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- Voltaire

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Return to negotiations

In the last few months, the Northeast of Sri Lanka has witnessed a sharp escalation of incidents of violence punctuated by a brief respite in the run up to and following the talks in Geneva between the Government and the LTTE in February last.

Both parties have been blamed for the escalation of violence and also for not keeping up the promises made in Geneva.. Despite the promises made, a relentless campaign of landmine attacks on security forces and retaliatory targeted killings of LTTE cadres and its supporters by so-called Tamil paramilitary groups continued. Cordon-and-search operations, targeted killings and counter-killings with reports of 'disappearances' were increasingly becoming a familiar pattern.

Following a bomb blast which killed five people in a market in Trincomalee town on 12 April, over twenty Tamil and Muslim civilians were killed by a gang of Sinhalese persons in what appeared to be retaliatory attacks in which dozens of homes and businesses were destroyed and several thousand people displaced. This was soon followed by, in what appeared to be a tit-for-tat exercise, a number of Sinhalese farmers and their families were attacked and killed in a village in Trincomalee.

Now, Colombo has been rocked by a suicide bomb attack attributed to the Tamil Tigers in which eight have been killed and twenty-seven seriously injured including the country's Army Commander who appeared to be the prime target of the attack. The military promptly launched what was described as retaliatory strikes against LTTE positions in the east which included aerial bombing and firing from Navy vessels. Many thousands of civilians have been displaced and reportedly twelve civilians have been killed, twenty-six have been injured.

While the military claims that its strikes in the east have been in response to LTTE attacks, the LTTE has characterised the military strikes as a gross violation of the ceasefire agreement and has promised to "respond with a force that will be catastrophically disabling and devastating to the enemy" if the military air and sea strikes continued.

There are those elements on either side that are spoiling for a return to war. They point to the defects in the ceasefire agreement and fault-lines in the peace and facilitation processes. They malevolently assert that three years of ceasefire had not brought peace without realising that nearly twenty-five years of all out war did not bring peace either. Instead what it did was to turn the beautiful island of Sri Lanka into the killing fields of Asia. Even if one ignores the other many benefits that the ceasefire has brought to the battered and beleaguered civilian population of the Northeast, it must be remembered that the ceasefire has saved the lives and property of hundreds of thousands of people and prevented the people from being victims of mass displacement and mass migration to other parts of the world. It has also enabled a substantial programme of rehabilitation and reconstruction bringing enormous benefit to the civilian population.

Officially, the 2002 ceasefire agreement still holds and both parties have been paying only lip service to its adherence. Ground realities clearly demonstrate that the provisions of the ceasefire agreement have been flagrantly violated on countless occasions. More than 200 soldiers, Tamil Tigers, members of non-LTTE Tamil groups and civilians have been killed in various violent incidents that have escalated since late last November.

Despite their strenuous efforts, the small team of 60 international monitors of the Sri Lanka Monitoring Mission (SLMM) are struggling to cope with the escalating incidents of violence. With events spiralling out of control it seems very obvious that the Norwegian facilitation alone cannot contain the deteriorating situation and save the peace process from collapsing altogether. The dire situation demands a well coordinated international intervention by the international community, particularly the EU, US and India, to arrest Sri Lanka drifting towards all out civil war.

The parties should be made to realise that there is no military solution to the conflict. They must be persuaded to return to the negotiating table without preconditions to engage in a sustained and all inclusive peace process that will address and discuss the details of the substantive issues that should form the basis of a comprehensive political and constitutional settlement. Parties should have the courage and the wisdom to remain at the negotiating table as long as it takes to reach such a settlement.

Suicide attack on army commander in Colombo

Eight Killed, 27 injured

D.B.S. Jeyaraj

April 25th, 2006 - Sri Lankan Army Commander Lt. Gen Sarath Fonseka sustained serious injuries in a suicide-bomb attack on Tuesday April 25th that killed at least eight persons and wounded another twentyseven. The suicide bomber was a woman who disguised herself as a heavily pregnant.

The attack took place in broad daylight just outside the Army Headquarters within a heavily guarded security precinct in the heart of the capital Colombo. Gen. Fonseka who received abdominal and chest injuries underwent three surgeries and is now pronounced to be in a "stable condition". But he is yet to be declared completely out of danger.

The battle-scarred veteran soldier is regarded as a "hawk" advocating a very hard line against the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam organization. Fonseka was in his office at the Army headquarters in Colombo during the morning. At 1.30 pm he had left office intending to go home for lunch.

The security convoy had just commenced the journey when a seemingly pregnant woman standing outside the military hospital ran towards his vehicle. One of Fonseka's bodyguards accompanying the vehicle on a motor cycle had seen her and tried to stop her by kicking out.

An explosion then occurred hitting Fonseka's and other vehicles in the convoy. The time was 1.35 pm. All eight of Fonseka's motor cycle escort rider cum bodyguards were injured. So too was the army chief's aide de camp Major. Priyal Wickramasinghe.

"I saw a fireball as I came out of my saloon," S.A. Weerasinghe, told "the Hindu" newspaper. Weerasinghe works in the military saloon, which is also inside the sprawling complex.

Security forces then cordoned off the area and took the affected persons into the military hospital. At least four were pronounced dead upon admission. Thereafter at least ten ambulances arrived and took the seriously wounded persons to the National Hospital in Colombo.

Speedy medical action was taken in the case of the Army Commander. Under the direction of National hospital direc-

tor Dr. Hector Weerasinghe a team of doctors attended to Sarath Fonseka. This included apart from the regular staff, ten additional surgeons. Fonseka had received injuries to his chest and abdomen. His lungs were pierced too. Fonseka was suffering from heavy internal haemorrhage and was in critical condition. Surgery on him began at 2.00 pm. It was a very delicate situation as bleeding had not stopped fully.

Surgery in two phases was performed within a period of three hours. At one point Fonseka suffered a cardiac arrest and was thought a "goner". But the tough Southerner from Ambalangoda fought death and clung on to life tenaciously. Hospital authorities said that the Army Commander's health improved miraculously and that his condition was now stable. Yet he is not firmly pronounced out of danger. Fonseka is unconscious still.

Thirteen army men including Fonseka were admitted to the national hospital. Of these Sgt. W.A.N Priyantha was found to be dead upon arrival. Sgt. Major Lasanthakumara had serious eye injuries and was later transferred to the eye hospital at 3.30 pm.

Among the eleven officers in the national hospital three including the commander are in the intensive care unit. One has serious head injuries and the other heavy internal bleeding. The other eight are in ward 72. Two of them have serious injuries. Other injured persons are at present in the military hospital.

Those receiving treatment at the National Hospital include the Army Commander's ADC Maj, Wickremasinghe, Lance corporals Jayasekera and Seneviratne. Woman Sgt. Sithara Gunatilleke is also warded. Among army personnel confirmed to be dead are Sgt. Priyanka, Corp. Warusawitharne, lance corp OKPD Viraj, Pvt Devasurendra and army civilian employee Ms. Niluka Priyangani.

'Pregnant' suicide-bomber

The severed, disfigured head of the woman was found lying many yards away after the incident. Her legs were also recovered. The rest of the body was

totally shattered.

According to official sources the woman had come to the military hospital for ante-natal tests relating to her apparent pregnancy. The military hospital is situated within the same security precincts where the Army Headquarters is in. It is well-fortified and tightly guarded. The military hospital caters to the needs of soldiers and their families.

Tuesday's was special maternity clinic day for those with concerns about pregnancy. According to Police sources the woman had come the previous Tuesday (18th) and attended a seminar on pregnancy. She had then registered for tests the following Tuesday. She was accompanied by a man claiming to be her husband and a soldier. Her papers were in order.

A military bus is also made available on these days to take patients to their destinations. The woman was standing outside the hospital seemingly waiting for this bus. The man who had come with her in the morning was now missing. It is said that Fonseka always went home for lunch at 1.30 pm sharp whenever he was in Colombo.

Even as the Army Commander started out for home to have lunch the woman had rushed towards the vehicle from its left side. Fonseka was in the right side rear seat of the vehicle. An alert bodyguard on a motor cycle had seen her and kicked out. The woman with explosives strapped around her then detonated herself resulting in massive explosion. It is said that Fonseka survived the attack due to this brave soldier receiving a direct hit. At least five of Fonseka's bodyguards were killed.

The national hospital was teeming with people after hearing of the Army Commander being admitted there. Additional troops were deployed to preserve law and order. Movement of people and staff was restricted. Restive crowds were anxious about Sarath Fonseka's condition. People began dispersing only after Dr. Hector Weerasinghe announced at 5.45 pm that the army chief's condition was now stable.

Apart from the family members and close relatives of the Army Commander cabinet ministers Nimal Siripala de Silva, AHM Fowzie, Mangala Samaraweera, Rohitha Bogollagama, Defence secretary Gothabhaya Rajapakse, Presidential adviser Ajit Cabraal and former first lady Hema Premadasa etc. were also in the hospital.

One story going around was that Chief of Staff Nanda Mallawaarachchi was also seriously injured. Another story was that the man claiming to be the suicide

woman's husband was also killed in the blast. But these reports were not confirmed and largely rumours.

Condemnation

The suicide attack bearing all the hallmarks of a Tiger operation was widely condemned. The USA, India and European Union condemned the attack and expressed support to the Colombo government.

With Indian Premier Manmohan Singh being in Germany senior most minister and Defence minister Pranab Mukerjee telephoned Mahinda Rajapakse personally. Terming the suicide bombing in Colombo, which seriously wounded the Sri Lankan army chief, as a "brazen act of terrorism", he conveyed India's solidarity with the government and people of the island in its "difficult hour".

Condemning the suicide attack, State Department spokesman Adam Ereli told reporters at a briefing that the attack was "an unacceptable act of terror, a clear provocation and an escalation of violence." He said it was unfortunate that the LTTE had restarted the war instead of restarting the peace process.

The Austrian presidency of the European Union condemned a suicide bombing in Sri Lanka and expressed its condolences

to the government and relatives of the victims. "This appalling act of terrorism must not be allowed to threaten the prospects for peace in Sri Lanka," the EU said in a statement released in Austria, which currently holds the rotating presidency of the 25-nation bloc. The EU called on both the Sri Lankan government and the Tamil Tigers to "refrain from further actions liable to jeopardize the peace process."

The Co-Chairs of the Sri Lanka peace process, US, Japan, Norway and EU condemned absolutely the attempted assassination this afternoon of Lt General Sarath Fonseka, head of the Sri Lankan army and sent their condolences to the families of the persons who lost their lives in the attack. Expressing their grave concern about further escalation of violence, they said, "The Co-Chairs call on the LTTE to cease all suicide attacks and other forms of violence."

The LTTE however denied that they were responsible. Tiger spokesperson Daya Master disclaimed all responsibility but did not comment further. An LTTE website abroad charged that the explosion was due to internal differences within the armed forces and said the explosion had occurred due to a bomb attached to Fonseka's vehicle. There were

few if any takers for the LTTE denial.

Address to the nation

President Mahinda Rajapakse in a televised address to the nation appealed for calm and patience. Stating that he could not be frightened away Rajapakse also warned the LTTE that he and the Country would not bend their knees to terrorism. "What the LTTE attempts to achieve by intensifying these attacks, while grossly violating the Ceasefire Agreement they are said to be bound by, is to bring about a clash of a communal nature among the Sinhalese and the Tamil people. It is the strategy of the LTTE by this means to change international opinion that is unfavourable to them, to be in their favour. Therefore, I make a fervent appeal to all our people not to take the law into their own hands, and in a way give cause for such a communal clash," the President said.

A coordinated bombing and shelling operation by the Army, Navy and Airforce was launched as a retaliatory measure in Trincomalee district. The Government also stopped all transport to and from LTTE controlled areas in the North. The entry-exit points at Muhamalai, Uyilankulam and Omanthai

(continued on next page)

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Military launches retaliatory strikes against LTTE

D.B.S. Jeyaraj

April 25 - Responding to a suicide bomber attack targeting Army commander Lt. Gen Sarath Fonseka in Colombo on April 25th at noon the Sri Lankan Government launched an undeclared war in the evening targeted against positions of the LTTE in the Trincomalee district in eastern Sri Lanka.

In a coordinated operation areas in the Muthur division of Eastern Trincomalee were bombarded by air and shelled from military camps and naval ships.

The Government also suspended all transport to and from Tiger controlled areas in the Northern province shutting down entry-exit points in Muhamaalai, Omanthai and Uyilankulam.

The suicide bombing operation in Colombo killed at least eight persons and injured twenty - seven. Among those seriously wounded were Army Commander

Sarath Fonseka and his aide de camp Major Priyal Wickremasinghe. Several soldiers were among the dead and injured.

Though the operation had the clear stamp of a Tiger attack the LTTE denied responsibility. Some tiger media charged that it was due to internal differences within the army.

With growing resentment in the South at the Government's perceived impotence the Sinhala public mood was getting increasingly sour. President Mahinda Rajapakse was under great pressure to retaliate effectively. His political allies like the Janatha Vimukthi Peramuna wanted him to be tough with the Tigers while the Jathika Hela Urumaya was for calling off the ceasefire and declaring open war.

The International community strongly condemned the suicide attack and ex-

pressed support to Rajapakse. Yet restraint was urged and appeals were made that Colombo should not resort to formal war.

Against this backdrop the Government decided to launch retaliatory attacks in the form of an undeclared war against the LTTE. Instead of attacking the LTTE headquarters in Kilinochchi operations were launched against Tiger positions in the Eastern district of Trincomalee.

Two Israeli made K - fir bomber jets flew out from China Bay airport and conducted five bombing sorties over the Muthur region of Eastern Trincomalee. The aerial bombing began at 5. 50 pm and went on till 6. 15 pm. After these K-firs had returned to China Bay two Russia made MIG 24 planes flew from Anuradhapura and conducted a sixth prolonged bombing spree at 6. 25 pm.

At 6. 35 pm five Israeli built Dvora gun boats sailed close to the Muthur coast and began shelling coastal areas. This naval shelling went on intermittently yet intensively till 8. 45 pm. About 80 shells were fired from the sea.

The army started its own artillery fire from the Kuranguppaalam or Monkett bridge camp towards Muthur at 6. 45 pm. The shelling was consistent but sporadic with short intervals. The shelling was heavy till about 9. pm but continued with less intensity till midnight. Around 150 to 160 shells were fired. Many of the shells fired were deadly multi - barrel artillery shells obtained from Pakistan and China.

Areas like Kattaiparichhaan, Sampoor, Koonitheevu, Kadatkarachenai, Senaiyoor, Iraalkuli, Ilakkanthai, Paattalipuram, Uppaaru etc were bombed initially and then pounded incessantly by artillery from gunboats and army camp. The Senaiyoor Central College was badly hit with its primary school and laboratory buildings reduced to rubble. Much of the damage was due to aerial bombardment here.

Though casualty figures were not known preliminary reports indicated that at least one family were affected when their house collapsed. A child was reported dead. Power supply to Muthur was also affected and the region was in total darkness during and after the bombardment.

According to preliminary reports the bombing and shelling had not affected actual LTTE positions in the region much. LTTE camps, sea Tiger bases and a newly constructed air strip were not damaged. Civilian homes and public buildings had been destroyed.

Preliminary reports stated that de-

(continued from page 5)
were sealed off.

Rajapakse also met a UNP delegation led by Karu Jayasuriya in the absence of Ranil Wickremasinghe currently in the USA. He asked for full cooperation by the UNP and received such assurance. Political circles were talking of a SLFP-UNP Government being a reality if full scale war commenced. Meanwhile the JVP wanted Rajapakse to be "tough" against the LTTE. The JHU wanted the Govt to call off the ceasefire and declare war.

SLMM Condemns

Sri Lanka Monitoring Mission (SLMM) in a press release issued from Colombo condemned the "suicide bomb attack that took place at the Sri Lankan Army Head Quarters," and urged the "Sri Lankan Government to equally refrain from any retaliatory actions at this stage and remain committed to the Peace Process."

The SLMM statement said - "The Sri Lanka Monitoring Mission strongly condemns the suicide bomb attack that took place at the Sri Lankan Army Head Quarters in Colombo earlier today resulting in death and injury of both army personnel and civilians. The attack was aimed at Lt. Gen. Sarath Fonseka who was subsequently rushed to hospital.

"The Sri Lankan Monitoring Mission still has limited information about the attack and will for the time being refrain from drawing any immediate conclusions about the possible perpetrators. However we remain at the disposal for the Government of Sri Lanka to assist in making the necessary inquiries.

"This attack is yet another serious blow to the Ceasefire Agreement and the Peace Process. It is likely to have very negative effects on the relationship between the Government of Sri Lanka and the Liberation Tigers or Tamil Eelam and could jeopardize any possibility for future talks.

"The Government armed forces have suffered countless attacks in the last few weeks but have shown restraint and refrained from massive retaliation. We sincerely urge the Sri Lankan Government to equally refrain from any retaliatory actions at this stage and remain committed to the Peace Process."

"Almost 300 people have died in attacks and violence this year. More than 150 of those were civilians. War is not an option for this country as it will only bring human misery and death. There is a desperate need for the two Parties to resume talks at all levels if the situation is not to result in a serious conflict that could escalate out of control and lead to war."

spite the intensive bombardment and shelling comparatively few lives were lost or people injured due to two reasons. One was that the people had taken proper precautions and sought secure shelters. The other was that the bombing and shelling was done at random with venomous fury with very little focus on actual targets.

LTTE political Commissar for Trincomalee S. Elilan has inquired from the Sri Lanka Monitoring Mission whether the ceasefire was over and war had been declared. The Trinco SLMM had informed him that the security force officials had not responded to the telephone calls and e-mails, faxes sent by them.

SLMM head Ulf Henricsson however has gone on record expressing the hope that the attacks were "limited retaliatory" measures. Peace secretariat Director-General Palitha Kohona has also "hinted" that these actions would be of a limited nature in interviews to the media.

Colombo also maintains that the retaliation was necessitated by the LTTE attacking Lankan naval craft in Trincomalee. The bombing and shelling is supposed to be retaliatory measures.

Just as few people believe the LTTE statement that they had nothing to do with the Colombo explosion there are few who would grant credibility to these assertions by the Government. Though the LTTE had exploded a bomb in Colombo on April 25th and engaged in some violence in Trincomalee over the past week the tigers had not attacked the navy on Tuesday as alleged by the Government.

It is apparent that the Government launched its undeclared war first by conducting aerial bombardment and supplementing it further by artillery firing from army camp at Monkey Bridge and shelling from Naval boats

Political analysts however were concerned that Sri Lanka was backsliding to an open and fierce war. There were three concerns. Will the armed forces and defence establishment continue these reprisals to the extent of open war becoming inevitable? Will the LTTE angered by these reprisals raise the ante further by conducting more operations that would make the situation deteriorate further? Will rajapakse egged on by the hardliners around him bow down to populist pressure and declare war?

Despite the ceasefire the country has witnessed an escalating shadow war in the past. Both the LTTE and Tamil paramilitaries assisted by the security forces engaged in that. The suicide bomb attack against Sarath Fonseka is actually

Geneva Talks Collapse, Peace Process in Peril

April 23 – The proposed second round of talks in Geneva between the Government and the LTTE failed to materialise in spite of strenuous efforts made by the Norwegian facilitators. The Tamil Tigers refused to go to Geneva for the second round of talks alleging that it was the Government that was responsible for its decision. The announcement came amid some of the worst incidents of violence and bloodshed since the February 2002, when a cease-fire agreement came into force.

Now that the talks have been almost abandoned without any dates being fixed for the resumption of any more talks, there is widespread fear of further escalation violent incidents that might even lead to a resumption of full scale war.

The talks scheduled to take place on

a high water mark of the escalating shadow war.

Now it is seeing an undeclared war in the form of action by the army, navy and air force. Civilians are victimised. But neither the Government nor the LTTE have said so far that they are declaring war. Sections of the media on either side of the ethnic divide say that the other side has declared ed war. But both parties have reiterated that they are committed to the ceasefire still. It remains to be seen whether this position would change for the worse or the better in the immediate future.

Meanwhile in what seemed a knee-jerk reaction, Defence secretary Gothabhaya Rajapakse clamped down on transport through the Wanni. All transport to and from the LTTE controlled Northern mainland of the Wanni was suspended.

The entry - exit points at Omanthai In Vavuniya district and Uyilankulam in the Mannar district were shut down at 2, 30 pm. The Muhamaalai point in the Jaffna peninsula was closed down at 3. 00 pm. Hundreds of people and vehicles were stranded by the sudden move. Reports indicate that the closure would be temporary.

Recent events have shown that the country is on the brink of an open, brutal war. Only effective International pressure could pull both sides back from the edge. Norway alone cannot do this. Greater coordinated action from the big players like USA, Japan and more importantly India is required to save the peace in Sri Lanka. □

19 to 21 April was previously postponed at the request of the Tamil Tigers and re-fixed by agreement between the parties and the Norwegian facilitators for 24 and 25 April.

By the time the LTTE announced its latest decision, some of the Government delegates had already left for Geneva. The government appeared to be optimistic and said it was going ahead with the logistical arrangements for peace talks with the LTTE in Geneva despite the negative signals coming from Killinochchi.

Norway's new special peace envoy Jon Hanssen-Bauer arrived in the island Tuesday 18 April and had several round of talks with Government leaders and officials and travelled to Kilinochchi in the north and had discussions with the LTTE leaders, including S P Thamilselvan, in a bid to end the deadlock between the the government and the LTTE.

The LTTE announcement said that the group had told Norwegian peace envoy Jon Hanssen-Bauer they would not be able to attend the talks scheduled for April 24 in Switzerland. "We are not in a position to attend the Geneva talks on the currently decided dates under the present environment," Thamilselvan told reporters. "It is the government that is creating a war-like situation and pushing us towards war." "Until a stable and conducive environment is created, we will not be able to attend the talks," he said.

He said the Colombo government must implement what was promised during the first round of talks in Switzerland in February, especially in regard to the Tigers' demands that Colombo disarm rival Tamil groups and a breakaway Tiger faction. "Until the government implements what was agreed to in Geneva, including the disarming of para-militaries, the violence will not stop," Thamilselvan said. "Geneva talks are not possible until a stable situation is created."

Reports said that Norwegian facilitators would travel again on Friday (21) to the north and meet Tamil Tiger leaders in a further attempt at persuading them to attend the talks. The decision was made after Norwegian Special Envoy Hanssen-Bauer held a series of meetings with top government representatives, hours after the Tigers announcement was made that they would

not turn up for the April 24-25 talks in Geneva.

"The door is not shut. Discussions are continuing through the facilitator," said Dr Palitha Kohona, Secretary General of the Government's Peace Secretariat. He declined to elaborate but other officials involved in the peace process said Hanssen-Bauer is expected to present the Tigers with a concrete proposal about transport for its commanders in response to suggestions made by the Tigers during talks with the Norwegian envoy on Thursday (20).

Dispute over transport

The government first refused to let the LTTE commanders fly in Sri Lankan military helicopters although this is a facility that had been made available to the Tigers in the past. When the LTTE vowed to sail in its own Sea Tigers' vessels, Colombo warned of serious consequences. The Sri Lanka Monitoring Mission (SLMM) too ruled that as Sri Lanka had sovereignty over the seas around the island, the Tigers would be acting contrary to the CFA if it acted unilaterally in an attempt to deploy its own vessels for the purpose and thereby precipitate a dangerous crisis.

Eventually, the SLMM stepped in and arranged a civilian vessel to sail from the east to the north where an LTTE leaders' meeting had been called ahead of the Geneva talks scheduled for this month. But the Tigers called off the travel plans at the eleventh hour, accusing the navy of posing dangers to them. In the impasse, the talks got postponed from April 19-21 to April 24-25.

