



ARMY FAILS TO TAKE JAFFNA IN OPERATION YAL DEVI

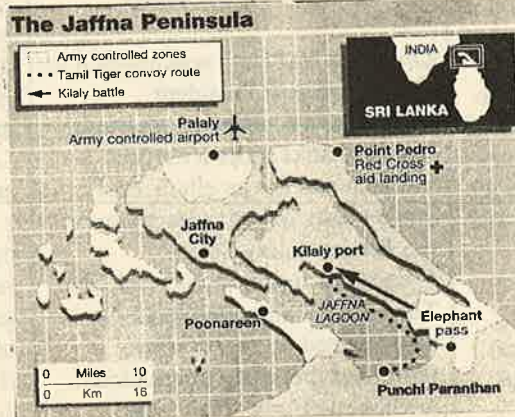
Over 100 civilians are reported killed in Operation Yal Devi launched by the military in Jaffna on 28 September. Reports say the main objectives of the operation, involving around 9,000 troops, were capturing Chavakachcheri town in the south of the Jaffna peninsula to prevent people crossing the Jaffna lagoon at Kilali and to launch an offensive on the Jaffna town further west.

According to reports, plans for Operation Yal Devi began as soon as General Hamilton Wanasinghe assumed duties as Secretary to the Ministry of Defence. General Wanasinghe now also heads the Joint Operations Committee formed after the disbanding of the Joint Operations Command by President D. B. Wijetunge. Weapons and military equipment received from China in late September were immediately dispatched to the north and the three armed forces chiefs flew to Palaly Army Camp in Jaffna on 26 September to meet the northern commanders.

Curfew was imposed in Jaffna, Kilinochchi, Mullaitivu and Mannar districts on 28 September and troops began advancing from Elephant Pass northwards towards Iyakachchi and northwest towards Pallai accompanied by indiscriminate bombing and shelling of populated areas. Supersonic planes bombed Kilali, Allippalai, Sangathanai, Mattuvil, Chavakachcheri, Pallai, Kokkuvil, Eluthumatuval and Nanthavil.

Helicopters continued to fire on Kunchuparanthan in Kilinochchi District. At Pulopallai troops faced major attacks by the Tigers. Some sources say the LTTE did not offer much resistance earlier in order to draw the Army into difficult terrain covered by coconut trees, thorn bushes and ponds.

troops advanced to Kilali on 1 October and claimed to have destroyed a pier and 450 boats. Defence Ministry says 114 soldiers, including seven officers, were killed and 248 were seriously injured. According to the LTTE 96 Tigers were killed in the battle and the army's four Czech made Main Battle Tanks were destroyed.



Surprisingly, the Army withdrew from Kilali on 4 October and returned to Elephant Pass. The following day civilian crossing at Kilali with Sea Tiger security resumed. The Tigers had moved most of the boats further east of Kilali during Operation Yal Devi and the Army claim that 450 boats were destroyed was certainly false. Army officers accuse the political leadership for the decision to withdraw from

Kilali and government officers in Colombo say the decision was taken by the military high command. Apparently no one wants to take the blame for defeat.

According to Army Commander Cecil Waidyaratne Operation Yal Devi had four aims: 1) to advance to Kilali pier and destroy all boats and allied facilities thereby preventing the LTTE from making use of this crossing point; 2) to destroy as many LTTE camps while advancing; 3) to kill as many LTTE cadres as possible; 4) to deny the LTTE a major source of income. It was alleged that the LTTE was making use of the crossing to earn millions of rupees

The Jaffna peninsula was shelled from military bases in Mandaitivu, Palaly, Mathagal and Karainagar and from naval vessels. On 28 September 20 civilians were buried alive at Sangathanai in Chavakachcheri when a bunker collapsed due to airforce bombing. Seven others were rescued and admitted to the Chavakachcheri hospital. The Nanthavil Amman temple in Kokkuvil was extensively damaged by bombs and four elderly civilians were killed. Seventeen students attending classes in the adjoining social welfare centre were injured.

After heavy fighting at Pallai,

a month. Lt Gen Waidyaratne is adamant that these objectives had been achieved but has not explained the withdrawal.

