



# Tamil International

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1st March, 1990

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## A STEP TOWARDS THE DISMANTLING OF APARTHEID



**In  
South  
Africa**

President  
F. W. de Klerk  
with  
ANC leader  
Nelson Mandela

**In  
Sri Lanka**

President  
R. Premadasa  
with  
PFLT President  
Mahendrarajah  
(Mahathaya)  
and  
Secretary Yogi



தமிழ்த் தேசிய ஆவணச் சுவடிகள்

## READERS' VIEWS

### OPERATION RE-BIRTH

Ranjan Thangavelu, Toronto

The 1980's witnessed enormous sacrifices made by the Tamils of Eelam. Hundreds of freedom fighters and thousands of civilians gave their lives in order to achieve freedom and independence. Beginning with the Sri Lankan Government's military repression during the early and mid 1980's, and untold suffering under the Indian occupation army from 1987, our people have experienced virtually a life of hell. There were many military operations mounted by both Governments against the LTTE with the advice of several 'intelligence' agencies. Operation Liberation, Operation Pawan, Operation Checkmate Phase I, Phase II, Phase III, each of which proved a dismal military fiasco. The RAW should conduct an Operation 'Introspection' to fathom what went wrong with their operations. And at home there is one more operation that remains; namely "Operation Re-birth", this time by our freedom fighters!

### THE NEED OF THE HOUR IS PEACE

R Kumar, UK

Soon after Ranjan Wijeratne's declaration "the match is over" (Government victory over the JVP), Sinhalese politicians, commentators, and journalists have turned their guns on the LTTE. Many of these may have excelled in their different fields but most of them cannot be called intellectuals because they lack the human touch. On the contrary they play an unprincipled and dangerous political game that costs human lives!

It was during the last presidential election Sirimavo Bandaranaike had sent Kumar Ponnambalam along with Anura "Putha" to the Vavuniya jungles to talk to the Tigers. She promised to call for the withdrawal of the IPKF and dissolve Provincial Councils, if elected. However, she lost to the present incumbent. Now the SLFP wants the Tamil "groups" to unite and surrender arms. Sheds tears for Tamil lives. Anura, who went underground when the "match" was on, has now surfaced and perhaps hopes for the return of the dynasty, which has crumbled next door.

Commentators like "Suranimala" and "Taraki" pretend to be knowledgeable and week after week keep on scaring the Sinhalese against the LTTE and continue beating the war drum. Kautilya, the "Island" columnist, if my memory is correct, once joked about Prabakaran's educational qualifications. But this is what he says in the "Island" of January 14 - "What nobody took into account seriously was Prabakaran's militarism. Or what a western correspondent who has covered guerilla wars in three continents described to me as 'his touch of genius'. And daring. And once again daring, the indefinable gift of all outstanding generals. He cut through the TNA 'defences' like knife through cheese, and only with 300 men, when his area commander wanted 750..."

The one-time UNP "twins" Lalith and Gamini went to Anuradhapura, placed garlands on the statue of Dutugemunu and swore a Buddhist oath pledging to save Lanka from terrorism. Ven Pallegama Gnanaratna who presided did not fail to point out that Lalith hailed from Ruhunu, the birthplace of Dutugemunu, while Gamini's birthplace was Kotmale where the king lived for sometime. Both of them brought disaster to the Tamils - one the bombs and the other Rajiv Gandhi's IPKF.

The Sri Lankan government helped in the formation of the CVF, a riff - raff collection. The government overlooked the formation of the TNA. It was fully aware of the crude, heartless and unprincipled hand of the RAW behind these groups. Ultimately CVF and TNA guns were directed against the Sinhalese forces and Muslim guards. The LTTE came to the rescue. It was the LTTE that took on the fourth largest army in the world. Big brother may day-dream that he could tackle a tired Tiger. God forbid another Operation Liberation.

It is a historical fact that Tamils had their own Kingdom. The BC Pact conceded the fact that there are traditional Tamil homelands. Let the Sinhalese, Muslims and Tamils move about as they wish. What is objectionable is Israeli-type state-aided settlements, to change the demographic character of the population. If men like K B Ratnayake have not read history, let them at least follow the current daily news. The Baltic States, Azerbaijan, Armenia and almost every minority like the Kurds and Albanians all over the world want to be "left alone." Kashmir is predominantly Muslim. It was a Hindu ruler who ceded the state to India. Referendum is a democratic process. From Nehru downwards, Indian leaders have failed to recognise this principle in Kashmir. Even Mahathmaji may not have accepted it because he had faith in ONE India artificially created by the colonial exploiters. Can India keep down the entire population of Kashmir?

If from 1949 the Sinhalese politicians had not made the Tamil issue a hobby-horse to ride to power, so many Sinhalese bodies would not have been carried by the rivers of South Ceylon or received the tyre-treatment. During Operation Liberation, many defenceless Tamils had to carry the tyre-necklace and face a horrible end; the Sinhalese too have had a taste of it now. Sinhalese and Indian fire-power had mowed down the Tamils mercilessly. Now that the IPKF is moving out, let not the Sinhalese politicians on the pretext of ensuring Tamil unity and saving Tamil lives cause more killings. If past mistakes are forgotten, history is sure to repeat itself at much greater cost to human lives - Sinhalese and Tamil alike.

The entire country has to remember its dead, lick its wounds, ensure human rights and begin the process of rehabilitation. The tale of the Tamils is indeed ghastly and Tamil hearts have been burning for many decades. The need of the hour is PEACE.

# TAMIL International

எப்பொருள் எத்தன்மைத்து ஆமினும் அப்பொருள்  
மெய்ப்பொருள் காண்பது அறிவு.

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## EDITORIAL

### TAMIL NADU TALKS & TAMIL EELAM EVENTS

*The focusing of public attention on the Tamil Nadu Chief Minister's initiatives in Madras - in resolving the differences between the LTTE and the other groups - would seem to suggest that the future scenario in North-East Sri Lanka hinges in some way on the outcome of these talks. Nothing is further from the truth.*

*The Madras rounds of dialogues have certainly brought political credit to Mr Karunanidhi. But that is not to say that these more-than-one month-old talks are likely to have any bearing on the ongoing course of events in the North-East, or the life of the people there. What many political observers fail to realise is that the fast-emerging ground realities in Tamil Eelam soil cannot be altered or stage-managed by holding talks in Tamil Nadu. Events are taking their own independent course in Sri Lanka. Violence has virtually ended in all areas from where the IPKF and its surrogate groups have withdrawn. Schools and offices have begun to function as normal. Night buses between Colombo and the Tamil areas are plying in safety. Hundreds of Tamil youths who sought sanctuary in Colombo fearing the forced conscription by the EPRLF have begun to return to their homes, schools and parents. Neither the LTTE which stood up to the armed forces of the two Governments, nor the public which suffered at their hands for seven long years, are today having problems with either. The people are also breathing free after the exit of the indisciplined, marauding cadres of the other groups who have been systematically plundering and humiliating them. The Eelam Tamils have at least regained the freedom of movement denied them these seven years. So, what then are the knotty problems of Eelam Tamils that the Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu is expected to solve ?*

*There is only one problem, one that has nothing to do with the Eelam Tamils; the problem of the future safety and sustenance of the leaderships of the various groups that had sought temporary power and privilege at the expense of the cause and the people, towards whom the previous Congress I rulers and their agencies owe a moral responsibility. That moral responsibility has now become the unhappy legacy of the National Front Government in Delhi and its constituent member in Tamil Nadu - the DMK. Not knowing what to do with that legacy is the dilemma facing the Delhi and the Madras Governments. Disowning that responsibility is no solution, because like a cushion pressed in one place bulging in another, the violence in Tamil Eelam is now beginning to bulge in Tamil Nadu. Mr Karunanidhi cannot afford it, because his own credibility is at stake; nor can Delhi. Nor can Mr Karunanidhi afford to permit prolonged exile status to these displaced leaderships and their cadres in Tamil Nadu soil. The Perumals and Padmanabhas are not Dalai Lamas and their cadres are not exactly monasterians! So they have to be made to stay put in their own habitats, under a guarantee which Mr Karunanidhi is apparently seeking from the LTTE, that they would not be physically harmed - the poor (armed) things!*

*Unarmed, uninvolved civilians have a right to human freedoms in the face of violence by armed groups. But it seems to us very odd that any party to a war - a conscious, deliberate war - should begin to shout for human freedoms and democracy the moment it loses that war. Anyway it is unmanly for a man with a gun to squeal. While we join Tamil Nadu Chief Minister Mr Karunanidhi in appealing that no Tamil should in the future die at the hands of another Tamil, we would like to quote an Arab proverb that declares: "God says: Take what you want in life, but please pay for it."*

# MACHAN, WHAT IS THIS “PERIYASTROIKA” IN RUSSIA?

*Periyadorai, Colombo*

The other day Peter Fernando met Citizen Singha Perera and Namadarl Prabha Ponniah at Galle Face Green and wanted to know about the latest he had heard in Wellawatte. He heard the word “*Periyastroika*” mentioned and thought that Namadarl Ponniah would be able to explain, as it sounded Tamil.