Norway, following intensive discussions with the Government officially intimidated to the LTTE that it would arrange helicopter rides, from the East to the North, for its area leaders to participate in the LTTE Central Committee meeting, but this arrangement too did not satisfy the Tigers.

Earlier, the LTTE had rejected the offer of a small helicopter as it had 32 (now 40) people to be transported. It had also said that the small helicopter was a security risk. LTTE Batticaloa political head, Daya Mohan, said the LTTE would not accept the government offer of a civilian helicopter because a civilian helicopter could be targeted by Karuna cadres or government forces as the chopper would fly at low altitude unlike air force helicopters and claimed the government offer of a civilian helicopter could even be a "trick."

Later the government had offered through the Scandinavian facilitators a

larger helicopter to the LTTE in order to prevent the transport issue from becoming a stumbling block on the road to the peace talks in Geneva.

Even after the LTTE had officially announced that its delegation would not go for talks in Geneva, the Norwegian facilitators made strenuous efforts to persuade the LTTE to agree to the travel arrangements they had made with the Government for the transport of its cadres from the east to the north and thereafter agree on amended dates for the resumption of talks between the Government and the LTTE in Geneva.

The new SLMM Chief, Ulf Henricsson flew to Kilinochchi with a Government Peace Secretariat document that confirmed approval and security guarantees for either a sea-going vessel or a private helicopter to transport 40 LTTE eastern leaders for a meeting in Kilinochchi with their leadership. Henricsson went to Kilinochchi on Friday (21) where he delivered the document containing details of the route of the aircraft, the flight plan, the cost involved and the agreement between the Norwegians and the private airline service. Henricsson stayed in Kilinochchi overnight in the hope of meeting S.P. Thamilselvan and other leaders of the LTTE the following day (Saturday 22), but was told that Thamilselvan was unavailable to meet him that day. A disappointed Henricsson returned empty handed to Colombo where Norway's Special Envoy Jon Hanssen Bauer was waiting expecting a positive outcome having postponed his departure from Colombo.

It is learnt that Mr. Bauer had hoped to receive LTTE's acceptance of the transport arrangements and security guarantees and to confirm dates for the second round of talks in Geneva during discussions with Mr. Balasingham in London. But that was not to be and Mr. Bauer returned to Oslo having failed in his endeavours in his capacity as the new Norwegian Special Envoy for the Sri Lanka peace process.

The Sri Lankan government said that it had done everything possible to make the proposed Geneva truce talks with the Tamil Tigers possible despite continued attacks against the security forces in which, since the beginning of April, as many as 70 soldiers and navy personnel are reported to have killed mainly in landmine attacks.

"We have gone that extra mile and done everything possible despite barbaric acts of terrorism by the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE)," Keheliya

Rambukwella, minister of policy planning and the government's defence spokesman, told reporters on 20 April. Rambukwella added that the government was committed to the Norwegian backed process and was ready to participate in the talks on scheduled dates.

Rambukwella said, quoting official figures, that there had been 48 deaths between April 7 and April 17 due to continued attacks of claymore mines and other attacks against security forces by the LTTE rebels.

"We have offered them air transport when they rejected an earlier sea movement as agreed with the SLMM," Rambukwella said, referring to a decision by the rebels not to send their eastern cadres to the north in a commercial ferry accompanied by SLMM monitors and Sri Lanka Navy escort ships.

SLMM's fears

Meanwhile, the Sri Lanka Monitoring Mission (SLMM) said it feared the worst if the scheduled second round of talks in Geneva did not take place following a spree of claymore mine attacks on the government security forces allegedly carried out by the LTTE. SLMM spokesperson Helen Olafsdottir said the level of violence had spun out of control following these attacks and feared the country was running out of time with both the government and the LTTE losing trust in each other.

Miss Olafsdottir stressing that the inability of the government and the LTTE to work together was seriously affecting the country and its people said, "Already people are dying in large numbers, so the situation is unacceptable and there is no way we can continue like this. The parties need to work their way out of the deadlock instead of speculating and pondering over why and who carried out the attacks," she said.

Shadow boxing

Analysts say that the so-called dispute over transport between the Government and the LTTE is nothing but an exercise in shadow boxing on the part of the LTTE. The LTTE leaders and cadres have previously travelled in Sri Lanka Air Force helicopters escorted by the military between north and east and between Kilinochchi and Colombo. Their cadres have also been previously transported between the north and east in vessels escorted by the Sri Lankan Navy.

What is really haunting the LTTE leadership is the increasing presence and activity of the Karuna Group in the east
(continued on next page)

South Asian intervention in Lanka recommended

New Delhi, April 22 - A Singapore-based scholar

has suggested an internationally backed South Asian intervention in Sri Lanka to end its unending ethnic conflict.

"It is time the rest of the world took Sri Lanka seriously," Michael Vatikiotis of the Institute of Southeast Asian Studies in Singapore said in an opinion piece in the International Herald Tribune. He said the "threat of force" was needed to bring the Sri Lankan government and the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) to the negotiating table "and keep them there".

Vatikiotis said India was well positioned to exert pressure on both sides but it preferred to lend quiet support to the Norway-backed peace process that is now under serious strain. He said South Asia's major donors and strategic allies, "using their enhanced access to the region, should persuade South Asian nations to cooperate more closely to bring an end to the war in Sri Lanka."

He added that admission of the US, China and Japan as observers to the South Asian Association of Regional Cooperation (SAARC) "will make it harder for India to ignore instability on its fringes."

The scholar added that the growing categorization of the LTTE as a terrorist group had not helped. "The progressive isolation of the Tigers, now banned as terrorists in Canada and Europe as well as in the US, doesn't help. Instead of pushing them into terrorist oblivion, where they could prove even more dangerous, governments should be finding ways to engage with them through the widely dispersed and hugely sympathetic Tamil diaspora."

"More forceful engagement with both sides could push them to respect the ceasefire agreed to in 2002 and lead to discussions about an acceptable federal solution."

Vatikiotis credited Norway, the peace facilitator, with "valiantly leading attempts" to revive the stalled peace process but warned that "there is precious little help coming from elsewhere. (*Indo-Asian News Service*)

"It seems perverse that a world gripped by the scourge of terrorism neglects the bloody conflict in Sri Lanka...Each side accuses the other of not being serious about the talks, and a

NEWS REVIEW

full-blown resurgence of this vicious war looms...

"A major part of the problem is that both sides in this con-

flict have proved reluctant to negotiate. The Tigers are strong. They control territory and have a respectable military capacity. They aren't going away. The government in Colombo wants to play it both ways - seeking to isolate the Tigers and engage them in a peace process."

SL seeks world support

April 23 - Even as incidents of violence between the LTTE and the security forces escalated on a daily basis throughout the Northeast amidst eruption of inter-ethnic clashes resulting displacement of thousands of civilians, particularly in the eastern Trincomalee district, the Sri Lankan government on Sunday (23) appealed to the international community to thwart the LTTE's bid to foment inter-ethnic violence on the scale of the infamous riots in 1983.

The government is also said that it was holding discussions with the European Union (EU) to secure a ban on the LTTE, in case it continues to indulge in unprovoked violence and dodge peace talks. The EU has already slapped a "travel ban" on the leaders of the LTTE. But the government is now pressing the EU to consider listing the LTTE as a terrorist organisation.

Addressing the media here, government spokesman Keheliya Rambukwella said that through its violent activities in Trincomalee, some directed at civilians, the LTTE was trying to foment communal violence of the 1983 kind to make political capital out of it. "They want to make gains out of bloodstains," he charged.

The government, for its part, was fully committed to peace and the resolution of the ethnic conflict through talks, he said. It was doing everything possible, giving concession after concession, to make the LTTE come for the second round of talks in Geneva, Rambukwella said.

But it was also the bounden duty of the international community to help Sri Lanka in this regard, by mounting pressure on the LTTE to eschew the path of violence, he stressed. "The international community, comprising the co-chairs of the To-

kyo donors conference, the EU, the Norwegian peace facilitators, the Scandinavian truce monitors, and others interested in peace in Sri Lanka, should take note of this and mount pressure on the LTTE to call off the violence and come for talks with government," Rambukwella said.

The Director General of the government Peace Secretariat, Dr Palitha Kohona, said that the government was engaged in discussions with the European Union on the possibility of getting the LTTE listed as a terrorist organisation if it did not stop its violent activities and come for talks.

The government is extremely worried about the bid to foment a 1983 type of communal rioting, because 1983 had

(continued from page 8)

of the country and all attempts by the LTTE to eliminate this group have not succeeded. On the contrary the Karuna Group has converted itself into a political party and even opened a political office in eastern Batticaloa. To regain its hegemony in the east, according to analysts, what the Tigers really want is for the government to disarm or rein in the Karuna group, or help the LTTE to transport sufficient number of men and material to once and for all eliminate Karuna and his group.

After the February Talks in Geneva, the Tigers had hoped that the Government would deliver on the promise to "disarm all armed groups" operating from

government controlled areas. But that hope has not materialised.

In response to the failure on the part of the Government to disarm the Karuna group, since the beginning of April, the LTTE has resumed claymore land mine attacks on the military leading to the killing and wounding of scores of security service personnel.

As a result, both parties are accusing each other of breach of what was agreed during the February talks in Geneva.

Now that the proposed talks are off, what appears to be on offer is the continuation of the "undeclared war" that commenced in December last year with more claymore mine attacks, targeted killings and assassinations and more civilians being caught in the crossfire. □

won great sympathy for the Tamils and Tamil militancy in the international community. The riots brought a bad name to the Sri Lankan government, from which it could not extricate itself for decades. The Rajapaksa government is therefore bending over backwards to prevent such a situation from arising again.

Spokesman Rambukwella pointed out that the violence in Trincomalee, precipitated by a terrorist bomb blast in a market, was brought under control within three hours because the President had rushed senior ministers to the spot. But still the LTTE seemed bent on provoking the civilians and the armed forces as part of its "sinister plan", he said.

Bishops say, 'Stop the Violence and Killings'

April 12 - A statement issued by the Catholic Bishops' Conference on 12 April stated: "The Catholic Bishops' Conference of Sri Lanka is deeply perturbed by the recent escalation of violence causing the loss of so many human lives.

The latest incident was on April 10, where five soldiers and two social workers attached to the Jaffna based Human Development Centre and working for Caritas, a Catholic Relief Organization, have been killed in a blast on the A9 highway, near Mirusuvil. The responsibility for this blast has been claimed by a group calling itself the Resurgent Tamil People's Front.

Just at this moment, when this statement is drafted, 10 sailors have been killed and nine injured, two of them foreigners in a mine blast on the Trincomalee - Habarana road, bringing about a further deterioration of the security situation.

The SLMM has already pointed out on an earlier occasion that the LTTE cannot disown responsibility for such incidents. It is unfortunate that even innocent civilians engaged in relief, reconstruction and rehabilitation work had to pay with their lives in these brutal killings.

The Catholic Bishops' Conference unequivocally condemns these senseless killings of innocent persons and those engaged in carrying out their duties.

Human life is too precious to be extinguished in this manner. We are alarmed that even sacred places and holy days are disregarded in these meaningless killings. At this hallowed time when the whole nation is preparing to commemorate the Sinhala and Tamil New Year the pathos of this tragedy is even greater.

This year Easter which represents a new beginning for Christians coincides with the National Festival. All the expectations of our people for a fresh beginning will be shattered if the violence is not halted immediately.

Therefore we cry out with all people of goodwill in this Country to those perpetrating these crimes against fellow human beings - STOP THE VIOLENCE AND KILLING!!!!

Tamil Tigers outlawed and added to Canada's terror list

The Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) have been added to Canada's list of outlawed terrorist organizations. The Honourable Stockwell Day, Minister of Public Safety, announced on April 10 that Canada's new government has listed the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) as a terrorist group, effective April 8, 2006, pursuant to the Criminal Code.

"The decision to list the LTTE is long overdue and something the previous government did not take seriously enough to act upon," said Minister Day. "Our government is clearly de-

termined to take decisive steps to ensure the safety of Canadians against terrorism."

In listing the LTTE, the Government of Canada conducted an extensive analysis of security information and intelligence to ensure the stringent legal test outlined in the Criminal Code was met. Canada is also meeting its international commitments to prevent terrorists from using the banking system to further their terrorist activities.

The Honourable Peter MacKay, Minister of Foreign Affairs, supporting this decision, reiterated the Government of Canada's resolve to help achieve a negotiated settlement to the situation in Sri Lanka. "The LTTE's repeated use of violence since signing a ceasefire agreement is unacceptable and seriously calls into question its commitment to the peace process," said Minister MacKay. "The Sri Lankan government must also fulfill its pledge to bring a negotiated resolution to the conflict. Canada will continue to work with international supporters of the peace process to help the parties reach a resolution."

The LTTE has been in armed conflict with the Sri Lankan Government since 1983. This organization is known for its commitment to using indiscriminate terror tactics and suicide bombings. Since the commencement of conflict more than 20 years ago, over 64 000 deaths have occurred.

The objective of the Criminal Code list is to help combat terrorist activities, including impeding terrorist financing. It is illegal for any person to provide support, facilitate or participate in the activities of a terrorist group. This includes providing any financial support.

"This listing is meant to support the Tamil community in Canada who are law-abiding and hard working people who have left their country of origin to build a better life for themselves and their families in Canada - where the rule of law and human rights are respected," said Minister Day.

The Tamil Tigers are the 39th terrorist group to be outlawed under the Anti-Terrorism Act, and the first added to the list by the new Conservative government. The move was spearheaded by Stockwell Day, the Minister of Public Safety, who in opposition repeatedly condemned the Liberals for not outlawing the Tigers. During the federal election campaign, the Conservatives promised to add the Tigers to Canada's official list of terrorist groups, and they have fulfilled their pledge.

"It sends a signal to the (Tamil) community and right across the country that the government will not tolerate terrorism or terrorist activities," Day said. Day said authorities will be keeping a close eye on affiliated organizations that could run afoul of the terrorist designation should they continue allying themselves with the Tigers.

The decision means it will now be a criminal offence to participate in the activities of the Tamil Tigers, formally known as the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam, or LTTE. For example, anyone convicted of financially supporting the Tigers could be imprisoned for up to 10 years.

But while the Tigers were placed on the list, the government stopped short of listing any of the group's Canadian front organizations.

The Cabinet order will likely have implications both at home and abroad. It will criminalize the Tiger "war taxes" that have long been paid - both voluntarily and involuntarily - by some Tamil-Canadians, and the listing could deal a blow to the Tigers, who are heavily dependent on Canadian and other foreign donors.

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On three separate occasions, CSIS asked the Cabinet to list the Tigers, most recently a year ago, but the Liberals would not do so, saying they did not want to interfere with Sri Lanka's peace process.

The decision is part of a hardening of Canada's counterterrorism policies that has been underway since the Conservatives took office. Last week, the government also severed ties with the Palestinian Authority over the refusal of Hamas to moderate its platform.

The decision brings federal counterterrorism policy in line with the Federal Court of Canada, which has already ruled that the Tamil Tigers qualify as a terrorist group. The Anti-Terrorism Act allows Cabinet to designate not only terrorist groups but also the front organizations that support them, but none are named in the latest listing. CSIS has claimed that eight front organizations support the LTTE in Canada, as well as several front companies that are used to harness financial and political support for the civil war effort in Sri Lanka.

The decision means that Canada has assessed the LTTE and determined that it is a terrorist group pursuant to the Criminal Code. Listing under the Criminal Code is a clear statement that anyone supporting the LTTE is not welcome in Canada and if they do support the terrorist activities of the LTTE, they can be subject to criminal prosecution.

WTM offices raided: Further to the listing of the LTTE as a terrorist organization by the Canadian government, the Canadian Police raided the office of World Tamil Movement in Montreal as part of an investigation into terrorist financing. A counter-terrorism team made up of forty Police officers swooped

down on April 12 in the first raid on the WTM at 4160 Van Horne Ave. in the Cote des Neiges district. Reportedly, the local Police from Montreal too joined in the raid. Jointly they seized computers, files and other documents. LTTE flags and other political material were also seized by the Police. However, no one was arrested.

The search warrant said police are investigating four alleged criminal offences, all related to financing and facilitating terrorist activity that occurred between February 2003 and April 2006. National security investigators told the judge who authorized the warrant they had reasonable grounds for believing the world Tamil organization was involved in criminal activities on behalf of the Tamil Tigers. Among the documents police were looking for: Bank records, Pre-authorized payment information, Donor lists, Phone bills, Correspondence between Tigers in Sri Lanka and world Tamil movement members in Montreal, Flags, Calendars, Clothing with the Tamil Tiger logo, Both used and unused lottery tickets sold to people who attended events in Montreal in support of the Tigers etc.

The Canadian Police officers carried out another raid, this time on the Scarborough and Toronto offices of the World Tamil Movement on 22 April, sealing off the building with yellow police tape and carting off boxes of documents.

Following the news of the raids, it is reported that LTTE literature, magazines, CDs which were displayed all these years so prominently on the shelves of the Tamil shops in Toronto have suddenly disappeared. Even the photographs of the LTTE leader Prabhakaran which used to be displayed prominently in the Tamil shops have suddenly disappear.

'Move out of your homes located around army camps'

April 23 - The "Upsurging People Force of Batticaloa-Amparai Division", in a an appeal said that they intend to accelerate their attack on the Sinhala 'mercenary' forces on a regular and systematic basis, therefore those residing near or around the Sinhala army camps and bases to vacate from their homes immediately.

The statement under the caption "Would fulfill the Vow" released to the LTTE controlled Tamil language websites and other electronic media states as follows :

"Our dear relatives and friends!

What ever little hope we earlier entertained about the peace process is no more in our hearts and mind, as there is a remarkable surge in the discriminatory activities of the communal Sinhala chauvinist Government against the Tamil nation.

"We are unable to tolerate any further discriminations and atrocities unleashed by the Sinhala chauvinist Sri Lanka Government and its Army against us in the guise of 'ceasefire and peace'.

"The Sinhala Government is functioning with the evil intention to decimate the Tamil nation. They are deceiving the innocent Tamil youths in the para-military groups, as those Tamil youths have failed to comprehend the discriminatory ploy and the deception of the Government.

"This is also our notice and a warning for those misguided youths in the para military groups. We are appealing to youths in the paramilitary groups: Do not convert yourself as 'traitors of the Tamil nation' and don't bloody your body and harm yourself permanently.

"To those residents located near the Sinhala army camps or bases: We humbly request you not to reside in close proximity of the Sinhala army camps and bases, as we have decided to accelerate our attack on a systematic and regular basis on those facilities.

"We firmly believe that this appeal made to our people, taking into consideration the benefit of our nation would greatly strengthen our resolve to fight a war for our ultimate liberation and freedom."

"To the Liberation Tigers: We regret very much that we could not exercise restraints and patience as you people adhere to. - Upsurging People Force, Batticaloa-Amparai Division.

Tigers deny staging TRO abductions

April 9 - The LTTE has denied reports by the University Teachers for Human Rights (UTHR)-Jaffna that TRO abductions were staged by the LTTE.

LTTE Political Head in the east S. Elilan reportedly told *The Sunday Leader* that these accusations by the UTHR- Jaffna were baseless.

"Why should the LTTE abduct the TRO members? We will not gain anything by staging an abduction of this nature," he said. He also said that the LTTE did not respect the UTHR as they made statements and comments without knowing the gravity of the problems.

"We don't respect them as humans. They don't respect the feelings of other people and make comments as they wish, and we can't waste our time on these petty statements," he said.

The TRO also condemned the statements by the UTHR and said that the comments were ridiculous and were not properly sourced. TRO Spokesperson Arjunan Ethirveerasingham reportedly said that the TRO was contemplating legal action

against the statements made by the UTHR. "This is one of the worst comments I've heard and it is most ridiculous," he said. He also questioned the background of the UTHR and their credibility to make such statements.

"This particular group is notorious for making such ridiculous statements and they are unreliable," he added. Speaking on the latest developments on the abductions he said that the families had attended the press conference last week and shared the difficulties they have been facing.

Meanwhile, the TRO expressed its dissatisfaction with the efforts of most of the local authorities on this issue. "We still have not received any feedback from the police and the Human Rights Commission has also reported this in their report," he said.

The University Teachers for Human Rights (Jaffna) had alleged that the LTTE faked the alleged abduction of seven Tamil Rehabilitation Organization (TRO) personnel at Welikande on the Batticaloa - Polonnaruwa border in two separate incidents on Jan 29th and 30th of this year. The UTHR (J) in the special report No 20 released on April 2nd titled "Terrorism, Counterterrorism and Challenges to Human Rights Advocacy" had cited sources close to family members of one abducted person saying that the LTTE has told them not to worry as the missing persons were safe with the LTTE.

The UTHR report refers to the TRO abduction incident in the following manner - "An example of the resulting anarchy is the alleged abduction of 10 TRO workers in the Batticaloa District about the end of January (first two and then reportedly another released). The facts around these abductions remained murky and appeared on the surface a complex plot involving several actors, with the connivance of the state security apparatus at local level."

"But now UTHR(J) can confirm that the TRO abduction drama was staged by the LTTE immediately before the Geneva meeting to force the paramilitary issue to the forefront of the talks. According to a reliable source close to a family member of an abducted TRO employee, the family was assured that he is safe and not to worry, as all the abductees are safe with the LTTE. But the family was warned not to leak this information."

"Further, we understand that the release of 3 abductees along with rumours that some of the abductors spoke Hindi was also calculated to point the finger of blame at the Karuna faction (which is aligned to the ENDLF). This was meant to detract from the Government's insistence that the abductions were the work of the LTTE. The released abductees were forced to relate a story implicating the security forces and the Karuna group."

"This also explains LTTE fronts quickly becoming silent in demanding the release of the TRO abductees. We withhold further information on the ordeal of family members and other information which led us to our finding for the sake of the safety of the families. But in the interests of peace and accountability, this information needs to be brought into the open."

Amnesty International fears for Jaffna VC's safety

April 12 - The London based international human rights organization, Amnesty International (AI) believes that the newly appointed Vice Chancellor, Professor Ratnajeevan Hoole's life is in 'grave danger'.

In a statement released on 12 April, AI states, "A group believed to be a front organisation for the armed opposition group Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) has threatened to kill an academic who has links to an anti-LTTE group. Amnesty International believes his life is in grave danger.

"People claiming to represent a group called the People's Uprising Force (Makkal Eluchip Padai) telephoned Professor Ratnajeewan Hoole's home, in the town of Peradeniya, several times on 11 March, warning that if he stepped onto the campus of Jaffna University, where he had just been appointed Vice Chancellor (VC), he would return home "headless in a box". The following day the leader of the Jaffna University Students' Union (Yaal Palkalaikalaha Maanavar Ondriyam) has threatened to assault him if he steps onto the campus.

"In February a group from the Students' Union sent a letter to the President of the University Council, which was also published in Tamil newspapers the same day, demanding that "only someone loyal to the Tamil people should be appointed to the post of VC" and that "one against the Tamil race ought not to be appointed". Soon after Professor Hoole's appointment posters appeared on the university campus, alleging that he was anti-Hindu (he is a Christian), which would imply that he is also anti-Tamil.

"On 12 March a website said to be operated by the LTTE, nitharsanam.com, posted a photo of Professor Hoole captioned "Who is this fool" together with an article entitled "Army Spy Appointed VC". The article referred to Professor Hoole's alleged involvement in the 1990 publication of a book called *The Broken Palmyra* which was highly critical of the LTTE's suppression of alternative voices within the Tamil community. The article alleged that a shipment of the book, printed in the USA, had been found to contain weapons intended for a group critical of the LTTE, which the publishers categorically deny.