The fierce charge by the Tigers in the Pulopallai area took the troops by surprise and reports say that many soldiers fled in panic. Army officers had great difficulty in making them hold their positions. The large number of deaths had demoralised the troops. It was realised for the first time since the beginning of the operation that territory could not be held. Airforce bombing was not effective because of the terrain and Tigers could ambush the troops in any number of places. Although the aim was to establish camp at Kilali, commanders also realised that the camp could not be supplied through land or the lagoon and without supplies there was no hope of holding the camp or making further advance on Chavakachcheri. In fact a camp could not be established anywhere along the 12km route the army had advanced. There would have been further losses and the troops would have been further demoralised. For these reasons, analysts say, the decision was taken to withdraw.

Several major military operations have been launched in the Jaffna peninsula in the last two years. A large number of civilians have been killed and enormous property destroyed in operations Liberation, Valampuri, Chess, and Whirlwind. Operation Yal Devi, named after the Colombo- Jaffna express train, was the biggest operation thus far

and has ended in failure at the cost of hundreds of lives.

Reports from Colombo indicate that whatever claims by the authorities about successes at battle fronts and whatever statistics are released by the Defence Ministry, ordinary people have learned to make their own observations and judgement. Many people stand by the Galle road and observe ambulances rushing from the Ratmalana airport to the General Hospital taking injured and dead soldiers and they are able to estimate the number injured and killed and judge whether the army has been successful. Observers say most soldiers sent to the front line are from rural areas and their deaths do not evoke any emotion in Colombo. Politicians praise the "sacrifice they have made for their country" and have no hesitation in sending more to their deaths.

Operation Yal Devi was planned in the backdrop of President Wijetunge's continuous assertion that Sri Lanka faces a terrorist problem and not an ethnic crisis, and the anticipated publication of the Parliamentary Select Committee report in mid-October. The Sri Lankan government has also rejected all recent peace initiatives including international mediation efforts. Observers believe that the real objective of the operation was to weaken the bargaining position of the Tamils and impose the recommendations of the Select Committee which has already been rejected by all Tamil political parties.

Both parties are continuing to attempt to win battles saying that such victories are necessary for a stronger negotiating position. But in reality, winning a battle makes them believe that they could win the war. Therefore fighting continues in which many hundreds of innocent civilians are killed. As said earlier, many operations have been launched for the capture of the Jaffna peninsula. At least, after Operation Yal Devi the Sri Lankan government must realise the futility of the attempt at a military solution.

Prime Minister Ranil Wickremasinghe and Foreign Minister A.C.S.Hameed have been recently saying in the United States and Britain that Sri Lanka was pursuing a political settlement. President Wijetunge continues to lament over the huge amount of money spent on defence. If these concerns are genuine, the government must accept all as equal citizens of Sri Lanka, and call for a ceasefire and enter into negotiations to work out a lasting solution. Continuing the military objective will lead to further militarisation of the whole society and result in suffering and increased human rights violations. If the international community does not play a role in finding a solution to the Sri Lankan crisis, human right violations will continue and more lives will be lost. The international community must press for a political solution in Sri Lanka.

REPRISAL KILLING

Three policemen on patrol near REDD BARNA village in Ampara District were killed in an LTTE ambush. P.Gopalapillai a resident of the village was tortured and killed by armed men in military fatigues. Villagers fled the area and fifty three houses were set alight as night fell.

PROHIBITED ZONE REDUCED

Responding to India's concerns the government reduced the prohibited zone from the earlier announced northern territorial waters to Sri Lanka's maritime boundary in the north as per Emergency (Establishment of Prohibited Zone- No. 2) Regulations 1993.

POLICE OFFICER KILLED

Assistant Superintendent of Police Ranjith Ekanayake was killed by gunmen on 19 September at Rawanaella in Badulla District. Deputy Inspector General Frank Silva notified all police stations to apprehend all army deserters after the leader of the gang was identified as an army deserter.

2224 Tamil Detainees in NE Military Camps

Human Rights Task Force in its annual report has revealed the number of detainees held in military camps in North-East as at 10 August 1993. The camps where detainees are held have been listed with Eastern Province accounting for the vast majority. Some of the camps listed are:-

Camps	Detainees
Batticaloa Military/Police camp -	982
Trincomalee Military camp -	141
Amparai military camp -	27
Hardy military camp -	06
Batticaloa military prison -	142
Kommaturai military prison -	50
Trincomalee military prison -	718
Valaichchenai military prison -	07
Thandikulam military prison -	75
Islands military prison -	16
Wanni military prison -	60

Military authorities have maintained that all detainees have LTTE links.

