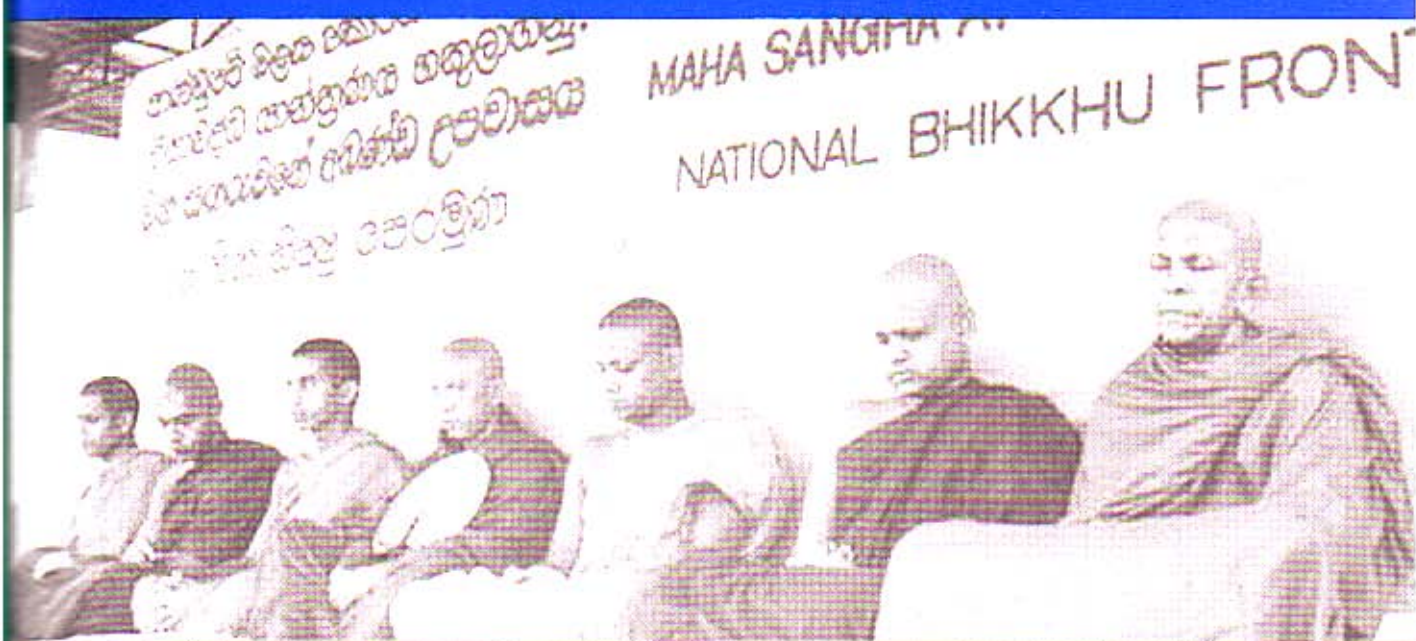


# Tamil TIMES

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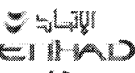
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of what you say, but I'll  
defend to the death your  
right to say it"*

- Voltaire

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Email: admin@tamiltimes.org

editor@tamiltimes.org

p.rajanayagam@btconnect.com

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#### COVER:

Top - Protest against joint mechanism  
by Monks National Front in Colombo;

Bottom right: JVP protest rally in  
Colombo; Bottom left: President

Kumaratunga addressing over 1000  
monks who support the joint  
mechanism

## A costly but courageous move

IT is said that history repeats itself. Some commentators have compared the present situation faced by President Chandrika Kumaratunga to what her late father S.W.R.D. Bandaranaike, as the then Prime Minister, faced when he tried to stick by the agreement (Banda-Chelva Pact) he had signed with the then leader of the Federal Party, Mr S J V Chelvanayakam way back in 1957.

The then powerful leaders of the Buddhist clergy who had propelled Mr Bandaranaike and his party into power in the 1956 general election orchestrated a fast-unto-death in front of PM's private residence at Rosmead Place in Colombo vowing to continue until the Pact was abrogated. Mr Bandaranaike buckled under pressure and tore up the Pact.

Until the midnight of 15 June, the question on everybody's lips was whether the daughter too will surrender and abandon the proposed joint mechanism with the Tigers in the face of the threat from the JVP to quit the Government and confronted by the rising tide of opposition from sections of the Buddhist clergy accompanied by fast-unto-death campaigns.

It looks as if the 'lady is not for turning' as British Prime Minister Mrs. Margaret Thatcher once said. The President seems to be made of sterner stuff than her late father and is determined go ahead and sign the proposed joint mechanism. The President and her Government have commenced a campaign and propaganda blitz to mobilise public support in favour of signing the joint mechanism. Over a thousand Buddhist monks are said to be ready to join this campaign.

The decision of the President and her cabinet to place the proposal before parliament for its approval is seen as a desirable and bold move. It will demonstrate to the people and the world at large that the President has not acted unilaterally or arbitrarily in an exercise of executive powers. Except for the parliamentarians belonging to the JVP and the JHU, totalling 46, it is quite probable that all the other parliamentarians will vote in support of the proposal to set up the joint mechanism. The United National Party (UNP), the largest party in the opposition, is certain to support the proposal, though some predict that the UNP may abstain from participating in the voting process. There can be no doubt that the 22 parliamentarians belonging to the Tamil National Alliance (TNA) will vote in support. Such support taken together with the votes from the parties of the ruling coalition should provide a substantial majority in parliament in favour of the President's proposal.

It is now more than six months since the island was struck by the tsunami. Since then discussions have been going on between the Government and the LTTE facilitated by the Norwegians in regard to setting up of the joint mechanism for the rehabilitation and reconstruction of affected areas of the Northeast. It now appears that the parties have more or less agreed on a draft Memorandum of Understanding.

For some months now, it has been clear that President Kumaratunga was determined to go ahead with the joint mechanism with the Tigers.

President Kumaratunga and Tamil Tigers are not the best of friends at any time. However, there are valid reasons why she is relentlessly seeking to enter into a deal with them.

From the outset, the LTTE has persistently refused to cooperate with the Government, and prevented the TNA parliamentarians from cooperating with the Government in relation to tsunami reconstruction and rehabilitation activities in LTTE controlled areas of the Northeast unless the LTTE was given a significant strategic and administrative role by way of a joint mechanism. Until the LTTE is given a recognised role, the situation will continue to the detriment of the ordinary people of the Northeast affected by the tsunami.

Secondly, the international community recognises the ground reality

of the LTTE having effective military control of certain areas of the Northeast. It also recognises that unless the Government and the LTTE agree to work together, these areas will continue to be neglected. Hence many of the donor countries and international lending institutions strongly urge and support a joint mechanism to be set up though they have not made it a precondition for providing aid. An island with serious economic and financial problems cannot dismiss such sentiments and expect further help.

Thirdly, though the Ceasefire Agreement (CFA) is holding, peace talks have remained stalled since the LTTE unilaterally walked out in April 2003. At present there are no signs that peace talks will restart in the near future. The mechanism will offer an opportunity to bring in the LTTE to work together with the Government within certain defined parameters. The Norwegian facilitators and the Donor countries see the proposed joint mechanism as providing a confidence building opportunity for the Government and the LTTE to work together which may eventually lead to the peace process being resumed.

Fourthly, the CFA is at present under severe strain with many violations including politically motivated assassinations being carried out frequently with the SLMM incapable of preventing many of these violations. The danger is that the LTTE will opt out of the ceasefire and war may breakout if the present situation is allowed to drift. The hope is that the Government and the LTTE working together will help to prevent such a dangerous development.

The President made her determination on the issue clear before the assembled audience of Sri Lanka Development Forum held last month when she used the occasion to launch an undisguised attack against her allies-in-government, the Jathika Vimukthi Peramuna (JVP) who were going round the country denouncing the proposed joint mechanism as a sell-out to the Tigers. Her readiness to proceed with the joint mechanism was rewarded by Sri Lanka's donor countries and institutions with a pledge of over \$2 billion aid package.

There is no doubt that the President's decision provoked considerable opposition. It was not a surprise that opposition to her decision to enter into the tsunami deal with the Tigers came from the Jathika Hela Urumaya (JHU), Sri Lanka's first ever political party of Buddhist monks that secured 9 seats in parliament in the last general election and from other Sinhala chauvinist groups backed by sections of the Buddhist clergy. However, what was most politically significant was the strident opposition to the proposal from the JVP, a key partner in Kumaratunga's coalition government.

This month has witnessed campaigns and demonstrations from the saffron robed fraternity of Buddhist monks belonging to the JHU and the JVP front organisations, the Patriotic National Movement (PNM) and the Jathika Bhikku Peramuna (JBP) becoming a visible phenomenon.

Events began to move fast and on 6 June, one of the JHU monk parliamentarians, Ven. Omalpe Sobitha Thera, launched a death fast. The JHU vowed that the fast would continue until the President gave up her move to set up a joint mechanism with the Tigers.

On 9 June the Mahanayakes of the four leading Buddhist Chapters in the country gave a 24-hour ultimatum to the President to drop her plan for a joint aid mechanism.

The President set up a face-to-face meeting with the Mahanayakes, who had arrived by a special helicopter from Kandy to the President's House, and "explained in detail" the

proposed Tsunami Relief Council for the north and east and its status to the prelates and assured them that the proposed joint mechanism did not threaten the nation's security or territorial integrity. "She told them no date has been fixed yet for the establishment of the Council, and implored them not to be misled by media speculation and misinformation created for narrow political gains."

Ven. Omalpe Sobitha Thera gave up his fast on Saturday (11) and the Mahanayakes have yet make any public statement of opposition to the proposed tsunami deal.

On 10 June the JVP gave notice that it would quit from the Government unless the President abandoned the proposed joint mechanism by midnight on 15 June. Launching a scathing attack on President Kumaratunga and her family, Amarasinghe warned that if Kumaratunga went ahead and signed the proposed joint-mechanism with the LTTE, she would be the "last of the Bandaranaiques". He warned that the proposed joint mechanism, if signed, would be a political tsunami for the Kumaratunga government.

Going beyond the disputed issue of the joint mechanism, Amarawansa said, "Sri Lankans will never allow sharing of power with the Liberation Tigers through the Joint Mechanism. We will support only a unitary constitution. We will always fight against a federal constitution as the Tigers will use a federal setup as a stepping-stone for a separate state. Joint mechanism is part of the Tigers' ISGA proposal."

The deadline set by the JVP passed with President Kumaratunga showing no signs of wilting under pressure. The JVP was left with no choice but to quit, and quit they did.

Many, including the international community which has been pressuring the President to enter into this joint mechanism with Tigers will regard her action as nothing but courageous. But at what cost?

As for Mrs Chandrika Kumaratunga, being an elected President she will be able to continue until her second term expires at the end of 2006. But her ruling coalition has lost its majority in parliament and she has put the survival of her Government in power in serious jeopardy. The UNP and the TNA may support her move in parliament on the issue of the joint mechanism. But thereafter, their support for the continuation in power of her present Government is not guaranteed.

Though the hope of the President and the international community is that a deal struck on the tsunami issue will in due course lead to the resurrection of peace talks between the Government and the LTTE, there is no guarantee that the LTTE will oblige. Though the UNP may not want at present to topple the Government and precipitate a premature dissolution of parliament followed by a general election, its leader Ranil Wickremesinghe may bide his time and pull the rug under the President's feet at the time of his choosing. As for the present the government, it might carry on but no important legislation can be enacted unless the support of either the UNP or the JVP is forthcoming on a continuing basis.

Sri Lanka has again entered a phase of political instability and crisis which the President's critics say is self-inflicted. Chandrika's action on the issue of the joint mechanism may be regarded as laudable, courageous and statesmanlike, but she has paid a heavy political price. By provoking the JVP to quit on this issue, she no doubt has rendered the fall from power of her otherwise stable and secure Government with an adequate majority in parliament a distinct possibility. How the President is going to emerge out of this crisis remains to be seen. □

# JVP Quits Over Joint Mechanism

June 16 - The much anticipated break up of Sri Lanka's ruling coalition materialised as its junior partner, the Janatha Vimukthi Peramuna (JVP), kept its threat to quit the Government exactly at midnight on 15-16 June as President Chandrika Kumaratunga refused to buckle under JVP's threat and abandon her proposed tsunami joint mechanism with the Tamil Tigers.

The JVP relinquished its eight ministries and junior ministries in the government sending formal letters of resignation to the President on Thursday (16).

"We will leave the government and function as an independent political party in the opposition," Cultural Affairs Minister Vijitha Herath told the press.

With the JVP pulling out of the coalition with its 39 parliamentarians, the ruling coalition has lost its majority in parliament and its very survival in government has been called into question. Before the JVP quit, it had 120 seats in the 225 member parliament. Kumaratunga will now have to rely on other opposition parties to enact any legislation.

Reportedly, Kumaratunga, in a letter sent to the JVP hours ahead of the midnight deadline indicating that she was determined to go ahead with the proposed joint mechanism, said there was "no basis" for the party to quit the government and reiterated that she would fully brief the nation about the deal before signing it. She had warned the JVP that its leaders would have to bear "the responsibility for any adverse repercussions this decision may have on the country."

Prime Minister Mahinda Rajapakse and other ministers in a last ditch attempt to prevent a break up of the UPFA urged the JVP to reconsider its decision on quitting the government and put-off the deadline till June 30 - but JVP leaders have rejected the appeal.

In late night talks at Temple Trees, Premier Rajapakse told JVP General Secretary Tilvin Silva and frontliner Nandana Gunatilake that the party's decision to leave the government even before the agreement with the LTTE was signed did not make sense. President Kumaratunga also had got a mandate from the people just as a mandate had been given to the UPFA government and the two should not be mixed up, the JVP leaders were told.

joint mechanism proposal.

## President's address to the nation

"The LTTE should enter the democratic mainstream if we were to progress as a Nation. This proposed administrative arrangement is the first step towards this end. An organization such as the LTTE, which at one point in time did not recognize the Government or even other communities such as the Muslims, has for the first time agreed to work with these parties," President Kumaratunga said in a televised address to the nation on Thursday (16), dismissing "all myths" associated with the proposed Tsunami Relief Council.

Chandika Kumaratunga clarified,

## JM before parliament

Despite losing its majority in parliament, President Kumaratunga is determined go ahead with the controversial tsunami joint mechanism and agree the deal with the Tamil Tigers. In what is seen as a bold move she has decided to present the proposal before parliament for its approval. She is certain that she will receive the support of the main opposition United National Party (UNP) parliamentarians following a pledge from its leader and Leader of the Opposition Mr Ranil Wickremasinghe who promised his party's support when he met the President and had discussions with her a few days earlier. Except for the JVP contingent of parliamentarians, it is believed that the proposal will receive the support of all other parties including the 22 MPs belonging to the Tamil National Alliance (TNA), which is a proxy of the LTTE.

The JVP leadership had issued an ultimatum to the government saying the party would walk out of the government if President Chandrika Kumaratunga did not withdraw the proposed joint mechanism deal with the LTTE by midnight on 15 June. Among others who took part in the make or break talks were ministers Ferial Ashraff, Dinesh Gunawardene, Jeyaraj Fernandopulle and Anura Bandaranaike.

Mr. Susil Premajayanth, General Secretary of the United Peoples Freedom Alliance (UPFA) and Mr. Maitthiripala Sirisena, General Secretary of the Sri Lanka Freedom Party (SLFP) on Wednesday (15) reportedly sent urgent written messages to Mr. Tilvin Silva, General Secretary of the Janatha Vimukthi Peramuna (JVP) to reconsider the decision to leave the UPFA government over the controversial

"This arrangement is aimed at reconstructing infrastructure within a two kilometre coastal belt ravaged by the tidal waves. This is a form of decentralized administration very similar to the JVP's proposed policy of decentralization to solve the ethnic unrest in the North and East. The Tsunami Relief Council does not have any legislative power. All funds will be expended by the Government's Treasury and its officials."

"It is unfortunate that some sections of the media continue to project this proposed joint administrative arrangement as a 'monster'. On the contrary this is one of the best openings in the path to reach a negotiated settlement to a 21-year conflict. Even without knowing the contents of this administrative arrangement some extremist elements oppose this. We should consider the views of the

majority, not that of the few extremist elements... that is democracy" the President said.

President assured the nation in her televised broadcast that the withdrawal of the JVP from the ruling alliance would not destabilize or weaken the Government though its numbers in Parliament have been reduced.

The President welcomed the offer by the main opposition UNP to support the proposed joint mechanism and its assurance that it would not act to topple the Government. However, rejecting the UNP demand that the presidential election should be held in November this year, she reiterated that the next Presidential election would be held not this year but in November 2006 at the end of her second term and expressed confidence that her party would win it.

She said the JVP action was not in conformity with the United Peoples Freedom Alliance (UPFA) Memorandum of Understanding, because it had agreed to find a solution to the National question through decentralization of power.

"Our country should follow a path

to achieve rapid economic development. The ethnic conflict and the December 26th tsunami have delayed achieving our goals. Several of our friendly overseas nations and peoples came forward to assist us. They have shown faith in our management structures and our stability and are confident the funds pledged will be properly utilized. Therefore, this administrative arrangement is a significant milestone in our path towards peace and prosperity", said President Kumaratunga.

Referring to the JVP's constant lament, 'How could a sovereign Government act in collaboration with a terrorist organization?' the President questioned whether the JVP's people friendliness was limited only to the Sinhalese? "Should we allow Tamils and Muslims to starve?" she asked. "The people affected by the tsunami in the North and East are our citizens too and they should be rescued" she added.

President Kumaratunga said all communities are represented in the Government and that though the LTTE does not represent the whole

Tamil population, it does represent a certain section of the Tamil population and should also be engaged in this process whether we agreed or not. "We know that a certain percentage of the Tamil population will vote for the LTTE if there were to be an election tomorrow. Therefore, their representation is essential."

"The JVP, which was opposed to the Provincial Councils when it was introduced, now has a representation there. I believe that their present protest is baseless as well, they will soon realize that"

she said "Differences cannot be solved only by violent means. There are several instances in history where countries have resolved differences through negotiations when all else had failed. As a Buddhist, I do not endorse violence in any form. However in 1995 we were forced into military action when the LTTE unilaterally withdrew from the peace negotiations and started a war", said the President.

"I was very disturbed when some fringe elements among the Buddhists behaved in a very unpleasant manner recently. We should not allow racism or religious extremism to ruin our country," she said. "Some monks tried to commit suicide by fasting unto death. This is not an issue to commit suicide," she said adding that some JHU and JVP demonstrators tried to enter President's House by forcibly removing barricades. They were using abusive language against me and even the Mahanayake Theras. This is not the Buddhism that I learnt. According to the Buddhism that I learnt, problems cannot be solved by murdering people," she said.

Making a reference to the controversy surrounding the erection of a Buddha statue in the market place in eastern town of Trincomalee, the President said the erection of a Buddha statue in the middle of Trincomalee town near fish stalls and beef stalls was an insult to the great Teacher and also an attempt to provoke the Tamil and Muslim people. "This is also happening in Muslim majority areas in the East. They are fanning religious violence in the country," she said.

The President said she firmly believed the proposed Tsunami Relief Council with the LTTE was essential for proper rehabilitation and for the long-term peace process and she was determined to go ahead with it. She said that whatever the obstructions, her Government would lead the country to a truly multi-ethnic and multi-religious nation based on respect for human rights, democratic freedoms, peace and justice. □



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# Ten days that broke the Coalition

## Monks launch death fast

June 6 - Sri Lanka's all Buddhist monks political party launched a death fast Monday (6) in protest against President Chandrika Kumaratunga's plan to enter a joint mechanism with the Tamil Tigers to co-ordinate tsunami relief operations.

The LTTE has been insisting on the Government to set up such a mechanism since tsunami struck the island in return for its cooperation for undertaking reconstruction and rehabilitation in the Northeast of the country.

A Jathika Hela Urumaya (JHU) press release said that Venerable Omalpe Sobhitha, one of its nine parliamentarians, would fast to death. According to a spokesman for the JHU their monks would continue their death fast near the historic Temple of the Tooth, Dalada Maligawa, in the central town of Kandy until the President gave up her move to set up a joint mechanism with the Tigers.

The JHU appears to have taken this rather extreme step to increase the pressure on Kumaratunga after her return from her visit to New Delhi where she had discussions with the Indian Prime Minister Dr. Manmohan Singh and reportedly securing India's consent to the proposed mechanism. The international community, including many donor countries have urged the Government to enter into a joint mechanism with the Tigers. Some donor countries have set the formation of such a mechanism as a precondition for tsunami-related aid.

Ven Dr. Sobhitha, lying down opposite the Sthupa, inside the Dalada Maligawa, beginning his fast yesterday said there were several communities and ethnic groups in the country, but the Buddhists were the majority and there was the threat of dividing the country by a group of bloodthirsty LTTE terrorists who had killed thousands of innocents in cold blood as well as members of the security forces.

Claiming that the proposed JM was in effect an attempt to hand over a part of the country to the 'Tiger terrorists', he said, "We cannot allow this to happen. Sri Lanka is a country that was granted to the Buddha several times and I would rather sacrifice my life for this holy island than to witness a part of it being given to the LTTE terrorists." Recalling allegations of past actions by the LTTE, the monk said, "The LTTE is responsible for the cold blooded murders of a group of Buddhist monks at Arantalawa. They attacked and destroyed the Dalada Maligawa the holiest shrine of the Buddhist world. They attacked the Sri Maha Bodhi shrine at Anuradhapura."

Some view the fast by the JHU monk as a move to bring pressure on other leading Buddhist Mahanayakes to intervene so as to prevent the President going ahead with signing the JM with the LTTE.

## President makes a plea for peace

June 8 - Even as the opposition to her joint mechanism proposal was mounting all around her, President Chandrika Kumaratunga made a strong plea for peace in her Ranaviru Day Address to the Nation at Mailapitiya, Kandy.

"If the war continues, it will bring more bloodshed, misery and death. We must not sacrifice any more of our children in a war which has continued for the last 20 years, without any tangible results. It has taken the country backwards. A bomb cost as much as Rs.1300. The nation had paid a very heavy

price in loss of life, progress and prosperity, she said.

Speaking before the 'Kith and Kin of the fallen heroes and disabled soldiers', she appealed to the nation to rally round the Government and to strengthen her efforts to end the North-East conflict. "The country could not afford to continue the war, but should seek peace through negotiations. We should dedicate our lives to develop our country by ensuring that the rights of all communities would be protected," President Kumaratunga said.

The President stressed that as good Buddhists, they could not agree to war. "Today, we have a golden opportunity to stop fighting and move forward through peace. The group which was at war with us has shown flexibility, and we should grab that opportunity and be a little more flexible."

"For two decades we have been fighting and the country has lost around 23,000 valuable lives and over 50,000 who went to wage war have become disabled because of war. No body wishes to live all through their lives fighting," the President said.

"The parents will not be ready to sacrifice their children for a cause that could not be achieved by war. No parent will be ready to give his or her son or daughter to fight a war if that is not going to solve the problem, we fight for,"

"We like to see truth as truth. There are some who do not like it. But if we are real human beings who value humanness, and seeing that there is a better way to resolve our problem without fighting, that is the way one should pursue. If there are means of resolving problem other than fighting we should embrace such opportunities. It is not your whims and fancies that should be at play but your willingness to make the best use of the opportunity. To do that you need courage," she said. And my government has that necessary courage.

"At no time will we do anything detrimental to the sovereignty, territorial integrity and to cause harm even by a jot to the rights of anyone or community. We will protect the national unity and integrity and treat all Sinhala, Tamil, Muslim or Burgher equally. This we have been telling for the past 15 years and we repeat that promise," the President said.