Perera and Ponniah had a good laugh and said it was “*Peristroika*” in Russian, which meant a re-structuring due to a new thinking and a change of attitude in politics by Gorbachev and the Russians.

“Oh! I see,” said Fernando, feeling glad that his uncertainty was now cleared. “So if it’s good for Gorby, it’s good for Prema too.”

The three of them all worked in the Audit Department and were good friends, meeting often on a Saturday evening at Galle Face Green. They sat on a bench facing the sea and seeing the sun go down with a mystical tropical glow that reddened their faces, as if they were on colour film. They philosophised and speculated about the Eastern bloc and the ripple effects it could have on other parts of the world.

“Now with the Marxist Socialist aspirations of the JVP removed by their defeat and the IPKF withdrawing, the situation seems to be reverting to better times. Well, the recognition of Tamil and English is certainly a good thing and that was the main cause of all our problems”, said Peter Fernando. “**After all, what have we gained by ‘Sinhala Only’?** We are back to where we started and now have sorted out our language problem and have Provincial Councils. All these things could have been done in Chelvanayagam’s time. But we suffer because of our karma and I think we are now on the correct path. Lokubandara is now asking pensioners to start teaching English. They are speaking English all over Europe, even in far away Nagorno

Karabakh, so it’s a jolly good thing we have corrected ourselves.”

“The trouble with you *Namadarl* fellows is that you are passing all the exams and getting all the good jobs” said Perera jokingly.

“That is true” said Ponniah, “But you see we had to educate ourselves to get jobs or we would have had to starve because of the arid climate in the North and East. Unfortunately, we can’t grow tea and rubber and coconut there, otherwise the white man would have developed those areas, so we have to come down south to the land of milk and honey, we educate ourselves to get jobs. You fellows had no such problems and no such motivation to study.”

“I see the point” said Perera. “So I suppose the only thing to do is to develop your areas so that you will not have to come down south and take our jobs.”

“That’s right” said Ponniah. “If we have enough jobs, you too could come over and we could give you our fine

‘*Karutha Colomban*’ mangoes and *Palmyrah Toddy*.”

Peter Fernando said “That may lead to a lot of inter-marriages too. I have Tamil relations already. My cousin is married to a nice Tamil girl from Kotahena and they are happily living in Canada, with four children.”

“I have Sinhala relations too” said Ponniah. “My sister in New York is married to a nice fair Sinhala guy whom I call ‘*Sudhu Mahathaya*’ and they have a brilliant son and a daughter.”

“Good show, that’s the best thing to do. So, Ponniah, let’s have a good thosai feed today and forget our problems. I am sure everything will be fine with *Periyastroika*” said Perera.

“Good, good”, said Ponniah. “We can have a ‘*Thosastroika*’ and a ‘*Thalagullistroika*’ too”, and the three friends repaired to the Jaffna Hotel down Hospital Street close by, ending their discussion on an auspicious note.

## Greetings

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## THE TAMIL NADU SCENE

# WHAT IS HAPPENING IN TAMIL NADU ?

Everything seems to be happening ! When at last peace is returning to Tamil Eelam, the theatre of violence is shifting to Tamil Nadu. The complete breakdown of law and order that the civilians in Tamil Eelam had to bear in silence during the two and a half years of **IPKF-EPRLF-ENDLF-TELO-PLOTE-RAW** rule is now threatening to become the legacy of the Tamil Nadu Chief Minister, the Tamil Nadu Police and Tamil Nadu public.

Here is a resume of events and happenings in Tamil Nadu during the month of February, reported in the Tamil Nadu Press itself.

**February 2:** 110 gold bars valued at Rs 46 lakhs were seized from a Sri Lankan Tamil in Madras. The gold bars were in the side box of a motor cycle which the Sri Lankan was riding with another person in the pillion. According to a press note by the Directorate of Revenue Intelligence, the motor cycle was intercepted on a busy city road, following a tip-off. The rider was caught and the vehicle seized, but the pillion rider escaped.

**February 3:** Strategic locations in the hitherto unguarded and placid coastline of Tamil Nadu will soon have watch-towers to monitor the clandestine arrival of arms and movements of Tamil militants. This was a major decision taken at a recent high level meeting of police officials in the wake of the large-scale find of arms and ammunition along the coast at Uchipulli near Ramanathanapuram.

**February 4:** Police vigil stepped up in Mandapam. A checkpoint has been set up near the Collectorate at Sethupathy Nagar, and every vehicle passing through, from Mandapam is checked by police for arms and ammunition.

**February 6:** Mandapam Police seized

ammunition - 23 rounds of AK 47 and 17 rounds of 9mm pistol - from a Sri Lankan Tamil, D Gouri Balan (35). He was intercepted while moving suspiciously near the Youth Hostel at Mandapam.

Eight Sri Lankan Tamil refugees killed and 19 others injured when unidentified gunmen fired at six boats near the Vedaranyam coast. While two boats reached Vedaranyam with 7 bodies and the injured, the fate of the other 4 boats was not known.

**February 7:** More than 50 Sri Lankan Tamil refugees, reportedly accompanied by some EPRLF leaders feared killed in mid-sea, when two motor boats sank off Vedaranyam coast. A 16 year old Sri Lankan youth was arrested by Customs officials in Vedaranyam forest area, with arms and ammunition, including hand grenades worth Rs 1 lakh.

**February 18: MILITANTS FIRED 200 ROUNDS:** At least 15 gunmen, suspected to be Sri Lankan Tamil militants killed two men and injured 17 in a bid to run through two police checkpoints and a road block in Ramanathapuram town. Of the two dead, one was constable Subramaniam (30). IGP Walter I Dawaram said two cars slowed down at Pattinam Kaaththan checkpoint and its occupants told the policemen to make way, saying they were in a hurry transporting medicine. They said another car would be following soon and that it too should be allowed to pass without any hindrance. The policemen however wanted to make a routine check, and one of them walked to the car. As a warning, one of its occupants uncovered an automatic rifle resting on his lap, and before the policeman could react the two vehicles sped away towards Mandapam, as did another car which followed in a few minutes.

The policemen then informed the S P Mr K Radhakrishnan and D S P Mr Seshayee who both gave chase to the three vehicles. Near Pirapanvalasai, they saw the vehicles returning. After a chase the police overtook and blocked them near a checkpoint. By then a van carrying policemen on a routine patrol arrived on the scene and parked in front of the cars. On seeing the S P and D S P approaching them, the occupants in the cars started firing their automatic rifles. Constable Subramaniam who had stepped out of the van was killed when a bullet hit his forehead. The other policemen lay on their bellies inside the van and some of them were injured. Taking advantage of the confusion, the miscreants sped off, shooting all the way running through another checkpoint and crashing past a road block.

**February 19:** The Tamil Nadu police will be trained in the use of sophisticated firearms so that they will be fully equipped to meet acts of terrorism such as that witnessed in Ramanathapuram. Addressing a press conference, Director-General of Police Mr P Dorai said the checkpoint firing incident was an eye-opener to the police, and they would be ruthless when faced with such terrorism in future. **"We have ordered our men manning the checkpoints to mean business. We will not allow gun-culture to thrive on our soil", Mr Dorai said.**

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# NAALADIYAAR

by S Sriskandarajah

Tamil language is very rich in literature and the mass of literature available today dates back to the pre-Christian era. Despite this literary heritage which has the quality of creating a salubrious effect on those that chance to have a taste of it, we expatriate Tamils are indifferent to and ignorant of this treasure. This is an unfortunate situation. Whereas constant efforts are being made in other countries to revive and resuscitate literature that is dead and moribund because the very language in which it is couched is itself dead and almost forgotten, we Tamils whose language is the most ancient in the world, perhaps with the exception of the Chinese language, continue to be so complacent as to allow the Tamil literature to become a museum piece. This is not a wholesome trend. This dangerous trend should be arrested with conscious and concerted effort directed towards creating greater awareness in our young people about our literature which besides giving us a sense of belonging also has helped us to hold fast to our moorings. We are what we are only because of our literary and cultural traditions. We will cease to be Tamils the moment we become aliens to our own literature and traditions. The source of our traditions, culture and mores is our language and literature. Hence there is an urgent need for our youth to become alive to our literature. As it is the duty of the elders to attract the attention of Tamil youth, particularly those that have been forced out of Sri Lanka as a result of the calamitous situation prevailing there, towards our literary heritage, it is proposed to give a taste of at least some pieces of such literature through these pages, starting from "Naaladiyaar" which is a work on ethics and morals comparable to the great Kural. The main body of Tamil literature is classified into two categories. One is called "Pathinen Metkanakku" and the other "Pathinen Keezhkkanakku". The former may be translated as the

Greater Eighteen Pieces and the latter Lesser Eighteen Pieces. Tamil war poems and the Tamil love poems form part of the Greater Eighteen while the Thirukkural and the Naaladiyaar are components of the Lesser Eighteen.