In addition to these 2224 detainees, 960 Tamil detainees have been listed as being held at the Kalutara and Magazine prisons. The report also reveals that HRTF received 2351 complaints of disappearances but it has been able to trace only 114 persons.

NEW DEFENCE SECRETARY

Disbanded JOC's chief General Hamilton Wanasinghe took over the position of Defence Secretary on 08 September vacated by Air Chief Marshall Walter Fernando who resigned earlier.

TIC ACCESSION LIST

A selection of documents received by TIC in September 1993

SHR 3223

Balasingham, Anton
Itandu tacaptankalum pulikalum
Tamil Eelam: LTTE; August 1992
43p. (Text in Tamil)
**DESCRIPTORS: LTTE / War /
Ethnic Problem / History**

SHR 3222

Inkulap
Inkulap Kavitaikal
Paris: LTTE International
Secretariat; 1993
36p.
**DESCRIPTION: Political poems/
Tamil**

SHR 3220

Interviews given by Dr. Kumar
Rupesinghe, Secretary General,
International Alert: press cuttings-
Sri Lanka 2-29 August, 1993
Sri Lanka: The Sunday Times; 29
August 1993
4p.

**DESCRIPTORS: Interview /
Peace initiative / Ethnic problem**

SGN 369

Gnanamaniyam
Tavattiru Vipulananta adikalatin
nutrandup pamalar
London: Ancient Tamil Folk
Theatre; 22 December 1992
25p. (Text in Tamil)
**DESCRIPTORS: Poems /
Vipulanantar / Tamil**

SHR 3224

The state Co-ordinating Committee
of NGO's for Relief and
Rehabilitation of Sri Lankan
Refugees
Madras: TECRAS; June 1993
4p.

**DESCRIPTORS: Tamil Nadu /
Sri Lankan Tamil / Refugees /
NGO's / Basic needs**

OHR 251

Passing the buck: deficient Home

Office practice in "safe third
country" asylum cases

London: Amnesty International
(British Section); July 1993
8p.

**DESCRIPTORS: Asylum / Cases
/ United Kingdom**

SGN 363

Eelaththuppooradanar
Penamunaiyillituntu ed. by Vi.
Pacupati Selvatacakopal
Canada: Nilal Publication; 1988
160p. (Text in Tamil)

DESCRIPTORS: Tamil / Essays

SGN 359

Eelaththuppooradanar
Minkanani Tamilum Eluttuc
Cirtittum ed. by Ita.
Nakalinkam
Canada: Nilal Publication; 1989
96p.

**DESCRIPTORS: Computer /
Tamil Programme**

SGN 357

Eelaththuppooradanar
Eelat Tamil aringnarkal ed. by
Edward Itayaccantita
Canada: Nilal Publication; 1992
60p.

**DESCRIPTORS: Biography /
Tamil scholars**

PB

Libertas: newsletter
Canada: International Centre for
Human Rights and Democratic
Development; September 1993
Vol. 3. No.4

6p.
**DESCRIPTORS: Human Rights
Violation**

SHR 3230

Towards Peace in Sri Lanka:
Collection of Appeals 1991-1992
15p

**DESCRIPTORS: Peace
Initiative/ Appeal**

SEPTEMBER DIARY

SEPTEMBER 01

NAVY ATTACKS INDIAN FISHERMEN: An Indian national was killed and three others were injured when naval craft attacked the boat in which the occupants were engaged in fishing in the northern waters.

SEPTEMBER 02

AMMUNITION TRUCK EXPLODES: An army truck being loaded with explosives blew up at Punanai in Batticaloa District. Two soldiers were killed and six others including four civilian employees were seriously wounded in this incident.

SEPTEMBER 03

PROHIBITED WATERS: Northern territorial waters were declared a 'Prohibited Zone' by the government. This order made by President Wijetunge covers the area stretching from north of Mannar in the west coast to Trincomalee on the east coast.

SEPTEMBER 04

POT AND KETTLE: SLFP leader Mrs. Sirimavo Bandaranaike speaking at the 42 annual general meeting of her party faulted the government for not presenting any proposals before the Parliamentary Select Committee for settling the festering north east problem although the government party members were present in the committee in preponderant numbers.