"On 18 March the website published a second article entitled "Who is this fool Part 2", which among other things accused Professor Hoole of being connected to the University Teachers for Human Rights (Jaffna) (UTHR-J), one of few civil society groups documenting abuses by the LTTE. Professor Hoole's brother, Rajan Hoole, is a leading UTHR-J activist, but the professor himself has never been involved in writing the organisation's reports.

"On 22 March Professor Hoole's daughter Anbini received an anonymous call with a threat to "kill her younger brother and chop him into pieces" if their father were to take up the Vice Chancellor post at the university. The family received further threatening calls from the People's Uprising Force.

"In a letter dated 21 March 2006 Professor Hoole raised his concerns about threats against him and his family with the Norwegian Embassy in Colombo and the Sri Lanka Monitoring Mission (SLMM), a body comprising five Nordic countries established to monitor the ceasefire.

"Professor Hoole has since received messages through MPs of the LTTE-affiliated Tamil National Alliance, and others claiming to be from the LTTE, that he must resign from the post of Vice Chancellor."

Meanwhile, the Social Services and Social Welfare Minister and EPDP leader, Douglas Devananda, has appealed to the co-chairs of the Sri Lanka peace process and the Diplomatic Community about the seriousness of the death threat issued by the LTTE and its front organisations to Professor S.R.H. Hoole, Vice Chancellor of the University of Jaffna and other council members who voted in favour of him taking up the position.

Mr Devananda has expressed his feelings on the seriousness of the threats issued and has called on the International Community to take measures ensuring the removal of terror as a weapon. He explained that "this widespread employment of terror by the LTTE to ensure that Professor Hoole cannot work, is a clear violation of the Cease-Fire Agreement (CFA). Strong measures are, therefore, required from the International Community to ensure the removal of terror as a weapon by the

LTTE and its front organizations, to undermine the lawful appointment to the post of Vice Chancellor and to save the voices of democracy in the North and the East"

Professor Hoole was appointed Vice Chancellor on March 12, 2006. He was one of three candidates put forward for the role and chosen because of his esteemed academic career. He is a respected academic with wide international experience but most importantly, he is the only academic in service in Sri Lanka with a higher doctorate from London in addition to his doctorate from Carnegie Mellon University.

It is reported that a poster has been put up in the vicinity of the Jaffna University giving a chilling warning to the Jaffna University Senate members, with photographs of faces of the University Council members who attended the meeting in which Professor Hoole was elected and asking the question: 'Who are the 15 traitors who voted for Hoole?' The poster identifies five of the members as having voted for Professor Hoole, and depicts them with skull and crossbones instead of their faces. It warns that they will uncover the others who voted for him and punish them.

Norway condemns latest violence

April 11 - The Norwegian Foreign Ministry, in a press statement issued on Tuesday (11) condemned the latest acts of violence in Sri Lanka. Noting the heavy loss of life in Tuesday's Claymore attack in Trincomalee, the statement said that the assassination of the prominent Tamil civil society representative in Trincomalee, Mr V. Vigneswaran, and other serious incidents were adding to the vortex of violence that could eventually create a situation similar to that in December 2005 and January this year. Full text of the press release issued by the Norwegian Foreign Ministry follows:

"Norway condemns the latest acts of violence in Sri Lanka - The Government of Norway condemns, in the strongest possible terms, the latest acts of violence in Sri Lanka. The media report heavy loss of life in a new Claymore mine attack today. This is the third such attack in the last three days in which people have been killed or seriously injured. These attacks must be seen against the backdrop of other serious acts of violence during the last few days. The assassination of a prominent Tamil civil society representative in Trincomalee, Mr V. Vigneswaran, and other serious incidents are adding to the vortex of violence that could eventually create a situation similar to that in December 2005 and January this year. I strongly urge the two parties to meet in Geneva on 19-21 April as planned", says Norwegian Minister for International Development Erik Solheim. "This meeting will provide an opportunity for finding ways to implement the Ceasefire agreement and the promises the parties gave in their previous meeting".

CBK, Cabinet, called to Court over land and other perks

Mar 26 - The Supreme Court has issued notices on former President Chandrika Kumaratunga and her former Cabinet of Ministers to appear in Court on July 17 after granting leave to proceed with the fundamental rights violation petition filed by three lawyers, against the Cabinet decision to grant President Kumaratunga land and other perks in violation of the Presidents' Entitlement Act.

The Court also issued a stay order against the decision of the Cabinet of Ministers to grant Chandrika Kumaratunga one

and a half acres of land at Madiwela along with additional facilities.

The Bench comprised Chief Justice Sarath N. Silva, Justices Raja Fernando and N.G. Amaratunga. Respondents were not present and were not represented by lawyers. Court issued notices on the respondents returnable on July 17.

Hiroshana Senarath, D.M. Dissanayake and Ajith Liyanage, in their petition, cited former President Chandrika Kumaratunga and the present and previous members of the Cabinet of Ministers as respondents. Peter Jayasekera with K. Thiranagama, P. Liyanarachchi and Kosala Senadeera appeared for the petitioners. The petitioners are seeking the Court to hold that the decision of the respondents at Cabinet meetings, to grant to Chandrika Kumaratunga a land at Madiwela, in free hold, a civilian staff of 63 personnel, the purchase of 36 vehicles and the assignment of 198 security personnel, in excess of the numbers permitted by the Presidents' Entitlement Act, are illegal and void and to quash the decision.

The petitioners want the Court to hold that granting these facilities is illegal and in excess of the Presidents' Entitlement Act, while she holds the post of President of the SLFP is arbitrary, unreasonable and 'mala fide' and has infringed their fundamental rights and those of the citizens of the country.

Muslims demand separate delegation in talks

Mar 27 - In a statement released at a press briefing held Sunday (26) evening at Sainthamaruthu Jumma Mosques conference hall, the Eastern Province Mosques Federation (EPMF) de-

mandated that a separate Muslim delegation should be included in any future peace talks between the Government of Sri Lanka (GOSL) and Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE). The statement also said Muslim community should have the complete freedom to decide on the the composition of such delegation.

EPMF has decided to obtain approval from the GOSL and LTTE to allow a separate Muslim delegation in the future peace talks to avoid contradictions and suspicions in future peace talks, the press release said.

The EPMF also decided to take steps to create a power-sharing unit for Muslims in the East to ensure Muslims rights are protected when two majority communities - Sinhalese and Tamils - jointly decide on power sharing arrangements between them, the statement said.

The Muslim community has been weakened because of differences prevailing among Muslim leadership. This is an outcome of a planned sabotage being carried out by national and international forces against the welfare of Muslim community. All Muslim leaders and activists should come forward to strengthen the unity of Muslim community and the EPMF will support this effort, said the press release.

"We condemn the statement made in the first round of Geneva peace talks and later by a election monitoring group that a Jihad Group has been working among the Muslims in Sri Lanka. No such group exists among Muslim community in the country. The accusation has been made against the Muslim community in a planned way to tarnish the image of Muslims in the international forum. Today's situation for Muslims would not have arisen if such group existed among the Muslim community," said the statement of the EPMF.

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SLMM Head condemns landmine attacks

April 11 - Head of the Sri Lanka Monitoring Mission (SLMM), Major General Ulf Henricsson, in a statement condemning the recent land mine attacks said, "The SLMM strongly condemns the claymore mine attacks on the Sri Lankan army in Jaffna on 8 and 10 April 2006 and on the Sri Lankan navy in Trincomalee district today. Over 20 people have been killed in violent attacks over the past five days and many civilians have also been caught in the above mentioned attacks resulting in both death and serious injuries.

The Head of the Sri Lankan Monitoring Mission, Major General Ulf Henricsson, visited Jaffna today and had fruitful meetings with the Head of the Security Forces in Jaffna and the Commander of the Northern Naval Command. He also visited the site of the claymore mine attack that took place yesterday in Jaffna. Head of Mission also hopes to meet with the LTTE leadership in Kilinochchi tomorrow to get their reaction.

SLMM is making inquiries into all three attacks but will refrain from making any further comments regarding the perpetrators and possible motives until further inquiries have been done.

At this stage it is safe to say that these attacks are seriously jeopardizing not only the Geneva talks scheduled later this month but is having a detrimental effect on the ceasefire. Head of Mission would like to commend the Government of Sri Lanka for not taking any retaliatory actions and thereby adhering to the CFA. We would like to urge both Parties to do everything in their power to maintain the ceasefire and not to engage in violence or provocative acts that can lead to any further escalations so that the situation does not slip back to the one we had in the months of December and January where countless number of soldiers and civilians lost their lives."

"Paramilitary" issue at Geneva Talks

Mar 29 - The Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) would participate at the second session of peace negotiations in Geneva during 19-21 April provided that the Government of Sri Lanka and the Norwegian facilitators guarantee the safety and safe passage of the Tamil Tiger negotiating team through Colombo Katunayake international airport. Mr. Anton Balasingham, chief negotiator of the LTTE, said he made this specific request for the security of the negotiating team when he met the Norwegian Development Minister, Mr. Erik Solheim on Wednesday (22) at his residence in London.

Mr Solheim assured that he will convey the security concerns of the LTTE leadership when he meets President Rajapakse in Colombo next week, on 6 April, Mr. Balasingham further said. The Norwegian Minister in charge of peace talks met Mr Balasingham and his wife Adele and discussed the ground situation for two hours. Mr Solheim was assisted by two senior Norwegian government officials.

During the discussion Mr Balasingham explained in detail the violent activities of the Tamil paramilitaries and their killing spree in Vavuniya and in the Batticaloa district. Expressing deep disillusionment over the government's reluctance to disarm Tamil paramilitaries, the LTTE's chief negotiator has im-

pressed upon the Norwegians that the peace process could not move forward until paramilitaries are disarmed and their violent activities are brought to an end. "The agenda for the second round of talks will be definitely about disarming the Tamil paramilitaries if the government fails to take action to contain them as pledged during the first session of Geneva talks," Mr Balasingham told the Norwegian facilitators.

Call to leave Jaffna

April 21 - Warning of an imminent war, an organization calling itself as the Jaffna District Civil Societies Union (JDCSU) has issued a warning to the people of Jaffna to leave the peninsula immediately and settle down in Vanni for their safety and security. Reportedly this warning has been carried in almost all the LTTE's Tamil websites and other media outlets.

JDCSU states that Government would renege on the Cease-fire Agreement any moment. It also states that the Government is placing stumbling blocs at every turn to prevent the Liberation Tigers from participating in the talks. The Sri Lankan Army and the paramilitaries are pursuing a programme of killing and exterminating the Tamils.

The full text of the statement under the caption "Is Jaffna Peninsula a killing field for the Army?" released by the General Secretary of the JDCSU is as follows:

"Dear relatives and friends!

You have been longing for a conducive situation to emerge. If you believe in such an illusion you are going to be entrapped in the killing field and die. Think over it. The time is ripe now for you to make an urgent decision. Is it not necessary for you to avoid the atrocities our enemy is inflicting on us in our soil? Military offensive and campaigns are focused on targeting youths.

The 20 meter wide border crossing entry point may be closed at any time and will it be possible to cross it once war begins? Have you all forgotten the bloodiest killings of the five youths at Anthiranveli in Puttur. Why did the Army kill them? Did they throw grenades? Placed claymore bombs? Did they carry guns? Why were they killed?

Are they not violently committed to decimate in total the Tamil community? Innocent youths were tortured and killed? At least now what is your decision? Are you unable to comprehend the plot hatched by the enemy?

Filled with threats and fears the Peninsula today has been converted into a killing field fenced by the military. Moreover to Vanni which has been freed and where there is security and protection.

At any given time the Ceasefire Agreement would be renege. That would not guarantee a peaceful and contended life. Government is placing stumbling blocks at every turn to prevent the Liberation Tigers from participating in the talks.

To stoke the fires of war, the Sinhala Army and the paramilitaries are on a mission to kill and exterminate the Tamils. Therefore come over, a Leader is there to guide. To lead you, there are commanders and many cadres to fight with modern and sophisticated military hardware.

This is a historic call - We will redeem Jaffna within a year and then live in a free land with freedom. This is the last opportunity. If you miss it, then you will be the one who has committed a serious mistake. Therefore clearly think over it and act wisely." □

FACT FINDING REPORT

Outbreak of violence in Trinco

The 15-minutes speed, with which the violence in Trincomalee town was triggered on 12th April, after a bomb explosion that killed five persons, indicate that there was an "element of pre-planning," said a report issued by Colombo based civil society representatives Friday, 21 April. The report said over 20 civilians were killed, over 30 shops and 100 homes destroyed and more than 3000 persons are displaced seeking refuge in schools and places of worship in Trincomalee.

A team of representatives from Colombo based organisations INFORM, Law And Society Trust, Centre for Policy Alternatives, and Free Media Movement undertook a fact finding trip to Trincomalee on 16th and 17th of April.

The pre-planned violence by armed Sinhala persons who began a rampage through the business area of the town, setting Tamil shops on fire, and looting goods, was "extremely disturbing," the report signed by various civil society organisation representatives in Colombo, said adding that observers of the violence in Trincomalee had characterised the situation as being "reminiscent of the anti-Tamil riots of July 1983."

The report mentions that there were "several very credible eye witness accounts to the manner in which the security forces stood by and allowed the burning and killing to take place."

"The government should devise some means of accepting accountability for the inability of the security forces to prevent the violence; a collective apology from the state and from southern political parties to the people of Trincomalee would go a long way towards re-building bridges of communication and trust," the report said.

The report also criticised the LTTE for engaging in acts of armed attacks against the security forces resulting in further heightening tension and fear within the communities and the Trincomalee area.

Full text of the report is as follows:

A fact-finding team of civil society representatives travelled to Trincomalee on 16th and 17th of April 2006 in the

wake of reports of civil unrest in the District.

The findings of this mission have left us gravely concerned by the events that have unfolded in Trincomalee over the past week; events which have left over 20 civilians dead, over 30 shops and 100 homes destroyed by fire and over 3000 persons displaced and seeking refuge in schools and places of worship.

On 12th April, a bomb exploded in the vegetable market in Trincomalee town, leaving five persons, including one child, dead. Within 15 minutes of the explosion, a gang of armed Sinhala persons began a rampage through the business area of the town, setting Tamil shops on fire, and looting goods. According to bystanders, though the gang never consisted of more than 100 at any given time, there was no reasonable attempt made by the security forces to prevent the violence.

Several people have been reported killed in and around the market on the 12th during the course of the rioting. Some bodies were thrown into the flames of the burning shops. 19 deaths, including of 7 women, have been reported so far; however the figure is rising daily. The burning of bodies has resulted in delays in identification, and has destroyed traces of mutilation and sexual assault prior to the death.

Over 30 shops were burned in all, the majority belonging to Tamils and 2 to Muslims. It appeared that several large shops were specifically targeted – among them were Hari Electricals, the Dollar Agency, the Dialog Company and the Sunlight (Lever Brothers) Agency. The mob also attacked the Hatton National Bank.

Other incidents of violence, including arson and murder took place outside the town. The body of a young Sinhala man, identified as Nissanka, was found in Mahindapura on the 14th April. He had been missing since the 13th. Subsequently the Sinhala villagers of Mahindapura went on a rampage in the

neighbouring Tamil village Nadesapura and set fire to over 40 homes. The office of the Trincomalee District Youth Development Organization (AHAM) was attacked and several vehicles belonging to the organization were set on fire; the Hindu temple in the village was also attacked. Similar incidents have taken place in Thuwarangkadu, resulting in the displacement of almost 1000 persons, and in Andankulam, where several houses were burnt down. The houses in Andankulam were new, built under a post-tsunami reconstruction scheme.

The violence, as well as the fear and insecurity experienced by the civilians, has led to a fairly substantial displacement. As of the 20th April, the District Secretariat, Trincomalee, had this figure at 2673 persons (723 families). This does not take into account the large numbers who are residing with family and friends, and those who are simply leaving their homes at night-time for more secure locations. The response to the displacement, even from NGOs, has been slow, hampered by the prevailing tensions and lack of personnel. In some areas government assistance was received only on the 18th April, despite the fact that people were displaced on the 14th April.

The speed with which the violence erupted after the explosion seems to indicate an element of pre-planning that is extremely disturbing. Two observers referred to the situation as being reminiscent of the anti-Tamil riots of July 1983. The rioting lasted for over two hours, during the daytime. During this entire period the armed forces and the Police did almost nothing to prevent the violence from taking place. There are several very credible eye witness accounts to the manner in which the security forces stood by and allowed the burning and killing to take place.

Although there is a multi-ethnic Citizens' Committee led by religious leaders of all communities in Trincomalee town, as well as Peace Committees initiated by the Police at the level of every Grama Sevaka Division, they have been ineffective in the face of the recent incidents of violence. There is a very high degree of mistrust and animosity between the Sinhala and Tamil communities in particular. Groups remain polarized on the basis of ethnicity and there is no structure that has the capacity to bring them

together in a positive and constructive manner. Even well-established social activists expressed their fear of taking the initiative to assist those affected by the violence; some of them were already receiving threatening telephone calls.

Given that Trincomalee has always been a flashpoint for ethnic conflict in Sri Lanka, it is imperative that civil society organizations in the south concentrate on strengthening existing networks and building new ones, to give a truly plural character to the moderate and peace-loving voices of Trincomalee's peoples and to ensure that a slide back into barbaric ethnic tensions does not arise.

On the basis of its findings, we wish to highlight the following areas of concern and appeal to the government, political parties, non-governmental organizations and all members of civil society,

- * Immediate steps must be taken to ensure that all emergency and humanitarian assistance necessary is extended to those displaced by the violence; rebuilding of houses should be a priority;

- * A delegation of senior members of all leading political parties should under-

take a visit to Trincomalee to meet with all sections of the population as a confidence-building measure;

- * The government should devise some means of accepting accountability for the inability of the security forces to prevent the violence; a collective apology from the state and from southern political parties to the people of Trincomalee would go a long way towards re-building bridges of communication and trust;

- * An independent investigation into the violence following the bomb explosion on 12th April should be undertaken by a team comprising representatives of government and non-government bodies; the investigation should aim at recording the various testimonies regarding the incidents and at making recommendations to the government regarding justice and redress for the victims;

- * These measures should take into account the culture of impunity that has prevailed in Sri Lanka, taking on board the experiences of previous commissions, and ensure that concrete steps are taken and implemented by the government to end impunity;

- * Civil society organizations should

create a 'rapid response' network that will make regular and systematic visits to their partners and colleagues in Trincomalee in order to monitor the situation;

- * Payment of compensation should be transparent, unbiased and acceptable to all affected parties;

- * Institutions such as the District office of the National Human Rights Commission should be reinforced with material and human resources to enable it to act more effectively in a time of crisis such as this;

- * The Citizens' Committee should be strengthened so that it can act independently and with the recognition of

the authorities.

We note that the LTTE have been engaged in acts of arm-ed attacks against the security forces resulting in further heightening tension and fear within the community and the Trincomalee area.

We appeal to the LTTE to:

- * Halt these acts of violence and commit to the pursuit of its objectives through non-violent and democratic means;

- * Ensure that there are no obstacles in providing emergency and humanitarian assistance to those displaced by the violence and facilitate in creating a safe environment for the implementation of aid work by agencies and individuals;

- * It is imperative that all political actors are aware of the dangers involved in not taking control of the situation and ensuring that the potential for heightened violence in Trincomalee is curbed. The creation of an environment in which people can return to their homes and their livelihoods should be given priority. In the current climate of insecurity, attempts by some politically motivated groups to incite ethnic and religious hatred should be dealt with immediately and all citizens need to be more vigilant about these manipulations. The fragility of the peace process at this moment calls for a concerted initiative to safeguard the CFA and strengthen the voices for peace in Sri Lanka.

The signatories to the report and appeal are:- Sunila Abeysekera, and Udaya Kalupathirana of INFORM; Packiasothy Saravanamuttu, Rohan Edrisinha, Devanesan Nesiah, Bhavani Fonseka and Mirak Raheem of Centre for Policy Alternatives, Ramani Muttetuwagama of Law Society & Trust; P.D. Gunatilaka of Devasarana Development Centre; Buddhika Weerasinghe of FreeMedia Movement; Ambika Satkunanathan, Soundarie David, Charan Rainford, Nimanthi Rajasingham, Sonali Moonesinghe, P. Thambirajah and S. Varatharajan of the International Centre for Ethnic Studies, Nimalka Fernando of International Movement Against Racial Discrimination; Kumudini Samuel and Sepali Kottegoda of Women and Media Collective; Jayadeva Uyangoda of Social Scientists' Association; Rukshana Nanayakkara of Transparency International, Sri Lanka, Samatha of Jawaharlal Nehru University, and Anita Nesiah, Manouri Muttetuwagama, Darini Rajsaingham and Tharumini Wijekoon. □

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Government Must Respond to Anti-Tamil Violence, HRW

New York, April 25, 2006 – The Sri Lankan government has failed to respond adequately to recent attacks by armed groups on ethnic Tamils and their homes and businesses in Sri Lanka's eastern Trincomalee district, Human Rights Watch said today.

Police and other security forces reportedly stood by as Tamils were attacked on April 12 after an alleged Tamil Tiger bomb at a Trincomalee market killed five persons. Witnesses said that within 15 minutes approximately 100-150 ethnic Sinhalese men armed with clubs and long knives attacked Tamil businesses and homes in Trincomalee town and district. Sri Lankan human rights organizations reported that attacks from April 12 to 16 left at least 20 civilians dead (including seven women), among them Tamils, Muslims and Sinhalese. Some

75 persons needed hospital attention for injuries.

"The failure of the security forces in Trincomalee to protect the Tamil population should raise alarm bells at the highest levels of government," said Brad Adams, Asia director at Human Rights Watch. "The government has a responsibility to protect all Sri Lankans, no matter whether they are Tamil, Muslim or Sinhalese."

Human Rights Watch called on the government to ensure a prompt, independent and impartial commission of inquiry into the violence and the security forces' response, with powers to recommend prosecution and compensation.

The attacks destroyed some 100 homes and left more than 3,000 people homeless. According to the Trincomalee chamber of commerce, 32

businesses and shops were damaged, destroyed or looted.

Police and armed forces stood by while the burning and killing occurred, waiting from 45 to 90 minutes before taking action. The alarm bell at the Hatton National Bank reportedly rang for two hours without response, while a policeman reportedly told a security guard at the Bank of Ceylon not to resist intruders.

President Mahinda Rajapakse's response to the violence has been grossly inadequate. According to media reports, Pre-

sident Rajapakse sent high-ranking security officials and other senior officials to Trincomalee in the days following the reprisal attacks. However, Human Rights Watch is unaware of any strong public statements by the president or direct steps to increase security in the district. Some persons displaced by the violence reportedly did not receive emergency government assistance for four days.

"Given continuing ceasefire violations and rising ethnic tensions, communal violence could spiral out of control unless there is a swift and strong government response," said Adams. "Yet in the days since mobs began targeting Tamils in Trincomalee for arson and murder, President Rajapakse has taken no decisive action."

Human Rights Watch said that to bring the perpetrators to justice and to demonstrate to Tamils and others that it is committed to equality under the law, the government should ensure a prompt, independent and impartial commission of inquiry into the violence and the response and behavior of the police and armed forces before, during, and after the incident. The commission, which should have at least one international member to reassure the public of its impartiality, should have powers to recommend prosecution and compensation.

Human Rights Watch also called for the prompt re-establishment of a fully functional Human Rights Commission to provide the necessary monitoring and leadership expected from this body since the outbreak of violence in Trincomalee.

