

# Tamil TIMES

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of what you say, but I'll  
defend to the death your  
right to say it"*

- Voltaire

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#### COVER:

Muslim children from the  
Trincomalee district in eastern Sri  
Lanka affected by the tsunami

## Internal violence

It is almost two months since the third anniversary of the Ceasefire Agreement was marked and went without any indications that the peace process would be resurrected soon or for that matter in the foreseeable future.

Now more than three months have elapsed since the tsunami tragedy struck the island leaving almost two-thirds of the coastline areas of the island battered, over 30,000 dead and hundreds of thousands homeless and destitute.

The positive response to the people's plight in the post-tsunami situation, the number of foreign dignitaries who have visited the island conveying their solidarity and support, and the amount of funds that have been made available for rehabilitation and reconstruction demonstrated that the international community is keenly focussed on the situation in Sri Lanka.

In contrast, at a time when the need of the hour is a committed, sustained and collective effort to address the humanitarian crisis facing the country, the Government and the LTTE are still locked in an unseemly dispute over the proposed joint mechanism to address and deal with the urgent task of relief, rehabilitation and reconstruction in the northeast. What has to be done is patently clear to everybody, but the dispute appears to over the issue as to who shall exercise power, control and influence over what has to be done. The tsunami struck every community of people without distinction of ethnicity, language, religion or political persuasion, and therefore all are stakeholders in this endeavour, and hence it is not just a matter only between the Government and the LTTE. Any proposed joint mechanism should be people-based and inclusive of all sections of the people.

In the meantime, while both parties to the ceasefire agreement have assured that they are committed to the ceasefire, recent months have witnessed an escalation of violent incidents, particularly in the east of the island where daily killings and counter-killings between the LTTE and those loyal to the former eastern Tiger commander Karuna have become a matter of routine. Persons alleged to be associated with other non-LTTE groups such as the EPRLF (V), EPDP and PLOTE have also fallen victims of this murderous spree. Two Tamil senior government officials - 55-year old Mr.Thiyagarajah Kailainathan, an assistant director for vocational education, and Divisional Secretary for Thirukkivil, Mr. A. K Thavarajah - have been brutally assassinated recently in two separate incidents.

The reported killings of some members of the Muslim community add a dangerous dimension raising the prospect of a recurrence of violent clashes between the Tamil and Muslim communities.

That these violent incidents are increasingly drawing the Sri Lankan security forces into the frame is another development that is fraught with danger. The recent increase in the number of incidents involving the LTTE and security forces reflects an unwelcome trend.

These violent incidents committed with impunity have not only exacerbated the insecurity of civilians who are gripped with a pervasive sense of fear, but also have made rehabilitation and reconstruction efforts in the post-tsunami situation more difficult in eastern Sri Lanka where the people were most adversely affected.

The Sri Lanka Monitoring Mission (SLMM) has in a statement denounced the latest round of killings as barbaric and cowardly acts threatening the ceasefire: "SLMM perceives the recent killings in the eastern parts of the country as a direct threat to the CFA and the Peace Process, and we condemn these barbaric and cowardly acts in the strongest possible terms. The violence has raised serious fears and created uncertainty, not only in the East, but also in the whole of Sri Lanka, and is preventing Sri Lankans from living a peaceful life."

The much welcomed ceasefire may have abated the fighting between government forces and the LTTE. But internal and internecine violence, often leading to brutal murders carried out with unmitigated impunity, which has been a main characteristic of the Tamil militant movements from the days of their inception in the late 1970s, has continued unabated even after the ceasefire came into effect. The absence of fighting between government forces and LTTE has only served to bring this ugly and self-destructive characteristic of internalised Tamil-on-Tamil political violence into sharp relief. Peace facilitators from abroad and peace lobbyists from within Sri Lanka must realise that any meaningful peace process worthy of its name has to confront this problem head on. To do so would mean that all parties, primarily the belligerent parties, must be called upon to renounce the use of force or threat of force and promise to use exclusively peaceful means to achieve their political aims.



## ● JVP threat to quit Govt over joint mechanism

Apr 19 – As the Government of Sri Lanka is coming under strong pressure from foreign donor countries including the US and UK and as Norway was indicating that a deal for a joint mechanism between the government and the LTTE was almost ready to be concluded, the Government was confronted with a threat to its very survival in power. One of its main coalition partner, the Janatha Vimukthi Peramuna (JVP) warned that such a deal would mean that it would quit the from the ruling coalition which would in turn mean the end of the road for the UPFA government.

JVP Propaganda Secretary Wimal Weerawansa in one of the strongest warnings and toughest attacks on the proposed joint mechanism said it would do more damage to the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the country than the Ceasefire Agreement of the former UNF government.

“The Ceasefire Agreement was a gross violation of the territorial integrity of the country by demarcating part of land as the LTTE territory. The joint mechanism will go a step further as it will see the government sharing its supreme power to handle finances with the Tigers,” Mr. Weerawansa told the media in Colombo.

He said the JVP believed the joint mechanism was being pushed to achieve the sinister agendas of certain Western players, NGOs and their agents in the government.

Sounding rather ominous, Mr. Weerawansa vowed, “As long as the JVP is there nobody will be able to make this betrayal a reality.”

Weerawansa's comments came amidst strong optimism from the Norwegian peace envoy Erik Solheim that the government and the LTTE were on the verge of finalising the joint mechanism. “It is almost impossible for the parties to go back on the contributions they have made towards the Joint Mechanism and only the placing of signatures for the agreement is left to be done,” Solheim is reported to have said during his visit to the eastern part of the country.

It was later reported that the JVP politburo had decided that its ministers would immediately quit their cabinet portfolios if the government went ahead with the joint mechanism. Party sources said the resignation of the JVP ministers would be followed by tougher action, including withdrawal from the UPFA government, to prevent the implementation of the joint mechanism deal. The politburo at a meeting chaired by party leader Somawansa Amarasinghe also decided to show its strength by holding a May Day rally on its own.

The JVP Wednesday (20) told Ms Christina Rocca, the visiting US Assistant Secretary of State, that it was opposed to the joint mechanism which was proposed to enable the Government and the Tamil Tigers undertake post-tsunami rehabilitation and reconstruction programme in the northeast. The JVP delegation led by its leader Mr. Somawansa Amarasinghe is reported to have handed over Ms Christina Rocca an alternate proposal for the joint mechanism, sources said.

Mr. Amarasinghe is reported to have told Ms Rocca that LTTE was not elected by the people that if the LTTE wants a say in disbursing funds it could do so through the Tamil National Alliance (TNA).

The JVP delegation pointed out to Ms Rocca that it opposed the introduction of the provincial council system because an attempt was made by an earlier government to give a major role to the LTTE in running the administration in the northeast province. The JVP opposed the introduction of joint mechanism in the north-

# NEWS REVIEW

east for the same reason and also that it would undermine the territorial integrity and sovereignty of the country.

However Ms Christina Rocca is reported to have told the JVP delegation the urgent need of a joint mechanism to reconstruct the tsunami affected coastal areas of the northeast.

Ganging up with the JVP in its opposition to the setting up of the joint mechanism, Jathika Hela Urumaya (JHU) Secretary Champika Ranawaka said that “as long as the nationalist forces were alert, the joint mechanism would be only a dream for the LTTE and their international agents who were trying to give legitimacy to terrorism.”

He said President Chandrika Kumaratunga would never be able or allowed to set up this joint mechanism.

## ● Christina Rocca spells out US position

“We hope the government and the LTTE will agree soon on a joint mechanism for tsunami relief, to ensure that assistance finds its way to people who need it - wherever they are in Sri Lanka,” said US Assistant Secretary of State for South Asia Christina Rocca said in a speech at the American Centre in Colombo on April 19.

On the LTTE, Rocca said, “Our position on the LTTE has not changed. The U.S. continues to regard the LTTE as a Foreign Terrorist Organization. Our listing of it as a Foreign Terrorist Organization will remain in effect until the group renounces terrorism in word and deed. This includes ending the murder of political opponents and the recruitment of children.”

Ms. Rocca who was forced to skip her appointment on 20 April with President Chandrika Kumaratunga, who is still in London, was to meet Prime Minister Mahinda Rajapakse and Opposition Leader Ranil Wickremesinghe.

In her speech, the US Assistant Secretary of State said, “I would like to start by expressing again the strong sympathy and support of the United States for Sri Lanka and its people as they rebuild after the horrible tsunami tragedy last December 26. Our support for you in this effort remains a top priority for us.

The first thing I did upon my arrival in Sri Lanka this morning was to visit Kalmunai in the East, to get a sense of the disaster and recovery efforts. Several months later it is still clear that the devastation was tremendous and that much remains to be done to help people recover.

The United States has been in the forefront of the effort to assist Sri Lankan recovery. We will remain engaged as the country addresses its enormous reconstruction needs. We've pledged \$350 million in tsunami relief worldwide, and as you know, President Bush requested an additional \$950 million from Congress for Tsunami reconstruction. So far, approximately \$132 million has actually been committed. I should add that American private sector contributions have also been enormous, topping \$1 billion by some estimates.

The emergency relief phase went well. People's needs were clear and, by and large, they were met. As Sri Lanka moves into the long-term process of reconstruction and a full return to normal life for the hundreds of thousands of affected people problems will continue. A critical need being confronted now is to ensure transitional shelter for the homeless before the rains begin in earnest. There are still some coordination problems at the national and local levels.

We hope the government and the LTTE will agree soon on a joint mechanism for tsunami relief, to assure that assistance finds its way to people who need it - wherever they are in Sri Lanka.

Still, I know that tremendous efforts are being made every day to recover from this disaster. In my visit to Kalmunai earlier today, I was impressed with some of the programs the US Agency for International Development's partners are undertaking there - transitional shelters, cash-for-work programs, and clean-up efforts. The NGO's we've contributed to have so far constructed more than 1,200 durable transitional shelters in Sri Lanka.

And now I would like to turn to overall bilateral relations. Relations between the United States and Sri Lanka are excellent: we work closely on counter-terrorism, IPR protection, regional stability, democracy issues and trade relations. Military relations are excellent, as demonstrated recently by the donation of a U.S. Coast Guard Cutter to the Sri Lankan navy, and Admiral Fallon's visit last week.

U.S. goals for Sri Lanka remain simple, straightforward and interlocking: A lasting peace settlement for this country, which will increase prosperity and reduce the threat of terrorism; Greater economic growth and investment, which will build support for peace; Strengthened democracy and observance of human rights.

Helping Sri Lanka achieve peace is key to the kind of success here that will match the exciting successes elsewhere in the region. We support fully the Norwegian efforts to facilitate a settlement, but the real key to achieving one rests with Sri Lankans themselves. A political solution is the only way to a resolution. We urge the parties to return to peace talks, and to continue the broader process necessary to end the conflict. The government should speak with one voice on the peace process.

Our position on the LTTE has not changed. The U.S. continues to regard the LTTE as a Foreign Terrorist Organization. Our listing of it as a Foreign Terrorist Organization will remain in effect until the group renounces terrorism in word and deed. This includes ending the murder of political opponents and the recruitment of children. The LTTE should understand that we would be willing to consider engaging with them once they undertake such a renunciation. We are concerned about the apparent upsurge in violence in the East and urge the LTTE and other armed factions to do everything possible to contain it.

Sri Lanka's economy seems to have weathered the recent tsunami better than many might have expected early on. Nonetheless, the extensive human tragedy will inevitably encompass negative economic effects. Further, with such devastation will come significant challenges during the rebuilding effort. The US intends to be a partner with Sri Lanka throughout that process.

## ● SLMM seeks access to LTTE airstrip

The matter of the LTTE constructing an airstrip in an area under its control in northern Sri Lanka and its alleged possession of fixed-wing aircraft have again assumed prominence particularly in the context of the current visits to Colombo by the US Assistant Secretary of State, Christina Rocca, and Norway's Special Peace Envoy, Eric Solheim.

Reportedly the government of Sri Lanka has told the Norwegian peace facilitators that they should no longer ignore the issue as the acquisition of air power by the LTTE after the ceasefire agreement came into effect as a significant violation of the ceasefire.

Quoting diplomatic sources, a report from Colombo said that the United States Assistant Secretary of State Christina Rocca also told Norwegian Peace Envoy Erik Solheim that the construction of the airstrip and acquisition of aircraft by the LTTE was a very dangerous development.

Now it is learnt that the Sri Lanka Monitoring Mission (SLMM) has demanded immediate access to the airstrip allegedly set up by the LTTE in Kilinochchi. The demand was made by SLMM Chief

Hagrup Haukland in a letter to LTTE political wing leader S.Paramu Tamilselvan on 20 April.

The SLMM spokesperson Helen Olafsdottir had expressed confidence that the LTTE would grant the monitors access to the airstrip at Iranamadu though such access had been denied previously.

Unmanned UAVs of Sri Lankan Air Force had taken several pictures of the airstrip and two light aircraft acquired by the LTTE. This was brought to the notice of the Norwegian facilitators and the SLMM. However the LTTE had denied access to the SLMM when a request was made two months ago.

The Government has also raised the matter with other countries, including the UK and India. Reportedly it was the subject of discussion when the island's Foreign Minister, Lakshman Kadirgamar, recently met with British Foreign Secretary, Jack Straw. Kadirgamar visited the UK recently to convey the appreciation of the government and the people of Sri Lanka to the British government and its people for their magnificent support when Tsunami struck. British government has provided debt relief of over 80 million US\$ over a period of 10 years to Sri Lanka and agreed to pay up 10% of Sri Lanka's debts interest commitments.

Reportedly Jack Straw on behalf of the British Government acknowledged that the LTTE owning an aircraft was a very dangerous development and a matter of grave concern. Jack Straw reportedly told his Sri Lankan counterpart that the British government understood the danger of an unauthorised aircraft in the hands of a non state party in the context of terrorism today.

Kadirgamar who met Straw on 14 March said that it was a very serious security concern and the government had informed the members of the security council, the United States, UK, France, Russia, China and also India, Japan, the EU and Norway about the Sri Lankan governments concern of the new developments.

## ● Reconstruction 'too slow'

The European Union (EU) has found the post-tsunami reconstruction work in Sri Lanka to be very slow, and has called for the setting up of co-ordination mechanisms at the provincial level to speed up the process.

"We were surprised to notice that despite the size of the problem and the amounts of funds available, little of necessary reconstruction work has been started. We understand it is a huge task, but things are moving very slowly," said Neena Gill, leader of an EU parliamentary delegation, in an interview to a daily newspaper in Colombo.

"We feel that faster decisions on the field could be easier with a provincial co-ordination network. More co-ordination in the affected areas is a necessity in our opinion. This way, all communities and local community groups and the affected people can work in a better manner to resettle their lives" Gill said.

Gill's views were endorsed by many voluntary organizations working in the tsunami-hit areas.

Asked if the absence of co-ordinating mechanisms or joint mechanisms was hampering reconstruction work, Jeevan Thiagarajah, President of the Confederation of Humanitarian Agencies (CHA) told the press that there had been a "slowing down" throughout the disaster area in Sri Lanka. "Big infrastructure and resettlement projects are the ones which are held up," Thiagarajah said.

Projects had not been drawn up yet because the Consolidated Needs Assessment Report had not been completed, he noted. Asked if he felt that establishment of a Joint Mechanism between the Government and the LTTE was necessary, Thiagarajah said that it would help decision-making. It would ensure fair and equitable distribution of the funds received among the various districts and ethnic communities, Karthikeyan said.

Thiagarajah felt that major issues such as land allocation and infrastructural facilities could not be settled without a proper, generally acceptable, and an adequately empowered, decision-making body being there to look into them. The absence of such institutions has affected work in the entire country, though the LTTE-controlled areas in the north-east are faring better than the south. "The process of planning has been faster in those areas in the north-east," Thiagarajah said. Clearly, this is because there is only one agency which takes all the decisions there - the LTTE!

Though localised co-ordination committees had been stressed by both the UN Secretary General and the World Bank president during their visits to the tsunami-hit island in January, the Sri Lankan government still seems to believe that the government departments and the formal government structure, ranging from the 'grama niladharis' to the district Government Agents, are enough to do the work.

But independent expert opinion, both national and international, is that there is a need for special structures at the provincial level, comprising the central and local government representatives, local civil society and interest groups. The work would then be answering the felt needs of the people, besides being transparent and non-wasteful.

There are no co-ordinating committees or mechanisms in the Sinhala-dominated south Sri Lanka, and there is no joint mechanism in the Tamils-speaking and LTTE-dominated north-eastern province either.

Though the international donors have not said categorically and explicitly that money will not come unless these joint mechanisms or co-ordinating committees are put in place, it is clear that money will not come unless and until such structures are there to give the donors confidence that the money will be well-spent and equitably distributed.

Western and Japanese donors are very particular about accountability and procedures.

And the fact is that very little has come from the international donors to the government account since \$ 1.8 billion was pledged soon after the tsunami on December 26, 2004. Just about \$ 100 million to 150 million is said to have come.

Most of the funds which have come, have been for NGOs and other private individuals working in the tsunami area. Though the latter remittances have been substantial, these are good only for small-scale projects, not for large-scale rehabilitation in the field of housing, fisheries, basic infrastructure and communications.

## 1 Tigers widen tax-net

Reports from Jaffna confirm that Tamil Tigers have started collecting "taxes" from passengers who travel by air to the northern Jaffna peninsula. Previously only those who travelled by land through Tiger-controlled areas were subjected to these impositions.

The new development has prompted many of the affected people, including expatriate Tamils community returning on holiday and travel north to seek the assistance of security forces, military officials said in Colombo. Many of the passengers, mostly Tamils returning from abroad previously opted to travel by air in order to avoid paying taxes to the LTTE at the entry point of LTTE-held areas. All passengers travelling by road come under a security and a "customs" check carried out by the LTTE at Omanthai, the entry point to the LTTE-held Wanni region while travelling by road.

But, passengers travelling by air were able to land at the Palaly airbase and travel directly into the government-controlled areas of Jaffna peninsula avoiding the payment of "taxes" imposed by the LTTE. But, passengers travelling by air have now begun complaining about collection of "taxes" in government-controlled areas.

According to the military LTTE men who claim to be from the finance division, pursue passengers immediately after they disembark at Jaffna town in order to extort money for the goods being taken with passengers from Colombo. The military spokesman claimed that civilians have appealed to the security forces and police to provide police escort to all air passengers from Palaly airport until their disembarkation point in Jaffna town.

## ● Conscience vote on disputed bill

The Sri Lankan parliament will have a "conscience vote" on the controversial bill to curb "unethical" religious conversions, Prime Minister Mahinda Rajapaksa has said.

Revealing this in an interview to a newspaper in Colombo, the Prime Minister said that this was a demonstration of the existence of democracy in Sri Lanka.

There will be no party whip on this issue, and members of the ruling party (and presumably the opposition also) will vote according to their individual conscience.

The bill is being present in parliament by the government, at the instance of campaigning Buddhist groups in the island that articulate fear alleging that foreign-funded Christian evangelists are busy converting poor and gullible Buddhists and Hindus to Christianity by offering money, education facilities, employment and medical treatment. These means are characterised as "unethical" and an undue exploitation of poverty.

However, the major political parties of Sri Lanka, including the ruling United Peoples' Freedom Alliance (UPFA) and the United National Front (UNF) have not been in favour of the anti-conversion bill, as these are secular parties which believe in the freedom of religion and the right to spread one's religion. Many of their prominent members are Christians.

But neither of the major parties can afford to ignore a plea by Buddhist campaigning groups or any of the spokesmen of the Buddhists, who are 70% of the population of Sri Lanka. The Sinhala Buddhists are the most important political constituency in the island.

However, the ruling party has found a way out of the embarrassment. It has decided to go for the "conscience vote". The party will not dictate. It will leave it to a member to decide for himself. The opposition UNF will take the cue and follow suit.

Known as the "Freedom of Religion Bill", it is expected to be presented in parliament soon. The draft was approved by the cabinet on June 16, 2004. And in February this year, after the Attorney General had certified that it was not inconsistent with the constitution, the Minister of Buddha Sasana, Ratnasiri Wickramanayake, sought the approval of the cabinet to present the bill to parliament.

According to the preamble of the draft bill, its aim is to promote inter-religious cordiality and the freedom of religion by prohibiting the conversion of persons from one religion to another religion by the exercise of force, coercion, allurement, fraud or other unethical means.

According to the bill, no persons shall either convert another or abet such conversion; no person in a relationship of trust, shall force another person of a different faith to attend a religion meeting and punish him or deny him any privilege he may have otherwise enjoyed, if he did not comply; no person shall accost any other person with a view to converting him to another religion; any person who remits, holds, keeps in custody, transfers or uses funds or any material resources for the purpose of conversion shall be deemed guilty of violating the act.

Proceedings under this act could be instituted either by an aggrieved person or by a person authorized by law. Offences under

the Act will be deemed cognizable under the Criminal Procedure Code of 1979. The punishment is imprisonment for a term not exceeding five years and a fine not exceeding SLRs.100, 000. In case the victim is a minor, the prison term would be seven years and a fine not exceeding SLRs.500, 000.

Unethical conversions taking place in institutions like schools, the army, hospitals etc, will be deemed to be particularly grave violations and this will be taken into account while awarding the sentence.

If a corporate body were responsible, every member, employee and office bearer shall be deemed to be guilty unless he is able to prove that the offence was committed without his knowledge.

Foreigners who violate the act shall be deported after serving the sentence handed to them.

The Free Media Movement has urged the Government to withdraw the proposed anti-conversion Bill. It said the Bill, if enacted, would seriously affect fundamental rights enshrined in the Constitution and universal democratic principles.

The FMM called upon all members of political parties in Parliament to vote against the Bill, since it would adversely affect pluralism and fundamental rights in the country.