SEPTEMBER 05

FISHERY LOSS: Fisheries Minister J.M.Perera accepted that the prohibited zone in force in north east is causing great hardship to those dependent on fishing for their livelihood.

SEPTEMBER 06

JOC DISBANDED: President Wijetunge did away with the Joint Operations Command and set up a Defence Co ordinating Committee in its place.

SEPTEMBER 07

KILALY KILLING CONTINUES: Two Air Force helicopters and two attack air craft strafed civilian boats carrying passengers across the Jaffna lagoon which though prohibited is the only entry / exit point to the besieged Jaffna peninsula and killed seven of them. Thirty were injured and the attacks had been made after flares were lit to identify the boats according survivors of this attack.

SEPTEMBER 08

POLICE SEARCH REFUGEE RETURNEES: Five hundred and fifteen Tamil refugees returning from India were subjected to a police search despite protests by UNHCR officials running the transit camp in Trincomalee.

SEPTEMBER 09

TORTURE VICTIMS: The Supreme Court ordered a medical examination on Veerasingham Mahadevan and Arunasalam Ketheeswaran who had filed fundamental rights applications. Both applicants now in detention at Kalutara prison have alleged torture after their arrests in Trincomalee District in March 1992.

SEPTEMBER 10

TULF VICE PRESIDENT ARRESTED: A vice president of the moderate TULF party and a retired public servant aged 65 years who was with him were arrested in Colombo and detained at a police station on suspicion of links with the LTTE.

SEPTEMBER 11

PLANTATION STRIKE ENTERS FIFTH MONTH: The strike at the Haputale Needwood tea estate in Badulla District continued despite the matter being referred for arbitration by the labour department.

SEPTEMBER 12

LAWASIA CONFERENCE: The

thirteenth LAWASIA conference was held in Colombo with the theme focus " The role of law in a region undergoing accelerating change".

SEPTEMBER 13

UNDERGRADUATES PROTEST: Engineering faculty students at Peradeniya university boycotted lectures in support of several student demands. Five students continue a fast in rotation to back their demands.

SEPTEMBER 14

REFUGEE APPREHENSIONS: Refugees at the Valaichenai refugee camp expressed their concern for safety in resettlement at their border villages to the officials who visited the camp. They appealed to the Batticaloa Government Agent, NORAD representatives and Rehabilitation Ministry officials to ensure their security by opening ICRC offices and police stations.

SEPTEMBER 15

ORCHESTRATED SHELLING: Army camps at Mandaitivu, Madagal and Palaly in Jaffna District commenced simultaneous shelling for one hour from 5 p.m. targeting populated areas. The head of a eleven year old girl was blown apart and eleven others were injured when a shell exploded at Chunnakam.

SEPTEMBER 16

MID DAY MEAL PROGRAMME SCRAPPED: Four million school children enjoying this benefit begun by former President Premadasa were deprived of this when this programme was scrapped.

SEPTEMBER 17

DEATH SQUADS AGAIN: Government MP Hudson Samarasinghe and opposition MP Mahinda Rajapakse have urged the new Defence Secretary General Hamilton Wanasighe to act promptly to apprehend the death squads who are openly engaged in

SEPTEMBER DIARY

abductions and killings.

SEPTEMBER 18

TAMIL GOLDSMITHS

ARRESTED: S.Lingarajah (25 Yrs), I.Sivaganeshan (25 Yrs) and his brother Maheswaran (15 Yrs) all from Batticaloa District employed in a jeweller's shop at Panadura in Kalutara District were arrested on suspicion.

SEPTEMBER 19

TRANSMITTER DESTROYED:

Military sources reported the killing of four LTTE cadres in the Kudumbimalai area of Batticaloa District. Radio transmitters used by them were destroyed in this operation according to the same sources.

SEPTEMBER 20

SHOPS OF TAMILS

SEARCHED: All shops owned by Tamils in Badulla town centre were subjected to a search at 4 a.m.. Two Tamils were arrested on suspicion during this search.

SEPTEMBER 21

SELECT COMMITTEE'S

LAST SITTING: The Parliamentary Select Committee decided to terminate its proceedings and submit its report to Parliament. The chairman gave time for any further proposals to be submitted by any interested party till 15 October.