The organization also called on Sri Lankan authorities to improve security in Trincomalee district, particularly for vulnerable populations, and to facilitate greater communication and cooperation among the government and civil society groups, including Tamil, Sinhalese and Muslim organizations. Human Rights Watch repeated its call to the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (the Tamil Tigers) to end all attacks on civilians. □

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● End of the road for the Bandaranaiques?

The former President Chandrika Bandaranaike Kumaratunga (CBK) still remains leader of the Sri Lanka Freedom Party (SLFP) founded by her late father and former Prime Minister S W R D Bandaranaike. But many believe that CBK's days at the helm of the party are numbered with the appointment of President Mahinda Rajapakse as acting leader of the party while she has been away from the island.

Her younger brother and Tourism Minister Anura Bandaranaike recently admitted frankly that this was the end of the 'long and illustrious innings' by the Bandaranaiques in the political firmament of Sri Lanka spanning nearly 75 years.

Hailing his sister as a great leader and a dedicated politician, Anura said that CBK's children would never take to politics. "They will be better off in their chosen professions," he said.

Complaining that many of the present day party stalwarts who were at CBK's beck and call while she was in power until recently, Anura lamented, "Some of those who were behind her when she was in power now turn their backs on her. They don't even answer the telephone when she calls. Bandaranaike said Premadasa did the same thing. It was J.R. who groomed him in politics, but after becoming the President he too turned his back on the man who helped him to reach the pinnacle.

Without making any reference to his own chequered role in the party in the years gone by when he engaged in many a battle with his mother and sister when they were leading the party and even crossed over to the UNP, Anura defending CBK exuding brotherly affection said, "I don't agree with many political decisions taken by my sister, but nobody can point a finger at her saying that she was a corrupt woman" and accused the media of carrying out a baseless mudslinging campaign against her.

"None from the Bandaranaike clan has resorted to bribery or been corruption or accused of murder and our hands are clean. Our family has made great sacrifices doing service to the nation," he said charging that many politicians today take to politics to earn money and not to serve the country.

People & Politics

● Karuna's crocodile tears

Karuna appears to be engaged in an exercise of wooing the Muslims of eastern Sri Lanka and is shedding crocodile tears on their behalf. Tamileelam Makkal Viduthalai Puligal (TMVP), the party led by the one time champion eastern commander of the LTTE, 'Col. Karuna', has in a recent interview with Reuters vowed to kill supporters and cadres of the mainstream LTTE unless its leadership took action to return thousands of homes and businesses appropriated from Muslims in the 1990s. It also said that it would also hunt down three top rebels and hand them to Nordic truce monitors.

In 1990 in what was seen as an exercise in ethnic cleansing, the LTTE gave tens of thousands of Muslims just two hours to abandon their homes and property in the northern Jaffna peninsula and forced them out of the northern province. Only a few hundred have dared to return since.

"Our military wing will kill anyone illegally occupying the homes and businesses of Muslims who the Tigers forced to flee Jaffna if they don't vacate within a month", a top Karuna aide had reportedly told Reuters on condition of anonymity. "We will hunt the Tigers responsible for the Muslim exodus. We want them to face charges of crimes against humanity at The Hague," he had added.

In fact most of the atrocities against the Muslims for which he blames the LTTE were committed when Karuna was part of the top leadership of the LTTE. Karuna was one of the LTTE's top military commanders and ran its military operations in the eastern Sri Lanka until he defected in 2004 and is now engaged in a do-or-die battle with his erstwhile leader Pirapaharan who is determined to eliminate him and his group. In the meantime, the LTTE has also sought the assistance of the Government to disarm Karuna and

his loyalists.

Karuna says his men will only disarm if the Tigers do so and vows to retaliate if attacked, and his new threat comes shortly before the April 19-21 talks are due to begin in Geneva. He is also preparing the ground to join the political mainstream, and plans to open a political office in the eastern district of Batticaloa on April 10 as a first step.

Rauf Hakeem, leader of the Sri Lanka Muslim Congress, saw the Karuna group ultimatum as a political ploy to win the backing of Muslims living in their eastern stronghold, and appealed to him to drop it. "Muslims were driven away from Jaffna. The LTTE gave them two hours to leave", Mr. Hakeem said. "It amounts to genocide, ethnic cleansing where they have appropriated all of their property." "But Muslims wouldn't want anyone to issue ultimatums of this nature", he added. "I think this is political posturing from Karuna. He wants to win the hearts and minds of Muslims in the east". Many of the evicted Muslims, who were among Jaffna's most prosperous businessmen and owned large houses, have been living destitute for years in camps for internally displaced.

● Controversy over 'freedom fighters'

April 11 - The controversy between the Sri Lanka Monitoring Mission (SLMM) and the Defence Ministry seems to be continuing with the monitors strongly denying reports that at a meeting with the Defence Secretary two weeks earlier the former SLMM head described the LTTE as "freedom fighters".

The Daily Mirror, a daily in Colombo, reports that the SLMM was also angered that at that meeting Defence Secretary Gotabhaya Rajapaksa had told the former SLMM head Hagrup Haukland the LTTE could be easily defeated if the army joined forces with the Karuna faction while denying claims the armed group was operating in government-controlled areas.

However, SLMM spokesperson Helen Olafsdottir refusing to comment over the Defence Secretary's statement on the Karuna issue, denied claims that the former SLMM head had termed the LTTE as freedom fighters.

Several political parties and organi-

sations have hit out at the SLMM after a media report ago quoting the Defence Secretary as saying that Mr. Haukland described the LTTE as "freedom fighters".

"This is certainly untrue. Mr. Haukland has never referred to or defined the LTTE in such a way. It is not up to the SLMM to make such political definitions when it comes to the LTTE or in fact the government. The SLMM received this mandate from both the government of Sri Lanka and the LTTE irrespective of the nature of any such definition", Ms. Olafsdottir said.

She stressed that the new SLMM head Ulf Henriksson and another of his aides were present at the meeting with the Defence Secretary. "Mr. Henriksson can testify that Mr. Haukland never uttered these words in such a detrimental context. Mr. Haukland has been working in Sri Lanka for four years and is very well aware of the sensitivity and nature of this issue and would never be so reckless to use the term freedom fighters", Ms. Olafsdottir said.

The SLMM said the rumors and allegations have been very damaging to the

work of the SLMM and urged the media and politicians to stop making baseless allegations.

● New chiefs at peace secretariat

With the departure of Jayantha Dhanapala who is seeking the top United Nation's top post of Secretary General, Palitha Kohona, the former head of UN's Treaty Section, has succeeded as the Director General of the Secretariat Coordinating the Peace Process (SCOPP). Mr. Kohona has been an advisor to President Mahinda Rajapaksa.

Ketheshwaran Loganathan has taken up duties as Deputy Secretary General of the Government's Peace Secretariat after resigning from the Board of Directors of the Centre for Policy Alternatives (CPA) and as the head of its Peace and Conflict Analysis Unit. Mr. Loganathan was a member of the Tamil delegation at the Thimpu Peace Talks of 1985 and played a role in subsequent initiatives leading to the Indo-Lanka Accord of 1987. "Although I'm honoured to have been appointed to the post, I see it more as a challenge than a profession,"

Mr. Loganathan said adding "A challenge in the context of the troubled times that the peace process is going through."

● 'Women in NGOs forced to pose in pornographic films'

April 23 - Local Sri Lankan women employed by some local and foreign non-governmental organisations carrying out tsunami relief work in eastern Sri Lanka have been sexually abused and forced to pose for pornographic films, a newspaper report from Colombo said.

The crisis has reached such serious proportions that Tamil National Alliance's Batticaloa district MPs have requested District Secretary S. Puniyamoorthy to summon an urgent meeting with heads of both local and international non-governmental organisations (NGO) to investigate the charges and take remedial action, The Sunday Times newspaper said.

Batticaloa and Trincomalee Bishop Kingsley Swamipillai told the newspaper that he believed such abuse had been going on for some time and he welcomed the inquiry.

Batticaloa's Senior Police Superin-

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tendent Maxi Proctor said no formal complaints of such sexual abuse had been made but he had read about it in leaflets distributed by an organisation.

These leaflets were issued by an organisation believed to be an LTTE front and they urged women working in NGOs to resign before the given deadline and disclosed details of the abuses.

Leaflets warning women to quit working at NGOs have been circulated across the eastern coast, after pornographic DVDs surfaced recently. The leaflets distributed by the 'Tamil Eelam Women's Uprising Army' threatened all women working in NGOs to quit their jobs before April 15. The warning stated that "your future life may be endangered" if this directive was not obeyed.

Akkaraipattu Inspector of Police, A. Gaffar, is reported to have said that one DVD contained explicit video clips of a foreigner sexually abusing a 19-20 year old Tamil girl. The DVD apparently contains shots taken in the Elle area in Badulla. However, it has not yet been proved whether the foreigner or the girl are employees of an NGO operating in the Ampara, Akkraipattu or Kalmunai areas. However, Mr. Gaffar said investigations have not yet been completed in Trincomalee or Batticaloa.

The DVDs are available for Rs. 50 in open markets across the Eastern province. The leaflet also quotes a statement made by the Batticaloa Tamil National Alliance MP Pakkiaselvam Ariyanenthiran which states that "183 Tamil speaking girls in Batticaloa and 163 in Ampara district have undergone abortions," and that these women were "Employees of NGOs". This statement was made at a recent seminar on "Tamil women and culture" in Pawattan Thirukkivil. The leaflet claims that "women working in NGOs are sexually abused" and that "in some cases where the abortions were not successful, they are on the verge of giving birth". It also claims that parents who allow their daughters to work for NGOs should be held responsible for these abuses. As a preliminary move to stopping the abuse, women workers have been told not to work in the NGOs or INGOs after 5pm and to attend seminars only in the main offices instead of going to distant places.

NGO sources also said two mosques in Kalmunai and Saindamaradu had pub-

licly requested women to leave the NGOs. It is learnt the matter has not been officially reported to the police because the victims are afraid to come forward apparently due to the stigma attached to it and possible reprisals.

The racket came to light when a lady doctor, who allegedly performed about 75 abortions, confessed. Consortium of Humanitarian Agencies (CHA) Executive Director Jeevan Thiagarajah noted that a joint plea has been forwarded to Defence Secretary Gotabaya Rajapaksa, IGP Chandra Fernando and the DIG East asking for protection for female NGO workers in the region.

Meanwhile, the LTTE's Batticaloa political wing leader Daya Mohan summoned a meeting of NGO representatives on Friday (21) and told them the Tigers had evidence of sexual abuse of women. He warned there would be serious consequences if such abuse was not stopped.

● Prisoners of Luxury

In a stunning disclosure, it was revealed recently that the country's top suspected criminals were leading luxurious lives at the Welikada Magazine Prison premises in a star class bungalow with ultra-modern facilities.

The discovery was made following a surprise visit by a team headed by Justice Ministry Secretary Suhada K. Gamalath who was on a mission to find out the status of prisoners who were unable to pay fines.

It was revealed that among the leading criminals enjoying luxury facilities at the Magazine Prison were drug king pins, murder suspects in the assassination case of Foreign Minister Lakshman Kadirgamar, police bribery suspects, multimillionaire foreign suspects and the main suspect in what is considered to be one of Asia's biggest VAT scam amounting to billions. The Ministry Secretary had been shocked to see a compact bungalow with star class facilities within the prison premises where the suspects were living in air-conditioned rooms with massive television sets and modern bathrooms without a single prison guard keeping watch on them.

"The building is separated from the main prison and it is surrounded with a well maintained garden and parapet walls," a prison source told the Daily

Mirror describing what he called the rogues' gallery of the country's leading criminals.

Following the shocking revelation, the Justice Ministry Secretary immediately ordered the transfer of Magazine prison Superintendent W. H. Wijayatillake and called for a full probe on the preferential treatment given to notorious criminals.

The suspects living in this luxurious bungalow were Thamil Eeniyam and Rengan Jenagan - the two main murder suspects arrested in connection with the killing of the former Foreign Minister, Mohamed Shyam Mohammed Shamoon - the main suspect in country's biggest drug, leading drug kingpin Noor Mohamed and A. G. de Soyza Jayatillake - the main suspect in the biggest tax fraud case.

Besides them were Jeewaratnam Susanthan, Saman Sujeewa Kumara, A. M. M. Chandana, E. A. P. Ediriweera, Ramanchandran Wigneshwaran and Police officer Nishantha Kumara Muthikuda were also living in individual rooms in this luxury bungalow.

In addition to the local suspects, the house also provided accommodation to wealthy foreign nationals jailed for various offences.

When queried by the Daily Mirror, Prisons Chief Romy Marzook said he was not aware of the existence of such a 'luxurious house' within the prison premises and claimed all prisoners treated alike. However he admitted that the suspect in the VAT fraud had requested for special security through a lawyer as there was a threat to his life. But the Daily Mirror learnt that the suspect A. G. Zoyza Jayatillake had also requested for permission for special meal arrangements too.

A Senior Prison official told the Daily Mirror preferential treatment was given to prisoners at all leading prisons in the country and the Negombo prison was notorious for it. He said it was shocking that the country's notorious were plotting major crimes, operating the underworld and drug trafficking while living in the lap of luxury in the prisons. It was revealed that the special building was built a few years ago to accommodate a local multimillionaire businessman who was remanded for alleged violation of the immigration law.

(Daily Mirror, 18 April 2006)

The Tamil and the Tiger

Kumar David

Slovo and First were no less courageous in their unrelenting defiance of apartheid than Mandela or Sisulu. It would therefore, for like reason, be egregiously untruthful to say that no Sinhalese can take an enduring stand, with equal courage, against a long history of chauvinist ethno-politics in our social and political mainstream.

It would, however, be reasonable to assume that their visceral images will not have the same emotive content as a Tamil who suffered the horrors of 1983, or military excess in the 1970s and 1980s, or fretted over perceptions of life-long humiliation.

An endeavour to empathise with this state of mind will go some way in helping the Sinhalese community gain a holistic appreciation of what many see as a baffling contradiction in the complicated nexus between the Tamil and the Tiger. Politically informed Sinhalese simply cannot understand why the LTTE has such a substantial degree of support among Tamils (exactly how substantial is anyone's guess until a free and fair election takes place) despite the hard time they face in holding on to some semblance of democratic and human rights in the land of the Tiger.

What the rest of this article says is palpably obvious to most Tamils and it is not breathtaking news for the sensitive Sinhalese either. But it is not quite so candidly and blandly stated, without apologetic frills, in the columns of newspapers. So it is time to say it, to let the catharsis flow and to invite responses.

In his emotive heart the Sri Lankan Tamil feels that the Tigers have allowed him to stand up again. There are two sides to this. He feels that the humiliation and the beatings have been banished, that another 1983 won't happen for fear of reprisals and that the army cannot run amok again in Tamil areas without risking a bloody nose. The balance of terror leads to mutual deterrence, the Cold War has taught us.

Secondly, in his conscious mind he reckons that there would never have

been any serious interest on the part of the national political establishment of whatever hue, to even recognise an ethnic conundrum, let alone negotiate a settlement, unless the Tigers had fought the army to a standstill. Both of these, in the minds of the Tamils, have been won on the battlefield. This I think I can say without risking much rebuttal, is the judgment of the great majority, including those who are not, and never have been, fellow travellers of the LTTE.

For this reason, the Tamil people will not settle their accounts with the Tamil Tigers until they have first settled their accounts with the Sinhala State.

There are indeed a lot of accounts to settle on both balance-sheets; with the former stakeholder, about the hegemony of the rights of the people over and above the gains and benefits for a military outfit; with the latter stakeholder, about the form and content of a new constitutional dispensation.

Now true, this strictly serial ordering of events is a little simplified, the world is never entirely linear, but it does get an important point across. The better we understand this correlation of variables the better we can deal with both sides of the equation and overlap progress on both issues.

To this end one consideration is especially paramount; the political powers-that-be must maximise devolution short and long term, and minimise permitted restrictions on democracy in the interim arrangements. Unfortunately, the thinking in the government and the South seems rather the opposite - mean on devolution and generous on letting the Tigers chew on the democratic rights and institutions of the denizens of the Northern and Eastern Provinces.

This is the worst kind of myopia. Giving the Tamil people the highest possible degree of autonomy to manage their own affairs is the only way they can grow and develop and put right whatever accounts they need to put right.

Neither the Sinhalese nor the State can sort out their internal problems,

but they can help. How? Simply by insisting on minimal restrictions, for the shortest necessary interim period, on elected bodies, representative mechanisms, internationally supervised freedoms of assembly, press and organisation, and so on in exchange for a highly devolved constitutional arrangement.

The obsession in the South seems to be that devolution, incorporating a high degree of autonomy - Asymmetrical Devolution in the best case - will be the first step towards secession. This is wide of the mark intrinsically, but also because Tamil Eelam is not possible without international support and Indian complicity.

The manifest ebb in international support for secession can turn to flood again only in the converse situation, that is, only if it becomes clear to the outside world that substantial autonomy to manage their own affairs is being denied to the Tamils. As for India, surely the blast that dispatched Rajiv Gandhi also interned in his casket any hope of Eelam. Can a febrile outfit in a pint-sized island murder a past and potential future prime minister of India and not pay the crippling price of forever relinquishing its fondest dreams?

In recent weeks the door to devolution has opened wider in the South as well. The JVP and the JHU sought to turn the Local Government elections into a referendum on the government's backsliding on several provisions included in Mr Rajapaksa's presidential election-manifesto as a consequence of agreements reached with the two parties.

No doubt it was some fireworks from the Tigers, costly in military lives that motivated the President, very wisely, to "backslide", if you want to call it that. Notwithstanding this commonsense, the JVP alleged at its 12,000 meetings that the "unitary State" concept was likely to go the way of the rest; imagine the fanfare from the rooftops if the JVP and JHU had scored handsomely.

The upshot is that it is now fairly obvious that had Mr Rajapaksa said, before the Local Government elections, that he was interested in looking into both unitary and federal options, the outcome of the JVP-JHU beckoned "referendum" would have been no different. The shackles are now removed and he should go forward boldly with an open mind. □

ETA/Spain and Hamas/Israel: Lessons for LTTE/Lanka

Rajan Philips

The pairings or the quotients in the title are meant to indicate that one (i.e. ETA, Hamas and the LTTE) cannot be understood or change without the other (i.e. Spain, Israel and Sri Lanka).

In Spain, Euskadi Ta Askatasuna (Basque Homeland and Freedom) the nearly fifty year old Basque separatist movement, has declared a permanent ceasefire. The news prompted calls for the LTTE to unilaterally declare a permanent ceasefire and give up its guns.

In the Middle East, Hamas, the Palestinian organization that is proscribed by the West as a terrorist group, won a convincing victory in the January elections to the Palestinian Parliament. With 76 out of 132 seats, Hamas has formed a majority government that will cohabit with President Mahmood Abbas of the rival PLO and Fatah groups. No one appears to have suggested that the LTTE should join the democratic process and should be allowed to contest elections to a regional parliament in Northeast Sri Lanka.

We can draw useful lessons by comparing ETA/Spain, Hamas/Israel and LTTE/Lanka, if we avoid superficial comparisons and keep in mind the different contexts.

The Basques in Spain and the Tamils in Sri Lanka

ETA is the last survivor of the student rebellions that arose in Western Europe in the 1960s, the most dramatic of which was the Paris uprising of 1968 that led to the fall of Charles de Gaulle. The ETA is perhaps the only one with ethno-nationalist inspiration and objectives and that explains its longevity.

The Basque crisis in Spain had long predated the ETA, however, and its origins go back to the establishment of the brutal dictatorship of General Francisco Franco in 1937. Franco rode to power in the Spanish civil war, survived the world war and ruled Spain with an iron fist until his death in 1975. The Basques bore all the heavy burdens of his dictatorship. He ruled their region like an occupied territory, suppressed their language and cul-

tural rights and denied any kind of regional autonomy.

So the ETA emerged to fight an old battle but as part of a new political manifestation – the political mobilization of university students whose swelling numbers in spreading campuses after the war provided the ideal hothouse for radical thinking and even more radical action.

ETA played its part in fighting Franco and its most spectacular moment was the 1973 killing of Admiral Carrero Blanco, Franco's intended successor. The death of Franco was the dawn of a new Spain and an autonomous Basque region. The new constitution of 1978 devolved Spain into 17 regions, and 2 non-contiguous regions, with directly elected authorities and different degrees of autonomy.

Affirming the "indissoluble unity of the Spanish Nation", the constitution enables the State to be "organized territorially into municipalities, provinces and Autonomous Communities". The Basque Country, along with Catalonia and Galicia, is recognized as a historic nationality and is at the apex of the asymmetrically autonomous regions.

There are continuing debates around the centralist and decentralist interpretations of the constitution but these are creative tensions and the positive facts of life in a federal set up. A set up that takes away the reason for the continuation of organizations like the ETA. Two significant set backs also contributed to ETA's final enlightenment.

ETA's kidnapping and killing, in 1997, of a popular Basque municipal politician, Miguel Angelo Blanco, enraged the whole country and six million Spaniards poured onto the streets in protest triggering a sustained pursuit of ETA by law enforcement agencies not only in Spain but also France, where ETA had found sanctuaries thanks to the ethno affinities between the Basque country and Southwest France. The March 2004 Madrid bombing by Islamic fundamentalists was the final writing on the wall for the ETA.

Interestingly, in making up its mind on a permanent ceasefire the ETA took

the advice of their older Irish cousins – the IRA and its political arm, the Sinn Fien. The IRA has already renounced violence and has turned in its arms which were among the main obstacles to implementing Northern Ireland's power sharing agreement. But other benefits of the peace process, security of life, economic growth, and the dismantling of the hated British police structures in Northern Ireland are becoming increasingly evident. In comparison, Spain and the Basque country are streets ahead of the Northern Ireland situation and Sinn Fien would have had no problem convincing ETA that the prudent thing to do was to renounce violence permanently.

Who will take the onus of convincing the LTTE to make a similar renunciation? There is no question that at some point the LTTE has to renounce violence permanently and turn in its arms. But is Sri Lanka in a situation comparable to Spain's 1978 constitutional change and Northern Ireland's 1998 power sharing agreement? Sri Lanka's constitution, although it is of the same vintage, is not at all possessed of similar consensus or success.

The onus, it would seem, is on the Sri Lankan state to indicate at least a willingness to make changes comparable to those in Spain and Northern Ireland before demanding a virtual surrender by the LTTE.

The Hamas and the LTTE

This is not to let the LTTE off the hook, but to point to the new challenges facing Hamas which is all the more appropriate now that Canada has decided to add LTTE to its list of banned organizations that already included the Hamas.

The Hamas victory in the Palestinian elections and its forming the new Palestinian government has thrown up new challenges not only to Hamas but also to Israel and the Western countries including the 'quartet' – the UN, USA, EU and Russia. The West and the quartet cannot ignore a democratically elected government but have indicated that they will withhold all financial aid until Hamas renounces violence and accepts Israel's right to exist, conditions that the PLO agreed to as part of the Oslo Accord.

Hamas came into being during the first intifada – the 1987 Palestinian uprising against Israeli occupation of the West Bank and Gaza – operating on two fronts: social programs focusing on education, health and religion, as well as violent attacks against Israel. Israel's prime reason

for reaching the Oslo agreement with the PLO then in exile was to bring an end to the intifada. Hamas was opposed to it from the beginning and did everything in its power to provoke Israel against the Accord.

But now faced with the task of exercising power in a democratically elected government, Hamas is being forced to renounce violence and accept Israel's right to exist or risk its government go into bankruptcy. Without foreign aid - \$ 1 billion a year - the Palestinian economy cannot sustain itself, cannot even pay the monthly salaries of 140,000 public servants. On top of this, Israel is refusing to give its monthly grant of \$50 million from tax revenues to the new government.