"On two previous occasions, in July and November last year, the JHU tried to enact anti-conversion legislation, but was forced to withdraw, when the Supreme Court determined that some provisions of those Bills and the procedures set out for their administration, would be unconstitutional. In particular, the Supreme Court took the view that the Bills would have extremely grave consequences for the fundamental rights of freedom of religion, thought, conscience and expression. The Supreme Court therefore determined that the Bills would require a two-thirds majority in Parliament and approval at a Referendum. Both determinations of the Supreme Court are binding on the Government in respect of the latest Bill too, since the provisions of this Bill are similar to the previous JHU Bills," the FMM said in a statement.

## ● Sangaree seeks Indian pro-active role

New Delhi, April 21 - Tamil United Liberation Front (TULF) leader V. Anandasangaree said in an interview given in New Delhi that it was time the Indian government stopped being indifferent to the activities of the Tamil Tigers and called upon India to play a pro-active role to end what he said was the growing stranglehold of the Tamil Tigers in his country.

"The kind of international mediation that is going on in Sri Lanka is strengthening the LTTE. The international players are only helping LTTE to get a foothold even in government-held areas (in the north and east of Sri Lanka)," Anandasangaree told M.R. Narayan Swamy of Indo-Asian News Service (INS), at the end of a three-day visit.

Anandasangaree, an outspoken critic of the Tigers, said New Delhi would realise to its peril one day that it had erred in not waking up to the entrenchment of the LTTE, a group outlawed in India for the 1991 assassination of former prime minister Rajiv Gandhi.

Attempts to equate the LTTE and the Sri Lankan government in matters of even tsunami relief were fraught with grave dangers, he warned. "This is the time for India to say 'no' to ISGA and 'no' to any joint mechanism in tsunami relief," he said adding "Once such a joint mechanism comes up, then the government of Sri Lanka will be caught in a trap from which it will not be able to withdraw."

Anandasangaree, 72 and a former MP, was referring to the Interim Self Governing Authority (ISGA) which the LTTE has been seeking to govern the Tamil-majority north and east of Sri Lanka. The Tigers are also seeking an internationally backed joint

mechanism to carry out tsunami relief in the areas of the north and east.

"India has a moral duty to tell the Sri Lankan government that it is opposed to ISGA. After all India can never accept an independent Tamil Eelam state," he said adding "I am worried by the Indian indifference (to goings on in LTTE areas)." He went on: "We believe this is the best time to seek the support of the Indian government to solve our problems. What we need is an Indian-type devolution. We don't need anything more."

Anandasangaree made it clear that he was in favour of any Indian military intervention - like the one in 1987 that turned out to be a messy affair - and that he had said this to Western diplomats as well. He said Norway in particular and Western countries in general were underestimating the dangers posed by LTTE and were not realising that ordinary Tamil people were sick and tired of living in the region under LTTE control. "What Tamils need today is not ISGA, not joint mechanism for tsunami relief, what they need is liberation from LTTE. What they need is the right to live without fear of LTTE."

"A peace process cannot go on and on at the cost of ordinary Tamil people. I told this to (Norwegian peace envoy) Erik Solheim also. Even he cannot go into the LTTE areas without their permission? Even he cannot Can you breach their Iron Curtain of the LTTE."

He referred to the widely reported 62-day-long detention by LTTE of Rajasingham Jayadevan, a British resident of Sri Lanka Tamil origin, in a prison operated by LTTE in the island's north. The British government's pressure forced the Tigers to free him. "If this could happen to someone like Jayadevan (who was influential and who was a long-time LTTE supporter), you can imagine what must be happening to ordinary Tamils in LTTE areas," Anandasangaree despaired.

## ● Human rights and Peace process

The National Peace Council of Sri Lanka (NPC) has, in the context of the spate of killings in eastern Sri Lanka has proposed "the strengthening of human rights monitoring mechanisms pertaining to the peace process by providing the Sri Lanka Monitoring Mission or a new human rights monitoring body with a more effective mandate to ensure the protection of human rights."

In a statement dated 23 March, the NPC said, "The serial killings mostly in the east have been among the most serious of human rights violations taking place in the aftermath of the Cease-fire Agreement signed between the government and LTTE in February 2002. Some of the killings have taken place in the north and also in Colombo, but most of them have been in the east of the country. These killings have been targeted ones and have thus spread a climate of fear and intimidation in the areas they are taking place. Most of the targeted killings after the signing of the Ceasefire Agreement have been of those identified to be working in opposition to the LTTE. However, the spate of killings taking place in the east increased significantly after the breakaway from the LTTE of its former eastern commander, Karuna Amman a year ago. This has created a volatile situation that could prove difficult to control if permitted to continue."

"Since the breakaway of Karuna from the LTTE, the LTTE has been complaining that the government has been providing logistical support to him and his cadre. Over the past year, gunmen believed to be from the Karuna group have been constantly attacking the LTTE. These charges have been routinely denied by the government. But now investigative journalism has disclosed the existence of a camp manned by militants of the Karuna group, including child soldiers, in government-controlled territory that borders the north east. The National Peace Council believes that

any complicity of the government in the sustenance of the Karuna group and its unlawful activities, including the killing of people whether belonging to the LTTE or any other group, is an indictment on the government's respect for human rights, for law and order and to the peace process itself.

"The National Peace Council calls on the government to disprove these allegations regarding its support for the Karuna group immediately and ensure that no such camps are permitted to exist in the territory it controls. In addition, it is incumbent on those who seek to safeguard the people's interests, be they political parties, civil society organisations or the international community, to ensure that the government and LTTE operate according to internationally recognised human rights norms and practices. At present much attention is focused upon the prospect of setting up a joint government-LTTE mechanism for tsunami aid to flow to the north east. The National Peace Council affirms that a commitment to human rights must accompany the peace process every step of the way. This would include the joint tsunami financial mechanism that could set the stage for a revival of the dormant peace process. We also propose the strengthening of human rights monitoring mechanisms pertaining to the peace process by providing the Sri Lanka Monitoring Mission or a new human rights monitoring body with a more effective mandate to ensure the protection of human rights."

### ● Another offer to deserters

Deserters from the Sri Lankan army, numbering tens of thousands, have become a major contributing factor to the island's escalating crime rate. Government of Sri Lanka is increasingly concerned over the persistent involvement of army deserters in crime and gangsterism in the island. Some of them have developed close links with the criminal underworld even undertaking contract killing.

Thousands of Sri Lanka army soldiers deserted their positions with their personal weapons during and after the war with the Tamil Tigers. Police say these weapons have found their way into the hands of criminal gangs.

Sri Lanka army recently made a fresh offer to de-list thousands of soldiers who deserted from service. Brig. Daya Ratnayake said 80,661 soldiers deserted military ranks during the two decade war with Tamil Tigers. SLA says that more than fifty five thousand deserters are still at large. This is the fifth offer by the Sri Lanka army to de-list deserters. "We appeal to all of them to come and start the process of de-listing," Ratnayake said of the new campaign that starts on May 9.

"On our earlier offers, about ten thousand deserters in the districts of Colombo, Anuradhapura, Kurunagala, Gampaha and Kalutara came forward to get themselves de-listed from the army. The deserters will be given a chance to obtain a clearance certificate from the army to continue their livelihood as normal citizens of the country," he said.

"Army deserters cannot find jobs legally. They have no civil status as long as they are considered as absconding from duty. Naturally, given their sheer number, they take to crime or get themselves hired out as contract killers and body guards for underworld gangsters. We are unable to control the growth and activities of well armed criminal gangs in this country because there is a vast pool of army deserters from which criminal dons are able to recruit freely," a retired senior Police officer in Colombo commented.

SLA said that names of those deserters considered eligible for de-listing would be available at all Divisional Secretaries' offices. "It would be easier to control crime when most deserters are accounted for. Also they would be able to find jobs and lead normal lives rather than be fugitives running from the law and finding

shelter in the criminal underworld," a Sri Lanka military officer said, explaining the idea behind the de-listing offer.

### ● Norway and the peace process

Norway did not have any ulterior motives or hidden agendas and said that the involvement in Palestine, Sudan and Sri Lanka purely because of its desire to see a peaceful world, the Norwegian Special Envoy in the Sri Lanka peace process, Eric Solheim reportedly said this at an interview at his office in the ministry of foreign affairs in Oslo on 3 April.

Admitting that as an unarmed facilitator, Norway is unable to impose anything, he however said that Norway has no desire to enlarge the facilitation by including India. "No we have no such plan in Sri Lanka. We have the total support of US, India and others for our peace facilitation in Sri Lanka."

Referring to the Government-LTTE talks, he said that the joint mechanism was likely to be established very shortly. "But you are never certain until it is established as sometimes we get so close to the objective and then something happens before we cover the last few feet."

Solheim expressed satisfaction over the ceasefire agreement despite its violations. "Only about 300 people died in the last three years since signing of the CFA and before that we had seen 300 or more die in a single day in the battlefield," he said.

Initially the Norwegian peace facilitation did not have blessings from India. He denied that India was upset that Norway had not kept them briefed. "No it is incorrect. We have kept Delhi briefed throughout. There was secrecy over the peace initiative. Only President Kumaratunga and Kadirgamar knew about that at that time. Even Sri Lankan cabinet ministers were not aware," Solheim said.

The Congress Party leaders had warned Norway even before the party came to power at the Centre that India would never give any legitimacy or recognition to LTTE supreme Velupillai Prabhakaran or his group for the assassination of Rajiv Gandhi. New Delhi considered that the killing was an act of terrorism and the Indian leaders believe that the killing of a prime ministerial candidate during a general election was a direct interference in the Indian democratic process.

When the Norwegian peace facilitator Erik Solheim was asked if India had given the above warning, he did not deny it. Instead he said, "India told me many things. But I cannot reveal what India had told me in confidence. If the Indian side decided to do so, it is their decision, but I have to maintain the confidence of all the things India told me."

"Main reason why Norway plays a prominent role is that Norway is a small country and it cannot impose solutions. Hence Norway's role is acceptable. We can only make suggestions and assist as in Sri Lanka. We have no powers either political economic or military. We are far away. So we are in a better position to offer ourselves as peace facilitators. We don't carry weapons. We don't have a peacekeeping army to impose decisions," he said.

He said that Norway did not have any ulterior motives or hidden agendas and said that the involvement in Palestine, Sudan and Sri Lanka purely because of its desire to see a peaceful world. He rejected the suggestion that Norway was taking the side of the LTTE.

Meanwhile, Norway has denied newspaper reports in the Colombo media that it had conveyed a warning to the Government of Sri Lanka and international donors that it is considering a suspension of its role as facilitator to the Peace Process. Daily Mirror published from Colombo in a lead story quoting "informed sources" said that "the LTTE may withdraw from the ceasefire agreement and Norway may suspend its role as facilitator if the government



## Whither tsunami 'joint mechanism'?

The talks between the Government and the LTTE in regard to the setting up of a joint mechanism to deal with the post-tsunami relief and rehabilitation in the Northeast remain stalled.

Intensive diplomatic and political efforts are underway to reach a compromise on the controversial issue of joint mechanism for tsunami aid distribution. On the one hand diplomatic efforts are being made to narrow the gap between the government and the LTTE. At the same time similar efforts are being made to secure a consensus within the political parties in the ruling alliance which seems to be divided on the issue.

United States Assistant Secretary of State Christina Rocca, who is currently on a visit to Sri Lanka, is learnt to have discussed with the government leaders as well as the Norwegian peace envoy Erik Solheim who is also on a visit to Sri Lanka. "We hope the government and the LTTE will agree soon on a joint mechanism for tsunami relief, to ensure that assistance finds its way to people who need it - wherever they are in Sri

Lanka," Ms Rocca said in Colombo speaking to journalists.

On 19 April, Ms. Rocca and Erik Solheim travelled separately to the eastern province to see the tsunami affected areas. US diplomats said Rocca was visiting US-funded projects for carpenters, masons and welders repairing schools in the wake of the December 26 tsunamis. Solheim was visiting the district of Batticaloa where there had been a spate of daily killings and counter-killings by the LTTE and its breakaway Karuna group. There have also been friction between government forces and the LTTE which accused the former of conniving with those of the Karuna group.

Scandinavians peace monitors have cautioned that increased violence in the eastern province would undermine the ceasefire that has been in place since February 23, 2002.

Diplomatic circles have indicated that the international donors would like to see a compromise on tsunami aid distribution before the next meeting of the donors scheduled to be held next month in Kandy, Sri Lanka. The

donor meeting will be held under the aegis of the World Bank-sponsored Sri Lanka Development Forum.

It is said that the government was conscious of impatience among members of the donor community because of the lack of progress in setting up a joint mechanism for handling relief work in the northeast, which was badly hit by the Dec. 26 tsunami.

More than 31,000 people died after a tsunami hit the shores of Sri Lanka - on Dec. 26, and a further 900,000 were displaced. International donors promised billions of dollars in relief and reconstruction aid and grants to help people in the Indian Ocean nations affected by the disaster.

Sri Lanka has received written commitments for 75 percent of the US\$2 billion (euro1.56 billion) pledged for post-tsunami rehabilitation and reconstruction. "We have now signed papers and the money will be made available for sure," Finance Minister Sarath Amunugama told a news conference in Colombo.

Solheim who arrived in Colombo on Sunday 17 April on a five-day visit in what was described as a routine visit has been optimistic about working out a deal in setting up a joint mechanism between the government and the LTTE for the distribution of aid to areas devastated by the tsunami and the war. Mr. Erik Solheim

fails to set up a joint mechanism with the LTTE before the end of April to handle tsunami rebuilding in the northeast" adding "They said both the LTTE and Norway had already informally conveyed this warning to the government and several international donors including the European Union have urged the government to act fast on this matter."

Denying the report a press release on March 15 from the Norwegian embassy said: "The Norwegian embassy categorically denies that Norway has conveyed a warning to the Government of Sri Lanka and international donors that it is considering a suspension of its role as facilitator to the Peace Process. Local media refers to anonymous 'sources'. We can only assume that these so-called sources neither wish the post-tsunami rebuilding efforts or the Peace Process well. We expect that serious media outlets in the future will check these kinds of outrageous claims with the embassy prior to publication."

### ● The 'hijab' controversy

Controversy erupted following a decision taken by the Principal of Lindsay Girls School, Colombo, to ban Muslim students from wearing the traditional Islamic head scarf. The action of the Prin-

cipal was thought to be contravention of the prevailing rules governing dress code of Muslim girl pupils.

As protests, mainly from the Muslim community, began to spread, Western Province Governor, Alavi Moulana, directed the Province's Chief Minister Reginald Cooray to issue instructions to the Principal demanding her strict adherence to the Education Ministry circular bearing number 37/1995 issued on December 12, 1995, which allowed Muslim students to wear the head scarf also known as the 'hijab'.

The Lindsay Principal had made an announcement during a morning assembly banning Muslim students from wearing the head scarf with immediate effect. More than 100 Muslim girl students are currently studying at Lindsay, which is a very popular girl's school in Colombo.

Reportedly, the many attempts made by the parents of affected students did not move the Principal from changing her decision. The parents had written to the Principal and had even gone several times to her office to meet and plead with her to reconsider her decision, but the Principal had refused to see any parent on the head scarf matter.

In the end Principal had to toe the official directive and permit the wearing of the head scarf by the concerned students. □

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that the Government of Sri Lanka and the LTTE were close to entering into an agreement on the long awaited joint mechanism. However there were still some issues that need to be resolved before signing the document, he said.

Rejecting the media speculation that the parties have already reached an agreement and it would be signed this time during his stay in Colombo, Mr. Solheim said: "The parties are close to an agreement. They have agreed to nearly everything. There are still some issues that have to be resolved," Mr. Solheim told journalists after a meeting with Sri Lanka Muslim Congress (SLMC) leader, Mr. Ruaf Hakeem.

"We do hope that the parties will be in a position to sign this document in two or three or four weeks' time," Mr. Solheim added.

Commenting on his meeting with the SLMC leader, he said that Muslim people were concerned that they too should have been a party to the discussions on the tsunami joint mechanism. "These are very understandable concerns and we feel that both the Sri Lanka government and the LTTE on this occasion have done their utmost to try to accommodate Muslim concerns," Mr. Solheim said.

On Wednesday (20) Mr. Solheim met with LTTE's Head of Political Division, Mr. S.P. Thamichelvan and his delegation, who had just arrived in Bandaranaike International Airport after concluding an almost 40 days long diplomatic mission to Europe and to South Africa.

Mr. Thamichelvan during his mission to Europe had held discussions with government leaders of more than twelve countries regarding the current state of the stalled peace process and the obstacles in establishing a joint mechanism to implement a tsunami relief, rehabilitation and reconstruction programme in the northeast. After the talks it was reported that Mr. Solheim and Mr. Thamichelvan held wide-ranging discussions on the latest position in regard to the joint mechanism.

But opposition to such a joint mechanism coming from various quarters, including the JVP, a coal-

ition partner in the governing coalition and those who represent the Muslim community, seem to stand in the way.

According to observers, the problem is that the LTTE is pushing hard to get maximum mileage in its efforts to win external recognition and sees this as a golden opportunity. And this is exactly what the JVP is resisting.

President Chandrika Kumaratunga recently said the proposed joint mechanism to distribute aid would be the foundation of a lasting political solution to the country's civil war. "If we can make the joint mechanism for providing relief to people in the northeast a success, it will be a fine foundation for finding a lasting solution to the national problem," she said in her Sinhala and Tamil New Year message on April 13.

#### Muslim complaints

SLMC leader Rauff Hakeem told US Assistant Secretary of State Christina Rocca that Muslims in Sri Lanka have been kept out of the discussions on the joint mechanism from the beginning though the Muslim community is the most affected in the north and the east. Hakeem met with Rocca and US Ambassador Lunstead at the US embassy on 20 April.

Hakeem reportedly told Ms. Rocca, "We are a key party of the Muslims and we are kept out of the discussions. If Muslims are not involved with the joint mechanism the credibility of the process could be affected."

SLMC leader also complained that the Muslims hadn't got a positive response from the Norwegians and the Norwegians were only working to help the two main parties, the government and the LTTE. Hakeem pointed out that the LTTE was exerting pressure on both the Norwegian and the government and dominating the discussions on the joint mechanism issue. He also warned that it could leave room for unrest. Hakeem said that he had no faith in the government machinery in the northeast because the government servants could not function properly and independently due to the fear and pres-

sure exerted by the LTTE. Hakeem also said that Muslims were caught between Karuna and Prabhakaran faction's clashes.

Hakeem pointed out that even the Muslims ministers in the government had expressed their sentiments on the joint mechanism but they were yet to receive a positive reply from the President.

Muslim concerns regarding the proposed joint mechanism have also come from Muslim parliamentarians belonging to the government. Deputy Media Minister Segu Izzadeen has impressed upon the necessity of the Muslim community be given equal representation in the tsunami reconstruction joint mechanism structure. Addressing a meeting recently, the Deputy Minister pointed out that the Muslims should be given the equal status which will be granted to the Sri Lankan Government and LTTE. "Muslims were one of the worst hit in the December 26 catastrophe. One percent of the entire Muslim population perished due to the tidal waves, and so it is very important that sufficient Muslim representation is provided in the proposed structure, so that the community's needs will be looked after," he said.

"Muslims in the East have equal rights as the LTTE and it should be honoured not only by the Muslim Members in the Government but the members in the opposition too, without any party differences. The East which was affected by the war and later by the Tsunamis is now filled up with refugees and orphans. The international community too must look in to the grievances of the people in the East and come forward to provide redress for them," he added.

#### JVP' opposition

JVP's opposition to the proposed joint mechanism is quite fundamental. In its opinion it would do more damage to the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the country than the Ceasefire Agreement of the former UNF government. "The Ceasefire Agreement was a gross violation of the territorial integrity of the country by demarcating part of land as the LTTE territory. The joint mechanism

will go a step further as it will see the government sharing its supreme power to handle finances with the Tigers," Mr. Weerawansa told the media in Colombo.

According to JVP's MP, Nandana Gunatilleke, there is no need for a Joint Mechanism with the LTTE, and that, like in the Sinhala-south, all rehabilitation and reconstruction work in the north-east should be done by the government departments.

And at any rate, as the argument goes, the "terrorist" LTTE is not a representative organization of the north-east people, because it had obtained its "sole" representative status "only through force".

#### Non-LTTE Tamil parties

Some of the non-LTTE Tamil parties like the EPRLF, EPDP and PLOTE also stand opposed to a joint mechanism covering the entire north-east. They say that it would be wrong to give the LTTE any say in the allocation of funds because the LTTE would manipulate the system in such a way that the money will go into its war chest and not to the victims of the tsunami.

Tamil United Liberation Front (TULF), V Anandasangaree, holds the view that like everywhere else, the rehabilitation work in the north-east should be left to the government, especially in the government-held areas. He says that calling for a joint government-LTTE mechanism was but a LTTE ruse to take over and misappropriate the funds.

In a letter delivered to the visiting US Assistant Secretary of State, and the Norwegian Peace Envoy Eric Solheim, Tamil United Liberation Front (TULF) Leader, V. Anandasangaree states that the Tamils in Sri Lanka are not prepared to negotiate peace by subjugating themselves to the LTTE, whose track record has no parallel to any other similar organization in the world.

"I only want the international community to understand the ground situation in the North and the East and not to think only in terms of bringing back peace to the country by merely satisfying the LTTE," the letter from the TULF leader said.

Making a plea on behalf of the Tamils Anandasangaree says "The Tamils who enjoyed all democratic and fundamental rights in government held areas are now deprived of all their rights and are weeping in silence being unable to show their opposition for fear of arms of the LTTE."