SEPTEMBER 22

ASHROFF'S CONCERN:

Speaking in parliament on the amendment to the Sports Bill SLMC leader Ashraff decried discussing sports at a time when bloodshed was continuing in north east. The Parliamentary Select Committee's decision to wind up sittings without finding a solution to the north east problem had dashed all his party's hopes he added.

SEPTEMBER 23

WAR ON PLACES OF

WORSHIP: State Minister P.P.Devaraj acknowledged in

Parliament that several places of worship had been damaged due to aerial bombing and cited the Durghai Amman Temple in Jaffna District where six devotees were killed and eleven were injured. He also stressed that the ethnic problem should be peacefully resolved if the war is to be brought to an end.

SEPTEMBER 24

CHOLERA EPIDEMIC: The health ministry reported that it had received confirmation from ICRC as to the prevalence of cholera in the Jaffna peninsula. Twenty two cases had been reported according to the ICRC.

SEPTEMBER 25

LTTE HIDEOUT

DESTROYED: Military sources reported the destruction of an LTTE camp at Angodavillu in Polonnaruwa District. Ten LTTE cadres were killed in this incident and forces also recovered rifles and radios used by them.

POLICE POST OVERRUN:

The police post at Katuwanwila in Batticaloa District was overrun by LTTE cadres at 3a.m. Five policemen were killed and five were injured in this attack. Twenty others at the post had fled to the jungles in the face of this attack. Four LTTE cadres were reported killed in this incident.

SEPTEMBER 26

AIRMEN AMBUSHED: Three airmen were killed and four were injured when an air force patrol was ambushed by the LTTE at Morawewa in Trincomalee District.

AERIAL BOMBING: Omantai

and Navatkulam villages in Vavuniya District were targeted by air force planes at 11 p.m.. Many residential building were severely damaged in this mid night air raid.

SEPTEMBER 27

CURFEW DECLARED: Mannar

and Mullaitivu Districts were brought under a curfew and troops with air cover moved out of the Vankalai army camp in Mannar District. Five soldiers were killed

SEPTEMBER 28

OPERATION YAL DEVI:

Curfew was clamped in Jaffna and Kilinochi Districts as troops backed by artillery, battle tanks with sea and air cover moved out of the Elephant Pass camp in the direction of Pallai in Jaffna District. Resistance from the LTTE hampered progress.

SEPTEMBER 29

CANNON FODDER: At least seventy soldiers were killed and over hundred were injured as the push to Pallai continued. LTTE casualty figures were put by military sources at around two hundred.

INTENSE AERIAL BOMBING:

Air force planes were engaged in bombing scattered areas in Kilinochchi, Chavakacheri and Jaffna areas. The Viththaha Pillayar Temple at Eluthumadduval was completely destroyed. Troops continued to advance towards the Kilali lagoon crossing,

POLICE CLASH WITH

RESIDENTS: Muslim residents of Main Street at Ottamavadi in Batticaloa District were involved in a clash with Police in the morning. Ten shops, ten houses and four motor vehicles all owned by Muslims were allegedly damaged at 7 pm by Police.

SEPTEMBER 30

TROOP ADVANCE: Troops continued their push towards the Kilali lagoon crossing with LTTE resistance diminishing.

SHELLING TARGETED

CIVILIANS: Shelling from Palaly army camp claimed the lives of five civilians at Navakkiri village in Jaffna District. Eleven others were injured..

Situation Report

ABDUCTION AND KILLINGS IN THE NORTHEAST

Midnight visits by armed gangs, abductions from residences and subsequent killing of those so abducted have become common in the northeast. The latest victims were T.Thevarajah, S.Packiyarajah and A.Thangarajah from Mahilavedduvan village in Batticaloa District. All three were abducted by an armed gang on the night of 15 September from their homes. The dead bodies of the first two named were recovered later. A.Thangarajah was found with serious injuries and was admitted to hospital in a critical condition.

A doctor from Bible in the Moneragala District was stopped in his car at Siyambalanduwa in the Ampara District on 15 September by armed gunmen in uniform who set fire to his vehicle when he refused to give up his vehicle. This doctor managed to escape with burns and was admitted to Ampara hospital.

It is significant that these developments are within the Eastern province which the security forces claim to be under their control. The government announced local elections on 19 August and referendum on 24 August based on this report by the security forces.