There are signs of flexibility on Hamas's part. Its Palestinian opponents have argued that taking part in the election itself is a de facto acceptance of the Oslo Accord by Hamas. Hamas's new ministers, some of them educated in the US, also recognize the difficulties involved in going against international opinion.

But Hamas's flexibility alone is not enough, and Hamas will resist international pressure as blackmail if there is no corresponding movement on Israel's part. Both Israel and the Palestinians are groping for a new equilibrium after Arafat's death and Ariel Sharon's incapacitation. Last month's Israeli elections saw the ouster of the extremist Binyamin Netanyahu and the Likud Party rump that he now leads. But the electorate did not give Sharon's new Kadima Party and its leader Ehud Olmert and his allies a clear victory.

To what extent Israel is prepared to retreat on the Jewish settlements in occupied territories, the construction of 670 km long wall in the West Bank, and the de facto occupation in many parts will have a direct bearing on Hamas's responses. But the fact of the matter is that by entering the democratic process directly, first in municipal and now in parliamentary elections, Hamas has changed the dynamic in the Israel-Palestine peace process.

Drawing a parallel to Sri Lanka, the first priority is for the LTTE and the government to continue to honour their ceasefire commitments and avoid ceasefire violations either directly or through proxies. The second priority is for the LTTE to enter the democratic process and participate in free and fair elections

Lebanon's Sri Lankan maids tell their story

Sophie Claudet

The film *Maid in Lebanon* is a tale of exile, occasional abuse and even death. It documents the fate of Sri Lankan women seeking better wages abroad to support their families. The documentary, shot by Carol Mansour, both in her native Lebanon and in Sri Lanka, opens on a hopeful note.

Sixteen-year-old Sureika is getting ready to leave for Lebanon, where her \$100 monthly wage will support her family back home, pay her dowry and may even put her sister through school.

Like all 80,000 Sri Lankan women who have similar jobs in Lebanon, Sureika is checked for HIV, hepatitis B, TB and pregnancy before departure. She also takes a 12-day course in English, Arabic and local cooking, and gets acquainted with electrical appliances she has never used before - a vacuum cleaner and a blender. Sureika's village has no electricity.

When she arrives in Lebanon she will be asked to clean, cook and probably look after children.

Employer's property

"On signing the contract," says a voice-over in the film, "we almost become property of the employer and will work three years without a day off."

Mansour told Aljazeera.net that during her research for the 26-minute film she discovered many examples of mistreatment. "Some of the maids are actually not paid during the first three months to make up for part of the money their employers paid to the agency that brought them over," she said. "Employers keep their passport for the duration of their contract."

Sureika may encounter the same fate as another maid, Kumari, who says her

first employer locked her up for hours without food. Kumari, in her twenties, says she had to work for more than a year to pay \$2,000 to the Lebanese agency that did her paperwork, in order to get her passport back. Even then, she ended up going back to Lebanon to support her children, whom she left in the care of her parents.

Lila, too, left her children behind. She sends her salary to her sister rather than to her husband, who has a drinking problem. She cries when Mansour shows her footage of her daughter in Sri Lanka.

"People here in Lebanon think that \$100 salary is a lot of money," says Mansour, "but what they don't know is that families in Sri Lanka are completely dependent on these women."

Success stories

But there are success stories as well, such as Nirosha's. Together with her husband, who stayed in Sri Lanka to take care of the family, she is helping to finance the construction of their future home. Nirosha's employer says she is happy that Nirosha is "doing something with the money".

She is one of the few employers who agreed to appear on camera.

"Some owners [employers] simply did not want to be interviewed," Mansour says. "I felt they knew deep down that what they're doing is wrong. Some would admit off camera that they keep their maids locked up at home."

"I knew that there was some abuse going on, but the more I got into the subject, the more I saw how difficult their situation is."

Rape and death

The film also tells the story of abused maids. While Mansour was shooting, she discovered that most maids do not have a room to sleep in. Some sleep on couches, others in windowless spaces. Mansour says the more money an employer has, the more likely they are to abuse their maids.

"Maybe they don't look at them as human beings," she says.

One maid, Sudany, says she was

in Tamil areas, and for the government to restructure the state and create autonomous authorities as it has been done in Spain, Northern Ireland, and in a fledgling way in Israel/Palestine. Without these foundations calling for the decommissioning of the LTTE or the withdrawal of the army will be pointless and ineffectual. □

abused by a boy from the family she was working for. Another woman, speaking on condition of anonymity with her face obscured, says she was repeatedly raped by a teenager while working.

A third, who does not give her name but shows her face on camera, tells of physical abuse and humiliation, involving beatings while handcuffed, hair pulling and chopping, as well as threats to throw her off a balcony while being held from the window by her male employer.

Ray Jureidi, a professor of sociology at the American University in Beirut, who is interviewed in the documentary, says: "There seems to be some kind of censorship with regard to abuse and deaths of migrant domestic workers."

Indifference

Two screenings of Mansour's documentary were held in Beirut.

She asked her acquaintances to bring their maids to one of them in November. She says some people were "a bit disturbed" by what they saw. "But many actually remarked on the beauty of Sri Lanka, how green and lush it is. It goes to show they have no idea about the women they employ," she says.

The film was released last summer and funded by Caritas Migrant Center Lebanon, the European Commission, Caritas Sweden, the Netherlands Embassy in Beirut and the International Labour Organisation (ILO).

It is being shown in Lebanon's schools and to other pupils worldwide to create awareness about problems faced by migrant workers.

Hope

The ILO said in a statement that Lebanon's labour minister had formed a panel to review the labour law and put together a standard contract for domestic workers.

The committee is also drafting a "rights and responsibilities booklet" for maids which should be available by May.

Mansour directed other documentaries focusing on socio-economic issues such as child labour.

Her first documentary 100% Asphalt told the story of street children in Cairo and was awarded the Jury's Prize by the Institut du Monde Arabe in Paris 2000, and Best Documentary at the Arab Film Festival in Rotterdam and in Sydney. She recently completed another piece focusing on child labour in Lebanon, entitled Invisible Children.

She says she and the producer of

Tamil Nadu: Eelam issue takes the backstage

V. Jayanth

If the refugees in Tamil Nadu or the Tamils in Sri Lanka expected the island's ethnic issue to figure prominently in the election campaign here, they have been in for a disappointment.

For the record, the issue does figure in the poll manifestos of most parties - often only in passing. Even these references are about the problems of Indian fishermen venturing into Sri Lankan waters, not the "freedom struggle" of the Eelam Tamils.

The reasons are not far to seek. The Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (DMK)-led Democratic Progressive Alliance (DPA) is bound by the 'alliance dharma' of the United Progressive Alliance at the Centre. Even the normally vocal Pattali Makkal Katchi (PMK) has not made an issue of it, although it champions the cause of Tamils and the Tamil language. The DPA constituents want peace in Sri Lanka, and the dignity and self-respect of the Sri Lankan Tamils to be protected. They call for a more pro-active role by India in hammering out a lasting political solution to the ethnic issue.

Vocal supporters

The two most vocal supporters of the Eelam Tamils are the Marumalarchi Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (MDMK), led by Vaiko, and the Dalit Panthers of India (DPI), led by Thol. Thirumavalavan. But both are now allied to the All-India Anna Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (AIADMK), led by Jayalalithaa, to whom the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam is anathema. So much so, they will not even raise the issue during the elections and embarrass her. Their wrath is directed against what they call the "Sinhala Government" of Mahinda Rajapakse, which they say is dependent on the "Sinhala chauvinist JVP." The two parties take comfort in the fact that Ms.

Maid in Lebanon, Cheryl Uys Allie, went back to Sri Lanka last autumn and documented the stories of other women there.

She is currently seeking funds to work on a 52-minute version of Maid in Lebanon.

(Courtesy of Aljazeera.net)

Jayalalithaa avoided seeing the Sri Lankan President during his visit to India.

The DMK, in its election manifesto, talks of the problem of Tamil fishermen. It says: "We will take steps to prevent the frequent arrests, abductions and killing of Tamil fishermen by the Sri Lankan Navy in the waters near Katcha Theevu." That is about all.

'Lease in perpetuity'

As for the AIADMK, Katcha Theevu is a key issue. Its manifesto notes: "Violence against fishermen of Tamil Nadu still continues in the Palk Straits in and around Katcha Theevu. In order to prevent this, the Government of India would be urged to get Katcha Theevu on 'lease in perpetuity' with the aim of protecting the traditional fishing rights of Indian fishermen and their privileges." This has always been Ms. Jayalalithaa's line. Mr. Vaiko goes further in the MDMK's manifesto. He talks about both the 'Eelam Tamils problem' and the Katcha Theevu issue. The MDMK pledges to press the Centre to get Katcha Theevu back. It also says the birth of 'Tamil Eelam' out of the "right of self-determination" for the Tamils is the ultimate solution and that this is the party's "unwavering stand."

The plight of fishermen may not be a central issue for the political parties but the leaders are forced to highlight it when they campaign in the southern districts. The focus is on Katcha Theevu, the rights of Indian fishermen there, and the alleged "atrocities" of the Sri Lankan Navy, which they accuse of "abducting" Tamil fishermen.

Ever since the DMK joined the coalition at the Centre, whether as a part of the BJP-led or Congress-led Government, it has shown remarkable restraint on the Sri Lankan Tamil issue. But M. Karunanidhi has utilised every occasion to raise the issue of missing Tamil fishermen with the Foreign Minister and the Prime Minister. As for Ms. Jayalalithaa, the fishermen's issue and the problem of Katcha Theevu have provided the ammunition to take shots at the Centre.

But there does not seem to be any solution in sight, so long as Indian fisher-

men cross the International Maritime Boundary and fish in Sri Lankan waters. **Violent clashes**

With the Sri Lankan Tamil fishermen also venturing into the seas in recent times, clashes have become more frequent and violent. The Government of India has taken up the issue with Colombo in order to secure the early release of fishermen from Tamil Nadu, whenever they have been detained.

Neither of the two major alliances has so far made the larger Sri Lankan Tamil problem an election issue. Nor are they likely too. This is perhaps why the Tamil Nationalist Movement leader Pazha. Nedumaran has secured from the court a relaxation in bail conditions, to enable him to address election meetings. It will be left to him, his supporters and the Dravida Kazhagam to raise the decibel level on this issue.

A few months ago, there was talk of Sri Lankan Tamil refugees returning home. But with uncertainty looming large over the island, that plan has been given up.

Instead, more refugees have arrived in Rameswaram and adjoining coastal villages. That has stopped for now. But given the tensions in northern and eastern Sri Lanka and the rise in violence, the situation is quite fragile now.

(The Hindu, 18 April 2006)

Businessman, conductor shot dead:

Mar 22 - Unknown gunmen riding in a motorbike shot and killed M. Gunaratnam, a prominent businessman in Vavuniya and his bus conductor Jude in Kurumankadu Vavuniya, on Wednesday (22) night at about 8.45 p.m., Vavuniya police said.

NEWS TRACK

No welcome meeting for Jaffna VC: 23 Mar - The meeting scheduled for 10.30 am Wednesday (22) to welcome the Jaffna University's new Vice Chancellor Professor Rathnajeewan H. Hoole was cancelled due to threats from the LTTE, according to University sources. Lecturers and non academic staff of the campus and residents of the area were to participate in the welcome but a man named Gnanam, an LTTE political leader of the area, had threatened to stop the meeting. Professor Hoole was appointed as the Vice Chancellor of the Jaffna University by President Rajapakse recently. But the pro - LTTE organisations, the Jaffna University Students' Union and TNA, threatened to kill him if he took up duties.

Body ex-LTTE cadre found in Batticaloa: Mar 23 - Body of a young male recovered near the Batticaloa lagoon near Pillaiyady on Monday (20) has been identified by his wife as belonging to an ex-member of Liberation Tigers' Jayanthan Brigade who had left the LTTE and was working as a day laborer, sources in Batticaloa said. Vairamutthu Arulpragasam, 32, from Valluvar Road in Karaveddy, Vavunathivu was a member of the LTTE for nine years, left the organization to get married in 2002, Ms Logitharajah Vasuki, 22, his wife said, identifying his body in the presence of Batticaloa Judge Vinobha Indran and Medical Officer M.M.A. Rahman. Arulpragasam is a father of two children.

LTTE Sentry Point ambushed: Mar 24 - A LTTE cadre was killed and two injured in an attack on the LTTE Forward Defense Line sentry point located in Poonagar in Trincomalee district on Thursday (24) around 8 p.m., said LTTE sources in the east. The Tigers charged that the attackers had come from the Sri Lanka Army camp in Mahindapura. Meanwhile, Sri Lanka Military spokesman Brigadier Prasad Samarasinghe refuted LTTE's claim that the attack was carried out by Sri Lankan troops.

NGOs recipients of Rs. 40 b. tsunami funds: Mar 24 - The Tamil Rehabilitation Organisation (TRO) is among the recipients of substantial overseas tsunami financial aid, reports from Colombo said. According to a Central Bank survey the TRO is among 30 NGOs which received 73 percent of a staggering Rs. 40.1 billion given by various foreign and local sources during last year. They had withdrawn 85 percent of the received funds purely for tsunami rehabilitation and reconstruction work.

Two hundred and fifty-six NGOs had received donations and

other funds by way of credits to their bank accounts. According to the survey 73% of total foreign remittances were received by 30 NGOs, each receiving foreign remittances in the range of 1% to

12% of total foreign remittances. Nearly 79% of the funds received in the bank accounts of all NGOs during 2005 had been withdrawn.

Navy apprehend LTTE suspects with arms: Mar 24 - In the backdrop of a sharp increase in LTTE attacks on security forces, the navy on Tuesday (21) night took into custody a boat belonging to the LTTE along with five persons and twenty sticks of gelignite sticks on board the seas off Point Pedro. A senior Navy official said that naval troops on patrolling northern sea off Point Pedro, detected a suspicious boat bearing a Sinhala name on its hull. "When they moved near the boat, the five suspects, who were on board threw a satellite phone into the sea. They also tried to damage the boat in a bid to sink it", he said.

Naval ratings managed to get on board the boat before the Tigers could damage it. "While interrogating the suspects, one of them admitted that he was a member of the LTTE and we also found a document containing a secret code that LTTE is using for communication and also a powerful communication set, which was also damaged by the suspects before the navy reached the boat". The navy men also found, the gelignite sticks stored in two boxes. The Nordic monitors were immediately informed about the incident, the suspects are to be handed over to police for further investigation later. "We brought them to the Kankesanthurai naval base and currently interrogating them", the Navy official added.

Vavuniya businessman shot dead: Mar 25 - Unknown gunmen who came in a white van shot dead Ponniah Murugesu, 40, in front of his shop in Sasthrikulankulam, 6 km north of Vavuniya town, around 8.15 p.m. on Friday (24) evening, Vavuniya police said. His assistant at the shop, Mr Ramesh, was also injured in the shooting. Ramesh has been taken to the Vavuniya General Hospital. His condition is not serious, hospital sources said. On Wednesday (22) M. Gunaratnam, another Vavuniya businessman who ran a travel business was killed.

Valaichenai man knifed to death: Mar 25 - A young father of two children was found knifed to death in Valaichenai on Saturday (25) noon, Kalkuda Police said. The victim, Mr. Regikanth, reportedly was subjected to death threats previously. A group of twenty armed men were waiting for Regikanth 300 meters from Valaichenai Police station while he was cycling from Karuvakerni towards his house in Kurinchinagar around 8:30 a.m. Mr. Kulathunga Regikanth, 26, was a contractor engaged in post-tsunami reconstruction of houses in Nasivanthivu area. TamilNet

reported that relatives of the victim, named Kathirgamathamby Jeyaseelan, known as Jeyanthan, a key operative of the Karuna Group, behind the death threats issued against Regikanth.

Eight Navy men killed: Mar 26 - One officer and seven sailors of a Sri Lanka Navy fast attack craft were feared dead after suspected six Tamil Tigers in an apparent suicide operation blasted an explosives-laden fishing trawler in the deep seas south of Puttalam on 25 March. Eleven others including the commanding officer, Lt. Cmdr. Chaminda Navaratne were rescued by fishermen. This was after their badly damaged FAC sank. They were brought to the village of Batalangunduwa, south of Kalpitiya. A Sri Lanka Air Force helicopter later airlifted them to Colombo. The blast occurred 17 nautical miles off Kuthiraimalai in Kalpitiya, 145 km north of Colombo Saturday afternoon.

An official Government statement said that it was a "suicide style operation" where the crew exploded the trawler "causing significant damage." A press statement issued by the Government of Sri Lanka said that the "magnitude of the explosion and the damage it caused to the approaching Navy vessel indicated that the trawler was transporting a large quantity of explosives." The statement added that it was a "suicide style operation" where the crew exploded the trawler "causing significant damage."

The sunken down Dvora (431), a brand new fast attack craft built by Colombo Dockyard together with another, was on patrol in the deep sea waters south of Mannar. They were led by the Navy's gunboat "SLNS Jayasagara." Their mission was to check on attempts by trawlers to smuggle in defence supplies for the LTTE after reports that a ship load was to head for Colombo last Thursday.

This special search operation was the result of Wednesday's apprehension by the Navy of a multi-day fishing trawler with five persons on board. Their interrogation revealed that three of them were top LTTE intelligence operatives. In the recent past, there have been several detections made by the SLN of fishing trawlers bearing fictitious Sinhala names transporting weapons towards the Northern coast, the press statement said, stating that the explosion carried out by the crew of the trawler causing damage to a Naval vessel and claiming the lives of Navy personnel was a violation of the ceasefire.

SLMM condemns attack: Mar 26 - Sri Lanka Monitoring Mission (SLMM) in a press release issued in Colombo Sunday condemned the attack on Sri Lanka Navy (SLN) in Kalpitiya, and said that the SLMM was conducting inquiries to establish the details of the attack. While appealing to both parties to "refrain from provocative acts," the SLMM urged the Government of Sri Lanka to "take the [paramilitary] matter seriously and not close their eyes to armed elements that to our knowledge still operating in Government controlled areas."

Full text of the press release follows: The Sri Lanka Monitoring Mission (SLMM) strongly condemns the attack on the Sri Lankan Navy vessel that took place off Kudiramalai Point, Kalpitiya on the 25 March 2006. It is still too early to establish exactly the details of the attack and the SLMM is currently conducting inquiries. The Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) have denied any involvement. However, based on SLMM's previous experience during the period of the Ceasefire Agreement (CFA) we feel that we cannot at this stage rule out their involvement. The SLMM would like to urge the LTTE to extend their full cooperation to both the Sri Lankan Government and the SLMM on this matter in the hope that we can establish how this attack came about and how such incidents can be avoided in the future.

There has been a dangerous escalation of violence taking place over the last couple of weeks. This trend is extremely

worrying as the Parties prepare themselves to meet in Geneva for a second round of talks in four weeks time.

Several serious incidents took place in Trincomalee Bay during the last week resulting in exchange of fire between the Sri Lankan Navy and the LTTE. The SLMM would like to stress that both sides have shown lack of commitment and their actions have been provocative and not in line with the spirit of the CFA.

The Sri Lankan Army has recently dismissed claims that armed groups are operating in Government controlled areas. However, based on SLMM's monitoring activities and experience on the ground the Mission does not share this view and we would like to urge the Government of Sri Lanka to take this matter seriously and not close their eyes to armed elements that are to our knowledge still operating in Government controlled areas.

Finally the SLMM would like to urge both Parties to refrain from provocative acts and live up to the pledges they made in Geneva by showing their true commitment to the CFA. If the Parties do not take responsibility we fear that the situation could become gradually worse resulting in an escalation beyond what we had in December and January.

LTTE political office burnt: Mar 30 - The Arayampathi political office of the LTTE located in the Sri Lanka Army (SLA) controlled area in Kathankudy, Batticaloa, was set on fire on Thursday (30) morning by unidentified persons who had damaged and robbed the things inside the office, said sources from Kathankudy. This office had remained closed since the LTTE cadres of the political wing withdrew from Sri Lanka Government controlled areas. Sri Lanka Monitoring Mission (SLMM) in Batticaloa has been notified of the incident, according to sources.

SLA arrests five in Vadamaradchy: April 2 - Sri Lanka Army (SLA) soldiers cordoned and searched Vadamaradchy areas close to the High Security Zone (HSZ) around 1st, 2nd and 3rd cross streets in Point Pedro Sunday (2) early morning between 5 a.m. and 10 a.m. and arrested five members of the same family and a boarding student, accusing them of hiding arms, sources in Point Pedro said.

A. Krishnarajah, 47, his wife Kalavathi, 42, and children Ranjini, 27, a student at Jaffna Technical College, Thivakumar, 21, student at Hartley College, and Vijeyaban, 20, another Hartley student were arrested early morning. Details of another student staying with that family who was also arrested are not known. They were taken to the SLA Brigade 52-4 for investigations. Mother Kalavathi and daughter Ranjini were released in the afternoon.

SLA officials said that the operation was carried out after they received information on the presence of armed groups in the area. A T-56 rifle and 281 rounds of ammunition along with a length of wire hidden in a house were recovered by troops in a search and clear operation in Point Pedro, the Military said. In separate operations in Jaffna and Vavuniya, nearly 120 anti-personnel mines were recovered and destroyed by the army, the Military claimed.

Two Karuna group cadres wounded: April 5 - Two Karuna Group paramilitary cadres were wounded in Panichchankerni, 60 km north of Batticaloa, Wednesday (5) around 5:30 p.m., when the Tigers launched a counter-attack on the paramilitary cadres penetrating into the LTTE controlled area, reports said. A key paramilitary operative, Chooty, wounded in his stomach was transported to the Kirimichchai SLA camp in a motorbike which the withdrawing paramilitary cadres hijacked from a civilian traveller. The retreating group was reportedly armed with mortars and automatic-rifles. Panichchankerni is a village in the LTTE con-

trolled region in Batticaloa north.

LTTE cadre killed in the east: April 6 - A Tamil Tigers cadre, Lt. Arulanantham, was killed Wednesday (5) evening by artillery fire from Sri Lanka Army position in Mankerni, Trincomalee District Political Head of the LTTE, S. Elilan, said in a letter to Sri Lanka Monitoring Mission (SLMM). The artillery fire was used by the Sri Lanka Army (SLA) when the Tiger cadres counter attacked a group of 40 armed men who launched an attack on a LTTE sentry post in Panichchankerni. Two paramilitary cadres were wounded. Sri Lanka Army troopers also took part in the 40 member attack group, alleged Mr. Elilan in his letter to the SLMM. The SLA has denied any involvement in the alleged incident.

Vigneswaran shot dead in Trincomalee: April 7 - Mr. Vanniasingham Vigneswaran, President of the Trincomalee District Tamil Peoples' Forum (TDTPF) was shot dead Friday (7) around 9.30 a.m. by an unidentified person when he was about to enter the main branch of the Bank of Ceylon (BoC) located along Inner Harbor Road in Trincomalee. Mr. Vigneswaran, aged 51, was father of three children.

The assassination of the key Tamil activist has taken place when the Tamil National Alliance (TNA) was about to announce the appointment of Mr. Vigneswaran as the national list Parliamentarian, the position last held by Joseph Pararajasingham MP who was slain in Batticaloa on Christmas eve, TNA sources said. Tension prevailed in Trincomalee town following the assassination. The TDTPF under the leadership of Mr. Vigneswaran has been spearheading the campaign for the removal of the controversial Buddha statue, which was erected in a land close to the Trincomalee central bus stand last year.

According to SLMM sources, the body of Mr. Vigneswaran was found lying on the ground about fifteen feet from the main gate inside the premises of the bank branch. Two gunshot injuries were found on the body, one through the head and other abdomen. The death was instantaneous.

