Indian origin. What is important is that the main parties involved should ensure that the issues covered by the Agreement are fully implemented.

Q: Except 'Eelam', the President has said 'Ellam' (everything else) is on offer. In your view how far will the government go in meeting Tamil demands?

A: The President has expressed his feelings in the broadest possible terms. The people who are fighting for the Tamil people should seize the opportunity, negotiate and bargain to get the best terms for their people.

Q: Why has the government not put forward its own set of proposals which they are prepared to concede?

A: There is no point in putting forward proposals over and over again for discussion. Right from the days of the late S.W.R.D. Bandaranaike, proposals have been put forward and discussions have taken place with no solution. In fact the problems became worse. For the first time we have a President who has risen from the ranks of the common man and he means what he says and he will be prepared to carry out anything to which he agrees without fear of consequences. For example, in regard to the problem of citizenship and voting rights for the so-called stateless Tamils of Indian origin, even before his election as President I raised the matter with him and he asked me to give him a draft bill which we did. Had the government legal officers been asked to do this, it would have taken months or even years. The CWC got its own lawyers to draft the bill containing the provisions we wanted incorporated. Likewise, the President has now pub-

Continued on page 22

Continued from page 21

licly expressed his mind. Now it is for those who are speaking for the Tamil people to come down to earth and snatch the opportunity to present what they really want in concrete terms. If they want improvements in the Indo-Sri Lanka Agreement they must set them out and come forward to negotiate. Insisting on previously entrenched positions even before discussions will not be helpful.

Q: The LTTE being the main group which is engaged in fighting on behalf of the Tamil people, do you say that it should present its own proposals?

A: What I say is the LTTE must be prepared to discuss. Once they are prepared to discuss, what proposals and when and how they are to be taken up for discussion are matters for the LTTE and government. Both parties, by now, must agree that neither is going to be victors in this war. Even in the context of World War One or Two, the warring parties entered into an armistice. Both parties must give up the idea of winning the war and bring an end to the slaughter that is taking place. If there is agreement to negotiate, both parties could sit together submitting each others' proposals for discussion.

Q: The fact is that the government and the LTTE were negotiating for fourteen months and it ended up in this war.

A: Both parties should share the blame for allowing chance to slip in this way. Had both parties been sincere and serious, this situation would not have developed.

Q: In your opinion, Minister, what is the kind of constitutional framework which would solve the ethnic problem?

Q: What is suitable is what will satisfy both parties. Demands can be made and if it is found reasonable and possible of implementation, the government must concede them. The parties should approach the problem in a practical way. If politicians can acquire the ease with which a 'thosai' (pancake) making woman does her job, they will be successful. If the woman attempts to remove the 'thosai' from the pan before it is ready, it will break into pieces or be half-baked and unpalatable, if she allows the 'thosai' more time than is necessary, then it will be over-baked and become uneatable. The common 'thosai' making woman invariably gets her timing correct by sheer experience. In politics too, timing is the essence of success.

Q: More than any time in the past, tens of thousands of Tamils presently have taken refuge and are living in South Sri Lanka having left the North and East. What will be their fate if there is a repeat of the anti-Tamil violence as in July 1983?

First of all Tamils must have self-

confidence and self-reliance. If they keep on thinking that there is going to be another bout of violence, it will happen. If the Tamils are determined to defend themselves and others know about such determination, violence can be averted. They should give up the idea of running at the first sign of any disturbance. Human beings are going to die one day. Why not face the situation and defend yourself and if it means death, so be it. People must give up the idea of running from place to place to avoid being attacked. But if the Tamils develop a frame of mind to be ready to defend themselves, a repeat of July 1983 can be averted. The other important factor is that many people including those in government have learnt a lot from the adverse consequences for the country following the July 1983 violence. The government and the President will not permit such violence to erupt again.

Q: As you know, there are over 150,000 Sri Lankan Tamils in Tamil Nadu. After the assassination of Rajiv Gandhi, there are calls for all of them to be expelled from Tamil Nadu. What is your reaction to this call?