SHELL FIRE DISPLACES RESIDENTS

Residents of Kottady, Naavaanthurai and Araaly in Jaffna District have been forced to flee their villages during the first two weeks in September due to intermittent shelling directed from the Mandaitivu army camp.

TAMIL ARRESTS CONTINUE UNABATED

Six Tamils from Wattala in Colombo District including women travelling in a coach to Kandy were arrested on 15 September at Peradeniya Road in Kandy. Being Tamils they are held on suspicion and have to prove their innocence.

Mass arrest of Tamils in Colombo in violation of the measures agreed to between the government and Tamil political leaders in June prompted State Minister M.S.Sellasamy to confer with President Wijetunge and Defence Secretary General Hamilton Wanasinghe on 15 September. According to the Minister not even a single terrorist had been identified from among the 15,000 Tamils recently arrested.

The Minister reported after the meeting that the Defence Secretary had agreed to consider new procedures of arrest which would avoid indiscriminate arrests in future.

COMMUNAL AMITY

Seven village divisions with Muslim residents brought three years back within the Muslim Assistant Government Agent's division of Ottamavadi were once again brought within the Tamil Valaichchenai regional secretariat.

This has been done due to the demands made by the Muslim residents who preferred to opt out of the Muslim Ottamavadi division. This has been hailed as a rejection of the attempts by interested elements to keep the Muslim and Tamil communities divided.

POLICE ABET ABDUCTION

Answering questions in parliament Minister Wimal Wickremasinghe disclosed that Abdul Gafoor from Akkaraipatru in Ampara District was abducted on 26 August in broad daylight within the Criminal Investigations Department's compound in Colombo under the very nose of Police officers on guard duty. He had presented himself for questioning at the CID headquarters and was leaving the building when he was abducted by persons who arrived in a vehicle bearing registration number 51-1725.

He was not arrested by the CID according to the Minister. He however admitted that the abducted person is now held in custody at Batticaloa by security forces on a charge that he supplied banned commodities to terrorists.

POLICE ANNOUNCE LOCAL ELECTIONS

At a Peace Committee meeting in Batticaloa eastern province Deputy Inspector General Police announced that local elections would be held in Batticaloa during January 94.

President of the Peace Committee brought to the notice of this police officer that mail to Batticaloa was being opened at the police station before delivery resulting in delay and pilfering. He pointed out that this belies the claim that normalcy prevails in this province and requested that if necessary, vetting of private mail should be done at the post office itself.

Situation Report

90,000 FAMILIES AFFECTED

The declaration by the government that the territorial waters around the north east coast is a prohibited zone has left 90,000 families depending on fishing without a livelihood. Appeals have been made to the Jaffna Government Agent to provide some relief by fishermen's co operatives and MPs.

No relief measures have been effected in spite of several appeals made to the authorities.

TRANSPORT OF HARVEST

Security forces in Batticaloa District have decreed that harvested paddy could be transported only on the basis of seventy five bushels per acre. This arbitrary ceiling is unrealistic and results in difficulty for the transport of all the paddy harvested.

There is already a ban on paddy cultivation west of the Sandana and Muhundan rivers in this District and the new measure is expected to further reduce the paddy production in the region.

ARRESTS AND DETENTIONS

Secretary to the Ministry of Defence has written to the Inspector General of Police and Attorney General that "the incidence of unjustified arrests and detentions continue at police stations and it was time that the Inspector General of Police took steps to arrest this trend.

KILLING FIELDS

The latest figures released in a crime prevention report by the police department gives the number of reported killings from 1 January 1988 to 30 June 1993 as 17,721. The highest figure for a year has been 8,127 in 1989.

It is significant that most extra judicial killings went unreported as were the killings in the war torn north east.

FORTY EIGHT CIVILIANS KILLED IN AERIAL BOMBING

Twenty seven civilians at a cultural event at Mathalan village in Mullaitivu District were killed on 18 September when Air Force planes targeted them. Government claimed that eight of those killed in this incident were LTTE members.

Further, on 28 September, Twenty civilians in an air raid shelter at Sangathanai in Chavakacheri were buried when air force planes bombed this village to assist ground troops advancing west, fourteen kilometres away. A similar bombing at Kokkuvil further north claimed four civilian lives (all aged over 50 yrs) when Nandavil temple was hit. Seventeen children at a play school adjoining the temple were also injured.