Two home guards shot dead: April 7 - Two Muslim Home guards, Salmaan Pitchaikutty Adambava, 34, and Seyyad Buhari Saheed, 30, were shot dead by two unidentified armed men on a motorcycle, Friday (7) morning around 7:00 a.m., at Kudapahuna, Welikanda police said. The killed home guards, returning home after night duty, were waylaid and shot by the gunmen who fled the scene after the shooting. The military blamed the Tamil Tigers for the killings.

Soldier and civilian injured in mine attack: April 8 - A Sri Lanka Army (SLA) soldier, and a civilian were wounded in a Claymore landmine attack on a SLA truck in Neerveli in Jaffna around 4:40 p.m. on Saturday (8). The civilian wounded in the Claymore explosion, S. Sithamparanadarajah, 60, was admitted at the Jaffna Hospital by the SLA soldiers. Several civilians were assaulted by SLA troops at Puththur and Neervely junctions following the explosion. A large number of troops were deployed and security was tightened in the area. Road traffic were diverted through Rasa Veethy for nearly 2 hours.

In the meantime, sources in Colombo said one SLA soldier was killed in a firefight that erupted at Selvanagar in Thoppur in Muttur Division of the Trincomalee district around 1:45 p.m.

Two Karuna cadres shot, injured: April 9 - Ajith, and another paramilitary cadre belonging to Karuna group were shot by suspected LTTE gunmen while they were travelling through Karuvaakerni towards Valaichenai at 6.30 p.m., Sunday (9), sources in Batticaloa said. Both were taken in Jeeps belonging to Valaichenai police, under heavy security, and have been admitted to Batticaloa Hospital, according to hospital sources. Karuvakerni is located about 32 km North of Batticaloa town.

5 SLA soldiers, 2 NGO workers killed in landmine attack: April 10 - Five Sri Lanka Army (SLA) soldiers travelling in a SLA truck and two Tamil humanitarian workers belonging to Human Development Centre (HUDEC), who were riding in a vehicle that was overtaking the SLA truck, were killed when a Claymore land mine fixed to a lamp post was exploded Monday (10) afternoon by suspected LTTE attackers on A9 Road at Mirusuvil, 9 km northeast of Chavakachcheri, police in Chavakachcheri said. Two more SLA soldiers and two more HUDEC staffers were also injured in the Claymore explosion.

The HUDEC staff killed in the explosion were identified as Mr. Pathmanathan and Mr. Pradeep. Mr. Patkunanathan and Mr. Ajanthan, were rushed to Chavakachcheri Hospital. SLA soldiers wounded in the attack were transferred to Palalay Military Hospital, SLA sources said. HUDEC is the social arm of the Catholic Church of Jaffna, which networks at Parish level across the Jaffna Peninsula and the Vanni working with the disadvantaged for the alleviation of poverty, ignorance and social oppression.

12 SLN troopers killed in landmine attack: April 11 - At least 12 Sri Lanka Navy (SLN) troopers were killed in a Claymore land mine attack by suspected Tamil Tigers that targetted an SLN convoy in Thampalakamam near 9th Mile Post on Trincomalee-Habarana Road Tuesday (11) around 1:15 p.m. Eight more SLN personnel were seriously wounded in the same attack. Two British nationals also were wounded when their vehicle was also caught in the blast. The ambushed vehicle, a bus in the SLN convoy, was

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transporting SLN sailors from Trincomalee to Habarana. The wounded British nationals were admitted to Kanthalai hospital.

Ten sailors killed, nine injured in mine blast: April 11 - Ten sailors and a civilian driver were killed and nine others injured when a Navy convoy was caught up in yet another LTTE claymore mine, in Thampalagamuwa on the Trincomalee-Habarana road on Tuesday (11), Navy Spokesman Commander D. K. P. Dassanayake told the media. Among the injured were a female British national whose van passed the spot at the exact time the blast occurred, travelling in the opposite direction. She was subsequently airlifted to Anuradhapura. Her husband, a Sri Lankan holding a British passport too was injured. The Navy convoy was transporting sailors from Habarana to Trincomalee. They were leaving for home for the New Year vacation, the spokesman added.

The incident occurred around 1.15 p.m. Nine sailors admitted to the Kantale hospital were later airlifted to Colombo and Anuradhapura hospitals, military sources said. The LTTE attack on the Navy convoy came hours before the funeral of the slain Tamil People's Forum leader V. Vigneswaran was due to take place in Trincomalee. Trincomalee DIG Rohan Abeywardena said the situation in Trincomalee remained calm prior to the funeral.

Two policemen killed in landmine attack: April 12 - Two policemen were killed and two others injured when their jeep hit a claymore landmine fixed on a tree at fifteenth mile post near Kumburupiddy, about 30 km north of Trincomalee town on Trincomalee-Pulmoddai road on Wednesday (12) morning around 8.45 a.m. The injured were taken to Trincomalee general hospital. The victims were on their way to Trincomalee to buy provisions for policemen when they were ambushed, a police official said. "Two men were killed on the spot and the other two in the truck were injured," he said. The dead were identified as Sergeant (driver) Liyanage and Sergeant Abey Siri. The wounded were identified as Kamalsiri and Wasantha. Police headquarters said that they were all attached to the Kuchchaveli police mess. The blast has been blamed on the LTTE.

Bomb explosion triggers mob violence: April 12 - Nine civilians and a soldier belonging to the SLA were killed and scores of others were injured when a bomb reportedly planted by the Tigers exploded in the busy vegetable market located on Central Road in the heart of Trincomalee around 4 pm. Soon after the incident, generalized anti-Tamil violence broke out with mobs running riot in orgy of violence against innocent civilians and vehicles, shops and businesses being set ablaze. Within a short time of violence breaking out Trincomalee hospital sources said that there were at least ten dead and 40 were injured and police had also declared an indefinite curfew to clear the streets. Police said that the streets were being cleared of the mobs but tension was still high.

The government dispatched a ministerial team headed by Rohitha Bogollagama IGP Chandra Fernando and a team of doctors Trincomalee hours after the outbreak of violence official sources said. The Indian Prime Minister Dr. Manmohan Singh said he was concerned about the happenings in Trincomalee and contacted President Mahinda Rajapakse and assured him he would give his fullest assistance to defuse the situation.

US condemns 'terrorist attacks': April 12 - The United States has condemned the "recent terrorist attacks carried out by the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) against the armed forces of Sri Lanka," A press release issued in Colombo on April 12 said, "The United States condemns in the strongest possible terms the recent terrorist attacks carried out by the Liberation

Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) against the armed forces of Sri Lanka. Our sympathies are with the families of the victims. The U.S. calls upon the LTTE to cease these violent attacks, to return to the cease-fire implementation talks and to engage constructively in the search for a political solution. The U.S. commends the continued restraint of the Government in the face of these provocations.

The U.S. also condemns other recent incidents of violence, in particular the April 7 murder of Mr. V. Vigneswaran in Trincomalee. The U.S. calls upon both the LTTE and the GSL to fulfill the commitments they made at the February talks in Geneva and to take all possible steps to build a positive atmosphere for future talks."

Japan condemns acts of violence: April 12 - The Government of Japan is seriously concerned with the recent escalation of violence in the North and East of Sri Lanka, including the claymore attack against the Navy bus on Tuesday in Thambalagamam Trincomalee which claimed eleven lives while injuring many others. The Government of Japan condemns in its strongest terms such acts of violence, a press release issued by the Japanese Embassy in Sri Lanka said.

It has been noted that the latest attacks took place no sooner than the Ambassadors of Co-chairs visited Kilinochchi on Monday and stressed the absolute importance of fulfilling commitments to stop violence, which was stated at the first round of Geneva talks on the implementation of Ceasefire Agreement.

Against the background of the latest violence: it is all the more urgent that both parties will hold the 2nd round of talks in Geneva from 19th April to uphold and strengthen the Ceasefire Agreement so as to put an end to such violence.

Kayts youth found shot to death: April 12 - A twenty six year old youth who works as a minibus driver was found shot to death at his mother's house in Kayts Wednesday (12) morning, sources in Jaffna said. Thambu Gopalasingham was alone in his house when the incident happened. Mr Gopalasingham's mother, who was away visiting one of her relatives, found the body of her son, with hands tied behind his back, with injuries from severe beating and with gun shot wounds at her home in Paruthiyaddaippu in northern Kayts, when she returned home, sources said.

Intelligence officer shot: April 12 - Gunmen shot and seriously wounded a senior Sri Lanka Army Military Intelligence officer, Kumara, 38, and his Muslim associate Gajan Ali in front of a house the officer used to visit frequently in Mancholai, 5 kilometers from Miravodai SLA camp in eastern Sri Lanka around 6:30 p.m. on Wednesday (12). The victim is reported to be an experienced intelligence officer and the military blamed the LTTE for the attack on him. Kumara was transferred to Colombo in serious condition, SLA sources said.

Three shot dead in Thenmaradchi: April 13 - A jewellery shop owner from Chavakachcheri in northern Sri Lanka, a mini-tractor owner from Sarasalai and a tailor shop owner from Usan, Mirusuvil, were shot and killed in three separate shooting incidents by unidentified gunmen on Thursday (13). Panchadcharam Kirupakaran, 36, who owns the jewellery shop, "Saranga," in Jaffna town was gunned down in front of his house located on Kandy Road (A9) in Chavakachcheri. His body has been taken to Jaffna Teaching Hospital for postmortem examinations, hospital sources said. The second victim, a mini-tractor Landmaster owner was identified as Chinniah Thaya from Manthuvil. The third victim gunned down in Thenmaradchi was identified as Selvaratnam Vijayakumar, 28, a tailor shop owner from Usan, Mirusuvil. The

LTTE has blamed 'paramilitary cadres working with the Sri Lanka Army (SLA) intelligence' for the killings, but the military has denied any involvement.

LTTE auxiliary cadre killed: April 13 - An auxiliary cadre of the Liberation Tigers was killed and another auxiliary cadre wounded in a Claymore attack allegedly carried out by a Sri Lanka Army deep penetration group. The attack took place Thursday (13) at 8:15 a.m. inside the LTTE controlled Semamadu village in Nedunkerni, Vavuniya North, LTTE sources reportedly said. The auxiliary cadres were transporting breakfast supplies to the LTTE sentry points, when their vehicle was targeted by the attackers.

LTTE cadre killed in ambush: April 13 - A LTTE cadre, Ithayaventhana, was killed Thursday (13) around 8:45 a.m. when alleged Karuna group members launched an ambush inside the LTTE controlled Vakaneri, 40 km north of Batticaloa. LTTE officials in Batticaloa reportedly claimed that the paramilitary cadres were assisted by SLA soldiers who fired mortar shells when the Tigers launched a counter-attack on the retreating group of paramilitary men. Sri Lanka Army sources, denying their involvement, claimed that two Tiger cadres were killed and four LTTE cadres were wounded the attack. The SLA source further claimed that a T-56 rifle was recovered by the Karuna Group.

Claymore blast kills 2 civilians: April 13 - Two civilians were killed in a claymore mine blast in Mullikulam, northwest of Vavuniya on Thursday (13). While the military spokesman blamed the LTTE for the death of the civilians in the attack, LTTE sources blamed Sri Lanka Army's Deep Penetration Unit for the attack.

Mine blast hits SLA bus: April 14 - Two Sri Lanka Army (SLA) soldiers were injured when the bus in which they were traveling was hit by a claymore mine blast at Allesgarden, about 3 km. north of Trincomalee, Friday (14). The blast occurred on the Trincomalee-Nilaveli road, around 2.30 p.m. The civilian driver of the SLA bus and two by-standers were also injured in the blast. The claymore mine was fixed on the bicycle, said SLA military spokesman in Colombo.

Muslim trader shot dead in Jaffna: April 14 - A Muslim trader was shot dead by unidentified gunmen at Muneeswaram road in the center of Jaffna town, around 2.15 p.m., Friday (14), police and medical sources said. Junaid Mohammed Aziz, 25, was seriously wounded with gun shot injuries in his stomach. He succumbed to his injuries at the Jaffna teaching hospital, medical sources said. Mr Aziz is from Colombo and was temporarily living in Jaffna.

Grenade attack on SLA sentry in Jaffna: April 14 - A Sri Lanka Army (SLA) sentry post near Sivan temple on the KKS road in Jaffna town was attacked with a hand grenade, around 7.30 p.m., Friday (14), Jaffna Police said. No casualties were reported. The attackers, riding a motorcycle lobbed a grenade on the sentry post, Police sources said. The troops cordoned off and searched the area. However, no arrests were made, according to the sources.

Residents flee fearing communal clashes: April 15 - Fearing fresh outbreak of communal violence, a large number of Sinhala and Tamil families vacated Mihindupura, Anandakulam, Sinhapura at 5th mile post, Thorankadu, Selvanagar and Ambuwelipuram, according to reports from Trincomalee. According to these sources, violent scenes erupted after suspected LTTE men killed a Sinhala youth, identified as Isanka Kumara, a resident of Mihindupura, when he was selling bread at Ambuwelipuram on

Friday (14) morning. The killing triggered attacks in Thorankadu and Ambuwelipuram.

LTTE cancels sea travel: April 15 - The LTTE cancelled the sea-transportation of their Acting Commanders to Eastern district Saturday (15) morning from Vanni after getting on board the ferry. The Tiger officials "spotted suspicious movement of four Sri Lanka Navy attack vessels issuing instructions to the ferry over VHF Marine Radio," said Director of the LTTE Peace Secretariat S. Puleedevan from Mullaithivu shore. "We were forced to cancel the transportation of Acting Commanders at the last moment after the breach of agreed procedure," Mr. Puleedevan said. Eastern Commanders of the LTTE were scheduled to travel to Vanni on the same ferry.

SLMM officials were on board the ferry which was scheduled to transport the acting commanders of the LTTE to Eastern District before transporting the Eastern Commanders Col. Sornam and Col. Bhanu to Vanni.

Landmine attack kills 5 SLA soldiers, 10 wounded: April 15 - Five Sri Lanka Army (SLA) soldiers were killed and 10 wounded in a claymore landmine attack by suspected Tamil Tigers on a Sri Lanka Army vehicle in front of Joseph camp in Vavuniya, at 12:25 p.m. on Saturday (15), police sources said. The SLA bus was carrying soldiers from Pampaimadu Vanni SF HQ. The claymore was fixed to a two-wheel tractor parked on the road side, at Mundrumirippu in Vavuniya. Four of the Sri Lanka Army soldiers who were seriously wounded were taken to the Vavuniya hospital. One of them is in critical condition, medical sources said. The others were taken to military hospital.

In a separate incident, A Sri Lanka Army (SLA) soldier was injured in a grenade attack on a road post near Chavakachcheri Hindu College on the A-9 high way in the Thenmaradchi sector of the Jaffna peninsula at 1.30 p.m., on Saturday (15).

LTTE cadre, civilian killed in Claymore blast: April 15 - An LTTE cadre and a civilian were killed when the motorcycle in which they were riding was hit by a claymore blast on Palampitty road, in Thatchanamaruthamadu in LTTE controlled area, around 1.30 p.m., on Saturday (15), LTTE sources in Mannar said. Isaivanan (LTTE member) and Nakuleswaran were reportedly killed on the spot.

Trader shot dead in Vadammaradchy: April 15 - Thevarajah Mariyathas, 26, a trader from Vadammaradchy, Point Pedro was shot dead at 4.40 p.m. on Saturday (15) by unknown gunmen who arrived in two motorbikes and fired at the local business establishment owned by the deceased, sources in Jaffna said. Mariyathas's father was also seriously injured during the shooting. The killing took place in Manal Olungai (Sand Lane), in Munai area Vadammaradchy. Injured father, K. Thevarajah, 58, was first taken to the Manthikai General Hospital and later transferred to Jaffna Teaching Hospital in serious condition, hospital sources said.

2 SLAF personnel killed Claymore mine attack: April 15 - Two Sri Lanka Air Force personnel were killed and one was wounded when a Claymore mine hit their Jeep in Kappalthurai, located about 10 km from east port town along Trincomalee-Colombo trunk road, military sources in Colombo said. The attack was reported around 7:30 p.m. Saturday.

Soldier killed in Claymore attack: April 16 - One of the two Sri Lanka Army (SLA) soldiers wounded in a Claymore attack Sunday (16) morning in Mattuvil, Thenmaradchi in Jaffna, succumbed to his wounds, SLA sources said. The attackers also fired

gunshots after the explosion of a small type anti-personnel Claymore mine, according to SLA sources. The attackers targeted a group of SLA soldiers on road patrol west of Kanakampuliyadi junction.

Trinco fishermen complain of attacks: April 16 - A fisherman rescued by the navy on Saturday (15) as he was drifting off Mullaitivu has claimed that LTTE cadres attacked him and a colleague off Salliamman as they were fishing last Thursday (13). The rescued man identified as Meera has claimed that four LTTE cadres had come in a boat. Two of them had boarded the fishing craft and attacked Meera and Raju. According to him Raju had been pushed out of the fishing craft and the attackers moved away after removing their 15 horse power OBM. Military sources said that Meera's craft had been detected by a Fast Attack Craft deployed off Mullaitivu. He was brought to Trincomalee.

Bus timekeeper shot in Vavuniya: April 16 - Suspected LTTE gunmen shot and wounded Mr. JW Dhanasri, a timekeeper employed at Vavuniya private bus services union, at 8:50 a.m. on Sunday (16). The incident took place in the heart of the town where security was beefed up following the Claymore attack on the previous day. Reportedly Dhasiri, a Sinhala person who is fluent in Tamil, was targeted because of the LTTE's suspicion that he allegedly had close links with the Army Intelligence in the town.

UNICEF asks Tigers to release children: April 17 - Following the killing of an LTTE child soldier in a mine explosion in the North, on the eve of the Sinhala-Tamil New Year (13), UNICEF has condemned the LTTE's practice of child conscription and called upon it to release all such recruits in its ranks. The UN's children body said in a statement: "UNICEF deeply regrets the death of a 17 year-old child in the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) auxiliary killed on 13 April in a reported claymore mine incident in North Vavuniya. This incident underlines the risks children are exposed to when used in direct combat or in support roles such as delivery of supplies. Recruitment of children is a direct violation of their right to protection from violence. UNICEF calls on the LTTE to immediately release all under-age recruits within its ranks and to cease recruitment of children. UNICEF conveys its condolences to the family for their loss."

Four soldiers killed, 11 wounded in mine attack: April 17 - Four Sri Lanka Army (SLA) soldiers were killed and 10 wounded when a Claymore mine fixed to a three-wheeler parked along the Vavuniya-Mannar road at Veppankulam, 2.6 km northwest of Vavuniya targeted an SLA vehicle, police sources in Vavuniya said. A civilian was also wounded in the attack that took place around 8:50 a.m. on Monday (17). The soldiers at the site opened fire for more than 10 minutes and the road remained blocked for all traffic, civilian sources said.

The wounded civilian, Mr. Nagarajah, 35, was admitted to Vavuniya hospital. Soldiers wounded in the incident were transferred to Colombo, according to medical sources. A security guard at Vavuniya hospital, Mr. Thayaroopan, was arrested by the Sri Lankan forces allegedly for taking photographs of the incident.

16-year-old killed, two civilians and soldier injured: April 17 - A 16-year old boy, who was standing outside his house succumbed to shrapnel wounds, caused by a Claymore mine explosion outside his house in Chavakacheri. A Sri Lanka Army (SLA) soldier was wounded in the explosion. The Claymore blast took place, 200 meters from the SLA Chavakacheri Command (52

Division) on Post office road in Chavakachcheri, around 9 a.m., on Monday (17). The dead body of the 16-year old school boy, Atputharasa Sureshkumar, who succumbed to his wounds after the Claymore attack outside his house, was lying at Jaffna Hospital. The other two wounded civilians, Krishnan Thiruchelvam, 30, and Sivapalan Thileepan, 35, were admitted at the Intensive Care Unit of Jaffna teaching hospital, medical sources said.

Shop owner shot dead: April 17 - Four gunmen riding in two motorbikes entered an electric shop located on A9 Road at Meesalai in Thenmaradchi and gunned down Mr. Ramalingam Sakilan, 30, the owner of the shop, around 11:30 a.m., on Monday (17). The victim's father, Mr. Ramalingam, who was at the site when gunmen entered the shop, reportedly accused involvement of Sri Lankan Army soldiers in the killing of his son.

Four wounded in Claymore attack: April 17 - Two Sri Lanka Air Force (SLAF) personnel, a SLAF officer's wife and her daughter, were wounded when a SLAF vehicle in a Sri Lanka Army (SLA) convoy was hit by a Claymore landmine on Monday (17) at 12:30 p.m. at Korakallimadu in Kiran in eastern Sri Lanka, police said. The injured persons were transferred to Colombo in a special helicopter. The military convoy was heading towards Polonnaruwa from Batticaloa when it became a target for the landmine attack.

One killed, two shot, injured: April 17 - Mr. Easan, 24, from Santhiveli in Batticaloa area was shot dead inside his home at 2.30 p.m. on Monday (17), by gunmen who reportedly arrived in a car. Santhiveli is located about 20 km north of Batticaloa town and is under the Eravur Police district.

In another incident, unidentified attackers riding in a van shot two young men in front of Karuvakerni school in Valachenai, 32 km north of Batticaloa town on Monday (17) around 9:45 a.m., Police said. Kanapathipillai Koneswaran, 24, and Kunapal Suresh, 24, were standing in front of the school talking with their friends when unidentified attackers riding in a van shot at the youths.

Grenade attack army checkpoint in Vavuniya: April 17 - A Sri Lanka policeman was killed and two wounded when suspected Tamil Tigers lobbed a grenade into a Sri Lanka Army and Police checkpoint in Poonthottam, Vavuniya at 9:30 p.m. on Monday (17). SLA soldiers and policemen opened fire and blocked all traffic. Telephone lines remained cut in the area. Tension prevailed in the area following the incident.

Body found in Vavuniya: April 18 - The body of a young man, with his hands tied behind and blindfolded, was found at Mathavuvaitakulam, in Vavuniya, on Tuesday 18. Vavuniya Police said the man was knifed to death. The victim is believed to be in his early 30's, according to the police. His throat had been slit, and there was cut injuries on the head, the police said. The body was found about 400 metres from the site where a SLA vehicle was hit by a claymore blast on Saturday (15).

Three Karuna group cadres killed, one captured: April 18 - Three suspected Karuna group cadres who were on a penetration mission into the LTTE controlled area in Pendukalsenai, west of Kiran in Batticaloa district, were killed when Tigers launched a counter-attack on the attacking group, LTTE's Kudumbimalai area coordinator Oliyan told media on Tuesday (18). He said one of the attackers was captured by the LTTE.

Mutilated bodies of three civilians found: April 18 - Three

civilians who went hunting into Periyamadu jungle on Thursday (13) from LTTE controlled Puliyankulam were found dead Monday (17), LTTE sources said. Villagers in the area have seen five men wearing dark clothes, leaving the Periyamadu jungle towards no-man zone on Friday (14). The victims died of blood loss caused by cut wounds, according to coroner's report. Periyamadu jungle is located 7 km north of the SLA checkpoint in Omathai in northern Sri Lanka. Thiagarajah Koneswaran, 32, Sivasambu Navanthirarajah, 36, and Sivaguru Rajalingam, 34, of Periyamadu in Puliyankulam had reportedly gone hunting with four dogs in the Periyamadu jungle in Puliyankulam on 13 April 2006 at 11:00 a.m. Three of the dogs had returned the same day without the men.

Mason killed in the east: April 18 - A 23-years old mason at Mavadiyembu on Monday (17) evening around 6:30 p.m. at his mother's house while he was having a meal. Mavadiyembu is located 22 km northwest of Batticaloa town. The victim, Thiagarasa Thaskumar, 23, a father to a child, had returned to his village Mavadiyembu on 6th April, after having worked in the LTTE controlled area.