A: I always held the view that the Tamils of Sri Lanka should never have been encouraged to go to India. I know some politicians encouraged many of them to go there for their own political

reasons. At the beginning there was a degree of organised encouragement for Sri Lanka Tamils to go there to get India involved in the Tamil problem. Now that they are there and politicians have promised safe refuge, it is grossly unfair for them to be forcibly expelled in the present circumstances. But the Tamils must realise that they cannot and should not live for all time as refugees in other countries. They should live here and stand up for their rights.

Q: Although you are a Minister and therefore part of the government, there is a view that you would be the best person to act as a mediator to bring the government and the LTTE to the negotiating table. Are you prepared to assume such a role?

A: Given the opportunity, I am ever ready to play any role, including that of a mediator, to bring peace. I am ready to offer my services provided both parties have confidence in me. As for the government and the President, there is no doubt about their confidence in me. I have already spoken to the President and he is fully aware of my views. It is up to the LTTE and those speaking on behalf of the Tamils to decide whether I can be of any service. I will only be too glad to offer my services to bring back peace and harmony. 

Continued from page 12

Home Minister, went to the enclosure and surveyed the security arrangements. The entry was strictly regulated and was by 'pass' only. The general public were allowed in from a different entrance and held back by barricades. A human wall of Army, Naval and Air Force personnel could be seen behind the enclosures set up around the platform.

A little before the arrival of the body, Mr. P.V. Narasimha Rao, Mr. K. Karunakaran, Mr. Arjun Singh and Mr. Gulam Nabi Azad walked up to the platform and soon moved to their enclosure. Till then the charge of the platform was with the Acharyas who could be seen giving the final touches to the funeral arrangements.

Commotion

There was a commotion as the body arrived. Everyone stood up to catch a glimpse of the departed leader. Swiftly, it was taken to the platform, marking the beginning of the ceremony which took just half an hour. The vedic mantra continued to be recited uninterruptedly.

As the body was engulfed in flames, large numbers of people broke down and wept uncontrollably. Tears could be seen rolling down the cheeks of a large number of men, women and

children. Others raised full throated slogans like *Jab tak suraj chand rahega, Rajiv tera nan rahega and Sonia Gandhi mat ghabarana thumhare picha saara zamana*.

Earlier, the gun carriage carrying the body reached the Shakti Sthal at 4.50 p.m. almost an hour-and-a-half behind schedule. The crowds which had crammed Shakti Sthal to capacity waited in a pensive mood showing infinite patience. Many could be seen perched on tree tops. Those who had captured vantage points were in no mood to move. And in between they kept raising slogans.

After the ceremony was over the President the Vice-President and the Prime Minister and some other dignitaries moved towards the platform to console the family members. As the VIPs left, the lesser leaders clambered on to the platform to pay their last respects.

In the afternoon the procession started from Teen Murti House where the body had been kept in state, since its arrival in Delhi on Wednesday morning. It followed the scheduled route covering Rajpath, Connaught Place, Barakhama Road, Bahadurshah Zafar Marg, Delhi Gate and Rajghat before converging on Shakti Sthal. All along the route large crowds waited to catch one last glimpse of their leader. 

TRAGEDY STRIKES A NATION IN POLITICAL TURMOIL

Richards Karunairajan

RAJIV Gandhi, very early in life, preferred to leave politics to his younger brother, Sanjay. He was not the heir apparent to Jawarhalal Nehru's political legacy but two tragedies rocketed him to the leadership of the second most populous state in the world.

When Sanjay Gandhi died in a plane crash, Rajiv's immediate concern was for his mother. It was to him, his mother looked for comfort and support and to Rajiv this also meant a commitment to serve the country's leader, Mother Indira. It was within the parameters of this sentiment he reluctantly entered the tough confusing and indeed dangerous world of Indian politics.

But seven years ago, when Mrs. Gandhi was betrayed and fatally struck by the bullets of her Sikh bodyguards, Rajiv Gandhi had to adorn the cloak of the country's leadership and take over the reins of power.

This time the commitment for him was to serve Mother India.

Tolerant by nature and known for his great sense of fair play, he was immediately perceived as a fresh new hope for the country. In the general elections that followed, even though the sympathy vote played a major role, Gandhi's reputation as an extremely honest and straight guy, helped the Congress (I) to a massive victory. With Rajiv Gandhi at the helm, it was expected, with great confidence, that India would become a major industrialised power and assume regional leadership in the Southern Hemisphere as well.

