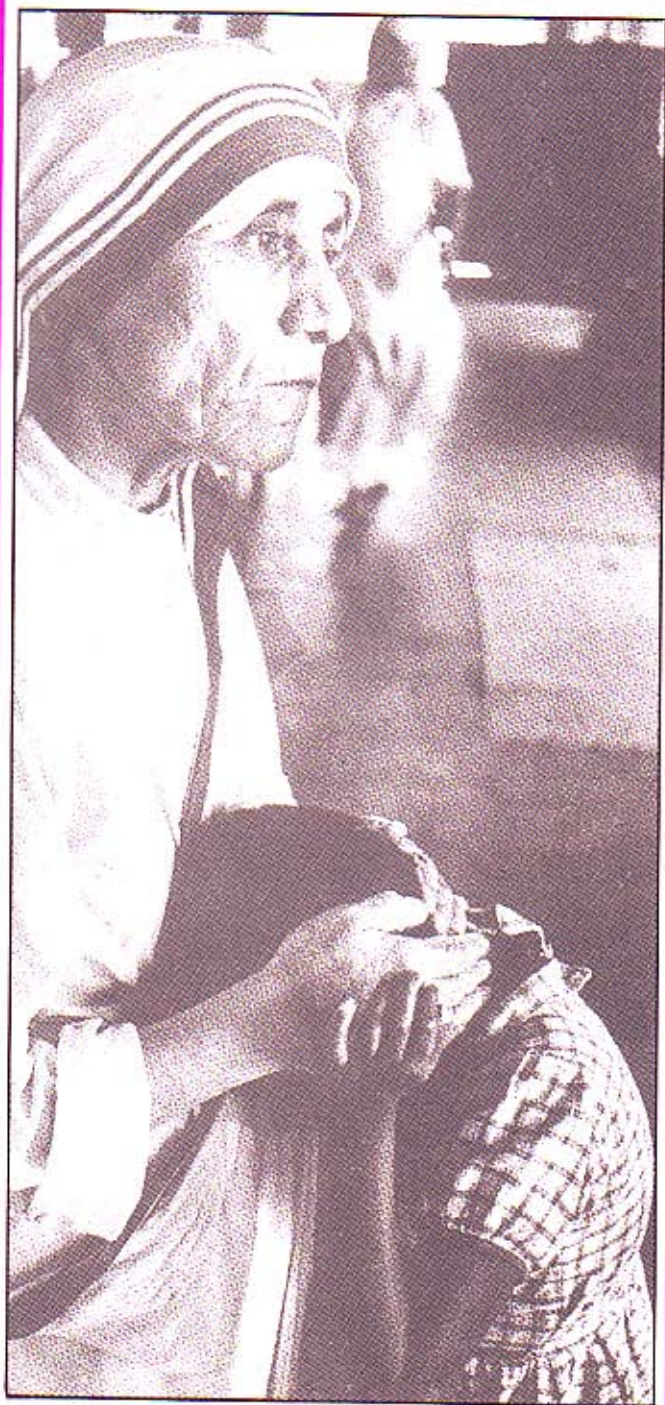


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defend to the death your
right to say it."*

-Voltaire

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I Was There Again

*It was even better than the good old days
My country was flourishing in many ways
There was no fighting for status or land
People were happy in their own sand
They have done it ! They have stopped the war
"It was enough" they said, "with the dirty war"
Things were better in Jaffna too
I could go there again oh! boo boo boo
Yaldevi was running to norm
No queues or crushing in any form
I was lucky to find a corner seat
I enjoyed the trip despite the heat
I looked around, everything was fine
When I was there, I felt everything was mine
What a difference it makes when there is peace
Heaven is on earth when things are at ease
There was no difference in caste or creed
No hunger and sorrow as was plenty to feed
Fields were full with paddy and grain
Farmers were happy there was enough rain
Onions and chillies, fruits and gourds
Now they needn't pay bulks to Lords
Temples I passed as I was going to town
To see the buildings that were broken down
Who says there was war in this beautiful place ?
Everything was the same in splendid grace
I went to the Library bowing at Fr.Long
"Nothing is burnt", he said standing strong
From there I went Weerasingham Hall
They have built it again never to fall
The event of the day was a women's meeting
I met many friends whom I enjoyed greeting
Fatima was there with Sitty and Naeema
We are here again said smiling Shahima
Shanthi was happy to see me there
I asked her how the women would fare
"We are better off now" she said aloud
We are being recognised as women, we must be proud
Selvi was there, busy making the program
Sivaramani was reciting a poem
"How nice to see women in their due identity,
With equality, dignity and humanity"
A voice from behind uttered with echo
It was Rajini in his usual glow
I was happy, I couldn't but scream
Then I woke up, it was dream!*

by Malliaka Pararajasingham

Mother Teresa, 'Saint of the Gutters'

India paid a fitting tribute with a state funeral to the selfless work of Mother Teresa, the diminutive Roman Catholic nun called the "Saint of the Gutters", who died of a heart attack on 5 September at the age of 87. International reaction to her death was equally considerable and widespread though to some extent overshadowed by the untimely and tragic death of Princess Diana a week earlier and her much publicised subsequent funeral.

Over a million people turned out to mourn at Mother Teresa's state funeral on 13 August in Calcutta while thousands of others climbed roofs of buildings for a glimpse of the cortege. Around 450,000 people packed the rain-drenched Park Street as the cortege passed through central Calcutta while another 300,000 waited outside the Netaji Indoor Stadium where Mother Teresa's funeral was held. Another 200,000 mourners thronged the streets leading to the Missionaries of Charity headquarters where she was buried in private at the end of a nine kilometre (5.4 miles) funeral procession.

There were some 15,000 invited guests at the Netaji Stadium where leaders from various parts of the world paid their respects to Mother Teresa.

The fatal heart attack on 5 September was the fourth suffered by Mother Teresa, who was on a pacemaker. She had suffered repeated bouts of pneumonia over the past year and she had been fighting a life-threatening illness for nearly two months.

She had been invited to attend the funeral of Princess Diana on 30 August, but according to those close to the Mother, she was too ill to make the trip to London.

Sister Christine, a nun at the Missionaries of Charity founded by Mother Teresa in Calcutta, said: "The death was very sudden. Mother was very quiet ever since she heard of the death of Princess Diana. Mother wanted to go and attend the funeral but her doctors did not advise her to undertake such a travel."

Sister Christine said while addressing special prayers, Mother Teresa had said of Diana: "She died very young. I do not understand God's ways." Mother Teresa had met Diana last June 18 in New York.

Mother Teresa, a frail Roman Catholic nun who never abandoned the poor

in her seven decades of religious service, won global accolades for her work with the sick and downtrodden of the world. Known as the "Saint of the Gutters" for her work among the poor, starving and dying on the streets of Calcutta, India's largest city, the Nobel Peace Prize winner had practically a cult following, drawing crowds who admired her faith in humanity.

"If they are hungry, we give them food to eat. If they are naked, we cloth them. If they are sick, we visit them and if they are homeless, we give them a home," Mother Teresa said in 1994. Her Missionaries of Charity, the order she founded with Vatican support in 1950, provides homes for orphans, cares for lepers and offers shelter for homeless people dying on Calcutta's streets.

Mother Teresa's order, which has a membership of more than 1,000 Catholic nuns, runs homes for the sick and destitute in far-flung regions of the globe, in countries including Russia, Sri Lanka, Tanzania, the United States, Jordan, Venezuela, Britain and Australia.

"If there are poor on the moon, we shall go there too," Mother Teresa once declared.

Born Agnes Gonxha Bojaxhiu on 27 August, 1910, in the Macedonian city of Skopje, Mother Teresa was the youngest daughter of a successful Albanian businessman, who died when she was 8 years old. In her teens, she became a member of a young people's group in her local Catholic parish and became interested in the work of missionaries. At 18, she was chosen to join an Irish order, the Sisters of Loreto, known for their missionary work, particularly in India.

She learned English in Ireland and in 1929, she was sent to Calcutta to teach. Her first 15 years in India were spent as a teacher at the local Loreto Convent High School. But in 1946 - the year before India won its independence from British rule - the young nun became convinced that God wanted her to leave the convent walls and work among the poor in Calcutta's teeming slums.

Four years later, she founded the Missionaries of Charity, an order emphasising strict personal austerity and dedicated to the service of the poor. The organisation picked up tens of thousands of destitute orphans, lepers, beggars and ailing people from the crowded

streets of Calcutta to provide them with shelter, food and, in her own word, love.

With her deeply furrowed face and her bent frame, Mother Teresa became a world-wide symbol of compassion for those at the bottom of the social heap. When she received the Nobel Peace Prize in 1979, Mother Teresa said her work would not have been possible without divine support. "We depend on divine providence. We get everything as we need it, at the right time, with no difficulty. I believe this is part of God's maintenance of our work." The Nobel committee said she earned the coveted honour "because she gave up her job as a teacher to devote herself to the work among the poorest population in India."

As the years passed, Mother Teresa became increasingly outspoken against abortion, condemning it as a selfish act that means "killing a child just to live a better life." She urged people to "fight abortion through adoption," adding, "If a mother can kill her own child, what is there left to kill?"

Mother Teresa, who travelled widely to promote her charity, emphasised her anti-abortion campaign during her international trips and meetings with heads of state. Her efforts were reflected in her face: strong, heavily wrinkled, compassionate.

But Mother Teresa had her detractors. A 1994 British-made documentary, "Hell's Angel," and a subsequent book accused Mother Teresa of denying painkillers to her dying patients due to her personal belief that physical suffering was beneficial for spiritual well-being. The editor of *The Lancet*, one of the world's leading medical journals, also said Mother Teresa's staff made few efforts to distinguish patients who were critically ill from those who could be cured some with basic medical treatment.

To illustrate the purpose of her work, she quoted a leper, to whom she gave shelter in her Calcutta home for the destitute, as saying: "For so long I was living the life of an animal, now I am going to die like an angel."

She often repeated her maxim, "When we all come face to face with God, we are going to be judged on how much we have loved. Love has to be built on sacrifice."

Financial problems and lack of other resources led her to devise her own techniques for raising money. On his trip to India in 1964, Pope Paul II gave Mother Teresa a limousine that she raffled off to raise \$13,000. In 1971, Mother Teresa was named the first winner of the \$25,000 Pope John XXIII Peace Prize. This gift also went to buy medical sup-

(continued on next page)

NEWS REVIEW

JAYA SIKURU STALLED

It is over four months since Operation Jaya Sikuru was launched on 13 May with the declared intention of opening up the land supply route between Vavuniya and Jaffna. Initially, it appeared that the military was making reasonable progress in their endeavour forcing the Tigers to withdraw as the troops advanced.

Within four weeks of the commencement of the operation, the troops reached Periyamadu covering a distance of some 12 miles within four weeks. However, it took over six weeks to advance a further two miles to the outskirts of Puliyanukulam. But since then except for reports of a large number casualties in attacks and counter attacks, it seems clear that the 20,000 troops committed to this operation is bogged down in the vicinity of Puliyanukulam.

Puliyanukulam has now become the epicentre of the battle between government forces and the LTTE. In their onward march towards opening the highway between Vavuniya and Jaffna, troops have been facing not only stiff resistance, but also unexpected attacks from the Tigers who resort both to conventional warfare in directly confronting the forces and also to classical guerilla attacks.

On the government side, reliable reports confirm that nearly 700 soldiers have been killed and about 4,000 injured since 13 May. There is no doubt the Tigers also have suffered heavy casualties during this period. However, army spokesman Brig. Sarath Munasinghe's claim at a press conference in Colombo that over 2000 Tigers were killed and 3,500 injured since 13 May has been described as fanciful.

The LTTE in an official statement dated 1 September claimed that in Eelam War 3 (since 18 April 1995) government troops have suffered 6500 casualties in the two and a half years since the resumption of the war. This was the highest number lost during any single phase of the war. In Eelam War 1 (1983 to 1987), the government lost 797 troops and in the four and a half years of Eelam War 2 June 1990 to December 1994, it lost 5500 armed forces personnel.

In the fighting that occurred on 9 September (122nd day of J) at least 27 soldiers and Tigers were killed in the fighting around Puliyanukulam. This followed a series of attacks by the LTTE on the 55th Division of the Sri Lankan army. Operational Headquarters of the military reported that ten soldiers were killed and 67 more injured following LTTE

artillery and mortar fire. In retaliatory attacks, the military claimed that at least 12 Tigers were killed and many more injured. Again on fierce fighting broke out on 12 September between the troops and the LTTE, and reported pitched battles over 40 soldiers were killed and over 200 more wounded. While reports said that the LTTE also suffered heavy casualties, an Ukrainian-built Mi-24 helicopter gunship suffered serious damage forcing the pilot to crash-land in army controlled area.

Meanwhile, the Sri Lankan military is facing a crisis in transporting men and material to their operational areas of the war-torn north of the island, particularly the Jaffna peninsula, due to lack of transport aircraft. As a result, they have again sought the assistance of a private company, Lionair Group, to transport their cargo and men. According to reports from Colombo there are only three Ukrainian built Antonov 32 and a Chinese manufactured Y-12 aircraft available to transport the personnel of the three services and the police. An airforce Y-8 transport plane has been grounded for unknown reasons.

Lionair Group was the only domestic airline service permitted to operate between Colombo and Jaffna after the government banned all domestic airlines for security reasons. Lionair is jointly owned by a Tamil businessman and a former Airforce Commander, and has been carrying civilians since December 1995 between Jaffna and Colombo charging at least Rs.5,000 per passenger.

GUNBOATS WITHOUT USE

The Sri Lankan Navy is faced with questions as to why it purchased six gunboats costing \$24 million (Rs.1400 million), ostensibly to use in the war effort against the Tamil Tigers, from Trinity Marine Group Inc. in the United States. The gunboats are of American make and are seaworthy, but they cannot be used in the war effort because the United States does not allow armaments made in that country to be used in ongoing conflict in Sri Lanka in the Northeast. It is said that the gunboats can only be used in the south and west coasts of the island. Figuring at the centre of this fiasco is the former Navy Commander Admiral Mohan Samarasekera, who entered into the transaction on behalf the government to purchase the gunboats in question, in his defence has said that none of the documents relating to the transaction was subject to any restrictive clauses as to the type of use to which the these boats could be put.

(Continued from page 4)

plies. When Mother Teresa heard she won the Nobel Prize, then worth 800,000 Swedish crowns or \$191,000, she said, "I am unworthy of this honour, but I have accepted the prize as through it the world has acknowledged the need to work for the poor, the sick and the homeless." She said she would spend the money on building homes for the poor and lepers.

In 1993, India awarded her the first Rajiv Gandhi Award for National Harmony, named after the prime minister who was assassinated two years earlier.

Though Mother Teresa always was in need of money for maintaining her charity, she never accepted government grants for her medical work. She said this would involve bookkeeping, too heavy a task for her one battered typewriter.

Mother Teresa underwent cataract

surgery in New York in 1985. In 1989 she received a pacemaker in Calcutta to regulate her heartbeat. Two years later, she underwent surgery at the Scripps Clinic in La Jolla, California, to widen her coronary arteries. In December 1992 she developed pneumonia, and in August 1993 suffered a bout with malaria. In April 1996 she was hospitalised after a fall that fractured her collar bone, medical authorities said. Then in August 1996, she had a heart attack - her third - and was placed on a respirator. Despite failing health and chronic medical problems, Mother Teresa maintained a hectic schedule supervising her order and travelling the world.

Mother Teresa had celebrated her 87th birthday on 26 August by inviting 200 street children to a celebration at which she gave them food packets and blessed them, saying they were the people "very close to my heart." □

TIGERS ATTACK CHINESE SHIP

Sea Tiger attack on 9 September on the Panamanian registered cargo vessel "MV Cordiality", belonging to the Chinese state shipping group COSCO, off the coast of Pulmoddai in the Trincomalee area. The Sea Tiger wing of the LTTE successfully got through cordon of security provided by the Navy and the resistance of soldiers who were guarding the 35,000 ton Chinese vessel, both on board and four small fibreglass dinghies near it.

The Tigers had boarded the ship and overpowered the soldiers guarding. Three of the four navy dinghies were sunk. When dozens of Tigers boarded the ship, most of the 32 member Chinese crew promptly jumped overboard and five of them were later reported missing. The Tigers fired rocket propelled grenades directed at the engine room which was set ablaze and returned to their boats in an effort to withdraw before naval reinforcements arrived.

And in the battle of the sea that followed lasting several hours, the military claimed that the navy sank four Sea Tiger boats. Two soldiers guarding the vessel, five Chinese sailors and five workers of Lanka Minerals and Sands Ltd were killed and four soldiers and 22 workers were injured in the assault.

The damaged vessel was later towed to Trincomalee harbour for repair. It had been scheduled to leave for Trincomalee on the day of the assault with a load of 30,000 tons of ilmenite valued at one billion rupees to be exported to ACI Chemicals Inc. in New York.

The LTTE in a statement dated 11 September justified the attack on the Chinese ship in a statement dated 11 September: The Ilmenite mineral sands of Pulmoddai are one of the principal natural resources found within the limits of Tamil Eelam. What rightfully belongs to the region is being systematically plundered by the Sinhala government to sell abroad at a high price. The proceeds are being used to purchase arms and ammunition for the destruction of the Tamil people. This injustice cannot be permitted to continue. Under the above circumstances we were forced to attack and destroy the cargo ship, which was loading the said Ilmenite mineral sands.

"What we did should not be construed as an act of hostility directed towards any particular trade or shipping organisation. Neither should it be inferred as an act prejudicial to international trade or shipping. We undertook the confrontation to prevent the removal and sale of our resources and to beat the war strategy of the Sri Lankan gov-

ernment....

"A war rages on the sea and on the land. The robbery of our natural resources by the relentless enemy cannot be permitted. We are unavoidably compelled to take certain protective measures for the safety and well-being of our land and of our nation."

UNP READY TO TALK WITH LTTE

Echoing the latest refrain of the UNP leader, Ranil Wickremasinghe, the UNP Member of Parliament Mr. Mahinda Samarasinghe in a recent interview with a Colombo newspaper has said, "We have no hesitation in sitting down and exploring the minds of the LTTE, if it means that we can guarantee peace eventually, in particular with the LTTE," adding that this approach would allow the Pirabhakaran and the LTTE cadres to enter the political mainstream and to be "rehabilitated".

By and large Mr. Samarasinghe in his interview sounded more progressive and positive than some of his colleagues in his party like Susil Moonesinghe. He says that the UNP is prepared to go beyond the 13th amendment to the Constitution (that established Provincial Councils and merged the Northern and Eastern Provinces into one unit of devolution following the Indo-Sri Lanka Accord of July 1987), which he admits was not implemented when his own party was in power under President Premadasa.

What Mr. Samarasinghe does not realise is that the LTTE, according to its declared position, is engaged in a "Do or Die" struggle to liberate the Tamil Nation and not for "the leader of the LTTE and the thousands of the cadres of the LTTE to be rehabilitated" through a settlement which Mr. Samarasinghe and his party have in mind which provides for, as he says in his interview, "a united and indivisible Sri Lanka".

Mr. Samarasinghe also says, "The idea is to make the LTTE more receptive to accepting a final political solution. If we are a government, we can do it. But as an opposition party we do not know how seriously the LTTE would take us. So far we have not received any overtures from the LTTE. In any event as an opposition we cannot implement any proposal." This is rich coming from a MP belonging to the UNP which was in power for 17 long years during which it did not succeed in solving the problem and bring about a solution. In fact the problem was further complicated and prolonged during its tenure.

The UNP has been expressing its opposition in the Parliamentary Select

Committee to many aspects of even the present government's proposals on devolution and thwarting its progress. The UNP is opposed to the "Union of Regions" concept contained in the government's proposals. "The danger may not be immediate. But what is to prevent a government in Jaffna from five years from now that it will secede from the Union of Regions. This is a dangerous road the government wants to tread and will lead to the breakup of the country", says Dr. Stanley Kalpage, a senior leader of the UNP.

When the UNP expresses the view that it is opposed to any proposal that will adulterate the "unitary character of the state", one wonders as to how the UNP hopes "to make the LTTE more receptive to accepting a final political solution."