Arguing against the pressure upon the government to set up a joint mechanism with the LTTE, the TULF leader in his letter raised the following issues: "Of the 73 Divisional Secretaries Divisions in the eight administrative districts of the north and the east, 47 divisions are under the full control of the government and only 15 divisions are under the full control of the LTTE. The balance 10 divisions come under both the government and the LTTE. The claim that 60% of the coastal areas affected are under the control of the LTTE is also unacceptable and not correct.

"The whole world knows that the LTTE refused permission for everybody to go into their areas with relief items and insisted on all such aid be handed over to them. As a result they deprived the victims from receiving aid from number of NGOs and voluntary organizations.

"The LTTE had proved by its conduct that its main intention is to gain legitimacy, not only in the areas held by them but also in other areas held by the government to cover the entire north and the east. The cease-fire agreement signed three years back has given them legitimacy over their areas and by the demand for a joint mechanism they are only trying to claim legitimacy in the north and the east, which will not be acceptable not only to Sinhalese and Mus-

lims of the East but also by the Tamils of the two provinces.

"The Tamils who enjoyed all democratic and fundamental rights in government held areas are now deprived of all their rights and are weeping in silence being unable to show their opposition due to fear. Murders, arrests, torture, conscriptions, extortions, taxation etc, go on unabated. The two Sri Lankans holding British citizenship are lucky. The moment their detention and torture was brought to the notice of the British authorities, they acted promptly and had them released. (The reference two Sri lankans holding British citizenship is to R Jeyadevan and Vivekananthan who were held in detention by the LTTE when they went to northern Sri Lanka and later released under pressure from UK authorities). But, the poor Sri Lankan Tamils so detained are not that fortunate to have the intervention of any authority local or foreign.

"In this situation, if the Government sets up a joint mechanism with the LTTE will it not amount to legitimising all their unlawful acts? Will it not be an encouragement to commit more such crimes? Will the LTTE with the setting up of a joint mechanism encourage a free print and electronic media to operate in the areas held by the government, leave alone in their areas? Will the LTTE remove its iron curtain and allow everyone to reach any part of the territory under their control as they are now allowed in government controlled areas?"

With such opposition coming from various quarters, particularly from the JVP which is threatening to quit the ruling coalition, the dispute over the formation of a joint mechanism between the Government and the LTTE is dragging on without the urgently needed rehabilitation and reconstruction of the tsunami affected areas and the people of the North-east. □



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# Tamil fratricide continues in the east

D.B.S. Jeyaraj

The tragic phenomenon of Tamil fratricide continues in the Eastern Province and its border regions. The latest incident in this seemingly endless saga was the killing of at least nine persons at a clandestine jungle camp in the Polonnaruwa district bordering that of Batticaloa. In a bizarre development four of the nine corpses presumed dead have now gone missing. In a further ironic twist the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam disclaim responsibility for the deaths and allege that it was a result of internal strife within the Karuna faction while the Tamil Eelam United Liberation Front denies it totally and in turn accuses the LTTE of having launched the attack. Complicating matters more are charges of complicity by the Sri Lankan armed forces.

It was in the early hours of the morning on April 14th that villagers of the area discovered nine bodies lying in a makeshift camp in the jungle area close to the village washing spot. They ran and alerted the security forces in close proximity. Thereafter the security personnel came and took charge. Searches were done. The people were kept away while some "movement" took place. The Police were called in. No one was allowed to go near. After a few hours the Polonnaruwa acting magistrate Ms. Chandani Meegoda came to the spot, conducted an inquest but declared an open verdict.

When local journalists and people of the area came to the scene they were puzzled to find that some dead men had walked away. Four of the bodies that lay still when discovered were now missing. Journalists saw more than a dozen pairs of footwear lying in the camp area. The camp itself comprised five thatched sheds. Three were for living while the other two had provisions and supplies. They were newly constructed. The people were upset by the missing corpses and told the reporters about it. When the scribes informed Ms.

Meegoda she raised it with the security forces who informed her that only five bodies were there.

The incident occurred at a spot near the place known as Vannaanthuraiy in the Soruwil village near Aralanganwila in the Polonnaruwa area. Soruwil known as Soruwila in Sinhala is a Tamil village close to the Tamil majority Batticaloa district border in Sinhala majority Polonnaruwa district. Soruwil has about 240 to 250 Tamil families. The closest Sinhala inhabitation is the recently established Sinhala agricultural colony of Maliyadevapura in Namalpokuna. This village has about 120 to 125 Sinhala families. There is an army camp, two mini-camps and about 24 sentry posts cum bunkers in the vicinity.

The stream, Soruwil aaru, runs through the area. Members of the "Vaannaar" or "Dhobies" engaging in their traditional occupation as well as other people usually wash their clothes at a particular spot along the river bank known as Vannaanthurai or Washerman spot. On April 10th a group of armed Tamil militants came to the Soruwil area and set up camp in the jungles close to Vannaanthuraiy. The exact strength of the "new" outsiders is not known.

On April 11th seven Tamil youths armed with T-56 guns came into the village and summoned the people for a meeting. They announced that they belonged to the Tamil Eelam Iyakkia Viduthalai Munnani (Tamil Eelam United Liberation Front). The TEULF consists of the Tamil Eelam Makkal Viduthalaip Puligal led by former Eastern tiger commander Vinayagamoorthy Muraleetharan alias "Col" Karuna and the Eelam National; Democratic Liberation Front led by Gnana-piragasam alias "Paranthan" Rajan. Despite this tie-up most Eastern Tamils refer to this group as Karunas boys.

The Karuna cadres informed the people that they would be staying in

the area for some time. No cadres belonging to the mainstream LTTE were allowed in the area. If anyone came there or any suspicious outsider was seen the people should immediately inform them they ordered. They told the people that they were fully supported by the security forces and that they had nothing to fear. If anyone was suspected of having links with the mainstream tigers they would be punished the cadres warned.

An adhoc committee was formed to liaise with the militants on behalf of the villagers. Some of the cadres were from Soruwil themselves. The people were warned not to engage in hunting or distilling moonshine in the nearby jungle areas. The cadres also said that they had enough food supplies but would require small items and minor help from the people. Thereafter an uneasy co-existence prevailed. While the people were generally sympathetic to Karuna they were concerned about LTTE retaliation. They understood however that the Karuna cadre presence there had the tacit support and approval of the armed forces.

Some people at least had heard reports of gunfire at about 1.30 to 1.45 am on Thursday. It was also the night of Sinhala - Tamil new year. Some revelry was still on. The armed forces too could have heard the gunfire but no one bothered to investigate. In any case the presence of Karuna cadres was officially "unknown" to the armed forces. The armed forces too were in an inebriated state due to "avuruddhu" festivity. Besides they would have been reluctant to venture into the middle of a suspected tiger attack. It could even have been a cynical calculation of letting "Tamil" kill "Tamil" in internecine warfare.

After the bodies were taken to hospital the authorities were able to identify them. The five "officially" acknowledged dead persons were Rajenthiran Perinbanathan alias Vijayan; Selliah Kulanthaivelu alias Kabie; Sinnathamby Krishnapillai alias Thurai; Thevathasan Theiventhiran alias Vasu and Kandasamy Jeyaneethan alias Kanthan. Vijayan and Kabie were from the ENDLF and hailed from Trincomalee district. Thurai was from Valaichenai in Batticaloa. Kanthan and Vasu were from



Soruwil itself. All three were ex - Tigers swearing loyalty to Karuna.

Interestingly two young Tamils Sinnathamby Mahendran and Karthigesu Yogarakah were admitted to the Polonnaruwa hospital on the same day. Both suffered gunshot injuries. It is not known whether they were of the four "missing" bodies presumed dead or whether they were additional wounded cadres. It is also not known whether they were injured in this incident or elsewhere.

The missing bodies claimed to have been seen by villagers is quite a mystery. Two explanations are possible. One is that they could have been high ranking leaders and that the bodies were removed to prevent the fact being known as it would demoraise cadre morale. The other is that it could have belonged to operatives of the state military intelligence reacting with the Karuna - ENDLF group. The bodies may have been removed by the forces to prevent that fact being exposed in an incriminating manner.

This also raises the question as to who was responsible. Usually a "successful" strike like this would have made the LTTE claim credit proudly. The Karuna faction would have taken pains to deny them that praise. Now ironically the opposite was happening. The tigers were "modestly" disclaiming responsibility and alleging that the Karuna and ENDLF factions had fallen out. The killings were an internal dispute they say. The Karuna group vehemently denies this. Instead of decrying tiger capability as is usually done the Karuna outfit is indirectly complimenting the mainstream LTTE by stating the tigers were responsible.

Why are the tigers not claiming credit for a "militarily" successful operation executed with precision? One is that this happened outside the North - East and because it is in all respects a brutal violation of the prevailing ceasefire. The second reason could be to sow doubts and dissension among their adversaries. The Karuna-Paranthan Rajan alliance is by no means firm or concrete. It is like most militant alignments opportunistic and fragile. The pro-Tiger

media has been pushing the line that the marriage of convenience is collapsing for quite some time now. There is also the remote possibility of the LTTE telling the truth for a change!

The LTTE propaganda is often fickle and fluid. There is no consistency and the line changes often according to utilitarian requirements. Thus the LTTE will say on one occasion that Karuna is a single individual and a madman without any followers. The tigers will say that the attacks on the LTTE were done by the armed forces. The tigers would on a different occasion allege that the killings were done by Karuna's group. They will also deny and charge that there was a wider alliance of anti - tiger forces. So the tigers will contradict themselves regularly as their accusations fluctuate according to their perceived needs.

In this case too the reasons for LTTE not claiming "credit" is understandable but why is the Karuna faction pointing the finger at the LTTE and giving them that "credit"? Would not cadres be demoralised by the fact that the LTTE was capable of executing successful operations like this? While this is true the Karuna faction may be accusing the LTTE openly because it may be the lesser evil. It may be better to accuse the tigers rather than let doubts of internal strife affect the Karuna - Paranthan Rajan alliance. Also it may be useful to charge the LTTE of a major ceasefire violation and take the moral high ground in a limited sense. Finally what the Karuna faction says too could be the truth.

While Eastern journalists are not venturing to cast definite blame on any side the news trickling down the grapevine points to the LTTE as being responsible. For one thing the victims are all anti - tigers. The LTTE always guns them down and says they were all internal killings. That practice is being followed here too. Apparently someone from the village disgruntled with the Karuna cadres had tipped off the LTTE.

The prime suspects in this instance are the Kasippu distillers put out of business temporarily by Kar-

unas men. A crack tiger squad hade rekked through the jungle to strike it is alleged. Their task was easier as the inmates at the Vannanthurai camp were having a "New year" party. There were some security personnel there too who were killed. This explains the missing bodies. In the earlier days Karuna cadres had been staying during day at the camp and sleeping by night in village dwellings. They had changed the routine on this night presumably due to the "Varushappirappuk Kondaattam".

Predictably the Army spokesperson Brig. Daya Ratnaik has denied any security involvement of any kind in the incident. This however is to be expected. These spokespersons admissions or denials have little credibility. When there were newspaper reports about a Karuna camp in Theevuchenai, Ratnayake denied it completely. 24 hours later there was an attack and the spokesperson was forced to eat his earlier words. In this case too if the media had exposed the existence of a camp before the incident Ratnaik may very well have denied it first. After the attack he would have sung a different song. Like that of a diplomat the duty of a spokesperson too relies on lies and cover ups.

The ENDLF cadres Vijayan and Kabie are prized scalps. Both were Peoples Liberation Organization of Tamil Eelam cadres from the early eighties. They left the PLOTE with Paranthan Rajan and helped form the ENDLF. They left for India in 1990 and lived in Salem, Tamil Nadu for nearly fifteen years. Both of them returned to Sri Lanka in the last quarter of last year and helped develop the alliance with Karuna. Vijayan who was once taken prisoner by the Tigers during the IPKF period made a daring escape after overpowering his guards. A rare exploit! It is reported that Vijayan travelled to Sri Lanka on an Indian passport and that family members in Salem want his body to be brought there for the funeral.

The attack came at a time when LTTE morale in the region was down in the doldrums and that of the Karuna cadres on the rise. The anniversary of the battle fought last year between Karuna and the LTTE last year was from April 9th to 11th. After

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arriving at a settlement with the Tigers Karuna was given safe passage to leave Tamil Eelam. Karuna journeyed leisurely with former UNP Parliamentarian Ali Zaheer Moulana to Colombo. There he was met by Intelligence chief Kapila Hendawitharana who persuaded Karuna to throw in his lot with Colombo. Karuna did so and broke the agreement entered into battle with the Tigers. The rest is (contemporary) history.

It was widely expected that Karuna would wreak havoc on Tigers in Batticaloa during this anniversary period. So great was this fear that the LTTE members in the East simply remained indoors in their camps, offices and bunkers without venturing out during these days. This even led to the impression that the Tigers had fled to the Wanni en masse. This may have even led to overconfidence among Karuna cadres. This cocksureness plus the New Year celebration may have led to this debacle. The saying about four-legged felines that

they crouch only to pounce (Puli Pathunguvathu Paaivathatkaaha) holds true for the two-legged followers of Velupillai Pirapakaran too.

This attack was not the first of its kind in Polonnaruwa. Some weeks ago the LTTE launched a similar attack on Mangalan Masters camp in Theevuchenai. But the intended targets were ready and waiting. 12 of the 26 man squad were killed in the skirmish and subsequent counter-ambush and attack.. Both sides underplayed the incident and adopted a low-key stance due to different reasons. Karuna's cadres also executed operations that affected the LTTE considerably. On one occasion Karuna's boys infiltrated deep into tightly controlled Tiger territory on the West shore of the lagoon and seized the Great heroes cemetery at Tharavai near Kokkatticholai. Instead of killing the cadres taken by surprise Karunas boys seized their weapons, gave "lectures" and withdrew after occupying the premises for nearly a

whole night.

On another occasion they moved along the interior to Trincomalee district and attacked a Tiger post in Mahindapura in the Seruwila area. Two LTTE cadres were killed in the shock attack. Karuna's group are now moving about in the interior areas of Eechilampattai and Serunuwara divisions while the Tigers are in control of the Vaaharai - Verugal littoral

The mainstream LTTE was on the defensive when the Soruwil attack happened. Though not claiming credit the Tigers will no doubt receive morale booster through this. The Karuna cadres will be deflated temporarily. It does not require any special skill to predict that there would be reprisal attacks and further related attacks. The cycle of violence will go on. "Brother" will attack "Brother" in endless bloodshed due to the ego and vanity of their leaders. Aided and abetted by interested third parties the fratricidal fighting will continue to diminish the Eastern Tamils. □

# The Temple Battle and Jeyadevan's Detention

The battle for control of a Hindu temple in London, the fate that befell upon its Chairman of the Trustees, Mr Rajasingham Jeyadevan when he went to the Tamil Tiger stronghold of Kilinochchi in northern Sri Lanka, his release after being kept in solitary confinement by the LTTE for 66 days which led to a hearing in the High Court of London seem to have dominated the attention of many particularly among expatriate Sri Lankan Tamils, not only in the UK but also in many parts of the world where they live in substantial numbers.

Even the name of this Sivan temple had its own political symbolism. The word "Eelappatheeswarar" had its derivation from "Thamil Eelam" for which the Tamil Tigers have been engaged in a do or die battle for well over twenty years. Located in Alperton in west London the "Eelappatheswarar Sivan temple" was established in 2000 in the premises owned by the British Labour party's Pavitt Hall trust.

When the battle for taking control of the temple began, a four-member board of trustees managed it. The chairman was businessman cum accountant Rajasingham Jeyadevan and secretary A.K. Vivekananthan. The other two trustees were P.Soundararajan, Vice Chairman and T.Koneswaran, Treasurer. This Hindu temple is one of many located in various parts of Greater London which sprang up in recent years presumably to cater to the religious needs of a considerable number of people of Hindu religious persuasion hailing from among Sri Lankan Tamils and the larger Indian population.

In the operation of these temples, the question as to who controls and runs them has always been a dominant one. Besides the ego of individuals to present themselves as 'leaders in the community', controlling these temples mean control over the considerable income that they generate and the utilization of that income

other than the small sums required for the administration of these temples. It is also no secret that the LTTE, though banned in the UK, is the most visible and powerful political group that operates in the country as much as they do in other countries of western Europe, Canada and Australia. And known LTTE activists and supporters do not fail in their bid to exercise influence over all community organizations, including temples.

## Battle for control

It is in the above background that the dispute as to who controls the Alperton Sivan temple broke out into the open. According to Mr Jeyadevan, the person behind the move to oust him and his co-trustees was Nagenthiram Seevaratnam who is also the head of Sivayogam Trust that runs another lucrative Muthumariamman temple in Tooting in south-west London.

Strange as it may seem, both Seevaratnam and Jeyadevan have been well known activists and campaigners of the LTTE's cause in UK. Jeyadevan, well known for his organizational ability, has actively involved himself in many a community organization for several years. Jeyadevan in addition to establishing and running the Sivan temple, played key roles in the formation of the International Federation of Tamils, the Tamil Refugee Action Council, the Tamil Community Housing Association, and the Kingsbury Tamil School.

Incidentally Seevaratnam's second wife is Jeyadevan's youngest sister. Despite being in-laws, their relationship has always lacked cordiality and often turned hostile. Reportedly the discord between Jeyadevan and Seevaratnam has been simmering for the last three to four years, and as time passed Seevaratnam had secured for himself the support of the official hierarchy of the LTTE, both in London and the Vanni back in Sri Lanka, as against Jeyadevan.

As a faithful worker and cam-

paigner for the LTTE cause, Jeyadevan honestly believed that the LTTE leadership in the Vanni would appreciate and recognize his contribution to their cause and would want him to continue the work he had been doing in the UK. Jeyadevan left London for Colombo on December 27, 2004, just twenty-four hours after tsunami struck the island carrying with him a large sum of money collected from the devotees of the Sivan temple to be handed over to the LTTE to provide relief for tsunami affected people. Investing absolute trust and confidence in the LTTE's leadership, he genuinely hoped that the leadership also would listen and vindicate him.

## Visit to Wanni

By prior arrangement with Jeyadevan, Vivekananthan, Secretary of the Sivan temple trust, flew from London to Colombo on January 1, 2005 and Jeyadevan's brother Dr.R.Narendran, another ardent supporter of the LTTE, too travelled from Saudi Arabia and joined them. On January 3 the three of them went to Kilinochchi and from there they went to "Nanthavannam", the reception point in Kilinochchi for overseas Tamils. They had an appointment with "Castro" alias Veerakathi Manivannan, who is the key LTTE functionary in charge of overseas LTTE branches. The three-some were kept waiting for a long time and were told later that 'Castro' was busy that day because of his tsunami related activities.

All three, Jeyadevan, his brother Narendran and Vivekananthan, therefore went to Jaffna and returned to Kilinochchi the next day and again after waiting for a long time were told that they could not meet Castro.

On January 6th when they were at the Colombo airport with Dr.Narendran, who was leaving Sri Lanka that day, the message asking them to return to Kilinochchi to meet Castro was received. Dr. Narendran left Sri Lanka and both Jeyadevan and Vivekananthan hired a van in Colombo and arrived in Kilinochchi on January 8th.

On the same day, Castro's deputy Nediyan met them at "Pandithar Illam", the lodge in Kilinochchi where they were staying. He asked questions about the London Sivan temple and stated that Eelappatheswarar Sivan temple belonged to

the LTTE. Nediyan subjected Jeyadevan and Vivekananthan to intensive questioning and wanted them to provide him with full details of the accounts and also make a statement regarding the temple. It was during this interrogation that both realized that Castro's refusal to meet them had some connection with complaints that Seevaratnam had made regarding the temple in London. Jeyadevan

knew that there was a close relationship between Seevaratnam and Castro who had a long-standing love-affair with Seevaratnam's daughter.

On January 10th LTTE operatives moved them to "Vakeesan" a lodge located in Tharmapuram where Castro's office was located. On January 11th morning a van came without number plates and with black-tinted glass windows. The LTTE intelli-

gence officers who leapt out of the van ordered them to get into the van saying that they were taking them to meet Castro. But they were taken far deep into the interior of Puthukudiyirupu and dropped in a new camp of the LTTE there. The two intelligence officers told Jeyadevan and Vivekananthan to cooperate with them and it would take seven days to leave the place. The interrogation

**"My Captivity by the LTTE"** is the subject matter of a letter written to the International Committee for Red Cross (ICRC), by Rajasingham Jeyadevan giving details of the nightmarish experience of being held captive incommunicado in detention for 62 days by the LTTE in the Vanni region of Sri Lanka.

*The full text of the letter written by Jeyadevan to the ICRC in Geneva is as follows:*

"I formally write to you in connection with my and my colleague Mr A K Vivekananthan's (AKV) captivity by the LTTE in Vanni, Sri Lanka. We both were held in captivity for 42 and 62 days respectively. AKV was released on 19 February 2005. I was held for further 20 days as a hostage and was only released on 9 March 2005.

Our detention has been widely reported in the Sri Lankan media and some regional newspapers in London too covered the news. It is our position that we were held captive against our will and were not permitted to communicate at least with our immediate family members. The objective of our detention was to transfer a Hindu temple we were managing in London to a LTTE front charity namely "Sivayogam." Our lives were put at risk to execute LTTE's irregular agenda and the LTTE gave scant regard to our sufferings during our captivity.

I also became aware that it was also LTTE's agenda to kill me following the transfer of the temple by using extra-judicial methods to circumvent violation of the international humanitarian law and the Geneva conventions. They had

## My captivity by the LTTE

confirmed to my colleague AKV's wife who went to Vanni to seek the release of her husband that:

1. With the view to circumvent the Geneva Convention they intend throwing a snake on me so that there won't be evidence that LTTE killed me.