But Rajiv's problems began even before his dear mother was cremated. In the wake of her assassination, Indian emotional volatility went berserk and thousands of innocent Sikhs were slaughtered. Among the victims were hundreds of children and frail and helpless elderly. The killings were not confined to Delhi alone.

Rajiv Gandhi was blamed for not taking immediate measures to check and control the violence. It was also known that a number of killings were egged on by senior Congress Party workers but the Congress government under Rajiv Gandhi conveniently ignored the issue. The men guilty of dastardly crimes against innocents were never brought to justice.

The Sikh community never forgave him.

The Tamils of Sri Lanka embroiled in the country's communal conflict

looked up to Mrs. Indira Gandhi as the most likely saviour of the community. Her death shattered every Tamil heart and the grief among them was total. When the Indian Air Force planes on the orders of Rajiv Gandhi air-dropped in North Sri Lanka essentially needed food stuffs and medical goods in defiance of the Colombo government, Tamil hopes and expectations for a just solution to their problems received a tremendous boost.

Overnight Rajiv Gandhi became a hero and was acknowledged as a great son of a super mum. Soon afterwards, following the signing of the Indo-Sri Lanka Accord, 52,000 Indian troops with all kinds of military hardware and equipment, much to the consternation of the majority Sinhalese, descended on Sri Lanka to protect the Tamils.

At this time, quite by coincidence, the Sinhala anger and confusion became symbolic in the attack on Rajiv Gandhi by a Sinhala soldier while he was inspecting a guard of honour following the signing of the accord. The Tamils breathed a sigh of relief that no physical harm was done to the young leader on whom they placed all their hopes.

But what followed was a tragedy and soon Rajiv Gandhi's forces were fighting the very people they came to protect. It was an incredible turn of events caused largely by Rajiv Gandhi's immaturity, the wounding of his ego and the failure of his advisers and experts to grasp the deep seated factors of the Sri Lankan Tamil problem. It was, unfortunately viewed purely within the context of India's politics and its own unity.

The inevitable Indo-Tamil Tiger War that erupted with great ferocity led to massive loss of civilian lives and damage to property. Eventually the Indian expeditionary force had to pull out in utter humiliation. This was a major Gandhian failure and tragic too, because he could have forced Colombo to recognise the rights of the Tamil-speaking people on par with the majority Sinhalese.

Rajiv Gandhi began his prime ministership throwing out the Congress power brokers and other elements who underwrite corruption and malpractices. In their places, he injected new blood with the determination to clean up public life, modernise India and make it a great eastern power. He enjoyed tremendous goodwill and appeared to provide a bold, fearless and relentless leadership. He showed great enthusiasm to the Non-Aligned Movement and visualised India as a major power.

But Rajiv Gandhi could not sustain his drive long. The firmly entrenched Delhi power bases re-asserted their vicious hold, the technocrats and the ambitious reformist elements disappeared into thin air. It was soon evident that he was losing his grip on the country's reins and his image as Mr. Clean was becoming tainted.

The sacking of his Minister of Finance, Mr. V.P. Singh, marked a new low in his administration. The only cause for this dismissal appeared to be the minister's determination to probe deeply into corruption within the Congress Party. The Indian press also became wary of possible checks on it and took measures to indicate that the prime minister would be foolish to engage in such an adventure.

The Bofors scandal involving an alleged £25 million bribe to secure Swedish military hardware for the Indian army hit the headlines much to the embarrassment of the prime minister. In essence, the charge against Rajiv Gandhi was not that he took the bribe but protected the culprits.

In the 1989 general elections, the Indian electorate showed in no uncertain terms that it had lost its confidence in his leadership and the manner in which he had handled many major issues of the state as the country's chief executive.

Rajiv Gandhi as the Leader of the Opposition and only too conscious of the instability of the government in power, was biding his time as Prime Minister-in-Waiting. As expected the V.P. Singh government was soon defeated and this was followed by that of Chandrasekhar, which ironically depended on Rajiv Gandhi and his Congress (I) Party to sustain it in power.