SIRISENA COORAY RELEASED

The government faced another severe embarrassment when the Supreme Court ordered the release of Sirisena Cooray, one time strong man of the UNP. Besides holding that Cooray's arrest and detention under the Emergency Regulations were illegal, the Court ordered that the government should pay him Rs.200,000 in compensation.

Cooray was arrested on 16 June and detained on a charge of conspiracy to kill President Kumaratunga. The police claimed that he had hired a contract killer and kept him in a house near the President's ancestral home in Attanagala with the intention of killing the President.

Mr. Cooray, backed by the UNP, challenged his arrest and detention by filing a fundamental rights application in the Supreme Court.

DEPORTATION ORDER UPHOLD

The Canadian Federal Court recently upheld the detention and deportation order issued by the Canadian authorities against Manickavasagam Thayalan Suresh, a Sri Lankan Tamil from eastern Batticaloa. He has been resident in Canada since 1990 having claimed political asylum.

Before his detention, Suresh functioned as the Officer-in-Charge of World Tamil Movement and Co-ordinator of the Federation of Associations of Canadian Tamils, both alleged to be aligned to the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE). He was arrested and detained under an order known as a National Security Certificate issued on 18 October 1995 under section 40(1) of the Canadian Immigration Act. Normally National Security Certificates are issued in respect of a

person considered as a security threat to the Canadian state.

The Certificate issued against Suresh was on the basis that he was a person who had been engaged in terrorism, been a member of a terrorist organisation (LTTE) and that he was continuing to be a member of that organisation.

The validity of the detention and deportation order was challenged on behalf of Suresh before the Canadian Federal Court by a team of top lawyers. In the course of the hearing which lasted several months, many expert and lay witnesses were called to give evidence in support of Suresh and in support of the submission that the LTTE was "liberation organisation" and not a "terrorist organisation".

On 29 August, Justice Max Teitelbaum, the presiding judge of the Federal Court, delivered his order upholding the detention and deportation order issued against Suresh stating that there were reasonable grounds to believe that he was a member of the LTTE and that there also reasonable grounds to believe that the LTTE was engaged in terrorism. The Judge also said that he would deliver his detailed judgement at a later date.

TIGERS RELEASE N.KOREAN SHIP

Thirty-seven North Korean sailors were taken to northeastern Sri Lanka on 30 August to retrieve a North Korean cargo ship that was previously seized by Tamil Tigers. One Korean crew member was killed and the others seized when the Tigers captured the Morang Bong on July 17 when it was returning home after unloading food and essential items on the northern Jaffna peninsula.

The remaining 37 crew were later released by the Tigers to the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), but the ship was anchored in LTTE-controlled waters off north-eastern Mullaitivu town.

The LTTE agreed to release the ship on "humanitarian grounds," and the Red Cross took six crew members to Mullaitivu to inspect the ship. The LTTE gave assurance of safe sea passage for the ship to be towed to the northeastern Trincomalee port. The Korean crew were taken to Mullaitivu and the ship was later towed back, according to Harsha Gunawardena, information officer of the Red Cross.

FOCUS

ON HUMAN RIGHTS

Govt to Publish Rights Abuse Probe Reports

The London-based International human rights organisation, Amnesty International said on 5 September welcomed Sri Lanka's decision to make public the reports of three commissions into the disappearances of thousands of people.

The Sri Lankan government said on 3 September that it was also considering legal action against those responsible for the disappearances of at least 16,742 people since 1982. It said the three commissions appointed by President Chandrika Kumaratunga in 1994 to inquire into the disappearances had received 19,079 complaints.

"This is a crucial juncture for Sri Lanka. By making public these reports and taking firm action against the violators, an extremely significant contribution is being made to the protection of human rights in the country," Amnesty said in a statement.

The human rights watchdog said it was also "delighted" at some of the follow-up measures announced by Kumaratunga, including the prosecution of those against whom the commissions found prima facie evidence, and the establishment of a new commission to examine complaints that the three panels were not able to see to before their terms ended.

It was not immediately clear when the reports of the three commissions would be made public. Amnesty repeated its call for the government to take decisive action in following up investigations underway into 760 complaints of "disappearances" in the northern Jaffna peninsula last year.

Human rights groups have accused Sri Lankan security forces of human rights abuses during operations against Tamil rebels as well as in a brutal crackdown on a left-wing youth uprising in 1988-90.

Prior to the government's announcement of its intention to publish the commissions' reports, Amnesty International said, "The Government of Sri Lanka should make public the reports of the

three commissions of inquiry into past human rights violations, Amnesty International said as the commissions handed over their final reports to President Chandrika Bandaranaike Kumaratunga on 3 September.

"It is the government's duty to ensure that what happened to the tens of thousands of people who 'disappeared' or were killed in Sri Lanka in the recent past is officially acknowledged and remembered," AI said.

"Not publishing the reports would give those responsible for past violations the opportunity to escape the judgement of history and to avoid being held to account."

Amnesty International also urged the President to announce within a reasonable period of time how the government will act on the commissions' recommendations for the prevention of 'disappearances' in the future, including steps to be taken to bring to justice those against whom the commissions found prima facie evidence.

The Presidential commissions were set up in late 1994 and had been mandated to investigate "disappearances" reported in the country since 1 January 1988. They reportedly heard evidence in relation to 16,750 cases out of 19,079 complaints. They were, among other things, asked to report on 'disappearances' and 'involuntary removals' (abductions by non-state agents), to identify those responsible and recommend legal proceedings that can be taken against them, and to suggest relief to be granted and preventive measures to be taken.

Amnesty International representatives, who visited Sri Lanka last month and met with several senior government officials, said that they had been encouraged by repeated assurances that the reports were to be made public.

"Making the reports public, and announcing publicly how the government intends to act on the commissions' recommendations, is of paramount importance to reinforce the rule of law in Sri Lanka and break through the lingering climate of impunity among security forces personnel," Amnesty International said.

Taking these steps is all the more important because "disappearances" continue to be reported in large numbers, particularly from the Jaffna peninsula. Amnesty International's team visited Jaffna in mid-August and was informed of more than 600 'disappearances' in 1996 and 39 since the beginning of 1997. During the visit, the delegates met with a Board of Investigation set up by the Ministry of Defence and chaired by a ci-

villain with a mandate to investigate these recent 'disappearances'. The Board had received 760 complaints and had heard oral evidence from relatives in 368 cases. The Board's members said they were expecting to finalise their investigations by the end of the year.

Amnesty International is encouraged by these efforts to establish the fate or whereabouts of the people who 'disappeared' in Jaffna. It is urging that the government at the earliest opportunity makes public the report of the Board of Investigation and announce action taken to follow-up on its findings, including bringing to justice those found to be responsible.

"The international community is waiting to see how the government deals with human rights violations both under the previous regime and under its own term of office," Amnesty International said. "Now is the time to prove its avowed commitment to promote and protect human rights."

In a statement issued by the Presidential Secretariat 3 September, "special arrangements to complete the legal process necessary to prosecute the persons responsible for the disappearances", were announced. In its letter to the President, Amnesty International highlighted the need to strengthen governmental investigative resources, particularly within the police, to ensure that successful prosecutions can be initiated in those cases in which the three commissions and the Board of Investigation found that there was enough evidence to initiate further investigations with a view to prosecute. In particular, the organisation recommended that the forensic expertise available in the country be strengthened.

Draconian Media Law Repealed

The Parliament of Sri Lanka on 11 September repealed a 19-year-old law that made journalists answerable to the parliament in cases where Members of Parliament were alleged to have been brought into disrepute by the media.

The motion to repeal the Parliamentary Privileges Special Provision Act of 1978 was presented in parliament by the government and passed unanimously when it was taken up for debate.

The Act of 1978 was enacted by the former United National Party (UNP) government in 1978, gave parliament the right to fine and imprison journalists. However when the motion to repeal the Act was debated in Parliament this time, even Members of Parliament of the UNP now in opposition also voted in support of its repeal.

The Act was enacted by the UNP after a photograph published in a state-owned newspaper with incorrect caption was claimed by a senior UNP Minister to have harmed his reputation. The Act had been used at least twice against the media by the previous government to penalise journalists.

The government said that repealing this "draconian Act" was a step in the government's efforts to create a free media.

The Parliament also passed a resolution appointing a Select Committee of Members of Parliament to review existing media laws and make recommendations.

The 30-member committee, representing all political parties in Parliament, will also make recommendations for the establishment of a broadcasting authority that would regulate the industry and changes to existing legislation that imposes limitations on freedom of expression and the independence of the media.

The Committee would also consider the establishment of a Media Council to promote the freedom and responsibility of both the print and electronic media and the maintenance of high standards of communications ethics and recommend guidelines for government advertising.

Visit by UN Human Rights Official

The United Nations Special Rapporteur on Extrajudicial, Summary Executions Arbitrary Killings, Mr. Bacre Waly Nadiyae, who recently visited Sri Lanka in his official capacity at the invitation of the Sri Lankan government, said that there appeared to be no end in sight to the northeast conflict in the island because there was a total lack of communication between the government and the LTTE.

Addressing a press conference on 2 September in Colombo following his visits to Jaffna, Trincomalee and Batticaloa, Mr Nadiyae said that his visit to Sri Lanka

was pursuant to an invitation extended by the government in 1992. The delay in responding to that invitation was due mainly to the fact that he had to visit other countries like Bosnia, Rwanda, Peru, Columbia and Papua New Guinea during the intervening years.

The mandate given to him by the UN Human Rights Commission concerned every single aspect relating to the safety to human life which included protection of life, deaths in custody, displaced persons, deaths in conflict situations, a genocide, mass graves and providing compensation to victims, said Mr. Nadiyae.

Since his mandate involved United Nations member states, it was not possible for him to contact NGOs independently and officially carry out any investigations on their behalf. However anyone, including NGOs were free to make representations to him, he said.

In regard to the situation in Jaffna, the Special Rapporteur said that "there is still a very painful and difficult human rights issue in the northern Jaffna peninsula. The gap between those who have disappeared and the numbers of people whose whereabouts have been finally discovered is too large, too important." The number of disappearances in Jaffna last year varied from 370 to more than 600. However, during his visit to Jaffna, the people there told him that there are now less human rights violations than before. "I did not receive many allegations of extrajudicial killings on my visit to Jaffna. There were some allegations of extrajudicial killings, but there were very little compared to the disappeared," Nadiyae said.

Mr. Nadiyae added that in every conflict as in Sri Lanka, it is the civilians who mostly affected by being caught in the fighting. Every possible step should be taken by the parties to the conflict to safeguard women and children who are most vulnerable to the effects of war and violence. The only way to end the conflict is by working towards peace, and peace is a basic human right.

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A Situation of Artificial Normality in Batticaloa

By Frederica Jansz, Colombo

The main issues of conflict in Batticaloa are the disappearance of persons and an extremely tense situation between the civilian population and government troops. Arbitrary arrests and detentions of persons suspected to be pro-LTTE continue at an alarming rate. At a meeting with the Batticaloa Peace Committee and later some government officials from the Batticaloa Kachcheri, both voiced concern at what they described as the abuses perpetrated by government forces in implementing the Prevention of Terrorism Act (PTA).

The army have allegedly told senior residents of Batticaloa, that they are forced to use 'reasonable persuasion' in order to elicit information from those arrested under the Prevention of Terrorism Act.

Rev. Harry Miller, an American Jesuit priest, resident in Batticaloa since 1948, has a list of over 2000 names of missing persons. The military he said do not acknowledge that these persons have been taken in for questioning while many he says have been murdered. He quoted a Commanding Army Officer for Batticaloa as having admitted that the military are forced to use aggression in order to elicit information. Miller reiterated that it is 100% truth to say that all those arrested are tortured, though the degree of torture varies. No perpetrators, he said are ever punished, except for a rare occasion whereby the accused is merely transferred out of the district.

A Project Director for Rehabilitation, who wished to remain anonymous, asserts there is no leadership left in Batticaloa. He said the police force in Batticaloa are anything but the guardians of the law and maintained that civilians in the area would be far better off minus the presence of government troops. We can deal with the LTTE, he said, stressing however it was impossible to have even a reasonably good relationship with government forces. There is no liaison between the military, police and civilians of Batticaloa.

Murder and rape is a regular occurrence. Joseph Pararajasingham, TULF MP, in numerous letters to President Chandrika Kumaratunge has voiced deep

concern over the gruesome instances of murder and rape which continue. He says there is some evidence to suggest that police personnel may be implicated in these murders. He has called for full and impartial inquiries into these incidents asking that persons responsible be held accountable for these murders. Pararajasingham however sounds disillusioned when he says rarely is any action initiated. All I receive is an acknowledgment to my letters he said adding the matter ends there.

The ICRC office in Batticaloa say that while the recent conflict between the Muslim and Tamil community have been resolved, the situation however remains tense between security force personnel and civilians.

A steady deterioration in the relationship between civilians and government troops has been seen since April 1995 when an existing cessation of hostilities was abruptly severed by the LTTE.

Tamil - Muslim Conflict

In this instance the conflict is largely perpetrated by an incident or event. Both Tamil and Muslim civilians voiced the above opinion maintaining that Tamils and Muslims in Batticaloa speak of themselves as interdependent. On the road south to Pottuvil from Batticaloa along the coast, Tamil and Muslim villages almost alternate. The Eastern province they say, has been an example of communal harmony from earlier times. All three major communities live here, Sinhalese, Tamil and Muslim, who validly claim their presence as being well rooted in history. Since independence Sinhala presence has increased in numbers many times, which has led to charges of colonisation, matching the historically more recent Tamil majority in the East. A Muslim official at the Batticaloa Kachcheri said Tamils have been in the area from time immemorial while the Muslims, later in coming, can point to the East being the area of some of their earliest settlements, as well as being their modern heartland.

Talks between the LTTE and the Muslim community early this year was seen as a people oriented step. S.L.M. Haniffa present at these talks said the Muslims

sought the protection of the LTTE as they can no longer depend on government forces for security. Allegations have been made that the recent incidents of violence between the Muslims and the Tamils has been largely perpetrated by the police force.

Manoranjan Rajasingham maintains the peace talks between the Muslim community and the rebel group have been more in favour for the LTTE who have used the opportunity to state their position rather than negotiate a better deal for the Muslim community. The Muslims disagree, maintaining fishing rights and trade have also been a part of these discussions. Rajasingham reiterates that it is unfortunate no member of the Tamil community have been present at these talks. In fact the Tamil community in Batticaloa have had no official interaction with the LTTE in recent times.

Other areas of Tamil and Muslim conflict issues are that Muslims are considered to be traders, but have managed to secure large areas of paddy land in predominantly Tamil areas. The predominant issue here is the purchase of land, as Muslims are seen buying prime property filling a vacuum created by the emigration of the Tamil community. The other issue of conflict seems to be that Muslims are perceived as being clannish and do not readily integrate with the Tamil community. Many individuals from both communities assert there is no long term difficulty between the two nationalities. However while an increasing number of Tamils foresee a bleak future in Sri Lanka, the Muslim community does not see the situation that way. When questioned however members from both communities say the above are all minor grievances adding the two have long lived in relative peace and harmony. Primordial differences are prevalent in that there is a basic division in business and land issues. The massacre of some Muslim villages by the LTTE in the past does not seem to have created a great division between the two communities.

The Devolution Package

Bemused expressions greet inquiries regarding the governments power sharing proposals. The general opinion is that no power can effectively be devolved in the East minus the representation of the LTTE. Joseph Pararajasingham, MP, said the governments two pronged solution of fighting the LTTE and offering a devolution of power for the Tamil community is not going to work. He said the way things are at the moment the present ethnic conflict will continue for at least a further 10 years. He says there appears to be a vested interest blocking a possible resolution to the ethnic conflict. He voiced

pessimism with regard to the devolution package, adding that previous attempts at resolving this issue have all failed. He accused both the PA and UNP of working mainly to build a better party image to meet the next election. He alleged both political parties have pressure groups within and which oppose every move for peace. President Chandrika Kumaratunge he says has also fallen prey to these groups.

Pararajasingham together with other senior citizens of Batticaloa articulated that people in the East do not care about a devolution package - "It means nothing to them with a war on," he said.

Many articulated the opinion that each successive government has been callous in their disregard of the issues. Batticaloa police station yet issue official summons in Sinhala. Third party mediation was felt to be a must if the conflict is to be resolved. Such an involvement was described as having to be a strong force that could achieve some arm twisting on both sides. It is important they say for any third party to be able to cut a deal for both the LTTE and the government.

A possible merger of the Eastern Province into ethnic sections, merging some parts with other provinces, or setting them apart, from their neighbours is considered by many to be a grave mis-

take. Some say that if some eastern Sinhalese sections were to be cut off and attached to other provinces, it would look as if again the majority community was only concerned for its own people. The Eastern Province remains a multi-ethnic region with an almost balanced three way division of population.

Civilians in Batticaloa feel that though the region is only a part of the east, yet seems to be a crucial element. Without Batticaloa District, with a Tamil preponderance, there would be no discussion of the east being essential to the Tamil nation. Amparai is minority Tamil, while Trincomalee, also mixed, is too important nationally as a harbour and commercial area, they said.

On this issue conflicting opinions are expressed. While the elite of Batticaloa seem strongly opposed to a merger of the north and east, some Muslim and Tamil at grassroot level expressed opinions in favour of a merger that would be administered by single Tamil dominated council. This opinion again appeared to differ as many villages, Muslim and Tamil, is represented by an elitist of the area.

Many civilians feel that while the issue of the east is being discussed, at all political levels, no-one however is talking to the Batticaloa civilian to hear their opinion on the matter. Many are confused with

regard to the devolution package as while they remain aware it involves devolution of power, they do not know what this would entail for the east.

No government initiated body (Sudu Nelum Movement) has visited Batticaloa and attempted to conduct workshops on the set of devolution proposals. Such endeavours have been exclusively concentrated in the South.

Conflict Resolution Initiatives

Samadhana - a non violent support group has and continues to conduct workshops on conflict resolution for community groups, on the technics and principles of conflict resolution. Conflict resolution training is conducted on an inter-personal level.

The group also does extensive work in highlighting human rights violations, leading satyagrahas against arbitrary arrests and detention and help locate prisoners held at the Kalutara and Welikada magazine prisons.

The Methodist Church together with the Quakers conduct workshops on conflict resolution in the Kalmunai area. Such workshops mainly bring youth together for interaction which also involve participating in environmental and social development projects.

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Mandru - a local NGO does work at the Pradeshiya Sabha level - seeks to ensure fair water distribution etc. to all communities. The Batticaloa Peace Committee is mainly a group which documents disappearance and murder of civilians.

Despair Among Civilians

Meanwhile the disillusionment and hopelessness among the civilian population continues while journalists are not officially allowed access into 'uncleared areas.' A considerable number of the civilian population in the East, live in uncleared areas and complain of daily harassment at security barriers. NGO's too remain constrained in moving in and out of uncleared areas, making it difficult to carry out relief measures for those in need.

Residents fed up with security measures which they say are largely in place to protect the security forces and not civilians said, 'Tell them all to go away. We can handle the LTTE. As long as the military and police remain we are sitting ducks for the rebel group.'

Meanwhile it is not only civilians of the area who are afraid of being identified but senior military persons as well plead to remain incognito, as they have received strict instructions from their higher command not to speak with the press. 'If quoted our necks will be on the block,' they said.

After 6pm human traffic is almost non-existent in Batticaloa town. A self-imposed curfew is strictly adhered to. Living in a conflict area 'it is possible the police need live bait for target practice' a resident commented wryly.

A member of the Batticaloa Peace Committee asserts there is no leadership left in Batticaloa. There is no liaison between the military, the police and civilians. Peace Committee members maintain recognition of human rights violations in the district go virtually un-noticed. The perpetrators, they say are never punished except on a rare occasion, by a mere transfer. A few publicized cases of rape however have initiated judicial action against some security force personnel. Senior military officials meanwhile are worried of a blemished record as they are aware President Kumaratunge, striving to maintain a clean slate where human rights are concerned, will not hesitate to put them on the mat, a committee member said.