## High Priests issue ultimatum

June 9 - A group of powerful and leading Buddhist monks and high priests stepped up pressure on President Chandrika Kumaratunga to withdraw from a plan to share tsunami aid with the Tamil Tigers, which they say will help the rebels achieve their aim of a separate Tamil state. A spokesman for the monks said that the President had 24 hours to drop her plan for a joint aid mechanism.

High priests (Mahanayaka Theras) of all four leading Buddhist Chapters of Maha Sangha gave a 24-hour ultimatum to Sri Lanka's President Chandrika Kumaratunga to make a clear statement on whether she intended to abandon the Joint Mechanism proposal, Jathika Hela Urumaya (JHU), the party Buddhist monks said in a press release issued Thursday (9) night in Colombo.

Ven Buddharakkhitha Thera of Asgiriya Chapter, Ven. Sri Sumangala Thera of Malwatta Chapter, Ven. Veweldeniye Medallankara Thera of Ramanna Chapter and Ven Galagodatte Gnanasara Thera of Amarapura Chapter have together made

the demand, according to JHU press statement. The press release added that the Chapters had demanded Sri Lankan President to respond within 24 hours as the condition of Ven Omalpe Sobhitha Thera, who has been on a fast to death campaign, was worsening.

The High Priests said, according to JHU, that Buddhist Chapters would withdraw their blessings and refrain from attending State ceremonies if the President proceeded to sign the Joint Mechanism with the LTTE.

The joint statement issued by the Mahanayakes stated: "Five months have passed since the tsunami devastated the West, North East and the southern coastal belt leaving the people helpless by causing destruction their lives and properties. We record our vehement opposition to the attempts made by the government for the formation of a joint mechanism or a tsunami relief council with the separatist Tigers saying that it is important for the rehabilitation of the North and East without consulting the Parliament or any other people's organization. We also stress the need to launch some practical measures to stop the moves of the LTTE trying to grab the rights of the Buddhists in the North and East by damaging the statues of the Lord Buddha."

### JVP's ultimatum to quit

June 10 - Janatha Vimukthi Peramuna (JVP), a key partner in the ruling United Peoples Freedom Alliance (UPFA) Government, has given the deadline to quit from the Government unless the proposed joint mechanism is abandoned.

At a press conference in Colombo on Friday (10) the JVP leader, Mr Somavansa Amarasinghe said that the JVP would leave the UPFA coalition on 16th of June unless President Chandrika Kumaratunga gave up the idea of signing a Joint Mechanism with the Tamil Tigers before June 15th midnight.

The announcement by the JVP followed the joint-statement by the Mahanayakes of the four Buddhist Chapters demanding President Kumaratunga to make a clear statement, within 24 hours, on whether she intended to abandon the Joint Mechanism proposal.

Party leader Somawansa Amarasinghe told the news conference that his party would not allow the government to enter a pact "with a terrorist organization that is not accountable to anybody other than their guns." Amarasinghe, surrounded by other top party brass, also slammed Kumaratunga for being "undemocratic and dictatorial".

"The President has no right to share the sovereignty of this country," Amarasinghe said adding, "If the President is not going to withdraw this idea, we will be leaving the government on June 16."

Launching a scathing attack on President Kumaratunga and her family, Mr. Somawansa Amarasinghe, warned that if Kumaratunga went ahead and signed the proposed joint-mechanism with the LTTE, she would be the "last of the Bandaranayakes".

Saying that the proposed joint-mechanism, if signed, would be a political tsunami for the Kumaratunga government, Somawansa said, "An internal war is going on within the UPFA. We will never allow the so-called mechanism. Some people are thinking of expelling us. We advise Chandrika Kumaratunga not to be the last of the Bandaranayakes."

Somawansa said it was impossible for the government and an organization such as the LTTE, which is not accountable to anybody, to work together. He criticised the Tigers for the

recruitment of child soldiers from refugee camps in the aftermath of the Tsunami destruction. Castigating the President's decision to enforce the joint mechanism arbitrarily, the JVP leader called it an "undemocratic decision as the President had not briefed her own cabinet, coalition partner, Opposition leader and M.Ps." on the details of the proposed mechanism." He claimed that only the President, the LTTE and Norway were aware of the contents of the proposed mechanism while the country was kept in dark.

Asked to comment on practical problems that would arise when implementing a rehabilitation structure without LTTE participation, the Propaganda Secretary of the JVP, Wimal Weerawansa, said government officials continued to function in LTTE held areas while the main government hospital in Kilinochi was being currently built there. Even the son of the LTTE leader Velupillai Prabhakaran sat the nationally held G.C.E. (A.L.) examination there. Mr. Weerawansa said government officials could similarly function to rehabilitate and reconstruct the LTTE held areas of the country.

### No final decision without consensus

June 10 - Sri Lanka's President Chandrika Kumaratunga Friday (10) early morning sent a special message to the Mahanayake Theras of three Chapters regarding the controversy over the signing of the joint mechanism, with the LTTE. Amidst rumours that the President had decided to sign the highly controversial Joint Mechanism with the Tamil Tigers on June 15th, she assured the Mahanayakes that a date has not been set to sign the deal.

"Final decision to sign the proposed Joint Mechanism will not be taken without the consensus of the three Mahanayakas," the President assured prelates in her letter, the State controlled Sri Lanka Broadcasting Corporation (SLBC) announced in its morning news bulletin.

Minister Mr. Rohitha Bogollagama and parliamentarian Mr. Wijesdasa Rajapakse handed over the President's special message, addressed to the three Mahanayake Theras, to the Mahanayake Thera of Malwatte Chapter, around 4.30 a.m. Friday, the radio said.

President's special message to the Buddhist prelates was in response to their ultimatum issued to Ms Chandrika Kumaratunga on the previous day against signing the joint mechanism structure without parliament's approval.

Ms Chandrika Kumaratunga had told in her special message to the Mahanayakas that she was prepared to discuss the joint mechanism proposal with them at length. Government sources said Malwatte Mahanayake Thera has taken immediate steps to convey the President's special message to Venerable Omalpe Sobhitha Thera, Jathika Hela Urumaya parliamentarian who has been fasting unto death since Monday (6), protesting against the signing the proposed joint mechanism.

### Fasting monk rejects assurance

June 10 - Venerable Omalpe Sobhitha Thera, parliamentarian of the Jathika Hela Urumaya (JHU) has on Friday (9) morning informed a team of government politicians that he was not prepared to give up his fast unto death against the proposed joint mechanism, as he was not satisfied with the assurance given by the President Ms Chandrika Kumaratunga that she would not take final decision on the JM without Buddhist prelates' consensus.

Venerable Athuraliya Ratana Thera, JHU parliamentary



group leader, also participated in the discussion.

According to Ven. Rathana, two representatives of the government, parliamentarians Wijedasa Rajapakse and Rohitha Bogollagama had arrived in Kandy with a letter from the President addressed to the Mahanayakes of the Malwatte and Asgriya Chapters assuring them that she would not take a decision on the proposed agreement until she has discussed the matter with them.

"This letter does not address our concerns in any way. She has not given us a guarantee that the agreement will not be signed. She cannot placate us this way, for she has over the past few days issued strong statements to the effect that she will set up the joint mechanism with the LTTE come what may, whoever may oppose it," Ven. Rathana said. He was of the opinion that the president's letter did not include any binding clause that offers the guarantees sought by the JHU.

He also pointed out that if the President went ahead and signs it would throw the country into chaos while strengthening and legitimising the LTTE further, with no guarantees from them with respect to laying down arms, putting a stop to recruitment of children, assassinating political opponents or opening their airstrip to scrutiny.

Asked what action the JHU would take next, Ven. Rathana said that fellow parliamentarian Ven. Kotapola Amarakeerthi has decided to join Ven. Sobitha in the fast if there is no response from the President before 12 noon today (Thursday).

The condition of Ven. Omalpe Sobitha Thero is critical, according to Ven. Rathana Thero. Ven. Sobitha began his fast unto death on 6 June and has vowed not to take any food until the President issues a statement that she will not sign the deal with the LTTE.

Meanwhile, a group of Buddhist monks and laymen began a campaign Friday (10) morning for a general shut down in Kandy town in support of the fast unto death campaign of the JHU parliamentarian.

### Protesting monks tear-gassed

June 10 - Buddhist monks in saffron robes sprinted for cover in the Sri Lankan capital on Friday (10) as riot police fired tear gas and water cannon to prevent them from breaking through the security cordon around the country's Presidential residence. The protesting monks were demonstrating against a deal with the LTTE proposed by President Kumaratunga to share tsunami aid.

More than 200 monks belonging to Jathika Hela Urumaya (JHU), party members and JHU parliamentarians held a protest campaign against the Joint Mechanism on Friday (10) in the afternoon.

The protesters started the campaign near the Colombo Viharamahadevi Park and marched through Maradana and Pettah, and stopped in front of Sri Lanka President's house shouting slogans against the Joint Mechanism proposal before continuing their march. President's Security Division (PSD), Army and police blocked the protesters from entering the President's house. JHU Parliamentarian group leader, Ven Athuruliya Rathna Thera demanded the President must sign on the letter they had already given to the President rejecting the proposal.

But given no response, the angry monks and hundreds of civilians who joined them tried to push their way past a security cordon, and were drenched with jets of water and engulfed in clouds of acrid white smoke.

"We were not targeting the monks. The civilians were be-

having very badly. It is outside the President's house. What do you expect?" said Assistant Superintendent of Police Champika Siriwardena.

The main roads From Colpetty junction to Galle Face Green were blocked because of the march. The Fort area and the surroundings were also blocked for nearly 3 hours.

### President meets Mahanayakes

June 10 - Sri Lankan President Chandrika Kumaratunga assured the Buddhist Mahanayakes that the proposed 'joint mechanism' (also known as Post-Tsunami Operations Management Structure (P-TOMS) and Tsunami Relief Council) "does not threaten the nation's security or territorial integrity."

The Mahanayake Theras were rushed to President's Residence on Friday (10) evening in a special helicopter from Kandy for a meeting with the President. Ven. Sri Sumangala Thera of Malwatte Chapter, Ven. Veweldeniyi Medaankara Thera of Ramanna Chapter and Ven. Galagodatte Gnanasara Thera of Amarapura Chapter attended the meeting with the President for more than an hour.

At the meeting with the Mahanayakas of three Buddhist chapters - Malwatte, Amarapura and Ramannya - on June 10, Ms. Kumaratunga "explained in detail" the proposed Tsunami Relief Council for the north and east and its status. "She told them no date has been fixed yet for the establishment of the Council, and implored them not to be misled by media speculation and misinformation created for narrow political gains," the President's office said.

The President told the Buddhist prelates as follows:

1. No date has been fixed for the signing of the agreement with the LTTE on the proposed mechanism to manage the distribution of aid to the tsunami victims of the north and the east;

2. She was totally dedicated to safeguard the rights of all citizens belonging to different ethnic and religious denominations including the Sinhala and Muslim people in the North and East;

3. She agreed to discuss further with the Most Venerable Maha Nayake Theras before coming to a final conclusion on the proposed mechanism to distribute aid;

4. She would never hesitate to consult the Maha Nayake Theras when there was a common national problem; and

5. The proposed Tsunami Relief Council would in no way become a threat to the country's national security and territorial integrity.

The President met the Mahanayakas against the backdrop of increased pressure from Sinhala-Buddhist leaders against the proposed P-TOMS, which aimed at sharing administrative powers with the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam for post-tsunami reconstruction in the north and east, parts of which were with the LTTE. Responding to questions by the Mahanayakas, Ms. Kumaratunga said she was "completely devoted to preserving the rights of all citizens belonging to every ethnic and religious denomination." The President stressed that the Sinhala and Muslim communities, who lived in the north and east "have no cause whatsoever to fear" and assured the chief prelates that there would be more discussions with them on the subject of the Tsunami Relief Council. She had "at all times" consulted them on "all important national issues."

### Monk MP gives up death-fast

June 11 - Ven. Omalpe Sobitha Thera, the parliamentarian

monk of the Jathika Hela Urumaya (JHU), gave up his fast unto death on Saturday 911) at 9.15 am following the assurances given by the Chief Prelates of the Malwatte and Asgriya Buddhist Chapters. Meanwhile, a media release issued from the Presidential Secretariat quoted President Kumaratunga as saying to the Chief Prelates that "the proposed Post-Tsunami Operations Management Structure (P-TOMS) does not threaten Sri Lanka's national security or territorial integrity".

The campaign, which completed seventh day against the setting up of the Joint Mechanism, was brought to an end at the request of President Chandrika Kumaratunga.

The decision by the fasting monk, Ven. Omalpe Sobitha Thera, to withdraw from his fast unto death campaign followed a visit and request to him from the Chief Prelates following their meeting with President.

However, another Buddhist monk organisation, the National Bhikku Front, has started a protest fast demanding the withdrawal of the proposed P-TOMS, popularly known as the "joint mechanism."

### Anura's appeal to JVP

10 June - Tourism Minister Anura Bandaranaike appealed to the Janatha Vimukthi Peramuna (JVP) not to leave the government over the differences on the proposed joint mechanism. "The JVP has a right to vote against this proposal. But at this moment, if they wanted to topple the Government, it is a great betrayal against the people in this country," Bandaranaike said.

Bandaranaike, who is President Chandrika Kumaratunga's brother, was instrumented in bringing the Sri Lanka Freedom Party (SLFP) and the JVP into a common front last year.

According to him, this is the first time that the LTTE has accepted the fact that Sri Lanka has a sovereign Government. It earlier referred to a country called Sri Lanka. He urged the JVP not to break away from the Government even if they don't like the Joint Mechanism. That would be an injustice to the people, he said.

"We are trying our best to get the JVP's approval for this proposal. What the President is saying is that at a time when the LTTE is extending their hand of peace to us, why should we refuse it? Then there will be another war. It is rather good to end the war. Only the youth in the villages sacrifice themselves for the war. Otherwise those who are shouting various slogans should go to war or send their sons to the war," Mr Bandaranaike said.

"If the country can achieve peace during our lifetime it is the greatest achievement that we can have." The other good aspect of the joint mechanism was that all the money could be distributed in a democratic way for the development of the infrastructure in these tsunami affected areas, he said. The whole world, including India, has given their fullest support to the proposed mechanism.

Without directly referring to JVP leader Somawansa Amarasinghe's attack on Bandaranaike family, Anura Bandaranaike said, "There is no point in blaming the Bandaranaike family. We know that we have the votes of the people in this country. We have been given the power to rule this country for six years. We have only completed one year. In that one year, we have faced crucial problems such as the tsunami catastrophe, high oil prices."

Bandaranaike, a contender for presidential nominations, is keen to keep the alliance in tact for the next presidential elections. Political analysts however believe that it would be diffi-

cult for Bandaranaike to edge out the main contender, current Prime Minister Mahinda Rajapakse.

### India's conditional support

Colombo, June 11: India's support for President Chandrika Kumaratunga's proposed tsunami aid agreement with the Tamil Tigers should not be seen as an admission by New Delhi that the rebels are the "sole representative" of the Tamils in the country, foreign minister Natwar Singh is reported to have said on 11 June.

It was earlier reported that President Kumaratunga during her recent visit to New Delhi had secured the agreement of the Indian Prime Minister for the controversial tsunami aid deal with the Tamil Tigers.

"While India has extended its support to President Kumaratunga's efforts on the aid agreement, it has also stressed on the need for engaging a wide variety of political parties and opinions in Sri Lanka," foreign secretary Shyam Saran said. He said since post-tsunami relief work was needed in the northern and eastern part of the island, where the Tamil Tigers have a strong presence, India did not want to block the process by raising objections.

"But at every opportunity and interaction with the Sri Lankan government we have made it clear that our support to the aid effort should not be seen as an endorsement of accepting the Tigers as the sole representatives of the Tamils in the island," Saran said. "At the same time we have also suggested the need for a consensus among the Sri Lanka political parties not to allow the situation to relapse into violence," the foreign secretary added.

Singh, who ended his three-day visit to Colombo this afternoon, had met Kumaratunga, Prime Minister Mahinda Rajapakse, United National Party leader Ranil Wickramasinghe, JVP and Tamil National Alliance leaders, a faction of the Sri Lankan Muslim Congress, and EPDP leader Douglas Devananda.

"The wide range of his meetings is a clear indication that India was in favour of a political consensus that has emerged out of consultations with a large number of political opinions by the Sri Lankan government," Saran said.

### President meets TNA delegation

June 12 - As part of her ongoing consultations with key political parties, Ms. Kumaratunga on Sunday (12) reiterated her commitment to the early establishment of the Tsunami Relief Council during a meeting with a six-member team of the Tamil National Alliance (TNA). During the four-hour meeting, the TNA impressed upon the President the need for the early establishment of the post-tsunami mechanism. Ms. Kumaratunga explained to the TNA the various issues that had arisen in relation to the mechanism.

The discussions were also on other matters of mutual concern, including the standoff in Trincomalee, following the installation of a Buddha statue by a Sinhalese group. Ms. Kumaratunga assured the TNA that a Government delegation would visit the eastern town shortly. TNA Parliamentary leader R. Sampanthan led the Tamil delegation.

Leader of the TNA parliamentary Group Mr.R.Sampanthan raised the question of the Trincomalee situation and urged that the Govt. should peruse action as per assurances given by the government delegation at the meetings held in Trincomalee. The President assured the TNA that a government delegation

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would visit Trincomalee shortly in order to pursue appropriate action. The need to review the deployment of the additional armed forces in Trincomalee town was also discussed and the President gave the TNA an assurance that appropriate action was being taken in regard to this matter.

Associated with the President at this discussion were the Deputy Minister Dilan Perera and Member of Parliament Mr. Wijedasa Rajapaksa. The delegation of the TNA Comprised of Mr.R.Sampanthan Parliamentary Group Leader of TNA, Mr. Joseph Pararajasingam, MP, Mr.Mavai Senathirajah MP, Mr. Suresh Premachandran MP, Mr.Gajendrakumar Ponnampalam MP, and Mr.K.Sivajilingam MP.

**Go ahead with JM, Ranil tells President**

13 June - Ranil Wickramasinghe, Leader of the Opposition held cordial discussions with President Chandrika Kumaratunga and discussed several matters including the establishment of the Tsunami Relief Council (TRC) according to media release from the Presidents office. The President had explained to Wickramasinghe some details regarding the proposed Council and a few of the issues that have arisen during the past few weeks. Thereafter, the Leader of the Opposition explained the stance of the UNP on the issue.

Though the press release did not say so, it is learnt that the UNP leader pledged support to the Post-Tsunami Operational Management Structure (Joint Mechanism), and not to topple the government if the JVP broke away on account of the P-TOMS

"The UNP does not oppose the mechanism, and we wrote

to the government last month informing it of our stand. We will not oppose any solution to the North-East problem if it subscribes to the Tokyo and Oslo declarations", Mr. Wickramasinghe told the President at their meeting.

Mr. Wickramasinghe is reported to have told the President to go ahead and sign the P-TOMS agreement without further delay because the wavering and vacillation were causing uncertainty and turmoil in the country. He said he believed the JVP would not topple the government as it would not want to see a UNP government back in office.

But whatever happened he believed the President should go ahead with the P-TOMS while the UNP would watch the situation and decide what to do.

**Unruly monks' protest tear-gassed**

June 13 - More than hundred policemen Monday (13) afternoon around 2.30 pm fired tear gas shells and used water canons in an effort to disperse monks and university students numbering several thousands in front of Colombo Fort railway station who were trying to reach the President's House in protest against the JM and in support of Ven. Dambara Amila Thera, the leader of the National Bhikku Front (NBF), who started a new fast unto death campaign on Saturday (13) against the Joint Mechanism.

As the slogan shouting protesters approached within 200 meters of President's House, the police anti-crime squads met them with a barrage of tear gas canisters and baton charged many students and monks who tried to force their way through.

It is reported that Ven Amila Thera was forcibly removed

from the location by the Police and rushed to the Colombo General hospital where he was treated for exhaustion.

Some students belonging to the JVP's students' federation from the Kelaniya and Jayawardenapura Universities who joined the fast in support of the monk and around forty of their colleagues who were marching from the Fort railway station to the President's official residence were also reportedly taken into custody by the police.

Police used baton charge and tear gas to disperse the crowd: The traffic in the city of Colombo came to a snarl for several hours due to the police action at the Fort railway station area.

### Govt to launch publicity blitz

Jun 13 - The Government of Sri Lanka has decided to launch an island wide awareness program to enlighten the public including the Buddhist clergy about the proposed Tsunami Relief Council. President Chandrika Bandaranaike Kumaratunga at an SLFP Parliamentarians' meeting convened at the President's House yesterday (12), explained at length what the Tsunami Relief Council is all about, its structure, what districts were relevant to the council and the manner of its operation.

The President told the Parliamentarians that she will make the entire citizens aware of the process through the Grama Niladharis, Samurdi Officers and Agricultural Animators at grassroots level. She stressed that the implementation of the tsunami relief program to resuscitate the tsunami victims of the North and East is an absolute necessity in the name of humanity.

The President said that to eliminate certain misgivings among the Buddhist clergy pertaining to the proposed Tsunami Relief Council, she will convene a meeting of the Maha Sangha numbering over 1000 at the Bandaranaike Memorial International Conference Hall on June 17 and explain the accurate position on the issue. She advised the Parliamentarians to make house to house visits to explain matters to the public.

President Kumaratunga told them that the Tsunami Relief Council agreement will be signed not by her but by a Ministry Secretary. She said she treated the agreement as an initiative to the peace process and that if this was not signed at this opportune moment, it will lead to a dangerous situation for which those who oppose it will have to answer.

She said the large number of donor countries who contribute enormous amounts of aid have requested her to sign this proposed Tsunami Relief Council agreement and develop the entire island including the North and East and assured that this process will not harm the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the country. She said the Tsunami Relief Council agreement will definitely be signed in the interest of the country and that before doing so, the public will be made fully aware of it.

President said that the privately owned media projected the joint mechanism as a Govt-LTTE arrangement which would exercise authority in all parts of the country whereas it will be operative only in the North/East and that too solely in the tsunami-affected areas of two kilometre stretch from the beach.

### JVP protest march

June 14 - More than 10,000 supporters of Janatha Vimukthi Peramuna (JVP) participated in a protest Campaign against the Joint mechanism (JM) proposal Tuesday (14) in Colombo said. The march started from Borella Campel Grounds, passed through Maradana and ended near the Colombo Municipal Council offices. The protesters after shouting slogans against

the aid deal proposal continued their march to the Lipton round about where they dispersed.

JVP parliamentary group leader and party propaganda Secretary, Wimal Weerawansa, led the protest. JVP Ministers, Deputy Ministers, and parliamentarians, also took part in the protest. JVP leader Somawansa Amarasinghe did not take part.

"The Country needs a government to defeat separatism, not to nourish it," and "We will agitate the president for her resignation," were two of the slogans used by the protesters during march.

For nearly four hours the main roads including Base Line Highways road, and all main roads in Maradana 2nd division, Union place, and Colombo 7 were closed. Over thousand police and Army officers were on the duty for the security of York Street and Olcot street. Sri Lanka telecom junction was closed to prevent protesters from entering the President's House, sources said.

Mr. Tilvin Silva, General Secretary of party addressing the crowd said that there would not be a United Peoples Freedom Alliance (UPFA) government in Sri Lanka after Wednesday (15) midnight. "We would be forming a new alliance on Thursday with the support of some UPFA senior ministers opposed to the Joint Mechanism," he said.