If the Greater Eighteen simply depict the family, social and public life of the ancient Tamils, the Lesser Eighteen illustratively demonstrate how such life could be lived usefully. In other words the Lesser Eighteen serve as a code of ethics and conduct enabling the people not to swerve from the path of rectitude and righteousness. While the Thirukkural is the peerless supreme among such ethical pieces, *Naaladiyaar* ranks next to it.

The *Naaladiyaar* is the title of a Tamil

இன்ன செயினும் விடுதற்கு அரியாரைத்  
துன்னாத்துறத்தல் தகுவதோ-துன்னருஞ்சீர்  
விண்குத்து நீள்வரை வெற்பு! களைபவோ  
கண்குத்திற்று என்று தம் கை.

The above verse is a useful and instructive verse in the *Naaladiyaar* which I have cherished from my childhood. It is an ideal and realistic balm to those whose mental eyes are instantly blinded when they are angered by others. When we are angry the faculty of reasoning recedes to the rear and the feeling of vengeance comes to the fore front. This results in our becoming temporarily insane. But as most of us fail to realize this truth *Naaladiyaar* tries to drive home this truth. It says that it does not behove us to abandon abruptly our friends just because they have acted in a manner contrary to our interests and wishes. It is human to err. But it is inhuman to hate a friend who has been nice to us all along and to whom we have been nice all these years. To illustrate this point the author of the verse employs a superb analogy. It is this. Both the hands are more than a bosom friend to a person. Life will be miserable to any person without his hands. One's brain coordinates its functions in such a way that there is

poetical book on morals having four lines to each verse and four hundred verses in all. The word *Naaladiyaar* means verses of four lines, *Naalu* meaning four, and *adi* meaning line; and *Aar* a suffix used to dignify a person or thing.

That *Naaladiyaar* is a great literary masterpiece in no way second to the Kural can be known from the well known Tamil adage

*Aalum Velum Pallukkuruthy, Naalum Irandum Sollukkuruthy*

This is to say, just as how the twigs of the banyan tree and the neem tree give firmness to the gum and teeth, the *Naaladiyaar* and the Kural will give strength and confidence to one's speech.

Let us therefore begin to have a taste of it.

hardly any confusion about the various functions performed by the various organs and limbs of the body. Even so there are occasions when our very finger pricks our eye unwittingly. The prick may be so bad as to requisition medical attention or hospital treatment. Perhaps at its worst the prick might result in the eye being left permanently blind. Still no one thinks of punishing the finger by chopping it off. For we know that it is this finger which unwittingly pricked the eye that rushes to cup the eye and to soothe the pain when the eye tears due to the prick.

Friends and colleagues must behave in the same way shown in the illustration. Conflicts do arise; misunderstandings do occur. But they should not be nursed; they should not be harboured. It is only when we forgive and forget we become great; it is then that we elevate ourselves from the ordinary rank and file.

Let us think of *Naaladiyaar* when we are tossed in the turbulent ocean of anger and vengeance.

# MUSINGS OF AN INVOLUNTARY EXILE

Thampu Visvanathan

In my first outpourings (TVI, Vol 3 No 2) I spoke of the wealth which surrounds us and suggested that each family comfortably installed in this country should think of contributing one half per cent of their gross income for the regeneration of the ravaged Tamil homelands. For a £20,000 income this would amount to only £100 per family per annum or £8.33 per month. The important decision has to be made quickly before Eelam becomes the impoverished part of Sri Lanka and vies for pride of place with the slums of Madras, Bombay and Calcutta. The Indians who did so much damage to our economy and wiped out so many of our people, especially the young, are not going to make adequate reparations for their atrocities and the destruction of homes, gardens, farms, roads and public property. Nor is the Sri Lankan government going to replace the lost belongings of our people - their jewellery, household and personal effects and so much else which were plundered by the Sri Lankan "Security" Forces prior to the Indian occupation. Aid-giving bodies of the West like OXFAM, SAVE THE CHILDREN FUND and UNICEF can only help scratch the surface. The bulk of the funds must come from the 200,000 expatriate Tamils at the rate of £1,000,000 per month. **To receive and properly utilise this large inflow of foreign money we need to have a Bank of Investment/ Reconstruction, set up and managed by our top brains, both in Sri Lanka and abroad.** Bank of Ceylon Manager Loganathan started such a project but after his untimely death we have not heard anything more about it. At one time, in the 50's and 60's, there was a large number of Tamils in top banking positions. Surely they are not all dead. Is there no way of assembling some of this talent here in London or in Eelam so that the blueprint for an Eelam Bank can be hammered out and contributions invited from our people throughout the world?

In the years I have been here there

have been scores of Arangetrams and wedding receptions. From year to year they are becoming more and more lavish occasions. Recently I was told of one Arangetram where the cost of the function - beginning with an exquisitely printed invitation and programme, hire of hall, payment for musicians, costumes, provision of refreshments, and all the other attendant expenses - was estimated at £15,000. This might be an exaggeration, but I have heard more than once that the 'going rate' for such occasions is around £10,000. At the current rate of exchange this is about Rs 700,000, enough to restore some semblance of life to devastated Kokuvil or Arialai or Nelliaddy. **Must we spend on this extravagant scale to mark the occasion of a daughter's 'coming out'?**

I spoke of weddings and the big show that is laid on. Nowadays every wedding is followed by either lunch or dinner for 300 - 500 people, not to speak of other refreshments provided on these occasions. I have no knowledge of actual expenses incurred by the parents of the bride on such occasions, but one will not be far wrong in assuming that they will run into five figures, even allowing for inflation and present high-cost trends. A wedding is a very happy occasion for not only the bridal couple but also for their families and friends as well. Nevertheless can we imagine this kind of glitter and this scale of spending back home? We ought to think seriously about these very expensive displays not only for those who put them on but also for the ones who attend them from far and near. After 1983, with such a large influx of young people into this country from Sri Lanka, weddings and parties seem to be taking place round the clock and while it is big business for the purveyors of food, drink, dresses and jewellery, I notice **there is not one hall in London owned by our community where a reception, party or meeting can take place. Is it not time that men of substance here thought of establishing a Tamil**

**Centre**, similar to the Polish Centre in Hammersmith or the many Gujarati and Punjabi centres in Wembley, Southall and Hounslow which will serve the many needs of our people?

**We are proud of the three Saivite Temples in London but one questions the judgement of their devotees in spending such large amounts of money on them.** It is said that each one of them has involved an outlay of not less than £500,000. It is good to know that devotees are so free with their giving but surely do we need such expensive places of worship? Or is this one more signal that we are here for good?

If many of us are here to stay, it is as well that places of worship are being provided, week-end Tamil schools - over 20 in London alone - are springing up everywhere, and cultural activities - Bharata Natyam, Veena, Violin, Miruthangam and Carnatic vocal music - are supported by parents. Scores of teachers have volunteered their services and Local Authorities in many Boroughs have been known to provide free classroom facilities and remuneration for the staff. For how much longer this enthusiasm and involvement will last is anybody's guess. Already there are signs of splits and factions among school teachers and governors, and managers of temples and charities.

More alarming than all of these is the growing apathy and alienation of the earlier wave of 'settlers' whose children have now grown up, often better educated than their parents and holding well-paid jobs. **If the older generation has begun to lose interest in their language, culture and customs, what hope is there for their offspring?**

*"Though the mills of God grind slowly, yet they grind exceeding small; Though with patience He stands waiting, With exactness grinds He all."*

*Longfellow's translation of Von Logan*

## MEDIA EXCERPTS

### UPTURN IN SRI LANKA



Tamil National Army men detained by LTTE in Vavuniya

The Tamil-Tamil problem has been resolved in six of the eight districts of the North-east province from which the IPKF has already withdrawn. The LTTE, acknowledged by all to be the strongest and most popular among the Tamil militants, has destroyed the Citizens Volunteer Force and Tamil National Army raised by the IPKF on behalf of the EPRLF Provincial Government and taken over the administration.