An artificial normality exists in Batticaloa. Disappointed residents say they see the government in the security forces. Efforts by the government to enforce a 'hearts and mind operation' in the North and East has not proved successful, civilians say as it has failed to filter down

AUSTRALIA'S CONCERN IN THE SRI LANKAN CONFLICT

By K T Rajasingham

Australia has emerged as the first country, since of late, to openly show concerns over the Sri Lankan conflict. It has emphasised the urgent need for a peaceful negotiated settlement to the protracted ethnic war. Worsening human right abuses cause grave concern to protect the civilians throughout the country, irrespective of their ethnic identity. Australia believes in a peaceful negotiated settlement, the way out as the conflict resolving resolution, to safeguard the people from the scourge of war, in the drawn out ethnic crisis.

Dr Andrew Golezdzinski, the Director of the South Asia and Regional Issues Section, Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, Australia, expressed succinctly that, "Australian Government appreciate your concerns over the human rights situation in Sri Lanka and considers that there is an urgent need for a peaceful negotiated settlement of the conflict to protect civilians throughout the country, irrespective of their ethnic identity," the facsimile message addressed to this writer as part of an endeavour to brief Australia's position. He did not either provide any further specific details or outlined the parameters of the proposal for a negotiated settlement. Anyhow, the facsimile statement clearly reveals the depth of the Australian compassion and demonstrates their care and concern for a speedy conflict resolution in the Asian region.

Alexander Downer, the Australian Foreign Minister, during his last visit to Colombo in July, was highly critical of the

Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) and admonish that, there is no terrorist solution to the drawn-out ethnic conflict. He also added that, "The Australian Government unequivocally condemns the terrorist activities of the LTTE." A strongly worded condemnation and first of its kind ever expressed by a leader of his standing, or on behalf of a government.

Earlier, it appeared Australia showed interest in interceding in the ethnic conflict to bring about a conclusive resolution. Political observers believed that the foreign minister's meeting with the leaders of the Sinhalese and the Tamil groups in Colombo during his recent official visit, arranged by the Sri Lankan government, an initial attempt to evolve a common denominator approach to the simmering problem. Subsequent remarks, made by the minister puzzled the political pundits, when he declared Australia supported the Sri Lankan government's effort to end the conflict and did not believe, a third party mediation would help.

Ian McConville, the officer in charge of the Sri Lankan Desk in the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, Australia, telephoned this writer to appraise the Australian Government's policy on the conflict in Sri Lanka. This was an arrangement made exclusively to brief this writer to get acquainted with the Australian Government's policy on the conflict. He informed that his Government shows keen interest to cause a negotiated settlement to resolve the ethnic crisis. From his summation, it became apparent that, Australia would consider to cause a negotiated settlement and to bring an end to the human sufferings experienced by the people in the country.

Even though Australian Foreign Minister, Andrew Downer, during his last official visit to Colombo, castigated the LTTE, but he showed indications during his meetings that Australia recognises the LTTE as one of the main players and a negotiated settlement with their participation is required to end the crisis. When asked whether Australia is ready to intercede in a negotiated settlement, Ian McConville said that, it cannot be ruled out or ignored when exploring all available avenues. Australia expects a quick end to belligerency to put behind the sufferings of the people. He added that it is time to focus on hope against despair and look forward that the Sri Lankan Gov-

(continued on next page)

to the rank and file. It is the soldier and police officer who the Batticaloa civilian has daily interaction with, they say, and not with the higher echelons of the military command.

Joseph Pararajasingham MP, TULF also maintains that unless a dialogue is initiated between the government and the LTTE the power sharing package cannot be implemented in the East. 'It is the LTTE who are the negotiating force,' he said, asserting that this is a fact which needs to be recognized soon.

Pararajasingham maintains that if the present negative situation is to continue in the East, the civilian population will lose faith in the military and their long term response to the devolution package will not be positive. □

ernment and the LTTE would come together soon to resolve differences for a sustainable peace accord.

During the last five to six years, the on-going ethnic war in Sri Lanka served only as a media-fodder at regular intervals, whenever big offensive led to a large scale loss of lives or incidents of assassination of important personalities occurred. Loss of lives and rampant human right abuses of a section of humanity turned out to be a media-type focus of attention. The protracted ethnic battle in the country, and a search for a sustainable peace, lost its luster, attention and urgency for a peaceful resolution to end the conflict, no sooner India withdrew its forces from Sri Lanka and the 1991 assassination of Rajiv Gandhi, the former Prime Minister. The conflict became a dormant issue and side-lined as an attempt to arrest terrorism in the country. Western nations dismissed the bloodied ethnic rivalry, which caused the lives of more than 80,000 innocent people, as an attempt by the Sri Lankan Government to stem out terrorism, an easy ploy by these Western nations to shirk their international responsibilities.

This is Sri Lanka today, an account of human tragedy. How much more pain should Sri Lankans endure due to the Government's impalpable policy of "War for Peace" and of the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam's response with the "Do or Die" military campaigns.

Australia recently released a White Paper - a major foreign and trade agenda for the next 15 years. The paper gave Australia's assessment of political, economic and security issues in the Asia-Pacific region. Alexander Downer also down played the anti-Asian image portrayed by the maverick politician Pauline Hanson, whilst releasing the agenda and emphasised that Australia is a tolerant society and the country cannot be judged otherwise.

In the wake of the release of the White Paper, Australians broke tradition to moot an initiative to clarify to this writer, its position through two senior most officials, the think-tank, a highest polity-making group in the department regarding Sri Lanka, a commendable approach to demonstrate the caring concern for a practical solution to the drawn-out conflict in Sri Lanka.

In case, Australia comes forward to intercede in the ethnic conflict, considered a welcome gesture to expect bright chances for a speedy resolution. Undoubtedly, Australia is one of the leaders in the Asia-Pacific region, a member of the Commonwealth of nations in which Sri Lanka too is a member and a neutral tolerant nation without any vested interest, required elements, always the overriding concern of the warring partners in Sri Lanka. □

The 1987 Indo-Sri Lanka Accord and the Sri Lanka Tamils A POST MORTEM

by D B S Jeyaraj

Ten years have passed since Indian Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi and Sri Lankan President Junius R. Jayewardene signed the controversial agreement between India and Sri Lanka on July 29th 1987 in Colombo. Both signatories are no longer among the living. One was cut down in the prime of life by a brutal assassination while the other passed away peacefully at the ripe old age of 90.

The accord that they evolved together remains still a valid document in a legal sense. Not all aspects of that accord are being adhered to in actual practice. Nevertheless the beneficial consequences of that pact, namely the 13th amendment to the constitution is effective yet in some salient spheres.

Provincial Councils set up under that amendment are functioning in the seven Southern Provinces. Tamil is an official language with constitutional status although there has been very little progress in implementation. More importantly the Provincial Council of the northern-eastern province, set up after the accord, is defunct. As such, the Sri Lankan Tamils for whose ostensible benefit the accord and consequent 13th amendment were supposedly drawn up, are yet to savour the fruits of this labour meaningfully.

In the meantime even the scheme of devolution provided for under the 13th amendment is now described as an "optional illusion" that never ever provided genuine devolution. The current search for a consensus on greater devolution amounting to federalism is rationalised on the basis that the PA government would not be a party to hoodwinking the Tamil people by stating that effective devolution had been provided under the 13th amendment when it had actually not been done so. Interestingly the chief component of the PA government, the Sri Lanka Freedom Party (SLEP sand Chandrika Kumaratunga) opposed even the "limited" devolution proposed under the 13th amendment as being inimical to the unity of the country then.

On the other hand, there exists a viewpoint that the current devolutionary exercise, despite the laudable objective of those involved, is not likely to succeed. The mandatory requirement of a

two-thirds majority in Parliament and subsequent victory at a referendum to amend entrenched clauses of the constitution is perceived as the obstacle. Unless a bi-partisan consensus evolves between the ruling PA government and the chief opposition UNP, the chances of the current devolution package materialising in realistic terms is seen as a remote possibility.

This perception has led to some Tamil political parties clamouring for an interim administration to be set up in the north-east first. This set up would concentrate on exercising the devolved powers under the 13th amendment for the time being, even as the search for a better scheme of devolution goes on. These parties contend that if the current devolution exercise fails the Tamils would still have the 13th amendment as a fall back position. The Provincial Council bird in the hand is better than the regional assembly cum union of regions birds in the bush, claim the proponents of this view notably Douglas Devananda, the leader of the Eelam Peoples Democratic Party (EPDP).

With the wisdom of a ten year hindsight, one could safely say that the merits and defects of the Indo-Lanka accord became an issue of only academic interest because it never really got off the ground in practice. To the Tamils of the north-east the gains from the accord were never visible except for a structural institution and attached trappings in Trincomalee during the 1989-90 period. In spite of its shortcomings there was a possibility that it could have been utilised to the overall advantage of the Tamil people.

That golden opportunity has been lost and, from the looks of it, for ever. It would be pertinent, however, a decade later to examine the Indo-Lanka accord from a historical perspective with particular emphasis on how it improved in conceptual terms the Sri Lankan Tamil situation at that particular juncture by accruing to the Tamils political gains in comparison with what prevailed in law or had been agreed upon in political discussions during the acrimonious past. Also of importance is to understand the contextual constraints that existed at that time of the accord

being formulated.

Unfortunate developments of the past decade have obscured at present the primary purpose of India in formulating the accord then. While the element of "real-politik" as well as geo-political considerations were prevalent, the overriding compulsion however was the genuine desire of the Indian Government at that time to engineer a viable political settlement to the Sri Lankan Tamils within the contours of a united Sri Lanka. The implementation of that agreement was underwritten and guaranteed by the Indian Government.

The accord paved the way for India to have a "legitimate" voice in Sri Lankan affairs over matters concerning the Tamil minority there. In geo-political terms the accord registered India's dominance in the South Asian region. The USA accepted India's "pivotal power" status while the then USSR acknowledged the "natural pre-eminence" of India. Indian academics characterised the accord as one more demonstration of Indian "benign Diplomacy" in the region, the undermining of the Rana and empowering of the Shah dynasty in Nepal, military aid to Sri Lanka during the JVP revolt of 1971, supporting the Birth of Bangla Desh, crushing the Maldives Island PLOTE aided coup etc. being some other instances.

The Sri Lankan crisis was from an Indian perspective a serious "intermestic" issue. This word had been coined by political scientists to describe issued lying at the interface of an international and domestic issue. The presence of 50 million Tamils in Tamil Nadu and their visible concern over the plight of their fellow Tamils in Sri Lanka affected the domestic equilibrium in India. Besides the influx of Tamil refugees numbering more than 135,000 provided India the "locus standi" to involve herself in Sri Lankan affairs.

The initial refusal of the Jayewardene government to talk directly to the Tamil leaders necessitated India into offering her good offices to break the impasse. India's concern about extraneous influences infiltrating the region under the cover of the Sri Lankan conflict as well as anxiety about the demonstration effect of a protracted conflict in the neighbourhood on the India polity itself, were other factors impelling India's benign intervention in the conflict.

A controversial element of this policy was the training, financing and arming of Tamil militants on Indian soil. Tamil separatist groups were also allowed to indulge in propaganda from India. New Delhi covertly promoted the Tamil cause worldwide then. Indian policy makers rationalised their action as providing additional input to the weaker of the two parties in

an internal conflict so that the stronger party does not annihilate the former. This was acceptable practice in third party mediation, it was argued.

The other side of the coin was that this whole policy was viewed from different perspectives. The Sinhala hawks saw it as clear proof of India's sinister design on their Island. India wanted to help the Tamils to dismember their country and perhaps annex it totally. Tamil nationalists saw it as a subtle manoeuvre to aid the creation of a separate Tamil state in the Island. Their concern was whether it would be allowed to function with some autonomy or whether it would be rigidly controlled by New Delhi. Tamil Nadu nationalists saw it as a prelude to the creation of a Tamil state that would, with the passage of time, prove to be the beginning of a greater Tamil Nadu or Pan Tamil project.

In cynical terms Indian machinations were seen as having the objective of raising the level of armed Tamil resistance in Sri Lanka to a point where the Colombo Government would find itself unable to contain. Then it would be compelled to submit itself to overall Indian supremacy and appeal to that country to intervene and help resolve the problem. Then India would intervene and compel the Sri Lankan Government to grant meaningful political concessions to the Tamil minority. The quid pro quo would be the ensuring by India of the elimination of Tamil militancy. This would be done by cutting off all help to the Tamil groups first and later, if necessary, by resorting to military suppression.

This policy also aimed at gaining Sri Lankan acceptance of Indian dominance in the region through the signing of two letters described as annexures. Also the underwriting and guaranteeing of the agreement by India helped establish for that country a permanent voice in the internal affairs of Sri Lanka. These cynical calculations of the Brahmins of South block were upset by the underestimated resistance and resilience of the LTTE. The Tigers not only entered into direct combat with the Indian armed forces but also came to a crafty understanding with Premadasa to set up an anti-India front.

This resulted in the ignominious withdrawal of the Indian army from North-east Sri Lanka. Later the killing of Rajiv Gandhi turned Indian policy hostile to the LTTE and by limited extension the Sri Lankan Tamils. The sad reality today is that New Delhi is extremely sympathetic to Colombo now and has virtually forgotten the parameters of the policy that led to the signing of the accord in the first place. Nowadays few Indian policy makers want to be reminded of that and informed Indian opinion makers describe

the earlier policy as "schizoid".

The period between 1983 July and 1987 July saw India exerting continuous pressure on the Colombo Government as well as the Tamil side to fashion together a satisfactory arrangement. Indian emissaries such as G. Parthasarathy, Romesh Bhandari, P. Chidamparam, K. Natwarsingh and Dinesh Singh engaged in periodic shuttle diplomacy. Indian envoy in Colombo Jyotindranath Dixit, Political secretary Hardip Singh Puri and Information Secretary Lakshmi Puri comprised the trio that devoted much time, energy and dedication to the task of bringing about an accord. Their pre-July 1987 role is greatly appreciated by Sri Lankan Tamils.

Given the recent history of armed groups fighting for a separate Tamil state, the accord was not satisfactory from an extreme Tamil Nationalist perspective. All that sacrifice and toil to remain under a Sinhala dominated unitary state! This was the essence of this objection. Taking the overall non-violent history of the Tamil struggle in Sri Lanka and its failure to gain worthwhile results, the achievements of the accord were creditable indeed. The accord and its consequential 13th amendment and its creation, the Provincial Councils, did provide a satisfactory framework to address the primary problems of the Sri Lankan Tamils.

The terms of the accord particularly the preamble paragraphs denoted a significant psycho-political shift. It recognised for the first time that Sri Lanka was a multi-ethnic, multi-religious nation. This was a departure from the earlier perception dominant in the majority community that Sri Lanka was the land of the Sinhala Buddhist. The tenets of the accord were against the one nation (Sinhala) theory. Equally important was the repudiation of the two nation theory put forward by Tamil nationalists on the basis of history and the right of self-determination. What was being offered was a new version that sought to strike a balance between conflicting Sinhala and Tamil nationalist ideals about the nature of the state or states.

Three of the cardinal principles enunciated at the Thimphu talks by the Tamil side was in relation to a distinct nationality, homeland and right of self-determination. These principles were put forward in a political environment where the dominant Tamil mood was to secede from Sri Lanka. Also the Tamil groups wanted to abort the talks without alienating India. So the Thimphu principles were proposed as a strategic ploy to evoke a negative response from the Sri Lankan side. It was deliberately calculated that Colombo would reject these immediately thereby rendering the talks useless. This

succeeded to some extent.

The political climate in which the Indo-Lanka accord was evolving was different to that of Thimphu. Now the emphasis was on formulating a satisfactory scheme without prejudice to the unity and territorial integrity of Sri Lanka. Political accommodation within a united Sri Lanka neither demanded nor warranted the extreme concepts articulated in Thimphu. More importantly it was also necessary to remove real or imaginary apprehensions within the Sinhala polity that the accord would be a danger to the unity of the Country.

Also India herself could not countenance terminology like the right of self-determination or an identifiable homeland or recognition of a distinct nationality in her domestic political discourse. As such the Thimphu principles in their original form were disregarded in the formulation of the accord. It must be said that at least four of the original signatories to the Thimphu declaration appreciated the Indian position. (TULF, EPRLF, EROS, TELO)

Nevertheless the accord did concede the fact that the Northern and Eastern provinces were the traditional homelands of the Sri Lankan Tamils. The phraseology was not glaringly strident. The accord recognised that the Northern and Eastern provinces have been areas of historical habitation of Sri Lankan Tamil speaking peoples, who have at all times hitherto lived together with other ethnic groups. While not subscribing to the north-east being the exclusive homeland of the Tamils alone the accord certainly emphasises the Tamil "right" to the North-Eastern Provinces but not an exclusive right.

While the Tamils have been the dominant community in the north-east there is incontrovertible historical evidence that other communities too have lived there. The 1881 census states the ethnic population of the Northern Province was as follows:-

Tamils	- 289481 (95.70%);
Muslims	- 10416 (3.44%);
Sinhalese	- 1379 (0.45%).

A hundred years later census figures for 1981 in the North was as follows:-

Tamils	- 1023228 (92.06%);
Muslims	- 52638 (4.74%);
Sinhalese	- 33149 (2.98%).

The corresponding figures for the East were as follows in 1881:-

Tamils	- 75408 (59.12%);
Muslims	- 43001 (33.71%);
Sinhalese	- 5947 (4.66%);

in 1981 the figures for the eastern province were:-

Tamils	- 411451 (42.14%);
Muslims	- 315201 (32.28%);
Sinhalese	- 243358 (24.92%).

These demographics illustrate the rationale behind the Tamil grievance about State aided colonisation that has altered the population balance drastically in the east. The Tamil and Muslim percentage has declined while the Sinhala population has increased. This process has been accelerated after Independence when state power went primarily into Sinhala hands. While appreciating Tamil concerns on this matter the accord has very correctly refrained from awarding exclusive rights to the Tamils on the issue. There are some Tamils who insist that a legal ban be enforced on "outsiders" settling in the Tamil homeland.

Apart from the fact that such a ban would curtail the fundamental rights of movement, inhabitation and residence it may also be counterproductive in the sense that other provincial councils may attempt to prevent north-eastern Tamils from entering their domain. What is objectionable is state sponsored or aided machinations calculated to alter the demographic pattern of a region. Reversing such trends requires attitudinal changes all round and also some mechanism for the respective devolutionary units to exercise control over land.

In that respect the accord and consequent 13th amendment did take into account the importance of land and land alienation in the overall scheme of things. The basic framework for devolving power over land to the periphery was introduced. Land was allotted as a subject for the provincial council. Rights in or over land, land tenure, transfer and alienation of land, land dues, land settlement and land improvement etc. were to a certain extent vested in the provincial council. Usable or state lands were reserved for the centre. Prof. Peiris in his critique of the 13th amendment makes a valid observation when he says that what was given by one hand was taken back with the other. This is very patent in respect of lands.

A joint letter signed by Messrs. A. Amirthalingam, M. Sivasithamparam and R. Sambandan was sent to Rajiv Gandhi on this aspect. In that letter the TULF objected to some provisions regarding land. The points raised by the TULF were as follows:-

- (a) Inclusion of state land in the reserve list.
- (b) State land continuing to be vested in the republic with Presidential power of disposition.
- (c) The denial of the right to the Province of the ipso facto use of state land for devolved subjects.
- (d) The restriction of the right of the Province to administer and control only such land as is made available to it.
- (e) The stipulation that the alienation

and disposition of State land within a province to any citizen or organisation shall be by the President in accordance with "LAWS" governing the matter contrary to even existing procedures for alienation.

(f) The wide definition given to inter-provincial irrigation and land development projects, the principle of the national ethnic ratio in such projects, the right given to the Sri Lankan Government to determine the selection of allottees for such lands designedly to perpetuate the present pernicious practices.

(g) The failure to properly formulate the principle of the cumulative entitlement of the Tamil speaking people in schemes under the Mahaweli project in the eastern province and the failure to incorporate under the province settlement provisions under the Mahaweli Project.

The TULF went on to observe "The above are clearly directed towards reducing the Provincial council to the position of a non-entity in respect of state land even though land is a devolved subject and enabling the Central Government to have dominant power over state land. Ample scope is also retained for the continued colonisation of the northern and eastern provinces with members of the majority community.