2. If item 1 does not happen they will make me mentally incapacitated so that I will not remember of all what had happened to me in Vanni.

Luckily either of the above did not take place. I am ever so grateful for the kindness shown by the British government to put pressure on the LTTE for my release.

Having gone through a painful experience, it is my position that these types of harassment and intimidation by the LTTE is brought to an end forthwith. I note that ICRC is in a unique position to help implement international standards in this regard in view of its involvement in the LTTE controlled areas. Therefore, I request you to use your good offices to get the LTTE to abide by the international standards while people are taken into custody. They should report any arrest and/or detention to the ICRC within a specified time limit. The detainees also must have basic safeguards and access to the family and legal representation. If these standards are not strictly followed very many people will fall foul to the LTTE's unacceptable conduct.

While I was in custody, I came to know through the Tamil media that ICRC gave its approval to a newly

established LTTE police interrogation centre in Vanni on the grounds that it meets all the required standards. It is with concern I note that there are many other detention centers in the LTTE controlled area where people are held captive and are being tortured. In some cases people are detained indefinitely. The LTTE must be made accountable for its conduct and controls must be placed to safeguard human rights violations by the LTTE. I request the ICRC to facilitate a process to carry out an inspection of all these centers with the support of other international NGO's such as Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch etc.,

I note with regret that ICRC offices in Vanni are not informed about the arbitrary arrests and detention of persons by the LTTE. It is also important to note that one of ICRC offices in the LTTE area was stone throw away from where we were held captive. Our attempt to contact the said office by clandestine methods did not succeed due to circum stances prevailing there. This would confirm the dire need for procedural change for LTTE to report the details of captives under its control to the ICRC.

I consider my experience, and sufferings of others in similar circumstances should not go in vain.

If you need a detailed report from me of my experience please do not hesitate to contact me. I am also prepared to forward to you various newspaper articles if you require in this regard.

I am forwarding copy of this email to the Amnesty International."

went on for three consecutive days and their statements were recorded. They also gave written statements. Jeyadevan's activities in the Housing Association in London were also queried. Their request to meet Castro was refused. On February 16, they were told that the LTTE leader Prabhakaran had gone through the reports and cleared them and they could leave in two days.

According to published reports quoting Jeyadevan, Anton Balasingham and A. C. Shanthan, LTTE's point-man in the UK, were in Kilinochchi and were fully aware of the detention and interrogation of Jeyadevan and Vivekananthan by LTTE operatives. Castro had asked for a statement from Seevaratnam, who had also visited Kilinochchi earlier and he responded by faxing a six-page statement with fresh allegations against Jeyadevan. Unknown to Jeyadevan, Castro had got down Mathanarajah, reportedly a relative of Mathivathani, the wife of LTTE leader Prabhakaran from London. He brought with him numerous documents to incriminate Jeyadevan.

On February 18, two operatives from Castro's department went to the place where the two were detained and said that they wanted to talk to Vivekananthan alone. Vivekananthan was told that his wife had come from London 4 days earlier and he would be released on condition that he signed the documents transferring the temple in London to Sivayoham Trust headed by Seevaratnam. He was also instructed to fully cooperate in the transfer of the management of the Sivan temple on his return to London. They also threatened Vivekananthan that they would use force and violence in London in case he refused to cooperate there. The operatives returned on February 19th evening and asked both Jeyadevan and Vivekananthan to sign some documents which had been prepared in advance presumably in London. They were told that unless they signed the documents they would not be released. As there was no choice, without questioning both of them signed them. However, only Vivekananthan was allowed to leave, but Jeyadevan continued to be kept in detention.

### Temple transfer

Upon Vivekananthan's return to London, with the sole intention of getting Jeyadevan released from LTTE's clutches, Vivekananthan and Mrs. Jeyadevan persuaded the other two Trustees of the temple in London also to sign the transfer papers which were delivered to Seevaratnam as directed by the LTTE in the Wanni.

When Vivekananthan telephoned Castro from London and informed him that he had complied with his direction to transfer the temple, and therefore requested the release of Jeyadevan as promised, he was told that the inquiry into Jeyadevan's conduct was not over yet and therefore not to expect his early release.

Meanwhile another tragedy struck the Jeyadevan family. Worried about Jeyadevan's plight in Wanni his father-in-law who learnt about the true situation from Vivekananthan suffered a massive heart attack and died on March 3. With her husband in detention in Wanni and her father dead, Mrs. Jeyadevan and their children were in a desperate situation not knowing what to do. With no other alternative, they turned to the British Police and on March 4 Mrs. Jeyadevan made a complaint about her husband's detention by the Tigers in the Wanni. The police told her to give them five days time. Apparently, she did not report the matter to the police earlier to avoid endangering her husband's life at the hands of the LTTE. Some other friends of the family had advised her not to go to the police as that would create "bad publicity against the LTTE and adversely affect the Tamil struggle for Eelam".

Following Mrs. Jeyadevan's complaint to the police, Vivekananthan was also questioned by the police for nearly three hours during which he is reported to have given graphic details about his and Jeyadevan's enforced detention.

### Release and return to London

Back in the Wanni, following his ordeal, Jeyadevan's health deteriorated. He handed over a written statement about his health. He was told that it would take 7 days to get a reply, as there was no neuro specialist in Wanni. As requested by him, he was then taken to the local medical centre and there the doctors informed

him that his sickness could not be treated in Wanni. The doctor advised him to go to the Apollo Hospital in Colombo for treatment. His request to be sent to Colombo for treatment was ignored.

Helpless Jeyadevan wrote an appeal to Prabhakaran on March 1, 2005. This was handed to an intelligence officer to be delivered to the LTTE leader. But nothing happened. He continued to be held incommunicado from February 19, 2005.

At last on March 9 one intelligence officer came and told him that he was to be released. He said that there were no charges against him and that he was a free man. Later, he was taken in a van to "Nandavanam" in Kilinochchi. When Jeyadevan asked for a receipt of the donation of 4700 pounds sterling (collected from devotees in London) made to the tsunami relief fund, they summarily dismissed his request saying that it was not LTTE practice to give such receipts. Two operatives from the Castro's group confronted him there when he thought his departure was imminent. They said they had received several complaints against him. He was asked to fill up a 4-page form about his personal details. He replied that he was very much disappointed and asked why they did not make arrangements to fill that form when he was kept under custody for 62 days against his will. They said that, they were merely following orders and the set procedure. Having signed the completed form containing his own comments about his harrowing experience in Wanni, he was allowed to board the van arranged by his family members. He reached Colombo on the March 10, 2005 and arrived in London on March 12, 2005.

### Before the High Court

In London, armed with the transfer papers signed by Jeyadevan and Vivekananthan under duress in Wanni, Sivayoham Trust had taken control of the Sivan Temple on 2 March 2005 ejecting the previous Priest, management and caretaker.

The Landlord of the premises where the temple was being operated, Pavitt Hall Trust, which had leased it to Jeyadevan now found that it was being occupied by unauthorized tenants (Sivayoham Trust)



in breach of the lease. Therefore Pavitt Hall Trust attempted to take back possession of the premises. However, Sivayogam Trust went to the High Court and obtained an ex parte temporary injunction to keep the temple open and perform poojas in the interest of the devotees and to keep the landlord and the previous tenants out of the premises. The ex parte injunction initially granted on 25 March was subsequently extended on 31 March for 7 more days. Earlier the parties to the case were Sivayogam Trust and Pavitt Hall Governors but on the last trial date (31 March), the four original trustees of the Eelappaatheeswarar Temple, including Jeyadevan and Vivekanandan, were joined with the Landlord as co-defendants in the case.

After the court heard from both sides it became apparent the temporary injunction should never have been granted. After 3 hours of detailed argument on April 7, the Honourable Justice Tugendhat found no merit in Sivayogam's request to continue managing the temple. The court said it would be manifestly unfair if

an injunction were allowed to continue. The effect of the order was that the unlawful occupiers must leave immediately. The judge also ordered Sivayogam Trust to pay the legal costs of the defendants. After the verdict, Sivayogam Trust lawyers agreed to hand back the keys, hand back all items in the temple, and return control of the Bank records and sign the necessary forms.

Although the case was heard under the general parameters of property law, the High Court judge Hon. Justice Tugendhat while delivering his verdict observed that there was corroborative evidence in the bundle of papers submitted to him that he found documents about the two defendants were held in captivity and he could see a clear violation of the country's Terrorism Act 2000.

#### Pressure for release

Reportedly Jeyadevan was released, mainly because of pressure from the British Foreign Office and his Labour party contacts (the intervention of the Labor Party MP Barry Gardener was also crucial). Soon af-

ter arriving in Colombo after his release, Jeyadevan briefed the British High Commission there. It is reported that the High Commission has provided a report of their own to the London Police. After returning to London, Jeyadevan reported matters to DC Cremins of the Kidnap Unit of the Metropolitan Police at Scotland Yard too. This unit is currently carrying out investigations into the kidnapping of Jeyadevan and Vivekananthan.

Having emerged from the jaws of death, the one time ardent devotee of the LTTE, Jeyadevan is hitting back. In a TBC (London) radio interview April 7th evening Jeyadevan said that he had heard after returning to London, when Seevaratnam had met the Tiger leader Prabhakaran with Castro in the Wannu, Prabhakaran had asked Seevaratnam: 'What we should do with Jeyadevan?' According to the information available to Jeyadevan, Seevaratnam had responded that "there was no need to do anything to Jeyadevan other than to shoot and kill him." □



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# A9 - Road to nowhere

Dr. Rajasingham Narendran

I have travelled on the A9 highway to Jaffna and back at six month intervals, since the ceasefire agreement was concluded between the Sri Lankan government and the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE). The experience has been a revelation of what we Tamils are in for, in the future, unless immediate remedial action is demanded from and instituted by the LTTE.

What I witnessed, perceived and inquired into, is a damning indictment of the LTTE and the manner in which some key elements in the organization have hijacked the Tamil liberation struggle. The absolute and unquestioning faith reposed in the LTTE by the Tamil public at large has been unconscionably squandered by these elements. To conform to the ethics governing public life, the LTTE as an organization has to take responsibility for these disastrous failures and be accountable to the Tamil people. Delusion, illusion and disappointment are three key words that would best describe my experiences on the A9 highway to Jaffna.

Spectacular achievements in the battle fields against the Sri Lankan and Indian armed forces and the brutal suppression of other, mostly misguided, Tamil militant outfits, had created an image among the Tamils that the LTTE was an invulnerable military machine that had the commitment, ruthlessness, organizational ability, tools, skills and discipline to counter the machinations of the political establishment in Sri Lanka and resist its armed forces.

## Naked in all its ugliness

The random acts of terrorism committed by the LTTE against civilian targets in both combat and non-combat areas were condoned by the Tamils as a necessary evil, in the face of the terrorism that was practised by the Sri Lankan state. In this context the misdemeanours of the LTTE

cadres involving extortion, kidnapping, misappropriation of public contributions and private property, thuggery, murder and other illegal tactics, were considered minor irritants that ought to be overlooked in the larger context of the on-going freedom struggle and the utopia that was about to dawn.

The widely publicized puritanical ethos enforced on his cadres by Vellupillai Prabhakaran and the willingness to sacrifice their lives for the cause, symbolized by the cyanide capsule, also over-rode any misgivings the Tamils had about the LTTE. The misdeeds of the LTTE cadres who came into contact with the Tamil public were largely forgiven as those committed by young boys (Podiyal), who would eventually overcome these tendencies as they grew and matured, under the watchful eyes of Prabhakaran - who had become a larger than life figure for most Tamils.

Unfortunately, at the same time the LTTE was refining their military machinery and related skills, with the financial contributions and whole hearted support of the Tamils, some key LTTE cadres were also refining their skills in spying on private citizens, extortion, propaganda and image-making, strong arm tactics involving thuggery, character assassination, callow journalism, kidnapping, illegal incarceration, and even murder; and businesses of various forms, to manipulate and control the lives of the Tamils, both in Sri Lanka and the Diaspora.

As the outfit grew in size, influence and power, alongside a suffering, appreciative, supportive, but largely passive Tamil community, a significant section within the LTTE were afflicted with the delusion that the Eelam they were going to achieve would be their personal fiefdom, to exploit, manipulate, plunder and benefit. With the dawn of the current Peace Process, and the cessation of

overt warfare, the latter aspect of the LTTE has gained ascendance. In the absence of the glare of military exploits to blind and dazzle the Tamil public, the LTTE's other persona is being exposed in all its ugliness. The LTTE, like the proverbial emperor, and equally deluded, is standing naked in all its ugliness - warts and all, for the world to see. This pathological delusion afflicting sections of the LTTE has to be treated and cured immediately, if it is to take its historic mission to fruition.

## The illusion on display

The illusion on display for the Tamil public at large starts at Omanthai and extends up to Muhamalai for travellers on the A9 highway. The Eelam immigration and customs posts at the entry and exit points of northern Eelam on A9, the Eelam police stations with policemen and women clad in French-style uniforms and, motor cycle riding and radar gun equipped traffic cops; the visible presence of uniformed Tigers and Tigresses, the Tamil Eelam banks, the Tamil Eelam supreme court complex, the Tamil Eelam Peace Secretariat, the new, multi-storied building and offices of the Tamil Refugees Organization (TRO) and several other institutions, are indeed a heart warming sight to the long suffering Tamils and a dream come true for many. These feelings are further reinforced by sights such as the motorcades with smartly attired soldiers and policemen in brand new glistening vehicles that escort visiting dignitaries in Kilinochchi.

Seran, Pandiyan and Ilam Thendral, sporting names that have both historical and poetic connotations for the Tamils, are good restaurants that have been established and run by the LTTE to provide a tantalizing range of foods and other comforts to the travel weary. These titillate the imagination as to possible lifestyles in a future Eelam. The news of the establishment of law and medical colleges, broadcasting services and other institutions of state power, add colour to the imagery of Eelam. These well planned, visible and highly publicized images provide the illusion, and some may call it bait, to hook the non-

critical and casual visitors travelling on the A 9, to the LTTE and reinforce fading dreams of Eelam.

However, the passage of time, repeat visits, greater familiarity and closer critical look, brought to light the ground realities and exposed the great deception being staged. Illusions lift like the morning mist to reveal the stark reality that exists in the LTTE controlled and influenced areas of northern Sri Lanka.

The disappointment is overwhelming, making one question one's sanity for having been so naive as to support the LTTE wholeheartedly and uncritically for two decades or more. The lack of palpable enthusiasm for the LTTE, its peacetime activities or Eelam among the Tamils living under its rule or its overwhelming influence, is an eye opener. The very same public that was overawed and exhilarated by the LTTE military prowess, are apathetic and apprehensive about their future and are unenthused about the LTTE activities.

### People in pervasive fear

A few who dare to be critical, do it with utmost caution. The LTTE has signally failed to mobilize the Tamils to enthusiastically participate in their nation's development. A Tamil public that was inherently incapable of violence but nevertheless enthusiastically supported the LTTE in its military confrontations with the Sri Lankan governments, have been prevented from utilizing their inherent abilities and capabilities in rebuilding and economic development by the stranglehold of sections of the LTTE. The pervasive and quite palpable sense of fear that has been instilled in the Tamil psyche by the LTTE has isolated the LTTE from the people and made way for the gullible, sycophants, time servers and fortune seekers to fill the intervening space. Sadly, this will ultimately cause the downfall of the LTTE, if immediate remedial action is not initiated within the organization to control and if possible, remove the human weeds.

The custom levies and the impediments to free movement of goods and services have prevented the resurgence of the northern economy from the debilitating effects of the civil war. In addition to the open custom levies, any organization or individual planning to move goods and services to the Vanni or the peninsula, has to make hefty payments to the LTTE, to be permitted to operate.

There is no policy in place to encourage investments by Tamils and other interested persons or groups in development, which would revive the local economy and enhance employment opportunities for the Tamils. All efforts are directed at collecting funds for the LTTE and in many instances the personal use of its cadres, even if these divert much needed resources for the development of the Tamil homeland into non-productive ventures. While no one can argue against the need for rehabilitation programs and facilities for the injured cadres or monuments to its fallen cadres (the ordinary Tamils

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who were also victims of the civil war are not remembered or honoured!!), such programs should not assume lopsided importance. The strategy to revive the economy and mobilize the might of financial resources, knowledge, professional know-how and experience of the Tamil community - both local and expatriate, should be the primary mission of the LTTE now, if the Tamils are to achieve economic freedom from the south. Economic freedom from the south will automatically generate the political freedoms desired by the Tamils in due course.

The space has been created by the military successes of the LTTE, to develop and nurture this economic freedom, free from the pernicious interference of the Sri Lankan government.

#### The Nandavanam Trap

The expatriate Tamil community is the goose that has the capability to lay golden eggs for the Tamil nation and should be harnessed for productive development as an immediate priority. The LTTE, however, wants the contributions of the expatriate Tamils to fill their coffers, a part of which is very likely pilfered by some of its cadres, and plans to have a major (most likely an exclusive) stake in all developmental and business activities that have a potential to make money. The LTTE priority to invest the hard earned money of the Tamil community to create illusions and not serious economic and developmental programs should be a matter of serious concern to the Tamils. In the long run, appearances cannot be substitutes for substance. The goose that lays the golden eggs will have only a fixed lifespan and should be nurtured, cared for and harnessed within this limited time, to lay the greatest number of large golden eggs for the long-term benefit of the Tamil nation.

The present acts of the LTTE such as extortion, kidnapping and

other strong arm tactics to force the Tamils to tow their line, will discourage Tamils of means, knowledge, experience and money, from investing in the future of the Tamil homeland. Expatriate Tamils, both Sri Lankan and foreign passport holders, were cordially welcomed at special booths set up at LTTE immigration and custom points and charged an entrance fee, in exchange for duty free exemptions, at the initial stages of the peace process.

However, with time these booths have evolved into branches of the LTTE international wing and direct people to the welcoming centres of the international wing, rather cynically named *Nandavanam*, located in Kilinochchi and Kondavil. The threat that failure to visit *Nandavanam* offices, will prevent exit from Vanni on their return journey, is very quietly, but ominously made. At *Nandavanam*, expatriates are intensely and quite intrusively interviewed with the objective of ascertaining their financial and contributory capabilities.

Further, requests are made for donations to various LTTE projects. I was a witness to an incident where thousands of Euros were generously donated and avariciously grabbed, without any attempts being made to issue a receipt. This made me wonder how much of such money is pilfered by corrupt LTTE cadres and how accounting norms are enforced within the organization.

The *Nanda-vanam* is also the point at which expatriates are lured into custody and if they are lucky released, as in the recent case of my brother Jayadevan and his friend Vivekanandan.

*Nandavanam* (flower garden) is a serious misnomer for this office, as it functions more like a Venus Fly Trap - a cannibalistic plant that entices insects into its flowers and extracts their vital fluids. This is one point on the A 9, expatriate visitors should be very wary of.

#### Fig leaf to cover sins

The likelihood of resumption of hostilities with the Sri Lankan armed forces is used as an excuse by the LTTE to coax the Tamils to toe their line and rationalize their inability to set developmental activities in motion. This also provides LTTE the fig leaf to cover their manifold sins and ensure their relevance.

However, the threat of resumption of civil war has not prevented the LTTE from investing the hard earned money of the Tamils in creating their illusions, in and around Kilinochchi, which would become the primary targets of bombardment by the Sri Lankan armed forces.

No attempt is being made by the LTTE to convert the cessation of hostilities and return to peace, after almost two decades of a very debilitating and destructive civil war, into an opportunity to reverse the fortunes of the ordinary Tamils and assuage their suffering. This has been sensed by most Tamils and is a matter of deep felt concern. It appears that Vellupillai Prabhakaran who became the overt symbol of Tamil resistance and manifested the collective feelings of the Tamils in the battlefields, is unable to perceive the current state of mind of the Tamils, due to his isolation for security reasons.

This has provided the opportunity for some LTTE cadres, at various subordinate levels, to sabotage the noble mission the LTTE was destined to fulfil. To the perceptive Tamil the A-9 has undoubtedly become the road to nowhere. The wise dictum, the end does not justify the means, has proved true in the case of Tamils in Sri Lanka. Violence that was condoned and encouraged to re-assert our rights in Sri Lanka, has now been directed at us to trample our rights further. A tragedy indeed! My ardent prayer is that messages such as mine reach Prabhakaran, in the spirit they are intended, and he vigorously responds in the spirit expected. □

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# Problems facing negotiated solution

Dr. S. Narapalasingam

The ceasefire agreed by the Sri Lanka government (GoSL) and the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) in February 2002 was claimed to facilitate negotiations for a final political settlement to the North-East (N-E) conflict. Although the ceasefire is holding with occasional signs of collapsing, the internecine killings have intensified and the victims are armed and unarmed Tamils.

The fact that after the ceasefire, the LTTE was functioning according to its own plan to acquire full controlling powers over the N-E region and the then GoSL anxious not to do anything to upset the ceasefire was not going for discussions on sensitive political issues was known to many. Perhaps the desire to retain certain features of the present constitution and the bickering between the two main parties also tempted the previous government to agree with the LTTE to delay discussions on the core issues.

The LTTE and all the main political parties have declared that they want a negotiated political settlement to the protracted conflict, while showing no sign of compromising their own political goals. Negotiated political settlement has now become a slogan for misleading the political opponents, the people and the international community. Knowing their burning desire to see a negotiated settlement, no party wanted to be accused of lacking interest in the negotiations.