When that support was withdrawn, the Chandrasekhar government promptly fell. After some days of uncertainty and much speculation in Delhi, the Lok Sabha was dissolved. As India prepared for a mid-term poll, it appeared that the Congress (I) Party had won back among the voters some of the ground it had lost.

Rajiv Gandhi knew it was going to be a tough election but he was confident of winning. His campaign was also marked by his spontaneous desire to really meet the people and move among them. He was in fact ready this time to be India's prime minister.

But the gods willed it otherwise, and India, if it still wants a Nehru legacy, will have to wait another five to ten years before a new Gandhi appears on the Indian political stage. That is the kind of time Priyanka Gandhi will need to blaze the trail of Indian politics, a trail blazed by her great-great grandpa Motilal, great-grandpa Jawarhalal, grandma Indira and finally dad Rajiv.

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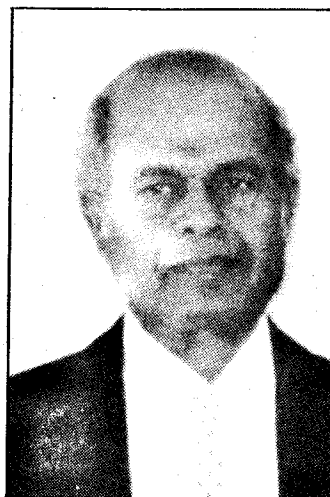
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OBITUARIES



Sellathurai Thambyayah, Retired teacher, Trinity College, Kandy; husband of late Thanamma (demise 6.1.71); brother-in-law of Chelliah (U.K.), late Mrs. Sellammah Sabaratnam, Mrs. Baba Rajanayagam (Colombo), Thilagarajah (Thinnelvally - Retired Deputy Commissioner of Excise); father of Skanthavathany (U.K.), Skanthamohan (Senior Financial Accountant, Sydney), Skantharubiny (Singapore), Skanthavarathan (Senior Financial Analyst, Kingston, Canada); father-in-law of Dr. Reginald (Coventry, U.K.), Ranja (Sydney), Jeyasingham (Manager, Hong Leong Industries Mfg. Ltd., Singapore), Vasanthi (Canada); grand father of Ajan, Arun & Anusha; Shashikala; Latha & Raveen; Vinoth, Vijith & Vijiya; passed away peacefully on 19.4.91 at Walgrave Hospital, Coventry following a heart attack.

Mr. Thambyayah was a man of simplicity, with an inexhaustible capacity for tolerance and patience, not only towards those who loved him, but also towards those who have harmed him, wronged him or humiliated him. At times those of us who were close to him often wondered whether, 'this man is so insensitive, that he has no feelings'. How small-minded we were, unable to understand or comprehend, that his simplicity, tolerance and patience could only evolve out of love, which he had in abundance. Though an only child, lost his mother while in his teens, deprived of his dear wife's love and companionship in the prime of his life, bitterness was never his refuge nor recluse his choice. He was a man who loved life, and enjoyed it living to the full, loving and caring for his children, and later his grandchildren. Though a vegetarian and teetotaler, he enjoyed parties. Even when he had his heart attack, he was in the midst of preparing for his grandson's 18th birthday party, and he told him 'You must have the party whatever happens'. Later when he was feeling a little better, he amused the hospital staff by asking whether he could 'just pop over for two hours to attend the party and come back'. That was the love he had for life and the zest with which he lived it, enjoying it to the last.

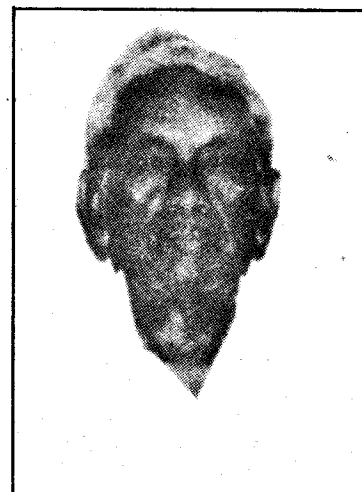
He never appeared to be very religious, but he was a religious man in his own way. While he was in Kandy, he never missed the evening pooja at the Kandy Pillayar Kovil, on Friday evenings, and later in his retirement, attended the temple poojas whenever he was in Jaffna, Singapore, Toronto or England. The

only luxury he never denied himself in his retirement, was the two hours from 5 to 7pm, which he devoted listening to his collection of 'Pakthi Padalhal', in the quietness of his room. In the face of any adversity, he would go to the temple and perform an 'aruchanai' telling his problem to his 'Muruhan' and then onwards it would be Muruhan's problem, not his. That was the simplicity and the completeness of his trust in his Creator.