It must be said that the fears of the Tamils as articulated by the TULF was grounded in the bitter history of land settlement programmes carried on by various regimes. Later President Jayewardene agreed informally to drop lands from the reserve list. As for the Mahaweli settlement it was agreed that the national ethnic ratio would be maintained. But in actual practice Sri Lankan Tamil quota would be given lands in Batticaloa district, the Muslims in the Amparal district and the Tamils of Indian origin in the Trincomalee district. It was also pointed out that the Mahaweli was perhaps the last major inter-provincial irrigation project of its kind. So Tamils need not fear any more massive irrigation and related colonisation projects.

As in the case of land there were grievances about other subjects devolved or not devolved too. Again the same TULF missive is an index of Tamil opinion in this regard.

The letter stated "Though it was clearly understood that the list of subjects would conform to the Indian model, the concurrent list has been heavily loaded and the provincial list clearly starved. Subjects such as Fisheries other than beyond territorial waters, Agriculture, Animal husbandry, Industries, redemarcation including creation of districts, assistant government agents, divisions, and gamma sevaka divisions, restoration, reconstruction of destroyed towns, villages, properties, compensation or relief to persons

who have sustained loss or damage, Palmyrah plantation and Palmyrah industry, coconut plantation and industry related thereto, the ownership, management and control of state owned industrial enterprises within the province dependant wholly or mainly on raw materials found in the province (recommended by the all party conference) Co-operative banks, provincial public service, provincial public services commission, local government service, inquiries, surveys and statistics for any of the purposes in the provincial list and such others have not been included in the Provincial list".

The TULF then protested over this saying that this had not been done "in keeping with the discussions held with the TULF or on the basis of the Indian pattern. In the field of education, the powers of the provincial council are substantially curtailed even in the matter of secondary education. Both the concurrent and reserve lists have been so framed as to minimise to the maximum possible extent, the scope and content of the Provincial Council's powers".

This then was the essence of Tamil grievances over the shortcomings of the devolution provided under the 13th amendment. While it cannot be denied that the quality and quantity of devolution left much to be desired it must also be understood that the very concept of devolution as opposed to decentralisation was ushered in for the first time through the 13th amendment. In that sense the Indo-Lanka accord that paved the way for it was indeed revolutionary. It was a paradigm shift in the political thought process of the Sinhala majority of Sri Lanka.

Another achievement of the accord from a Tamil perspective was the unit of devolution. Earlier concepts had been the regional Councils of Bandaranaike, the district councils of Senanayake and the district development councils of Jayewardene. The Tamil demand in the aftermath of 1983 was the northern and eastern provinces. As Mr. Amirthalingam stated at the round table conference of 1984, the immediate priorities were the "security of our people" and the "integrity of our homeland". From a Tamil point of view, the north-east merger was of paramount importance.

The 1986 December 19th proposals that emerged during the visit of Chidamparam and Natwar Singh advocated the exercising of the present Amparai electorate or electoral division from the eastern province. This would have altered the population ratio to Tamil 49%, Muslim 39% and Sinhala 12%. Thereafter both the north and east were to function independently with provisions for inter provincial co-operation.

There was also provision for unified

institutions common to both provinces. Within the East the Muslims were entitled to cultural autonomy and enhanced representation and quotas. The chief ministership itself would be on a rotation basis. After a specific period of time there would be a referendum to determine whether the provinces should merge or not. Although this proposal seemed the most reasonable, short of a merger, at that time Tamil sentiment however was for a permanent linkage of the north-east.

Against that backdrop the Indo-Lanka accord was a major conceptual breakthrough from a Tamil perspective. The Sri Lankan Government had conceded that the north-east was the area of historical Tamil habitation in the preambular paragraphs. More importantly it was agreed to merge the provinces unilaterally for a specific period of time. Thereafter a referendum would be held to determine whether the "temporary" merger would become permanent or not.

If the east voted against it then both provinces would function separately. The president however had the power to postpone the envisaged referendum from time to time. The Tamil groups were promised by New Delhi that Jayewardene would never stage the referendum. That promise was kept. Apart from Jayewardene even his successors have postponed the proposed referendum.

The reality today is that the north-east merger has stood the test of time for ten years. The non-working of the north-east Council and the on-going conflict has prevented the people of that region meaningfully assessing for themselves the pros and cons of peaceful coexistence in a unified Province.

The accord, the 13th amendment and later the 16th amendment to the Constitution, also provided for Tamil to be an official language of the country. The ethnic crisis was exacerbated by the enthroning of Sinhala as the sole official language of 1956. That historic wrong had now been righted constitutionally subject, of course, to effective implementation. This area remains a sore point from a Tamil point of view.

The conflict in the north-east is trotted out as an excuse for neglect in developing the north-east. Yet nothing constructive has been done in implementing the constitutional provisions of the Tamil Language in the Seven Sinhala majority provinces or in the high level government administration. This state of affairs has induced a crisis of confidence about the sincerity of the Governments of Colombo over this issue.

It is clear therefore that the accord did provide substantial concessions to Tamil demands and recognised the basic rights of the Tamil people. The allo-

cation of powers under devolution, the scheme of devolution particular in lands and policing etc. left much to be desired. The reservation of powers for the centre as well as the list of subjects terms concurrent "starved" the periphery to some extent. The problem of devolving under a unitary constitution with a centralised executive presidency was also there. JR Jayewardene accepted the shortcomings and in a document signed on November 7th in New Delhi 1987 promised to remedy the situation.

It must be remembered that the accord and subsequent provisions were introduced in a hostile Sinhala climate. Violence had been unleashed by the JVP, the SLFP was organising democratic dissent and the UNP itself had its own share of opponents and critics. Attempting to provide greater devolution may have necessitated a country-wide referendum in which the whole concept of devolution may have been shot down.

In that context Tamil opinion was not fully satisfied but reluctantly agreed to go along with India subject, of course, to certain reservations. Subsequently the LTTE rebelled openly against India and indulged in a military campaign against the IPKF. As time went on New Delhi tried to help set up a Provincial Administration under the EPRLF for the north-eastern provinces. Continuing conflict prevented the satisfactory working of that institution.

The advent of Ranasinghe Premadasa as Sri Lankan president and the understanding reached by him with the LTTE helped to undermine the north-east Provincial Council further. The obstructionist attitude of the Premadasa regime and bureaucracy along with the violent opposition of the LTTE rang the death knell of the North-east Council. The epitaph was written by the formal dissolution in 1990.

Thereafter the Provincial Councils created under the Indo-Lanka accord are functioning reasonably well in the seven southern Sinhala dominated provinces. Ironically the Sri Lankan Tamils of the North-East, for whom the Councils were set up primarily, are yet to savour the fruits of devolution. Tamil is yet to be implemented as an official language in a meaningful manner. The structure established for the North-East Council remains yet with former Sinhala film star and politician Gamini Fonseka functioning as Governor of the North-East Province. The North-East merger remains valid even ten years later.

Politically the Chandrika Kumaratunga government is committed to awarding the Tamils a scheme of devolution greater than what was envisaged under the Indo-Lanka accord's 13th amend-

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TIGERS & COLOMBO REMAIN LOCKED IN LETHAL DANCE

by K T Rajasingham

The expression "holding the Tiger by its tail" sums up the true state of affairs in Sri Lanka today.

The government clings to a belligerent ideology of beating the Tamil minority into submission while the intransigent guerrilla opposition strikes back when it can.

The latest government offensive, aimed at flushing out the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) from the northern Wanni region and establishing a military land supply route from Colombo to the Jaffna peninsula has had catastrophic consequences. In the last week alone, 67 guerrillas and soldiers were killed in fighting, according to the government.

Code named "Jayasikuru" (Sure Victory), the campaign's targets are the sprawling Tamil Tiger bastions in the districts of Mullaitivu, Vavuniya and Mannar in the Wanni region. The military action, however, succinctly demonstrates the government's belligerence and its goal of beating the Tigers into submission, rather than accepting a political negotiation to settle conclusively the long-running civil war.

The recent troubles in Sri Lanka have their roots in the proclamation of the Republican Constitution in 1972, which led the successive governments to adopt a policy of sectarian appeasement of the majority Sinhalese community. This Sinhalese nationalism propagated and fermented the emergence of Tamil nationalism, instead of unitary nationhood. This one country two nations system

lacked a firm ideological commitment to forge unity in diversity and instead focused on communal dissension.

Calls for a unitary nationhood and a plural state under a federal ruling arrangement were ignored, and the result has been the present dilapidated situation, where arrests, detentions, extortion, mayhem, murder and a host of other extra-judicial activities, both by the security forces and by the separatist guerrillas, have become dark features of life in Sri Lanka.

Moderate Tamil political leaders, however, found themselves edged out forcefully by the separatist organisations, mostly dominated by Tamil youths in their teens after 1972. The separatists' declaration, "Tamil Eelam" remains simply

Both the separatists and the government must share the blame for Sri Lanka's ongoing troubles.

a slogan, rather than a political philosophy. Tamils bemoan the obstreperous, and obtrusive militant organisations that have emerged under this mesmerising slogan for the complete decadence of their ethos.

The separatist organisations introduced the politics of militancy and belligerence at a time when Tamils were frustrated, when their Gandhian policies of non-violence had failed to achieve anything politically. The slogan thrilled mainstream Tamils in the beginning, but they acquiesced when the militancy of the youths took a turn for the worse.

of maximum devolution. If the hopeful plans of the Kumaratunga regime do not materialise where does that leave the Tamils?

The only option now is to fall back on whatever that has been gained under the Indo-Lanka accord. Full scale implementation of the accord should be undertaken while the search for greater devolution could continue. As far as the Sri Lankan Tamils are concerned, a decade of post accord strife has resulted in a change. With the wisdom of a 10 year hindsight, Sri Lankan Tamil opinion is increasingly shifting in favour of resurrecting the accord as a fall back position if the present political initiative of Chandrika Kumaratunga fails. □

Eventually, the LTTE eliminated the other militant organisations in a series of bloody manoeuvres and became the dominant force in the political arena. The LTTE's armed struggle has failed to obtain any political achievements.

India has banned the LTTE as a terrorist organisation after the assassination of Rajiv Gandhi on 21 May 1991, and isolated them. Even Muthuvel Karunanithi, the chief minister of Tamil Nadu - a home for 60 million Tamils - repudiated any links with the LTTE. Amnesty International, the London-based human rights group, too, had earlier criticised the LTTE for its attacks on non-combatant Sinhalese civilians.

In a recent report, the US State Department singled out the LTTE for its atrocious activities but noticeably refrained from calling it an international terrorist organisation. In its report, "Patterns of Global Terrorism 1996," the State Department said the LTTE had refrained from targeting Western tourists, but said a front group, Eellalan Force, continued to send threatening letters to Western missions and the press.

In a recent development, the LTTE waylaid and captured a commercial vessel belonging to North Korea off the coast of Pint Pedro and held 37 North Korean crewmen hostages. Though details were sketchy, the foreign hostage-taking drama of the LTTE warrants severe international condemnation.

While the Clinton administration took a dim view of the LTTE, it also had harsh words for the Colombo government as well in the State Department's "Sri Lanka Country Report on Human Rights Practices for 1996," released in February. The report squarely places the onus on the government to desist from its belligerence and take necessary precautionary measures to put an end to the alleged extra-judicial activities by its security forces.

Feeling the need to boost its international image, the Sri Lankan government responded by deploying information specialists at embassies abroad. The appointees, mostly media personnel from outside the framework of the Sri Lanka foreign service, were designated "Counsellors (information)" and sent initially to Britain, Canada, Sweden, India and Thailand. These professionals are tasked with liaising with opinion makers, communicators and policy planners in the host countries to stem the flow of bad news.

Expatriate, Tamil academics regret the death of thousands of Sri Lankans in the see-saw battles between the government and the separatist guerrillas. They note that since April 1995, more

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ment. The unitary nature of the state is to be changed to that of a quasi-federal nature, Sri Lanka will become a union of regions with the provincial councils becoming regional assemblies. The eastern province is likely to be re-demarcated with the Batticaloa and Trincomalee districts being attached to the north and a new Muslim majority South-Eastern Province being carved out of the Pottuvil, Kalmunai and Sammanthurai electorates in the Amparai district.

There is trepidation in some Tamil political circles about whether the Kumaratunga Government could succeed in pushing through an effective scheme

JAFFNA: A VISION SKEWED

[Text of Special Report No 9 dated 7 June 1997
by the University Teachers for Human Rights (Jaffna)]

(Continued from last issue)

9. Hobson's Choice: Facing Disillusioned Combatants

On both sides many of the combatants see themselves caught up in a war that has lost all meaning for them. But all choices seem unenviable. In recent weeks there have been well publicised desertions of security personnel sent to the Vanni from safer postings. A batch of applicants who went recently to be interviewed for selection as army officers were surprised to find themselves strongly discouraged by serving officers who met them on the way. In the case of the Tamil struggle the causes of disillusionment are very deep and have been increasingly felt from its mili-tarisation in the 80s. We have discussed this in earlier reports and the issue has been covered from several perspectives in the 'Broken Palmyra'. We merely point to some recent developments.

With the opening of the Vavuniya-Mannar road earlier this year the army stopped the boat service from Vidathalivu in the LTTE controlled mainland to Mannar Island that had been under army control. The pass system operated by the LTTE had made it very difficult for its deserters and ex-militiamen to leave its domain. The army wanted travellers to Mannar Island to come to Uyilankulam on the newly opened main road and take a bus. The people did this despite being forbidden by the LTTE and in time it

became regularised. With many pressing matters on its hands the LTTE lost control of the situation. Consequently, it became an escape route for LTTE deserters who went to Uyilankulam and surrendered to the army.

On 1st May 1997, about 4 LTTE men went along with the civilians with concealed weapons and suddenly opened fire at soldiers manning the Uyilankulam entry point. Two soldiers were hit of one whom died later. The soldiers had been without success trying to get the civilians into two queues. Fortunately there was present a competent civil coordinator, Wijedasa, a retired army officer who was trilingual, who got the people to lie down before the army responded with small weapons and cannon. The shells fell further afield killing the son of Bar Ponniah of Mannar, father of a four months child. One shell killed two cows, and a lady about to feed them stood transfixed by shock holding the bag of feed, when a piece of shrapnel from a second shell, tore through the bag though not harming her. Subsequently LTTE deserters who came to surrender were beaten and the message has been given that the army does not want LTTE deserters to come that way. The people of the area live on pins owing to occasional shelling.

Once the LTTE's deputy leader **Mahattaya** was placed under custody in 1993, those who were closely associated with him became suspect and were tortured by their own organisation. According to local figures in Chavakachcheri, when the Army moved in there in April 1996 they used **Mahattaya** loyalists who had come over to them to screen out LTTE cadre who had remained in refugee camps. The mother of a detainee from Meesalai said that her own son was being tortured by former LTTE men now working for the army. A number of former LTTE men now dressed in Sri Lankan army uniform have been observed in Jaffna. In the Manipay area a former LTTE area leader is now said to hold the rank of 'captain' in the army. The LTTE cadre **Sayanthan** (alias **Anandan**) who was responsible for the

landmine attack at Ponnalai on 29th January (report above) was arrested in Araly after being shot in the leg. He told a fellow prisoner apologetically that he did not have time to take the cyanide. The army is known to have been treating him well.

Thus one gets accounts of many strange things in Jaffna. A young man who came from Colombo and attended a funeral in his village, was closely questioned by a former acquaintance. Others at the funeral warned him, "Be careful of what you tell him, he is very close to the LTTE". The next day this young man was going past an army camp when to his surprise he observed the same person who questioned him holding hands with a soldier, engaged in a very friendly conversation. A young man **Ramesh** who lived near Valvettithurai was shot dead by the LTTE. The local talk is that LTTE cadre had visited his home, had dinner with him and he had gone along with them to escort them safely out. But subsequently they had shot him.

What follows is the story of a young man caught up in a tragedy that is very characteristic of the atmosphere. After the forced exodus of the civilian population from Valikamam in October 1995, **Haran** deserted from the LTTE and stayed with his family which included two sisters, who were refugees in Thenmaratchy. One day the LTTE came to the area and said that they were looking for two LTTE deserters who were being hidden by the refugees. But on that particular day **Haran** had gone to another village for the night. After the Army moved in those who were members of the LTTE were asked to surrender. The parents arranged for **Haran** to be surrendered by a person of standing.

Haran was kept for a few days and released with a slip of paper. With this he enjoyed the freedom to travel much more freely than was permitted to normal civilians. He was freely allowed to go into the uncleared areas and come back. At one point he visited the Thavady area frequently and had evidently made contact with the LTTE. Having had lunch one day in September 1996 with some LTTE members who had come from the Vanni, he was shot dead by the army near Uduvil where he is said to have been attempting to throw a grenade. One explanation of this episode is that he had been an agent deliberately left behind by the LTTE. But what seems to fit the facts better is that he had agreed to provide information to the Army and had at the same time tried to persuade his LTTE companions that he was on their side. He may have been sent to throw a grenade to prove his loyalty to the LTTE.

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than 2,000 Sri Lanka security personnel and about 3,000 LTTE should renounce all forms of belligerent activity and work to find a solution to the civil war through political negotiations. A meaningful approach through dialogue without any pre-conditions is the best political way to find a sustainable peace. These academics have suggested a "Russian-Chechnya peace" formula be applied starting with a temporary peace accord and ultimately finding the necessary parameters that would enable a permanent and sustainable peace. □

10. A Follow up on Earlier Reports and Issues Kerudavil:

4th August 1996: In Special Report No.7 of August last year we reported the murder of **Karthigesan** and his daughter **Baleswari**, the latter being killed after rape. According to local sources the culprits were detained by the Army following medical evidence. We have no record of what further action was taken.

Meesalai: 8th August 1996: **Navaratna-kurukkal Koneswara (27)**, Brahmin priest, had gone to Meesalai the previous day and set off home to Point Pedro via Jaffna about 9.30 a.m. He did not reach home. All possible agencies were informed including army camps but to no avail.

Chavakacheri: 12th August 1996: **Chinniah Somaskandan**, Arts student, University of Jaffna, originally from Thellipalai, refugee in Chavakacheri, arrested on the way to the university via Kopay. Mother, Rajapopathy Somaskandan, widow, has since then been inquiring at army camps only to be sent from one camp to the other.

Karambakkurichchi, Varani: 13th August 1996: **V.Ramanathan (25)** unmarried was killed in 'cross fire'.

Manduvil, Thenmaratchi: 28th August 1996: The decayed body of **M.Kanagu (55)** with the hands tied was found in the cesspit of a lavatory close to his house. The detection was made a month after the victim had gone to see his lands and not returned. The identification was made by the wife. The culprits were not traced. In our Special Report No.7 of August 1996, we reported a similar case from the same area during the same month. In that case the victim, **Mayuran (19)** who was thrust into a cesspit had managed to attract the attention of a lady with sharp ears and was rescued. It was also in this area that on 17th May 1996 three males and a child were chopped to death and three women were raped. This too remains uninvestigated.

Sarasalai, Thenmaratchi: 13th September 1996: At about 6 p.m. **Saravanabavanandan (21)** was made to crawl by soldiers and was shot from behind. The army version is that he had come with arms with 15 others.

Nunavil, Thenmaratchy: 18th September 1996: **Thangavelu Rajendrakumar (28)** of Athai, Alval East, Vadamarchy, was Sarvodaya Regional Co-ordinator, Vadamarchy. On the day in question he went to the regional office at Nunavil at 10 a.m. and was arrested by the army in the vicinity, at the site of a claymore mine incident the previous day. The arrest was witnessed by a watcher who is prepared to testify anywhere. **Rajendrakumar** is frail and suffers from occasional fits.

Thenguthattu, Thenmaratchi: 22nd September 1996: This village is 300 yards beyond the bund. 6 persons were killed by shells fired from Eluthumattuval South.

Manduvil, Thenmaratchi: 24th September 1996: **Krishnapillai (57)** was killed by the LTTE in the presence of his daughter. He was reportedly accused of being friendly with the army.

We have so far been unable to find local confirmation of the claim made in the LTTE Bulletin of 15th August 1996, that the bodies of three young girls and five young men were discovered in a shallow grave which was connected apparently with an army round up in Kachchai and Thanankilappu. The people contacted were not aware of this particular incident but there was a rumour about the disappearance of 13 persons in another part of Thenmaratchi of which we have no concrete testimony. (The recent AI report gives an incident in mid-1996 in Thenmaratchy West, where a number of persons went missing.)