Mr. Wimal Weerawansa, JVP parliamentary group leader said the JVP will leave the UPFA coalition if Ms Kumaratunga failed to abandon her decision to sign the joint mechanism proposal. "There is no change in our stand. We are firm that JM should not be signed with the LTTE," he said.

### Police tear-gas unruly demo

June 14 - Tension, conflict and chaos continued in Colombo over the controversial joint mechanism with police again using tear gas canisters to disperse unruly JVP-backed university students including monks who tried to march to President's House.

As the JVP ultimatum for President Chandrika Kumaratunga to withdraw the deal neared, the protest march was led by the pro-JVP Inter University Bhikku Federation and the Inter University Students Federation. IUSF Convener Duminda Nagamuwa said the proposed deal with the LTTE would be the worst betrayal of the country.

In the pandemonium following the demonstration and police action, the National Bhikku Front's Ven. Dambara Amila Thera who was fasting unto death opposite the Fort Railway Station, was also removed from his tent after he was hit by several stray tear gas canisters, eye witnesses said. He however was brought back and resumed his fast around 5 p.m.

According to reports the protesters had first gathered at the Technical College Junction in Maradana and then proceeded to the Telecom Roundabout in the Fort, but at that point they were tear-gassed and attacked with water cannons when they defied police orders and tried to enter the High Security Zone around President's House.

Police said they arrested 28 monks and two students after they chased the demonstrators past the Bo Tree junction in Pettah. The whole area including the spot where the monk was fasting was polluted with tear gas. Police said those arrested were later released after obtaining statements.

Ven. Vakamulle Uditha Thera who was in the tent with the fasting monk charged that the police deliberately fired tear gas canisters into the tent, compelling them to remove the fasting monk for medical treatment. He warned that the JVP-backed



Bhikku front was ready to sacrifice not just one life but hundreds of lives to prevent President Kumaratunga from signing the deal with the LTTE and betraying the country. Monks and the police were seen having heated arguments after the fasting monk was taken away for medical treatment.

Meanwhile, Fort Station Master J.H.A. Hemapala said his staff was also hit by stray tear gas canisters and at least ten trains left the station with ticket less passengers because tickets could not be issued. Shops along Olcott Mawatha were closed and the public were inconvenienced for some three hours until the situation returned to normal.

## JVP rejects PM's appeal

The JVP yesterday vowed on Tuesday (14) that there would be no UPFA government with the dawn of Thursday (16) and pledged to go ahead on a fresh path to form a new alliance with all patriotic forces.

Addressing a large gathering following a protest march at the Lipton Circus, JVP General Secretary Tilvin Silva said the UPFA was formed and brought to power on certain principles and not to comfort each and every member of it.

"The UPFA agreement was more importantly aimed at protecting the country's sovereignty. If anyone goes against it as a people's party that is accountable to the public we cannot keep our mouths and eyes shut. Our path may not be rosy yet our motive is to serve the country and its people. Those who are against that path can leave us but we are not going to give-up serving the country," he said.

Vowing to prevent any faction from entering into a joint mechanism with the LTTE, Mr. Silva said his party's responsibilities would not cease just by sitting in the opposition from tomorrow.

Meanwhile, JVP Propaganda Secretary Wimal Weerawansa charged that President Chandrika Kumaratunga was attempting to commit a crime that could never be rectified. "Ranil Wickramasinghe during the UNP regime accepted that there is an area held by the LTTE and recognized the Tigers as a separate Army. You cannot take back whatever you gave through a legal document. The President is trying to go one step ahead of Mr. Wickramasinghe trying to share administrative powers with the LTTE," he said.

"If she withdraws the proposed joint mechanism before midnight today, she can retire from the Presidency with great honour as these are her last few months in office. She still has time to come back to her senses. She is a lonely person now. All her senior ministers and even her onetime confidants are withdrawing from her as they cannot approve this joint mechanism," Mr. Weerawansa charged.

## President rebuts JVP claims

June 15 - Rebutting charges made by the JVP, in her reply to JVP General Secretary, Tilvin Silva, President Kumaratunga on 15 June said, ".... you have no valid reason to quit the alliance government on June 16. I shall not challenge your right to leave the Alliance. However I believe that you are responsible for all ill effects on the people due to that decision."

She added: "The constitutional powers vested in the government by the people will never be delegated to another organization. P-TOMS will have no statutory powers and au-

thority. It is only an administrative course of action that will be taken to provide relief in the areas concerned and to carryout the rehabilitation work in such areas. Authority of the government will not be affected in any way as all activities of the P-TOMS will be performed by administrative officers of the government. Further, financial transactions will be carried out under the supervision of the Treasury. The responsibility of spending funds received as foreign aid will be entrusted with public officers.

By merely allowing the LTTE to participate in the P-TOMS that organization will not be established as the sole representatives of the Tamil Community. The ceasefire agreement had been signed with the LTTE. The JVP too had agreed that discussions should be continued with the LTTE to arrive at a political solution.

We negotiate with the LTTE not with the presumption that it is the sole representative of the Tamil Community but on the understanding that it is a party in the war. In the P-TOMS too its participation is sought as the sole armed group in the area. Through that the LTTE will not be treated as the sole representative of the Tamil community. The willingness of the LTTE to accept the government of Sri Lanka is in itself an indication of their tendency towards the democratic path. In spite of certain instances of violating the ceasefire agreement the ceasefire period of three years is an indication of their inclination towards the democratic path.

Administrative regulations and regulations in the establishment's code will not be violated as a result of P-TOMS. Financial allocations will be done according to those criteria. The relevant projects will be implemented by the government and Provincial Councils. Expenditure will be through the Treasury. Everything will be done in keeping with the administrative and financial regulations of the country.

The P-TOMS document will be signed not by the President or a Minister but by an officer of the relevant ministry. Hence such a document will not be a threat to the Sovereignty and the Territorial Integrity of the country.

Through the UPFA agreement you have consented to devolve administrative power. Through the P-TOMS too only the administrative authority will be devolved but in a limited manner.

A final document has still not been prepared for the establishment of a joint mechanism. What I have done is only initiate discussions with the people, Maha Sangha and political parties to exchange views and ideas with them.

I have repeatedly stated that the Maha Sanga led by the Maha Nayake Theras and all parties within the Alliance will be made fully aware of the contents before arriving at a final decision. In these circumstances I wish to emphasize that you have no valid reason to quit the alliance government on June 16. I shall not challenge your right to leave the alliance. However I believe that you are responsible for all ill effects on the people due to that decision."

## JVP promises a 'political awakening'

June 15 - Mass demonstrations in Colombo brought the capital, Colombo, to a near standstill today (15) as supporters and opponents of the proposed tsunami joint mechanism 'invaded' the capital coming from all corners of the island in a

display of their respective strength.

The Janatha Vimukthi Peramuna (JVP), which was reiterated its decision to quit the coalition protesting on the proposed Tsunami Relief Council (TRC) assured the party supporters that a new era would begin with their withdrawal from the government of President Chandrika Kumaratunga. "Watch for a new political awakening," JVP spokesman Wimal Weerawansa said at the rally.

President Kumaratunga's sent ministers, deputies, Members of Parliament and supporters went about distributing pamphlets justifying the proposed joint mechanism with the LTTE. They assembled with hundreds of supporters of the Sri Lanka Freedom Party (SLFP) at central points in Colombo 'to explain to the people that the joint mechanism would not lead to separation of the country'.

Meanwhile the US Embassy in Colombo issued a statement to strengthen Kumaratunga's hand, stating that the co-chairs of the donor community had urged the need for a tsunami joint mechanism.

### Bhikku front vows 'disaster' for Chandrika

June 15 - National Bhikku Front (NBF) Secretary Venerable Kalawelgala Chandraloka warned that President Kumaratunga would face disaster if any harm befell to NBF President Venerable Dr. Dambara Amila, who is engaged in a fast unto death over the proposed Joint Mechanism with the LTTE.

Saying that they in the NBF were reaching the limits of their patience at a media conference in Colombo on 15 June, the

Ven. Chandaloka said. "In the event of a tragedy, from that very moment we will not allow the President to live in peace in this country," he said. "We will fully mobilize public opinion at the highest levels."

Reportedly Ven. Amila's condition was said to be extremely critical, according to doctors who examined him the morning of 15 June. Ven. Amila was reportedly suffering from acute dehydration and had so far refused doctors' effort to give him first aid. The monk was resolved not to give up the death fast until the President withdrew the proposed joint mechanism. claimed, "Venerable. Amila has almost lost consciousness."

Drawing attention to a move by the government to organize over a thousand Buddhist monks to show public support to the Joint Mechanism, Ven. Chandraloka describing such monks as "shameless", urged Chief Incumbents of Buddhist temples to be on the alert for the organizers and teach them such a lesson that they would never step into the places again.

"The President is ignorant of the power of the Maha Sangha. We want to remind her that she can never suppress the power of the bhikkus who are with the NBF. We never allow it to happen. If any tragedy takes place from that moment she will realize the power of this country's true Maha Sangha. We are in great pain of mind since the Venerable Amila's life is invaluable to us. We cannot say in which direction that sorrow will push us. We wish to tell the Buddhist Mahanayakes not to come to Ven. Amila's cremation. Don't issue condolence messages. Intervene now. This is the final hour. The Venerable monk is engaged in a life-and-death struggle. The Chief Prelates of all the Buddhist Sects have a responsibility to save Venerable. Amila's life," Ven. Chandraloka

NBF Chief Advisor the Venerable Aththangane Rathanapala in his address said: "She (the President) will lose her Presidential powers. She will lose public support. She will lose the support of the Maha Sangha. She will lose everything. Yet her readiness to commit this great betrayal raises a big suspicion. Those political leaders and members of the Sangha who remain silent on this issue will; also have to bear responsibility for this great bad karma."

Secretary, Patriotic Bhikku Front, Venerable Bengamuwe Nalaka said that the present situation could lead to a state worse than the Ranil-Prabha agreement and provide the Tigers with greater powers. "If the President signs this document (the JM) she will earn not the people's blessings but their curses," he said.

Secretary, National Joint Committee, Dr. Piyasena Dissanayake said that Norway was today ruling Sri Lanka and President Kumaratunga's sole aim was to earn Oslo's Nobel Prize for Peace - no matter what happened to this country. This, he noted, was the reason for her eagerness to sign the Joint Mechanism document.

Buddhist prelate of the Malwatte Chapter reportedly sent urgent messages through a representative urging Ven Amila Thera to give up his fasting, but the monk refused to suspend his campaign.

Ven Amila Thera from the NBF initiated his fast unto death campaign last Saturday (11) when the Ven Omalpe Sobitha Thera, General Secretary of the JHU quit his fast to death campaign following Sri Lanka's President's assurances to Mahanayake Theras, the High Priests of the Buddhist Order in the country, that she would not sign the Joint Mechanism without approval from the high priests. □

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# Joint Mechanism: Structure, Composition and Functions

The Post Tsunami Operational Management Structure or the Joint Mechanism consists of three tiers headed by a high level committee comprising three members – one government nominee, one nominee by Muslim parties and one LTTE nominee.

On the handling of funds the document states: The function of actually allocating and disbursing the donor funds will be retained by the Treasury; the High-Level Committee only formulates the policies regarding these.

In addition, the Regional Fund administered by the multilateral agency will be set up by an agreement between the multilateral agency and the Government of Sri Lanka. The LTTE, as a non-state entity, cannot be party to such an agreement.

## A synopsis of the draft

Memorandum of Understanding ("MOU") for the Establishment of a Post-Tsunami Operational Management Structure (the "Joint Mechanism")

The preambular clauses set out the rationale for the formation of the Joint Mechanism, principally:

- \* the urgent humanitarian need to effectively deliver relief, rehabilitation and reconstruction to the Sinhala, Tamil and Muslim communities affected by the tsunami;

- \* the need for the Sinhala, Tamil and Muslim communities to work together to accomplish this task; and

- \* the need for an equitable allocation of post-tsunami funds to all tsunami-affected areas of Sri Lanka, based on accepted needs-assessments.

## Structure

The Joint Mechanism consists of three tiers:

A High-Level Committee for the tsunami-affected areas of Sri Lanka;

A Regional Committee for the Six

Districts in the Northern and Eastern provinces affected by the tsunami (Ampara, Batticaloa, Jaffna, Kilinochchi, Mullaitivu, and Trincomalee); and District Committees, one for each of the Six Districts.

## Geographic Scope

The Joint Mechanism is restricted in its area of operation to the land area affected by the tsunami that is within 2 kilometers of the coastline.

The MOU will not change the terms of the Ceasefire Agreement between the Government of Sri Lanka and the LTTE, which will remain in effect.

## Non-Discrimination

The MOU prohibits discrimination against any person on the basis of grounds such as ethnic origin, language, or religion.

## Period of Operation

The MOU states that the Joint Mechanism will operate only for one year, unless both parties mutually agree to extend it.

## High-Level Committee

Functions: The High-Level Committee's primary function will be to formulate policies regarding the allocation and disbursement of donor funds for the tsunami-affected area. The High-Level Committee will also have an advisory and monitoring role.

Composition: The High-Level Committee will have three members - one nominee by GOSL, one nominee by Muslim parties, and one nominee by LTTE. Observers: Two nominees from the international donor community will attend the meetings as observers.

## Safeguards and Minority Protections:

Consensus between the three members is required before any decision is made. If consensus cannot be reached, any member can, upon 14 days notice, suspend their cooperation in the High-Level Committee.

## Regional Committee Functions:

The Regional Committee will be re-

sponsible for prioritizing, approving, managing, and monitoring the implementation of projects.

Composition: The Regional Committee will have ten members - two nominees by GOSL, three nominees by Muslim parties, and five nominees by LTTE. The MOU states that the Committee should have a proper gender balance.

Observers: Two nominees from the international donor community will attend the meetings as observers. Other observers may also be invited.

## Safeguards and Minority Protections:

If at least two members of the Regional Committee acknowledge that a decision of the Regional Committee would have an adverse effect on a minority group, then approval of that decision will require seven members of the Regional Committee. This provision protects the Muslim and Sinhala communities from any proposal by the Regional Committee that is, in their opinion, harmful to their interests. Subject to the protection above, two members of the Regional Committee may request redress when a proposal submitted to the Regional Committee by a District Committee is rejected; consequently, rejection of that proposal will require seven members of the Regional Committee.

This provision allows proposals put forward by District Committees (which may have a greater representation of a particular ethnic group than the Regional Committee) to be passed by the Regional Committee without the necessary consent of the LTTE nominees.

## Regional Fund

A Regional Fund will be set up to make available funds for relief, rehabilitation, reconstruction and development in the Six Districts. A multilateral agency will serve as the custodian of the fund.

## District Committees

Functions: The District Committees will identify needs, receive and generate project proposals, and monitor the progress of projects.

Composition: The District Committees that are currently established

(continued on next page)

# Joint Mechanism Explained

## Some questions and answers

As part of its awareness campaign to win support for the P-TOMS agreement the government has circulated among SLFP members a document with questions and answers about the controversial deal.

Following are excerpts:

**Q:** Is the Joint Mechanism the idea of the Norwegians, international donors, and International NGOs? Is the Sri Lankan Government being pressurised to accept the Joint Mechanism 'from these foreigners'?

**A:** The initiative to engage in discussions on the Joint Mechanism originated from the Government of Sri Lanka (GOSL) and the LTTE, not from the Norwegians or other outsiders. Two days after the tsunami, the President sent a letter to the LTTE inviting them to work together with the GOSL to deliver assistance to the people affected by the tsunami. The GOSL and the LTTE had a

(continued from page 15)

and functioning in the Six Districts will be used in this role. However, the Committees will ensure adequate Muslim representation and a proper gender balance.

### Comments

### Relationship with Other Development Activity

Normal government-financed development in the Northern and Eastern provinces will continue as before, including in the Six Districts, in addition to what the Joint Mechanism does.

### Role of Treasury

The function of actually allocating and disbursing the donor funds will be retained by the Treasury; the High-Level Committee only formulates the policies regarding these.

In addition, the Regional Fund administered by the multilateral agency will be set up by an agreement between the multilateral agency and the Government of Sri Lanka. The LTTE, as a non-state entity, cannot be party to such an agreement.

*Daily Mirror Monday,  
June 13, 2005*

series of face-to-face meetings shortly thereafter where the details of the Joint Mechanism were directly negotiated. The Norwegians only acted as facilitators to these discussions. Other international donors or NGOs did not have any role in the negotiations.

**Q:** Why hasn't the President consulted others about the Joint Mechanism?

**A:** The President kept the negotiations about the Joint Mechanism confidential because she did not know whether anything would be agreed to by the LTTE. Since there is now a broad area of agreement with the LTTE, the President is in the process of consultations with political parties, religious representatives, civil society, and others to brief them on the details of the Joint Mechanism.

**Q:** Does the LTTE obtain international recognition through the Joint Mechanism?

**A:** The Joint Mechanism does not give the LTTE any international recognition. Under the Joint Mechanism, foreign governments and agencies do not interact directly with the LTTE. On the contrary, it is in the absence of a Joint Mechanism that foreign governments and international agencies such as the United Nations would be more likely to interact directly with the LTTE as if it were a sovereign entity responsible for distinct areas of the country.

Furthermore, in the absence of the Joint Mechanism, foreign donors - who have already committed themselves to providing aid to the North and the East, including the uncleared areas - will be likely to give funds directly to the LTTE or through LTTE-front NGOs such as the TRO. Such direct aid would make international recognition for the LTTE more likely than if assistance were received through the Joint Mechanism.

**Q:** Will the Joint Mechanism interfere with Government work in the non-LTTE controlled areas?

**A:** The Joint Mechanism will not interfere with Government work in the South and West. For the districts of the South and West, relief, rehabilitation and reconstruction will be undertaken by the existing GOSL institutions, e.g. line min-

istries and Provincial Councils. Projects implemented by the Joint Mechanism will be limited to those projects in the six (6) districts of Ampara, Batticaloa, Jaffna, Kilinochchi, Mullaitivu, and Trincomalee.

**Q:** Will it safeguard the interests of a particular community?

**A:** The Joint Mechanism protects and safeguards the interests of all communities. Safeguards have been built into it which provide protection to all ethnic communities, especially in places where they may not be in the majority. No proposal for tsunami reconstruction (genuine or disguised) that would hurt the interests of a community can be adopted under the decision-making rules envisaged.

**Q:** Who will participate in the implementation?

**A:** The Joint Mechanism includes the participation of groups of different political persuasions. Muslim and Tamil groups other than the LTTE have a role in the mechanism. Furthermore, the Joint Mechanism is limited to tsunami-related projects. Other development projects will proceed in the North and the East; for example, under NEPC or Ministry/RRR, that will continue to include such groups. The Joint Mechanism is by no means the exclusive actor in the North and East for rehabilitation and reconstruction work.

**Q:** Who will monitor the mechanism and its funds?

**A:** The Joint Mechanism will be transparent, accountable, and subject to scrutiny. It will not bypass normal government regulations and accounting procedures. The allocation of funds will be done in accordance with normal Treasury procedures.

Representatives of the international donor community and an independent auditor will be able to observe and monitor the operation of the mechanism. This will deter any LTTE violations of the terms of the Joint Mechanism. The joint Mechanism will not give money directly to the LTTE.

**Q:** What will be achieved by the implementation?

**A:** The Joint Mechanism will contribute to the peace process. It will allow engagement with the LTTE, build confidence and create the climate for a resumption of peace talks with the LTTE. In the Joint Mechanism, the LTTE has agreed to an arrangement negotiated with the GOSL. In this way, the Joint Mecha-



nism could function as an ice-breaker in the peace process, and help pave the way for a renewal of the talks.

**Q:** Is the time ripe for a joint effort in rebuilding?

**A:** It is an opportune moment for a Joint Mechanism. The LTTE is willing to settle for a Joint Mechanism because it has been weakened by the Karuna breakaway and by the tsunami disaster. In six months, the GOSL would likely have to give more to the LTTE in order to obtain its consent to a similar agreement.

**Q:** What if any agreement is not signed?

**A:** Politically, Sri Lanka needs the Joint Mechanism. The Joint Mechanism, by engaging the LTTE at a political level, can help reduce the likelihood of the resumption of war. Furthermore, if it is not signed, it would strengthen the extremists in the country who are against the peace process and are likely to endanger the already fragile ceasefire.

**Q:** What if the government fails to agree to this Joint Mechanism?

**A:** We must consider the alternative to the Joint Mechanism. If we fail to agree on the Joint Mechanism with the LTTE, it is likely that aid will go directly to the

Tigers and LTTE-controlled NGOs. The GOSL would be left out of the decision-making for reconstruction. Furthermore, the GOSL's credibility with the Tamils of this country, with all the tsunami victims in the North and the East, and with the international community, would be shattered.

**Political questions about the Post-Tsunami Operational Management Structure (the "Joint Mechanism"):**

**Q:** Will the Joint Mechanism give the LTTE greater legitimacy?

**A:** The Joint Mechanism will give some legitimacy to the LTTE, but precisely because they are working together with the government. If not, the LTTE is likely to campaign for direct funding on the grounds that the GOSL is not meeting the humanitarian needs of the Tamil people and many countries may decide to support the LTTE/TRO. It would be awkward for the GOSL to block such support without being vulnerable to the charge that it is hampering humanitarian assistance.

The LTTE is no longer banned in Sri Lanka. The Joint Mechanism will provide a framework for the LTTE to work with the GOSL and others in a transparent and accountable process of govern-

ance. Given the reality that the LTTE is in control of territory and has political influence in other areas, the GOSL or anyone who seeks to do humanitarian work in certain areas of the North and the East has no alternative but to work with the LTTE.

**Q:** How can a sovereign democratic government negotiate with the LTTE, a terrorist organisation?

**A:** Isn't this like the chicken and the egg argument? What came first, the chicken or the egg? How can the LTTE transform itself from a rebel group to a democratic organization unless the GOSL engages with them?

There were many organizations in Sri Lanka that were at one time terrorist organizations, and they were allowed to enter the democratic process without formally renouncing violence. Should we have required such organizations to formally renounce violence before we engaged with them?

Ultimately, there is a need to reconcile with the LTTE in order to achieve a permanent and durable peace. As a sovereign democratic government, we have the responsibility to take the first step because the majority of people do not want to go back to war. □



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## Donors urge signing of tsunami mechanism

June 14 - The Co-chairs of the Sri Lanka Donor Group who met in Washington D.C on Monday (13) urged immediate signing of the agreement on tsunami reconstruction in order to ensure proper flow of reconstruction aid to tsunami victims in the NorthEast.. The Co-chairs hoped that an agreement on tsunami reconstruction would help to build confidence between the two sides.

Full statement of the Co-chairs of the Sri Lanka Donor Group issued by the Embassy of the United States of America in Colombo on Tuesday follows:

"The Co-chairs of the Sri Lanka Donor Group met on June 13 to discuss the current situation in Sri Lanka and consider the way forward.

**Peace process and Ceasefire Agreement:** We note with utmost concern that while full-scale hostilities have not resumed, respect for the Cease-Fire Agreement has been undermined by persistent violence, including assassinations of individuals affiliated with both parties. The resulting climate of impunity violates the spirit of the Cease-Fire Agreement.

The Co-chairs urge the parties to take all necessary steps to end violence and enforce all provisions of the Cease-Fire Agreement in areas under their control. The Co-chairs call on the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) to stop assassinations, including of individuals such as Tamil informants, members of other Tamil groups and political parties and govern-

ment and military officials, and to stop the recruitment and use of child soldiers. The Co-chairs likewise call on the Sri Lankan government to take decisive action to ensure that killings are stopped and paramilitaries are disarmed immediately as required in the Cease-Fire Agreement.