**So long as the LTTE does not proclaim Eelam or push federalism to the point of challenging Sri Lankan sovereignty, Colombo should be able to live with the situation.**

It may be argued that the EPRLF and its armed cadres could earlier retreat to Jaffna and Trincomalee but now have nowhere to go when the IPKF withdraws from these areas. Unless a ceasefire is organised it must therefore stand and fight. Another alternative is that the EPRLF leadership will move out with the IPKF either to Colombo or to India until passions cool. The CVF-TNA rank and file might by and large volunteer to join the LTTE which should be glad to accept them with open arms. In other words, the LTTE could take over the entire North and East and write a devolution package within the framework of Sri Lankan unity and integrity. **So long as the LTTE does not proclaim Eelam or push federalism to the point of challenging Sri Lankan sovereignty, Colombo should be able to live with the situation.** Many will argue that this scenario is too good to be true and that if the LTTE goes along with any such scheme it would only be to get the IPKF out, consolidate its hold and then proclaim Eelam. Nothing is to be ruled out. This could happen and would immediately provoke civil war as the government in Colombo would perforce react strongly. However, even if the LTTE adopts such a manoeuvre, the ploy might not work as intended once peace breaks out. Time too is a great healer. It brings reconciliation. **Eelam could become a receding objective if all of Sri Lanka becomes Eelam in unity and equal opportunity -and a**

large number of Tamils live outside the North and East. Likewise, the Sinhalese might discover that federalism is not tantamount to separatism and that Sri Lanka emerges stronger for devolution not only in the North-east but in the Southern provinces where, already, one Sinhala chief minister has been heard protesting that devolution is moving too slowly. Devolution is good for all, for it will bring access and participation in governance and accountability to many more at many levels.

Many Sinhalese, we are told, have accepted devolution or federalism intellectually though not yet emotionally. Yet, the bitter civil strife of the past few years has been a painful education and **Sinhalese are coming to realise that federalism cannot and will not diminish the lofty concept of Dhammadvipa. Bloodshed will.**

The proposed referendum to confirm or undo the "temporary merger" of the North and East has twice been postponed by the President. The Tamils should have no difficulty winning the North. But there are in the Eastern Province substantial Sinhalese and Muslim populations. Should these combine, the verdict in the East could be open to question. Should Amparai be excised and the Muslims in the East be accorded a special status by general consent, the referendum could conceivably be dropped as a *quid pro quo*.

This leaves over the problem in the South. The killing of Rohana Wijeweera and certain others has crippled the JVP for the moment but far from eliminated it. Its cadres have since been hunted down and massacred by vigilante squads which are widely believed to be a euphemism for the security forces and the armed guards liberally provided to MPs, MLAs and other VIPs at state expense. Human rights groups have deplored these killings and Western aid donors have also made known their concern to the Sri Lankan Government.



Tigers in no mood for compromise

It will take time for the JVP to regroup. The interregnum, which could run to years rather than months, must be used to win back the youth. But without social equity and economic opportunity the battle will be lost. A Youth Commission has just reported and these concerns appear to rank high on the President's agenda. Finally, the Indian



connection. It cannot be the IPKF's role either to ensure a satisfactory devolution package or its implementation. This is for the Sri Lankans to settle internally. As part of the Treaty, or otherwise, India should participate in a "post-war" reconstruction programme to rebuild the Island's shattered infrastructure and economy in the North-East and South and create the jobs and opportunities that will cut at the roots of ethnic and social discontent. [B G Verghese in *Indian Express*, Madras February 9, 1990]

## A FAILED STRATEGY

**According to Mahathaya, the LTTE is talking to the Government from a position of strength and would "depend on its own strength if the Sri Lankan Government betrays it".**

The LTTE, however, is in no mood for compromise with anybody, as its deputy leader, Ajit Mahathaya, made clear to a group of journalists recently in Vavuniya. The Tigers are flush with the triumphant feeling of having fought and survived the IPKF for two years, and are convinced that it is they who managed to drive the IPKF back. Now in their moment of victory they are in no mood to compromise with the "quisling forces" of the EPRLF, the ENDLF, the TELO and the PLOTE, who collaborated with the "occupation army." Once the IPKF leaves and the TNA disintegrates, the LTTE plans to contest the Provincial Council elections and come to power. What the Tigers will do then is an open question, and the leaders only say it all depends on how much the Sri Lankan Government is willing to concede to them.

According to Mahathaya, the LTTE is talking to the Government from a position of strength and would "depend on its own strength if the Sri Lankan Government betrays it." The question is what the LTTE will consider to

be a betrayal. The Tigers have not given up their demand for a separate state but have said they are not going to raise it immediately; instead they are waiting to see how the Sri Lankan Government responds to their demands in the post withdrawal phase.

The real test will probably come once the LTTE comes to power in the Provincial Council and begins to negotiate for greater autonomy and also for one of the fundamental demands of the Tamils, the permanent merger of the north and the east. If the Sri Lankan Government can manage its relations with the LTTE during this phase, which should begin around the middle of this year, then there is hope for the future. If not, the stage will be set for a new phase in the struggle for a separate Tamil state. [Thomas Abraham - Frontline, Feb 3-16, 1990]

## PEACE

India's jawans are returning in dribs and drabs from a war that seems to have little meaning for them. The cost has been high for the longest war that Indian troops have fought in recent times: more than 1,000 dead, thousands more wounded, many of them crippled for life, and crores of rupees invested into a military and political operation - one that has lost us friends in the neighbourhood and respect in the world.

There is little that the new Government can do but accept the ground realities of the failure of India's Sri Lankan policy. It has done so by organising talks between Tamil Nadu Chief Minister M Karunanidhi and the LTTE. Negotiations on the Tamil issue in Sri Lanka have gone on for years now without any settlement. It would be unrealistic to expect another accord soon, but a scaling down of the violence would signal a new start. [*Illustrated Weekly of India*, Jan 14, 1990]

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# THE ROLE OF BUDDHISM IN SRI LANKA

Lt Col Anton J N Selvadurai

"The authentic history of the island of Sri Lanka begins with the conversion of the people to Buddhism" - so says historian S Paranavitana. In the 3rd century BC King Asoka of India sent his son, Mahinda Thero, to spread the Theravada doctrine of Buddhism.

## MAHINDA PREACHED IN TAMIL

According to legend, Mahinda met King Devanampiya Tissa in the forest at Mihintale, while the King was hunting deer. He had a discourse with the King and spoke to the people of Anuradhapura the next day; they were almost immediately converted. Mahinda came from Bengal; so it is interesting to know in what language he communicated with the people. He obviously spoke to them in their own language. The people of the island originated from South India and came in their catamarans across the Palk Straits - which was only 20 miles wide - long before the arrival of Vijaya in the 5th century BC. There is archaeological evidence of a Dravidian megalithic civilisation, common with that of South India, which is about 5,000 years old. The Aryans who came with Vijaya - the so-called progenitor of the Sinhalese race - were comparatively few in number and by now would have learnt the common language and therefore understood Mahinda. He was also responsible for spreading his faith in South India before he arrived in Sri Lanka and would have been proficient in Tamil, which was also the common language in Sri Lanka at that time.

## A PLURAL SOCIETY

In the early days of Buddhism, Sri Lanka was a plural society, consisting of several autonomous dynasties. There were Tamils, Sinhalese, Telugus, Keralites and Kanarese everywhere fighting one another from time to time, depending on where they were and who paid most. It was quite common for Sinhala kings (Sri Lankan Kings actually) to get assistance from their royal relatives in South India. The use of South Indian mercenaries was quite common and these people, together with the millions through the ages who came across, were duly absorbed and added on to the local mixed population. Because they were mainly Buddhists at the time there was no problem and that is how the Sinhala population increased to its present majority status. In invit-

ing the IPKF Ex-President Jayewardene - whose grandfather was Tamil - merely did what his ancient predecessors did. So it is evident that whatever little Aryan introduction there was at the time, had been just a "drop in the ocean" and thoroughly diluted by the Dravidians. In fact it is the Hindu Brahmins who are supposed to be the direct descendants of the original Aryans.