In Bulletin No. 13 of 27th December 1996 we reported the arrest by the army of **Sivagurunathan Arutchelvam (20)** in Kaputhoo, Vadamarchi. We are informed that he has been released. We also reported the arrest in Thanankilappu of **Sathasivam Ramesh (19)** on 15th October 1996, who had crossed the lagoon with his mother. We are now informed that he was held at the Chavakacheri army camp and transferred to KKS on 23rd December 1996. He wrote his first letter to his mother on 26/12/96. He was subsequently transferred to Magazine Prison, Colombo and his case was to be heard in Anuradhapura on 9th May. When his mother had inquired at the Chavakacheri camp just after his arrest, she had been firmly told that her son was not there. The case of **Poopathi Aravindan (26)** missing after arrest in July '96 (Our Bulletin No.13) was taken up before the MoD's committee in Jaffna on 17th April.

The case of the Chundikuli tie: 12th December 1996: The LTTE London Bulletin of this date stated that the bodies of a number of Tamil school children were washed ashore around Mullaitivu. One corpse of a girl in school uniform is said to have been wearing a tie of **Chundikuli Girls' College**, Jaffna. The Uthayan published a news item on 13/12/96 quoting news agencies in London that the bodies of 3 girls previously subject to abuse were washed ashore in Mullaitivu. It added that this had been confirmed by the BBC Sinhalese Service. Its issue of 19/12/96 gave further information quoting a letter from the TULF leader to the President that the corpse had both the Chundikuli tie and school badge. The is-

sue of 25/12/96 carried a response from the army. The army had interviewed the school principal who had said that other than the case of the rape victim **Chryshanthi Coomarasamy** (who was killed on 7/9/96) she had received no reports from parents or relatives about any other girl missing and that in such an event she ought to be the first to be informed. She too had heard about the Mullaitivu corpse from the press. The Uthayan was faulted for blindly publishing reports coming from Colombo and abroad without going to the trouble of checking with the school principal who was accessible within the same Jaffna municipal limits. The truth about the corpses remains a mystery.

11. What is the Reality Behind Missing Persons?

Of the 676 missing persons listed by Amnesty International, 576 are from Thenmaratchi and 100 from Valikamam. The committee appointed by the Defence Ministry to look into missing persons heard 59 cases in January (Jaffna Municipality 19, rest of Valikamam 12, Thenmaratchy 28) and another 60 cases in April (Jaffna Municipality 13, rest of Valikamam 27, Thenmaratchi 20). No findings have been made public so far. Of the number given by Amnesty, 361 went missing in August 1996. We may take AI's to be the most complete list.

We had ourselves suggested that one reason why the government was so silent on the matter is that a number of those detained had died under conditions of torture or criminal assault. The case of the remains in the cesspit given in the earlier section is almost certainly one of several such examples that may never come to light. What independent information do we have with regard to this question? According to testimony coming from two middle ranking army officers (above the level of captain), the Army did eliminate scores of persons belonging to the LTTE who were captured or picked up in Valikamam when the army moved into Jaffna town in December 1995. They claimed that their bodies had been burnt. But they added that of those detained after April 1996 when the civilians returned to Valikamam, no one was eliminated and that they are nearly all under custody.

As to the first claim we have no independent sources, but it does conform to the little that is known about what happened after the Army came to Jaffna in December 1995. We recorded the case of a merchant in Kandarmadam in whose house at that time 20 LTTE cadre had taken shelter. When the army came there on a tip off, the merchant himself was shot along with three LTTE cadre. As far as the LTTE is concerned all those left

behind in Valikamam who fell into the Army's hands should have taken cyanide rather than get captured. Even after April 1996, summary executions do not seem to have been regarded unusual - e.g. the execution of two captured cadre in Navindil (Sp. Rep. No.7). If the claim about eliminations is true, it is made the more baneful when one also considers that there is an association of families of missing servicemen in the South with the late **General Kobbekkaduwa's** widow as patron. These families have been frantically seeking information of about 500 missing servicemen. Public appeals to the LTTE through the press by some of the parents have been both moving and conciliatory, with emphasis on a strong desire for peace.

In the case of testimonies we have recorded in the previous reports, the methods of torture were so unrestrained that several of those detained would have died. Despite repeated protests, the Government was in practice very lackadaisical about the matter. This partly owes to the sheer inertia of the system.

We do have testimony that torture in the form of suffocation with petrol bags and severe assault with thick pieces of wood went on at least until the end of last year. A prisoner who was at Chavakachcheri camp testified that when he was beaten on the hands the piece of wood came down on his handcuffs causing them to break. Several persons so treated are likely to be released by the Anuradhapura High Court after a nominal bail of Rs 1500/- - meaning that they are practically innocent. Most of the torture seems to have been carried out at local camps rather than at Palaly base itself. At Palaly base there seems to be some form of internal accounting where records are maintained of prisoners who are brought there. If a prisoner does get sent to Palaly for medical treatment, he or she would then come into this accounting process. An exception seems to be prisoners taken by the Special Forces (SF). According to testimony coming from an army nurse, prisoners sent for medical treatment by the Special Forces are returned to the SF themselves. A particular case referred to was **Shanthi** from Brown Road, Jaffna, a female LTTE cadre picked up by the SF in the uncleared part of Kokkuvil early this year, who was tortured with her vagina being burnt with lighted cigarettes.

The Government seems to have settled down to dealing with the problem of missing persons by releasing a small number of detainees at a time. There are regular news items in the 'Uthayan' providing information about youths detained or released. The issue of 8/12/96 said

PEACE PROCESSES FAILING ACROSS THE WORLD ?

Ramesh Gopalakrishnan

Pace is a word which now haunts as much as war. Peace processes are on simultaneously with war and it is as if George Orwell's 1984 dictum "War is Peace" has become a daily routine in our seared lives. Peace processes all over the world seem to be collapsing and the subcontinent is no exception to this trend of destiny.

The Indo-Pak talks which made much news in the last few months are now being impaired by border skirmishes in Kashmir and by the question whether the United States has any role to play in the impending peace talks between the prime ministers of the two countries. Well, political opinion in India views President Bill Clinton's pronouncements in

this regard with suspicion, but the fact is that US of late has had a big role in peace processes across the globe. The US has its interests, legitimate or otherwise, to keep, and the it is not clear whether US is interested in the peace processes only to the extent of protecting its interests! In any case, the world just sits back and watches the peace processes flounder right under the nose and eyes of Uncle Sam.

The fourth anniversary of the Oslo peace agreement between Israel and Palestine leaders is in sight, but the peace process in West Asia is in tatters. Israel has clearly not honoured many promises and clauses made in the agreement. Post-agreement history witnessed tragedy after tragedy. And hatred, passion, frustration and anger have become commonplace in Israel after the suicide bombings of Hamas and others in Jerusalem. Several leaders who initiated the peace process now want the agreement to be redesigned to suit the current climate of negotiations, though it is easier said than done with nobody willing to make an effort at reconciliation.

Cambodia is another war signpost. Less noticed, it has become more disastrous. Ever since the US-inspired coup against King Norodom Sihanouk in 1970, this great country has been ravaged by wars and revolutions and genocide. And Pol Pot, who came out in public glare after 18 years, is the cause for the current war. His old compatriots in Khmer Rouge thought of trying him and getting rid of him so that they could go in for the much-needed alliance with Prince Norodom Ranariddh, the first prime minister and son of Sihanouk. Pol Pot decided to kill his defence deputy whom he thought was getting closer to Ranariddh. Khmer Rouge leaders responded by capturing Pol Pot and immediately guns boomed in Phnom Penh. The second prime minister, Hun Sen, ensured a coup d'etat even as Ranariddh went abroad immediately. Thus, the two prime ministers extended their battle for the control of the Khmer Rouge support to Cambodia itself. And well, Pol Pot lives on in a jungle prison, Hun Sen in the palatial Phnom Penh bungalow guarded by his armed forces, Ranariddh is exiled in Paris and Sihanouk is battling cancer in Beijing.

that there were 149 youths at Kalutara from the North, most of whom were arrested in 1996. It also said that 21 were being released. On 16/2/97 the Uthayan published a list of 34 persons held at Magazine Prison said to have been given by the EPDP. The Government might hope that by so releasing small numbers at a time, the issue might in the end become so cloudy that it will be very difficult to obtain an accurate picture as to how many were released and how many had disappeared. The existing instruments, both national and international, do not seem to afford a remedy against so called 'friendly' governments getting away with such things.

Recently, a 'Committee for the Defence of Missing Persons' in Jaffna sent a memorandum to the President of Sri Lanka which reads: "...students, government servants and employees of private institutions were among those detained by the security forces. About 800 parents so affected have been blighted in both body and mind. Life has lost its meaning and their life-span too has been shortened...Despite warnings from other quarters it is out of the trust reposed on you and the armed forces that we chose to live under government control...Our children were arrested by the army before our own eyes at their check points. They had neither gone abroad nor joined the LTTE [as is sometimes suggested by officers]...Our minimum demand is that arrangements should be made for them to exchange letters with us - their parents..."

(Continued on page 29)

Cambodia, the land of the great Angkor Vat temples, has been held as a showcase of United Nations-sponsored peace-making and peace-keeping. In the wake of the coup, the power-shift arrangements have been blasted out of existence. Hun Sen has prevailed in Phnom Penh and Ranariddh's forces have been bottled up in the Thailand border along with Khmer Rouge guerrillas. Japan, Cambodia's biggest donors, feels troubled by Hun Sen's brazen ways, but has resumed its aid after a brief impasse. As for the charges of human rights violations, Hun Sen wants the UN human rights team in Cambodia replaced!

In Bosnia, another forest of tortuous peace routes, things are looking down once again. Much like when I was in Serbia at the time of the signing of the Dayton agreement under US auspices in 1995. Bosnia is supposed to be one single entity comprising of the Muslim-Croat federation and the Bosnian Serb republic of Serbska. However, the Muslims and Croat politicians deeply distrust each other and Serbska is getting divided into two regions led respectively at Banja Luka by president Mrs Biljana Plavsic and at the hilltown of Pale by her

one-time mentor Dr Radovan Karadzic, the former president. Dr Karadzic and his associate Dr Ratko Mladic have indicted as war crime suspects and the NATO peace-keeping forces, known as I-FOR, wants to bring Dr Karadzic to hell. A hardcore Serb nationalist, Dr Karadzic wields enormous power in Serbska as well as in neighbouring Serbia and has so far avoided arrest by the I-FOR. Mrs Plavsic, who is being backed by the West, has no choice but to order an election next month, with the Pale-based parliament dismissing her from presidency. The election might formalise the split in Serbska, dividing the army, police and the media into two groups owing their allegiance to the two battling leaderships. The NATO troops will have to vacate by the middle of next year, in any case.

In Afghanistan, the see-saw battle rages on, with the Pakistan-sponsored Taliban forced to vacate ground to the forces controlled by ousted president Burhanuddin Rabbani, his Tajik associate Ahmed Shah Masood, ousted Uzbek warlord Rashid Dostum who fled to Turkey and the Iran-backed Shi'ite forces. The US and its allies are watching the situation closely as the eventual winners in the current battle might hold the key

to the flow of oil reserves in central Asia to the Arabian Sea.

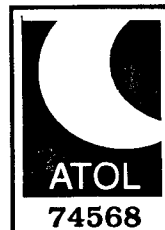
Oil and geo-strategy, no doubt, dictate US initiatives for peace and war. Hence, West Asia is the greatest gamble the US administration has undertaken in terms of peace. The stakes are really high. However, the US peace efforts are over-determined by its closeness with Israel and the pro-Israel lobby in that country. It is in this context that the failure of the Oslo agreement should be seen. The pro-Israeli lobby in the US ensured that no pressure needed to be put on the Israeli government to implement the agreement and grant the much-needed concessions to the Palestinians. Most US commentators and Congressmen turn a blind eye to the excesses of the Israeli government and the provocative speeches of Israeli prime minister Benjamin Netanyahu. Instead, as the great literary critic Edward Said points out, the US-based intelligentsia never lets an opportunity go to attack PLO chairman Yasser Arafat who leads the hapless Palestinian authority. Arafat has responded to this by employing a double strategy of expressing his willingness to broker peace with anyone and

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STRETCHING A HELPING HAND ACROSS THE BORDER

by D N Dixit

India, through the fifty years of its Independence has set out its own parameters and agenda for its dealings with the world. As India completes 50 years of Independence it is time for a critical appraisal and serious introspection of achievements and shortfalls, in terms of India's own foreign policy and national security concerns. In its external dimensions, India's foreign policy objectives were to eradicate colonialism and the remnants of imperialism, to end apartheid and racial discrimination, to advocate peaceful political negotiations to resolve political dispute and military conflicts to ensure non-discriminatory treatment and to create an international economic order ensuring distributive justice to the majority of the people of the world who were poor.

India sought the achievements of these aims not through acquisition of military might or exploitative economic power. Instead India sought to influence public opinion in other countries. The signposts of this influence were India's success in harnessing international public opinion against imperialism and colonialism which resulted in practically all the developing countries following her example: India, collaborating with China to define the five principles of peaceful co-existence which provided the ideological foundations for the establishment of the non-aligned movement; India's initiative in cementing Afro-Asian solidarity; India's successful mediatory efforts leading to the Geneva agreement for

Through fifty years of Independence, India has set out its own parameters for its dealings with the world. Now, it is time for critical appraisal and serious introspection of our achievements, and our shortfalls, writes J N Dixit.

The question arises whether there were no inadequacies in our foreign policy whereby Indian interests would have been better if our foreign policy stance had been different.



establishing peace in Indo-China and for ending the civil war in Congo; and India's success in fashioning a balanced pattern of bilateral relationship with the US and the USSR.

The period from 1947 to 1962 can be described the period during which India created and framed her foreign policy to meet the objectives listed earlier. The military defeat of India in the Sino-Indian conflict in 1962 can be described the period during which India created and framed her foreign policy to meet the objectives listed earlier. The military defeat of India resolve the Kashmir conflict on the merits of the issue brought about a shift in India's foreign policy. These events taught the country the important, albeit unpalatable, lesson that international relations are governed by power equations and realpolitik, that are an amoral phenomenon. From 1962 to 1971 India translated this lesson into her foreign and security policies. India focused attention on improving its defence capacities and on its technological and economic development. India created equations with eastern Europe and the Soviet Union mainly because

these countries, when compared to western democracies, were responsive to India's needs.

India adopted a two-dimensional strategy to safeguard its interests. It activated entities like the UNC-TAD, the Group of 77, and it strengthened the non-aligned movement to counter the negative pressures generated on developing countries by the Western powers for their own purposes. Secondly, India strengthened and expanded its technological, economic and defence relationships with the Socialist countries led by the Soviet Union to safeguard India's specific interests in terms of defence, development and security. The period between 1963 and 1964 witnessed the continuation of this dual strategy which generally met India's interests and India's foreign policy objective.

Lal Bahadur Shastri briefly and Indira Gandhi for nearly a decade-and-a-half, introduced the necessary realism and purposiveness in our foreign and national security policies. The most significant manifestation of this was noticed in the successful intervention in the east Pakistan crisis.

India became as self-reliant as it could in its defence and technological capacities. It successfully structured political and economic equations with the different important powers in the world. It withstood international pressure on accepting discriminatory and unequal disarmament measures like the Non-Proliferation Treaty. India became a nuclear weapon-capable power and developed an entirely new and beneficial pattern of relations with important countries like Iran and countries in southeast Asia.

Having recounted these trends, the question arises whether there were no inadequacies in our foreign policy whereby Indian interests would have been better if our foreign policy stance had been different. Six such instances come to mind. The first was our taking the Kashmir issue to the UN when we were on the brink of successfully neutralising the Pakistani invasion of Jammu and Kashmir. The second was our not dealing firmly enough with Pakistan when it signed the defence agreement with the US in 1954. The third is our not being alert enough about China's intentions. The fourth was our accommodating China when it first took over Tibet. The fifth was our not becoming a nuclear weapon power immediately after China became a nuclear weapon power in 1964. It is relevant to note that the United States had urged India to become a nuclear weapon power at this point of time. Panditji rejected the proposal. The sixth was our failure to acquire nuclear weapons at a time when Pakistan did in the

(Continued from page 20)

kissing in public the leaders of Hamas and Islamic Jihad!

The Lankan peace-brokers will have to take all these into account. Lanka, which has a certain geo-strategic importance and not oil, will interest the West only that much. Of course, the visible presence of Tamil refugees and the growth of an articulate Tamil intelligentsia in the West will carry some weight. Certainly, an initiative like that of Dr Liam Fox needs to be correctly exploited. But one also has to be guarded about the paradox of peace processes generating more conflict, tension and bitterness than progress towards peace and harmony. Well, the lessons of the 1987 Indo-Lankan peace agreement cannot be easily forgotten. □

1980's.

The continuing facets of Indian Foreign policy are:

* India's territorial integrity is under threat from Pakistan due to Pakistani claims on Jammu and Kashmir, and from China, due to the still unresolved boundary disputes. In the latter case, the threat is not operational, as it was until the late Eighties. It remains, nevertheless, until a Sino-Indian agreement is reached on the subject.

! Internal centrifugal forces continue to affect India's geo-political unity. There are demands for secession from segments of population in Jammu and Kashmir and northeastern states of India. Separatist aspirations have been expressed by some groups in Tamil Nadu, Punjab and north Bengal on and off since the late Fifties/early Sixties.

! Adversary relations with Pakistan and China, and military conflict with these countries have resulted in India having to divert its financial material and trained manpower for defence purposes, thereby reducing Indian capacities for formulate and implement social and policies for national consolidation and reconstruction. During the period 1984 to 1997 the Indian leadership has managed

to respond to these effectively regardless of our limitations.

The following can be considered the successes of India's foreign policy:

! Despite the enormous diversities and centrifugal forces affecting India, we have remained a united country.

! We have safeguarded our territorial integrity despite external threats and pressures which we have faced through sub-military threats and political challenges.

! Despite negative perceptions about India amongst India's neighbours, however unjustified they may be, we have maintained a working relationship with our neighbours in overall terms, whatever the interim ups and downs might have been, managed to stabilise our relation even with Pakistan and Bangladesh.

! We have retained in our foreign policy, our nuclear, our space and our technological options, despite continuous negative pressures on us to fall in line with arrangements which would have been detrimental to our national interests.

! We have managed to structure a working relationship with all the power centres over the last 50 years whether it

was during the Cold War period or during the transition after the Cold War.

! We are an effective and credible member of all the multilateral institutions dealing with global issues. Even if we are not given the role and position due to us because of power politics.

! We have managed our defence and foreign economic relations with sufficient imagination and flexibility to meet our interests and to ensure the safety and well-being of our people in a complex world of ferment and change.

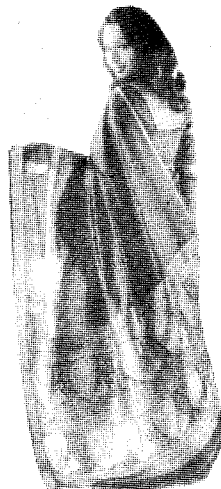
! That we have achieved all this as a democracy subject to contradictory pulls and pressures of plural society characterised by enormous diversities is a remarkable achievement, if one were to indulge in a comparative evaluation, what India has achieved in foreign policy terms is something which all the countries of Europe are still in the process of achieving after nearly 300 years of experience as nation states with a lesser population and with much great resources.

At this juncture, we must be capable of critical introspection about these matters. But there is every reason for us to be imbued with hope provided we remain united as a country.

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India and Pakistan - A Long Way to Go to Justify Celebrations

T.N.Gopalan

As both the government and the media sought to artificially whip up a hysteria over the golden jubilee celebrations in India, as also in Pakistan, though to a lesser extent, the large impoverished masses remained stone-cold. What was there for them to celebrate, they wondered. After all they are still caught in a time warp and the much talked about progress has passed them by blithely.