Man shot dead in Jaffna: April 18 - Unknown gunmen shot dead a 27-year old youth in Koyathottam area near Jaffna town at 4 p.m. on Tuesday (18). Balachandran Reginald Rosan from 1st Cross street was visiting his grandmother's house located in Puthu Veethi, Koyathottam, when the gunmen reportedly entered the residence and shot him at close range. His body with four gunshot wounds has been taken to the Jaffna Teaching Hospital for postmortem examinations.

Australia commends Govt's patience: April 18 - Australia has commended the government for not retaliating in the face of LTTE violence and continuing to call for a negotiated settlement to the conflict.

A media release issued by Foreign Minister Alexander Downer said: "The Australian Government strongly condemns the recent violence in Sri Lanka, particularly the attacks on Sri Lankan security forces personnel and civilians in the north and east. Australia similarly condemns the murder in Trincomalee on 7 April of the Tamil political figure Mr. V. Vigneswaran.

"Australia calls on the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) to cease the indiscriminate attacks on members of the security forces and civilians.

"Australia commends the Government of Sri Lanka for not retaliating in kind and in continuing to call for a negotiated solution to the conflict. "Australia welcomes the commitment expressed by the Government of Sri Lanka to engage in talks with the LTTE and calls on the LTTE to desist from further acts of provocation and to engage constructively in future peace talks. "Australia further calls on both the LTTE and the Government of Sri Lanka to abide by the commitments made at the 22-23 February talks in Geneva and to work towards strengthening the ceasefire and building confidence of all parties."

Trinco curfew continues: April 19 - A curtailed night police curfew was imposed in Trincomalee on Tuesday (18), amid a few minor incidents reported during the day. Life was apparently returning to normalcy with many shops and market places opening for business as usual. The 6 pm to 6 am police curfew which continued from last week due to the outbreak of communal violence was reduced to eight hours - from 8 pm to 4 am. Police said

an unidentified man hurled a hand grenade at an Air Force sentry point in Gandhinagar area in the afternoon but there were no reports of casualties.

SLMM on land mine attacks: April 19 - The chief Swedish cease-fire monitor blamed the LTTE for the recent spate of land mine blasts that have killed dozens in Sri Lanka and imperiled a four-year-old, Norwegian-brokered truce. In an interview with The Associated Press, retired Swedish General, Ulf Henricsson, said while he couldn't be completely certain the LTTE was responsible for all of the mine attacks, it was likely they were to blame for most. "If I look into the pattern and whole series of mine blasts, I would ... rule this as a serious violation by the LTTE," Henricsson said. "I can't prove every explosion to one single party, (but) the blasts directed toward the army, (I'm) quite sure that it could not be launched by any organisation other than the LTTE."

Five civilians shot and killed in Puthur, Jaffna: April 19 - The dead bodies with gunshot wounds of five villagers were found in an open wasteland at Vatharavathai, Puthur, 13 km north-east of Jaffna. Three dead bodies were found together and the other two were found 200 meters away by the villagers Wednesday (19) morning. The victims were identified as Kandasamy Gowribalan, 32, a Municipal Council official, Balasubramaniam Kannathasan, 27, Sellappu Kamalathanan, 25, an electrical mechanic, Mahadevan Kishokumar, 20, a farmer and Thangarajah Raveendran, 27, an auto-rickshaw driver who went searching for the missing persons.

Reportedly the five civilians on their way home in an auto-rickshaw were taken into custody by soldiers belonging to the SLA, taken into the nearby army camp and later brought them out to an open terrain and gunned them down on 18 April. Army spokesman denied any involvement of soldiers in the killings.

Mine attack injures 2 Navy men: April 19 - Two Sri Lanka Navy personnel were wounded in a landmine blast at Vankalaipadu on the A-14 main road in Mannar, around 11 a.m. on Wednesday (19). The sailors were travelling in a water-bowser when they were attacked by suspected Tamil Tigers.

Korean national injured in claymore blast: April 19 - Lan Lee, a 51 years old Korean citizen, was injured when the pickup truck he was travelling in at the Vavuniya Aluthgama junction came under a landmine attack at 12 noon Wednesday (19) by suspected Tamil Tigers. The Korean victim was taken to Vavuniya teaching hospital, but his injuries were not considered life threatening, according to hospital sources. Mr Lee ran a quarry business in partnership with Mr Jayasinghe in the Mahakachchakodiya area, sources said.

Teenager injured in grenade attack: April 19 - Gunam Gunaseelan, 17, was injured in a grenade attack by unknown assailants near Arasady junction in Batticaloa at 8.40 p.m. on Tuesday (18) and was admitted to the Batticaloa Teaching Hospital, hospital sources said. Batticaloa police said the grenade attack took place in front of the Hindu temple and that they were conducting investigations into the incident.

Jaffna trader shot dead: April 19 - Two motorbike riding gunmen shot and killed a shop owner at Kondavil junction, 7 km northeast of Jaffna town around 7:00 p.m. on Wednesday (19). The gunmen reportedly called the business owner to come out of the shop, opened fire on the victim and fled the site in their

motorbike. The victim, Mr. Ambikaipahan Thambapillai, a long time owner of a grocery shop in Kondavil Junction on Palaly Road, is from Palanyandavar Road in Kondavil East.

Two bodies with bullet wounds found: April 20 - Two bodies with severe cut wounds and gunshot injuries were found on Thursday (20) morning around 6 a.m. in Kuttinagar area in Maharambaikulam Vavuniya by local residents, sources in Vavuniya said. The faces were covered with black cloth and gagged with duct tape, according to sources. The identities of the killers and the victims are not yet known. A leaflet with print "Tamil Nationa Army Puthukulam, Vavuniya" was reportedly found under the legs of one of the victims, sources said. Maharambaikulam is located 4 km Northeast of Vavuniya town.

EPDP member gunned down: April 20 - Unidentified gunmen shot and killed a senior member of Eelam Peoples Democratic Party (EPDP) at Batticaloa public market around 8:45 a.m. on Thursday (20). Gunmen had used a 9 mm handgun to kill the victim. He was hit by 6 bullets in his head and abdomen, Police said. The EPDP member, identified as Sellathurai Sivakumar, 33, is from New Boundary Road, Urani in eastern Batticaloa. Sivakumar, a father of 3 children, had re-joined the group after being abroad in middle east for two years. The EPDP has blamed the LTTE for the killing.

Three claymore mine attacks in Batticaloa: April 20 - Three claymore attacks targeting Sri Lankan forces were reported Thursday (20) morning in Batticaloa. Two Sri Lanka Army (SLA) soldiers were wounded in one attack in Urani 3 km northwest of Batticaloa town where a claymore mine was fixed to a boat. In another incident reported at 8:00 a.m., a claymore attack at Koddakallar, 28 km southeast and Puthukudiyiruppu, aimed at a road clearing patrol of 15 Sri Lankan Special Task Force (STF) troopers, missed its target. Another claymore attack targeted a road patrol of the Sri Lanka Army (SLA) soldiers at Puthukudiyiruppu, 11 km southeast of Batticaloa town, around 9:30 a.m. No casualties were reported in Puthukudiyiruppu claymore incident. A SLA lorry that left Batticaloa at 11:00 a.m. and heading towards Polonnaruwa, was damaged in the blast.

Fish-trader shot dead in Jaffna: April 20 - Two unknown gunmen shot dead a fish-trader who ran fish market in Chulipuram in Valikamam Southwest in Jaffna district around 9:00 a.m. on Thursday (20). The gunmen arrived in a motorbike, requested the trader to come out of the building, and escaped after shooting the trader at close range. Reportedly, this is the 17th killing to take place in Jaffna within a period of one week. The victim, Mr. Thavasi Thavachandran, 35, is from Kalladi, Chulipuram.

Violence breaks out after Claymore attacks: April 21 - A home guard was killed and a policeman was injured in a claymore mine attack at 58th colony, Dehiwatte, in Trincomalee district on Friday (21) around 8.40 a.m. The claymore mine, fixed to the fence of a coconut field, targeted a road patrol of home guards on Dehiwatte-Kiliveddy Road. In another incident on the same day, two policemen were killed and two others were injured when a claymore mine hit a police jeep at Thanganagar village in Seruvila division in Trincomalee district around 2:00 p.m. Following these attacks, violence broke out in which a Tamil farmer was hacked to death and several houses were set on fire when Sinhala thugs armed with knives and clubs attacked villagers of Menkamam, a

traditional Tamil village in the Seruvila division in Trincomalee.

Muslim man shot dead, spouse injured: April 21 - Unknown gunmen gained forced entry into the home of a Muslim couple in the Manipuram area of Vavuniya and shot dead the Muslim owner of the house at 8 p.m. on Thursday (21), sources in Vavuniya said. His wife also sustained gunshot wounds and was admitted to the Vavuniya Teaching Hospital. Ilum Nizar, 35, did not open the house when the gunmen knocked at his home. The gunmen broke the main door and entered the house and sprayed bullets at Nizar before escaping. His wife Nizar Babee was seriously injured in the attack, Vavuniya police said. Manipuram is located 7 km North west of Vavuniya town.

Three dead bodies yet to be identified: April 21 - Kathankudy police, recovered the body of a middle-aged male at Kallady beach in Batticaloa Thursday (20) night around 7.30 p.m. The police estimated the age of the deceased to be around 35 years. On information received from the public, the police rushed to the scene and brought the body to Kathankudy hospital, for identification.

Meanwhile, the body of a youth with bullet wounds, recovered by Kathankudy police on the 18th April from the Poonochchimunai cemetery in Kallady and another body of a youth around 17 years, recovered by the Kathankudy police on the 11th of April from Velloor in Kallady, were being kept in the mortuary of the Batticaloa Teaching hospital, according to the police who appealed to the public to provide information to help identify the dead.

Man killed in Vavuniya claymore attack: April 21 - A businessman from Vavuniya was killed in a claymore explosion at 9.30 a.m. on Friday (21) morning. Mr M Kandasamy, a trader in Palmyrah and Coconut products, and a father of six children, was killed in the jungle area between Puthur and Navvi villages in Vavuniya North. Members of the Sri Lanka Monitoring Mission (SLMM) accompanied by Head of Vavuniya LTTE political wing, Mr Gnanam, visited the scene. SLMM members recovered two unexploded claymore mines in the vicinity of the blast area.

Soldier succumbs to injuries: April 21 A Sri Lankan soldier attached to Batticaloa military base succumbed to serious injuries on Friday (21) around 2.45 p.m. at Colombo National Hospital where he was admitted after being injured in the claymore blast on Monday (17) at Korakallimadu, Kiran in Batticaloa. The claymore attack targeted a Sri Lanka Air Force and Army convoy transporting soldiers from Batticaloa to Polanaruwa. The victim, M.W.Thilakaratne, was immediately airlifted to Colombo National Hospital in a special helicopter. Four persons including the wife and children of a Sri Lanka Air force Commander, injured in the attack, were brought to Kalkudah SLA camp and then flown to Colombo for treatment in a special helicopter.

Body of youth found in Barathipuram: April 22 - The body of a Tamil youth with gunshot injuries was found near Barathipuram, close to Mihindapura along Trincomalee-Anuradhapura road about 4 km off northwest of Trincomalee town on Saturday (22) morning around 6 a.m. by the Uppuveli Police officers who were on a road patrol, police sources said. The Uppuveli Police immediately removed the body to the Trincomalee general hospital mortuary. According to residents of Kanniya, soldiers in Kanniya SLA camp around 6.30 p.m. took

the deceased, Pakkiaraja Baskaran alias Batchcha, into custody when he was returning home after playing. He was employed as a cook in an eating-house in the area, sources said. Police sources said the attackers had brought the body to Barathipuram after murdering him in another location the same night. The body was dumped at the site where an unidentified person had lobbed a hand grenade on a passing police vehicle on Friday (21) afternoon. The grenade missed the target and damaged a bus plying between Vavuniya and Trincomalee.

Woman shot dead, husband wounded: April 22 - Unidentified gunmen shot dead Kanthasamy Nallammah, aged 49, on Friday (21) night at Kavatikudah, a Tamil resettled village in the Chinabay police division between Samanpura and Thaniyagama. Her husband Pasupathipillai Kanthasamy, aged 50, sustained gunshot injuries and has been admitted to the Trincomalee general hospital, medical sources said. A group of attackers who went in a white van reportedly entered the house of Kanthasamy and fired at the occupants. Ms Nallammah died on the spot. Her husband who received injuries on his forehead and left eye, now ward in the intensive care unit (ICU), is to be transferred to Colombo hospital for further treatment, hospital sources said.

SLA soldier killed, one wounded in mine attack: April 22 - A Sri Lanka Army (SLA) soldier was killed and another soldier sustained minor wounds when three claymore mines targeted at an SLA road patrol at Thevapuram, 7 km north of Vavuniya on Saturday (22) around 10:00 a.m. exploded, Sri Lanka Army sources in Vavuniya said. The SLA soldier killed in the blast was identified as S.K. Sarath, Vavuniya Police said. The claymore mines targeted a road patrol of SLA soldiers from Kalmadu SLA camp.

SLA Major killed, in claymore attack: April 22 - A Major rank Sri Lanka Army official was killed and six SLA soldiers were wounded when their pickup vehicle was ambushed with a Claymore mine attack in Welikanda in Batticaloa-Polonnaruwa border on Saturday (22) around 1:00 p.m. SLA Major Percy Jagath, attached to the 8th Battalion of Gemunu Regiment, was killed in the attack, according to the military officials in Colombo. The attack took place 150 meters away from a checkpoint in Singapura.

Two civilians killed in claymore attack: April 22 - Two Tamil civilians were killed in the LTTE controlled area in Mannar district on Saturday (22) afternoon around 2.30 p.m., when their motorbike hit a claymore mine fixed to a tree. They were travelling from Pandivirichchan to Aandankulam to their worksite where they were employed as masons, sources said. The dead were identified as Thambiah Gunanayagam aged 21 of Periyapandivirichchan, Madhu Kovil, and Loganathan Chandra Perumal aged 21 of Periyapandivirichchan, Madhu Kovil. The incident took place at Parapukadanthan, Madhu Kovil road, 2 km from Madhu Church.

Two auto-rickshaw drivers shot dead: April 22 - Unidentified gunmen riding in a motorbike shot dead two owners of auto-rickshaws, at the central bus stand in Nelliady, Vadamarachy at 5 p.m. on Saturday (22). Subramaniam Vaseekaran, alias Kannan, one of the two killed, is the current President of the Vadamarachy branch of Auto-rickshaw Owners Union. Kannan, 28, a father of two, from Rajakiramam village in Karaveddy, following the violence in December had temporarily relocated to LTTE area for safety, and had only recently resumed driving his auto for hire

again. Rathinam Rasinthan, 23, who was standing by the side of Kannan was also killed in the gun fire.

2 SLA soldiers killed, 6 wounded: April 22 - Two Sri Lanka Army soldiers were killed and 6 wounded when a Buffel Armoured Personnel Carrier (APC) was hit by a claymore blast at Kalmadu in Vavuniya around 5.30 p.m. on Saturday (22), SLA sources said. The troops from the Kalmadu SLA camp were on road patrol when they were attacked. The wounded soldiers were taken to military hospital at the Joseph camp in Vavuniya.

Two policemen injured in grenade attack: April 22 - Two policemen were seriously injured when unidentified persons lobbed a grenade at the police checkpoint at Anuradhapura junction in the Anpuvallipuram area, a suburb of Trincomalee town in the Trincomalee district on Saturday (22) around 7 p.m. One of the injured was immediately taken to the operating theatre of the Trincomalee general hospital for emergency operation, hospital sources said.

Vavuniya trader shot dead: April 22 - Unidentified gunmen shot and killed a shop owner at Veppankulam, 2.6 km northwest of Vavuniya on Saturday (22) at 7:55 p.m. The victim, Mr. Satkunarajah Rajapathman, 31, owns a shop, Madumatha Kalanchiam. Local residents said he was a Tamil activist and was involved in the dispute with the security forces on flag hoisting during Heroes day celebrations. Four Sri Lanka Army soldiers were killed in a Claymore ambush at Veppankulam last Monday.

LTTE's gunfire on Navy boat with SLMM on board: April 22 - A Sri Lanka Monitoring Mission representative was at hand recently to witness the shooting of the Sri Lanka Navy in the sea off Mullaithievu on 19 April according to a Sri Lanka Army report. The SLMM monitor aboard the craft witnessed this broad daylight LTTE shooting and ruled it a gross violation of the Ceasefire Agreement and informed the SLMM Head in Trincomalee. According to the official website of the Sri Lanka Army, LTTE cadres on fast fiberglass dinghies with heavy weapons in the seas off Mullaithievu around 2.00 p.m. on Wednesday (19) brazenly violated the Ceasefire Agreement (CFA) by firing at a Navy vessel with an SLMM monitor on board.

Released after payment of ransom: April 22 - It has been reported that a British citizen Sivananthan Sivakaran and his brother have been released following payment of ransom of Sri Lankan Rupees 500,000 to the LTTE. The two brothers landed in the UK on 20 April 2006. It was reported that the LTTE had taken the two brothers into captivity when they were proceeding to Jaffna to visit their parents. They were forced into detention at LTTE's Muhamalai check point. The friends of Sivakaran in the UK worked tirelessly and raised the sum demanded by the LTTE and facilitated both their release.

Three Tamil youths killed in Trinco: April 23 - A Tamil youth was shot dead at Kappalthurai, a Tamil village in the Chinabay police division, Sunday (23) morning. Meanwhile, bodies of two Tamil youths were found with gunshot injuries at Poddankadu in Kantalai on Sunday (23). According to villagers, the victims were among the five Tamil youths who had come to Kantalai from Muttur, Saturday, to meet representatives of Insurance Company and were detained by Sri Lankan Government armed forces.

The bodies of the two youths were found along rail track near

Erulankuda in Poddankadu, a suburb in Kantalai town, around 6 a.m., Sunday. Gunshots and explosion were heard in Poddankadu Saturday night, the villagers said.

About 400 families from the village fled from their houses and sought refuge in Kappalthurai government school, following violence that erupted following blast in Trincomalee market on 12 April. They returned recently to their houses.

With the killing of a Tamil youth Sunday morning, these resettled families have again started fleeing from the village seeking refuge in other areas for safety, sources in Trincomalee said.

Gunmen target auto-rickshaw owners: April 23 - An auto-rickshaw owner was shot dead by gunmen at Irupalai junction on the Jaffna-Pt. Pedro main road, around 1 p.m. on Sunday (23). "The victim was sitting inside his vehicle. He was chased by the assailants when he tried to escape. He was shot and killed near a Hindu Vairavar temple.

In a separate incident, a former member of the PLOTE, Amirthanathan Kennady, 35, was gunned down by suspected Tamil Tigers at Navanthurai, in Jaffna, around noon, Sunday. Amirthanathan Kennedy escaped an assassination attempt 3 months ago. He was shot and seriously injured by unidentified armed men inside a private bicycle park in Jaffna town. The auto-rickshaw owner who was killed Sunday was identified as Kurunathan Janarthan, 23, of Kulakkandy lane, Kopay in the Valikamam sector of the peninsula.

Two SLA soldiers wounded in gunfire: April 23 - Two Sri Lanka Army (SLA) soldiers were wounded when unidentified gunmen launched an ambush attack on an SLA checkpoint at Vadamuani, 6 km southeast of Welikanda on Sunday (23) around 6:30 a.m. Welikanda police said. Gunfire was exchanged for 30 minutes, sources said. On Saturday, a Major rank SLA official was killed in a Claymore ambush at Welikanda. A soldier wounded in Saturday's ambush succumbed to his wounds Sunday.

Attacks on Police, STF escalate in Batticaloa: April 23 - Suspected Tamil Tigers lobbed a grenade into the police checkpoint located in front of the Batticaloa Police Headquarters wounding a Sub Inspector, a sergeant and a Police Constable around 11:50 a.m. Another police sergeant was wounded in a grenade attack Saturday (22) night at Navalkuda police sentry in Kalmunai in Batticaloa district. The attackers, who were hiding behind the wall of the Veerakathi Pillayar temple, lobbed a grenade into the checkpoint wounding Sub Inspector Mr. M. Moorthy, 55, Police Sergeant M. J. Jemeel, 38, and Police Constable S. Puvichandran, 35.

A grenade attack at 9:30 a.m. targeted a patrol of 16 Special Task Force (STF) personnel near Mandoor junction. Noone was wounded in the grenade attack. Police Sergeant W.B. Sugathasa, 35, was wounded Saturday at 8:30 p.m. when unidentified attackers lobbed a grenade into the Navatkuda police sentry post.

LTTE sentry attacked, 3 wounded: April 23 - Three Liberation Tigers cadres who were repairing the bunkers at LTTE controlled Vavunathivu were wounded in Sri Lanka Army soldiers gun and mortar fire, alleged LTTE's Political Head of Batticaloa District,

Mr. Daya Mohan. However, the SLA sources claimed that the Tigers were wounded when SLA troopers counter-attacked an LTTE penetration team attempting to enter Government controlled area.

Ice-cream vendor injured by gunfire: April 23 - S. Kajendran, 25, an ice-cream seller was seriously injured when gunmen fired at the van he was travelling in at the Natchimar Kovil area in Jaffna-KKS road on Sunday (23) around 7 p.m. The driver and the passenger said that the gunfire was from Sri Lanka Army (SLA) soldiers who were stationed near the junction.

SLA soldiers blocked ambulances from taking the injured to the hospital for more than half an hour, according to local witnesses. Kajendran has been admitted to the Jaffna Teaching Hospital and is undergoing emergency surgery, hospital officials said.

Two suspected Tigers swallow cyanide: April 23 - Two out of three suspected LTTE cadres scheming to assassinate Agriculture, Irrigation and Mahaweli Development Minister Maithreepala Sirisena at Kaduruwela, Polonnaruwa tried to commit suicide by swallowing cyanide when they were arrested by the Police around 1.30 in the afternoon on Sunday (23). The two would be assassins were rushed to the Polonnaruwa hospital and were due to be brought to Colombo this evening. The other person was detained by the Polonnaruwa police and he too was to be taken to Colombo for further questioning.

The Minister who was in Polonnaruwa to attend several functions organized by Aralaganwila and Welikanda divisional secretariats was advised by the police not to attend them as information had been received that the LTTE had dispatched a group of assassins to Polonnaruwa to assassinate him. Mr. Sirisena then cancelled his visit and returned to Colombo. The police acting on the tip off was conducting a special search operation at Kaduruwela and spotted a suspicious looking man in a bicycle posing as a sweets and bread vendor. Two other persons were near him and when they were about to be searched, the cyclist and one other person had swallowed cyanide.

Batticaloa police comes under bomb attack: April 23 - An Inspector, a sub-Inspector and two constables were injured when LTTE cadres flung a grenade at the Batticaloa police station around 11.45 this morning. This was the first attack on a police station, though there was a spate of claymore mine and grenade attacks against security forces over the past few days.

The army acting on a tip off found a claymore mine near Central College in Inner harbour Road, Trincomalee this evening. Military spokesman Brigadier Prasad Samarasinghe said the forces had recovered 24 anti-personnel mine in search operations conducted over the past few days.

Sinhala village attacked, 6 killed, 4 injured, 6 missing: April 23 - Five persons were killed, four injured and six others were reported missing, all Sinhalese, when a group attacked a suburb Kallampathai in Gomarankadawela village in Morawewa police division along Trincomalee-Anuradhapura main road, 33 km northwest of Trincomalee town on Sunday (23) evening. The

(continued on page 37)

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British citizen father seeks professionally qualified groom in UK/EU/USA/Canada for his fair daughter, B.A (First Class), 25, 5'4", living in Colombo. Please send details to M 1470 c/o Tamil Times.