He also respected other religions. When three of his four children wanted to marry into the Christian faith, he gave his blessings. The measure of his love and understanding, his humbleness and humility, peaked and radiated, when he as one of the pillars of the Kandy Pillayar Kovil, a known and respected teacher of Hinduism, a long standing member of the Kandy Saiva Maha Sabai proudly walked into St. Paul's Church, Kandy, leading his eldest daughter by the arm, to give her in marriage, in front of his friends and associates.

God must have loved him, if not, it would never have been possible, for all his children and grandchildren to come over from the four corners of the world, to be present at his bedside, when the Good Lord called him to His bosom. He leaves behind his most treasured and proud possession, an album filled with the photographs of all his grandchildren, chronologically arranged, the latest additions being the photographs of his pets, Jester and Jake, two King Charles Cavaliers, who accompanied him on his walks and outings. He had not forgotten them and had a place for them too in his 'Big Heart'. We, your loved ones, do miss you very much.

Bobby Reginald.



K.V.M. Manickavasagar (78), Proprietor Planter; Proprietor, New Batticaloa Motors, Chief Trustee, Vaithilingam Madam, Keerimalai, Markandan Madams, Uhintai and Kathirgamam Murugan Temples, Sivagnanapillaiyer Temple, Sanguvely; Charter Member, Rotary Club of Batticaloa; beloved husband of Vadivambal; father of Shyamaladevi, Anusnyadevi (both of Canada), & Vathsaladevi; father-in-law of the late S.K. Kanagasabay, T. Srikanth (Canada) and K. Sri Saravanapavan (Solicitor, U.K.); grandfather of Gowshalya, Kumar, Mithila, Suresh, Vishnu Thilak, Ramthilak & Aishwarya; brother of the late K.V.M. Thiagarajah, K.V.M. Somasundaram & K.V.M. Subramaniam, passed away peacefully on 27.5.91 at Batticaloa and was cremated on 29th. - 10 Love Lane, Batticaloa, Tel: 065 2606 (Batticaloa), 081-672 4618 (London), 403-462 9785/450 2875 (Canada).

IN MEMORIAM

மயில்வாகனம்

உதயகுமாரன் (வள்ளல்)

கொல்லங்கலட்டி, தெல்லிப்பழை.

உதயம்: 10.04.1973

வீரமரணம்: 16.06.1990

மண்ணை மறந்த தென்றல்
மீண்டும்
தெம்மாங்கு கமந்துவர வேண்டுமென
நீ நடந்தாய்

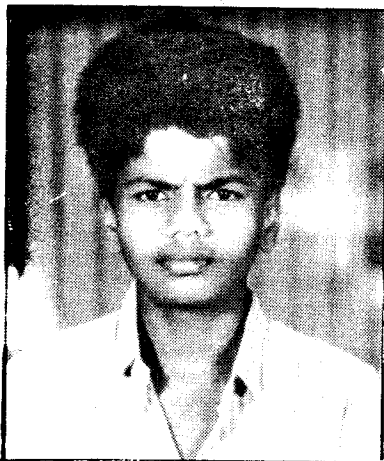
இருளின் குழந்தையாம்
மரணம்
உனை வாரியெடுக்கையில்
உன் நினைவின்
வலிமைக்கு
தலை குனிந்தது.

வள்ளல் குமண,
எம்மரும் சோதர!

நிலவு வான்வெளியில்
களங்கமின்றி
நடைபோட
நெடியதொரு வழித்தடத்தை
நாம் தருவோம்!

நீ துயில்க.....

அண்ணன் மார்
தம்பிகள்.