Even the more conscientious and less facile and complacent among the middle classes in both the countries refused to be swept off their feet by all the hype. If the funeral-baked meats coldly furnished the marriage tables at the wedding of Hamlets mother, the historic session of the Indian parliament on the dawn of independence was sought to be parodied by another midnight session during the golden jubilee. There was no Jawaharlal Nehru fascinated by the tryst with destiny and there were a number of criminals and looters in the gathering.

In the six-day special session that followed when an appropriately physically puny Speaker P.A.Sangma called upon the nation to gear itself for a second freedom struggle and still punier characters, in terms of their morality that is, tore the air and heightened the noise pollution in the nations capital, none except the media seemed bothered too very much by all the farce. If anything the housewives addicted to TV soaps were cursing the special session idea and the direct telecast since it deprived them of their favourite afternoon fare on doordarshan. The special session was perhaps the single greatest non-event of the year.

The mood in Pakistan was even more grim, with none but the hypocritical elite hailing the golden jubilee and patting their own backs for a good job done, keeping the entity intact despite the hiccups which had intervened. But their rhetorical flourishes were drowned out by the staccato fire of the guns in Karachi which continues to be torn by mindless sectarian violence. The track-record of successive rulers in both the countries do make a pathetic reading. In 1993-94, an estimated 320 millions (against a total population of 915.9 millions) were officially deemed to be living in poverty in India. Nearly one-third have to make

do without even two square meals a day. If in 1950-51 the literacy rate was only 18.33 per cent, after 50 years of independence rule, the figure has inched up only to 52.2 per cent. And in the wake of the much trumpeted liberalisation, unemployment is rising, the poor continue to slide down the scale, health-care costs are skyrocketing and the tribals and the dalits are pushed further and further to the brink, sparking off violent protests, not to speak of the communal and caste tensions wracking the polity.

And what about Pakistan? The social sector has been consistently neglected. There are more illiterates today in the country than there were at independence. Educational standards have fallen and healthcare has deteriorated. Infrastructure is crumbling, being chipped away as it is by an ever-increasing population. Pakistan has one of the highest population growth rates in the world, the highest in Asia. On its 50th anniversary, it suffered the ignominy of food riots. It is this seemingly endless litany of failures which has prompted observers to term Pakistan a failed state, notes sadly Kamal Siddiqi, a well-known Pakistani journalist.

The Pakistani elite were relatively on the defensive about the fate of the nation, going into contorted arguments to try and prove that Mohammed Ali Jinnah's two-nation theory still held good despite Bangladesh, the perennial clashes between the Mohajirs (the Muslims who went from India) and the native Punjabis or Sindhis and the equally unceasing strife between the Sunnis and the Shias.

Their Indian counterparts, equally apologetic about the economic mess the country was in and social injustice on an extraordinary scale, still held their heads high on the preservation of democracy.

Our Nehrus and Patels had the vision, the unflagging commitment to democracy; for all our failures on a whole host of fronts, the democratic institutions have survived and flourished; barring the emergency aberration, democracy has reigned supreme; it has become deeply rooted in the psyche of the people, and in the institutions responsible for the governance of the country; and no one can trifle with it any longer. Such was the

refrain, a very soothing explanation that in the face of the innumerable problems plaguing India that is Bharat.

But then all the institutions of governance are bursting at the seams and threatening to collapse at various points. Take for instance the very entity called India, or the nation state. When Mr.C.L. Sulzberger of the New York Times once wondered what held India together as a state against the various centrifugal forces, Jawaharlal Nehru reportedly told him that throughout history, you would find that politically, India was often divided, but the same ideas coursed through it, the same background of culture...(though) one of the politically unifying force was the British occupation.

But the supposed cultural unity is receiving serious batterings all round. While Kashmir and the whole of North East are in flames, the various regional satraps from Bal Thackeray to Laloo Prasad Yadav manage to hijack the entire state apparatus and the newly energized communal forces epitomized by the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) are poised not only to overrun the northern regions, but also capture power at the Centre and sow the seeds of renewed clashes with the Muslims all over the country besides evoking strong reactions from the various regional forces.

Strangely it is the South, which had witnessed secessionist movements in the formative years of the independent India which remains peaceful by and large barring of course the ferocious Naxalite movement in certain districts of Andhra Pradesh. Tamil Nadu, the nation of the Tamils, the home of the Dravidian movement which originally rejected the very concept of India, has become the most loyal constituent, and the so-called Dravidian parties have all happily allowed themselves to be co-opted into the mainstream.

If, in the face of the myriad problems, India has survived as a nation state, it is because the ruling elite have seen the wisdom in hanging together. But as poverty and exploitation intensify and the executive is progressively weakened, leaving it unable to stem the popular anger in time or take appropriate remedial measures, such a survival itself will become a moot point.

The Congress has become thoroughly marginalized, the coalition of centrist forces time and again demonstrate their crass inability to provide a cohesive administration, one would not have seen a weaker Prime Minister than the incumbent. And the BJP, though it boasts of its increasing popularity among the Hindus of the North and its strong centralising tendencies, could, if and when it

(Continued on next page)

(Continued from page 23)

comes to power, actually prove quite divisive and destabilise the polity through its myopic policies.

In striking contrast Pakistan which has fared much worse in the last 50 years, having been through martial law for the major part of its existence and for the last two decades having been held to ransom by the antediluvian mullahs, looks forward to the future with some hope. The simple logic being things cannot be any worse. A largely democratic government is in place though the Nawaz Sharif government is considered very unrepresentative because of the very poor turn-out in the elections.

As a third world country, Pakistan is steeped in corruption, but the Sharif regime is expected to be more tolerable on this score than its predecessor when the Bhuttos had brazenly looted the exchequer and the people were left to moan and die. Even now more than 80 per cent of the budget is consumed by defence spending and debt servicing, leaving precious little for developmental works.

And a matter of greater concern, the state-funded madrasas, the so-called religious schools, are churning out mindless, ill-educated fanatics, reared in hatred and venom and they could prove a most disastrous force ever to have struck the nation. Mercifully certain sections are coming alive to the danger of the growth of Taliban-type forces and are talking in terms of reining in the madrasas and the mullahs. Besides there is a talk of a new census, the last one was in 1981 and then given up altogether because of pressures from vested interests. Also some do make bold to assert the need for family planning - some more positive indicators.

Like the BJP being forced to eat the humble pie and cling on to the cantankerous Bahujan Samaj Party of the Dalits - if the arch-conservatives and those at the bottom of the heap can come together even if in pursuit of power, it only means that the polity could still survive, whether the people themselves benefit in the process or not. And the disparate regional parties do still manage to hang together under I.K. Gujral. In the circumstances, it would make sense for both the countries to bury the hatchet. In fact Gujral did make some noise and initiate some moves. But he is a flip-flop man par excellence. He offered unconditional talks with the Kashmiri militants, sought induct a known pacifist into his office, implicitly gave his nod for talks with Sharif at Washington, then retracted on all fronts under pressure from the hawks. When last heard he said he would not mind talking with Sharif after all.

In Pakistan the cry, "No compromise

Whither Dravidian Challenge to Indian Nationalism?

Ramesh Gopalakrishnan

Political dravidianism has quite a few ideologues in Tamil Nadu. Prominent among them, of course, are chief minister M Karunanidhi and his nephew Murasoli Maran, now India's industries minister and the brain behind Sun TV, one of south Asia's biggest private-held satellite channels. Two years ago, Maran published a history of the early Dravidian movement and Karunanidhi loses no opportunity to recount this history to his sweet thambis (younger brothers) whom he says he loves more than his life. Of late, younger scholars have started mapping out this field: Dr M S S Pandian, in his book *The Image Trap*, has recorded the rise of the phenomenon of M G Ramachandran and his blood-of-blood rasikars (fans). A R Venkatachalapathy, an ardent bibliophile at the Maraimalai Adigal library in Madras, has quite a few essays to credit. S V Rajadurai, once a firebrand Marxist revolutionary, last year co-authored, with V Geetha, a political biography of Periyar EV Ramasamy which can be seen more as a polemic against Indian nationalists and Dravidian "distortionists". And Guna, the writer from Bangalore, who served a prison term last year for daring to criticise EVR for subjecting the cause of separate Tamil Nadu to a larger Dravida Naadu, or south India!

Well, there are ideologues and ideologues, but what differentiates them is the level at which they consider the Dravidian movement a success or a betrayal! The measure of success or betrayal, however, depend upon the respective viewpoints adopted by them. There are those who adopt the criticism that

unless Kashmir is sorted out. We are the sole guardians of the Muslim interests in the sub-continent", still rent the air and make it difficult for any government to cut down on the defence expenditure. And the military establishment itself still remains very powerful. When a group of enlightened Indians set out to the Wagah border to meet like-minded Pakistanis, no one was allowed to cross the borders from the other side even as a symbolic gesture of friendship and harmony.

Miles to go, miles to go before the two countries get out of the woods and embark on a course of progress and prosperity. □

the current state of Dravidian movement amounts to a betrayal or degeneration.

Thus, when the DMK conference held in Tiruchirappalli last year had a poster depicting the shadow of Gandhi behind the EVR photo, it is derided as "capitulation". When Mayor Mu Ka Stalin leads a DMK cadre march with a huge national flag on the arterial Anna Road on the occasion of the golden jubilee of Indian independence, it is seen as "compromise". When Karunanidhi offers to write the history of Tamils' contribution to Indian independence from Britain, it is termed "placatory". Thus, for the betrayal theorists, contemporary Dravidian politics is sham and parties like the DMK, AIADMK, MDMK and PMK are nothing but distortions of EVR's legacy. They consider the hero-worshipping indulged in by these parties as a monstrosity, their civic tolerance of personal religion or spirituality as inevitable degeneration, their electoral politics as an avoidable exercise in futility, their statement-wars as a clumsy circus and their welfare programmes as cheap gimmicks out to hoodwink the people of Tamil Nadu. To counter all this, they harp on the Dravidian republican ideals as the right framework for good society and statehood.

Well, the framework of success brings about a very different scenario. Indeed,

Periyar went against the grain of Indian nationalism ever since he broke away from the Congress in the mid-twenties on the question of social reform. And as for August 15, 1947, EVR gave a clarion call to his disciples to observe it a black day, even as his ardent followers like Tiruvarur Thangaraj were distributing sweets to celebrate the British decision to leave the country. EVR's decision to stay away from Indian nationalist mainstream came at the end of a turbulent social and political battle which he felt had decisively been won by the Indian nationalist mainstream. EVR was rightly impatient with the level and progress of social reform envisaged by the Congress, especially Gandhiji. Also, EVR found to his dismay that his concept of Dravida Naadu did not find takers in rest of south India.

However, EVR found a new strategy with which he could go ahead and work

within the framework of the Indian constitution. He would continue to keep his DK out of electoral politics, but would campaign for the emergence of a genuine backward class leadership in Tamil country. He found this leadership in Kamaraj, whom he kept backing for the next 30 years. Thus EVR's distaste for electoral politics did not keep him away from campaigning for "Pachchai Tamizhar" Kamaraj in elections and by-polls or decisively influencing state policies on a number of issues, especially social reform.

C N Annadurai's strategic decision to welcome Indian independence and break away from EVR proved a watershed in Tamil politics. Within a decade, the DMK was to smash the monopoly of the Congress in Tamil politics and make the communists fight for every seat. Thus, the rise of the DMK brought about the emergence of competitive politics in Tamil Nadu. With EVR, the atheist rebel, operating through Kamaraj and Annadurai, his chief disciple, and the leftists performing the mandatory role of critics, Kamaraj had no option but to push through several reform measures. Annadurai thus managed to carve out a political space for the DMK which went on to win the mayoral elections in Madras and entered the state legislative assembly in the late fifties.

En route, Annadurai had made a cool shift away from atheism. He quickly adopted theism which is exemplified in the verse literature of saint Tirumular as Onre kulam, Oruvane Devan. This, according to the betrayal theorists, was done with an intention to garner votes; but seen from the perspective of mainstream Tamil culture, it can be said that Annadurai was merely trying to cross from an inane Western dualism to a form of theism which owes its origin to great savants like Tiruvalluvar, Tirumular, Thayumanavar, Vallalar and Subramania Bharathi. Actually, Annadurai was making the DMK compete for this mainstream cultural space in which the Congress had settled itself.

While EVR maintained a general distaste for art forms, Annadurai and his followers never let an opportunity go in working with new forms. Even as the Congress was struggling to access the latest art form of cinema, the Dravidian ideologues were revelling in it. They went on to establish a stranglehold on the emerging mass form of cinema which adopted, marginalised or destroyed earlier popular forms like musical play and folk theatre.

In the early sixties, Annadurai crossed yet another problem-zone. He went on to drop the demand for Dravida Naadu stating that the DMK would not

endanger India's security given the context of the Sino-Indian war. Thereby, the DMK prepared itself to enter into a debate with all kinds of representational social forces in the subcontinent. This decisive shift gave the DMK more space to make alliances across the political spectrum and, within the next five years, the party was to struggle for several major issues and capture state power and, till now, never let the Congress rule Tamil Nadu. Thereby, the task of integration of "Dravida Naadu" with India was achieved forever.

Thus, it can be seen that history presents any and every movement with a series of opportunities which it can exploit or miss. A movement is best measured with by its relative successes and failures even as it runs its course in the public sphere. While there can be successes or failures, the movement cannot be stated to be suffering from the sole intention of betrayal akin to a conspiracy theory.

Well, it is clear that state-level parties and their offshoots have more stakes in the Indian constitutional framework today. The parties are certain to push for some landmark amendments, but it is clear that they are satisfied with its general framework. The parties are overjoyed by the fading out of the Congress and eager to exercise their new-found power in a coalition set-up.

Thus, Karunanidhi and Tamil Maanila Congress boss G K Moopanar are virtually uncrowned kings. Tamil Nadu, with its 39 MPs in the ruling front, has managed to gain four cabinet ministers and five ministers of state in Delhi. No other state has got such massive representation. Maran sits in Delhi to clear foreign investment proposals and travels to London to meet Tony Blair. Palaniappan Chidambaram, the blue-eyed boy of international financial institutions, is the finance minister. Arunachalam and Venkatraman handle chemicals and surface transport respectively. These ministers have a whole range of senior bureaucrats who hail from the south to help them out, apart from lawyers, chartered accountants and software experts from the south who have made it big all over India.

Thus, economically, the "Dravida Naadu" is today much more an integral part of India just like the rest of India is! It has all the problems of urban and rural poverty, child labour, bursting cities, environmental pollution, poor infrastructure and poor health and education facilities for the majority of the people, non-implementation of land reforms etc., They are becoming as insurmountable here as elsewhere. And no one can imagine that the Dravidian parties, or any

other party, including the communist outfits, are contemplating a popular revolution today!

The crucial issue of social reform, addressed by the Dravidian movement, is now an all India phenomenon, with particular geographical variations. It would be interesting to compare the various features of the reform initiatives. Nevertheless, it can be stated without doubt that no one strand of reform, as envisaged by Buddha or Ramanujar or Guru Nanak or Kabir or Raja Rammohan Roy or Phule or Narayana Guru or Gandhi or EVR or Babasaheb Ambedkar, has the power or potential to dominate and claim full-scale hegemony over the rest of the reform strands. There are a million or zillion strands of reform. Such is the multiplicity of possibilities in the subcontinent. Hence, the Dravidian movement has a strong claim to be one strand of reformist modernity in India, but, no one strand can serve as a complete model of reform. In the best interest of reform, there should be better to have a reconciliation or harmony among various trends of reform.

Well, reconciliation, indeed, is an interesting possibility for politics. It is not just a routine honourable compromise. Reconciliation was genuine when Willy Brandt as German Chancellor flew to Israel to apologize to the Jews for the Holocaust. Mikhail Gorbachev cried at the funeral of Andrei Sakharov who spent more than 20 years in Soviet prisons. F W de Clerk left the presidency and worked under Nelson Mandela as an act of repentance. Reconciliation calls for trust and genuine dialogue between differing points of view about change and reform. It means assuming enough responsibility for the political decision taken on the basis of pragmatism and ethics. To quote Albert Camus, it is an act of culture and moderation. Moderation is neither a strategic withdrawal, akin to calling off of violent stirs, nor an act of betrayal, nor a compromise on good-old ideology.

And writing history provides an opportunity to exercise moderation, to reconcile even the best of opposites. It is to be seen whether in this task in which ideologues are failing a sensitive historian can succeed. □

No man is an island, entire of itself. Any man's death diminishes me, because I am involved in mankind; and therefore never send to know for whom the bell tolls; it tolls for thee.

- John Donne

The Veerappan Sideshow

T.N.Gopalan

The DMK government did jump into the golden jubilee bandwagon with gusto. That old war-horse, Karunanidhi, announced that he was going to write a book on the lives of some of the more significant freedom fighters. Expressing his profound admiration for the martyrs, he claimed that those days he was too young to participate in the struggle, a dramatic turn around for a veteran of the Dravidian movement. Still the people at large ignored such effusions and celebrations. Their attention lay in some other direction - towards the forests on the Tamil Nadu-Karnataka border where the notorious sandalwood smuggler Muniyasamy Veerappan was holding eight Karnataka forest personnel hostage.

In fact right on the Independence day Veerappan's deadline for the fulfilment of his demand for a ransom of Rs.50 million expired and the two governments had not paid up. And so everyone was more worried about the fate of the hostages than about the golden jubilee celebrations. Veerappan had actually threatened to shoot down the hostages one by one if the money he had demanded did not materialise. Mercifully nothing of that sort happened and all of them were released unharmed on Aug.24, after 43 days in his custody. And that thanks mainly to the efforts of Mr.R.Rajagopal, Editor and Publisher of the popular Tamil bi-weekly *Nakkeeran*.

R.R. Gopal who was the first to take on the then formidable Jayalalitha well before she became unpopular, relentlessly exposing her misdeeds, liberally resorting to slanders and canards though, has thus successfully bearded Veerappan in his den and rescued the hostages from the jaws of death, as it were.

But for all the expectations raised Veerappan and his gang did not surrender. Eating the humble pie, the two state governments had agreed to accept his surrender offer, detain him and his men in a special camp, plead for a lenient punishment from the courts and then work for his amnesty. They had also guaranteed him complete security for the gang. None of you will be harmed when you turn yourselves over to us, they had sent word through their emissary Gopal.

But Veerappan has declared that he will not surrender unless he is guaranteed that no trial would be conducted against him or his men and all that he is

willing to settle for is a two or two-and-a-half-year detention in a special camp which could be set off against all his offences. Quite unrealistic demands and so unlikely he will surrender on his own in the near future.

But what makes this brigand tick? He has eluded the mightiest operations mounted by specially trained police personnel for years and has mowed down more than a hundred policemen and informants in the process? He has indeed a Robin-hood image among the people of the Tamil Nadu areas bordering the forests inhabited by him. Though he is ruthless in dealing with anyone suspected of collaborating with the police, he does go to the help of the people as much as he can, rendering them monetary help too on occasions like marriage, etc.

In his press interviews in 1993 he had recalled how he was initiated into hunting down the elephants in pursuit of the precious ivory when he was only 14 years old, how he had killed as many as 200 elephants before he switched over to sandalwood smuggling, how he made a lot of money in the process, how he regularly used to grease the palms of both the forest and police personnel, how the local politicians had offered him patronage and protection, seeking his help to win votes en bloc and how conveniently they ditched him when it suited them.

The rags to riches story of a former AIADMK MLA with strong links to Veerappan, but who was never indicted by the police, is often cited as a case in point. He had wondered in self-righteous indignation: Why these fellows are after me? The MLAs, MPs, are all in this dirty trade...everybody who can, fells sandalwood and carts away by truckloads...they have bought up estates, built hotels and castles...but I am in this only because I know no other trade... this is my only source of livelihood and I have to take care of all my men...

Journalists who have interacted with him affirm that he is very amiable towards his associates and is concerned about their health. No special treatment for him, he shares with them whatever he has and so on. Veerappan's dreaded empire in his own enclave rests on the twin pillars of empathy and terror. The *Nakkeeran* team vividly recalls how a dog found in the company of Veerappan's

associates was brutally strangled to death when it ceaselessly barked at some new arrival on the scene - it has ceased to be useful...it is perhaps a danger now...we can't take chances, they were quoted as saying.