We recognize that most Sri Lankans understand that the only path to a better future is through negotiations aimed at a peaceful settlement. The Co-chairs continue to call on the government and the LTTE to bring about substantial and concrete progress in the peace process.

The Co-chairs commend the untiring efforts of Norway to facilitate a peaceful resolution to this conflict, and the Sri Lanka Monitoring Mission (SLMM) in carrying out the monitoring of the Cease-Fire Agreement."

**Tsunami reconstruction:** The Co-chairs support the commitment by the President, her government and the LTTE to rapidly implement the structure to administer tsunami assistance in the North and East. The Co-chairs recognize the importance of the Muslim community in the functioning of this structure. We believe such a structure will facilitate effectiveness and equity in tsunami assistance, and can help build confidence between the two sides. We urge the immediate signing of the agreement in order to ensure proper flow of reconstruction aid to tsunami victims in the North and East.

The Co-Chairs call on all donors, private and public, to tailor their reconstruction activities in the North and East to the specific humanitarian situation, particularly the need to observe a balance between the victims of the conflict and those of the tsunami."

## US support for Joint Mechanism

June 14 - Assistant Secretary of State for South Asian Affairs Christina Rocca, testifying before the United States House of Representatives International Relations Subcommittee for Asia and the Pacific on Tuesday June 14, said the division within the Sri Lankan government and the absence of trust between the government and the LTTE, which continues to use assassinations and suicide bombers, underscoring their character as an organization wedded to terrorism and justifying their designation as a Foreign Terrorist Organization are the main reasons for the breakdown of the peace process.

However, Rocca said that the United States primary goal in Sri Lanka is to help the country end more than a decade of bloody conflict between the government and the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam. She told the House panel, which oversees the South Asian region and frequently reviews United States foreign policy priorities in the region and assesses related opportunities and challenges to American interests, that the U.S. continues to support Norway's facilitation of a peace settlement in Sri Lanka.

The Assistant Secretary continued to say that the recovery from last December's tsunami pre-empted the peace process as the primary concern of both parties for the past several months. "With the Norwegian assistance, both parties have been negotiating an agreement to regulate the distribution of tsunami reconstruction aid. This agreement, a Joint Mecha-

nism, is an opportunity to build trust between the parties and is therefore an important contribution to the peace process should it come to fruition. President Kumaratunga has publicly committed herself to signing the Joint Mechanism, but she faces serious challenges from members of her government who oppose the mechanism." She said the United States firmly supports her plan to sign the Joint Mechanism and remains prepared, along with other donors, to help Sri Lanka address urgent post-conflict reconstruction needs. The goal of peaceful reconciliation will need to help guide our (US) post-tsunami reconstruction assistance.

## Sivaram murder suspect remanded in custody

June 14 - One of the suspects in connection with the assassination of veteran journalist Dharmeratnam Sivaram was remanded till June 20 at the Kaduwela Magistrate courts on Tuesday (14), reports from Colombo said. The suspect who is believed to be an ex-PLOTE cadre was brought to the courts with heavy security and was produced before the Magistrate Champa Janaki Perera by a Special Police team investigating the murder. Another suspect was released by the courts as he was found no involvement in the assassination of Sivaram.

An identification parade is to be held when the suspect is produced before the Magistrate again on June 20, according to the police. Legal sources said the Courts barred media from using names of suspects.

On June 13 police investigators said they had arrested two

men in connection with the April 28th murder of Dharmaratnam Sivaram. According to D.S.S. Lugoda, Director of the Colombo Crime Division, the two men were arrested early morning on Monday (13) in Maharagama, twenty miles off Colombo after evidence linking them to Mr. Sivaram's stolen mobile phone led officers to their location.

Mr. Arumugam Sri Skandarajan, alias "Peter", and Mr. Veluthan Nallanather were taken into custody without incident. Mr. Skandarajan was in possession of Mr. Sivaram's mobile phone SIM card. A vehicle believed to have been used in the kidnapping and murder was also confiscated at the time of arrest.

Skandarajan is reported to be a Colombo area organizer and vehicle driver for the People's Liberation Organization of Tamil Eelam (PLOTE). According to police, the vehicle allegedly used in the assassination belongs to the PLOTE. Skandarajan, a member of PLOTE since the early 1980's, spent five and a half years in prison for his part in the attempted 1983 coup against the government of the Maldives. As of yet, there is no specific information regarding Mr. Nallanather; according to police, however, they have no clear evidence linking him to the murder, and he may soon be released. Lugoda stated that the suspect had been under investigation since the 2nd of this month and that he was located by an examination of Sivaram's telephone records.

In his statement to the police, Skandarajan claims to have been approached by an associate on the evening of Sivaram's murder. The man wished to borrow the PLOTE vehicle, which Skandarajan usually drove for the organization. When the vehicle was returned to him early the next day, he was given Sivaram's SIM card and told to monitor and record all incoming calls. According to Crime Division Director Lugoda, the murderers wished to know with whom Sivaram was in communication. In his statement, Skandarajan claimed that the PLOTE had no involvement in the assassination. Another PLOTE member, known only as RR, is also being sought in connection with the murder, police said. He is expected to be apprehended in the coming days.

Mr. Kawon, Secretary to PLOTE leader D. Sidarthan, said when contacted today (13) that he was unaware of any arrest. "But our party had no intention to kill Sivaram," he said. "We have never had any reason to kill him. He left us over 15 years ago. If "Peter" has been arrested it is based on false information probably provided by the LTTE." Mr. Kawon explained that Sivaram was initially in support of Colonel Karuna when he split from the main LTTE body in the winter of 2004, but that he shifted his support back to the main body soon thereafter. "So you see both would have a reason to kill him much more than us," he said.

The People's Liberation Organization of Tamil Eelam was founded as a pro-separatist militant group in 1980. Although originally considered a terrorist organization, PLOTE legitimized their organization by winning seats in Parliament in 1994 (they currently hold no seats). They are opposed to the more prominent Tamil group, the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE), and their claim to be the sole voice of the Tamil people.

Sivaram began working with the People's Liberation Organization of Tamil Eelam in 1982 when he joined the PLOTE as a member of the Ghandian Movement, an organization affiliated with PLOTE. After the eruption of the ethnic conflict in 1983, Sivaram became an active PLOTE militant. In 1988 he

was appointed General Secretary of the Democratic People's Liberation Front (DPLF), the political wing of the PLOTE. He left the front in 1989 amidst ideological differences with the party's founder, Kathriagamar Uma Maheswaran who was assassinated in July 1989 resulting from an internal factional struggle. Sivaram was often fiercely criticized by his former PLOTE comrades for promoting what many see as a "pro-LTTE" agenda in his reporting.

D. Sidarthan is the current leader of PLOTE. He has denied any connection with the murder of Sivaram. Skandarajan too has told the Police that PLOTE is not linked to the assassination of Sivaram.

(Arthur Rhodes, *The Reclaim Initiative in Colombo*)

## Tribute to Sivaram

May 29 - Several colleagues from Colombo media, friends and relatives attended the memorial service held Saturday (28) in honour of Dharmaratnam Sivaram, popular military analyst and senior member of TamilNet editorial board who was abducted and killed on 28 April. The event was held at the St. Andrew's Scots Kirk Church in Colpetty, Colombo.

Prof. K. Sivathamby, Free Media Movement representative and freelance journalist Mr. Ravi Chandralal, Sunday Times Deputy Editor Mr. Rajpal Abeynayake paid tribute to the slain journalist.

"Though many believe that Sivaram loved only certain regions of Sri Lanka, from the close friendship I had, which transcended racial politics, I can honestly say that Sivaram loved Sri Lanka, north, east, south and west," said Mr. Abeynayake.

Former Island editor Mr. Gamini Weerakoon, Hindu Correspondent in Sri Lanka, Mr. Sambandan, former Daily news Editor Mr. Lakshman Gunasekera, civil society leaders Mr. Pakiasothy Saravanamuttu, Jehan Perera and Sunila Abeysekera also attended memorial service.

**Journalists honour:** More than one hundred media personnel, covering their mouths with black bands and carrying August flowers in their hands, gathered in front of the Parliament building at 3.00 pm on May 29 despite heavy showers to show their respect to the murdered military analyst and popular journalist Dharmaratnam Sivaram who was killed a month ago, sources said.

Media colleagues marched along the Japan-Sri Lanka friendship highway to the spot closer to the Parliament building where veteran Sivaram's body was found. He had been shot in the head at close range. The march was organised by the Hiru Sinhala bulletin with the coordination of Sri Lanka Tamil Media Alliance (SLTMA) and the Sri Lanka Free Media Movement (FMM).

Participants carried a photograph of Mr. Sivaram in the one hour long march and placed the photo at the spot where Sivaram's body was found. Along with floral tributes speeches were also made by media friends of Sivaram at this event to mark the first month of his abduction and murder.

Mr. Rohitha Bashana from the Hiru paper in his speech said that Mr. Sivaram was murdered for his writings. The killing was against the freedom of speech and everyone who wants to promote freedom of speech should come forward and fight to keep that right. Many Sinhala alternative media personnel and Tamil media personnel participated in the march.

## SLMM chief on LTTE airpower

May 27 - Asked how the reported acquisition of one or two aircraft by the Liberation Tigers could be deemed a violation of the ceasefire agreement, when the massive acquisition of weaponry by the Sri Lankan state was not counted as a violation, the head of the international truce monitors in Sri Lanka, Hargup Haukland, said that the Sri Lankan government had a legitimate right to arm itself, while the LTTE did not.

The Sri Lankan government had the legitimate responsibility for the defence of Sri Lanka and all of Sri Lanka, its land, sea and air and thus it had a much larger responsibility than the LTTE, the head of the Sri Lanka Monitoring Mission (SLMM) was quoted as telling the Foreign Correspondents' Association (FCA) in Colombo on 27 May.

"The acquisition of aircraft by an organisation like the LTTE means a lot. It is a serious matter, which impinges on Sri Lanka's security. India is concerned too," Mr. Haukland was quoted by press reports, including one in the Hindustan Times, as saying.

"The skies over Sri Lanka were under the sovereign control of the government of Sri Lanka. Any flying in Sri Lankan skies would have to have the express sanction of the Sri Lankan government. As for the use of international air space, that was also controlled by international agreements. Flying by an unrecognised group like the LTTE would therefore be against international law," Mr. Haukland was quoted as saying.

"The LTTE is recognised only in so far as the ethnic conflict and the peace process in Sri Lanka are concerned," he said.

Mr. Haukland said that the SLMM had not actually seen the aircraft the LTTE is alleged to possess and therefore could not say if they existed or not.

"We do not know if they have an aircraft," Mr. Haukland said, adding he himself had seen an airfield from a helicopter but did not see any aircraft there. Asked what would happen if the Sri Lankan Air Force were to bomb the LTTE airbase, Haukland said: "That would be war."

## India to promote grassroots level projects

June 9 - Indicating a significant shift in its development assistance policy vis-à-vis Sri Lanka, India will from now on help set up small-scale, quick-gestation and grass-roots level projects involving a lot of local participation, in addition to assisting large projects through credit lines.

According to the Indian High Commission, the two countries will be signing an MoU on setting up such projects, in the presence of the visiting External Affairs Minister, K Natwar Singh, and the Sri Lankan Foreign Minister Lakshman Kadirgamar on Friday.

The small-scale projects envisaged in the MOU, will cost under \$3 million. They will involve Indian NGOs, small and medium enterprises, and scientific and educational institutions. These institutions will interact with Sri Lankan grass roots level organisations, companies and local authorities.

The MOU, to be signed by the Sri Lankan Treasury Secretary and the Indian High Commissioner, will lay down the framework for the implementation of these projects. India had entered into a similar MOU with Nepal in 2003.

The drafts of the projects will be prepared by the Indian High Commission in consultation with Sri Lankan institutions and the relevant line ministries, and then submitted to the Sri Lankan Ministry of Finance for approval. The funds, however, will be made directly to the project with the concurrence of the Sri Lankan Ministry of Finance.

The two countries will sign an agreement on educational exchange also. The agreement will set up a Joint Working Group to maintain all-round and continuous contact and cooperation between their educational institutions. The educational exchange programme will become operational from the date of signing (June 10, 2005) and will last for five years.

The Indian High Commission said that Indian institutions of higher learning had set up very high standards of excellence, which were also globally recognised. The exchange programme would help Sri Lankan institutions of higher learning upgrade their capacity in both teaching and research.

Political significance of shift: Political observers say that India has taken the cue for these agreements from the Americans and the Europeans, who had started funding small scale, people-oriented projects some years ago. These were making a good impact on the target groups.

While large-scale projects do make an impact, and are necessary for the economy, they tend to become controversial. Some of the large-scale projects are projected in the local media as signs of Indian/foreign hegemony. The common man also does not feel the benefits of these projects, directly and quickly. The two new agreements to be signed on Friday are expected to

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win for India many friends among the hoi polloi in Sri Lanka and help it acquire a strong local constituency. (*Hindustan Times*)

## Trinco former UC Chairman Suriyamoorthy killed

May 25 - Mr. Periyapodi Suriyamoorthy, former Chairman of the Trincomalee Urban Council, succumbed to gunshot injuries in the Colombo national hospital on 25 May, a week after he was shot at on May 18 by unidentified gunmen in his Trincomalee residence, family sources said. They have accused the LTTE of carrying out the murder.

He underwent emergency operation in Trincomalee general hospital after he received gunshot injuries in his abdomen but was later airlifted to Colombo national hospital after his condition became critical. He passed away after a week with regaining sense, sources said.

According to close members of Mr Suriyamoorthy's family, he had been residing in Colombo for the last several years and returned recently to Trincomalee with the intention of selling his residential property there to enable him apply the proceeds from the sale in connection with his daughter's proposed marriage. However on the day in question, some young men, reportedly from the LTTE, had visited Suriyamoorthy's home and told him that he should go to their office for an inquiry into his proposed sale of his house. When he refused the young men had attempted to forcibly take him away, but a crowd of Mr

Suriyamoorthy's relatives and neighbours had gathered and sought to prevent his abduction. It was then that one of the young men pulled out a gun and shot him at point blank range.

Suriyamoorthy was 56 and father of five children. He was born in Alvai in Vadamaradchchi division in Jaffna district in the year 1949. He entered politics in the year 1989 contesting the first election to the North East Provincial Council (NEPC), which came into being with the signing of the Indo-Sri Lanka agreement. He was elected to the NEPC and became its first chairman. The NEPC was dissolved by the then Sri Lanka's President Mr. R. Premadasa in 1990. Since then the NEPC is administered by the central government. Provincial Council system was introduced in the country to find a political solution to the Tamil national question through devolution of power.

Mr. Suriyamoorthy thereafter entered local politics by contesting the election held for the Trincomalee Urban Council in 1994. An independent group fielded by him polled highest votes in the election and he became the Chairman of the council. He continued as the chairman till the council was dissolved in the year 2000. Since then the UC is administered by a special administrator appointed by the central government.

During his tenure of his office, he constructed new public market at a cost of about seven million rupees in a new place located along the Power House Road in addition to the existing market of the council in front of the bus stand. However the central government did not allow the opening of the new market on representation made by Sinhalese vendors of the UC market, describing it as a "Tamil market". From 1999 the new market remained unused.

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## Senior Intelligence officer shot dead

May 31 - A high ranking Sri Lankan Military Intelligence Corps (MIC) Commanding Officer, Major Thuwan Nizam Muthaliff, 39, was shot and killed Tuesday (31) morning around 8.00 am by unidentified gunmen at Polhengoda Junction in Narehenpitya, Colombo. The gunmen following him in a motorbike shot him at point-blank range while his car stopped at the Wijaya Kumarathunga signal crossing along the Baseline Highway. Muthaliff is the highest ranking Sri Lankan Military Intelligence officer to be killed since the signing of Cease Fire Agreement (CFA) between the Government of Sri Lanka and the LTTE. February 2002.

The incident took place while Major Muthaliff was on his way to attend a special meeting at Kotelawala Defence Academy, military sources said. Major Muthaliff who was provided with special body guards for his security, was travelling without the security personnel when he was shot, sources in Colombo said. Muthaliff was rushed to Apollo Hospital, but he succumbed to gunshot injuries at the hospital.

Sri Lanka's President Chandrika Kumaratunga awarded posthumous promotion to the rank of Lieutenant colonel to Major Muthaliff Monday. Muthaliff is a father of two children.

### AHRC fears 'major breakdown of law and order'

May 31 - Saying it was shocked by the assassination Tuesday (31) of a high ranking Sri Lankan military intelligence officer, Major Nizam Muthaliff, the Asian Human Rights Commission (AHRC) said it was concerned at the escalation of violence, saying Sri Lanka was "heading towards a major breakdown of law and order."

The text of the AHRC's statement follows:

"The Asian Human Rights Commission (AHRC) is shocked to learn about the assassination of a high ranking Sri Lankan military intelligence officer Major Nizam Muthaliff today in Colombo. The AHRC condemns this murder and further reiterates that Sri Lanka is rapidly heading towards a major breakdown of law and order. The AHRC urge for rapid and effective inquiries into this crime and the perpetrators being brought to justice.

"Another brutal killing took place at the heart of Colombo on 28 April 2005 when a Tamil journalist Mr. Sivaram Dharmeratnam was abducted and killed. There were earlier killings of a High Court Judge Mr. Sarath Ambepitiya on 19 November 2004 immediately followed by the assassination of a torture victim Mr. Gerald Melvin Perera who was shot in public while he was traveling in a bus on 21 November 2005 and his subsequent death in hospital while undergoing treatment. There were also threat to the life of two journalists and some civil society activists. The life in Colombo has thus begun to witness the type of violence which it had experienced in late eighties as well as the years immediately prior to the ceasefire agreement between the government and the LTTE.

"This escalation of violence need to be stopped and the duty to stop it is with the Sri Lanka's law enforcing agency, the police. Under no circumstances should anyone, whatever their political ideologies be, be allowed to engage in assassinations and acts of violence. Though this type of violence poses great

difficulties to a law enforcement agency to control it still remain their primary duty and also to rapidly investigate and to deal with such violence. If they are unwilling or incapable of dealing with this situation, further retaliations will spread everywhere.

"It is the duty of the government and the opposition to give utmost support and cooperation to the law enforcement agencies to stop this escalation of violence. If the country further deteriorates into panic and acts of retaliation and further violence, people in every part of the country will be the losers once again. Violence in the past decades have deteriorated the conditions of life in the country so much that it has already become one of the most unstable places in the region.

"It is a time that the civil society organisations, the media and all persons of goodwill should speak out and intervene to stop this cycle of violence. If there is no such intervention by the civilians irrespective of race and religion to ensure stability the consequences may soon go beyond the control of everyone.

"The AHRC also urge the United Nations and the international community to make their pressure felt on all sides to ensure that the violence will not spread any further. International interventions often happen only when much life is lost and when the situation is beyond normal repair. It is better to intervene now than to let the situation slip into a situation like that in Nepal or Cambodia. The AHRC once again reiterates that the key issue is the capacity of the law enforcement agency, the Sri Lankan police system, to discharge its obligation to the people. If this system fails in this duty every person and group will exploit the situation to their advantage. When a society is filled with extreme elements of various factions the only possibility of establishing a balance and bringing the society to normalcy lies with the law enforcement agency. We hope that this agency will rise to the occasion."

## Vaiko appeals Indian PM

June 4 - MDMK MP Vaiko met Prime Minister Manmohan Singh on 4 June and appealed to him against giving any defence assistance to Sri Lanka. He said after the meeting that the Prime Minister had said India would not enter into any defence agreement with Sri Lanka.

Vaiko, who had a 30-minute meeting with the Prime Minister, said Singh also assured him that India would not give any defence assistance against the interests of Tamils in Sri Lanka. "I am satisfied with this meeting," he said.

He also gave Singh a memorandum in which he said if a confrontation breaks out due to unavoidable reasons, India would be liable to be accused of assisting military attack on the Tamils. "India should not give any form of defence assistance to the Sri Lankan government for which the Tamil community will be ever grateful to you," Vaiko said in the memorandum. He had expressed concern about the reference to cease-fire violations by the LTTE and their illegal acquisition of air capability in the joint statement issued by India and Sri Lanka.

"I am worried that a deliberate, pre-planned and systematic misinformation is carried out by some vested interests by planting stories during the last few days as if a threat has been posed to the security of our country," he said.

On the LTTE aircraft posing a security threat to India, Vaiko said "it is ridiculous to say that some small aircraft allegedly possessed by Tamil militants will pose a threat to the security of mighty India." Pointing out that the UPA government had committed itself to take steps to help the peace process of the island, he said any military aid directly or

indirectly to Sri Lanka would be an "unjustifiable" deed causing grave concern to the Tamils.

Vaiko also urged the Prime Minister to brush aside Sri Lanka's opposition to the Setusamudram Canal project. "The Sri Lankan government has been opposing this project since 1960s for the simple reason that the Colombo port will lose its significance. With the same partisan consideration, the Sri Lankan government is opposing the project under the guise of environmental impact," he said in the memorandum.

## Indo-Lanka defence pact being finalized

June 10 - Giving a major boost to their defence cooperation, Sri Lanka said it would accept air defence radar systems from India as the two sides announced a slew of measures which would help the island nation in various spheres of development.

At a joint press interaction with External Affairs Minister K Natwar Singh after the meeting of the India-Sri Lanka Joint Commission, his counterpart Lakshman Kadirgamar said "Yes, certainly we will accept it." He said this when asked whether Colombo was going to accept New Delhi's offer of radar systems.

"Yes, this is very much under discussion," he said adding "We are looking at ways and means to see how this can be done." The minister, however, declined to fix any timeframe for accepting it. India, he said, maintains an abiding interest in the security of Sri Lanka and remains committed to its sovereignty and territorial integrity.

Singh said a Defence Cooperation Agreement between the two countries "is in the process of being finalised. There are certain procedures to be gone through and that process is underway". This would be a framework for providing regular exchanges between their defence establishments, training of personnel and capacity building, he said.

Stressing that India was determined to take relations with Sri Lanka to "greater heights", he said negotiations were currently underway for concluding a Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (CEPA) by the end of this year. This was aimed at realising the enormous potential that exists for further economic and commercial cooperation.

India and Sri Lanka signed two agreements, one relating to small development projects and the other dealing with an exchange programme on education. Singh said India has decided to train 450 Sri Lankan policemen in that country. India will also provide a Rs 10 million grant for funding a pilot project of 20 e-libraries.

On the peace process, Singh said India supported the process of seeking a "settlement acceptable to all communities and reflecting the pluralistic nature of Sri Lankan society within the framework of a united and democratic Sri Lanka while upholding and preserving the territorial integrity and sovereignty of the country."

"The Government and people of India remain firmly committed in their support for efforts being made by the Government and people of Sri Lanka to consolidate the processes of peace and to promote development in their country," Natwar Singh said.

On the post-tsunami reconstruction, Singh said India has expressed its "understanding and support" for such efforts.

On the Sethusamudram Canal Project, he said since the project was closer to India's coastline, there was more concern than anyone else to ensure all safeguards against any environmental impact are fully taken into account. "This has been done

in a transparent manner. We will do nothing which will even remotely adversely affect our bilateral relations," he said adding if there was any specific area of concern by Sri Lanka, India was ready to organise further technical discussions on them.

Singh earlier called on Prime Minister Mahinda Rajapaksa and discussed ways to intensify cooperation.