## WANING OF BUDDHISM

A few centuries after Asoka's death, Buddhism waned in South India and was replaced by the original Hinduism. The North and East of Sri Lanka, because of their close connections with South India, followed likewise. However, in the South, also because of their close connections to the Buddhists of Burma, Thailand and Cambodia, Buddhism remained steadfast. The Buddhist religion helped in the development of the Sinhala language by the absorption of Pali and Sanskrit and Tamil of Buddhist literature. The waning of Buddhism and the revival of Hinduism naturally caused a polarisation, with Hindu Tamils in the North and East and Sinhala Buddhists in the South and rest of the island. So it would be logical to assume that, had there been no introduction of Buddhism into the island, there would not have been this polarisation and the people would have remained Hindus, as they were before conversion to Buddhism. It is because of Buddhism that the Sinhalese in the South stood out separately as a separate race - although by now they had lost their Aryan connection - that the country was divided into Sinhalese and Tamil. Had there been no Buddhism, there would not have been a Mahavamsa, which is now having such a chauvinistic and jingoistic effect on the Sinhala Buddhist majority, who consider the Hindu Tamils as their traditional enemies and foreigners. The myth of the Vijayan hero and their so-called Aryan ancestry had to be kept going to hold them together and boost their morale, although there is more Aryan influence in the Hindu religion and Hindu culture.

## SINHALA A MONASTIC LANGUAGE

The Sinhala language, before European colonisation in the 16th century, was a monastic language and confined

mainly to the temples. The language of the kings' courts and administration was Tamil. The last four kings of Kandy had Tamil as the language of the courts and that is why the peace treaty with the British in 1815, was signed by the King and his Adigars in Tamil. It is because of this that Sinhala struggled for expression in the day-to-day administration, when it was made the only official language in 1956. I am happy to state that now Sinhala is considered a virile and eloquent medium of expression for the complexities of modern thought.

## THE ABUSE AND EXPLOITATION OF BUDDHISM

King Asoka used the principle of "Dhammavijaya", i.e. conquering not by force of arms but by the Dhamma. All the suffering and dislocation of the Tamil nation could have been avoided if this principle had been used. But instead the Machiavellian twins - Bandaranaike and Jayewardene - used "Dhammadukkha" which is just the opposite, to sow hatred and divide the country. They abused the Dhamma and exploited it to serve their own ends, tricking the people into believing that the end justifies the means, and failing to realise that the means you use determine the end you reach in the karmic cycle of Buddhist belief.

## ROLE OF BUDDHISM TODAY

So what is the use of Buddhism today? Is it playing a role that Lord Buddha intended? Surely pacific Buddhism is not like militant Islam? Did Asoka realise the damage he was going to do to our island paradise in dividing it and making it internationally notorious for its cruelty and human rights violations and causing the fleeing of over 500,000 Tamils?

## CONCLUSION

So we can come to the only logical conclusion, that had Buddhism not been introduced into Sri Lanka, we would not have had these racial and linguistic problems caused by a religious divide.

*"Necessity is the plea for every infringement of human freedom. It is the argument of tyrants; it is the creed of slaves"*

William Pitt

# IPKF WAS A MONUMENTAL FAILURE

A P Venkateswaran, ex Foreign Secretary of India

The change of leadership at the Centre in India provides an opportunity to repair the damage and rebuild our relations. **The very first thing for us to understand is that the Tamil speaking people in Sri Lanka are citizens of that country, and not in our charge. Often, there has been a tendency to overlook this vital fact when responding to developments in that island state. It stands to reason, accordingly, that it does not lie with India to guarantee "the independence, unity and security of Sri Lanka", as erroneously assumed by the late Mrs Indira Gandhi while making a statement in the Indian Parliament. Similar grandiose claims by countries more powerful than ours have been proven wrong over the years. The solemn responsibility for looking after its interests and the rights of its citizens, whether ethnically Tamils or Sinhalese, can vest only in the Government of Sri Lanka.**

Turning to the ethnic question, tension between the Tamils and the Sinhalese has been endemic to Sri Lanka politics. The Tamil-speaking people constitute nearly one-fifth of the population on the island and may be classified into three categories. Contrary to the general impression, the history of the Tamils in Sri Lanka goes back over two millennia which was also, significantly enough, a period of conflict between the then existing Sinhalese and Tamil kingdoms. The subduing of King Elara by Dutugemunu makes Sinhalese hearts swell with pride even to this day. The Tamils are, therefore, as much the original inhabitants of Sri Lanka, as any body else.

Then, there are the descendants of those Tamils who had settled in Jaffna, at the time the Chola empire had flourished in southern India. These two groups of Tamils of ancient descent number 1.8 million, or 12.6 per cent of the total population in Sri Lanka of around 15 million. The plantation Tamils come next and are relatively recent phenomena. Their number is 0.825 million or 5.6 per cent



of the population, and they work in the tea estates located in the central highlands. Last, but not the least, there are the Moors numbering one million people and constituting 7 per cent of the population. Although the Moors claim a separate identity and are encouraged to do so by the Sri Lankan authorities, who follow the policy of "divide and rule", there is no gainsaying the fact that they speak the Tamil language and, accordingly, should be classified as Tamils. Proceeding on that basis, the total Tamil-speaking population in Sri Lanka would then come to 25 per cent of the total.

A quantum jump in the intensification of ethnic tensions in Sri Lanka took place in 1958 when J R Jayewardene organised a march from Colombo to the Temple of the Tooth in Kandy to protest against the Bandaranaike - Chelvanayagam Pact of July 27, 1957, which provided many facilities to the Tamils that had been earlier denied to them, on one pretext or the other. The facilities included the following:

- (i) Recognition of Tamil as the language of the national minority and for administrative purposes in the northern and eastern provinces.
- (ii) Grant of citizenship to the plantation labour.
- (iii) Northern and eastern provinces would be permitted to amalgamate.
- (iv) Power to the regional councils would be delegated by Parliament and could include a host of subjects, namely, agriculture cooperatives; lands and land development; colon-

isation; education; health; industries; housing; social services; water schemes etc.

(v) Land colonisation schemes would be decided by the regional council.

Seen against this context, the devolution of powers under the Indo-Sri Lanka Agreement of 29 July, 1987, was by no means the dramatic breakthrough that it had been made out to be, particularly considering that a number of these areas are yet to be defined in detail. And, moreover, the motivation for concluding the agreement over the heads of the Tamil groups involved in the struggle, still remains suspect. One reason for the haste was, undoubtedly, the erroneous perception of the previous Indian government that the ethnic struggle in Sri Lanka could have a spill-over effect in Tamil Nadu and promote a secessionist movement there as well. Another reason was the desire to achieve instant success and an unwillingness to allow the situation to ripen. Yet another contributing factor was a mixing up of the cause and effect, and expecting that the LTTE would also fall in line, like the other militant groups. And, most ironic of all, no one on the Indian side seemed to have asked as to why in 1987 the self same President J R Jayewardene who had led the Kandy march was prepared to offer, even if only on paper, much more than he had been willing to do only a few weeks earlier.

Time presses on and the situation prevailing today in Sri Lanka is by no means the most propitious. Nonetheless, there is no alternative to pulling out the IPKF according to the announced schedule and to leave it to the Sinhalese and the Tamils to sort out matters as best as they can in the existing circumstances. It is just possible that, with some luck, President Premadasa may be able to pull it off, despite Sri Lanka appearing to teeter on the verge of anarchy. The decimation of the JVP and the death of many of its top leaders under the onslaught of the security forces hold out hope

*continued on page 23*

# SWEET & SOUR

by SOURPUSS

While the odd Samys and Swamys of Tamil Nadu, the Cho Ramasamys, the T R Ramasamys and Subramaniam Swamys have been puffing it out all these years trying to discredit the now legendary "Tiger" supremo Mr Velupillai Prabhakaran and his courageous cadres with threadbare criticisms and distortions of truth, aided and abetted by a few of their clan in the Madras newspapers, the rest of the world, including Tamil Nadu and Sri Lanka, is leaving them far behind.

**Asia Week**, published in Hong Kong, in its issue of January 26, carries on its cover a striking colour study of a Tamil Tiger guerilla with the headline - *Tiger Country: Sri Lanka's New Order*. Inside is an "Eye Witness" pictorial feature spread over eight pages with some dramatic close-ups in colour by Dominic Sansoni. The internationally circulated American **Time** magazine in its issue of February 12, carries a report on Sri Lanka under the title - *Back Roar The Tigers*. "Undisputed control: Tigers riding a ferry near Batticaloa on the east coast", says the caption of a photograph. "Time of the Tigers", says the headline in the **Far Eastern Economic Review** of January 25. "Sri Lanka Tamils Retaking Territory", said the **New York Times** of January 8, headlining a dispatch by correspondent Barbara Crossette. "Sri Lanka Guerrillas Complete Humiliation of Delhi Peace-Keeping Force", said **The Times**, London of January 3. "Doomed in Sri Lanka", said the editorial in the **Statesman**, Delhi, referring to Mr Perumal's fate. "IPKF was a monumental failure", was the headline of an article by former Indian Foreign Secretary Mr A P Venkateswaran in the **Sunday Observer**, Bombay, of January 21. Not to be outdone by all these, the Lanka Guardian, the radical fortnightly in Colombo edited by Sri Lanka's best-known journalist Mervyn de Silva, voted LTTE leader V Prabhakaran as the "Man of the Decade", while carrying his picture on the cover.