The almost total absence of people's co-operation is a factor in the colossal failure of the police operations to nab him, says a local journalist. At Gopinatham, Veerappan's native place, on the Tamil Nadu-Karnataka border, and nearby villages, the residents fall silent on being questioned about his whereabouts. They do benefit from his munificence. Besides they are terrified of crossing his path.

Veerappan harbours a strong resentment against the police not just because of the ruthless operations against him and those who offer his men shelter or provide information on the movements of the police. He has been let down badly on two occasions. Once in 1986 when a Karnataka forest official induced him to surrender with promise of an amnesty only to turn brutal and stretch him on the rack. But he managed to escape and get even with the department later with a string of ruthless killings.

It was almost an encore with his brother Arjunan but who was found poisoned to death in police custody. He cannot forgive the police for such betrayals and would go to any length to avenge.

The plight of as many as 119 Tamils detained under the TADA and languishing in Karnataka prisons or externed in Bangalore and living amidst untold miseries for more than three years now is another telling instance of the insensitive of the police and forest depts. - their only crime, having lived in the areas frequented by Veerappan and ipso facto suspected of having collaborated with him.

Incidentally even though he hates the police of any hue, his anger towards the Karnataka is much stronger. Somehow a Vanniyar by caste, he has come to have a strong affection for fellow Tamils and he and his men had rendered a lot of help to the Tamils displaced from Bangalore, Kolar and other areas following the Cauvery-related anti-Tamil riots in 1992.

In November 1995 he had abducted three Tamil Nadu forest department personnel and released them after holding them hostage for 20 days. Then too he was paid a ransom of Rs.3 lakh though the then Jaya government strongly denied it. He himself confirmed the payment subsequently.

Later he went on to excoriate Jayalalitha before Gopals video cameras denounce her as the corrupt queen and exhort the people to vote her out. The footage was repeatedly aired on the

DMK-ruling-family-owned Sun TV during the run-up to the last general elections.

Be that as it may, if he has not been paid any ransom, when he has not been granted amnesty, why should he release the hostages, his best bargaining chips? Why should he choose to jeopardise his entire future, risk nabbing and incarceration and under humiliating conditions? The story is that he was actually paid a huge ransom, if not Rs.50 million, at least half of it. Karunanidhi who too had talked about the imminence of surrender is highly embarrassed.

Back in 1993 some psychiatrists who studied the behavioural pattern of the elusive smuggler concluded - he is an amazing criminal and he is powered by a range of strong emotions...he so strongly believes that he is more sinned against and is thirsting every second of his life for revenge, that only a bloody end is conceivable in his case...he will more likely than not go down fighting. Says Gopal, he is definitely desperate and he is seething with rage against the police, the forest officials, those from the Karnataka side especially... He says Veerappan has many scores to settle...still I also believe that he has mellowed over a period of time, seen the pointlessness of it all... Given a chance he would prefer to settle down to a normal civilian life, free from all the tensions and uncertainty he is now plagued by.... But then surrender will be on his terms alone, Gopal feels.

The dense forests, rich with sandalwood trees, provide ideal hide-outs for the desperado and his men who live like mountain rats. The undulating terrain combined with bad roads make it difficult for the police untrained in jungle techniques to track down the gang. Ironically the tall-talking all-bluster policemen like the self-proclaimed Rambo of Rambos, Walter Devaram, depend solely on the forest officials to guide them into the interior areas into which the foresters themselves have not ventured.

Say many observers: he knows the thick forest maze like the back of his palm ... and he knows his habitat so intimately that he can detect the movement of even the reptiles from the noises they make...theres no way they can catch him alive unless he agrees to surrender... Points out Gopal, the living conditions in the areas bordering the forests are intolerable, you can even say they live in some pre-historic era sans all rights, all amenities, harassed and terrorised by the police... and they know that spilling the beans, if they have any to spill, means brutal retribution from Veerappan its pathetic ... one can only wish some solution is thrashed out earlier than later and these people live in peace. □

TAMIL UNITY AND THE POSITION OF UPCOUNTRY TAMILS

by K.A.Reddiar, Trincomalee

The degrading and pathetic conditions of the upcountry Tamils, who are the third and fourth generation of men and women brought from South India to work as labourers in the tea and rubber plantations during the British rule have been described very vividly by several authors. Their plight worsened during the period 1971-1977 mainly as a result of food shortages that drove this section of the population to near starvation. This was perceived by them as inhuman and the worst form of discrimination practised by the then "socialist" Government. Although the restrictions on imports and on the inland transportation of paddy/rice affected the population as a whole, other sections of the population were not that badly off as the upcountry Tamils, since they received favoured treatment in the dispensation of public welfare benefits.

Faced with starvation and no prospects for even casual employment in the plantation sector, many migrated to the North, mainly to the districts of Vavuniya and Kilinochchi. Some also moved to Mullaitivu and Mannar. This was also the time when the main Tamil political party, the TULF, was suggesting that the upcountry Tamils should settle in the Northern and Eastern Provinces. The Tamil weekly "Suthanthiran", the unofficial organ of this party (formerly the Federal Party) was actively involved in spreading this idea. The adoption of the 1972 Constitution, despite the overwhelming opposition of the political parties representing the Tamils and the discrimination by the Government against the Tamils that followed suit in employment, university admissions and socio-economic development, reinforced the demand for a Tamil homeland in northern and eastern Sri Lanka. Perhaps, the then perception of the Tamil leaders was that significant increase in the Tamil population in the two provinces claimed as traditional Tamil areas would arrest the demographic change occurring there through the settlement of Sinhalese families under the state-sponsored colonisation schemes and also strengthen the political clout in pressing the demand for a Tamil homeland in Sri Lanka.

The development in the 1970s mainly through agriculture that occurred in Vavuniya and Kilinochchi, which was de-

stroyed after the outbreak of the civil war was in no small measure due to the hard work of these upcountry Tamils who had settled there. Having been used to working in the harsh conditions in the tea plantations, they toiled in the harsher conditions of the Vanni region in the hope of securing a better future for themselves and their progenies. They also felt that their safety and security would be assured for all times.

The landlord farmers, the so-called Sri Lankan Tamils, exploited these hapless workers to the maximum. Actually in terms of the way they were treated in the upcountry, these workers found themselves in no better position in the North. Nevertheless, they were not in a hopeless situation as their off-springs became more enlightened and could demand for their basic rights, including reasonable wages. Some actually prospered with the passage of time and a few of their off-springs were able to enter the universities. Those born in these districts became more or less normal citizens. Inter-marriages between the locals and the descendants of the upcountry Tamils also happened. The presence of these families were quite conspicuous in Vavuniya and Kilinochchi.

The conditions of the Tamil people in the estate sector improved significantly after the 1977 parliamentary election, when the UNP regained power having won the election with four-fifths majority and the new Government embraced open market economic policies. There was an economic upsurge with substantial increase in investment and high growth. The flow of Tamil migrants from the upcountry to the North also ended. Despite all these developments concerning the upcountry Tamils, the total number of professionals among them cannot be more than 2,000. Significant numbers are employed as primary school teachers in Government schools and as clerks, supervisors and factory workers in the plantation sector. Some are also employed in the wholesale and retail trading establishments in Colombo and in the hotels. With these exceptions, the bulk of the upcountry Tamil labour force are employed as labourers in the plantations. However, the fact is that there has been some improvement in the status of the upcountry

Tamils since the 1970s.

It is believed that a sizable number of the youths whose parents migrated to the North in the 1970s from the upcountry has joined the LTTE. Thus, this section of the Tamil community is now sacrificing directly for a cause advanced by the leadership from Jaffna. It is they who did most of the tiring menial jobs this side of Kilaly and at Thandikulam during the period 1990-1995. Will the Jaffna Tamils who owe much to them appreciate their contributions and reward them for all what they have done since settling in the North? The attitude of the Jaffna Tamils towards this section of the Tamil community has not changed much. The thinking of the LTTE leadership on this subject is unknown. The Jaffna Tamil elites, the group that include the professionals and the business community still consider the descendants of the upcountry Tamils as an inferior group. Unlike many among this "high class", the Tamil children of the settlers from the upcountry did not migrate to foreign countries for whatever reason. From these safe havens, the escapees can afford to raise the war cry as loud as they want and this is happening.

Politically, the attitude of the "high

class" Tamils towards the underprivileged upcountry Tamils can be discerned from a common statement among them which reflects their basic approach to others: "Naangal Engal Vali, Neengal Engal Vali." Translated into English it means, "We go along our way, you go along your way." The paradox here is that while a section of the Tamils continue to be discriminated by fellow Tamils, the Sinhala nationalists do not differentiate between the Tamils from the North-East and those from the upcountry. To them all Tamils are their enemies. During the 1983 anti-Tamil riots, the upcountry Tamils were not spared by the organized Sinhala goons, who attacked the Tamils and destroyed their property in Colombo. Even in the refugee camps set up in the aftermath of the 1983 riots, the Jaffna Tamils did not mix with the upcountry Tamils. The class distinction prevailed even in this most difficult situation! Even today, all Tamils are treated alike by the security forces in their operations searching for "terrorists."

As an illustration, a happening in the recent local government elections in Nuwara Eliya is cited. One of the unsuccessful candidates in the municipal election was a Jaffna Tamil businessman. He

canvassed votes on the grounds that all Jaffna Tamils residing in Nuwara Eliya municipality area needed someone to look after their interests. The intention to retain the separate identity as Jaffna Tamil even in an area where the majority of the people are the upcountry Tamils is evident. A fact that stands out like a carving on a stone is that Jaffna Tamils can survive, prosper and possibly dominate the North-East area and the upcountry Tamils as well only in a united Sri Lanka! If the Jaffna Tamils are isolated from the other Tamils they will be like fish out of water!

The fact that the present upcountry Tamils are the third and fourth generation of the Tamils who migrated from South India and that the vast majority of them (except the few among the business community) have no contacts with India is recognized by the Sinhalese, who have accepted them as Sri Lankans. But the Jaffna and Batticaloa Tamils still consider them as Indians! Are they serious when they talk of Tamil unity? Is Tamil unity needed only temporarily to serve their cause? Will the upcountry Tamils be ever integrated into the mainstream Tamil society?

(Continued on next page)



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Some may think that this is not the time to raise such questions. But these are so vital to the future well-being of a large section of the Tamil community that it is foolhardy to assume that the common ethnic factor alone will assure equality among all Tamils, once the privileged section of the community achieves its political goal. It is with great pain of mind I have to state here that even after 14 years of misery caused to all Tamils by the ongoing war between the State and the LTTE, the attitude (both economically and socially) of the Jaffna Tamils towards the poorer upcountry Tamils has not changed for the better at all. The relevance at this point in time of the above questions, if viewed in this context will be understood.

The arrogance of many Jaffna Tamils prevents them from recognising and accepting the obvious. The reality is that the upcountry Tamils are advancing in many areas although the progress is slow. Literacy rate is rising due to compulsory primary education. Television is also playing an important part in providing information on events happening outside their habitats. Their homes have electricity. They are no longer living like the frog in the well. Many educated youths are gradually moving out to be employed outside the estate sector. The upcountry Tamils were kept in economic bondage tied to the plantations and attempts to seek employment elsewhere in the formal sectors were thwarted by various surreptitious methods. The slavish condition in which they were kept for the country's economic benefit is fading away. Economists and other experts have predicted that the tea industry would face shortage of labour in the near future due to the mobility of the labour force in the estate sector.

The upcountry Tamil youths today are an enlightened lot; a fact that is not recognized yet by the average Jaffna Tamil. Exploitation of the upcountry Tamils by other groups for their benefits will be increasingly difficult. The number of qualified upcountry Tamils is increasing annually. It remains to be seen when peace is restored whether or not they will have the same opportunities as other qualified Tamils to serve in the North-East.

The economic problems facing the Tamils have been overshadowed by the ongoing war in the North-East. Unemployment among Tamil graduates is rising. The once prosperous farmers in Nedunkerny, Kilinochchi, Mankulam and other adjoining areas have been turned into paupers. Their present plight is worse than the upcountry Tamils faced in the 1970s. Even the watered down

devolution package has little chance of delivery in its present form. There is no end in sight to the protracted guerrilla warfare also. Hence, the end to the collective sufferings of the Tamils is not imminent. Even if the present conflict is settled (only God knows when), without real (not opportunistic and transient) unity and equal opportunities for all, including the upcountry Tamils to prosper, whatever political gains achieved after enduring the enormous human suffering and incurring the huge losses both in human and economic terms will not lead to continued social and economic advancement of the Tamil community as a whole. □

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12. Jaffna: Condemned by her own sons?

It is unfortunately true that Jaffna has suffered the most from political game-playing by her own sons who had cut off any permanent stake in the place. We have pointed out before that the LTTE's activities were most profitable to those who wanted to establish themselves abroad. During the war years while a relatively privileged section with the means or foreign connections was seeking to establish themselves abroad as immigrants or refugees, propaganda by persons from the same group in concert with the LTTE sought to represent life in the North-East as having become impossible entirely due to state oppression. We will not go into the several ways in which this contention was used and abused. We just take one strand.

The Medical Institute of Tamils (MIOT) was formed in 1994 and it convened its first meeting in London in September 1994. Many distinguished Tamil doctors attended who genuinely wanted to help the people. The medical problems of the North-East highlighted were genuine and urgent, and no doubt the government was culpable in a big way. One paper highlighted mental illness and trauma as being about the gravest problem with internal repression under the LTTE being among the major causes. (This was played down by censorship in the published collection.) The purpose of the conference was to seek remedies.

As a follow up, a "Short Visit Programme for Doctors" was announced. The appeal was published in the May/June 1995 Bulletin of the Tamil Information Centre (London), a co-sponsor of the conference. The appeal mentioned "large numbers suffering from Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) resulting from constant shelling and bombing by the Sri Lankan Security Forces" (no doubt true, but partially). It added: "The overriding health need in the North-East, however,

according to the visiting and local doctors is personnel. The attitude of the Sri Lankan government towards the North-East population is calculated apathy and it is only the Tamil medical fraternity abroad that can fill the prime need for medical personnel". In announcing the details for volunteers, it was stated: "Transportation will be arranged from Colombo under the auspices of the Red Cross or other organisations. Board and lodging will be provided during the stay in Eelam" (our emphasis).

Clearly, as a programme requiring the co-operation of the ministries of health, defence and the local Red Cross, it was a non-starter. An explanation is owed about what the intentions were.

Came the Government offensive in Jaffna in October 1995, and the LTTE ordered the civilians to leave Valikamam on 30th October. This had no doubt been planned at least some weeks earlier. It was to be represented to the world that a patriotic people left en masse of their own free will, because they did not recognise nor wanted to live under an alien government. A privileged few had early notice to leave with their possessions (our Special Report No. 6) The international networks had to be primed to articulate this message and represent the enormous sufferings of the dispossessed as being due to the Government alone, and promote the LTTE as their saviour.

The medical problems of the residents of Jaffna today remain no less severe than they were in 1994, and there are far fewer doctors. Most consultant specialists in Jaffna hospital have left. There is to begin with, no permanent surgeon at present. Many peripheral units are without doctors at all. The doctors in Nainathivu and Vadamaratchi East have left. The people who are now more vulnerable to infectious diseases could suddenly be faced with epidemics with totally inadequate medical care. For example, during recent years malarial illness has been common in the early months of the year. There is only one doctor in Kayts serving the islands, and in February the Kayts hospital had at one time 40 patients warded. In Thenma-ratchi 1271 fever victims had their blood tested at Chavakachcheri hospital. Point Pedro hospital at Manthikal, once a thriving hospital has, besides the MSF staff, only two qualified doctors, one of whom is in harness after passing his age of retirement. Jaffna peninsula which was a relatively a healthy place for much of this century, now according to medical sources, has a significantly higher rate of infant mortality.

(To be continued in next issue)

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MATRIMONIAL

Jaffna Hindu parents seek doctor groom for attractive daughter, 24, 5'2", final year medical student in London with PR. Please send horoscope, details to P.O. Box 11666, London SW19 7ZE. All correspondence treated confidentially and returned.

Canadian Jaffna Hindu parents seek groom, 29-35, professionally qualified, over 5'5", vegetarian for pretty daughter, employed, professionally qualified. Send horoscope with details. M 973 c/o Tamil Times.

Jaffna Hindu parents seek bride (educated, pretty, modest) from good family in Colombo/UK for highly qualified professional, 32, UK citizen, employed in London. Correspondence treated confidentially. M 974 c/o Tamil Times.

Jaffna Hindu parents seek professional partner under 30 for tall attractive 23 year US Resident graduate student daughter. Appearance and compatibility essential. US/Canada residents preferred. Send details to M 975 c/o Tamil Times.

Jaffna Hindu mother seeks partner for daughter, 40, attractive divorced working professional residing in Canada with two daughters entering University. M 976 c/o Tamil Times.

Jaffna Hindu mother seeks professionally qualified partners for British born doctor son and good looking doctor daughter, ages 30 and 27 respectively. Send photo, details. M 977 c/o Tamil Times.

Jaffna Hindu parents, Australian residents seek partner for pretty graduate daughter, Australian citizen in good employment, divorcee, 33, 5'4", with five year old son. Send horoscope, details. M 978 c/o Tamil Times.

WEDDING BELLS

We congratulate the following couples on their recent wedding.

Shanthakumar, son of Mr. & Mrs. N. Vigneswalingam of 42 Kenwood Drive, Beck-

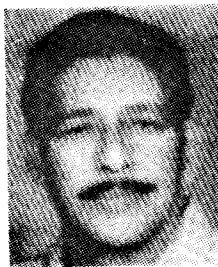
enham, Kent, UK and **Sivatharshini**, daughter of Mr. & Mrs. V. Ramalingam of 42 Stephens Way, Redbourn, Herts., UK on 3rd September 1997 at The New Kathiresan Hall, Colombo 4.

Dharmini, daughter of Mr. T. Nadesan and the late Mrs. Nadesan of Maniarkadu, Kokuvil West, Kokuvil, Sri Lanka and **Dhushyanthan**, son of Mr. & Mrs. Sivagnanasundaram of 81 2/5 Kumara Veethiya, Colombo 11 on 6th September 1997 at Peter Chennells Hall, Rockware Avenue, Greenford, Middx., UK.

MARRIED

Suren, son of Mr. S. Paramalingam, Retired Divisional Telecommunication Engineer of D5 1/1 Mangala Path, Manning Town, Colombo 8 married to **Sivanangai**, daughter of Mr. V. Sivasupramaniam, Principal Emeritus, Anuradhapura Vivekananda and Arunodaya of P.O. Box 644, Seychelles on the 22nd August 1997 at the New Kathiresan Hall, Bambalapitiya, Colombo 4.

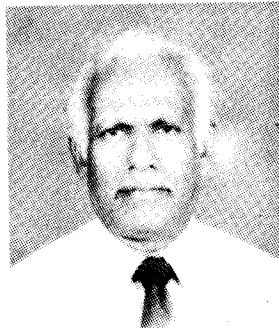
OBITUARIES



Mr. S. Sellathurai Selvanayagam, (59 years), owner of Theva Jewellers, Jaffna, beloved husband of Arunthamalar and brother of Jeyaluxmy (Ranji) (England) and Padma, Bala, Indra and Ganeshwary (all of Australia) and Paralokapushpam (Colombo) and brother-in-law of Dr. V. Jeevananthan (England) and Professor S. Arasaratnam, Mr. S. Amirthalingam, Mr. R. Gunarajan and Mr. P. Pathmanathan (all of Australia) and Mr. S.K. Durairajah (Colombo) passed

away in Colombo on 19.8.97. His funeral took place on 23.8.97 at Mt. Lavinia Crematorium, Sri Lanka.

The family thanks all those who sent messages of sympathy, attended the funeral and helped in so many ways. - Jeva and Ranji, Bromley, Kent, UK.