A five-page joint statement issued at the end of the Commission's meeting said it was emphasised that frequency of air travel between the two countries could be further increased by further liberalisation of the aviation sector, particularly with regard to flights to major Indian cities. Over 100 flights are at present operating between India and Sri Lanka every week.

The Indian side acceded to Sri Lanka's request to use the balance available from the 381 million dollar credit line given for import of wheat for getting passenger buses from India. On investments in the power sector, it was noted that the National Thermal Power Corporation would submit a detailed proposal for setting up a coal/LNG power plant in Sri Lanka. It was agreed to explore the further development of the oil storage complex in Trincomalee into an expanded facility catering to the region. Sri Lanka has agreed that a block will be allocated to India for oil/gas exploration at a mutually agreed location, the statement said.

India has offered to set up a cancer hospital in Sri Lanka and the project is expected to commence soon after finalising land requirements.

## US supports efforts to set up JM

June 5 - The US Secretary of State Dr. Condoleezza Rice on Friday (3) declared that the US government was supportive of Sri Lanka's efforts to evolve a Joint Mechanism with the LTTE to handle post-tsunami rehabilitation in the north and east, a Foreign Ministry press release said yesterday.

Dr. Rice made these observation when Foreign Minister Lakshman Kadirgamar met with her on Friday at the State Department, marking the first meeting with Dr. Rice, since she assumed duties as US Secretary of State, the release said. Dr. Rice said the US government remained committed to assist Sri Lanka as it recovers from the effects of tsunami and noted that the US was "comfortable with the progress" made by Sri Lanka in this regard and satisfied that "the reconstruction funds were being spent in an equitable manner", the release added.

Minister Kadirgamar arrived in Washington after participating in the 25th anniversary celebrations of CNN in Atlanta, during which he was a member of a panel which discussed "Tsunami - six months later".

Minister Kadirgamar and Dr. Rice reviewed bi-lateral relations and issues of mutual interest. The Minister briefed Dr. Rice in detail of the efforts being made by President Chandrika Bandaranaike Kumaratunga to evolve a consensus on the operation of a Joint Mechanism for the specific purpose of dealing with the immediate humanitarian situation at hand, the press release added.

He emphasised that while the Joint Mechanism was not part of the peace process, the Government was conscious that its successful implementation could serve as a confidence building measure between the Government and the LTTE, the release said.

He noted that there were several sections of the Sri Lankan polity that were opposed to it. Besides the JVP and the JHU, concerns had been expressed by the Muslim community as

well as several democratic Tamil groups, the press release said. Minister Kadirgamar said the President was currently engaged in a process of consultation, but that the time will come when the process of consultation will have to end and for the leadership to lead, it added.

He noted that unfortunately recent acts of the LTTE were not helping in the process of generating confidence among the groups that had reservations in this regard. The continued acts of violence, recruitment of child soldiers, procurement of weap-

ons and the construction of an airfield and acquisition of air capability by the LTTE were matters of serious concern, the release said. Dr. Rice was quoted as saying that the US remained strongly committed to ensuring that democratic principles were adhered to, and the framework evolved should be one that brings democracy to the entire country. She said the US government took serious note of the LTTE's acquisition of air capability. Dr. Rice also accepted an invitation by Minister Kadirgamar to visit Sri Lanka at an early date.

## 20,000 quit SLA since truce

May 29 - Revealing that over 20,000 soldiers had quit the Sri Lanka Army (SLA) since the February 2002 ceasefire, a top general blamed lack of appreciation of the military by the public and other departments of the state as key reasons for soldiers deserting their posts in the army, press reports in Colombo said. Officers also blamed poor infrastructure in camps and difficulties in obtaining home leave from duties in forward defence areas also as contributing to low morale.

Over 20,000 of the 85,000 soldiers who have quit the Army did so after the indefinite ceasefire with the Liberation Tigers signed the CFA with the Government of Sri Lanka in February 2002, Major General T.T.R. de Silva, was quoted in press reports as saying.

The SLA has an official operating strength of 125,000.

Many deserters have taken up the option of being honourably discharged from the Army, Maj. Gen. de Silva said. Repeated amnesty to deserters has resulted in over 11,000 deserters returning to civilian life.

Over two thousand more applications received in the most

recent amnesty from 9 May to 20 May this year will be processed in the coming months, he said.

Soldiers quitting the military is not unusual and it is a common occurrence within the armed forces of many countries, but there are other compounding factors in Sri Lanka, Maj. Gen. de Silva said.

"In countries including India and the US, soldiers are recognized for their contribution to safety their nation and are respected. In some countries there are special seats are allocated for soldiers in public transport. In Sri Lanka many leave the Army because there is not much of recognition in the civil society. They are also routinely ignored even at Government departments when they seek help to fulfill personal matters during short periods of leave," he said.

Brigadier Tuwan Bhaha, Director of Personnel and Administration, was quoted by Colombopage as saying that among those who leave the Army, most have not completed five years of service. "From those [who] leave, 87% have a service record of less than five years. Family demands and lack of sufficient numbers in their respective camps, lack of infrastructure facilities, lack of transport to those serving in the North either by air or by sea, and their inability to get leave contribute to soldiers' frustration," he said.

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## Accused in Bindunuwewa massacre case freed

May 27 - Sri Lanka's Supreme Court (SC) Friday acquitted all the remaining four accused who had been sentenced to death in the Bindunuwewa rehabilitation massacre case, stating that there was no direct evidence to implicate them with the crime. Five-member bench of the SC comprised Justices T.B. Weerasuriya, Nihal Jayasinghe, N.K. Udalgama, N.E. Dissanayake and Raja Fernando delivered the order acquitting the accused-appellants, Sepala Dissanayake, M.A. Sammy, R.M. Premananda and Senaka Jayampathy Karunaratne, former officer-in-charge of the Bindunuwewa Police, reports from Colombo said.

The accused-appellants, Sepala Dissanayake, M.A. Sammy and R.M. Premananda, all are civilians, Senaka Jayampathy Karunaratne, former officer-in-charge of the Bindunuwewa Police and Tyronne Roger Ratnayake with several others had been indicted before the Trial-at-Bar (TAB) of the High Court on 83 charges including murder of 27 Tamil detainees of the Bindunuwewa Rehabilitation Camp, and the attempted murder fourteen other detainees on 25th October, 2000, legal sources said.

The Trial-at-Bar comprised High Court Judges, Sarath Ambepitya, Eric Basanayake and Upali Abeyaratne, legal sources said. TAB at the conclusion of the inquiry found only five accused guilty for the offences and discharged other accused. All the five accused were sentenced to death. They appealed against the TAB order to the Supreme Court.

The five-member bench, which heard the appeals of the five accused in June last year, acquitted the fifth accused Tyronne Roger Ratnayake for want of evidence and continued to hear the appeals of the other four accused, legal sources said.

The inquiry into the appeals of the other four accused came to a conclusion in December last year. The accused petitioners in their appeals

begged court to set aside their conviction by the High Court Trial-at-Bar and to acquit them, as there was no evidence to prove that they had committed the offences, which they were charged. They also said the judgement of the TAB was contrary to the evidence and it had erred in law in dealing with the charge of being members of an unlawful assembly. The appellants maintained that the TAB had not paid sufficient attention to the dock statements by them, legal sources said.

President Counsels Mr. Ranjit Fernando, Mr. D.S. Wijesinghe and Mr. Rienzie Arasekularetna appeared for accused appellants. Solicitor General Mr. Chitraranjan de Silva appeared for the Attorney General, legal sources said.

### HRW: Failure of Justice for Victims of Massacre

New York, June 2, 2005 - Last week's acquittal by the Sri Lankan Supreme Court of all defendants in the mob killing of 27 Tamil detainees at the Bindunuwewa detention facility in October 2000 demonstrates the failure of the Sri Lankan justice system to address crimes against alleged Tamil Tiger members, Human Rights Watch said today. Human Rights Watch called for a new investigation to be launched immediately to identify those, including senior police officials, responsible for the killings.

On the night of October 25, 2000, following days of rumors in the local community that detainees were armed and dangerous, an angry mob stormed the detention facility. In spite of the presence of armed police, the mob killed 27 of the inmates, hacking and clubbing them to death. Some victims were burned to death. The remaining 14 detainees were seriously injured.

"These acquittals show a shocking failure of the police and judicial system in Sri Lanka to find justice for the dead and injured from this hor-

rific incident," said Brad Adams, Asia Director of Human Rights Watch. "As the victims were all Tamil, the government needs to move quickly to start fresh investigations and to prosecute the perpetrators, some of whom were police officers, or it will only further distance aggrieved Tamils."

Though there were approximately 60 police officers stationed around the camp, not a single officer arrested any member of the attacking crowd. Subsequent independent investigations revealed that not only did the police not do anything to prevent or stop the killings, but some police officers also participated in the attack.

The Bindunuwewa detention facility housed a total of 41 inmates, all of them Tamil men or boys with real or suspected links to the armed opposition Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE). The youngest inmate in the camp was 12 years old, the eldest was in his mid-thirties. Among the inmates were youths who had been abducted by the LTTE, had escaped and sought refuge with the Sri Lankan government. Others were accused by the Sri Lankan government of being LTTE members, although none of them was ever formally charged. The detention facility was set up as a transitional rehabilitation centre, and despite many problems was regarded by many, including international observers, as a model center where the inmates had better conditions than at other detention facilities in Sri Lanka.

After years of investigation and prosecution, on May 27, 2005, the Supreme Court acquitted the last of the accused in the case, citing lack of evidence.

The police conducted investigations into the killings. Prosecutors charged 41 persons with various crimes, including murder. Most of those charged have been acquitted. Last year, five of the accused were found guilty and sentenced to death. These convictions were overturned by the Supreme Court last week.

Impartial observers of the Supreme Court hearing said the justices were openly hostile to the prosecution, and seemed to have decided

(continued on next page)

# Engaging the JVP on Federalism

Ahilan Kadirgamar

If one thing has changed with the political landscape of Lanka in the last year and particularly in the last few months, it is the tremendous attention on the JVP. It is indeed the pre-occupation of analysts in Sri Lanka. Remarkably, even the pro-LTTE analyst Taraki wrote his last two columns on them, before his shocking abduction and murder in Colombo. Chandrika and many in her cabinet have had numerous debates and even mud slinging fights with the JVP. Even the Co-Chairs of the Donors and the Norwegian mediators have made it one of their priorities to try and rein in the JVP.

And this attention is not related to one single issue. Whether it is the peace process, neo-liberal reforms, tsunami reconstruction, the role of the NGOs, the anti-conversion bill etc, it is the JVP that is talked about in the public sphere. Yet in the Lankan public sphere, and particularly among the

English speaking communities, little in depth analysis of the JVP seems to be present. Neither is there a clear understanding of what the JVP is today, nor is it clear as to where it's headed and how it will impact the political landscape of Lanka. Neither are we clear about its constituencies and its social base, nor are we differentiating between the JVP and the various other Southern, Sinhala and anti-globalization forces.

Hence in this issue of lines we have given space to two interventions and two editorials relating to the JVP. It is an attempt to contribute to a much-needed discussion and debate about the JVP. A debate that could hopefully lead to an engagement with them by progressives in the Lankan public sphere. Because, engage we must, regardless of what we think of the JVP. It is no longer the marginal force coming out of a decimated rebellion; it is now a strong contender

to become the second largest political formation in the mainstream political realm.

As mentioned above, there are many angles from which to choose to engage with the JVP. It could be on questions of economic development and neo-liberal reform. Certainly, it is the JVP's opposition to neo-liberalism and its pro-rural and pro-poor stance, rather than its position on the Tamil question that has propelled it back into the political mainstream. One could engage with it on its recent stand on the NGOs. One could engage with its position on imperialism and what it calls Westernization. However, in the lines that follow, I will stick to the question of the JVP's position regarding the Tamil minority, particularly the issues related to the peace process, pluralism, human rights and federalism.

Before going further along that trajectory, I must say that the peace process is not the only issue facing Lanka. It is for me one among many inter-related issues. And while recognizing the inter-relatedness of these issues, there is also the need to strategically de-link certain issues when the need arises. A major political blunder on the part of the Ranil Wickramasinghe government and the international Donors, both strategically and morally, was their project of linking the peace process with neo-liberal reforms. (See my interviews with Sarath Fernando in the February 2004 and May 2004 issues of lines. And 'Who Wins the Neo-liberal Peace' by Darini Rajasingam-Sennanayake in the February 2003 issue of lines.) Not only did that lead to the fall of the Wickramasinghe government and the rise of the JVP, as increases in the cost of living and further pauperization alienated the electorate, it also created a negative imprint about the peace process in the psyche of sections of the South. And continuing along that troubling path was the statement by three of the four Co-Chairs of the Tokyo Donor Conference (US, EU and Japan) on 15th December 2004:

"They expressed deep concern about the ongoing JVP-led actions against the peace process in Sri Lanka and the Government of Norway's ef-

(continued from page 25)

beforehand that the accused were unfairly sentenced. One justice publicly reminded the courtroom to remember that the inmates who had died were members of the LTTE, suggesting that this might mitigate the guilt of the accused.

"The judgment of the Supreme Court calls into question its impartiality in dealing with cases related to the Tamil Tigers," said Adams. "The Court must put aside politics and personal feelings when dealing with criminal offenses involving Tamils."

Following a public outcry over the deaths, on March 8, 2001, the government established a Commission of Inquiry into the killings. The Commission faulted the local police commanders—Assistant Superintendent of Police, A.W. Dayaratne, and Headquarter's Inspector, Jaya-

ntha Seneviratne—for failing to protect the detainees from the attack in spite of prior knowledge of a planned demonstration by local villagers in front of the detention centre. Both are alleged to have known that an attack was likely, but neither acted to prevent the attacks. Neither officer has taken any disciplinary action against their subordinates for failing to protect inmates under their control. However, to date, neither Dayaratne nor Senivaratne has been indicted or even disciplined.

"To ensure that justice is done and seen to be done, investigations of senior police officials such as Dayaratne and Seneviratne should be re-opened," said Adams. "To date, those in authority who should accept responsibility for the mob killing appear to be protected instead of investigated." □

forts as facilitator of that process. The representatives expressed bewilderment that a member party of the UPFA could engage in such a campaign in absolute contradiction of the clearly stated position of the President and the Government that they endorse and support the Norwegian role."

It was clear that the JVP's letter of protest to the Norwegians was only a red herring for the Donors and the Norwegians to try and put the JVP in its place. Their aversion to the JVP for its opposition to the neo-liberal agenda may have been one motivation for such a strong statement. The LTTE leader's Heroes day speech in late November threatening to resume the war, and the LTTE increasing tensions on the ground at sentry points and by shutting down public life through orchestrated hartals in the weeks that followed was the other reason why the donors, Norway and perhaps even the President wished to increase the heat on the JVP as a way of appeasing and deflecting attention away from the LTTE. This strategy clearly backfired, since the LTTE was unable to restart the war due to the intense internationalization of Sri Lanka in the weeks and months that followed the tsunami. The JVP on the other hand became more entrenched in its opposition to the Donor aligned forces. The JVP went on to articulate a link between forces that support neo-liberalism and forces appeasing the LTTE.

Another flawed approach of engagement was articulated by no less an expert on the JVP than Jayadeva Uyangoda, a member of the 1971 JVP insurrection, and now respected as one of the foremost political analysts in Sri Lanka. In an article discussing the JVP's verbal attacks on NGOs, Uyangoda has the following to say about reining it in:

"In a fragmented parliament, they have also been able to bully the two main political parties, SLFP and UNP, who, with all their blemishes, have allowed a multi-ethnic, democratic, pluralistic polity to take shape in this country even amidst a prolonged civil war."

"The traditional democratic political parties in Sri Lanka, the SLFP, UNP,

SLMC, CWC, TNA and left parties should not allow these half-democratic forces to use the country's parliament for undemocratic agendas and McCarthy-type witch hunting." ('NGOs and hate politics must end' Daily Mirror, April 30, 2005)

The problem is, of course, whether the above-mentioned political parties are pluralistic and democratic in their "traditional" or modern garbs. In the Tamil mind, it is the SLFP and the UNP and their undemocratic attacks on pluralism and their chauvinism that led to the rise of Tamil militancy. (Kumar David also makes this point in his article in this issue of lines, on the kind of actions that led to the marginalization of the minorities and the Left by these "traditional democratic political parties.") It is all the more ridiculous to include today's TNA as a democratic party, the TNA is nothing less than the proxy or a puppet of the LTTE, whose members in parliament were not only elected in the most fraudulent election ever held in the North and East, but do not even have the space to mourn their own leaders and colleagues who were slaughtered by the LTTE over the last two decades. Furthermore, Uyangoda's reliance now on the "traditional democratic political parties" may be as flawed now as the strategy of some progressives in the late eighties who relied on these very same chauvinistic political parties. Both the SLFP and the UNP have played havoc with Tamil rights and Tamil aspirations throughout Lanka's post-colonial history and they both continue to play a politics of opportunism with the human rights of dissenting Tamils facing the LTTE's guns. And it is such opportunism that will determine these "traditional democratic political parties" engagement not only with the LTTE but also the JVP. Uyangoda perhaps has made the mistake of confusing the bourgeois political parties from the bourgeois democratic state. The bourgeois democratic state and its apparatuses have certain obligations to its citizens, and they in turn can demand certain bourgeois democratic and human rights as part of a social compact. The bourgeois political parties on the other hand have

been acting in the interests of their patronage networks, their consolidation of power and when it comes to the question of minorities, mobilization with their majoritarian ideology.

Keeping these flawed approaches of engagement with the JVP in mind, we may return then to the progressive agenda for engaging the JVP. This requires clarity on the issues on which we engage and on the means of engagement. The attempts by the Donors and the "traditional democratic political parties" to rein in the JVP are questionable both on substance and means, that is, both the issues on which they were pressured and the manner in which they exerted pressure.

Some directions on progressive means of engagement may be found in the JVP's own history and the history of militant politics in Sri Lanka. Again, it may be worth looking at another article by Uyangoda titled 'Social Conflict, Radical Resistance and Projects of State Power in Southern Sri Lanka: The Case of JVP' written a few years ago, possibly before the ceasefire, but published in 2003. This essay is written in the great tradition of the Social Scientists Association (SSA) in its hey day in the late seventies to late eighties. It is in many ways an accumulated wealth of analysis of the work of figures like the late Newton Gunasinghe on whose shoulders some of us stand to gain an understanding of Lankan politics. Uyangoda writes:

"Indeed, the JVP's political programme for immediate seizure of state power has been an oppressively totalizing one that necessitated violence and terror. This is where the politics of both the JVP of the eighties and the LTTE all along presents an anti-modernist, not a post-modernist, reaction to the incomplete conditions of Sri Lanka's political modernity."

"The violence associated with the anti-systemic and anti-state violence of these two forms of radicalism has been directed not only against the state, but also against the political formations in the public sphere that could present different agendas and practices of politics. Bringing the

public sphere under total control, with no space for deliberative politics, was a major strategic objective of JVP violence in 1987-89. The LTTE carries on those politics in Sri Lanka's Tamil society with great passion and commitment." (Pg. 54, *Building Local Capacities for Peace* edited by Markus Mayer et al.)

Uyangoda here is mainly talking about the JVP of the 1987 - 1989 insurrection and the LTTE during the last two decades. The question then is about the space for engagement in the public sphere. There is far more space for engagement in the South, including engagement with the JVP today than in the extremely militarized environment of terror in the late eighties. It will be a grave mistake to get our historical bearings wrong and assume that the JVP is the same monster that it was in the late eighties. Just as it would be equally wrong to assume that the Sri Lankan State now is the same authoritarian regime of the late eighties. There may be ideological continuities in both the JVP as a party and the institutions that form the State apparatuses, but the space for engagement is different. As for the North and East, I would agree with the Uyangoda at the time (his position seems to have changed during the last few years as evident from his regular columns) that the public sphere is under the total control of the LTTE, as hundreds of Tamils have been killed and thousands more abducted and disappeared during the three years of the ceasefire.

If we agree that public sphere in the South provides the space for engagement, we have to now figure out the specific issues on which to engage the JVP. As mentioned earlier, I will limit my comments to that of engaging the JVP's position on the peace process, pluralism, human rights and federalism. The JVP's position on India and the Tamil minority, which it saw as agents of Indian expansionism, have indeed changed over the decades. The JVP now uses the strongest rhetoric in opposing the LTTE, and claims it is not against the Tamils, but only against LTTE "terrorists". Now, the JVP has a very good relationship with India, has es-

tablished links with Tamil political dissidents, and even claim to stand for the human rights of Tamils under the jackboot of the LTTE.

However, the JVP fails the political litmus test of federalism. It is the only major political party that has not agreed to explore federalism as a political solution to the conflict. Both the SLFP and UNP leadership have at least agreed to explore federalism. So did the LTTE, through the Oslo declaration, though now it seems to be back peddling. To claim that the JVP as per its resolutions in the 1980s is for the rights of all minorities and equal treatment is a cynical denial of historical realities. It is an insult to the sufferings of a minority ravaged by two decades of war. When the JVP talks about "territorial integrity" or patriotism (not to mention its role in the Patriotic National Movement) as reasons for opposing certain initiatives of the peace process, including resumption of peace talks or the Joint Mechanism, such rhetoric stinks of majoritarian chauvinism. Flirting with the language of "patriotism" in particular is a grim reminder of rhetoric that the JVP used during its insurrection of terror in the late eighties. There are perfectly valid reasons for opposing talks based on an interim administration proposal that is undemocratic or a joint mechanism that is not accountable and does not adequately represent the Muslims. But an opposition to initiatives within a peace process colored by the rhetoric of "patriotism", coupled with the dismissal of Tamil aspirations for autonomy and the Tamil people's desire for a political solution, while simultaneously expressing concern for Tamil human rights is a cynical engagement with the Tamil minority. The JVP needs to wake up and ask the question, why are there no patriotic Tamils, even among those opposed to the LTTE? The JVP cannot pretend that two decades of war and six decades of injustice against the Tamil community is a fiction. They need to ask those Tamil dissidents with whom it has established links as to why they as young Tamil youth took up arms against the state. In the Lankan context, "patriotism" is the privilege of the majority,

and the uses of "patriotism" are often no different from the uses of Sinhala chauvinism.

If one is to think of a similar parallel in the North and East, even those who have opposed the LTTE tooth and nail cannot merely state that they will treat the Muslims with justice and equality in a Tamil dominated province. Where the Muslim community is concerned, at minimum, they must call for political guarantees, safeguards for rights, democratic autonomy and reparations for past injustices. Similarly, questions also arise regarding caste and gender oppression in the Tamil communities. Tamil nationalism like Sinhala patriotism has been marred by the slaughter bench of history. It can no longer subsume the Muslim identity under the category of Tamil speaking people, to do so would be the expression of ethnic Tamil chauvinism.

An engagement with the JVP, first, on an agreement to explore federalism and then on a commitment to a suitable federal model is necessary for continuing the peace process, minority confidence in pluralism, and a genuine support for human rights. Given the history of injustices, the JVP needs to realize that minorities require institutional guarantees for cultural self-expression and against majoritarian discrimination. Federalism is the best bet for such institutional guarantees. However, even if the JVP accepts a federal political solution, this does not necessarily signify their transformation. A prudent engagement will require the political will of progressives in all the ethnic communities to push the JVP to accept federalism and then hold it to such a political solution. To do otherwise will be to repeat the folly of failed promises by the other political parties in the South.