Even after the 'Oslo Declaration' that conveyed the readiness of both sides to explore a federal solution to the conflict, there was no eagerness to discuss the kind of federal structure suitable for Sri Lanka. The belated announcement by the LTTE's chief negotiator Anton Balasingham that the 'Oslo declaration' did not mean that the Tamil Tigers had abandoned

their goal of a separate state surprised many. In any event discussions between the parties did not progress further on a suitable federal structure when after the LTTE unilaterally withdrew from the talks in April 2003. After the change of government following the April 2004 elections, the LTTE started blaming the present government for not resuming the talks and having no faith in a political settlement. It is the dispute between coalition partners in the government on both the basis and the parameters of talks on political settlement that is being seized by both the LTTE and the UNP to expose the Government's inability to begin negotiations. This does not mean these two detractors are prepared to compromise and settle for a federal structure that is reasonable and guarantees the avoidance of the kind of conflicts that led to the present crisis.

Despite the lack of positive signs, both the peace lobbyists and the government leaders have been presenting an encouraging outlook. Anyone exposing the truth faced the risk of being branded as a saboteur. In the so called 'peace process', truth has been the principal casualty. Truth and reconciliation are essential for achieving real peace and both are ignored in Sri Lanka's 'peace process'. These are anathema to those with prejudiced minds as well as the leaders interested primarily in power than just peace. Apparently, to some powerful leaders their privileges are more important than the rights of the people.

## Federal Solution

The difficulties experienced in setting up a 'joint mechanism' with the LTTE for the resettlement of displaced persons and reconstruction work in the N-E regions hit by the 12/26 Tsunami have also conf-

irmed the dim prospects for a negotiated political settlement. The present government's decision to defer negotiations because of the urgency to address the needs of the tsunami affected people is as risky as the decision of the previous government to focus mainly on development, hoping settlement and peace would follow after some significant progress is achieved in improving the living conditions of the people in the entire country. The current volatile situation illustrates the grim future that lies ahead, if the present strategies to sustain the ceasefire without any united move to adopt a sensible federal constitution continue. The futility of open-ended discussions at the negotiating table has been seen from the six rounds of talks held between September 2002 and March 2003. The talks even failed to build mutual trust helpful for advancing the peace process.

Addressing an SLFP women's conference to mark the International Women's Day, President Chandrika Kumaratunga said on March 8, she believed 80 percent of the people of Sri Lanka would support the devolution of power in a federal solution to the ethnic conflict. She was prepared to hold an election or referendum on the federal solution and confident of victory as she believed many other parties would also support federal solution. Responding to her statement that federalism is the only solution to the N-E problem, UNP Deputy General Secretary, MP Tissa Attanayake said: "We continue to subscribe to the stand as explained in the Oslo and Tokyo declarations. Therefore, we have nothing against the President's statement regarding a federal solution." But, subsequent statements of the UNP leaders revealed the party was against President's referendum proposal.

The Tamil National Alliance (TNA) Batticaloa district MP Joseph Pararajasingham also said: "We must commence peace talks. A federal solution is needed for this problem. The possibility of a federal solution should be explored. The prevailing atmosphere after the tsunami is ideal for both parties, especially for the



government. A mechanism to achieve this objective of building a bridge of understanding should be activated at this hour." However, the LTTE has not indicated its readiness to consider any alternative to its own ISGA proposal which goes beyond the parameters of a federal structure.

#### JVP stance

JVP's stance on the resolution of the conflict is as rigid as that of the LTTE. The key partner in the present coalition government has been reiterating its commitment to the unitary centralised system, which almost all Tamils regardless of their political views consider it as identical to majority rule that led to the present national crisis. Many Sinhala intellectuals also subscribe to this view.

The JVP propaganda secretary, Wimal Weerawansa blasted the government for neither consulting nor informing them about the February 23 announcement that Colombo "continues to be ready to reopen direct negotiations with the

LTTE on the basis of an interim authority to meet the urgent humanitarian and development needs of the people of the north and east and to proceed, thereafter, to negotiate a final settlement of the ethnic conflict." In Parliament too, Wimal Weerawansa said that his party rejected the government position mentioned in the statement. He said JVP's stand was that the LTTE must agree to discussing a final 'peace deal' before there can be an interim administrative mechanism. An interim council can be set up only after the Tamil Tigers discuss and finalise a permanent 'peace deal'.

He also said that Tamil Tigers should not be given a legal role in distributing tsunami aid in ethnic Tamil-majority regions because it would give the guerrilla group international recognition. His position is that the Tigers are trying to use distribution of tsunami aid as a tool to gain legitimacy and international recognition. Unlike other main parties in the Parliament, the JVP

with 39 MPs supporting the government in the Parliament and the JHU, an opposition party with 9 Buddhist priests as MPs, are open in their criticism of the different approaches used by the LTTE in recent times to gain legitimacy.

Moreover, JVP's close link with the Patriotic National Movement (PNM) that is dead against any form of joint working arrangement with the LTTE is well known. The JVP parliamentarian and the party's Propaganda Secretary Wimal Weerawansa is also a co-President of the movement. It is the uncompromising stand on the basic matters that require compromise that renders JVP's declared commitment to negotiated political settlement worthless. Ironically, given LTTE's strategy to exploit any action to bolster communal tension or deter negotiations on non-unitary structure and devolution of powers for justifying separation, the JVP is indirectly aiding the LTTE!

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Colombo on March 8, visiting European Union External Relations Commissioner Dr. (Ms.) Benita Ferrero-Waldner said, the international community wants Sri Lanka to remain as a single state "giving self-determination to the Tamils, through a federal solution within a united Sri Lanka." The international community has accepted the Oslo Declaration as a basis to seek a negotiated political settlement. The Tokyo Declaration of the donor community has also endorsed the federal concept, which has been reiterated subsequently by its members on several occasions.

The position taken by the international community on both the 'joint mechanism' for channeling tsunami relief and federal solution to the North-East conflict based on democracy, pluralism and united Sri Lanka has been clearly indicated in the press release which called upon the LTTE to "restate their commitment to the principles stated in Oslo Declaration of December 2002 to find a federal solution within a united Sri Lanka".

Also many other governments keen on seeing an end to the protracted conflict in Sri Lanka have taken the same position. But for some reason they are ignoring the underlying factors that are hindering a negotiated political settlement. Perhaps they think these will recede in time given the imperative to restore normalcy and improve the living conditions of the people in all provinces. They should consider the reasons for the long delay in reaching an agreement on the urgently needed 'joint mechanism' for relief and reconstruction work in the tsunami-hit North-East to grasp fully the obstacles to a negotiated political settlement.

#### **LTTE's current strategy**

The LTTE, having earlier insisted that direct talks with the Government should focus exclusively on the ISGA and its formation, after the tsunami agreed to consider a 'joint mechanism' for rebuilding the affected areas. This decision was influenced by necessity and the acuity that an opportunity has come to strengthen

its authority in the entire North-East region. Most likely, its dented grip in the East and the continuing conflict between the two Tiger factions there also induced the Tigers to seize the opportunity. London-based LTTE's chief negotiator, Anton Balasingham in his statement on the 'joint mechanism' proposal said this must not in any way linked to the 'peace process'.

The recent visit of a 6-member LTTE team led by Political Wing leader S. P. Thamilselvan to Europe came amidst the background of the efforts by the Norwegian peace facilitators to help both the Sri Lankan government and the rebels set up a 'joint mechanism' sought by the tsunami aid donors. One objective of the mission was to get the support of foreign governments to LTTE's current stand on joint working arrangement with the Government and possibly hoping aid will be given through some other channel. S. P. Thamilselvan said (March 11) in Norway they had already endorsed the draft of the 'joint mechanism' for tsunami aid delivery and reconstruction submitted to the LTTE by the Norwegian facilitators. He accused the Government of dragging its feet on securing foreign assistance to tsunami-affected people in the LTTE-controlled areas. He said delays had caused doubts in the minds of the people about the Government's sincerity. The view propagated by the pro-LTTE media that the Government was inconsiderate with regard to post-tsunami relief for the Tamils was also intended to sustain the suspicion. This is considered indispensable to demand self-ruling powers.

The LTTE leadership has proved its ability to exploit any difficult situation to its advantage. Taraki, who is privy to the thinking behind LTTE's strategic moves, commenting on the UN Security Council proceedings (February 23, 2005) on the question of child soldiers explained in his weekly column in the 'Daily Mirror' of March 11, how the LTTE used the occasion to "impress the UN that it was a responsible organization ('governing' its areas of control),

which is anxious and eager to abide by international law in the comity of nations". Instead of "completely disregarding the UN in the knowledge that the Security Council's resolution is toothless", it seized the opportunity to portray itself as a decent organisation fit for governing the "Tamil homeland".

Reproducing excerpts of the letter that S. P. Thamilselvan sent to Olara Otunnu and Kofi Annan, Taraki highlighted the evolving diplomatic sophistication of the LTTE. He said that "the Tigers have used the issue to further engage the UN in its quest for legitimacy and diplomatic respectability". Taraki substantiated his portrayal by the following extracts taken from Thamilselvan's letter: "We are a movement committed to creating a free and democratic society in which our people can realize their right to self-determination and live with dignity that has been denied to us by the Sri Lankan state. As a liberation movement that struggles for the betterment of our people, we are a very concerned stakeholder in the welfare of our future generation. It has evolved in its Liberation struggle to the situation in which it effectively governs 70% of the North East of Sri Lanka and provides social and economic services to the people, including children. The reality is that the LTTE is the de facto Government of this area. Thus, we need to clarify the status of the LTTE with regard to the different international instruments that are being used to monitor compliance with the protection of children in armed conflict."

#### **The 'joint mechanism'**

President Chandrika Kumaratunga addressing a workshop of SLFP members said the joint mechanism with the LTTE should be set up first to attend to reconstruction of North East areas destroyed by the tsunami and through that the background for peace talks should be prepared. She stressed, the proposed joint mechanism would only deal with reconstruction of destroyed areas in the North East and it was not an Interim Self Governing Authority (ISGA).

According to media reports, the 'joint mechanism' being considered by both sides will have three-tier structure. There will be a national body managed by a high level committee, a regional committee for the North-East and district level committees to cover the tsunami affected districts of the two provinces. According to some reports, LTTE will have considerable sway in the regional committee and in most district committees. But according to the Foreign Minister Lakshman Kadirgamar, the 'Joint Mechanism' is "wholly dissimilar" to the ISGA, which had not mentioned the Sri Lankan parliament and its judiciary. The LTTE had sought a monopoly over the ISGA. The 'Joint Mechanism', on the other hand, has "wide representation" and it is "pluralistic". It would have representatives of all the three major communities in the North East, namely, the Tamils, Muslims and Sinhalese. It would have, besides government representatives, the representatives of NGOs and other interest groups. The Minister's

clarification was with reference to the modified version of the draft given to the Government and the LTTE on March 22 by the Norwegians. It was the original draft that Thamilselvan announced in Norway the LTTE had accepted. At the time of writing, another draft has been submitted by Norway to both parties. There seems to be no end to this negotiation on 'joint mechanism' for delivery of urgent tsunami relief. If the prime objective is to repair/reconstruct the houses and regain their livelihoods, a compromise would have been reached long ago. But with importance given to the political objective, the displaced people are forced to endure the suffering.

The Muslim leaders have raised their concerns about the composition of the committees. They have protested against their exclusion from the discussions on the 'joint mechanism' although the Muslim community was the most affected in the December 26 tsunami having borne 60% of the damage and over 50% of the total deaths. Accordingly, they want equal

representation in the relevant committees. On the other hand, TNA district parliamentarian M.K.Sivajilingam warned that the Tigers might even withdraw from the ceasefire agreement, if the government delays the 'joint mechanism' for rebuilding the tsunami-hit North-East. He also said: "If the 'joint mechanism' is not set up, the TNA may be compelled to boycott parliament and expose the government to the international community." The TNA has faithfully been following LTTE's strategy to force the government to yield. Only after the Government and the LTTE jointly agree to the 'joint mechanism', the reactions of the JVP, the JHU, the PNM and the Muslim leaders will be known. The difficulties that lie ahead if and when negotiations begin for a political settlement have been demonstrated by the continuing efforts to reach an agreement on the 'joint mechanism'.

Foreign Minister Lakshman Kadirgamar told a meeting of Foreign Correspondents' Association of Sri Lanka on March 24, "an early resum-

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ption of peace talks with the LTTE is very much on the backburner" but a deal on disbursing tsunami relief was possible. The government's decision to put off the resumption of peace talks is said to be because of the urgency to concentrate on the relief and reconstruction work in the tsunami-hit areas. But, many see it as an excuse to avoid facing the political challenges that have intensified recently. There are important lessons not only for the government but also for other national parties from evading the issues that need early resolution. This neglect since independence has moved the country steadily to the present crisis.

The assertion made recently by the JVP leader Somawansa Amarasinghe that national unity cannot be achieved without solving the national question and that this problem cannot be solved without national unity highlights the prevailing catch-22 situation. This also reveals the basic conceptual difference in the term 'national'. To the JVP this refers to one integrated nation, while the LTTE is sticking steadfastly to the concept of two nations. With such diametrically opposite positions, the two extreme groups claim they are fully committed to negotiated political settlement and peace! The crucial question no one has raised is: What is it that the different parties want to negotiate?

Farsighted bold leadership is needed to meet the many challenges simultaneously given the dire consequences of inaction on the complex ones. It is now up to the Southern polity to come up with a federal structure considered reasonable by all communities and the international community to save the country from ultimate break-up with disastrous consequences for all communities. If the South is unable to shun political differences and reach an understanding on the vital national issue, this will only help the LTTE to proceed with its own agenda. Permanent peace and the future of the country depend crucially on the way it is resolved early. The LTTE should also be pressured to modify its ISGA proposals to be within a

## Regi Siriwardena, an Appreciation

Regi Siriwardena, who died aged 82 in Colombo, Sri Lanka, lived many lives as political and later human rights activist, journalist, literary and film critic, translator, playwright, poet and novelist.

His reputation as a critic of both English and Sinhala-language literature and film inspired the Sri Lankan director Lester James Peries to commission him to write the screenplay for a film of the same name based upon Martin Wickramasinghe's Sinhala-language novel, *Gamperaliya* (The Changing Village), depicting a rural community in the throes of social upheaval.

Released in 1963, it achieved international recognition and broke new ground in dramatic form and technique in a local cinema that until then was largely imitative of formulaic Indian productions.

Born in colonial Ceylon in the Colombo suburb of Ratmalana into a lower middle class Sinhala Buddhist family, Siriwardena's father was a government clerk who retired when he was still in school, leaving the large family in financial straits.

However as he once remarked, his "ability to wield the English language – that potent instrument of power in a colonial society – often compensated for those disadvantages".

His education began at the elite Anglican school, St Thomas' College in Mount Lavinia, where he was never socially at ease, and was disaffected with its pro-colonial ethos.

He was happier at Ananda College in Maradana, where others shared his class and cultural background; and who's famed Principal P de S Kularatne was a

federal framework. There must not be room for intentionally delaying these tasks, as seems to be the case now with the call for 'negotiated political settlement' intended merely to depict the opponent as the reluctant party. One factor that has become obvious after the ceasefire is that there cannot be a breakthrough towards a final political settlement without a powerful third party involvement (not facilitation). □

Ceylonese nationalist.

Awarded a scholarship to read English at the University College in Colombo, that offered the external degree of London University, he was among the first few graduates of its English department whose faculty included EFC Ludowyck and Doric de Souza.

It was at university during the Second World War that Siriwardena attracted the attention of British authorities as an anti-colonial activist in the left-wing Lanka Sama Samaja Party (LSSP). Under the nom de guerre 'Hamid', he became part of the LSSP leadership in its period of illegality.

He recounted his role in propaganda work and revolutionary organising in his brief memoir *Working Underground: The LSSP in Wartime* (1999) – along with sharp observations on well-known personalities of the Sri Lankan Left.

Critical of the LSSP's evolution from the pre-war "loose, open, radical mass party" it had been, towards orthodox Trotskyism in organisation and ideology in the early 1940s, Siriwardena left the Party in 1946.

A few years later he was hired by a former LSSP turned cold war conservative, Esmond Wickremesinghe, as parliamentary sketch-writer and leader-writer on the Ceylon Daily News, part of the Associated Newspapers of Ceylon (or 'Lake House') Group then owned by Wickremesinghe's father-in-law, DR Wijewardena.

Frustrated by the newspaper's editorial opportunism and closeness to the right-wing United National Party, Siriwardena left journalism in the early 1960s and entered academia when he founded the English Department at a former Buddhist seat of higher learning, Vidyalankara (now Kelaniya) University.

He had briefly taught English after graduation to the senior classes at Royal College, another leading Colombo school, and before that at Ananda College too, and was highly regarded by his students' in all three institutions.

He read widely in a number of European languages, self-taught in French, Italian and Spanish, and learning Russian in middle age so that he could enjoy his beloved Akhmatova, Pushkin, and Tolstoy

in the original, and introduce them to an English and Sinhala reading public.

From translating poetry, he began writing it too in *Waiting for the Soldier* (1989), *To the Muse of Insomnia* (1990) and *Poems and Selected Translations* (1993) with local favourites making their way into anthologies of Sri Lankan writing in English. His literary criticism over five decades, widely dispersed and hard to find, has fittingly been collected and edited by AJ Canagaratna for publication in Siriwardena's memory in March 2005.

Siriwardena was drawn back into direct political engagement in 1971 when in response to an abortive armed insurrection by the Janatha Vimukthi Peramuna (Peoples Liberation Front) the Sri Lankan government used emergency powers to arrest and detain suspects, impose curfew and censorship and ban public meetings and processions.

He became a founder of the Civil Rights Movement of Sri Lanka, the island's first non-governmental organisation to campaign against attacks on individual liberties and democratic rights, and was its first Secretary confronting a hostile government that included many of his old comrades in the LSSP.

An early representative of the liberal-left, he was sought out by a younger generation of like-minded activist-intellectuals to become one of the public faces of the International Centre for Ethnic Studies (ICES) in Colombo during the 1980s and 1990s, where he edited its journal, and was held in great affection by young researchers and passing visitors.

Unlike his younger co-thinkers, Siriwardena, maintained a critical respect for Marxism and an emotional attachment to its history, literature, and personalities.

Enthused by developments in the Soviet Union in the late 1980s, Siriwardena resumed writing political commentary for the Sri Lankan media, with informed analysis based upon his access to Russian-language sources and personal knowledge of Eastern Europe. He believed Mikhail Gorbachev's mix of political and economic pluralism to be a superior alternative to Stalinism and neo-liberal capitalism.

At the ICES he finally had the creative space and supportive environment to write well-received studies on language and poetry, as well as two novels: *The Lost Lenore* (1996) and *Among My Sou-*

# Spectrum

## ● Ancient history of Batticaloa

"We should write the people's history of the northeast. It is important to discover and publish old palm leaf manuscripts such as 'Mattakkalappu Poorva Sariththiram' (Ancient History of Batticaloa) to bring out the history of the communities that live in this region. We have to search and preserve valuable primary sources of our history", said Prof. S. Mouna-guru, former dean of fine arts at the Eastern University, speaking on Sunday, April 10, at the release of a work that relates the settling and history of Batticaloa from pre-Christian times to the eighteenth century.

The book release was held at the Mahajana College auditorium in Batticaloa town.

'Mattakkalappu Poorva Sariththiram', was edited and annotated by the Tamil scholar Mr. S. E. Kamalanathan (Hon. D. Lit) and Ms. K. Kamalanathan with an introduction on medieval and colonial primary sources of Batticaloa history by Mr. D. Sivaram.

The definite edition was prepared by comparing several copies of the work which were found in old palm leaf manuscripts. 'Mattakkalappu Poorva Sariththiram' relates the origins and histories of the several dynasties that ruled

venirs (1997) – the former a defence of cultural hybridity in the wake of ethnic polarisation in Sri Lanka; and the latter drawing heavily on his own biography mourning the squandering of promise in Sri Lanka's nationhood.

Late in life he believed he found his true vocation as a playwright enjoying the collaborative and interactive dimensions of writing and re-writing for public performance. He wrote eight plays assembled in *Octet: Collected Plays* (1995), all but one performed on the local stage.

Regi, born on 15 May 1922 and died on 15 December 2004, is survived by his son, Amal.

Borrowing from one of his favourite modern poets, Regi Siriwardena "hoped to improve [the world] a little by living", and he did.

- B. Skanthakumar

the region. It also provides an insight into the social organization and traditional customs of Batticaloa.

'Mattakkalappu Poorva Sariththiram' gives a version of the Vijaya Legend which differs in some critical details from the one related in Mahavamsa – the medieval Buddhist Pali language chronicle that relates the island's ancient history.

Mahavamsa says that the first Sinhala king was the grandson of a lion that carried away a north Indian prince and begat a son and a daughter. 'Mattakkalappu Poorva Sariththiram', on the other hand, says that a jungle chieftan called Singan married the princess.

The kingdom of Batticaloa was established by Kooththikan, who is said to be from the dynasty of King Vijaya. The Mahavamsa, however, says that Kooththikan (Guttikha in Pali) was a Chola horse trader who conquered the island in the pre-Christian era.

The work also throws light on some unknown aspects of Batticaloa history when the region was under the Portuguese and Dutch.

## ● Fate of maritime artefacts

By Amal Jayasinghe, March 24 - Marine archaeologists spent nine years trawling the seabed of Sri Lanka's Galle port to collect thousands of centuries-old treasures buried underwater in shipwrecks. But it took just a few seconds for them to be reclaimed by the ocean when a tsunami battered the shores of this island nation on December 26 and swept away everything in its path, including hopes of opening the country's first maritime museum.