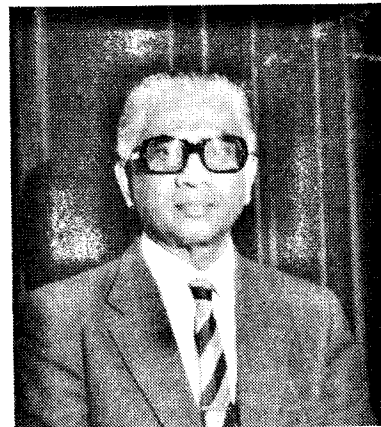


Mr. Sivapatham Maheswaran
son of late Mr. K. Sivapatham

and Mrs. N. Sivapatham, beloved husband of Mahadavi, loving father of Arulmoli (UK), Abirami (New Zealand), father in law of Sashi Kumar (UK), brother of Wimalaswaran (Canada), Naguleswaran (New Zealand), Savithri Devi (Sri Lanka), Loheswaran (Sri Lanka), Mangaleswaran (UK), late Sathanandan and Ravindran (New Zealand), passed away in Colombo on 2 August 1997. Funeral took place at Kanatte on 4 August 1997.

The members of the family wish to thank all friends and relatives who attended the funeral, sent messages of sympathy and floral tributes and offered assistance in several ways during the period of great sorrow. - 16 Harvesters Way, Grove Green, Maidstone, Kent ME14 5SJ. Tel: 01622 736996.

IN MEMORIAM



'Tis all a Chequer-board of Nights and Days
Where Destiny with Men for Pieces plays;
Hither and thither moves, and mates, and slays,
And one by one back in the Closet lays.

The Moving Finger writes; and, having writ,
Moves on: nor all thy Piety nor Wit
Shall lure it back to cancel half a Line,
Nor all thy Tears wash out a Word of it.

(from the Rubaiyat of Omar Khayyam of Naishapur)

Dear Appa, you are ever present, ever missed, but always with pride and love; especially on this the third anniversary of your passing away on the 24 September 1994. Mr. PONNUDURAI NARENDRA NATHAN, most dearly beloved and adoring husband of Gnanambal; dearest loving and proud Appa to your children, Dr. Thrinayani Jegathambal, Dr. Mrs. Sowmya Wijayambal, Mrs. Sobhana Meenambal, Dr. Mrs. Priyadarsani Brahathambal, Adhithya Thriochanan, Mrs. Vasutharini Girijambal, Agasthya Ponnambalam and Ambika Dhakshayani; father-in-law of Dr. P. Arulampalam, S. Raveendran, T. Ilangoan, R. Srikanthan and Dr. Mrs. Meera Narendranathan; darling dearest Thaththa to your grandchildren, Abhirami Janani Raveendran, Amarnath Thirumadhavan Raveendran, Nirmala Arulampalam, Janaki Saruhasini Srikanthan, and Janarthanan Ragavan Ilangoan; you are greatly missed forever but never forgotten; and always in the thoughts of your family and friends. God Bless. - 53 Crossways, South Croydon, Surrey, CR2 8JQ.

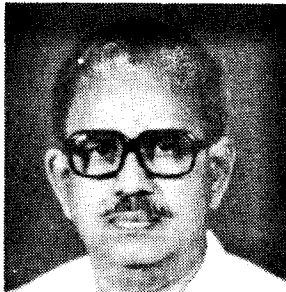
IN MEMORIAM

In Loving Memory of
Our Beloved Daddy
T.J. Rajaratnam
(Retired High Court Judge)
called to rest on 15.9.81



Softly the leaves of
Memory fall
Gently we gather and
treasure them all
Today, tomorrow and
Our whole life through
We will always love and
Remember you - Dad.

Fondly remembered and
sadly missed by your loving
wife Arul; children Rohini, Re-
nuka, Rajiv; sons-in-law Vi-
jayan, Sriharan; grand-children
Vasi, Ravi, Prathi, Jayanthi
and Ajit.



In loving memory of **Deva Ra-
jan N.**, FSI., Licensed Sur-
veyor, Leveller & Valuer of 257

Arasady Road, Kantharma-
dam, Yarpnam.

Fondly remembered on the
sixth anniversary of his passing
away on 11.9.91 by his beloved
wife Padma; children Sujithan,
Siva Kumaran, Rajam, Jeyara-
man, Rengan and Raj Iswari;
sons-in-law Theventhiran and
Nirthanakumaran; daughters-
in-law Jeyadevi, Suhanya,
Thangalogini and Helen; grand-
children Jamuna, Karthika,
Bharathan, Uththami, Luxma-
nan, Sri Ram, Vaitharani,
Vithuran, Devarajan, Poorani,
Pavithran, and Dhurka; sister
Saraswathy Panchadcharam;
brother Punjaksharam; sisters-
in-law, brothers-in-law, rela-
tions and friends. - Flat 4, 24
Mansfield Road, Ilford, Essex
IG1 3AZ.



**FIRST DEATH ANNIVERSARY
MRS DIAMOND JOSEPH
LAID TO REST 28-09-1996**

Our sweet, gentle, kind and
precious AMMA,
You were the gem of the
purest ray serene,
You were the epitome of the
fair womanhood,
A wife emblem of devotion, a
mother unmatched,

A grandma brimming with
love and honey,
Thank you OUR AMMA for all
thou has given us,
Lavishly and sumptuously,
asking nothing in return.

Fondly remembered by Daddy,
Children, Grand Children and
in-laws.

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Shotts, ML7 5DA UK. 388/1
Galle Road, Mount Lavinia, Sri
Lanka.

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

September 29 & 30 10.30pm
Tamil Arts Performing Society
presents Tamil Drama 'Malai'
on Sunrise Radio.

October 1 Amavasai.

Oct. 2 Navarathiri commences
- Durka pooja starts; Feast of
the Guardian Angels.

Oct. 4 Puraddasi Sani (3);
SLTWG drop in. Tel: 0181 545
3313.

Oct. 5 Chathurthi; Luxmi pooja
starts.

Oct. 6 Feast of St. Bruno.

Oct. 7 Sashti; Feast of the Lady
of the Rosary.

Oct. 8 Saraswathy Pooja
starts.

Oct. 10 Saraswathy Pooja.

**Oct. 11 Vijaya Thasami - Man-
ampoo; Puraddasi Sani (4th
and last); SLTWG Navarathiri**
celebrations. Tel: 0181 545
3313.

Oct. 11 7.00pm Jaffna College
Alumni (UK) Annual Reunion at
Chiswick Town Hall, Heathfield
Terrace, London W4. Tel: 0181
440 2906/949 4234.

Oct. 12 Ekathasi; 3.30pm Sri
Lankan Catholic Association
organises Feast of Our Lady of
Madhu at SS Michael & Martin

Catholic Church, 94 Bath Road,
Hounslow, Middx. All welcome.

Oct. 13 Pirathosam; Feast of
St. Edward.

Oct. 14 Feast of St. Callistus.

Oct. 15 Full Moon; Feast of St.
Teresa.

Oct. 17 Iypasi Velli (1).

Oct. 18 Karthikai; Feast of St.
Luke.

Oct. 19 Sankatahara
Chathurthi.

Oct. 24 Iypasi Velli (2).

Oct. 25 SLTWG drop in. Tel:
0181 545 3313.

Oct. 26 Ekathasi.

Oct. 28 Pirathosam.

Oct. 30 Deepavali; Amavasai.

Oct. 31 Skanda Sashti
Viratham starts; Iypasi Velli (3).

**At Bhawan Centre, 4A Castle-
town Road, London W14**
9HQ. Tel: 0171 381 3086/
4608.

Oct. 4 5.30pm Talk on 'The
Ever Sacred Himalayas' by Dr.
Adrian Cooper.

**Oct. 4 6.30pm Kathak by Pra-
tap Pawar from India.**

Oct. 5 6.00pm Bharata Natyam
by Keshava from Switzerland.

**Oct. 6 7.00pm Karnatic Sax-
ophone by Kadri Gopalanath.**

**Oct. 9 7.00pm Mandolin Srimi-
vas with musicians from India.**

Oct. 18 6.30pm Odissi Dance
by Kavita Dwibedi from India.

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NEWSLETTER

**Vembadi Old Girls' Association, Syd-
ney:** The Annual General meeting was
held on 28th June 1997. The following
were elected to the Executive Committee.
President: Mrs. Devi Balasubramaniam,
Vice-President: Mrs. Shanta Arulampa-
lam, **Secretary:** Mrs. Shanta Fonseka,
Asst. Secretary: Dr. Sivagowri Manamo-
han, **Treasurer:** Mrs. Shyamala Ragha-
van, **Asst. Treasurer:** Mrs. Nimmi Man-
ohar, **Committee:** Mrs. Kumuthini Sun-
deresan, Mrs. Indrani Satkunananda, Mrs.
Sakuntala Dharmakumar and Mrs. Ramani
Sunilraj.

The very successful Dinner Dance held
last year was discussed and it was decided

to hold the next Dinner Dance in February
1998.

Australian Foreign Minister in Sri
Lanka: The Australian Foreign Minister,
Mr. Alexander Downer recently visited Sri
Lanka and at a press conference that he
jointly addressed with the Sri Lankan
Foreign Minister Mr. L. Kadirgamar, noted
that the Sri Lankan government was chart-
ing a path towards a political solution to the
ethnic crisis in the country. He said that the
Australian government would be suppor-
tive of a solution which takes into account
the legitimate aspirations of all communi-
ties. Mr. Downer also held talks with Tamil
leaders in Colombo.

Saxophone Concert: Saxophone Chak-
ravarthy Sri Kadri Gopalanath entertained a
packed house at the University of New

South Wales on 2nd August 1997 for over
three and a half hours. The concert was
organised by Pallavi in collaboration with
the Indian Consulate and Air India to
commemorate the 50th year of Indian
independence.

Vidwan Kadri Gopalanath has mastered
carnatic music on a western instrument
such as the saxophone and at this point in
time he is the only one to do so. In this
concert he was accompanied by two re-
nowned artistes Miss Kanyakumari on
Violin and Sri Guruvayur Dorai on Mri-
dangam.

The concert started with a Navaragama-
lika Varnam, followed by a Krithi by Dikshi-
tar on Lord Vigneswara in Kalyani Raga.
He went on to play a Tyagaraja Krithi in
Sree Raga followed by Ragam Tanam
Pallavi in Raga Kapi. Sri Gopalanath's

rendering of this Raga through Alapana and Pallavi was magnificent with the brilliant support from the violinist and mridangist. It was a concert which enthralled the huge audience, an evening they will never forget.

Sydney Murugan Temple Project: The students of the Thillai Nadanalaya School of Dance trained by its Director Mrs. Dhamayanthi Balaraju presented an evening of Bharata Natyam in aid of the Sydney Murugan Temple on 9th August 1997 at the Bankstown Town Hall.

The programme began with an Odissi dance dedicated to Lord Vigneswara, followed by Jathiswaram, Swara Malai – a garland of musical notes and a Sirattai (coconut shell) dance. In the Sirattai dance a group of girls danced with tambourines and coconut shells. The beating of coconut shells and the rattling of tambourines were beautifully harmonised in sound and coordinated with dance movements. After the intermission, the story of Rama and Sita was depicted in a dance drama – Bhavayam, which was followed by a folk dance, panthattam and finally mangalam.

The very large audience besides enriching the project was captivated by the evenings entertainment.

A Natyam to be Remembered



To the London audience which is used to uninspiring and stereotyped Arangetrans, the Bharata Natyam presented by American born Sri Lankan sisters Garani (16) and Divani (15) Nataraja at Croydon's Ashcroft Theatre on 24th August was stunning. In theme and content, choreography and execution of abhinaya and jathis, we found a stamp of perfection. The repertoire was not in the usual Alarippu, Jathiswaram Paddathi. Beginning with an invocation to Ganapathi the girls took up a piece entitled **Adavallan**, a composition by Aru Gopalan, in which are enumerated the Pancha Sabhas or the divine Halls where Lord Siva revealed his five different dance forms. Here it was

thrilling to watch the young dancers illustrating the five different dances as well as the five Sabhas at Chidambaram, Madurai, Tiruvalangadu, Tirunelveli and Tankasi. This brilliant illustrative Natyam by the sisters revealed the scholarship of the Guru, Smt. Mythili Kumar, and the understanding of the sishyas. The Varnam, a composition by Subbudu on Muruga's infatuation for Valli and Deivayanai's anger, was ably enacted by the sisters, with brilliant jathi korvais and coordination. Particularly interesting was the formation in which the sisters merged into a single figure still dancing – a brilliant feat. Further, there were some items individually danced by the sisters with gusto which thrilled the audience.

The orchestra (recorded) was excellent and the girls themselves prefaced the items in clear English. Father Nadaraja handled the decor and the lights, while the mother Gowri gave the vote of thanks. Such devoted parents and distinguished Guru deserve our appreciation. The programme was in aid of the proposed Siva temple at Hawaii under the supervision of Satguru Sivaya Subramuniya Swami, disciple of Sri Yogar Swami of Jaffna.

– Sivapatha Sundaram.

Shanmugam, OBE Felicitated

Friends, relatives and fellow countrymen of Mr. Shanmugam met at Angel Hall, Raynham Road, London N10 on 17.8.97 to felicitate him on his being awarded the OBE in the Queen's birthday honours.

The meeting commenced with the garlanding of Mr. Shanmugam and introductory remarks by the Chairman Dr. K. Thanapalan, who in turn introduced the programme presenter Angela Nagarajah.

After the recital of devotional songs by Mrs. T. & Miss B. Chandrapalan, Ananthini & Haran Yoganathan, Dr. Thanapalan and Mr. P. Karalapillai who both hail from the same village as Mr. Shanmugam and were his school mates at Jaffna Hindu College spoke about his perseverance which has crowned him with repeated successes in later years and ultimately the rare honour. Mr. N.S. Kandiah, a long standing family friend said that the life and achievements of Mr. Shanmugam should serve as a guide to the young men and women of our community.

Eight year old Nisha Ananthan from the Meenakshi School of Dance gave a dance performance which was appreciated by the audience.

Messrs Vamadeva, Sathasivam and Sam Samaranayake, all civil engineers, expressed their delight at Mr. Shanmugam's dedicated services having been recognised by the Ministry of Transport. All of them stated that Mr. Shanmugam's supportive family, particularly his wife Mohana had contributed towards his success.

A vocal recital by the twin sisters Kala Yogarajah and Uma Satkunasisivam accompanied by violinist Gnambikai Pathmasri, Sithamparanathan on morsing and

Bala Murali Yoganathan on miruthangam held the house spellbound.

Mr. Wimal Sockanathan, President of the Gnanantha Seva Samajam gave an appreciation of Mr. Shanmugam's spiritual life followed by a light hearted contribution by Mr. Sivahar Mahalingam from the LSE. Finally a Valthupa composed by Mr. M. Ponnampalam was excellently rendered by Kala Yogarajah.

Mr. Shanmugam expressed his delight to see so many of his friends, relatives and countrymen and thanked the organisers. The meeting concluded with lunch.

Mrs. V. Nagarajah.

Mrs. Sellamma Pararajasingam of Urelu, Jaffna – An Appreciation

All creatures have an end; some die; some deace; many perish; only a few are immortal. It is when people become immortal we say 'Kaalamanaar' in Tamil meaning has become one with time, which knows no past, present or future. Sellakkaa belongs to the category of those that have become one with time. Sellakkaa moved with the time and has now merged with the time so as to continue to live with her family in order to be an eternal source of solace and support. She was a messenger who had some messages to convey. She has effectively published those messages in the form of novel books called children, grandchildren and great grandchildren.

At a time after the demise of her husband, when her ship of life was tossing and turning in the turbulent sea of domestic economics, Sellakkaa like a veteran captain steadied and navigated the ship to safe waters. We say in Tamil that even a Royal Prince will become a pauper if he becomes a father of five girls. Sellakkaa was blessed with eight children of whom six were girls. She always remained royal and majestic. How was it possible in her case? Her patience, innate wisdom and presence of mind gave her succour and sustenance during times of crisis.

She never coveted the moon in the sky, but the moon longed to play on the palm of her hands. The veracity of this statement can be realised from the commendable life her children lead in various parts of the western globe. It is possible to fathom the greatness of a person from his or her external features. The big and sparkling eyes of Sellakkaa revealed her personality. The internal personality of a person can be measured from the mental equipoise of the person. It was this equipoise and composure which is the end product of the absence of avarice, jealousy, anger and harsh words that made her live like a queen for ever.

She was the only woman except my mother who prided that I was receiving university education. My wedding for which I had extended invitations to none, took place at Sannity Temple, Thondamanna.

at midnight. Sellakka who got wind of it was there in the dead of the night with her family members to bless me. This act of hers left an indelible mark in me. Only a noble soul could have graced the occasion in the absence of an invitation.

Four years ago I went to London and took that opportunity to pay her a visit. We spent hours and hours talking about the pleasant and not so pleasant days and incidents at Urelu. It was a memorable meeting. I knew then that I would not be able to see her again. Sellakka lived ninety years of full life. Her demise did not shock me. Death is also a pleasure. She who during her life time entertained noble thoughts, executed exemplary deeds and uttered productive words would not have felt death as a pain; because such people have nothing to fear. It is fear that begets pain. To fearless people death is a pleasurable feeling.

Sellakka would have, I am sure, experienced greater pleasure in her death. But can the surviving children, grandchildren and great grandchildren who have known her through and through take such a stoic and philosophic stance? No; It is difficult; time alone can heal their pain of parting.

Dr. Vidwan K.N. Velan.

Who Killed the Princess?

by Professor Kopan Mahadeva

God, we ask you in all sincerity,
Who killed our Princess Diana?
Please reveal to us the reality.

Was it the gossip-crazy,
Dollar-greedy and ever-pushy
Paparazzi?

Or the antiquity
And inflexibility
Of the traditions of monarchy?

Or her own propensity
For cordiality, and her beauty
Which attracted publicity?

Or her perceived cruelty
Or self-confessed adultery
Ending up in infidelity?

Or her youthful romanticity
And unsurpassed facility
For pains-easing charity?

Or the impaired ability

Of her drunk-driver, and security.
To chaperon her in safety?

Or the inhumanity
Of us humans, regarding privacy.
To show her dignified humanity?

God, we ask you in all sincerity,
Who killed our Princess Diana?
Please reveal to us the reality.

And, is there a possibility
Of an answer with finality
Before the end of eternity?

J.S.S.A. (UK) Sixth Annual Cricket & Net Ball Festival 1997

The Jaffna Schools Sports Association (UK) Sixth Annual Cricket and Net Ball Festival was held on 25th August 1997 – Bank Holiday Monday – at Warren Farm Sports Centre, Windmill Lane, Southall, Middx.. There was a torrential downpour in the morning, but the skies cleared later and it was a bright and sunny day. The programme for the day comprised Cricket and Net Ball, Over-40 Cricket, Under-15 Cricket tournaments as well as 50 and 100 metre races for Under-5, Under-8, Under-10, Under-12 and Under-15 Boys and Girls.

The Mayor of the London Borough of Ealing was the Chief Guest at the colourful flag hoisting ceremony. The past pupils of 32 schools and their children took part in

Tournament

Under 15s Cricket
Over 40s Cricket
Cricket
Net Ball

Champions

St. John's College
Jaffna Hindu College
Jaffna Hindu College
Chundikuli Girls College

50 metres & 100 metres Races

Girls under 5: Sareka Ragavan
Girls under 8: Thayan Elias
Girls under 10: Rathu Puvanendran
Girls under 12: Jamina Loganathan
Girls under 15: Caroline Gratien

Raffle

1st Prize – Air Ticket to Colombo/Madras
2nd Prize – Air Ticket to Toronto
3rd Prize – Air Ticket to Paris

The day's events concluded with a fireworks display.

the various events. There were six large pitches and net ball courts, and the schools had their own marquees. There were other marquees serving sumptuous food.

A Science Exhibition held on the premises evinced a lot of interest. The winning exhibit was a working geological model of a live volcano demonstrating its explosions and lava flows. The winning schoolboy, Mark Antony had ingeniously used vinegar, baking powder, sparklers and colouring to display the pyrotechnics to good effect.



Mr. V. Sivasundaram, Proprietor of Western Jewellers distributed the awards.

The results were as follows:

Runners-up

Tamil Welfare Assn, Newham
St. John's College
Jaffna Central College
Hindu Ladies College

Boys: Roshan Baskaran
Boys: Luxan Emmanuel
Boys: Sathuram Sivakumar
Boys: Shylash Mahadevan
Boys: Sanjeev Kunanayagam

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