Mayilvahanam Uthayakumaran (Vallal)

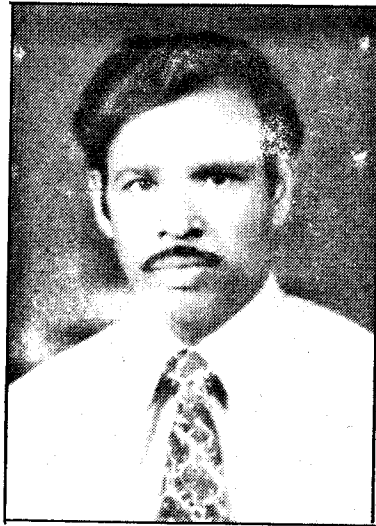
Kollankaladdy, Tellippalai.

Birth: 10.4.1973 Heroic death: 16.6.1990.

You set out
for the return of the gentle breeze
carrying melodious songs.

Death
the child of darkness
when it carried you off
bowed its head
in honour of your memory.

Our dear brother
as generous as Vallal Kumanan
We will pave the sky
a path so wide
for the moon to pace
unhindered.
You may rest
- Loving brothers.



In loving memory of **Mr. Nagalingam Sivapathasundaram**, born 22.5.37, formerly Deputy Director of Buildings, Sri Lanka; Commonwealth Civil Engineering expert in Swaziland and Zimbabwe, on the first anniversary of his passing away in Zimbabwe on 6.5.90.

Remembered with deep love and affection by his wife Selvamani, children Sumithran, Sumitha and Sudhershana, as well as numerous friends and relatives he had helped in many kind and generous ways - 4 Glesham Lodge, 91 Orford Road, Walthamstow, London E17, U.K. Tel: 081-503 6868.



Vallipuram Chelvadurai, retired Customs Officer, popularly known as Charlie Chaplin, born: 4.11.14, Died: 7.7.90, Hindu Almanac Anniversary: 26.6.91.

Sadly missed and sorrowfully remembered as the leading light of the family and the fountain of love, affection, kindness, generosity and knowledge, on the first anniversary of his passing away by his beloved wife Panchadasaram, children Selvakumaran, Mechanical foreman, Norway; Gobalakumaran, Chief Shroff, Vavuniya; Nanthakumaran, N.S. Bank, Pt Pedro; Panchakumaran, Engineering faculty, Peradeniya; Pavalarany, Student; brother Vettivelu; sisters, Mrs. Selvaratnam Selvavinayagam, and Mrs. Thankaratnam Chinniah; brothers-in-law Thuraiamy, Retired Postmaster; Rasiah, A.C.C.D., Mannar; Veerasingam, Chief Clerk, Magistrates Court, Pt Pedro and sister-in-law Mrs. Saraswathy Ponnuswamy - Chelva Vasa, Thunnalai South, Karaveddy, Sri Lanka.



Third Anniversary of the passing away of **Mr. S.S. Bastiampillai** on 14th June 1988.

You were a great man
So noble and great
Whom we all miss
And will never forget

Sadly missed and fondly remembered by his loving wife Ruby; children Vinothini, Pathmini and Rajan; grandchildren Tilan, Arosha, Sumithra and Suthashini - 24 Woodend Avenue, South Harrow, HA2 8NX, U.K.

P. Kanapadhipillai, J.P.,
Attorney-at-Law, Uduppiddy
An Appreciation.

I came to learn of the death of Mr. Kanapadhipillai only when I read the Obituary on his lawyer-daughter Sarojini, in the last issue of the Tamil Times. May I extend to the family my deepest sympathies on the great loss they have suffered by the two deaths.

Mr. Kanapadhipillai will be remembered as a truly great Co-operator and as a person of great integrity by many who knew him well. I was fortunate to meet him on several occasions in connection with my work and he struck me as an extra-ordinary man of courage, wisdom, dedication to duty and above all, honesty and integrity of a high order, indeed rare commodities in the Co-operative Movement. He could not tolerate corruption in high places. His interest in the Co-operative Movement started with the School Co-operative Society at Hartley College, Pt. Pedro, where he was a student in 1929. He was greatly influenced by the teacher in charge of the society, Mr. R.W.M. Walton, who, he explained instilled in his students a high sense of integrity, especially when it came to the use of public money - a sacred trust which needed to be respected as such. After he left school and became a lawyer he naturally got involved in the Co-operative Movement, mainly out of love of service to the community. Some of the Co-operative institutions with which he was associated were the Credit Society in his own village, Uduppiddy, the Transport Society, of which he was President for a number of years. He was greatly influenced by the two stalwarts of the Co-operative Movement, C. Ragunathan and V. Veerasingam.