Says Mr Mervyn de Silva in the inside piece under the title "Prabhakaran: The Eye of the Storm" - "... As we look back then to the 1980's, and study the decade as a whole, we are inclined to concede primacy to the Tamil threat to the unity, and indirectly the sovereignty of Sri Lanka. **In that struggle, there is one commanding personality, the LTTE supremo Velupillai Prabhakaran, regarded by many western experts as leader of one of the toughest guerilla organisations in the world, and by military analysts as a "genius" in the theory of unconventional warfare. At least one Sri Lankan politician, now at the pinnacle of power, is on record as saying that he might have been an excellent choice as the island's army commander. Though a mere aside, it was no frivolous jest.**" High praise indeed, coming from pol-

iticians and intellectuals from the other side of the ethnic fence in Sri Lanka. The fact is that Prabhakaran is now a folk hero not only in the eyes of the Eelam Tamils, but also in the eyes of the overwhelming number of genuine Tamils in Tamil Nadu, as well as a large cross-section of Sinhalese people themselves ! It is therefore a case of "while the dogs bark, the caravan moves on."

\* \* \* \* \*

Sri Lankan Foreign Minister Ranjan Wijeratne is fast becoming the most quotable politician in international dealings. Calling a spade a spade is not the customary way in which international business is conducted, because diplomacy is supposed to go along with a lot of deceit, double-talk, dishonesty and sweet unreasonableness. But the trouble with Ranjan is that he sometimes calls a spade a sword as well, as when he described Amnesty International as "another terrorist movement"! That of course was a misguided missile on his part. Barring that, while purists and hypocrites might take objection to his style and usage of the English language, it must be said to his credit that he brings a lot of fresh air into public life with his candid, off-the-cuff *obiter dicta*, which naturally shock a lot of people who prefer to sweep all dirt under the carpet. At an all-party conference chaired by President Premadasa in Colombo on February 13, Mr Wijeratne was answering an allegation by Tamil Congress member Motilal Nehru that over a hundred "innocent" Tamil youths had been rounded up in and around Colombo. Mr Wijeratne replied that the youths had been rounded up, some with arms and ammunition, following intelligence reports. Some Sinhalese and Muslim youths were also among them. The minister said that he has issued orders to take action against "any dicey character" irrespective of the community he belonged to. Speaking to journalists after the meeting, Mr Wijeratne said: "These RAW fellows (meaning the Research and Analysis Wing, the Indian counterpart of CIA and KGB) are trying to destabilise our country. We will smash them out of sight." Later, when asked about the Indian High Commission's denial of the charge, he retorted: "I am not accusing the High Commission. They (High Commission) can deny if they please." Asked whether the Sri Lanka Government has lodged a formal protest against the RAW with New Delhi, Mr Wijeratne replied: "I do not waste time in protesting. I catch them first." (*Times of India*, February 16). In December last year, he described Indian bureaucrats as "a pack of liars", not an entirely inaccurate description as those who had followed the Indian bureaucracy's bungling under Rajiv Gandhi would have testified. Had he said: "The bureaucrats sometimes indulge in terminological inexactitudes", that would have sounded better in diplomatic language, but then look at the sheer waste of Her Majesty's English language !

\* \* \* \* \*

What was all this big ha-ho about a bloodbath in North-East Sri Lanka after the IPKF is withdrawn, and the threatened tide of refugees flooding into Tamil Nadu ? Let us look at the facts first. One sees neither blood nor a

flood; neither in Tamil Eelam areas nor in Tamil Nadu. **In one of the biggest ironies of history, the progressive withdrawal of a Peace- Keeping Force is bringing peace to all the areas they had vacated.** Trains and buses are plying between Colombo and Jaffna. Offices are open for five days in a week instead of three. Traffic on the road has increased. People are moving about in Jaffna with an air of freedom. A Jaffna Tamil weekly, the **Thisai**, reported recently that the Jaffna folks are now able to see some of the areas in their own Jaffna after a period of several years; areas like the vicinity of the old Dutch Fort (once occupied by the Sri Lankan army, later by the IPKF), the Muniappar Kovil, Pannai causeway, the Ashoka Hotel environs where the EPRLF once had their headquarters under heavy IPKF protection. So where is the predicted bloodbath? In fact, the killings not only in the North-East but also in the South have come down to near-zero.

Let us now look at the tall stories about a new refugee influx into Tamil Nadu. Between July 1983 and July 1987 there was an estimated 130,000 Eelam Tamil refugees, 29,000 of them in the camps. Out of the one lakh refugees outside the camps, at least 60 - 70,000 never left India, and they are still there. Practically all the camp refugees were sent back, some of them unwillingly, more than a year ago. Today, the so-called new "influx" consists of about 2,800 persons at the Mandapam camp (Indian Express, February 8), and about 380 at the Kottapattu camp in the Trichy district, which make a total of 3,180. Over a period of four months, does this mean an influx, let alone a flood? Anyway who are these "refugees"? A majority of these "refugees" are in the age group of 16 to 30 years, most of them suspected to be fleeing cadres belonging to ENDLF, TELO, and possibly EPRLF. Many of them are seen with gold chains and rings and are apparently not short of Indian money. Some of them confess that they belong to some group or other, but some of them don't. Inspector General of Police, A Rajmohan, who visited the Mandapam Camp told **The Sunday Mail**, Madras - February 18: "As such we have to depend only on what the refugee says. If he says he is a militant, we accept it and if he says he is not, we can only enter him in the records as an ordinary refugee."

There is an English saying: "There is a sucker born every minute." In India apparently there is a sucker born every second, for otherwise how does one explain the statement made by Subramaniam Swamy at a Trichy press conference on February 8 (**Indian Express**, Madurai edition, February 9) that "according to his information, already 50,000 Tamils had arrived as refugees in Rameswaram and he was afraid that this figure might go up to two lakhs in about a month"! For Dr Swamy to say that, for the **Indian Express to publish that, and for both of them to expect the readers to believe it, there is surely something wrong somewhere. Either Dr Swamy's head should be examined by some qualified brain specialist, or the Indian Express must carry an apology to its readers for lending its columns for the dissemination of such blatant falsehoods.** And to think that the poor Mahatma Gandhi lived all his life in upholding Truth

among his countrymen! It is depressing.

\* \* \* \* \*

Reporters ask questions and politicians give answers; that we know. Between sessions of the DMK's sixth state conference in Trichy, newsmen asked Tamil Nadu Chief Minister M Karunanidhi to comment on some statements made by Dr Subramaniam Swamy. "Who is this Swami? in which party is he now?" asked the CM in turn. As good an answer as possible under the circumstances. Let us thank the **Indian Express** at least for carrying that as a special item.

\* \* \* \* \*

Twice Prime Minister of Sri Lanka and half-responsible along with her husband in bringing ruin to that beautiful island country, (credit for the other half must go to Junius Jayewardene), the now visibly aged Mrs Srimavo Bandaranaike was recently on a Hindu pilgrimage in India. And what a pilgrimage! Not a question of Tirupati Venkateshwara or the Madurai Meenakshi. She did not spare the seashore Tiruchendur temple of Sri Subramaniaswamy, and what is more she even paid obeisance before the Paramacharya of Kancheepuram and sought the blessings of His Holiness. She was accompanied by her son Anura Bandaranaike, whose birthday it happened to be. She later left for Tiruttani to perform Abishekam at the Subramaniaswamy temple. Earlier she had visited Swamimalai near Kumbakonam and worshipped Swaminathaswamy. It is obvious that Mrs B reserves her Buddhism for politics, but for spirituality she turns to Hinduism!

\* \* \* \* \*

## TAILPIECE

Why is it that wherever Mr Jyotindra Nath Dixit serves as India's envoy in a neighbouring country, India's relations with that country worsen? Under his posting in Colombo in Sri Lanka not only Indo-Sri Lanka relations, but also Indo-Eelam Tamil relations hit rock bottom. Now, within a few months of his accreditation to Islamabad in Pakistan, Indo-Pakistan relations have suddenly taken a nose-dive! What is the man's secret?