The collection of priceless artefacts - including spoons, jars, jugs, bottles, cannons and leather belts - were to be exhibited to showcase the maritime heritage Sri Lanka shared with European invaders and Arab traders. But only 20 percent of 3,600 objects salvaged from shipwrecks within the waters of Galle port from about 1996 appeared to have survived the tsunami, said S. M. Nandadasa, the officer in charge of the project.

According to Nandadasa, authorities



are now trying to trace the twice-lost treasures. Some of the artefacts have been found among the debris and now the main concern is to try and conserve what remains. He said the long-term plan was to get foreign help to go ahead with its goal of establishing the maritime archaeological museum on the island nation that had been a key transit point in east-west trade centuries ago.

Galle, 112 kilometres south of Colombo and located along the ancient silk sea route, is rich grounds for marine archaeological exploration. The authorities have identified 26 locations, including 15 shipwrecks, within the small Galle port and its immediate environs.

Nandadasa said Sri Lanka was also seeking foreign help to re-establish the devastated Maritime Archaeology Unit (MAU), which had been housed in a single storied building on a jetty at the old section of the Galle port and was where the artefacts were being stored.

Sri Lanka's Central Cultural Fund was to take over the running of the MAU from Dutch and Australian experts at the end of December, but after the tsunamis it was left literally picking up the pieces.

"My first reaction was everything is lost - the maritime archaeological unit is gone," said former director, Robert Parthesius, a Dutch national who has helped the MAU from its inception. Parthesius has been helping set up the marine archaeological operations since 1992. "We lost 80 per cent of our collection (of artefacts)," Parthesius said. "Fortunately, not a single life was lost. Buildings were lost, but we have not lost the Sri Lankan expertise we developed over the years."

The jewel in the proposed maritime archaeological museum was to be artefacts found on the wreck of the Avondster, a Dutch ship which slipped anchor and hit the shore, broke in two and submerged in the soft sand on July 2, 1659, according to historical records. Blue and white ceramic ware, spoons, jars, jugs, cannons and cannon balls and leather belts were hauled by divers from the Avondster together with some of the areca nut cargo that it was loading

346 years ago.

Marine archaeologist Rasika Muthukumarana recently carried out his first dive after the tsunamis to check if the Avondster, had shifted from its position. "A bit of the galley was sticking out of the sand and some of the bricks had come off, but there was no major damage," Muthukumarana said, adding that sand had been dumped on the wreck. -AFP

### ● Ancestral Home turning into a Boutique Hotel

By Feizal Samath, March 14 (Bernama) - The ancestral home of one of Sri Lanka's famous political dynasties, the Bandaranaiques - the home of two former prime ministers and the country's current president - will soon be turned into an exclusive boutique hotel.

Tintagel, the stately mansion down Colombo's fashionable Rosemead Place, will soon make way for a small group of architects and workers turning the home of the Bandaranaike family into one of the city's best-known venues for the rich and famous overseas visitors.

Sunethra Bandaranaike, elder sister of President Chandrika Kumaratunga and brother Anura, who is a senior minister in the government, is the only current occupant and the main reason for the temporary parting of the ways is loneliness and the huge cost of maintaining mansions like this. All three own the property.

The family last month signed a tenancy agreement with Shanth Fernando, owner of one of Sri Lanka's best-known lifestyle stores and restaurants, who will be running the boutique hotel.

The Bandaranaike family is one of the famous political dynasties in South Asia like the Gandhis in India and the Bhuttos in Pakistan.

"Yes, this house has had drama more than any other in the country. A majority of people in Sri Lanka considers this to be a treasure that should be preserved for posterity," said Sunethra Bandaranaike, in an interview with The Sunday Times, adding however that mansions and palaces across the world were being leased out due to the high cost of

maintenance.

"All the huge palaces in Europe, the chateaus in France, the castles and manorial homes in England and even the Maharajahs' palaces in India have been turned into plush, posh elegant hotels," she was quoted as saying.

Sunethra Bandaranaike is the only member of the family who has stayed clear of politics. She runs the Sunera Foundation, an organisation she founded many years ago that provides opportunities through dance and drama for differently-abled and underprivileged children and youths to integrate into society.

"This was a lively house, full of people and noise. With Amma's (mother's) death the situation changed overnight. I felt lonely and isolated. During the day I filled the place with Sunera Foundation staff and people," she says.

The 1,116-1,302 sq. m (12,000-14,000 sq ft) mansion on 101 perches of land is steeped in history. This is where Prime Minister Solomon Dias Bandaranaike was shot dead by a radical Buddhist monk in September 1959 in the veranda. Nearly a year later, his bereaved widow, Sirimavo, was elected Prime Minister and 34 years after that Chandrika became the country's Prime Minister and later President while younger brother Anura was already a parliamentarian.

In the past, Tintagel has been rented out twice by the Bandaranaiques between 1962-67, first to the Burmese ambassador and later to the Egyptian ambassador. Fernando, its new tenant, says that while protecting and preserving the mansion for posterity, he hopes to create a unique Sri Lankan boutique hotel for the discerning tourists and visiting foreign dignitaries who themselves would know the value of a place of such old world charm and history.

Tintagel, built in 1929, will have eight suites, each with its own sitting room, attached facilities and private balcony. A few walls will have to be opened out in the house but no major alterations will take place. There will be a swimming pool and a lap pool. The boutique hotel is scheduled to be opened by year-end. □

## NEWS TRACK

**Grenade attack on PLOTE camp:** Mar 11 - Three PLOTE cadres were wounded when two unidentified men riding a motorbike lobbed a grenade on the group's camp in Batticaloa town on 11 March. The condition of two injured PLOTE cadres was reported to be serious. The assailants got away, Police said.

The injured PLOTE cadres identified as Mr. Balasubramaniam Baheerathan (Rathan), 45, Mr. Thambirasa Balasunderam (Kaanthan), 41, Mr. Nagamany Sivarajah (Vellai), 44, and Mr. Baheerathan's son Laxikaanthan, 15 were admitted to the Batticaloa hospital. PLOTE spokesman accused the LTTE of being responsible for the attack.

**Canada: no peace if Muslim concerns are ignored:** Mar 14 - Canadian High Commissioner for Sri Lanka Valerie Raymond has stressed that her country was very mindful that no permanent settlement will be reached to the Sri Lankan ethnic conflict other than the legitimate Muslim concerns are taken into account and consideration.

A visiting Parliamentary delegation comprising Maria Minna, Derek Lee, Joe Comartin, Pierre Polievre, Senator Joseph Day and the High Commissioner met with Sri Lanka Muslim Congress high command members A.M. Faiz, Nizam Kariapper, Faizal Cassim and M. Nijamudeen on 14 March evening in Colombo where these thoughts were expressed.

SLMC's Director of International Affairs, A.M. Faiz, however pointed out that despite it being the Muslim community that was worst affected by the December 26th tsunami, the Muslims have been ignored even in the proposed joint mechanism structure. "Muslim leaders nor the community in general have been consulted for their views and aspirations on the matter," Mr. Faiz noted. Mr. Faiz also said that although the Muslims had not been given due recognition in the peace scenario, the SLMC has always been promoting and actively campaigning for a peaceful resolution to the ethnic issue. In response Ms. Raymond agreed that it was very critical for the Muslim community and the leadership to be consulted on the joint mechanism structure proposal.

**Grenade attack on LTTE office:** Mar 15 - Political office of the Liberation Tigers in Batticaloa town was the target of a grenade attack by unidentified persons around 7.25 pm on Monday 14 March, and this was the fourth attack on the office in six months, according to the Police who said that the attack must have been the work of Karuna supporters. Mr. Anpumarana, head of the LTTE political division for Batticaloa town, said there were fifteen persons in the office at the time of the attack but that no one was injured. Truce monitors rushed to the scene to investigate.

**Two killed in Karapola:** Mar 15 - Two men were shot dead in Karapola, Welikanda, on 14 March around 9.30 pm, according to police sources who added that the victims were suspected to be Karuna supporters and the assailants belonged to the LTTE. Karapola is a Tamil village in the Polannaruwa district near the Batticaloa border. Officer in Charge of Welikanda Police Mr. Saman Perera said an unidentified armed group was involved in the killing. The dead men were identified as Mr. S.Kunasegaram, 21 and Mr. S.Selvanagam, 22.

**Red Cross to reconstruct medical institutions:** Mar 15 - The Sri Lanka Red Cross Society (SLRCS) and the International Federation of Red Cross (IFRC)

have undertaken to reconstruct, renovate, repair and equip General Hospitals, Base Hospitals, District Hospitals, Rural Hospitals, Peripheral Units and Central Dispensaries in the tsunami affected areas throughout the island.

The project includes health facilities in the districts of Kalutara, Galle, Matara, Hambantota, Batticaloa, Jaffna, Amparai, Trincomalee, Killinochchi, Mullaitivu, and Puttalam and will include the maintenance for 5 years, according to the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) Ministry of Health Care, Nutrition & Uva Wellassa Development for and behalf of the Government, the Sri Lanka Red Cross Society (SLRCS) and the International Federation of Red Cross (IFRC) in Colombo signed in Colombo on the 14 March. Dr. Nihal Jayathilaka Acting Secretary of the Ministry of Healthcare, Nutrition and Uva Wellassa Development on behalf of the Government of Sri Lanka (GOSL) and by Mr Jagath Abeyasinghe, President of the SLRCS - and Mr. Alasdair Gordon Gibson Head of Delegation of the IFRC respectively signed the MoU, the SLRCS press release said.

**Karuna cadre shot dead in Batticaloa:** Mar 16 - A person suspected to have belonged to the Karuna faction of the LTTE was shot dead by gunmen allegedly from the mainstream LTTE in Kaluthaavalai, 27 kilometres south of Batticaloa on March 15, Tuesday night, Police said. The dead person identified as as Myilvaganam Jeyaganesh, 23, was from Chenkalady north of Batticaloa.

**Another youth shot dead:** Mar 16 - A youth was shot by unidentified gunmen in Maruthamunai, a Muslim town 35 kilometres south of Batticaloa on 16 March Wednesday evening around 5. 45. He was rushed to Batticaloa hospital but died soon after admission, Police said. The youth, identified as Mr. Thambirasah Jegan, 22, is from 'Farm Colony' in Mankerni, about 50 kilometres north of Batticaloa. He was riding a motorbike when he was shot, according to Police. His girl friend, who was at his side when the youth was pronounced dead, told Police he had no links to the LTTE or any other armed group. Kalmunai Police, however, said the killing was clearly not a private matter.

**Undergrads protest in Colombo:** Mar 17 - More than five thousand university students marched through Colombo demanding that the Government of Sri Lanka drop plans for privatizing higher education. The massive protest march which wended through busy and traffic congested areas of the city to the University Grants Commission was organized by the powerful Inter University Students' Federation (IUSF), an arm of the Janatha Vimukthi Peramuna (JVP), the main coalition partner of President Kumaratunga.

Thousands of undergraduates, including Buddhist monks marched carrying placards and banners and shouting slogans denouncing moves by President Kumaratunga's government to allow private universities and a medical college. They also condemned plans by the Government of Sri Lanka to introduce reforms to the process of university admissions.

**UK medical volunteer team in NorthEast:** Mar 18 - A group of about one hundred medical officers and volunteers from United Kingdom comprising Indian, Sri Lankan and European nationals belonging to Satya Sai Samithi Society, arrived this week in Sri Lanka to conduct medical camps in the NorthEast, sources in Trincomalee said.

One group of medical team commenced its medical service in the Trincomalee district and will continue till March 23, Trincomalee organizer Mr.N.Puhendran said. He said the eye surgeon who arrived with the medical team has planned to do one hundred cataract operations in the Trincomalee general hospital.

First medical camp was conducted in Chelvanayapuram Tamil Maha Vidiyalayam Tuesday where large number of children and adults participated. Second medical camp was held in Chinabay Tamil Maha Vidiyalayam on Tuesday, sources said. Eight more medical camps are scheduled to be held in various villages, Eeachilampathu, Sampoor, Pattalipuram, Puthukuddiurpu, Mihindupura and Trincomalee town in the Trincomalee district, sources said.

**PLOTE cadre shot in Batticaloa:** Mar 18 - A man said to be a member of the PLOTE was shot allegedly by a LTTE gunman in a high security neighbourhood of Batticaloa town Friday (18) evening. The injured man, Mr. Jeyarajah Raju, 25, a resident of Veechchukalmunai, was rushed to Batticaloa Hospital for treatment.

**US issues travel warning:** Mar 18 - The United States Embassy issued a travel warning to its citizens cautioning and urging them to exercise increased caution when travelling or working in the Eastern region of the country. "The US Embassy in Sri Lanka advises all American citizens in the east of Sri Lanka of ongoing violence, including politically motivated assassinations in that area. US citizens are advised to avoid political demonstrations that may occur in this area. Political activity and gatherings may well become the focus of violence in the area. We urge American citizens in the region to exercise increased caution. We do not recommend that American Citizens work alone as individual volunteers in Eastern Sri Lanka at this time," the US Embassy in Colombo said. The Embassy also requested Americans working on relief projects in large groups to register with the Embassy.

**Colombo paper exposes Karuna's camp:** Mar 20 - Colombo-based English newspaper, the Sunday Leader, has revealed the presence of a camp maintained by Karuna loyalists at Theevuchenai in the Polonnaruwa district. The paper said its reporters visited the village lying about 10 km north of the Harabarana-Valaichenai highway from Sevenapitiya.

Two youth from the village were shot and killed on March 14 night by unidentified gunmen. The villagers, on March 16, brought the caskets containing the bodies of the two slain youth on to the main highway and protested against the presence of the camp, blaming that the murders were carried out by a cadre named Laksman, who operated from the camp. Earlier, soon after the murders, the Defence Spokesman's office in Colombo blamed the LTTE saying that the murders were carried out as the LTTE suspected the youth to be supporters of Karuna.

The area around Theevuchenai is ringed by SLA camps and detachments. The closest army check point is at Mutugala, on

the access road to Thivichchenei, about 3 km from the village. The newspaper in its 2 page report, also carried photographs of a road-block sentry point allegedly manned by Karuna's cadres. The camp was allegedly headed by Karuna loyalist "Mangalan Master" according to the paper.

**Father killed and daughter injured:** Mar 21 - Mr. Segulebbe Razeek (43), a jeweller by trade, of Oddamavadi in eastern Sri Lanka was killed by unidentified gunmen in Meeravodai. His daughter was critically injured in the shooting incident on the night of the 21 March. It is reported that when Mr. Segulebbe was mugged outside his house by an unknown group alleged to be the LTTE ; while he was struggling with his attackers,, he was shot by an accomplice who suddenly arrived on the scene. The murderers had also shot his daughter who came out of the house. Mr. Segulebbe Razeek is a father of two daughters and one son.

**Three injured in predawn attack:** Mar 21 - Three cadres of the Karuna Group were wounded in a predawn attack by suspected LTTE gunmen in Theevuchenai, an interior hamlet near the Batticaloa-Polannaruwa district border, Police said. The wounded cadres, including a man identified as 'Mangalam Master', were admitted to Polannaruwa Base Hospital, Welikanda Police sources said. On the previous day, Sri Lanka army (SLA) spokesman denied a report in a Colombo weekend paper that the Karuna Group was running a camp in Theevuchenai, an area controlled by the SLA.

The Karuna Group cadres admitted to Polannaruwa Base Hospital gave their names to the medical authorities as Mr. Aiyathurai Satheesh, Mr. Sinnamuththu Ravindrarajah and Mr. Kandasamy Deveraj.

An SLA officer in Polannaruwa said 'Mangalam Master', a cadre believed to be a key operative of the 'Karuna Group', sustained only minor injuries in the attack. But medical sources in Polannaruwa said his injuries were serious. A five year old girl, Ms. Appuhamy Ranbanda Premalatha, was injured in the cross fire and was also admitted to the Polannaruwa hospital. Police brought the wounded cadres to the hospital around 9 a.m. Monday. The attack occurred around 3 a.m. according the sources.

Meanwhile, Sri Lanka army sources in the area claimed that two LTTE fighters were killed in the firefight in Theevuchenai. However, Welikanda Police sources said two dead men were cadres of the Karuna Group.

**Clashes Threaten Cease-Fire:** Mar 21 - An escalation in fighting between the LTTE and its breakaway group was undermining the cease-fire, truce monitors said. "The situation is very volatile and it certainly undermines the cease-fire," Helen Olafsdottir, spokeswoman for the Sri Lankan Monitoring Mission, said in a phone interview in Colombo. "Full clashes between the two sides - the Government forces and Tamil Tigers - have been ruled out, but this certainly doesn't help to build trust between the LTTE and the government," she reportedly said. "We have to emphasize how serious the situation is," Olafsdottir said. "These clashes won't improve relations between the two sides." The clashes were also likely to delay any agreement between the Tigers and the government to work together to help distribute relief aid to survivors of the tsunami, Olafsdottir said.

**Injured cadres transferred to Colombo:** Mar 22 - Three Karuna Group cadres injured in an attack on their camp in the early hours of on 21 March have been transferred to Colombo national hospital for treatment under tight security, police said. Meanwhile, bodies of two persons killed during the predawn raid are yet to be identified and are lying at Polannaruwa hospital. The assistance of the ICRC has been sought to identify the bodies.

**Foundation laid for Trinco campus:** Mar 23 - Foundation stone was laid on 23 March for the 91 million rupee-project to construct a building complex to house the Trincomalee campus of the Eastern University in a 250 acre-land allocated in Konesapuri, 16 km north of Trincomalee town along Trincomalee-Pulmoddai road. Trincomalee campus is currently functioning in rented buildings in the east port town without adequate space for its academic activities and lack of hostel facilities for students, sources said.

The project includes the construction of a two-storied administrative block, dormitories for students, library building and other related academic infrastructure facilities, the sources said.

Mr.V.S.Swaminathan, Deputy Chief Secretary (Planning) of the North East Provincial Council (NEPC) laid the first foundation stone followed by Rev Fr.Dr.C.P.Rajendran, Campus Rector, Attorney-at-Law Ms Subashini Chitravelu, a member of the East University Council, Dr.K.Thiyagarajah, member of Campus Faculty and the Deputy Chief Secretary (Audit) of the NEPC and other distinguished guests.

The State Engineering Corporation (SEC) has undertaken the construction of the campus complex. Mr.Lalith

Liyanarachchi, Senior Project manager of the SEC said they would complete the construction by the end of the December this year.

Campus Rector Fr.Dr.Rajendran said by January next year the academic activities now being conducted in Trincomalee town would be permanently shifted to the new complex in Konesapuri.

**Injured in shooting:** Mar 24 - Unidentified gunmen shot a person believed to have links with the Karuna group in Kommathurai, north of Batticaloa on March 24 around 8.30 pm. The man escaped with gunshot injuries. His assailants had gone to his house and shot him with a 9 mm pistol, according to Police. The injured man was identified as Arumugam Manaalan, 34.

**Tamil Eelam satellite TV channel launched:** Mar 26 - A satellite TV station called National Television of Tamil Eelam (NTT) began beaming news to Europe from an undisclosed location in Sri Lanka's northeast from March 26 Saturday night, an official of the NTT said. "The satellite channel will start today at 17.30 GMT time. We will beam only fifteen minutes of news everyday for the next two weeks. Thereafter our telecast time would be increased to half an hour", he said. The NTT official added that the Paris based Tamil Television Network (TTN) will relay the broadcast to their audiences in Europe at 18.00 GMT.

NTT programs cannot be viewed in Asia now, according to him. The TV channel will expand its reach to other parts of the world in due course the NTT official added. The NTT logo shows the flower, "Karthigaipoo" or Gloriosa Lily (Botanical name - Liliaceae Glory lily or Gloriosa superba), declared as national flower of Eelam Tamils by the Tamil Tigers in 2003.

**Pedestrian shot dead:** Mar 27 - Gunmen suspected to be members of the Karuna group is reported have shot dead a man on 27 March, Sunday evening around 4.45 in Chenkalady, north of Batticaloa. The gunmen riding a motorbike opened fire on Mr. Nadarajah Supenthiran, 26 of Kannankudah, an LTTE held village 6 kilometres west of Batticaloa town, at point blank range when he was walking down Kanapathipillai Road in Chenkalady. Mr. Dharmasena Ratnayaka, Officer in Charge (OIC) of Eravur Police said that Mr. Nadarajah's affiliations are not known.

**Grenade attack on LTTE Vavuniya office:** Mar 28 - Three persons were injured in grenade attack on the office of the LTTE in Vavuniya town March 28, Monday around 5.30 am. The wounded were a security guard at an adjacent weaving centre and two civilian employees at the LTTE office located in Vayiravar Puliyanakulam, a suburb of Vavuniya town.

**STF injures political head for Amparai:** Mar 28 - Mr. S Kuyilban, head of LTTE's political division for Amparai was admitted to Kalmunai Hospital with serious injuries after he was severely assaulted by Special Task Force commandos at a Tsunami refugee camp south of Batticaloa on 28 March, Monday. Two LTTE political workers were also seriously injured in the attack at the Mandaanai Tsunami refugee camp in the Thirukkivil area.

The injured LTTE political officer and his colleagues were transferred from Amparai Hospital to Kalmunai for fear of their

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safety, the LTTE media spokesman for Batticaloa said.

**Gunmen fire on EPDP van:** Mar 30 - Suspected Tamil Tigers hurled grenades at a vehicle carrying six EPDP members including a senior member on Wednesday (30), wounding a police sergeant. The gunmen opened fire at the vehicle carrying Ravi, a senior member of the Eelam People's Democratic Party, according to military spokesman Brig. Daya Ratnayake. Police guarding Ravi fired back, but the rebels then threw two grenades, wounding one officer, said Ratnayake. Ravi, who goes by a single name, escaped unhurt. The injured policeman was identified as Mr. Piyal Perera, 42.