One of his major responsibilities in his locality was to function as a Trustee of three temples founded by his ancestors, and he functioned with responsibilities almost identical to those relating to his work in the Co-operative sector. His forebears were scions of Hindu tradition and culture, and this inheritance stood him in good stead to lead a life of humility, philanthropy and social responsibility. Being neither a radical nor a reactionary, he sought to preserve and enrich all that is great and invaluable in Hindu heritage. His life and work were directed to the welfare of the community. May he attain eternal bliss.

Dr. K. Paramothayan.

Sabalingam Uthayalingam – An Appreciation.

Uthayalingam, 'Saba' to his friends and 'Ranjan' to his kith and kin, admired by all those with whom he came in contact is no more and has left a void which none can fill.

Saba had his early education at Jaffna Hindu College, where he excelled in studies and extra curricular activities. He was an outstanding member of the soccer, cricket and athletic teams of the college and was appointed physical instructor and soccer coach in 1970 in recognition of his outstanding ability.

He came to the U.K. in 1973 to pursue higher studies and on completion became an engineer with British Telecommunications where he worked until his tragic demise. He was a guiding light to several Tamil students, who encountered difficulties in pursuing higher education in Sri Lanka and helped several of them to proceed to the U.K. and was a source of inspiration to many of them to achieve academic success.

He showed great concern for the plight of his unfortunate brethren in Eelam and carried this concern until the last day when he was cycling to work to improve his fitness for the charity walk, he had planned, to swell the funds of the Tamil Orphans Trust.

Saba was a devout Hindu, a perfect husband and an excellent father. He was a good colleague and a trusted friend, who brightened social and family occasions with his infectious enthusiasm and will be sadly missed by all his friends and members of his family. 'Saba touched our lives very deeply and his going has left a wrecked wanting in all of us. Such human goodness, kindness and gentleness were stolen so prematurely'. These words of a neighbour and friend were echoed by a multitude of friends and relatives who thronged the crematorium to pay their last respects. **May he find eternal peace.**

N. Thirunesan, London E6.

Acknowledgement & Memorial Poojah

Mrs. Prema Uthayalingam and family wish to thank all friends, relatives and wellwishers who attended the funeral, sent messages of sympathy and flowers, when Mr. Sabalingam Uthayalingam died on 4.4.91 under tragic circumstances.

There will be a poojah in his memory at Highgate Murugan Temple, 200A Archway Road, London N6 on Sunday, 7th July 1991 at 10.30am followed by lunch. All friends, relatives and wellwishers are welcome.

Acknowledgement

Jeyam Hensman, Gangi Ponniah and their families thank everyone who attended the Funeral and Memorial Services, sent floral tributes, messages of condolence on the death of their mother Mrs. Yogam Hensman – 30 Broadlands Way, Colchester, Essex, U.K.

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

June 29 7.00pm Academy of Fine Arts, London presents Bharathanatyam Recital by Anandavalli at Baden Powell House, Queens Gate, London SW7. For tickets and information Tel: 081 904 3937.

July 6th 9.00am to 2.30pm Ontario Senior Tamils Information Seminar at Oriole Community Resources Centre, 2975 Don Mills Road, West Side. (Open to non-members). Tel: Fred Balasingam 416 498 1491

July 7 11.00am to 8.00pm Mahajana College Old Students' Association Open Day, Manor Park, Malden Road, New Malden, Surrey. For tickets and information Tel: 0277 223981, 081 399 7848 & 0268 766624.

July 7 3.30pm Novena at Asian Chaplaincy, 48 Gt. Peter Street, London SW1P 2HA. Tel: 071 222 2895.