The variety of voices that have emerged calling for the South and the JVP to address the need for a federal political solution during the last few months is a welcome change in the public sphere. Veteran dissenting Tamil politician Anandasangaree has taken the lead in engaging the JVP in calling for the protection of Tamil rights and the simultaneous need to

address Tamil aspirations by moving forward on a federal political solution. To not engage the JVP at this point in the public sphere and through debate will be a repetition of one of the most costly political blunders. In 1983, President Jayawardena banned the JVP for the 1983 anti-Tamil riots, which were in fact organized by his own party. The ban led to the JVP's isolation and disengagement with them, paving the way for the violent insurrection of 1987-1989.

In conclusion then, an engagement with the JVP relying on the Donors and the other major political parties is bound to fail. The Donors do not have the leverage that they have over the ruling parties, because the ruling parties depend on Donor aid to rule the country. The unsuccessful

donor carrot used to entice the LTTE will not work with the JVP. The JVP's politics are diametrically opposed to the Donor agenda and any attempt to rein them in this way is bound to fail. Various forces in Sri Lanka have acquired the habit of using the leverage of the international community to push for a liberal agenda, but in the case of the JVP, this will not work. Next, the opportunistic politics of the two major political parties will also not provide sufficient conditions of engagement, until they decide to take a principled stand on the very same issues on which we would like to engage the JVP. What is required now is a critical engagement by progressives with the JVP's stand on federalism. In claiming the status of 'sole-representative' and in targeting and

eliminating all dissent, the LTTE continues to unite all Tamil dissidents and is creating the conditions for the silent majority to throw their lot in with the latter. If the JVP does not make a historical shift in its position on the question of minority rights and aspirations through an embracement of federalism, the time may come when a consensus emerges on a peace with justice and a political solution in the country, and at that time, the JVP may find itself in the dustbin of history. A major blunder of both the Wickramasinghe and Chandrika peace processes was the lack of a national discussion and debate on federalism. This should be a priority for progressives in Lanka today.

(Courtesy of lines, May 2005;  
www.lines-magazine.org)

## They yearn to live .....

**Varatha Shanmuganathan**

*Beautiful Vesak lights  
Brightly burning temple  
lamps*

*Glittering church candles  
Glistening mosque domes  
Calming, but cast a  
dreadful shadow*

*A shadow of war and fear  
A shadow of suspicion and  
cotentp*

*The shadows stare ominously  
The worshippers sit in the  
shadows*

*Their eyes are glazed with tears  
And their hearts are full of fears  
Still their minds are strong and clear  
THEY YEARN TO LIVE,  
NOT TO DIE.*

(Writer's reflections while returning from Sri Lanka on May 21st 2005 at the Heathrow airport lounge)

## 'The way it used to be'

**Capt. Elmo Jayawardena**

*The gram sellers at Galle Face Green sold their 'kadala gottu' topped with 'isso wade' for twenty-five cents. The movie goes at Savoy cinema came out; Couples went to Aleric's for ice cream and families miserly budgeted for Chinese fried rice at Golden Gate.*

*Gunawardena opened batting for the Tamil Union and Sunderalingam kept wickets for the Sinhalese Sports Club.*

*This was once nostalgic Sri Lanka on easy street sans the raging war and the terrible turmoil; 'The way it used to be'.*

*The 'Yal Devi' took the Madhu pilgrims and the 'Ruhunu Kumari' carried the Kataragama clan. Marawila fishermen fished at Mullativu with the monsoon change and Lever's and Reckitt's Sales Reps sold toothpaste in Jaffna and drank 'Tal Raa' whilst bathing in the Keeramalai tank.*

*The Vel cart used to come down Wellawatte and the waiters worked double time at the Sarasvati Lodge.*

*The differences were there from the North to the South, but who cared?*

*Nobody killed anyone. There was a life, simple and in peace.*

*Bala Tampoe took the CMU out on strike every year and the Parliament changed colours every five years with mythological promises.*

*That was acceptable.*

*The queues got long at the CWE to buy "Jumping Fish" and the bread prices leapt like high jumpers. Those were our big problems.*

*The smiles were there too, affordable to the all and sundry, beat shows and big matches, sports meets and school carnivals, all within a ten-rupee budget.*

*Fashion-wise, the pinnacle was the CR-Havies Match at Longdon Place or the Royal Thomian at SSC; the Suzettes and Claudettes were there, dazzling in mini skirts, making their best attempts to get partnered to go to the Coconut Grove and jingo and jive to the Jetliners.*

*Some made it to Akasa Kade too, to eat egg hoppers and hold hands and become more naughty whilst pretending to be watching the ship lights at the Colombo harbour.*

*There was peace; it was a long long time ago. That was before the Morris Minor taxis changed their English alphabet number plates.*

*Then came the carnage. Who's to blame? Don't waste time, that's kicking the moon and corralling clouds. We all know better. We are all to be blamed, some for cheering and others for their silence. It has always been 'our soldiers' - but it is their war.*

*The guns are silent now and the talks go on and hope seeps slow like a weed-clogged wave. If the Gods are kind, we'll have peace. Let it lie there.*

*North and East must be separate 'Don't give this', 'can't have that', 'autonomy? what nonsense?' Such passionate phrases bellow from borrowed patriotism.*

*'My son has to study', 'No no, not to join the Air Force', 'Army? Are you mad?' The same voices add the contradictions.*

*'We must continue to fight at any cost'.*

*Brave words, quite cheap too when rights and wrongs are just "whys" sprouting out from empty opinions on even emptier forums.*

*Try telling all that to mothers who buried their sons or children who pray for their missing fathers. Voice it to a legless 'Boy' from Velvettiturai or a Sightless soldier from Devundara. Or maybe to a lover who lights a candle for some forgotten fighter buried under swollen earth, too poor even for a memorial.*

*What does it matter to which side they belonged? They paid the price, we didn't. They shed the tears, we didn't.*

*Let us then wish, nay, that's not enough, let us pray, to all the Gods in creation for "The way it used to be" to return.*

*Or... let us be silent. We owe that much to those who died nameless.*

*(The writer is the president of AFLAC - The Association for Lighting a Candle)*

## NEWS TRACK

**STF trooper wounded in landmine blast:** May 19 - A trooper of the elite Special Task Force (STF) was injured when the vehicle he was driving was hit by a claymore landmine which detonated at around 9.30am near the 9th milepost on the Monaragala-Ampara Road in eastern Sri Lanka, police sources said. The Defender jeep, being driven by the Constable Kalansuriya, was escorting a Prison Department bus, which was transporting some prisoners to the Monaragala Prison, they said.

**Body of missing soldier found in Kilali:** May 19 - The body of a soldier of the Sri Lanka Army (SLA) who was reported missing from May 17 during training in the forward defence line in Kilali high security zone in Thenmaradchchi division along Jaffna-Kandy highway was recovered on the following day from nearby shrub jungle by fellow army men, security sources said. The Kodikamam Police said that no injuries were found on the body of the soldier. Chavakachcheri Magistrate Mr.P.Subramaniam visited the scene and held the inquest. The Magistrate further ordered the Police to send the body of the soldier to the Colombo national hospital for post-mortem and to submit the report in court later, sources said.

**Woman killed in Grenade attack on LTTE office:** May 21 - Mrs. Sinnathamby Annapillai (65) was killed Saturday 7.15 pm when unidentified men lobbed a grenade at the Periyakallaru LTTE political office located 500 metres from Special Task Force (STF) camp in Periyakallaru. There were no LTTE officials in the office at the time of the attack, sources said.

Mrs. Sinnathamby is the owner of the house used by the LTTE as their Batticaloa office.

**Attempt to erect another Buddha statue foiled:** May 22 - Sri Lanka Army and Police jointly removed the Buddha statue that was erected overnight on 21 May on the roadside along Ehambaram Street in Kerniyady, a suburb in Trincomalee town, Police said. The Police also removed building materials left behind by unidentified persons to build a shrine. Kerniyady is situated about one km off north of Trincomalee-Uppuveli road in close proximity of Sinnathoduvai Pillaiyar Kovil and Trincomalee Railway Station.

The matter was immediately brought to the notice of the top officials of the SLA and Police. Thereafter a contingent of army and personnel rushed to the site and stopped the construction work and removed all building materials from the site and the statue, police said.

**New Navy base on Jaffna coast:** May 23 - The Sri Lanka Navy (SLN) has started preliminary work on a new naval base at Thiruvadinilai beach in Chulipuram, on the Jaffna peninsula's western coast, reports said this week. Large quantities of gravel and sand have been transported over to the beach. Local fishermen say buoys have also been deployed to mark out the particular area of the harbour. SLN personnel who have set up camp on the beach are preventing local fishermen from fishing there, the Colombo based daily Virakesari reported.

**Shop employee shot dead in Batticaloa:** May 24 - Nagappan Sivarajah (25), a father of three, who was employed at a tea shop



in Mannampity, 72 km northwest of Batticaloa town was shot dead by three unidentified men Monday (24) evening, Police said.

**Cancer Hospital to be reopened:** May 24 - Cancer Hospital located within the Sri Lanka Army (SLA) demarcated High Security Zone (HSZ) in Tellipallai, Jaffna, was to be reopened on 27 May, Hospital sources said. For the past several years the SLA refused permission for the hospital to function and cancer patients in Jaffna often had to travel to Colombo to obtain life saving treatment in Maharagama.

**Warning of humanitarian crisis in Trinco:** May 24 - Community Empowerment Network of Trincomalee (CENT) Tuesday made an urgent appeal to authorities concerned to take immediate remedial action to restore normalcy and ensure peace in Trincomalee to continue humanitarian assistance to the victims of war and tsunami. "Trincomalee is on the verge of a humanitarian crisis if the current tense situation persists," said CENT in its appeal.

CENT made this appeal after all relief, rehabilitation and reconstruction works had come to a halt in the district following general shut down and violence since May 17th in the east port town.

CENT is a network of governmental, non-governmental organizations working towards psychological empowerment of survivors in the Trincomalee district. "Trincomalee survived two decades of war and was on the path to peace. This peace was unsettled by tsunami waves and the people have just begun to recover. Unfortunately peace was again interrupted for the last few days. As a result service provisions including basic relief such as water and food are curtailed. Rehabilitation process is stopped," CENT said. "Government, NGOs and Donors should continue their support. We hope saner counsel prevails", CENT stressed on behalf of survivors.

**Karuna Group cadres remanded in custody:** May 25 - Four armed members of the Karuna Group and their driver who were arrested by Sri Lanka police on 22 May Saliyaveva region of Amparai district in eastern Sri Lanka were remanded in custody until 8 June by Acting Magistrate for Puttalam, Tamil press reports said.

The vehicle was stopped by police while travelling from Kochchikade, Negombo to Anuradhapura on the Anuradhapura-Saliyaveva Road, the Thinakural reported. A routine search of the vehicle turned up a brand new handgun and ammunition, the paper said.

The group had told the police they were Karuna group members and that they were going to Anuradhapura. The weapons were for their protection, they also told police. They were arrested, however, brought to Puttalam and produced before Acting District Magistrate AMS Abdul Qadar. The four Karuna Group members were named as Niranjan Nimalan of Trinco, Shanmuganathan of Negombo, S Kusala Kumar of Negombo, Shanmuganathan Nishanthan of Negombo. The driver was named Don Niroshan.

**Trinco former UC Chairman killed:** May 25 - Mr. Periyapodi Suriyamoorthy, former Chairman of the Trincomalee Urban Council, succumbed to gunshot injuries in the Colombo national hospital on 25 May, a week after he was shot at on May 18 by unidentified gunmen in his Trincomalee residence, family sources said. They have accused the LTTE of carrying out the murder.

He underwent emergency operation in Trincomalee general hospital after he received gunshot injuries in his abdomen but

was later airlifted to Colombo national hospital after his condition became critical. He passed away after a week without regaining sense. Suriyamoorthy was 56 and father of five children.

**Court reaffirms order on Buddha statue case:** May 25 - Mr. M. Ganesharajah Trincomalee Magistrate and Additional District Judge reaffirmed his earlier judgement on the controversial Buddha statue in Trincomalee bus stand and directed that the Police should continue its effort with the co-operation of the Urban Council administration in regard to the temporary removal of the statue and against unlawful structures of other faiths, sources said.

**India to refit Navy flagship at no cost:** May 25 - The Sri Lanka Navy (SLN) said an Indian naval delegation consisting of top engineers and architects is visiting the island to discuss the refitting of the SLN flagship 'Sayura.' The ship is to be refitted in a naval dockyard in India, the SLN said.

During President Chandrika Kumaratunga's official visit of to India in December 2004, the Indian government had agreed to carry out the refit of 'Sayura' in India at no cost to Sri Lanka, the SLN said. The 'Sayura,' an offshore patrol vessel (OPV) was purchased from Indian Navy in 1998 and served as the Sri Lanka Navy flagship and in off-shore surveillance operations, the SLN said.

**Protest against SLA's embargo:** May 26 - A large number of Tamil civilians participated in protest marches held Wednesday in areas of LTTE controlled Muttur east and Eachchilampathu division in the southern Trincomalee district, demanding the immediate removal of ban on transporting cement, building materials and fuel through Sri Lanka Army (SLA) checkpoints at Kaddaiparichchan and Mahindapura, sources said.

The protest march held in Muttur east commenced from Navalady and reached the Kaddaiparichchan SLA camp. Representatives of the Sri Lanka Monitoring Mission (SLMM) in Muttur, Divisional Secretariat officials and officer in charge of the Kaddaiparichchan SLA camp were at the site when the protest march arrived. Delegations of the Civil Groups' Forum, which organized the protest marches handed over memoranda to SLMM monitors and army officials assembled at the SLA camps at Kaddaiparichchan and Mahindapura demanding the immediate removal of the embargo, sources said.

**Home Guards in LTTE custody:** May 27 - Tamil Eelam Police produced three suspected Sri Lankan homeguards in Tamil Eelam District Court in Kokkaddicholai. The Home Guards were arrested by the Liberation Tigers on Tuesday (27) in LTTE held Poraithivu, 35 km southwest of Batticaloa, according to LTTE sources. The judge, refusing bail, has ordered remand till 10th of June. Officials from Sri Lanka Monitoring Mission (SLMM) and parents were allowed to meet with the arrested persons, sources in Kokkaddicholai said.

LTTE's Mavady Munmari military wing arrested the three persons who were riding in a motorbike inside the LTTE held area and reportedly they were later handed over to Tamil Eelam Police.

Sri Lankan Police from Bakiella Police earlier said they had complained to SLMM about three persons, Mr. K. M. Samintha (24), Mr. A. M. Santhapala (19) and Mr. R. A. Sanakapradeepkumar (22), who had gone missing. According to Sri Lankan Police one of the persons is a Home Guard cadre and the other two are bus drivers. The persons were from Lugu Lanthan in Bakiella, a Sinhala village, is located between Amparai and Maha Oya, 25 km north of Amparai.

**Troops attacked in Jaffna:** May 27 - A Sri Lanka Army sergeant was injured when a group of people threw stones at troops in Nelliady in Jaffna, the SLA said. A petrol bomb was thrown at another Army detachment in the area earlier in the evening, the Army said. A group of unidentified men had lobbed a petrol bomb at the Army detachment in the general area of Nelliady on 26 May 2005 around 8.45 p.m. but the bomb did not explode, the Army said, adding it suspected the Liberation Tigers.

"Later, around 9.15 p.m. another group of people went on pelting stones towards the troops at Malai Junction near Pulleyaradi Kovil in the general area of Nelliady," it said. Sergeant Palitha Kusum Kumara received injuries in the pelting. The SLA has complained to the Sri Lanka Monitoring Mission (SLMM) about.

**SLMM acting head meets non-LTTE groups:** May 27 - Mr. Hagrup Haukland, the acting head of the Sri Lanka Monitoring Mission (SLMM) met with officials from the EPDP, PLOTE and EPRLF (V) groups in the East. The meeting took place in SLMM District office located at Lake Road, Batticaloa on 27 May.

Mr. R. Thurairatnam from Eelam Peoples Revolutionary Liberation Front EPRLF (V) Varathar Wing, Mr. S. Sivanantharaja alias Siva from Eelam People's Democratic Party (EPDP), Mr. Subramaniam Baheerathan alias Rathana and Mr. Ramasamy Anthonipillai alias Conshan from Peoples Liberation Organisation of Tamil Eelam (PLOTE) participated in the meeting, sources said.

Discussion reportedly centered around the escalating killings in the East. Around 350 persons including officials and cadres from the Tamil Tigers, alleged informants and agents associated with the Sri Lankan Army, cadres belonging to various non-LTTE Tamil groups and civilians have been killed since the signing of Cease Fire Agreement (CFA) in February 2002.

**Police Sub-Inspector shot dead:** May 28 - Unidentified gunmen shot and killed Batticaloa Police Sub-Inspector, Mr. Jude Felix Thiyagarajah (42). The incident took place on Saturday 28 May at 6.30 pm in Batticaloa Main Road close to a book depot, 100 meters from the Head Quarters of the 223 Brigade of the Sri Lanka Army.

At the time he was fatally shot, Mr. Thiyagarajah was returning home from duty in a motorbike, according to Batticaloa Police. The assailants had used a hand-gun to kill their victim, according to Batticaloa Police conducting investigations into the killing.

**Grenade attack kills one, wounds three:** May 29 - Mr. Abdul Kadir Jauffer Hussain (23) was killed and three others were wounded in a grenade attack Saturday (28) night 8.00 pm in Eravur Shaikh Road, 15 kilometres north of Batticaloa. One of the wounded persons is in critical state, according to Batticaloa Hospital sources. Eravur Police conducting investigations said they suspect a personal dispute to be the motive behind the incident. Mr. Seeni Mohammed Kasim (23), Mr. Latib Abdul Shaja (23), Abdul Kadir Mohammed (16) are the persons wounded in the attack.

**Muslim van driver shot dead:** May 30 - Mr. Mohammed Fowzan (31), a Muslim van driver from Ibbagamuva, Kurunagalle, was shot and killed by unidentified gunmen in Veeramuanai close to Kattumedu junction south of Batticaloa in the early hours of Monday (30). Mr. Fowzan is the driver of Free Media Movement (FMM) Spokesperson Sunanda Deshapriya, sources in Colombo said. A friend of Mr. Fowzan, Mr. Mohammed Nazar (32) who was a passenger in the front seat, was admitted to the Sammanthurai hospital with two gunshot wounds, hospital sources said. Mr Fowzan was driving towards Addalaichenai campus of the South Eastern University to meet his relatives in

a newly hired van when the incident happened. The van crashed into a bus stop after the driver was critically injured, according to the injured passenger.

**SLRCS to construct 1000 houses in Trinco district:** May 31 - The Sri Lanka Red Cross Society (SLRCS) supported by the Japanese Red Cross Society is to construct one thousand permanent houses to tsunami-hit families in the Trincomalee district. The government has already identified two sites, one in Kinniya division and other in Trincomalee to construct about 245 houses, SLRCS sources said.

One hundred permanent houses will be constructed in Kinniya division and 145 houses in a site between fourth and fifth mile post along Trincomalee-Kandy road for tsunami affected families in Samudragama, an illegal Sinhala settlement, which is located along the Back Bay beach in the heart of Trincomalee town, sources said.

SLRCS is waiting for the Sri Lanka government approval for the construction of the remainder of one thousand houses, SLRCS sources said.

Meanwhile, the visiting Japanese Red Cross Society President Mr. Tadateru Konoe and his team accompanied by Dr. E. G. Gnanagunalan, President of the SLRCS, Trincomalee district branch visited Kinniya division Sunday morning and inspected the site at Kuba Nagar. About one hundred and five transitional homes are to be built for the tsunami affected Kuba Nagar families who now reside in tent houses elsewhere with great difficulties.

**Senior Military Intelligence officer shot dead:** June 1 - A high ranking Sri Lankan Military Intelligence Corps (MIC) Commanding Officer, Major Thuwan Nizam Muthaliff, 39, was shot and killed Tuesday (31) morning around 8.00 am by unidentified gunmen at Polhengoda Junction in Narehenpitya, Colombo. The gunmen following him in a motorbike shot him at point-blank range while his car stopped at the Wijaya Kumarathunga signal crossing along the Baseline Highway. Muthaliff is the highest ranking Sri Lankan Military Intelligence officer to be killed since the signing of Cease Fire Agreement (CFA) between the Government of Sri Lanka and the LTTE. February 2002.

The incident took place while Major Muthaliff was on his way to attend a special meeting at Kotelawala Defence Academy, military sources said.

Major Muthaliff who was provided with special body guards for his security, was travelling without the security personnel when he was shot, sources in Colombo said. Muthaliff was rushed to Apollo Hospital, but he succumbed to gunshot injuries at the hospital. Sri Lanka's President Chandrika Kumaratunga awarded posthumous promotion to the rank of Lieutenant colonel to Major Muthaliff Monday. Muthaliff is a father of two children.

**Grenade attack on LTTE office:** June 1 - Unidentified persons lobbed two grenades at the administration office of the LTTE in Akkaraipattu-Amparai road in eastern Sri Lanka. The incident took place Wednesday (1) morning around 2.00 am. No one was injured in the attack, LTTE sources said. Six cadres were stationed in the office at the time of the attack. LTTE officials said that they have lodged a complaint with the Sri Lanka Monitoring Mission (SLMM) over the incident.

**USAID helps rebuild Jaffna psychiatric ward:** June 1 - US Agency for International Development (USAID) has provided a grant of US\$225,000 to rehabilitate a new psychiatric wing at the Tellipalai Hospital in Jaffna, a press release issued by the US Embassy in Colombo said. USAID is an independent agency that provides economic, development and humanitarian assistance around the world in support of the foreign policy goals of the United States.

One thousand outpatients and 60 inpatients each month will now have access to a rehabilitated psychiatric ward in the Thelipallai Hospital in Jaffna thanks to a grant from the United States worth \$ 225,000. In addition, 300 displaced families in Jaffna, half of which are headed by women, will benefit from newly constructed sanitation facilities and access to clean water. The American-financed project also trained fifteen Internally Displaced young men in concrete casting and pre-fabrication skills to construct latrines to service formerly displaced families returning to Thelipallai, Jaffna, Kopay, Point Pedro and Chavakachcheri.

Representatives from the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) participated in a ceremonial re-opening of the upgraded hospital wing and toured sanitation and clean water facilities in Jaffna, the press release said.

**TV retransmission station attacked:** June 2 - Sun Television retransmission station in Vairavarpuliyankulam in Vavuniya district operated by cadres of Tami Eelam Liberation Organization (TELO) was attacked with hand grenades by unidentified attackers at 1.45 am Thursday (2) morning, causing damage worth over Rs 1 million to equipment. The station administered by TELO rebroadcasted Sun TV channels to Vauniya town and surrounding areas.

Witnesses to the incident said that a group of three persons carried out the attack before escaping. Vavuniya Police and Sri Lanka Army (SLA) soldiers visited the scene of the incident and began investigations.

**Two civilians injured in STF fire:** June 3 - Two civilians, Mr. Nadarajah Manickam (42) and Mr. Vijay Nadarajah (22), a father and his son, were injured when Special Task Force (STF) soldiers fired on Thursday (3) night around 9.30 pm. when the EPDP office in Karaithivu in eastern Sri Lanka came under attack by unidentified gunmen. Injured civilians were admitted to Kalmunai Ashraff Memorial Hospital.

**Three injured in Grenade explosion in Trinco:** June 3 - Three persons received minor injuries when unidentified persons lobbed a grenade inside the Anuradhapura - Anpuvallipuram junction market which is located about 2 km from east port town of Trincomalee Friday (3) morning around 10.30 am.