NEW SECURITY ARRANGEMENT

Five districts bordering the north east province have been granted a special status by the police department. Each of these districts will be under a Deputy Inspector General of Police from October 93.

The districts selected for this special policing are Puttalam, Anuradhapura, Polonnaruwa, Monaragala and Ampara.

HOUNDING OUT DESERTERS

Lt. Colonel A.P.Thorandeniya of the Military Police divulged that plans have been drawn up to arrest atleast four hundred army deserters every month. He disclosed that eighteen officers and 2,923 soldiers had been apprehended from January 93 to date.

Those apprehended had been handed over to their regiments and commanding officers of the regiments have the right to decide

ETHNIC PROBLEM

State Minister U.L.M.Farooq speaking at a function to mark the opening of a UNP office at Anguruwella in the Kegalle District spoke of the urgent need to resolve the ethnic problem by all concerned including political parties.

A REVIEW**ANNAI IDDA THEE**
(FIRE KINDLED BY MOTHER)

A dramatic entertainment lasting almost 90 minutes was staged by the undergraduates of the Faculty of Medicine, University of Jaffna depicting the realities of Sri Lanka's ongoing ethnic conflict, that has affected many thousands, if not every Tamil family in the semi destroyed and war torn Tamil Eelam. The drama staged at the Kailasapathy auditorium in the Jaffna campus had a powerful impact on the local audience and sought to increase the social awareness amongst our people. The local media published a number of appreciative reviews and some with constructive criticism. This play has been captured on video tape and includes a panel discussion at the end with the participation of Dr. Suresh Kanagarajah (Head of English), Professor K.Sivathamby (Head of Fine Arts) and chaired by Dr. Somasunderam. The playwright Mr. Shanmugalingam has portrayed this piece of art as a psychological drama imparting the social problems that prevail in modern Eelam. Many of the sad problems confounding the present day Tamil community of Eelam has been condensed into a 90 minute release. It shows in a nut shell how cruel regimes began to destroy the will and dignity of three inter related indigenous Tamil families. They are compelled to live under the same roof, due to the indiscriminate destruction of a home by the Sri Lankan armed forces. These families are living in fear and desperation day after day from the perpetual shelling from army camps and strafing by air force helicopters flying around them. They anxiously await the return of a son or husband from Colombo

through war torn areas of Vavuniya and Kilinochchi. Some never return as they are shot dead and disposed of by the Sri Lankan army. Some others do return having been tortured and carry permanent mental and physical scars. A young girl in her teens witnessed her friend being caught and raped by an army officer. The poor victim could not bear her shame and took her life by jumping into a nearby well. The teenager who witnessed this sad episode has now become psychologically disturbed. Every time she tries to get to the well she returns indoors screaming and has to be comforted by her widowed mother and sister. The sister too has by now realised that her young husband had been shot dead by the army in Vavuniya., when he was returning from Colombo. She suffers in desperate silence as not to upset her aunt who also happens to be her mother-in-law. The latter an upper class lady who is married to a Government Agent is still living in hope for her son's return. She indulges in regular prayers and invites her daughter-in-law to join her to go for temple poojas. Half-heartedly the young widow concedes to her aunt's request. A young son who is preparing for his examinations becomes very much disturbed and eventually becomes mentally imbalanced due to the indiscriminate and perpetual shelling by the army. The play thus revolves round the families who have really been engulfed by the atrocities committed on them by the Sri Lankan armed forces

and instigated by the Jayawardene regime followed by the late Premadasa's administration. The situation has not changed as it appears to be still continuing under the present Wijetunge government.

With maximum limitations and basic necessities that are available in the Tamil Eelam the production team has to be given full credit for having made a video for posterity, of this amateur dramatics. The sound effect was overpowering at times and as a result one was unable to grasp the dialogue. The lighting and costumes needed improvement to suit the different moods. The Government Agent showed a lot of professionalism as an actor. The disturbed boy's acting too is much commendable.

Review by Dr. K.C.Rajasingham

Dr. Daya Somasunderam, one of the producers of the above play has requested donations and proceeds from the sale of the video. The copy of the video in hand at present is not of the best quality. However, copies are being issued at £10 each. Efforts are being made to obtain a good copy. Please send donations to :

Medical Institute of Tamils
Thamil House
720 Romford Road
London E12 6BT

For copies of the video tape please contact Dr. V. Nerminathan on 0702 553053

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