**Abduction attempts end in clashes:** Scores of irate civilians in the welfare center for Internally Displaced People (IDP) at Mandan, Thirukkivil in eastern Batticaloa district on Monday, 28 March, confronted a group of LTTE cadres, which came there to abduct a child from the welfare center for LTTE conscription, irrespective of the pleas made by the child's parents, a Defence Ministry press release claimed.

At about 12.30 p.m. four LTTE men had first visited Thambivil village and abducted a sixteen year old youth child for LTTE conscription, prompting his mother to complain to the nearest Special Task Force (STF) camp in the area, but she was later directed to the Thirukkivil Police station for a formal complaint. She had also alerted the SLMM of her son's abduction.

Barely one and half hours after abduction, four LTTE men suddenly showed up at the welfare centre for Internally Displaced People (tsunami victims) at Mandan, Thirukkivil and again resorted to the same practice by trying to abduct another seventeen year old youth from that centre, but their attempt was foiled when parents confronted them and resisted forcing those four LTTEers to turn away. After a couple of minutes upon their return, a mob of about 40-50 LTTE men and motorbikes and vehicles stormed the IDP center once again went on assaulting inmates and tried to abduct the same child forcibly and after threatening his parents and others in the centre. As protesting parents were joined by hundreds of inmates in the centre, Policemen from the nearest Thirukkivil Police station and additional STF troops had to be deployed to bring the situation under control. Two Policemen and three STF members sustained injuries during the clashes in the melee and were referred for medical treatment. Two double cabs (WP-HI 9839) and two motorbikes belonging to the LTTE were seized by the Police immediately after those LTTE gang fled the area.

Reports confirmed that LTTE leaders Manilavan and Kuiylamban, who received injuries in the head after civilians assaulted them, had been admitted to the Thirukkivil government hospital for treatment under police escort.

**UK suspends working holiday visas:** Apr 1 - The British Home Office has said that it's High Commission in Sri Lanka will cease to accept working holidaymaker visa applications until further notice from 2 April. The same will apply to Malaysia, Botswana and Namibia. The British High Commission in Colombo said that the service is being suspended in these countries because a "significant and unprecedented" rise in the number of applications has resulted in demand outstripping capacity, which has adversely affected the wider visa operations.

The release said the situation would be reviewed in six

months. In Colombo, the UK visa application centre is contacting everyone who has submitted an application form before the suspension. All those who have paid a fee but are waiting for an interview will have their fee refunded. If applicants wish to travel when the service is resumed, they will need to reconfirm their interests at the UK Visa application centre, the Mission said.

**EPDP cadre shot dead:** Apr 1 - A person believed to be close to the EPDP was shot dead in Kommathurai, 17 kilometres north of Batticaloa on 1 April, Friday evening around 6.30 by unidentified gunmen. The man identified as Mr. Puththirasihamani Kuhathasan, 23, was walking along Uma Mill Road in Kommathurai when he was gunned down, Police said. The EPDP has accused the LTTE of carrying out the murder.

**EPDP cadre shot dead in East:** Apr 3 - An EPDP cadre, Kokiladasan Gowindan, (21) of Chenkaladi was shot dead with a 3.8 pistol by gunmen who arrived on a motorcycle. The victim had been cycling to the Kovil at the time of the incident.

HQI Valachchenai police N.K. Dharmaratne said the victim had been regularly threatened allegedly by the LTTE. He had earlier left Batticaloa also due to this reason. Six 3.8 spent cartridges were found at the scene. The SLMM has been notified about the incident.

**Ministry official shot dead in Batticaloa:** Apr 4 - A senior official from the Ministry of Vocational Education was shot dead by suspected LTTE pistol gang members on 4 April, Monday, around 12.40 p.m. at Kathankudi in Batticaloa. The official, 55-year old Mr. Thiyagarajah Kailainathan, an assistant director for vocational education in the Ministry, was having lunch at the Government Technical College after conducting the interviews when he was gunned down by an alleged LTTE gunman.

The attack was allegedly the third targeting EPDP supporters in less than a week. The Ministry falls under Douglas Devananda, who is also leader of the Eelam People's Democratic Party or EPDP, the members of which have become frequent targets of the LTTE for assassinations.

Kailanathan had travelled from Colombo to the eastern region to interview prospective candidates for training. On Friday (1) and Saturday (2), Mr. Kailanadan was in Trincomalee to conduct some interviews there and arrived in Batticaloa the following morning. Fifty-eight years old Kailainathan was a former Trincomalee Technical College Principal and was a dedicated government servant.

A police official in Batticaloa said Mr. Kailanadan who lived in Dehiwela and worked in the Colombo office had not informed the police of his visit to Batticaloa and thus no security had been provided. A police official in Batticaloa said there were no eyewitnesses and residents in the area were reluctant to provide information, fearing retaliation from the rebels.

**US to Grant Five years Visas Again:** Apr 4 - The United States embassy in Colombo announced today that effective immediately Sri Lankans travelling to the United States will be eligible to receive multiple entry visas valid for 5 year period. The travellers whose visa requests are approved and have compelling reasons to travel often to the US due to business or family considerations will automatically be issued five years

validity visas. In addition the US will eliminate the 95 USD issuance fees which had previously been charged for approved visas.

**SLN rescues stranded refugees:** Apr 4 - Mannar Magistrate Mr.N.M.M.Abdullah ordered the civil authorities to send twenty three Sri Lankan Tamil refugees to their own villages when they were produced in court on a report that Sri Lanka Navy (SLN) had rescued them from a sandbank in midsea off Talaimannar on 3 April around noon.

A group of twenty four Sri Lankan Tamil refugees left in boats belonging to Indian fishermen on the previous night around 7.30 pm from Ramanathapuram in South India towards Mannar. However Indian boatmen had left them on a sandbank in midsea saying that they had arrived in Mannar shore. But later refugees found they were left on a sandbank, refugee sources said. A SLN patrolling vessel rescued the refugees struggling for survival on the sandbank and handed them to Talaimannar police. The Police immediately admitted an injured boy at the Talaimannar hospital and the rest - four children, seven women and twelve men - were kept in the police station Sunday before being produced in Mannar courts.

**Grenade attack on Karaithivu EPDP:** Apr 5 - Unidentified persons presumed to belong to the LTTE lobbed a grenade on the EPDP office in Karaithivu, 45 kilometres south of Batticaloa 4 April, Monday night around 8 pm. The building, located at Karaithivu Junction, was damaged in the explosion, according to EPDP sources. Kalmunai Police said that a No-87 type grenade was used in the attack.

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**Upcountry youth to be recruited:** Apr 3 - For the 1,100 Tamil medium schools in the Uva, Central and Sabaragamuwa provinces and Kalutara district, a total number of 3,500 Tamil medium teachers will be recruited from the estates.

In addition 2,000 youths from estates will be recruited as minor employees to government hospitals and other state institutions. A further, 1000 youths will be recruited to the police prior to April 15 said M. Sachinthanadan the Deputy President of the Ceylon Workers Congress and Deputy Chairman of Committee in Parliament. This was stated by Deputy Chairman Sachinthanadan at a press conference held on Saturday at the office of the Deputy Chairman of Uva Provincial Council Chaired by CWC leader Arumugam Thondaman. He said a sum of one billion rupees has been allocated for development work in the up-country by the government and in addition grants would be received from SIDA and NORAD.

The objective of the CWC is to use these monies to get the best results. He also said that there would be a proper co-ordination between the Central government and the Provincial Council and the most suitable persons would be appointed to posts without any bias. He also expressed support to construct the Uva University and that the children of the estates too would be given higher education. He also said due to the backwardness in education, the Uva province is not developed and expressed regret that some estate trade unions opposed the establishment of a University on communal lines.

**Navy patrol boat fired on:** Apr 5 - Sri Lanka Navy complained to the Sri Lanka Monitoring Mission (SLMM) that one of its patrol boats in Trincomalee harbour had come under fire in the Uppaaru area. A member of the SLMM was on board the SLN patrol boat at the time of the incident on 5 April, Tuesday morning around 10.30. No one was injured in the firing. SLN accused the LTTE of firing on their vessel.

**Ex EPDP cadre shot:** Apr 5 - An ex EPDP cadre was shot and seriously wounded in a movie theatre in Batticaloa town Tuesday(5) afternoon around 2.40. A gunman shot Mr. Arumugam Ambikaipahan, 22, at point blank range with a 9 m.m. pistol at Vijaya Theatre, according to the police. The seriously injured ex-EPDP cadre was rushed to the intensive care unit of the Batticaloa Hospital.

According to EPDP sources, Ambikaipahan from Kakkaddicholai and currently a resident of Seththukudah had left the group long time ago. The EPDP and the police have blamed the LTTE for the shooting.

**Ex EPRLF cadre gunned down:** Apr 5 - An ex-member of the EPRLF was shot dead in Akkaraipattu, 64 kilometres south of Batticaloa, Tuesday (5) around 5.30 pm by suspected LTTE gunmen. He was cycling on the Akkaraipattu-Saahamam road when he was gunned down. The victim was identified as Mr. John S Amerasingham.

**LTTE abducts poosari:** April 5 - The Poosari of the Kaluwanakaranai Kovil, Nagarajah Chandra Mohan (25) has been abducted allegedly by the LTTE. Batticaloa Police said he had been abducted while on his way home and that the LTTE had informed his mother to turn up at the Karadinagoor LTTE camp if she wished to see her son. The letter to her had stated that her son would be killed soon. The mother had informed the SLMM about the incident.



**Policeman shot dead in Kalmunai:** Apr 6 - A Police constable was killed and another wounded when a group of unidentified men opened fire on them around 4.15 Wednesday (5) morning in Kalmunai, south of Batticaloa. The two Policemen were guarding a store in Kalmunaikudi, a densely populated Muslim suburb, when a group of eight armed men attacked them, Police said. The assailants went off with the Policemen's T- 56 assault rifles. The dead Policeman was identified as Mr. A. D. N Laliith.

**JVP against federal solution:** Apr 6 - "A federal system as a political solution to Sri Lanka's ethnic conflict would not even get twenty percent support from the people at a referendum," said Mr. Somawansa Amarasingha, leader of the Janatha Vimukthi Peramuna (JVP), addressing a meeting Tuesday (5) in Anuradhapura to commemorate the thousands of party activists who were killed in the April 1971 insurrection. Mr. Amarasingha was one of the young JVP leaders who participated in that insurrection.

The JVP leader was reacting to President Kumaratunga's earlier statement that eighty percent of the people in Sri Lanka support a federal system solution to the island's ethnic conflict. Addressing a packed audience of party activists and supporters in the Salgado Hall in Anuradhapura, Mr. Amarasingha said, "This country does not need a federal system. Solution for the national question can be found by treating all nationalities equally in a unitary Sri Lanka." The JVP leader added that if a referendum were to be held for a federal system his party would educate the people and urge them to oppose it.

**Grenade attack on liquor dealer's house:** Apr 7 - Six grenades were lobbed at the home of a liquor dealer, Mr. Thambirasa Maheswararaja in Chenkalady, 16 kilometres north of Batticaloa, Wednesday(6) night around 9.45, according to police sources. The house and a vehicle were damaged in the blasts. No one was injured. The liquor dealer's house is located in government controlled area.

**Jaffna roads to be widened:** Apr 7 - Six major roads in the Jaffna district are to be widened to accommodate two way traffic to reduce number of accidents, according to a decision taken at a conference held in the Jaffna district secretariat Thursday morning with the Government Agent Mr.K.Ganesh in the chair.

The roads that will be widened are: Jaffna-Kandy (A9 highway), Jaffna-Point Pedro Road, Jaffna- Kankesanthurai Road, Jaffna -Palaly Road, Jaffna-Manipay via Karainagar Road and Jaffna-Kayts Road through Pannai, Mr.Ganesh told Jaffna based journalists after the conference.

These roads will be widened by thirty feet by removing existing buildings and other structures. Compensation would be paid to land and house owners due to the widening project according to assessments carried out by the authorities concerned, Mr.Ganesh said. The project would be implemented in two stages, the GA said. Under the long term plan Jaffna-Kandy (A9) highway will be widened with funding from Asian Development Bank (ADB). The Government of Japan has come forward to fund the widening of other roads, said Mr.Ganesh. The implementation of the short-term project would commence within next three months and would be completed before the end of December 2006, Mr.Ganesh said.

**Karuna cadres seen in army area:** Apr 7 - Renegade rebels, who Sri Lanka's Tamil Tigers say are helping the army kill its cadres, are operating in a government-held area, according to testimony by a Nordic ceasefire monitor. Steen Jorgensen, head of the Sri Lanka Monitoring Mission in the eastern district of Batticaloa, testified on Wednesday before a presidential commission that he had seen fighters loyal to a breakaway rebel commander called Karuna near a military base in the restive east. Jorgensen testified that he had "seen armed Karuna supporters" in the government controlled area of Welikanda.

The revelation comes in the wake of a rash of ambushes and killings in the east, where the Tigers control pockets of jungle, blamed on feuding among the rebel factions. Analysts and diplomatic sources said the revelation was worrying because it suggested the army was turning a blind eye to the Karuna faction, and would be potentially serious if confirmed as a violation of the 2002 ceasefire.

The army has been saying it has cut off all ties with paramilitary groups since the truce came into effect and denies helping the Karuna faction, either directly or indirectly. "There is no such rebel camp located inside the government controlled area. We don't have any paramilitary groups working for us since the signing of the ceasefire agreement," said military spokesman Brig. Daya Ratnayake.. It's a popular secret that before that we had links with paramilitary groups ... We disbanded these groups because it was a violation of the ceasefire to have any links with them," he added.

**Ex-Razeek Group cadre shot dead:** Apr 8 - An ex-member of the Razeek Group was gunned down by an unidentified gunman in Kattankudy, 5 kilometres south of Batticaloa, Friday(8) morning around 7 am. The man was travelling in a bus from Batticaloa to Kalmunai when he was shot dead with a 9 mm pistol, Kattankudy Police said. The dead man was identified as Mr. Edward Pakkiyarasa, 29, and was engaged in liquor business, according to Kattankudy Police.

**LTTE sentry in Muttur attacked:** Apr 9 - A Tamil Tiger activist was killed and another injured in an attack on a LTTE sentry by an unidentified group Friday(8) around four am within the LTTE controlled area, south of Trincomalee district along Muttur-Batticaloa highway, sources said.

Mr.Elilan, LTTE Trincomalee district political head said a nine-member gang in army uniform was involved in the attack. Three days earlier he made a complaint to the Sri Lanka Monitoring Mission (SLMM) that cadres of Karuna group had been given shelter in SLA camps in the area, he said.

**Two EPRLF men shot in Vavuniya:** Apr 9 - Unidentified gunmen opened fire on two EPRLF (Varathar Group) members in Nagar Iluppaikulam, about 8 kilometres southwest of Vavuniya, Friday(8) around 12.30 pm. One of them was admitted Vavuniya hospital with five gun shot wounds. The other person's whereabouts are not known. The EPRLF member admitted to hospital is Mr. Govindasamy Sivakumar, 30.

**SLA soldier shot, injured in Seruvila:** Apr 9 - An unidentified group of four men shot at a soldier of the Sri Lanka Army (SLA) Friday(8) afternoon in Sri Mangalapura area in the Seruvila division, south of Muttur in Trincomalee district. The injured soldier was admitted at the Kantalai Base Hospital,

police said. According to SLA sources, the soldier was shot when he was collecting palmyra leaves. The SLA has lodged a complaint with the Sri Lanka Monitoring Mission (SLMM) regarding this incident accusing the LTTE of being responsible for the shooting.

**SLA soldier captured by LTTE:** Apr 9 - A soldier of the Sri Lanka Army (SLA), armed with a rifle and a compass, was arrested Saturday (9) morning around 11 am by the Tamil Tigers. The arrest took place in the village of Thanganagar in Muttur east, an LTTE controlled area south of the Trincomalee district, according to a report in TamilNet. Mr.S.Elilan, LTTE Trincomalee district political head, told that he has brought the matter to the notice of the Sri Lanka Monitoring Mission (SLMM). The soldier, identified as Siriwardene, is now in the custody of the LTTE, Mr.Elilan said.

**SLMM says LTTE violated CFA:** Apr 9 - The LTTE has violated article 1.2 of the Ceasefire Agreement (CFA) which states "neither party shall engage in any offensive military operation," BBC Sinhala service quoted Sri Lanka Monitoring Mission (SLMM) spokeswoman Helen Maria Olafsdottir as saying, referring to a recent incident where the Liberation Tigers were accused of firing a Sri Lanka Navy (SLN) patrol boat with an SLMM member on board in Trincomalee Bay off Upparu on 5 April 2005.

"We found it necessary to say that the navy boat under any circumstances had not fired at any time towards the localities of the LTTE", Olafsdottir was quoted as saying Friday by the BBC Sinhala service.

In a press release issued in Colombo on 6th April, the SLMM said on the reporting of the event by the Sri Lanka media: "SLMM finds it necessary to rectify false reports in relation to the shooting incident that took place in Trincomalee Bay on 5 April 2005.

"SLMM can confirm that a navy boat was on routine patrol in Trincomalee bay off the shore from Uppu Aru when fired at from the shore. The navy boat immediately left the area and headed back to base without returning fire.

"Some of the media reported that a monitor from SLMM had been injured in the incident but those reports are completely false. SLMM stresses that no one on board the boat received injuries. We regret these false media reports as they have caused unnecessary concern both here in Sri Lanka and for family and friends of SLMM monitors that are working on the island. SLMM would like to underline the importance of responsible journalism so that rumours and disinformation do not find their way into the media causing unnecessary confusion."

**LTTE releases captured SLA soldier:** Apr 10 - The Sri Lanka Army (SLA) soldier, who was arrested by the LTTE on Saturday (9), was handed over Sunday evening to the Sri Lanka Monitoring Mission (SLMM) officials. The handing over event took place at the LTTE Trincomalee Political Secretariat which is located in Sampoor.

Mr.Siriwardene, a soldier stationed in the 64th mile post army camp in the army controlled area was captured by LTTE cadres when he allegedly entered Thangapuram, a village which is under LTTE control in the Muttur east. The soldier was armed with a T 56 rifle and compass at that time of arrest.

Mr.Helge Lyberg, acting head of the SLMM in Trincomalee

took charge of the soldier handed him over to the Kaddaiparichchan army camp which is located on the border dividing the areas controlled by the SLA and LTTE, SLMM sources said.

**Killings in Kalmunai, Trinco:** Apr 11 - A man said to be a member of the EPDP was shot dead by unidentified gunmen in Trincomalee town Monday (11) around 10.30 am. Police searched the Huskision Road area immediately but arrested no one. Meanwhile, in Kalmunai Police found the body of a man who was shot dead Sunday (10) night around 10.30. "The reason for the killing is not clear although it appears to be linked to the current 'shadow war' in the east", said the Police officer investigating the shooting.

The man gunned down in Trincomalee town was identified as Mr. Wijethasan Wijendran who works with the EPDP. Police said Mr. Wijendran was cycling along Huskision Road when he was shot at close range by unidentified persons. He succumbed to his injuries when admitted to the Trincomalee General hospital. Hospital sources said five gunshots were found on his body. The man who was found shot dead with a nine mm pistol in Kalmunai was identified as Mr. S. Arulampalam, 44, a resident of Manalchenai, a suburb of the southeastern town. He was working as a Samurdhi (Poverty Alleviation Program) animator, Police said.

**Sri Lanka relaxes tax laws to expatriates:** Apr 13 - Sri Lanka has amended its tax laws to encourage more expatriates to contribute to the country's development. Expatriates Sri Lankans have been reluctant to return home because anyone working more than 182 days in a year in the island nation were liable for tax on their earnings both in Sri Lanka and their resident country. According to the amended law, expatriates will have to pay taxes only for their earnings in Sri Lanka irrespective of the number of days, according to National Council for Economic Development.

**Man shot in Batticaloa suburb:** Apr 13 - A man was shot and critically injured in Thiraimadu Colony, an outer suburb of Batticaloa town Tuesday(12) close to midnight, Police said. He was identified as Mr. Selvamani Yogeswaran, 36. Two men who went to his house Tuesday night had called Mr. Selvamani out and shot him. He was admitted to Batticaloa hospital with gunshot injuries in the neck.

**Rights body studies tsunami refugee complaints:** Apr 13 - Human Rights Commission of Sri Lanka (HRCSL) has taken steps to verify if relief and other related assistance are equitably distributed to victims of war and tsunami disaster sheltered in several welfare centres in the Jaffna district, civil society sources said. To accomplish this task HRCSL recently sent a team of officials to conduct a survey by visiting these camps and centres.

HRCSL has taken this step following complaints that victims of war and tsunami in the Jaffna district are not provided with basic facilities and adequate relief and other related assistance to restore normalcy in their lives, sources said. HRCSL team is conducting an indepth study by visiting several camps and welfare centres where internally displaced and tsunami victims are sheltered to verify the claim made by government and non-governmental organizations that they have been providing basic and essential facilities, Jaffna HRCSL sources said.

**SC holds State responsible for disappearances:** Apr 14 - Sri Lanka's Supreme Court (SC) held last week that the State was responsible for the disappearance of two Tamil youths who were brothers after their arrest by soldiers of the Sri Lanka Army fifteen years ago on 6th July, 1990 in Trincomalee, legal sources said. The three member bench of the Supreme Court ordered the State to pay the petitioner who is the father of the two youths a sum of Rupees 300,000/= as compensation. The SC also directed the State to pay the compensation within three months before the end of June.

The Fundamental Rights application filed by Mr. K.Machchavalavan came up for inquiry before a three-member bench of the SC comprised Justices Ms Shiranee Bandaranaike, N.K.Udalagama and Raja Fernando.