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# DEVELOPMENT OF EELAM

Dr Arjuna Sittampalam, International Tamil Foundation

With the possibility of peace dawning in Eelam, future development becomes a topical issue. This article addresses a few issues that should be considered. It is non-political in that it applies irrespective of whether Eelam is within or without the Sri Lankan framework in the long term.

**Two distinct stages of development need to be identified.** The first consists of rehabilitation, recovery and short term projects, and the second involves identifying long term goals and needs. Short term plans have to be driven by the need to ensure that the population is assured of the basic necessities of life, such as food, clothing, shelter, health care and freedom from fear. Nevertheless, short term plans also need to bear in mind long term goals. This article is concerned with the latter.

We need to think about what kind of society is desired. There are two distinct visions. One involves our harking back to our past and establishing a simple village based society, largely self-sufficient, but lacking industrial and technological sophistication. The other involves establishing a society that ultimately aims at taking its place among the foremost in the world. Mahatma Gandhi, for instance, was in favour of the simple, homespun, village based society. Retreating into simplicity is not consistent with the proud heritage of the Tamils, who could, perhaps, claim descent from one of the oldest civilisations in the world, the Mohenjadaro and Harappa civilisations. These civilisations, more than 5000 years old, are believed to have been Dravidian in origin. Even more recently, the Cholas, the Seras and the Pandyas have won glories for the Tamil speaking people. Intellectual disciplines such as chess and mathematics have been traced back in their early stages to the Indian sub-continent. Many other nations would be proud to have the Tamils' cultural heritage, and philosophical contributions such as Thirukkural are to be admired even in a global context. Overall, the case is very strong for saying that the heritage of the Tamils



is far too glorious to contemplate retreating into a backward sheltered village culture.

Recent events underline this very heavily. For most of this century, Tamils have been "emigrating" from Eelam to Colombo, Malaysia and, more recently, the West. Has this emigration taken place purely for economic reasons? The evidence does not warrant this conclusion. The fact is that Tamils have always prized education, and taken great pains to acquire it, but have lacked opportunity within the confines of Eelam to apply their knowledge. Though higher incomes have been part of the story, it would have been the wider opportunities elsewhere to apply their education and skills that lured many. A retreat into a village culture would only accelerate this brain drain, and Tamil Eelam will never be a viable entity. Continued emigration is, in fact, a very major threat to the concept of Eelam. It is, perhaps, a much more potent threat in the long term than the political and military disputes that have scarred the island in recent times. It is in human nature to seek challenge, stimulation and new experiences. Eelam needs to avoid the fate of being deprived continuously of its brighter and more dynamic talent, ultimately becoming like Cornwall or Wales, merely places to have holidays in.

The achievements of the Tamil Tigers

add force to these arguments. Whether one supports them or not, their **willingness to sacrifice their lives for a cause ranks among one of the highest human ideals. More generally, the willingness of large numbers of Tamils to undergo enormous suffering for the sake of their beliefs refutes the previous image of Tamils as a decadent race, merely content with safe middle-class jobs.** What is also interesting is their command of technology demonstrated in the military sphere in recent years. It is difficult to see a society that nurtured such people, drawn from all classes, settling down to a simple existence.

Therefore, if a self-sustaining society in Eelam is desired, an environment must be created which encourages the cleverest and most advanced thinkers, and the most energetic and dynamic do-ers, to remain there. Instead of sharing the fate of Wales and Cornwall, Eelam must look instead at Ireland and Scotland. The Irish, with their sovereign status, and the Scots, within the United Kingdom framework, both come across as credible nations. A look around the world reinforces these arguments. The Japanese and the Russians have come a long way in a short time by placing emphasis on catching up with, or even overtaking, the latest developments of advanced societies; not by retreating into rural culture. India and China, too, have won respect by establishing international reputations in many fields.

Two other issues are relevant. One is the desirable extent of globalisation, and the other the role of English. Today, the whole globe is becoming one village with cheaper communications and air travel, and the spread of television. This has many positive aspects. Many people's lives are enriched by greater awareness and appreciation of foreign cultures. Nevertheless, negative features too abound. There is the danger of excessive cultural homogeneity leading to a boringly uniform world, and a threatening loss of identity every-

where. The proliferation of anonymous hotels and faceless office blocks typifies the danger. Careful consideration needs to be given to the co-existence of global (formerly known as Western) and Tamil cultures. Though our culture should not be swamped, it cannot remain frozen in the past either. Remember that cultural habits are often the product of economic circumstances of the day. The role of English also needs close attention. It is no longer just the language of Tamils' former colonial masters. It is the language of international diplomacy, finance and commerce, which people the world over are striving to learn.

Formerly, only the West or the Soviet Bloc countries were available as models of development in the context of advanced technological societies. In the last 10 or 20 years, however, advanced development has spread to other parts of the world, such as the Pacific Basin. Countries in this region seem to be pulling off the trick of acquiring international status while preserving their own culture. If Tamils are determined enough, they can achieve similar high respect, but they need to devise a Tamil solution, and not ape an American, Japanese or Russian solution.

The \$64,000 question, of course, is how such an advanced society can be established. Eelam is too small and lacks natural resources to achieve this on a self-sustaining basis. An obvious answer is to emulate the Japanese, who exported their way to advanced nation status in spite of being a resource starved nation.

However, export success is easier talked about than achieved. There are many requirements to be fulfilled before a country or region can gear itself to exports, foremost among which is an adequate infrastructure. A good seaport, an airport acceptable to international businessmen and a good road network feeding into both would be advantageous. So would the existence of modern telecommunication facilities. Currently, many of these infra-structure requirements are geared towards Colombo being the main export centre. While this situation prevails, export industries are more likely to thrive in areas closer to Colombo than in the remote North-

East. It is worth noting that the development of an export based economy in the arid North makes sense whether Sri Lanka consists of one sovereign state or two. The creation of an adequate infra-structure in the North-East concerns regional economics rather than issues of sovereignty.

Human resource development must also be aimed at export success. The education system needs to cater for the export industries. This of course should not imply concentration purely on practical skills. A society that does not encourage pure scholarship for its own sake is narrow minded, lacks vision and idealism and would be stultifying. Nevertheless, the bias must be towards development of export orientated skilled labour and managerial talents. Of course, the pool of skills which is developed must never be too far ahead of available opportunities; otherwise Eelam will continue to export people instead of goods and services. It is interesting to study the Japanese experience. Their export success in the 50's was geared towards cheap goods such as textiles. In the 60's they moved towards steel; in the 70's they conquered the automobile markets and in the 80's they started rivalling and even surpassing the US in some areas of advanced technology.

What are the likely export markets? In most parts of the world, the nearest neighbours are the first port of call for budding exporters. In addition to the traditional markets in the West, the possibilities in the newly emerging economies of the Pacific basin must not be overlooked. Eelam does have the advantage of having expatriates all over, from nearby India to the distant US, who would be familiar with local conditions and able to advise potential exporters. The more enterprising expatriates should think in terms of forming joint ventures with those back home.

What types of exports are possible? Obviously not natural resources. Heavy industry is out of the question. Eelam is too small to be competitive in a crowded world market. **Light industry is the best bet, but market research and intelligence would be required for a more specific focus.** High tech industries

such as electronics, computing and software are perhaps likely candidates, but dedication to quality and excellence, precise awareness of market niches and effective marketing strategies would be pre-requisites. Singapore is probably a useful model for Eelam to learn from. A likely path to success would involve attracting multinationals to invest here for ongoing exports.

While aiming for advanced status, some negative aspects of the Western experience have to be avoided. One such is excessive materialism. Spiritual values need to be preserved. The rootlessness and breakdown of family relationships, excessive stress and a growing need for psychiatric treatment are all aspects of progress Eelam can do without.

Another cost of excessive development is environmental pollution, a very topical global issue. Instead of blindly following western footsteps, economic progress should aim at preserving the land for future generations. In addition to widely discussed global problems, Eelam's special concerns such as maintenance of adequate fresh water supplies have to be looked at.

Eelam cannot become an exporting state overnight. Minimising imports must also be a priority. Obvious areas are in agriculture and fishing where efforts must be devoted to maximising productivity using all the latest techniques. Many estates and farms tend to be run conservatively, which is not surprising as agricultural populations the world over tend to resist change. Better education would obviously help.

The above programme has to await the dawn of peace, and even then, be subject to the will of the population. But debate must begin on the true aspirations of the people of Eelam. This article only identifies some issues and arguments. **It is for those living in Eelam to decide, and for expatriates to help.** Whichever path is chosen, the task ahead is gigantic. However, without lapsing into despair, Eelam can draw encouragement from Germany and Japan, who have recovered from the ravages of the second world war to become leading economies in the world today.