Jaffna Hindu parents seek professional groom for Doctor daughter, 27, working in UK, Mars afflicted. Please send horoscope, details to M 1471 c/o Tamil Times.

Jaffna Hindu parents seek professional groom for Doctor daughter, 25, working in Australia. Please send horoscope, details to M 1472 c/o Tamil Times.

Jaffna Hindu parents seek professional bride for son, 41, 5'4", British citizen in employment in UK. Please send horoscope, details to M 1473 c/o Tamil Times.

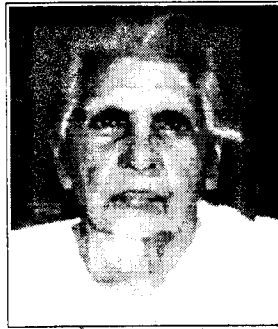
Jaffna Hindu mother seeks Tamil Hindu professional groom, 28-32, for graduate daughter, 27, 5'7". Please reply with details to M 1474 c/o Tamil Times.

OBITUARIES



Mrs Thanaluxmy Chelliah (Thana), Dearly beloved wife of late Swaminathapillai Chelliah (of Lawton Road, Manipay); beloved daughter of late Ramanathan and Vadivambai; ; beloved sister of late (Dr.) Sri Pathmanathan (London), Beloved sister-in-law of Sheila Sri Pathmanathan (London), Beloved moth-

er of Nagendran (London), Vasanthy (Brisbane), Jayanthy (Melbourne), Balendran (Melbourne), Dhamayanthy (Melbourne) and Ushanthy (London); Beloved Mother-in-law of Yogeswary (London), Sivananthan (Brisbane), Rajarubendra (Melbourne), Shashikala (Melbourne) and Sooriyakumar (London); Beloved Grand Mother of Nadia, Arangan, Dhakshmi, Ghajan, Salasan, Nilanie, Dr. Nirosan, Thakshan, Dilakshini, Nidiya and Murali; Beloved great grandmother of Brinda and Haran . passed away peacefully on 28th February 2006 in Melbourne, Australia. The cremation took place according to Hindu rites on Saturday, 4th March 2006 in Melbourne, Australia - 287, Norcot Road, Tilehurst, Reading, Berkshire RG30 6AF, U.K. Tel: 01189411107.



Mrs Saraswathy Chellappah of Mylany, Chunnakam
(Born: 09.04.1906)

Beloved wife of the late Mr. Ramalingam Chellappah and loving mother of the late Ramanathan, Dr. Shanmuganathan (London), Dr. Rajalakshmi, Seethalakshmi, mother-in-law of Kamaladevi, Dr. Ganeshwaran (Melbourne) and the late Murugasothirasar.

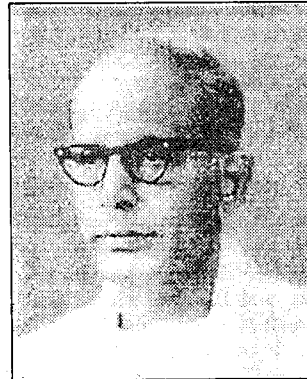
Daughter of the late Dr. Naganather and Mrs. Theivanaipillai and the youngest

sister of the late Thangam Kumaraswamy, late Dr. N.S.Nathan (Johore Bahru), late N. Senathirajah (Thinnavaly Thotam), late N. Kumarasingham (Colombo), late Rukmani Mailvaganam (Ipoh) and grandmother of Selvi, Dr. Gangatharan (Melbourne), Dr. Chenduran, Shankari (London), Arani, Ranji and Murali (Colombo); great grandmother of Ruby, Ramanathan and Haridarshan passed away peacefully on 08/02/2006 and the funeral took place at the Galkissa Crematorium on 13/02/2006.

The family wishes to thank all those who attended the funeral, sent messages of sympathies and floral tributes and assisted in various ways during this period of sadness.

-146 Ridge Lane, Watford,
Hertfordshire WD17 4WU
Tel: 01923 235552

Second Year Remembrance



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

Sadly missed and fondly remembered by his beloved wife Mahadevi, sons and daughters and their families; Dhayananthan and Vijayalakshmi, Shanthi and Sivakumar, Abhiramy and Jayantha, Vaheesan and Dhushyanthy, Gitanjali and Nirmalarajan and his grandchildren Gajendran, Janarthani, Branavan, Sivahamy, Ahran, Ramya, Ahrani, Hariharan, Bhargavy and Sindura.

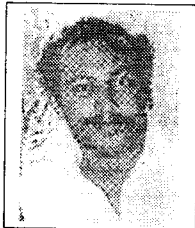
- 7 Gossington Close, Chislehurst, Kent BR7 6TG

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IN MEMORIAMs

Ninth Anniversary Remembrance
Pradeep Jeganathan

31.03.1997

Nine long years ago today

You were cruelly taken away

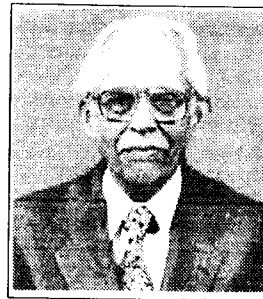
Time stood still for us that day

But memories of you will always stay.

Sadly missed and lovingly remembered by his parents Jeganathan and Shakuntala, sister Mythili, brothers Janarthana and Sanjayan and their families.

Auckland, New Zealand.

Seventh Year Remembrance



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

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

- 24 Rowlands Avenue, Hatchend, Middx HA5 4BH/ 37 Mississippi Road, Seven Hills, NSW 2147, Australia.

Forthcoming Events

May

01. Mayday Bank Holiday;
Feast of St. Joseph

02. Shashti;

08. Eekathasi

10. Pirathosam

12. Full Moon; Sithraparuvam

14. Feast of St. Mathias

16. Sankadakara Sathurthi;
Feast of the Ascension of
the Lord Jesus Christ.

20. Feast of St. Bernardine
of Siena

23. Eekathasi;

24. Pirathosam

26. Amavasai; Karthigai;

Feast of St. Philip Neri

27. Feast of St. Augustine of
Canterbury

28. Stoneleigh Sri Rajaraj-
eswari Amman Temple
Annual Festival Flag
Hoisting Ceremony

30. Sathurthi

31. Feast of the Visitation of
the Blessed Virgin Mary.

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Tel: 0207 381 3086/4608

May 28th 6 p.m. Vani Fine
Arts presents 'Ojas- A Rare
Brilliance' - Bharatanatyam
& Kathak by Nirupama -
Rajendra and Group

Sri Lankan Teacher in Seychelles Wins
Commonwealth Science Award

Mrs Pamathy Sivakumar, science teacher in the Seychelles Ministry of Education has won the first prize in the annual CASTME (Commonwealth Association of Science, Technology and Mathematics Education) competition conducted by the Commonwealth Foundation for the year 2005. Her environmentally friendly project on "Farewell to Whitefly" was ranked the best in the Seychelles Science and Technology exhibition in 2004. Whitefly is a dangerous pest that has caused great damage to agriculture and environment in Seychelles. The European Union has been funding heavily to eradicate this pest from this environmentally friendly small island nation in the Indian Ocean.



Mrs Pamathy is an old student of Jaffna Vembadi Girls High School and a former teacher of Kandy High school. It is to be recalled that she is the fourth Sri Lankan science teacher from Seychelles to win this prestigious Commonwealth Award.

V.Sivasupramaniam

(continued from page 35)

gang had set fire to a paddy harvester and attacked people in the village. The military has accused the Tamil Tigers for the attack.

"Those farmers were working in their paddy fields when they were taken and shot," army spokesman Brig Prasad Samarasinghe said. The spokesman told the BBC that the Tigers were trying to provoke communal violence by targeting civilians. Sinhalese villages in fear of further attacks are reported to have fled the area.

Two youths killed in Batticaloa: April 24 - Sri Lanka Army (SLA) troopers shot and killed two suspected Tamil Tigers a youth and another was reported killed around 7:30 a.m. on Monday (24), when SLA soldiers detected a Claymore land mine attack on Thivu Road in Vantharumoolai, police said. An SLA soldier was wounded. An ambush on an SLA patrol was also reported at 10:30 a.m. at 18th Mile Post on Batticaloa - Valaichenai Road. SLA sources have claimed that they have recovered a Claymore mine, a 200 meter wire and a grenade from the victims. Vantharumoolai is located 17 km. northwest of Batticaloa town. The youths were in the process fixing a Claymore mine on a Mango tree, the SLA troopers have told the police.

Gunmen kill education officer: April 24 - Gunmen who entered the Education Office in Valaichenai shot and killed Mr. Kanagaratnam Lingewaran, 29, a clerk from Vaharai Education Office, around 10:45 a.m. on Monday (24). The gunmen who shot the victim with handgun were covering their faces with helmets. Another official, Mr. A. Nagalingam, 53, was wounded in the gunfire, education officials said. The victim, Mr. Lingewaran, is from Thirukkovil and was residing in Valaichenai. □

THIRUKKURAL BHARATHAM

We wish to let you know of an exciting and innovative theatrical production called **Thirukkural Bharatham** to be presented at the Logan Hall, University of London on Saturday, 3 June 2006 by Kavitha, Meera & Anjana Pathmarajah of Lancaster, California, USA. Choreography for this dynamic dance event, expounding on virtuous living, and involving twenty-seven verses from Thirukkural, is the brain-child of the world renowned Indian dancing couple, VP & Shantha Dhananjayan. The highly acclaimed artiste couple has produced an excellent creation within the traditional parameters of classicism. They will dazzle the audience with a brief performance of their own at the start of the concert.

The concert is sponsored by **Nandalala Seva Samithi Trust** of Chennai, India and **Visions** based in California. Thirukkural Bharatham was very successfully performed by the Pathmarajah sisters last year to large audiences in Chennai (three shows), Los Angeles, Washington DC, Virginia and Toronto. The funds raised by these concerts have been used entirely to aid underprivileged children in Sri Lanka and Tamil Nadu.

The Trust's main objective is to serve the weaker society, particularly in education, arts & crafts and personality development for the youth and preventive health for women & children. **Visions** is a voluntary organisation of young graduates and undergraduates. It aims to uplift war-affected youth in Northeast Sri Lanka through skills training, scholarship opportunities and leadership camps. Visions has raised about US \$45,000 during the last two years by conducting similar programmes. It has provided funding and other support to over 18 children's homes and local service organisations to enhance youth education and empowerment to thousands of poverty stricken children. To date, Visions has sent 49 international



graduates / undergraduates to the Northeast, each of whom has spent their summer vacations teaching English and working as camp counsellors. Meera Pathmarajah, a Harvard post-graduate in education, has been spending long periods in different children's homes in the Northeast translating Visions' aim into action and influencing the different educational institutions there to implement innovative curricula that would promote wider knowledge acquisition by the 6-12 year old children.

We are confident that you will lend us your support to sell some tickets for the above event to be held at the Logan Hall. We are particularly interested to sell the reserved seats on the front rows at £50 per seat. Seats on the other rows go at £15 for each adult, £10 for child (under 16) and £40 for a family comprising a couple and two children. All proceeds from this concert will go to fund children's educational programs, including provision of scholarships to talented students at Vanni Institute of Technology (Vanni Tech).
Vathsala & Paramanathan
(020 7603 7689 / 0777 351 6468)

Tickets could also be purchased from:

Mr & Mrs Srinivasan
- 020 8763 2221 / 07958 424222;
Mr & Mrs ShivaJee
- 020 8440 7183 / 07710 257309
Dr Sivakumar
- 020 8468 7181 / 07788 415927;
Dr Chellappah
- 01892 824 661 / 07971 167405
Mr Yoganathan
- 020 8954 6392 / 07725 313438;
Mr Ganeson - 020 8845 7900

The following websites contain information and reviews on Thirukkural Bharatham:

<http://www.newstodaynet.com/03jun/ev1.htm>
<http://www.bharatakalaanjali.org/productn/tkural.html>
<http://kutcheribuzz.com/news/20050603/thiru.asp>
www.narthaki.com/info/reviews/rev297.html

BOOK REVIEW

"MEMORIES ARE FOR EVER"

As I started perusing the book : "Memories Are For Ever", by Mr. Karthigasoo Jeganathan, I was astonished at the author's memory power. He has written this autobiography running to more than 200,000 words, narrating his life history spanning over seventy years, purely from memory without documentary material. He also observes in his preface that he had little experience in writing. But anyone who reads through a few pages of this book will be struck by the lucid style and the simple language of his writing.

The first three chapters simply narrate his childhood and teenage days, and these provide us with information about the life of an average Tamil in Jaffna in the nineteen forties. Later the author vividly describes the passing of the bill on Free Education and how it opened a new world for millions of young ones who were denied education because of the cost. He also describes the travails of a large middle class family in Ceylon and how the end of World War II brought in inflation and an uncertain future.

The author joined as a teacher in 1948 and was selected for training in June 1950. At the College of Education, he met Shakuntala whom he later married. He writes about the pass-

ing of the Official Language Act declaring Sinhala as the only official language and how the rift that began with it widened as the Government brought in one irritant after another. From then on he describes vividly the travails of the Tamils as he narrates his own progress in his career which ended on 31 July 1979. He then went over to Africa and worked for the next eighteen years. As we read his story we weep when he suffers a set back, we are happy when he succeeds and we marvel at his extraordinary memory, his courage to stick to the straight path and convictions. As we come to the end, we are convinced with an irresistible feeling that God will be with those who do their duties sincerely and honestly. I recommend this book to every Tamil.

Prof. S.Muthukumaran

Former Vice Chancellor Bharathidasan University, Chennai, India.

Copies of the book are available for sale, the price inclusive of postage from the following whose names and telephone numbers appear below. Those interested please contact them.

London : Miss. S. Muttucumaru - 020 - 89597634 Payment Fifteen pounds.
Toronto: Mr.M.Rajasingham - 416- 6931431 " Twenty dollars
Sydney : Mr. J. Janarthana - 02 - 97846502 " Twenty dollars
Melbourne: Mr.K.Sathialingam - 03 - 95610117 " Twenty dollars.
New Zealand- Mrs. M.Sathianathan 09 - 6206664 " Twenty dollars
Colombo - Mrs. S.Satcunanathan - 112 - 514584 " Five Hundred Rupees

10th World Saiva Council Conference Sydney 2006

The 10th World Saiva Conference organised by the World Saiva Council was held in Sydney, Australia and ran over four days from 27th January to 30th January 2006. Yogananda Adikal, the president of World Saiva Council, gave the opening address welcoming saivites from all over the world to the conference. Thirupperunthiru Santhalinga Ramasamy Adikal of Peru Aatheenam, Sri la Sri Somasundara Thesika Gnanasampantha Paramacchariya Swamigal of Nallai Aadheenam, and Satguru Bhodinatha Veylan Swami of

Hawaii Aadheenam graced the occasion and delivered the opening addresses after the opening ceremony. Mr Santhiran, the chair of the organising committee, gave the inaugural address on behalf of WSC Australia. The Conference itself commenced with the raising of the traditional Saiva flag at the Sydney Murugan Temple.

In his speech, Santhalinga Adikal praised Swami Siva Nandhi Adikalaar for having the vision and courage to establish the World Saiva Council in order to bring about a revival of Saivism in the West. He highlighted the carrying of the Saiva message to the five continents through the World Saiva Council Conferences as Swami Siva Nandhi Adikalaar's greatest achievement, adding that this is much more than the Mutts of



India had been able to achieve even though they have been in existence for much longer period.

To translate his vision into practice, Swami Siva Nandhi Adikalaar formed the World Saiva Council in 1992 as an inter-

national Saiva educational and social service organisation. Its objectives, among others, are (a) to preserve, foster, promote and further develop the Saiva religion, philosophy and traditions of Saivite Tamils, and (b) to initiate programmes and activities for the progress, welfare and solidarity of the Saiva Community throughout the world.

The Conference lasted a period of four days. Seminars were held on the first and last day with Saiva Siddhanta discussed on Friday 27th and Siva Yoga on Monday 30th both at the Sydney Murugan Temple. These events were well subscribed with excellent feedback from attendees. During Saturday 28th and Sunday 29th, the conference moved to the Hills Centre, a short distance from Sydney, where the conference proper ran for two days. Papers were presented and speeches delivered on Saivism and related topics during the day on these days. By the evening the atmosphere at the centre was transformed for the Tamil cultural events showcased by the Tamil youth of Sydney. These shows were witnessed by large and appreciative crowds, with all shows without exception receiving standing ovations. The conference is held to have been a great success by all those who attended the event.

- K Ganapathy

Australian Newsletter

Melbourne Siva-Vishnu and Sydney Murugan temples observed the annual ten day festival which culminated with ostentatious Rathotsavam that habitually attracts people from a cross section of the community. Tamil New Year was celebrated with special prayers and religious rituals in temples across Australia & New Zealand and the congregation in most temples was more than usual as the Tamil New Year day coincided with the Good Friday public holiday.

New Zealand witnessed a volcanic eruption in Raoul island about 1000 km northeast of Auckland. It is a scientifically known island roughly triangular in shape with an area of 29 sq km and the volcano began erupting after a strong sequence of earthquakes. According to Seismograph data available, eruption continued for 30 minutes and was at its most intense for about 10 minutes. The eruption occurred in one of the craters known as Green Lake and threw out mud, rocks and a plume of steam. Raoul is known to have erupted 14 times and the last being about four decades ago that resulted in a sequence of strong earthquakes and big changes in lake level, gas emissions and hot springs.

Commonwealth Games in Melbourne was an ostentatious success attracting more than a million live spectators to the city with more than 100,000 lined the Yarra river for the opening ceremony, 110,000 in the streets for the triathlon and an estimated 150,000 for the marathon. According some estimates 95 percent of Melbourne's 20,000 hotel rooms were occupied on the night of the opening ceremony and about 300,000 in a total of 1.5 million tickets were sold to people outside the state of Victoria

Australia experienced wild weather across the continent. First it was the tropical Queensland and then Western Australia and Northern territory were hit by cyclone and heavy rain. Queensland's banana plantations were devastated and as a direct consequence the local market experienced some scarcity for bananas.

Australian and New Zealand classical music circle which normally experiences the incessant flow of artiste from the sub-continent had a rare experience when Yaripanam Rudrapathi Krishnan captivated the Auckland & Melbourne audience with a violin performance. Melbourne, Auckland and Sydney also witnessed classical performances from several other visiting artistes during the month and Auckland's annual Thiyagarajah utsavam was no doubt an alluring event.

- Sivasupramaniam Sitsabesan



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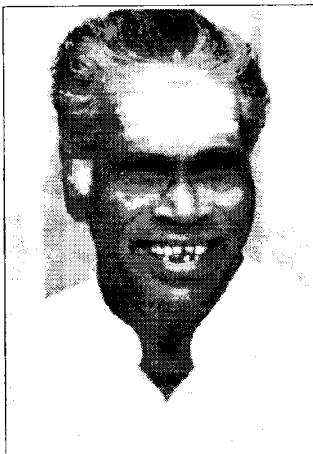
-SRI LANKA

-SOUTH INDIA

-SINGAPORE

The late Mr Sathasivam pillai **Kulasekaram pillai** **(Sangeetha Bhooshanam)** **07.03.1923- 26.01.2006.**

- Appreciation



(By a Colleague)

Mr Kulasekarampillai born in Velanai, Srilanka was a leading Carnatic musician. In Sri Lanka he was a music teacher to hundreds of students in Royal College, Colombo initially for over a decade and later in Colombo Hindu College, a father to his seven beloved children and an inspirational guru when it comes to devotional songs and cultural programmes.

Kulasekarampillai was not only an asset to the Colombo Hindu college but also to the nation and to those

who were influenced by his music. He will be sorrowfully missed especially by myself, staff, students, parents and all those who were associated with the College.

His dedication to the Hindu religion was so immense that he encouraged all young children to understand and memorise Sivapuranam and Thevarams. He ensured that they understood the concepts of the religion and this was his mission throughout his life.

I wish to take this opportunity on behalf of the Colombo Hindu College to convey our deep sympathies to his wife, Poompaavai, his children Kulabhushany, (Bhushany Kalyanaraman), Kulapoopathy, Kulasekary, Kulanayaki, Kulasunthary and Kulamurugan and grand children. Our special condolences are due to his eldest daughter, Smt Bushany Kalyanaraman whom we remember very well and is now a

leading carnatic musician in India, famous for her regular performances on Indian TV and All India Radio.

Let us all pray for his soul to rest in eternal peace and for his music be an influential part of our lives. We will remember him with love and kindness and may God bless his family.

T Sankaraligam
(Retired Principal, Colombo Hindu College)

(By an old pupil)

Mr Kulasekarampillai taught Tamil language, literature and Saivism at Royal College Colombo for many years between the late fifties and sixties for well over a decade. Like myself many students will be saddened to hear of his passing away recently in Chennai where he spent his last days in the company of his wife and his eldest daughter Bhushany Kalyanaraman. We remember him as one of our popular teachers. He has lived and enjoyed a full life of eighty two years.

I can recall with fond memories and nostalgia the hours we have spent learning the basics of 'Oriental Music' as it was referred to in our school time table. We thoroughly enjoyed having him teach us Thevarams and Tamil literature songs in the cabin like wooden class rooms under the shade of massive tamarind tree at one end of our vast cricket grounds at Royal College. We could hear his enthusiastic "humming" of his favourite songs as he walked along the long corridors of the marvellous school. He was well liked and respected both by students as well as teachers at the school. Mr Kulasekarampillai was also involved in the Tamil literary Society guiding us to greatly improve our debating and public speaking skills. My involvement in the debating society gave me more opportunities to become close to him. He was always helpful and willing to support us.

I was delighted to meet his eldest daughter Kulabhushany after many years and was very happy to note that she has done him enormous proud by establishing herself as a top quality vocalist (carnatic musician) in the international and Indian Carnatic music scene.

As his students of the era gone by we will pray for the Lord's guidance and Blessings to his wife and family to cope with his loss and offer our heartfelt condolences to them.

- Dr S Rajasundaram.

A TAMIL TSUNAMI ORPHAN'S PLEA FOR PEACE

The rolling waves followed us
Like some snarling snakes.
My parents were gone.
They surrendered and went
Down into the fathom less deep.
I was pushed away to the shore
And thrown far, far away.
A roof landed on my head.
A shroud of darkness fell
And I became a senseless log.
I woke up in a tent.
Food tasted like the slimy water
That Tsunami poured.
I lost my sleep. My mind
Journeyed to some distant land.
Throat, parched and dry
Choked all my words within.
My thoughts dug deep vigorously
Into the dark caverns
Of my battered brain
While my heart bled furiously
Longing to be with my mum and dad.
"Am I dead or alive?" I asked myself.

I'm now, in this orphanage.
Lovely people love me dearly
Friends abound with lots of care.
But, I'm alone.
Alone I stand and stare,
At the million waves
With a million hopes
For a miracle to happen
On those deserted shores
Strewn with all the debris and ruins.
I yearn for my loved ones
To come back and cuddle me,
And give me a kiss and a hug.
"A vain hope, my friend," whispers my Reason.
"Keep calm," reiterate my sensible Senses.
With a quick shudder, I realize,
The hypes of Tsunami are down
Like the air less balloons,
And have been blown like sands.
The likes of us are still forlorn,
The wound persists in our heads and hearts.
"Please do not taunt us more
With more wars or more suffering.
I beg you all, in the name of Tsunami orphans,
Bring back peace to our beautiful land."

- Varatha Shanmuganathan

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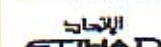
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