The petitioner said in his application that his two sons M.Arumugam aged 20 and M.Mahendrarajah aged 25 were taken into custody by army soldiers on 06.07.1990 with him and several others. Soldiers took them to Plantain Point Army Camp in Trincomalee the same day. He and two others were released later and not his two sons. On inquiry he was told that his sons were not in the camp, legal sources said.

The Supreme Court after inquiry held that there was clear evidence that the two sons of the petitioner were arrested and detained in a cordon and search operation conducted on 06.07.1990. Justice Ms Shiranee Bandaranaike with Justices N.K.Udalagama and Raja Fernando agreeing said that the State was responsible for the infringement of the fundamental rights of the two sons of the petitioners. Justice Ms Shiranee Bandaranaike directed the State to pay Rs; 150,000 each for the two sons, who had disappeared while in detention in the army camp, legal sources said,

**Nine killed in attack on Karuna camp:** Apr 15 - At least nine were killed in an attack on the camps of the Karuna group in Sorivil in the Welikanda area, 80 kilometres northwest of Batticaloa Thursday (14) morning. "We can neither confirm nor deny the reports of the attack," a senior military officer in the east said. The bodies of nine men who were killed in the assault were lying near a river in Sorivil (Soruwila in Sinhala), an interior village in the Polannaruwa district. It was recently reported that the ENDLF/Karuna Group set up five camps in the area recently. Three camps in Vannaathuraiyadi near Sorivil were attacked reportedly by the LTTE. The other camps had supplies, according to villagers in the area

Three ENDLF operatives including 'Vijayan', a senior cadre of the ENDLF, were also killed in the attack, informed sources in Batticaloa said. Five bodies those killed in the attack were found near Sorivil. The bodies were later moved to Aralaganwila hospital, Police sources added. Informed sources in the Batticaloa said Mr. Vijayan's family lives in Salem in Tamil Nadu.

The dead were identified as Mr. Devadas Devendran, Mr. James Kandasamy Vivekanandan, Mr. Devendran (one name), Mr. Ravi (one name) and Mr. Wijeyan (one name). Two cadres injured in the attack were admitted to Polannaruwa hospital. The wounded men are identified as Mr. K. Yogarajah and Mr. Sinnathamby Mahendran, Police said. ENDLF is believed to be operating in the Polannaruwa district with the Karuna Group.

On 15 April, the acting magistrate for Polannaruwa, Ms.Chandani Meegoda, visited the place where the Karuna Group/ENDLF camp were attacked on the previous day. Dur-

ing her inspection reportedly found five dead bodies, including that of a man identified as 'Vijayan', in makeshift huts in Vannaanthuraiyadi in the general area of Aralanganwila. However according to other sources in Sorivil there were nine bodies. Provisions for the camp were found in two huts located nearby. Police said the attackers had removed arms and ammunition.

**Divisional Secretary shot dead:** Apr 15 - Divisional Secretary for Thirukkivil, Mr. A. K Thavarajah, was shot dead Friday (15) night around 6.45 p.m. He was riding a motorbike in Thirukkivil when a gunman opened fire on him, residents said. He was shot with a 9 mm pistol four times at close range, according to Police in Thirukkivil, south of Batticaloa. Mr. Thavarajah was going to his residence after closing his office when the gunman riding a motorbike with an accomplice shot him.

Reportedly, Mr. Thavarajah from Cheddipalayam, south of Batticaloa figured in a controversy recently over a portrait of LTTE leader V Pirapaharan which was hung in his office.

**Soldier guns down major, two corporals:** Apr 16 - A Sri Lanka army private shot dead a major and two lance corporals in a dispute over leave on Saturday (16) morning around 10.40 at the 7 Sinha Regiment camp in Nunavil in Jaffna. The major was second in command of the camp, Sri Lanka military sources said. The soldier was angry with his superiors for not granting him leave to go home for the Sinhala New Year, Police sources said. He was arrested and handed over to Chavakachcheri Police. The murder weapon was seized from him.

The dead officer is Major Sujeewa Ratnaweera. Lance Corporal P. K. G Abeyasingha and Lance Corporal A. M. L Premakumara were shot dead by the soldier. Chavakachcheri magistrate, Mr. P. Subramanian, visited the camp and recorded statements from witnesses.

**LTTE sentry point attacked:** Apr 18 - The LTTE said that it lodged a complaint with the Sri Lanka Monitoring Mission in Trincomalee that one of their sentry points in the LTTE-controlled Muttur east had been attacked by a group of soldiers of the Sri Lanka Army Sunday (17) night around 7.10 p.m. In Pachchanoor area, LTTE sentry point at Kilathimalai is located on the east side of a river and the SLA camp is located on the west side of the river.

A group of about fifteen soldiers in uniform allegedly moved forward from their camp towards the LTTE sentry and started firing. However no one in the LTTE sentry was injured. Later the SLA soldiers withdrew to their camp, Mr.S.Elilan, LTTE Trincomalee district political head said in his complaint to the SLMM.

**Two wounded in explosion in Colombo:** Apr 20 - An explosion from a jeep parked in front of a restaurant wounded two people in the Sri Lankan capital late Wednesday (20), police and witnesses said. A patron had parked the jeep in front of the restaurant in a busy Colombo district, and had gone inside before the blast, said a police official at the scene. Three persons were hurt in the explosion.

Though initial suspicion for the blast was directed at the LTTE, the police said there was no evidence that it was involved in a hand grenade explosion. "There is no indication

(continued on page 41)

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In ever loving memory of **Mr. C. K. Kanthaswami**, Former Principal, Kokuvil Hindu College, on the first anniversary of his passing away on the 21<sup>st</sup> of April 2004.

Sadly missed and fondly remembered by his beloved wife Mahadevi, sons and daughters and their families; Dhayanathan and Vijayalakshmi, Shantini and Sivakumar, Abhiramy and Jayantha, Vaheesan and Dhushyanthy, Gitanjaly and Nirmalarajan and his grand children Gajendran, Janarthani, Branavan, Sivahamy, Ahrani, Hariharan, Bhargavy and Sindhura.

- 7 Gossington Close, Chislehurst, Kent BR7 6TG.

#### Ninth Anniversary



In loving memory of **Mr. Visvalingam Sivasubramaniam**, Principal Emeritus, Skanda Varodaya College, Chunnakam on the ninth anniversary of his passing away on 26th April 1996.

Sadly missed and fondly remembered by his beloved wife Sironmany and other members of the family.-

S. Sivamohanarajan,  
3 Wessex Court, Wembley, Middx.  
HA9 9RH. Tel: 020 8385 0477.

#### Sixth Anniversary Remembrance



In loving memory of **Mr. Vellupillai Kumarasamy** on the sixth anniversary of his passing away on 20th April 1999.

Fondly remembered and sadly missed by his beloved wife Sarojini; loving children Nirmala, Baskeran, Shyamala and Dayaharan; sons-in-law Rasalingam and Uthayakumaran; daughters-in-law Gnanamanohari and Sujatha; grandchildren Gayathiri, Gajan, Arjun, Shivani and Pooja, relatives and friends.

- 24 Rowlands Avenue, Hatchend, Middx HA5 4BH/ 37 Mississippi Road, Seven Hills, NSW2147, Australia.

#### Eighth Anniversary Remembrance Pradeep Jeganathan



01.12.1964 - 31.03.1997

*"But O for the touch of a vanish'd hand,  
And the sound of a voice that is still"*

Lovingly remembered and profoundly missed by his parents Jeganathan and Shakuntala; sister Mythili; brothers Janarthana and Sanjayan and their families.

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## Sixth Anniversary Remembrance



In loving memory of **Mrs Thiyalnayaki Sivalingam** on the sixth anniversary of her passing away on 18th April 1999.

Greatly missed and fondly remembered by her loving children Jeyakumaran, Kaladevy, Gnanendran, Dr. Jeyagowri, Sureshkumar and Sivasuthan; sons-in-law Ganeshamoorthy and Dr. Kumaran; daughters-in-law Yogendradevi, Vallinayaki, Malathy and Balasuhanthini; sister Sethunayaki Sivasithamparam; grandchildren Havitha, Sinduja, Kalyan, Neruban, Pratheeban, Apamah, Geevithan, Abisha and Kishore.

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- 2 Feast of St. Athanasius
- 3 Saint Thirunavukkarasu  
Nayanar Guru Pooja
- 4 Eekaathasi
- 5 Pirathosam
- 7 Amaavaasai
- 8 Kaarthikai
- 11 Chathurthi
- 13 Sasti; Pilgrimage to the  
Shrine of Fatima, Pandateruppu
- 14 Feast of St. Mathias
- 15 Feast of the Ascension of  
the Lord Jesus Christ
- 19 Eekaathasi
- 20 Feast of St. Bernadine of  
Siena
- 21 Sani Pirathosam
- 22 Full Moon; Vaikasi Visakam

- 25 Thirugnana Sampanthar  
Guru Pooja
- 26 Sankatahara Sathurthi;  
Feast of St. Philip Neri
- 27 Feast of St. Augustine of  
Canterbury
- 31 Feast of the Visitation of  
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Day conducted by John Shi-  
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- May 8 6 p.m. Mirudangam  
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A Glittering Evening of Rhythm,  
Melody and Colour

Sunday Evening, March 13, 2005 was the final evening of the Annual Festival of Carnatic Music and Dance of the Tamil Isai Kalaamanram of Ontario, Canada and was held at the Yorkwood Public Library Hall, North York, Toronto. This followed the annual examinations conducted by this organization late last year, pioneered 15 years ago by a group of Sri Lankan Tamil Diaspora in Canada. An examination activity started with ninety students has now grown to over three thousand students this year from the provinces of Ontario and Quebec and some even from outside. This organization, managed by volunteers from the Sri Lankan Tamil community, has to date received no grants of any kind and is entirely supported by membership fees and whatever it charges as entrance fees for its recitals from non-members and by way of annual examination fees.

Throughout the year recitals are held for the public at which local artistes from the community perform and at times even well known artistes are invited from overseas especially India to concerts organized by the Tamil Isai Kalaamanram. This year during the six days over three successive weekends, students who participated in the examinations in various grades performed every evening in the style of a variety concert of dances, vocal and instrumental recitals. On the final day, however, it was an entire dance programme in the classical Bharata Natyam style at which over fifty students participated in about ten items of Pushpanjali, Jatiswaram, Padam, Varnam and Thillana. It was a glittering evening of rhythm, melody and colour bringing out some of the finest elements of Bharata Natyam to a spellbound audience.

Speaking as the chief guest of the evening, writer and author Victor Karunairajan complimented and congratulated the Tamil Isai Kalaamanram for its foresight to propagate such a rich culture in the new homeland of North America and the Herculean efforts of its members to give their services to this sacred task as volunteers. He expressed his pride that his community is today at the forefront of promoting this classical dance tradition in North America, Europe and Down Under.

Dwelling on the message of the Navarasas, the nine essences of human characteristics, which are expressed in gestures by Bharata Natyam dancers, Victor Karunairajan said each one of us is blessed with these natures. A dancer learns these during her long training from a very young age by discovering from within herself with the help of her guru (the teacher) and presents them on the stage in the form of abhinaya, giving meanings to whatever she expresses through her dance.

These characteristics represent the entire feelings of human nature from happiness (hasya), kindness and compassion (karuna), anger and fury (raudra), heroism and valour (veera), fear and terror (bhayanaka), disgust and hatred (beeabhasta), wonder and astonishment (adbhuta), and finally peace and serenity (shanti).

"It is important that we, just like a dancer," emphasized Mr Karunairajan, "discover these feelings within us, control and hold them in balance to be fuller human beings and through the final gesture of shanti bring peace to the entire humanity."

This he said is fundamental to this dance tradition that goes back to eons of time when the sages of old saw God's

actions, aspirations and grace in the dance.

Mr Thampiah Siripathy, the president of the organization paid his tribute to his team of volunteers, expressed his delight at the vast number of young people who are becoming interested and indeed involved in our rich heritage and the public for their spontaneous support.

The Yorkwood Public Library auditorium was packed to capacity and the final event of the evening following a very inspiring mangalam rendering by a group of young dancers bearing lights on the determined hopes of the Tamils of Sri

Lanka, was the distribution of certificates and the awards of medals of distinction, and gold medals to five best young dancers of the year.

The live orchestra for the evening was provided by Vasu Sinnarajah (Nattuvangam) one of the community's leading dance teachers, Mohan Thiruchelvam (vocal), Subathra Ramachandran (Violin) and Vasu Rasalingam (mrithangam), another guru who promotes the learning of various percussion instruments as a popular teacher of the community.

- Arani Aravindan, Toronto

## Karthic at Twelve Shows His Class as a Percussionist



Toronto's York University was the venue on Sunday March 20, 2005 when 12-year old Karthic Kailas made a highly promising start as a mrithangam percussionist at his Junior Arangetram, a debut performance before his final graduation in

this field in due course. Academically, a high-achieving sixth grader from Wismer Public School, Markham, a disciple of Shri Vasuthevan Rajalingam and the son of Siva and Sutha Kailas, Karthic at this debut performance showed every sign of becoming an artist of great repute in the future. He is indeed a child prodigy now.

A multi-talented young man, interested in such sports as hockey, basketball and baseball at all of which he excels, Karthic is also learning vocals in Carnatic music under the tutelage of Srimati Kulanayaky Vivekanandan who gave him inspiring vocal support at his debut performance. She was supported by A Jeyadevan on the violin, an artist who has performed at top recitals and music festivals in India, Anandakumar Nadarajah on the kenchira, Sanjeev Vijayakumar on the ghatam and Surenthar Santhiralingam on the morsing.

The trio Nadarajah, Vijayakumar and Surenthar are senior students of Shri Vasudevan Rajalingam and they continue to amaze Carnatic music enthusiasts in Canada not only with their expertise at such a young age but also their dedicated commitment to music as they pursue professional careers of their own. Playing in the company of a violin maestro like Jayadevan, these three young men not only won the hearts of the arangetram audience but also showed how they guided and encouraged the young debutante to give his best that evening.

Treating the Curtis Hall audience packed to capacity, young Karthic Kailas showed his rhythmic skill in no small measure. There were moments when his vocal guru, Srimati Vivekanandan made appreciative gestures that must have given immense inspiration to Karthic let alone the admiration of the audience.

The concert began with a composition in Ragamalikai by Patnam Subramania Iyer and this was followed with the ever popular Nattai raga Muthuswami Dikshithar invocational lyric, Maha Ganapathim. All the pieces rendered were well chosen for the evening and they were in the Sri Ranjani, Abheri, Kalyani, Ravichandrika, Madhuwanthi, Kapi and Revathi ragas. Srimati

Vivekanandan rendered the Kalyani raga piece as the highlight of the evening with an elaborate alaparana that dripped smoothly and sweetly like honey on the audience ably supported by Jayadevan on the violin and finally, the percussionists led by Karthic performed a stunning thani avarthanam as a grand finale to this item.

The chief guest of the evening was Dr Pon Sivaji of Scarborough Grace Hospital and the two special guests were Mr Thampiah Siripathy, President of the Tamil Isai Kalaamanram of Ontario and Sangeetha Vidwan Srimati Prema Sriskandarajah. It must be said to the credit of the Tamil Isai Kalaamanram founded fourteen years ago by volunteers to serve the community that today hundreds of children are learning Carnatic music and classical dancing as a natural part of their development.

## Book Review

**Thiruvaachakam** published by Socio - Religious Guild, Thirunelveli, Tamilnadu, India. Volume 1 - 926 pages & Volume 2 - 324 pages

Although this masterpiece is called Thiruvaachakam, any reader would accept that it is a modern compendium on Saivism designed for Tamil and English speaking students of all ages.

These two volumes are the end products of research, labour and love for five years of ten eminent scholars of the Guild including Mr. V.Arumugam and Dr. S. Kuppuswamy. They will definitely serve as excellent resources of knowledge in many spheres of Saivism. As the title of the book indicates the authors have accurately quoted all the Thiruvaachaka Hymns composed by Saint Manickavasagar, they have rewritten the Hymns splitting of the combined words to facilitate easy reading and written the meanings in the prose form. To help the English reader, each Hymn is transliterated in the English alphabet and the meanings are rendered in English.

The life story of Saint Maanickavasagar, the underlying philosophies of the Hymns, Puranic stories mentioned in the Hymns, Different Names of Sivaperumaan, Glossary of Saiva terms and many other connected topics are appended.

The inclusion of Meihandathevar's Sivagnanabotham with explanatory meanings add a further dimension to the resourcefulness of the volumes

The texts 11" by 8.5" which are printed on specially imported paper from USA which could withstand years of use without discoloration or decay are bound with hard covers and presented in beautifully printed cloth bags.

A limited number of copies of the first edition were available at the Shri Ganapathy Temple, Wimbledon and Saiva Munnetra Sangam, Manor Park, London.

- Kandiah Thilagamoorthy.



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We as a family of multi-culture  
Proudly co-exist respecting each other's rights.  
May you in robust health and happiness  
Continue for years and years  
And serve with the will of a Mother  
Many more souls that come seeking your care.*

Toronto, Ontario

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## Australian Newsletter

*Tamil community in Australia is slowly regaining its posture after the Tsunami devastation of last year and it is evident from the fact that the community events that had decelerated during the last quarter is beginning to bubble again. Melbourne has witnessed few Arangetrams already and notable overseas vocalist during this season is O S Arun, a popular carnatic vocalist from India. Apart from adding value to arangetrams, O S Arun is also performing at various centres in east coast of Australia during this period and no doubt it would be an indulgence for the carnatic music lovers.*

*Two major temples in Australia – Sydney Murugan Kovil and Siva-Vishnu Kovil in Melbourne separately observed their ten-day annual festival, which culminated with the water cutting ceremony on Pankuni uthiram. Ther festival was celebrated grandiosely on the ninth day and the event got live radio coverage on Sydney's Inbathamli Oli & Australian Tamil Broadcasting Corporation and Melbourne's community radio 3ZZZ. Both temples are proud of their beautiful Ther, which is designed in traditional style and it adds colour to the event enormously. No doubt, Ther festival in Sydney and Melbourne serves as a cultural showpiece of Tamil heritage.*

*Tamil Australian Friendship Society in Melbourne organised Tamil Women's Achievement Concert to commemorate the International Women's Day and several Tamil women were honoured for their achievement on the occasion.*

*Spiritual movements which are outside the traditional institutions such as a temple or a church are gaining momentum amongst the Tamils in Australia. No doubt, it is a significant phenomenon and the growth & developmental path of such movements are bewildering in some ways.*

- Sivasupramaniam Sitsabesan

(continued from page 37)

whatsoever so far to indicate any involvement of the Tamil Tigers," said police spokesman Rienzi Perera. A restaurant security guard and a bystander were injured and admitted to the hospital, he said. A policeman, Manoj Fernando, also sustained minor injuries and was being questioned.

**LTTE fires at Army sentry point:** Apr 20 - The Army Observation Post in Mahindapura in Trincomalee came under LTTE fire for the fifth day on 19 April despite Army complaints to the Sri Lanka Monitoring Mission about the LTTE's provocative act on four earlier occasions. Military Spokesman Brigadier Daya Ratnayake said that three uniformed LTTE cadres who were at a distance of 200 meters fired at a group of soldiers returning to the Mahindapura Army detachment after a routine patrol in the area around 10.30 am.

The LTTE cadres were seen in the Government controlled area in Mahindapura. "The LTTE cadres while firing 30 rounds of ammunition had thrown a hand grenade towards soldiers, but it had exploded without injuring any of them," Brigadier Ratnayake added. "Our soldiers acted patiently without reacting to the LTTE cadres," he said. According to civilians 15 armed LTTE cadres had been seen around the Government controlled areas of Mahindapura, Brigadier Ratnayake added. The Army on April 9, 14, 16 and 18 complained to the SLMM on the LTTE firing.

SLMM Spokesperson Helen Olafsdottir said that truce monitors were visiting the area regularly. She said she was not in a position to confirm the incident. "We have received complaints over the weekend from the Sri Lanka Army and the LTTE about the firing incidents," she added.

**Karuna Group cadre shot dead:** Apr 21 - A youth believed to be a Karuna Group cadre was killed by suspected Tamil Tigers Thursday (21) around 11.30 a.m. in Valaichenai, north of Batticaloa. He was gunned down on the Valaichenai Kalkudah road, according to Police. The victim was identified as Mr. Sivagnanaselvam Kirubaharan, 25, of Kalladi Uppodai, a suburb of Batticaloa town.

**Six killed in clashes in the east:** April 21 - Five Tamil Tiger rebels and a civilian were killed Thursday (21) in separate incidents in Sri Lanka's volatile east, police and military officials said. Five guerrillas were killed and seven others wounded in a pre-dawn attack by a breakaway faction of the mainstream LTTE in Kangikudichiaru, in eastern Sri Lanka, said military spokesman Brig. Daya Ratnayake, citing an intercepted rebel communication. Details of the incident were not immediately available as the area is controlled by the Tamil Tigers.

Separately, a Tamil civilian was shot and killed by unidentified gunmen in Valachchenai, near the eastern city of Batticaloa, Ratnayake said. However, a senior commander of the LTTE in the Batticaloa-Amparai region is quoted by TamilNet as having said that two men had opened fire in the direction of their forward defence positions on the outskirts of the Kanjikudichcha Aaru region Thursday morning. "There were neither casualties nor damage on our side," the LTTE commander said. He dismissed the SLA statement as "routine psy ops". He said that Tigers had recovered two kit bags dropped by the gunmen when they fled. □



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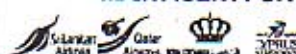
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