July 13 7.30pm Chundikuli – St. John's, Disco in aid of Refugee Children in both schools at Copland Community School Hall, Cecil Avenue, Wembley, Middx. Tel: 081 200 6743 & 021 471 3629.

July 27 7.00pm Ontario Senior Tamils Annual Cultural Event, Woburn College, Scarborough, Ontario.

At the Bhavan Centre, 4A Castletown Road, London W14 9HQ, Tel: 071 381 3036/4068.

July 5 7.45pm Cultural Programme of Music & Dance by Bhavan's students.

July 12 7.45pm and July 14 6.30pm Hindustani Music by Gangubai & Krishnaa Mangal.

July 13 7.00pm Bharatanatyam by Anjali Jayadev.

Commitment to Their Alma Mater

Heath Clarke School Hall, Croydon, Surrey was the venue of a dinner and dance on 11 May 1991, organised by the past students of Union College, Tellipallai. The get-together was remarkable in that it was not only a meeting of past students of the college, but also a family evening in which the young and the old participated in a kind of spirit seen back at home in the premises and campus of the college.

It is of course a sad reflection that this school has in recent months come under the heavy fire of the military outrage that continues to devastate institutions the Tamils cherish and the facilities that sustain them, not to state the hundreds of civilian lives that are lost as gun fodder with frightening frequency. Just like most past students of various educational institutions who live overseas the past students of Union College are determined to build back their alma mater.

Tellipallai was privileged to have two great educational institutions – Union College and Mahajana College, both built from very bare resources during the lifetime of two great principals – I.P. Thuraiatnam and T.T. Jeyaratnam, who towered in the finest elements of democracy they imparted to their students, teachers and the community they served and both schools shared a very healthy competitive spirit while being mutually supportive.

Mr. V.T.S. Moorthy, the President of the Old Students Association, while paying the finest tribute to both these schools which are both co-educational, said that among a large number of families in the area the children could look up to one parent from Union and the other from Mahajana.



Muthamil Vizha

An enjoyable concert of music and dance was provided by the students and teachers of the West London Tamil School (Wembley), on 18.5.1991 at the Camden Town Hall. The item I enjoyed most was the vocal by Sujaya Chandran. Sujaya has a rare and beautiful voice, and was very relaxed and enjoyed every moment of her singing as did the audience. Good guidance and dedication will transform this talented girl into an excellent performer. Dancing to recorded music is not the same as a performance with proper accompaniment. It was nevertheless a pleasure to see again a few items from the recent arangetram of Gayathri Manikkavasagan, which I, like many others, enjoyed very much. The Villuppattu was fun and the children enjoyed it as much as the audience. I also have my fair share of complaints. Programs with many children under the age of ten need much more planning and organisation than they seem to get and the audio engineers should pay a little more attention to sound and recording quality. Often, the person in charge of sound takes the audience for granted.

Muthamil Vizha is, perhaps, not the most appropriate title for a concert of music and dance. But that does not in anyway take credit away from the organisers for the spirit of cooperation and commendable management evident on and off stage.

Sivasegaram.

Vinayagar Temple in Seychelles

The history of Hinduism in Seychelles dates back to the arrival of the first south Indian Tamil settler on 27th August 1770, and there are at present over 5000 Hindus resident there. There is also a substantial population of Hindu expatriates from India, Sri Lanka, Malaysia and Mauritius working for the government and the private sector.

The Seychelles Hindu Kovil Sangam was inaugurated in June 1984 and in December 1985 bought a piece of land in the centre of the town with an old building on it for 225,000 Seychelles rupees (U.S.\$ 45,000/£ 24,000). All religious observances and cultural programmes are held in this building.

Prof. Ganapathy, the well known temple architect from Mahabalipuram, Tamilnadu had drawn detailed plans on a modest scale for the construction of a Vinayagar Temple on the same site and this has been approved by the government. The estimated cost of the Temple Complex incorporating some features of traditional Indian Architecture is 1.8 million Seychelles rupees (U.S.\$ 400,000/£ 212,000). Mr. K.D. Pillai, Chairman, Hindu Kovil Sangam, P.O. Box 88, Victoria, Mahe, Seychelles has appealed for donations from all well wishers all over the world for the completion of the project.



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