**Hartal paralyzes Northeast:** June 3 - Normal life in the north-east province was disrupted Friday (3) following the one-day general shut down condemning the failure by the Sri Lanka Government to withdraw troops from Trincomalee town who were deployed in large numbers due to the recent tense situation there.. More than fifteen hundred troops are deployed in the east port town following the controversy over the erection of a Buddha statue in a land located close to the central bus stand.

Reports from the districts of Jaffna, Mannar, Vavuniya, Trincomalee and Batticaloa state that offices of the central government, provincial council, and branches of state and private sector banks were closed down. Schools did not function. Public markets did not function. Transport services came to a standstill. Jaffna-Kandy A9 high way was closed for traffic. Business establishments except Sinhalese shops in some towns were closed, sources said.

There were also reported incidents of grenade explosion and injuries in Trincomalee. All roads were blocked in Killinochchi and traffic on A9 road to Jaffna was completely blocked by protestors who burnt tires at several places. All shops remained closed.

Parliamentarians of the Tamil National Alliance (TNA), members of the Trincomalee District Tamil Peoples' Forum (TDTPF) and other Tamil groups at a meeting held in Trincomalee on the previous day decided to hold one-day general shut down Friday through out the North-East condemning the government's

failure to keep its promise by withdrawing government troops by Thursday evening, sources said.

**Two shot and injured:** June 3 - Two Tamil youths, identified as Mr.Ravi and Mr.Sathyaseelan, have been admitted to Trincomalee General Hospital with serious gunshot injuries after being fired on by Sri Lankan Air Force (SLAF) personnel at Mitsubishi Cement Factory in Chinabay, 10 km off Trincomalee town, sources said. One of them received injuries on one of his legs and the other in his abdomen. The incident took place around 1.50 p.m. Friday, Trincomalee police said.

Police said both injured youths were LTTE cadres and were in possession of a grenade at that time of incident. However, LTTE sources denied that the injured were their cadres. Members of the Sri Lanka Monitoring Mission (SLMM) in Trincomalee went to the Trincomalee general hospital where the youths have been warded in the intensive care unit (ICU).

**EU delegation visits Jaffna:** June 4 - A delegation of the European Union (EU) visited Jaffna on Friday (4) and held discussion with the representatives of the Jaffna District Non-Governmental Organizations' Consortium (JDNOC) regarding the implementation of rehabilitation and reconstruction projects of the EU in the Jaffna district.

Mr.Gilles Bertrand led the delegation. JDNOC representatives told the EU delegation the full benefits of the short-term rehabilitation projects implemented by the EU have not reached the beneficiaries in time, sources said.

EU delegation leader replied that in future all assistance would be channelled through the World Bank under the supervision of EU after the establishment of the Joint Mechanism. He added that EU is prepared to obtain the services of the local non-governmental organizations in this regard. The EU has planned to implement long term rehabilitation and reconstruction projects in the Northeastern province in addition to the short-term projects currently being implemented by the EU.

**Army sentry burnt down:** June 4 - Unidentified group of youth Friday (4) night around 7.30 p.m. set fire to a Sri Lanka Army (SLA) sentry located in Mirusuvil-Puttur junction in Thenmaradchchi division in Jaffna district, Chavakachcheri Police said. First the group threw stones at the sentry. When soldiers stationed there withdrew the sentry was burnt down, police added. This army sentry has been frequently attacked and set on fire during general shut down and other public demonstrations previously held in the area. The military has blamed the Tamil Tigers for instigating the attacks.

**Civilian shot dead:** June 4 - Mr.Rajadurai Thangarajah (60) was shot dead Saturday (4) around 12.30 p.m. at Udupidy area in the Vadamardchchi division in the Jaffna district. He was shot by one of the two persons who followed him on a motor bicycle, Valvettithurai Police said.

The deceased was a resident of Kommathurai village in Vadamardchchi division and was returning home cycling from Udupidy market with his sister on pillion. He was shot when he was cycling towards his village through a lane along Point Pedro-Vallai road, sources said. He received gunshot injuries to the head and neck and died on the spot, police said. The deceased was married and a father of three children.

**SLA troopers search LTTE office:** June 4 - Around hundred Sri Lankan Army (SLA) soldiers entered the premises of the LTTE administrative office at Thamaraiakerni in Batticaloa town Saturday (4) night around 11.30 pm. However, LTTE officials did not allow the soldiers to enter the office building till the arrival of truce monitors, Deputy Head of Batticaloa-Amparai Political Wing of the LTTE, Mr. Daya Mohan, told TamilNet. Truce monitors rushed to the scene. Four policemen were later allowed to conduct search inside the office in the presence of

SLMM officials. The police did not find any weapons at the LTTE administrative office as charged by the SLA soldiers, according to LTTE sources.

**SLA soldiers search TELO office:** June 5 - Around hundred Sri Lankan Army (SLA) soldiers entered the Batticaloa office of the Tamil Eelam Liberation Organization (TELO), a constituent of the Tamil National Alliance (TNA), Saturday (4) night and searched the office. Military Intelligence (MI) officers participated in the search operation. Mr. Indrakumar Prasanna, Secretary General of TELO, told TamilNet. There were around 10 officials of the organisation at the office which is located at Sree Sabaratnam Road in Batticaloa town. The search operation was conducted at the same time as the SLA soldiers attempted to enter the LTTE administrative office in Batticaloa.

**Two Tamil youths killed in Colombo:** June 5 - Two Tamil youths, identified as Mr. Francis Denisius and Mr. Thevathas Emmanuel from Gurunagar, Jaffna, were shot and killed by unidentified gunmen who followed the victims in a three-wheeler in Kochchikkadai, Colombo. The incident took place in front of a Kali Temple located near the Ponnambalawaneswar Temple in Kochchikkadi Sunday (5) morning around 5.50 am, according to residents in the area. Two cellphones, 4 identity cards and around 5 000 rupees in cash were found with the victims by the Police.

**EPDP member shot dead in Jaffna:** June 5 - A resident of Naranthanai village in Kayts division in Jaffna district, Mr. Baskaran Preman Ashok (25), believed to be a member of Eelam Peoples Democratic Party (EPDP), was shot dead Sunday (5) morning around 10.45 a.m. by suspected LTTE gunmen near Moothavinayagar Kovil in Anaikoddai in the Jaffna district. The deceased was riding a motorbike at that time of incident. Gunmen, who came in a motorbike, according to reports received by the Jaffna Police, stopped him behind the Kovil and shot him.

Mallakam Magistrate Ms Sarojini Ilankovan held the inquest into the killing, sources said. The body was handed over to the mortuary of the Jaffna Teaching Hospital on the orders of the Magistrate who later directed the hospital administration to submit a report after post-mortem examination, sources said.

**Tamil youth killed in Colombo:** June 6 - Mr. Veerabahu Inthirakumar, 27, was shot by unidentified gunmen at Nelson Place, Wellawatte, Colombo Monday (6) early morning 2.30 pm, Police said. The victim succumbed to gunshot injuries at Kalubowila Hospital in Colombo.

**Karuna Group cadre shot dead:** June 6 - Mr. Karuwathamby Packiyarajah (48), suspected to belong to the Karuna faction of the LTTE, was shot and killed by suspected LTTE gunmen Sunday (5) night in eastern Sri Lanka. Valaichenai Police recovered the dead body Monday (6) morning in Aalankulam in Valaichenai. The assailants had used a T-56 assault rifle to gun down the victim, according to the Police.

The body with gunshot wounds to the head was found in Sri Lanka Army (SLA) controlled area of Alankulam, located 47 km north of Batticaloa and 8 km off the Batticaloa - Polannaruwara (Welikanda) road.

**Memorial meetings for Sivaram:** June 6 - Memorial meetings for Dharmeratnam Sivaram, senior TamilNet editor and military analyst abducted and killed on 28 April, were held in Washington D.C and in Rutgers University Center Hall New Jersey, Saturday (5) and Sunday (6) respectively.

Associate Professor at the University of South Carolina, Mark Whitaker and Associate Professor of Anthropology at the University of Colorado, Patricia Lawrence, addressed both events. Both Prof Whitaker and Prof Lawrence, and several other academics in the US and New Zealand have collaborated with Mr Sivaram on research projects related to history of Batticaloa.

Several of Mr Sivaram's close relatives from United Kingdom and Canada also participated in the events.

A memorial booklet containing messages from Tamil organizations from the US was distributed to the attendees at the events. Organizers said voluntary donations collected at the events will be sent to the TamilNet memorial fund.

**LTTE official attacked:** June 6 - A political division official of the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) from Veeramunai Navithanveli, Mr. Sathees, was attacked by Sri Lankan Special Task Force (STF) soldiers Monday (6) morning around 9.30 pm, LTTE said. STF soldiers hit Mr. Sathees with gun butts while he was standing in front of the Veeramunai LTTE political office, according to Mr. Atheeswaran Master, Political Head of the LTTE Veeramunai Koddam in Amparai. LTTE has lodged a complaint with SLMM over the incident, Atheeswaran Master said.

**Rights Commission visits Jaffna:** June 6 - Five commissioners of the Human Rights Commission of Sri Lanka (HRCSL) led by its Chairperson Ms Radhika Coomaraswamy visited Jaffna on 6 June and held discussions with the Jaffna area commander of the Sri Lanka Army, Major General Sunil Tennekon, representatives of the Jaffna District Consortium of Non-Governmental Organizations (JDCNO), Civil Groups and Jaffna Bishop Rt. Rev Dr Thomas Soundaranayagam regarding several problems confronting the people of the district from high security zone to accidents involving army vehicles.

The HRCSL delegation first met Major General Sunil Tennekon in the latter's headquarters. The delegation discussed with the SLA command in Jaffna about resettling displaced families in no-man zones located close to the high security zones (HSZ) and in general the HSZ which is blocking the return of normalcy in the lives of displaced people, sources said.

The HRCSL delegation also took up the issue of violence following accidents involving army vehicles, sources said.

Later the HRCSL delegation met with the representatives of the JDCNO at the office of the Jaffna regional office of the HRCSL. JDCNO officials briefed the delegation about the ground situation prevailing in the district and problems caused by the security forces preventing normalcy in the lives of displaced people and civilians, sources said.

HRCSL delegation met with Rt. Rev. Dr. Thomas Soundaranayagam, Jaffna Bishop at Bishop House. Jaffna Bishop told the HRCSL delegation about the difficulties currently undergoing by the civilians and the displaced and urgent needs of them.

**Trinco airstrip, a canard - LTTE:** June 6 - Mr. S. Elilan, Trincomalee district political head of the LTTE Monday (6) has brought to the notice of the Sri Lanka Monitoring Mission (SLMM) that reports published in a section of the media quoting a report from the state intelligence agency that LTTE was engaged in constructing an airstrip in Sampoor, Muttur east, was a figment of imagination, sources said.

Mr. Elilan said that the army has concocted the airstrip story to justify the economic embargo imposed on the residents of the LTTE controlled Muttur east villages. The report said the airstrip was under construction in Thakaravadi in Sampoor. There was no such place called Thakaravadi in Sampoor, Mr. Elilan said. Mr. Elilan said that he urged the SLMM should investigate the matter and make public its findings.

Currently SLA has banned Muttur east residents from transporting cement, building materials and fuel from the army controlled areas. Villagers recently held several demonstrations demanding the removal of the economic embargo.

**More Lankans for Malaysia:** June 6 - Malaysia is to allow an unlimited number of workers from Sri Lanka into the country in

a bid to address a critical labour shortage, diplomats said. The agreement, which places Sri Lanka on a list of official labour-providing countries, follows the Lankan Labour and Foreign Employment Minister Athauda Seneviratne's recent visit to Kuala Lumpur.

"The Malaysians assured us that jobs in large numbers are available in the construction, manufacturing, information technology, plantation, tourism and health sectors," Seneviratne said. The Sri Lankan government will screen potential workers to make sure that only genuine candidates who do not pose any security risks make their way to Malaysia, said B. Wijayaratne, Labour Counselor with the Sri Lankan High Commission. It will also monitor employment conditions and agreements being offered to Sri Lankans.

Malaysia is one of the largest importers of foreign labour in Asia. Foreign workers, both legal and illegal, number around 2.6 million of its 10.5 million workforce. The repatriation earlier this year of some 400,000 illegal immigrants, mostly Indonesians, left a huge labour gap in the agricultural, construction, manufacturing and services sectors. In an attempt to legalise the workforce, the government has been looking for workers from countries other than Indonesia, including Pakistan, India, Sri Lanka, Nepal, Myanmar and Vietnam.

**Tiger cadre killed in Colombo:** June 6 - A LTTE cadre described by police as an LTTE intelligence cadre, and identified as 27-year-old Veerawagu Indrakumar from Punagar, Trincomalee, was found shot dead at Nelson Lane, Wellawatte by rebel LTTE cadres, in the early hours of Monday (6), police said. The victim was found by the police lying on the road with gunshot injuries and was rushed to the Kalubowila hospital but he had died on the way. Eight spent cartridges were found near his body.

He had been in Colombo for the past four days and a permit for leave from the LTTE was found on his body together with receipts of purchases made in Jaffna, DIG Sirisena Herath said.

**Tigers prevent mapping in N-E:** June 5 - The LTTE has prevented surveyors from the Survey General's Department from mapping the Mullaitivu coast citing security reasons, Survey Department officials said.

Surveyors arrived in Mullaitivu three months back to carry out measurements to demarcate the 200 metre buffer zone, but were prevented from measuring the land by the Tigers, according to S. V. Thavalingam who heads the mapping project.

Thavalingam told The Sunday Leader that the Tigers had said that high security installations were located on parts of the Mullaitivu beach and only persons with clearance were allowed in. Only a few kilometres of the Mullaitivu and Kilinochchi coasts have been so far mapped. "We were allowed to work in some areas, but not in some other stretches," Thavalingam said.

**Parts of Batticaloa District** under the control of the LTTE too were barred from the mappers due to the same reasons.

Most of the high profile LTTE Sea Tiger bases, including the main base at Chalai, are located on the north eastern coast. The army has maintained that the Sea Tiger units suffered severe damage in the December 26 tsunami. A claim however denied by the Tigers.

The Tigers meanwhile have initiated a 400 metre buffer zone in areas under its control. No independent verification has been possible of the damage to Tiger military establishments due to the restricted movement.

**125 quizzed over Sivaram killing:** June 6 - The Colombo Crime Division (CCD) probing the killing of Dharmaratnam Sivaram, editor of the pro-LTTE TamilNet website and columnist for the 'Daily Mirror' under the pseudonym Taraki, had questioned over 125 persons and had recorded their statements,

said CCD Director Senior SP Sarath Lugoda.

The CCD has received several vital clues on the killing. On the direction of IGP Chandra Fernando, the CCD had deployed three special police teams to conduct investigations on those clues. Earlier, the CCD officials had collected several important clues pertaining to the vehicle in which Sivaram was abducted.

**JHU threatens to boycott parliament:** June 7 - Venerable Athuraliya Ratana Thera, parliamentary group leader of the all monks' Jathika Hela Urumaya (JHU) party Tuesday (7) announced in parliament that his party has decided to boycott the House temporarily in protest of the Sri Lanka government's move to sign the joint mechanism proposal with the LTTE, parliamentary sources said. Thereafter JHU parliamentarians present in the House walked out.

However two JHU parliamentarians, Venerable Dhammaloka Thera and Venerable Punnyananda Thera, later returned to the House and occupied their seats, the State controlled Sri Lanka Broadcasting Corporation reported.

Meanwhile, the fast unto death protest launched by the JHU entered the second day in front of the historical Dalada Maligawa in Kandy, capital of the Central province.

JHU parliamentarian Venerable Omalpe Sobitha Thera began his fast unto death protest Monday demanding the government to abandon its decision to sign the joint mechanism with the LTTE. About fifty others also joined the monk parliamentarian in the second day, sources said.

**Bhikku Front begins fast in Colombo:** June 8 - National Bhikku Front (NBF) started a fasting campaign on Wednesday (8) morning in front of Fort Railway Station, Colombo, protesting against the signing of Joint Mechanism proposal between the Government of Sri Lanka and the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE). The proposal spells out administrative and funds disbursement arrangement for rehabilitation and reconstruction of tsunami destroyed coastal areas in the Northeast province.

Seven monks including convener of NBF Rev. Kalawelgala Chandaloka Thera and Advisor of NBF Prof. Rev. Attanagala Ratnapala Thera are participating in the campaign. The large banner displayed at the scene said "Withdraw the Joint Mechanism offered state power to the tigers; Maha Sangha at fast unto death." Before beginning the fast the monks swore in front of a small Buddha statue at the Fort Station that they will continue the fast until the Sri Lanka's President, Chandrika Kumaratunge abandons her decision to sign the Joint Mechanism proposal, sources said.

**Two LTTE cadres killed:** June 9 - Two LTTE cadres, Mr. Niveharan (22) and Mr. Sutharanjan (23), were killed in a claymore landmine attack in no-man zone at Sangamankandy, between Pottuvil and Komari at 12.35pm Wednesday (8), TamilNet reported. The attack took place at Sangamankandy 2 km from Thandiyadi Sri Lanka Army (SLA) checkpoint while the cadres were walking with their punctured motorbike from Kanjirankuda LTTE base towards LTTE political office in Komari, Mr. Daya Mohan, Deputy Head of LTTE's Batticaloa-Amparai Political Division told TamilNet. Mr. Daya Mohan blamed Special Task Force (STF) soldiers and paramilitary cadres working with the STF for the attack. The LTTE recovered the bodies of the victims and lodged a complaint to Akkaraipattu Sri Lanka Monitoring Mission (SLMM).

However, the army has given a different version of the same incident. According to the army version, an ex-LTTE cadre killed two LTTE cadres who came his village to abduct him. Micheal, a LTTE deserter, was taking a wash in a nearby canal in his village when he was approached by two LTTE men with a T-56 weapon. The ex-LTTE cadre however befriended the LTTE cadres claiming that he would comply with the orders and agreed to

go along with the LTTE cadres to the Kanjirankuda LTTE base. In a dramatic change of events, the ex-LTTE cadre was reported to have snatched the T-56 and shot indiscriminately at the two LTTE men while the team was on the way to the Kanjirankuda LTTE base, killing the LTTE cadres on the spot, according to the statement given by the ex-LTTE cadre to the police. However, the ex LTTE cadre surrendered to the Sri Lankan securities forces at Rottekulam, Pottuvil for his personal safety from the LTTE and later was handed over to the police.

**Civilian killed in crossfire:** June 9 - A 40 year old civilian, Mr. Thadchanamoorthy Karunamoorthy an auto-rickshaw driver from Mavadvempu in Chenkalady, was killed in crossfire when gunmen shot at an EPDP cadre Thursday (9) morning around 10.30 am. The EPDP cadre, Mr. Tharmaratnam Elamaran Ravi, 30, who was in-charge of the Chenkalady EPDP office, and an SLA corporal Mr. Piremathilake, 35, were wounded in the attack by suspected LTTE gunmen. A Police constable, Mr. W. M. Nimal, also received injuries, Police said.

One T-56 rifle used by the gunmen was recovered by the Police at the spot, Sub-Inspector of Eravur Police Mr. S.J.Santhapala said. The injured EPDP cadre and the SLA Corporal were transferred to Colombo for treatment, sources said. According to the police, this EPDP member had been targeted by unidentified attackers for the fourth time. Police blamed LTTE for the attack on the EPDP cadre.

**Civilian found dead with gunshot:** June 10 - Mr.S.Balakrishnan (60) father of four children was found dead Thursday (9) night with gunshot injuries along roadside in Thotty Amman Kovil area in Mirusuvil north in Thenmaradchchi division in Jaffna district. On receipt of information the Kodikamam Police rushed to the site and recovered the body, Police said

Mr. P. Subramaniam, Chavakachcheri Magistrate accompanied by the Kodikamam Police went to the scene where the body was found and held the inquest. Police said it was revealed at the preliminary investigation that the deceased had been displaced from Ottakapulam in Vayavilan area during the 1990 military operation launched by the Sri Lanka Army and was residing in Mirusuvil area since then.

**WB funds housing reconstruction in NE:** June 10 - World Bank (WB) funded North East Housing Reconstruction Programme (NEHRP) is to construct about 3,900 houses in the war affected fifty one villages in the Jaffna district under a four year plan commencing from 2005. About 1,600 houses will be constructed in 2005, said NEHRP officials at a discussion held with World Bank representatives in the Jaffna district secretariat. Mr.S.Sivasamy, Jaffna Additional Government Agent presided. Divisional Secretaries and representatives of non-governmental organizations also attended the discussion, sources said.

Mr. S.Pathmanathan, NEHRP Project Director and a former Government Agent of Jaffna said each beneficiary selected under this scheme would be paid 250,000 rupees for the construction in instalments. The first payment to one thousand beneficiaries will commence on 16 June, he added.

**Intelligence officer, EPDP member killed:** June 11 - A Sri Lanka Army (SLA) Intelligence Officer, Lance Corporal Ellaperuma Rukman Edward, 31, and an EPDP member, Mr. Gnanakumar Kannan, 28, were killed when LTTE gunmen attacked Kurumankadu EPDP office located 1.5 km west of Vavuniya on Saturday (11) morning. Five members of the EPDP and an SLA intelligence officer, Mr. Ajith De Silva, 30, were injured in the attack. The attackers reportedly from the LTTE had exploded Claymore landmine placed in wall and fired shots at the area office of the EPDP office in Vavuniya,

The members and the office reportedly belonged to EPRLF Varathar Group till they later joined the EPDP a few weeks ago,

TamilNet reported. Mr. Sanmukanathan Wimalathas, 30, Basthiampillai Amalathas, 28, Mr Govintharajah Sivakumar, 25, Mr. Majooran, 26, and Mr. Mukunthan, 25, are the EPDP/Ex-EPRLF members injured in the claymore mine attack, the report said.

Sri Lanka Monitoring Mission (SLMM) officials rushed to the spot. Vavuniya district judge Mr. Manickavasagam Ilancheliyan visited the scene, Vavuniya Hospital and ordered Vavuniya Police to conduct investigations. EPDP spokesman S. Thavaraja said. "We know beyond any doubt that this is the work of the Tigers."

**Tsunami survivors protest:** June 10 - Hundreds of tsunami survivors protested in southern Sri Lanka alleging that the government had still not compensated them for homes lost in the December catastrophe. The demonstrators in Pareliya village carrying black flags blocked traffic on the main road linking capital Colombo with the southern town of Galle. Protesters turned violent and stoned a bus when police tried to disperse the crowd. They said police attacked protesting women with rifle butts. No one was injured.

Later the villagers sat blocking a road and demanded that a senior minister visit and assure them of a quick resolution to the problem. "We have lived in this area with much respect but we have lost everything now and we are not receiving any assistance from the government," protester Premalal Dhanawardena said.

Peraliya, 80 kilometers (50 miles) south of Colombo was where a train was swept by massive waves on Dec. 26, killing 2,000 passengers and villagers who tried to escape by crawling on top of the train.

Dhanawardena said the government promised 250,000 rupees (US\$2,500; euro2,061) for every destroyed home but has not paid. More than 31,000 Sri Lankans were killed and about 1 million lost their homes in the disaster.

**SL Constable arrested by LTTE:** June 12 - LTTE cadres arrested Mr. Amal Priyantha, a police constable posted to Chinabay police station in the Trincomalee district Saturday when a boat carrying Mr. Priyantha and seven others strayed into the shores of Upparu, a village controlled by the Liberation Tigers, sources said.

Mr. Priyantha had earlier worked in Muttur police station. Eight persons were travelling from Muttur to Kinniya Saturday (11) when they were arrested. LTTE cadres who took the eight into custody identified seven of them as civilians. They took Mr. Amantha Priyantha into custody as he was identified as a policeman working in the Chinabay police station. Mr. Priyantha was in civil and he kept his uniform in his bag at that time of this incident, sources said. Sri Lanka security forces reported the matter to the Sri Lanka Monitoring Mission in Trincomalee for necessary action to get the policeman released, sources said.

**Grenade attack on TRO official:** June 13 - Mr. Packiarajah Thanapalan (22), a Tamil Rehabilitation Organization (TRO) official attached to the Batticaloa office, was injured when the TRO office located in Dias Road in Batticaloa town was attacked by unidentified persons Monday (13) night, Batticaloa-Amparai TRO Director, Mr. Sebastian Sessar told TamilNet. Office entrance was damaged from the explosion of two grenades that were hurled by the attackers, he added. Mr. Thanapalan who resides on Bharathi Road in Batticaloa, has been admitted to Batticaloa Hospital. A motorbike was completely destroyed and a three-wheeler was damaged in the attack, TRO officials said.

**One killed, 16 injured in grenade attack:** June 13 - A sixty year old Sinhala civilian was killed and 16 Tamil civilians were



injured when unidentified attackers lodged a grenade at the funeral of a former LTTE cadre, who was shot and killed on Saturday (11) by unidentified gunmen in Sorivil in Polannaruwa district. The grenade attack took place around 10.30 pm Sunday (12) night. Twelve of the 16 injured persons, 6 men and 6 women, were admitted to Polannaruwa hospital. Aralaganwela Police suspected Karuna Group for the killing of the former LTTE cadre and the grenade attack at funeral. The attackers had lodged one grenade at the funeral, according to the police.

The dead civilian was identified as Mr. W. G. Punchirala from Makkumpura village.

The former LTTE cadre, Mr. Shanmugan Selvarajah, aged 23 years, also known as Sinnapodiyan, was shot in his head by two unidentified gunmen who were riding a motorbike Saturday evening around 3.00 pm in Sorivil. Mr. Selvarajah, who left the LTTE two years ago, was on his way to a tea shop when he was shot and killed. The assailants had used T-56 rifle to gun down the victim, Police said.

**Mahinda to be UPFA's candidate:** June 13 - Prime Minister Mahinda Rajapakse will be the UPFA's candidate at the forthcoming Presidential elections which will be held when the incumbent Chandrika Kumaratunga's second term comes to an end.

Reportedly President Kumaratunga announced this when she met Premier Rajapakse for a lengthy meeting on the controversial joint mechanism recently at the President's House.

President Kumaratunga had, it is said, confirmed Premier Rajapakse's candidacy for the Presidential elections when she addressed governing party's parliamentarians recently. It is also learnt that Tourism Minister and brother of the current Presi-

dent, Anura Bandaranaike, who also had entertained ambitions of succeeding his sister as President, had been present when the announcement of Rajapakse's candidacy was made.

**IP Jeyaratnam held in Malawi:** June 13 - The Government has received information that the anti terrorist police Inspector T. Jeyaratnam who went missing and later believed to have been abducted by the LTTE from Mt Lavinia last month is being held in LTTE's custody according to a report in the Daily Mirror. It is understood that he is to be produced before the LTTE's "Eelam courts" in Malawi in northern Sri Lanka for betraying LTTE leader Prabahakaran and participating in the inquiry into the Central Bank bombing. The SLMM has been requested by the Sri Lanka Police Inspectors' Association to obtain the release of Mr. Jeyaratnam but there has been no response yet. Mr. Jayaratnam had allegedly been tortured while in LTTE custody.

**Tamil Tigers fire at navy's road patrol:** June 14 - Suspected Tamil Tigers fired at a navy patrol in northern Sri Lanka, wounding at least one sailor. The wounded man was among four sailors who were on a reconnaissance patrol in the town of Manner, 235 kilometers north of Colombo, said defence ministry's spokesman, Brig. Daya Ratnayake. The injured soldier was first admitted to the Mannar general hospital and later transferred to Anuradhapura hospital.

**Civilian shot dead:** June 15 - Two unidentified gunmen riding in a motorbike shot and killed Mr. Ponniah Chandrabavan (22), a civilian, who was on his way to a temple in his motorbike Wednesday (15) at 5.45 pm, Katankudy Police said. The incident took place in Arayampathi, Batticaloa-Kalmunai Road. The assassins had used a 9 mm pistol.

**Two civilians shot dead in Kalmunai:** June 15 - Unidentified gunmen shot and killed Mr. Nallathamby Ravinthiran (28), a Tamil refugee, and Mr. A. Mohammed Galeel (39), a Muslim resident from Kalmunaikuddy Shivo road, at Kalmunai bus stand approximately 100 meters away from the Kalmunai Police station around 8.00 pm on Wednesday (15), Kalmunai Police said. Police said the reason for the killings was not clear. The victims worked as time-keepers in the bus stand, according to residents.

**Youths remanded in custody:** June 15 - Mannar Magistrate, Mr. N.M.M. Abdullah, Wednesday (15) ordered three suspects, Selliah Nimalanathan, Jeyanathan and K. Karthigesu, to be remanded in custody till June 22 who were produced before him in connection with the shooting that took place Tuesday morning close to Talaimannar old bridge area. In this incident a soldier of the Sri Lanka Navy (SLN) Mr. Meegoda Japthige Jayalath was injured, police said. The three suspects are all natives of Talaimannar. According to security sources, one of the two youths clad in shorts came across a group of SLN soldiers who were on patrol duty at the site had fired at them. Mr. Jayalath received serious injuries on his left hand. He was first admitted to Talaimannar hospital and later transferred to Anuradhapura hospital, sources said.

**Ministers Anura and Mangala in Beijing:** June 16 - Ignoring the political tension resulting from break up of ruling coalition two senior cabinet Ministers Anura Bandaranaike and Mangala Samaraweera landed at Beijing airport in the Sri Lankan Airlines inaugural flight to China. Deputy Minister R. Baduyudeen, Wijayadasa Rajapakse MP, Ceylon Tourist Board Chairman Udaya Nanayakara, BOI Chairman Saliya Wickramasuriya, President's economic advisor Harry Jayawardena and other delegates also came in this inaugural flight. Sri Lankan Airlines will celebrate their inaugural flight to China by arranging a gala dinner and cocktail at five star Kempinski Hotel in Beijing on 16 June. More than one hundred invitees are expected to attend to this gala dinner at Beijing number one hotel. □

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### ABOUT PEOPLE AND EVENTS

### OBITUARY



**Mrs Shanthini Jeyaveerasingam:** Shanthi, beloved wife of Mr. Jeyaveerasingam (Sri Lanka); daughter of Mr. & Mrs Govindasamy (UK); loving mother of Kalyani (Canada) & Sanjeev (Aust.); sister of Dhaksha (Germa-

ny), Sriharan (UK) & Easan (Germany) and grandmother of Ajay (Canada) passed away in Sri Lanka on 24th April 2005.

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**Sironmany,** beloved wife of the late Visvalingam Sivasubramaniam, Principal Emeritus Skanda Varodaya College, Chunnakam; loving daughter of the late Ramasamy and Thaiyalnayaki; loving mother of Dr. Sivanandarajah, Sivegnanasunderam, Dr. Sivapalan, Sivathasan, Sivaratnam, Sivamanoharan and Sivaloshanadevi, mother-in-law of Thavarajah, Manimehaladevi, Anandhi, Yogeswary, Kamaladevi, Supathiradevi and Devahi; grandmother of Dr. Sutharsan, Priyatharshini, Suseenthiran, Suhanthan, Mrs Sutharshika, Ramanan, Sulo-

shan, Suthaharan, Sula-kshan, Arooran, Gajamohana, Gajaharan and Vais-hna; great grandmother of Vakshan, Subakshi and Birinthuvi passed away on 11th June 2005. The funeral rites were performed on 13th June and the cremated took

place at the Kothiyalady Crematorium, Chunnakam..

All relatives and friends are kindly requested to accept this intimation..

- S.Sivamanoharan,  
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Tel: 020 8385 0477.

## IN MEMORIAM

### Sixth Anniversary Remembrance



**In ever loving and Precious Memory of Mrs. Rasathy Thirunavukkarasu,** daughter of the late Dr. and Mrs. Ambalavanar of Suthumalai, Sri Lanka on the Sixth Anniversary of her Passing Away on 4.7.99.

Sadly missed and fondly remembered by her beloved husband Thirunavukkarasu; daughters Vasuki and Dr. Vatsala; sons-in-law Pathmalingam and Suresh; grandchildren Thusan, Shivi and Thusi; brothers Dr. Ponnampalam (Melbourne, Australia), Sritharan (Jaffna) and their families. - 28 Foxmead Close, Enfield, Middx EN2 7JG. Tel: 0208 363 0922

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### Anniversary Remembrance



In ever loving memory of **Balasubramaniam Sivaganathan** on the fourteenth anniversary of his passing away on 22nd June 1991

Remembered with love and affection by his step mother Mrs Rajaletchumy Balasubramaniam (Australia); wife Kamala (Sri Lanka); brothers Dr. Sivaloganathan (UK), Thirunavukkarasu (Australia), Radakrishnan (Chennai), Sritharan (Australia), sisters Mrs Gowri Pathmanathan, Mrs Bhagawathy Mohanadas (both of Sri Lanka), Mrs Mangayarkkarsi Jetheendran and Mrs Jayanthi Kumaranayagam (both of Australia)

- 22 Oakwood Drive, St. Albans, Herts AL4 0XD.

### In Loving Memory of Our Amma:



**Rattinam Selvanayagi**  
Born: 04. 09.1920  
Rest: 09. 05. 2001

**Aiyah:**  
**Sayambunather Vyrmuttu Rattinam**  
Born: 30.03.1922  
Rest: 09.07.1997

Sadly missed and fondly remembered by sons Pathmanathan, Ramnathan, and Loganathan; daughters-in-law Vasuki, Vijeyaladchumy and Thanaledchumi; grandchildren Vijayaluxmi, Thevakumar, Senthooran, Delaney, Bhavan, Kugan, Asha-Vidhya and Sathian; great grand daughters Krishni and Vishala - 3 The Orchard, Wickford, Essex SS12 0HB, UK.

### Fifth Anniversary Remembrance



In cherished memory of **Mr. Chelliah Paramanathan** on the fifth anniversary of his passing away 3<sup>rd</sup> June 2000. Affectionately remembered by his sons, daughter, daughters-in-law and grand children

### Forthcoming Events

July 1 Feast of St. Oliver

2. Karthigai; Eekathasi

3. Pirathosam; Feast of St. Thomas

4. Kodi Etam, Highgatehill Murugan Temple

5. Amavasai

6. Feast of St. Maria Goretti

10. Sathurthi; Saint

Manickavasagar Guru Pooja

11. Feast of St. Benedict, Patron of Europe

12. Sashti; Aani Uththaram

15. Feast of St. Bonaventure

16. Aadi Pirappu; Feast of Our Lady of Mount Carmel

17. Eekathasi; Therth Thiruvilaz, Highgatehill Murugan Temple

18. Theerththa Thiruvilaz, Highgatehill Murugan Temple

19. Pirathosam; Aadi Shevvai (1); Thirukkalyanam, Highgatehill Murugan Temple

20. Full Moon; Vairavar Madai, Highgatehill Murugan Temple

22. Kodi Etam, London Sri Murugan Temple, Eastham, ; Feast of St. Magdalene

23. 10 a.m. Kodi Etam, Wimbledon Shree Ghanapathy Temple

24. Sankatahara Sathurthi

25. Feast of St. James

26. Aadi Shevvai (2)

29. Karthigai; Feast of St. Martha

31. Therth Thiruvilaz, London Sri Murugan Temple, Eastham; Eekathasi; Feast of St. Ignatius of Loyola.

At Bhavan Centre, 4A Castletown Road, London W14 9HQ. Tel: 020 7381 3086/4608 Website: [WWW.bhavan.net](http://WWW.bhavan.net)

July 3 6 p.m. Kathak Dance Concert by Pandit Birju Maharaj

8 p.m. Karnatic Violin by Hosahalli Brothers

Venkataram & Subba Rao and students of Lalgudi G. Jayaraman

July 9 7 p.m. Kathak Shringar by Pt. Birju Maharaj & Saswati Sen and Pratap Pawar with live music.

July 9 7.30 p.m. The Bhavan and Vani Fine Arts present at Queen Elizabeth Hall - U. Shrinivas, U. Rajesh and Group present Karnatic

Mandalin Concert

July 10 6 p.m.

Bharatanatyam by students of Guru Prakash Yadagudde

### Wedding Bells

We congratulate the following couples on their recent wedding

**Senthuran**, son of Mrs N. Viyakesparan of 787B Kenton Lane, Harrow, Middlesex HA3 6AH, UK and the late Mr. C. Viyakesparan and **Vijitha**, daughter of Mr. & Mrs. T. Thiagarasah of 86 Ridge Road, London N21 3EN, UK on 28th May 2005 at the Decorium, 22 Western Road, Wood Green, London N22 6UH.



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## Bhushany Kalyanaraman delights London Rasikas again



Bhushany's vocal recital has become a regular annual event in London. This time it was earlier than her usual summer feature, and was on 10th April 2005 presented by another sangeetha sabha, Vedagama Sabha. Rasikas await with great expectation to listen to her music. It is so enriching and fulfilling to the soul that it is worth the wait.

She never disappoints as she is a fully trained and mature musician who communicates successfully every nuance of her music to the audience and they are easily transported to the world it is meant to be.

Bhushany is a renowned Carnatic vocalist amongst the top rankers in Chennai and she brings fame to Sri Lanka which is her birth place. Her strength is her voice, which is really a great gift, richly sweet, expressive and her music is shruthi suddam, bhavam enriched, has tonal beauty and sustains alignment of the voice with shruthi. As usual her repertoire was full of very famous and favourite masterpieces of famous singers. Every composition added beauty to the concert. Bhushany's rendition fortified the imagination and poetry of the composers.

She began the recital with a varnam composition in Ranjani ragam by her guru's guru master singer G N Balasubramaniam. GNB's bani was evident in this rendition. It was followed by Dikshithar's Mahaganapathy in Gowla ragam, then Thiyagaraja's popular Pancharatna Kirtana "Enthanomahanubaavu" in Sri ragam-salutation to all ye greatmen!, and another

Thiyagaraja kirtana in Kalyanavasantham-"Nathaloludai" Then she settled down to one of her favourite ragas Mohanam. She covered the full range and brought out the true beauty of Mohanam as appreciated by many a rasika. This led to Thiruvagasam "Ammaye appah" very movingly sung. We did not need any further communication with the almighty. She transferred smoothly to "Jegatheeswary", a Ramasamy Pillai's infamous composition. This was a master stroke and the piece de resistance of the evening.

Lord Siva was not short of repertoire and so was Thiyagarajar "Siva Siva Siva Yena Radha" in Pantuvarali ragam by Thiyagarajar found pride of place. This was followed by another classic composition of Thiyagarajar, "Bagaayanaiya" in the rare ragam Chandrajothi beautifully rendered and the ragam exploited to the full range. Then followed the ever popular "Sakaniraja" in Kharaharapriya. This ragam received the full treatment showing the musicians strength in the rendering of ragam alapana.

No recital will be complete without a composition of Purantharathasar. Bhushany sang "Jagathotharana" in the heartmelting bhava so characteristic of her style, followed by the ever popular "Srirangapuravihara" in Brindavani Saranga ragam. Kavingar Vaali's composition "Koovizhithaal" was sung in light mode. Then followed Rajaji's philosophical masterpiece "Kuraionrum Illai". She finally paid homage to her Guru/late husband Thanjaavur S Kalyanaraman rendering his Dharbari Kaanada Thillana in Misra-Chapu Talam, yet another GNB baani.

The accompanists Bangalore Balu Raguram (violin), Karaikudi Krishnamoorthy (mirdangam), Bangalore R N Prakash (gatum) and Bavani Suthahar (thambura) enhanced the Kuchcheri. It was a very full and satisfying kacheri and the rasikas felt fortunate that they could enjoy this level of music in London and look forward to the next one hopefully soon.

- Siva Sivananthan

## Australian Newsletter

Puthuvai Ratnathurai's "Puvarasam Velliyum Puulunickunjukalum" was ceremoniously released in Melbourne in a colourful ceremony and representatives from most Tamil Organization in the state of Victoria were invited to receive the ceremonial copy of the book. TNA Parliamentarian Mr Gajendran was also in attendance for the occasion. Under the auspicious of Eelam Tamil Association in Victoria, Professor John Carroll of Melbourne's La Trobe University delivered Eliezer Memorial Lecture on "What culture is?, How it works? and Why Cultures vary, but Human Rights are Universal".

Vaikasi Viskam was observed in various temples across Australia. Young Tamils in Melbourne with young and talented Niroshan Sathiyamurthy presented Illam Thulir 2005, a musical night in Melbourne and Sydney.

Like elsewhere, the concept of Senior Citizen Forum is greatly encouraged in Australia and New Zealand. Governments nurture such forums through various financial as well as non-financial support mechanisms. There are large migrant communities in Australia and New Zealand with their

origins ranging from Asia to Europe and Americas. Senior Citizen groupings with diverse linguistic and ethnic background flourish in this region and relatively latest is the Tamil Senior groupings which are beginning to thrive in cities like Melbourne, Sydney, Auckland in New Zealand and elsewhere. Recently, Tamil Seniors in Sydney celebrated the grandchildren day in grandiose style. Although, Tamil Senior forums primarily focus on simple gatherings, the emerging trend is in becoming a hub which creates awareness on health issues, welfare programs and other necessary aspects in a senior's life.

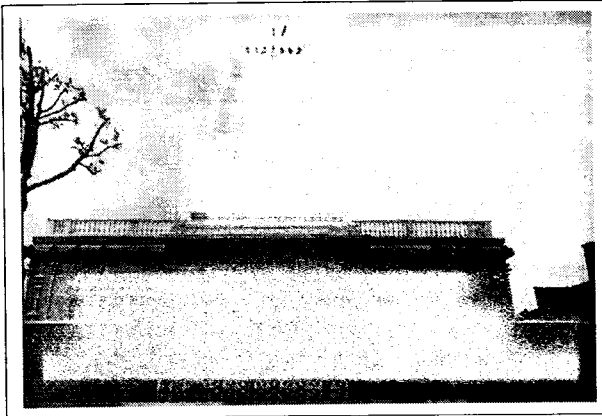
Australia's mandatory detention has long been criticised outside its shores for far too long, but what is new now is a visibly growing sentiment against mandatory detention among many Australians. A 27 year old Queensland beauty student Schapelle Corby who received 20 year sentence in Indonesia on drug trafficking charges received intense media focus in Australia for the past several weeks. At one point, public mood was hugely volatile and government struggled to appease the domestic sentiments while not being seen as interfering in the affairs of a foreign judiciary.

- Sivasupramaniam Sitsabesan

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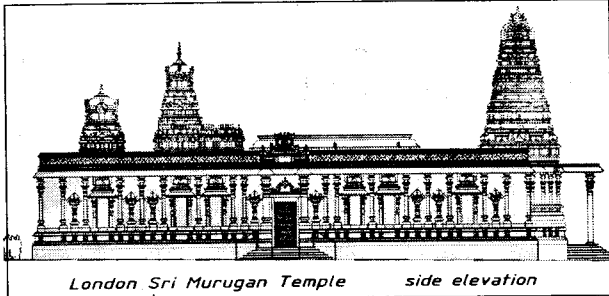
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# The New London Sri Murugan Temple



The Mahakumbabishekam of the New London Sri Murugan Temple in Manor Park, East London was celebrated on Sunday, 22nd May 2005 and the Temple was opened for devotees and visitors. The outside of the temple and the surrounding land is still in the process of building and there remains about a year's work left for completion.

It is an extraordinary structure built of granite, stone and bricks. The building has been overseen by the renowned temple architect Padmasri M. Muthiah Sthapathi and assisted by a



team of Indian specialist craftsmen and British builders. There are three inner temples (see plan above) for Sri Ganapathy, Sri Murugan, and Lord Siva. Beside the building will be several outlying structures connected by covered walkway, some of which are presently used for cooking, feeding visitors, and handling administrative affairs. In the future they will be refurbished to accommodate guests for private functions such as weddings and music rehearsals. A library is also planned, as is a meditation room and accommodation for the temple priests. The spacious car park that has been created around the back of the complex will itself be a blessing to visitors driving to the temple, many of whom formerly had to negotiate the narrow adjoining streets in search of a place to park.

Such a striking building naturally required much discussion with the local planning authorities in order to be passed for construction in the inconspicuous east end of London. The balance to be reached was between erecting a building of adequate stature and the likelihood that it would overshadow surrounding buildings. Consequently, despite the impressive height of the Rajagopuram (50 feet), it does not dominate the surrounding landscape until the observer is quite close to the temple.

The cost of the undertaking has been estimated at £4.9 million, although with work still to do in order to bring the plans

to completion this figure is strictly provisional. Furthermore, donations towards would be much appreciated. Further details can be found at [www.londonsrimurugan.org/html/helpneeded.htm](http://www.londonsrimurugan.org/html/helpneeded.htm)

This ambitious project has arrested the attention of everyone in the area, Hindu and non-Hindu alike. Local children tread gingerly through the temple with Tamil school-friends, keen to learn more about the place and 'what happens inside'. People on the buses that pass outside the temple correct fellow passengers when they claim that it is an Indian temple, telling them that it was in fact built by Tamils. We know, of course, that it was a joint effort and that it could not have happened without the support of people of all backgrounds, but knowledge of the building does not seem to be limited among the wider community in London, and one of the most refreshing aspects of the construction process has been the support and goodwill of the neighbouring community.

Naturally the erection of the temple has raised the profile of Tamil people in the local area. More surprising has been the self-consciousness of many of its visitors. This is new for everybody who lives here. The overly-cautious steps across the marble floors are not the movements of people who are physically comfortable in their surroundings. However, as the magnitude of their collective achievement begins to fill them with the confidence to accept this magnificent temple as their own, the structure will appear more amenable to their needs and the weight of their efforts will finally lift.

- Laavanyan Ratnapalan

## Highgatehill Murugan Temple

200A, Archway Road, London N6 5BA, Tel: 020 8348 9835

The Annual Mahotsava Festival of the Temple shall commence with Ganapathy Homam on Sunday 3rd July 2005 in the morning. It would be followed by Kodi Ettam on Monday at 10.30 a.m. on 4th July. 14 days of Festival would follow, the Ther or Chariot Festival being on Sunday, 17th July, Theertham or Water-Cutting Festival on Monday, 18th July at 10.30 a.m. ending with Thirukkalyanam Festival on Tuesday, the 19th July in the evening.

The daily details of the morning poojas are as follows

08.30 a.m. Abishekam

10.45 a.m. Kodimara Pooja

11.30 a.m. Vasantha Mandapa Pooja & Veethi Ula

The evening details are as follows

6.00 p.m. Evening Pooja

7.00 p.m. Kodimara Pooja

8.15 p.m. Vasantha Mandapa Pooja & Veethi Ula

10.00 p.m. Pooja concludes.

## Adam Elected to Judiciary

Adam Vaithilingam, Barrister of Walnut Chambers, Exeter recently took his oaths as Recorder at Bristol Crown Court. (A Recorder is a part time Judge at the crown court.)

Adam was educated at Bristol Grammar School, Kings College (Cambridge) and Middle Temple, London. He is the second son of Angela and Sri Skandarajah of Bristol and is the grandson of the late Mr. & Mrs N. Vaithilingam of Colombo, Sri Lanka.

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