## PEOPLE AND EVENTS

### WEDDINGS

**Pathmanathan**, son of Mr & Mrs Sabapathy of 56 Hindu College Lane, Vannar Pannai, Jaffna, and **Logambikai**, daughter of Mr & Mrs Kumarasamy of 122/10 Point Pedro Rd, Anaippanthy, Jaffna at the Oshwal Hall, 1 Campbell Road, Croydon on 31 January.

**Jude Amalaraj**, son of late Mr S F Antonimuthu and of Mrs M Antonimuthu, Unit 1, 95 Marhatten Hts, Glendene, Auckland 8, New Zealand, and **Naomi Shirani**, daughter of late Mr S N Winslow and of Mrs K Winslow of Trincomalee, presently of Flat 2, 31 Milton Rd, London W7 1LQ at St Joseph's Church, Hanwell on 17 January.

**Ranjit**, son of Dr & Mrs C Perumal Pillai, 41 1/1 Gregory's Rd, Colombo 7, and **Vasuhi**, daughter of late Dr P Nadarajah and of Mrs Sarasvathy Nadarajah, 7 Clavering Av, London SW13 9DX at Ganapathy Temple, Wimbledon on 27 January.

**Cooma**, son of Mr & Mrs K V Chelliah, 1/46 Garabella St, Kirbilli, NSW 2061, Australia, and **Nalini**, daughter of late Mr K Mahadeva and of Mrs Mahadeva, 69 Streatfield Rd, Harrow, Middx HA3 9BP at Ealing Town Hall on 4 February.

### DEATHS



Born: 26.6.49 Died: 13.2.90

**Sobhana**, wife of K Singam (691, Whitton Ave West, Greenford) and daughter of late Mr N Rajaratnam (Principal, Technical College Maradana) and of Mrs Rajaratnam of G Block, Govt Flats, Bambalapitiya, on 13 February. Cremation at Golders Green Crematorium on 17 February attended by a large number of friends, relatives and colleagues. She leaves behind Daughter Rohini, Son Shankar, Brother Balamohan, Ontario, Canada, Sisters Dr Chandraprabha Ravindren (Scotland) and Mrs Suryakala Shanmuganathan (Qatar).

**SJ Kadirgamar**, QC, at Apollo Hospital, Madras on 13 February. Cremation Colombo 15 February. He leaves behind his wife Sarojini (daughter of late Dr & Mrs S L Navaratnam), daughter Sakuntala (wife of Indeesa Rajasingham, World Bank, Washington DC), son Arjuna (U N, New York), sister Iswari Richards and brother Lakshman. 17 Queen's Rd, Colombo 3.

**Padmini ARULRAJAH** (47) on December 30 in Vaddukodai. Wife of T Arulrajah (Canada), daughter of late Mr & Mrs Edwin Samuel (Navaly), sister of Edwin, Merwin & Solomon (USA), Pamela Beadle (Navaly) and Vinothini Paul (Vaddukodai).

**Chandra KULENDRAN** (40) on February 19 in Strasbourg. Wife of Jothy Kulendran, mother of Gehan (7) and Priscilla (3), daughter of late Mr & Mrs Alfred Jesudasan. 28, Puevecquerel, 67200 Strasbourg, France.

**V K SABARATNAM** (74) on February 20 in Hounslow. Husband of Gnanambihai, father of Nanthakumar (Manitoba), Dr Arulkumar (S'pore), Ratnakumar (Ontario), Gnanakumar (Alberta) and Sreekumar (UK). 3 Sandra Close, Hounslow, Middx

**KADIRGAMANATHAN JEGANATHAN** (Chief Human Rights Officer, Province of Nova Scotia, Canada) husband of Sundari and brother of Dr Padmanathan, Ranganathan, Kausa

Balasubramaniam and Lalita Mahendran died at Halifax, Nova Scotia 11th February. "Dwaraka", Kacheri Road, Jaffna

### FORTHCOMING EVENTS

April 13, 12 noon - 2pm Good Friday Meditations - London Tamil Congregation, Putney Methodist Church, London SW15

April 14 Tamil New Year

April 15 3.45pm Easter Service - L T C, Putney M C, London SW15

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By **S. Sivanayagam**

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## ICRC NOT ALLOWED IN NE

The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) delegation has received more than 4,700 complaints regarding missing persons upto mid-January. Most of the complaints were in the form of letters while others were telephone and personal calls. But the Red Cross team has had no luck in their attempts to visit detention camps in the North-Eastern province. Although the ICRC has contacted the Indian authorities regarding such visits they have not been able to get the necessary permission.

## TAMIL WRITER HONOURED

Lankan writer Chandrika Somasundaram received a prize for her book in Tamil, 'Women and Media', from the Tamil Nadu Government. She received a cash prize of Rs 5,000 and a merit certificate from the Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu Mr M Karunanidhi at a function held in Madras. She is a media consultant, social scientist and holds a Master of Arts, a Master of Philosophy and a degree in Mass Communications.

## LITTE IMPOSE TAX

The LITTE have imposed a tax on businessmen and public servants in the Batticaloa and Ampara districts. Businessmen pay a certain percentage of the profits they make on the sale of goods, while public servants are taxed according to salaries they earn.

## MILITANT GROUPS FOR PEACE

The Minister of Textiles and Rural Industries Mr S Thondaman feels the Tamil militant groups should be used as an alternate force to maintain peace in the North after the IPKF withdraws. Commenting on the LITTE operations in the North, the Minister said that the talks between the Government and the LITTE will achieve a solution to the problems in the North. Expressing his view on the demand of Mr Varatharaja Perumal for an extended stay of the IPKF, Mr Thondaman said that a devolution of

power to his liking will be hard to achieve by the continued presence of the IPKF when such a thing did not materialise in the past two years of IPKF presence.

## REOPENING OF POLICE STATIONS

The LITTE has requested the government to delay the process of reopening police stations in the Jaffna peninsula until the Indians were fully withdrawn. In a statement issued they have said that they are seriously concerned about the possibility of Sri Lankan police stations being subjected to armed attacks by the notorious TNA to provoke armed confrontation between the LITTE and the Sri Lankan security forces.

## TO RESIGN IN MARCH

Twelve of the 13 Eelavar Democratic Front members in Parliament are to resign their seats in March, when the Parliament which is scheduled to be prorogued on Feb 19 is re-summoned. EDF formerly known as EROS has come under great pressure from the LITTE who have accused some of the EROS leaders of collusion with RAW. The LITTE had done this saying that there was no need for the cadres to be armed as the LITTE was there for the protection of all Tamils.

## INDIA WORRIED

India emphasised that Colombo should attach equal priority and urgency to the question of total deinduction of the IPKF from the island nation, devolution of powers to the North-East Provincial Council and safety and security of all communities. The EPRLF has asked the Indian Government to transport the Tamil refugees stranded at many places in the island's North-East, as a result of the Lankan Navy and LITTE threats.

## IPKF PULL-OUT CERTAIN

The IPKF quit Jaffna town on Jan 27. The rest of the Jaffna district is to be vacated by end of February. The



Trincomalee district is to be vacated last. The LITTE is in control of all areas so far vacated by the IPKF. Rival militant group, have assembled in the Kankesanthurai - Palali area. Residents from this area are moving out to safer areas. The Jaffna town returned to normal. Defence Minister Ranjan Wijeratne has said that he was certain that the Indian Government would honour the March 31 troop withdrawal deadline.

## ARMS IN SOUTH INDIAN COAST

Large quantities of arms worth Indian Rs 100m were found buried along the coast between Uchipulli and Rameswaram in Tamil Nadu state on Jan 20. Chief Minister Karunanidhi referring to the find said he did not rule out the possibility of RAW, the Indian intelligence agency, being involved in it. The package were found with the ENDLF tag according to police and customs officers.

## LITTE MEETINGS

The LITTE is holding political meetings in the North-East in spite of a ban on such meetings imposed by the Emergency Regulations.

## HEAVY FIGHTING

Heavy artillery attacks and counter attacks broke out between the LITTE and the IPKF in the Ariyalai area on Sunday Jan 21 resulting in 50 deaths. Mortars manufactured by Bofors of Sweden were used by the LITTE to

fire at Indian helicopters which were deployed to assist the ground forces. The LTTE claimed to have damaged five helicopters while losing five of their men. The train from Colombo to Jaffna that day had to be terminated 15 miles south of Jaffna. A curfew was enforced for 24 hours.

#### EROS MP TO TEACH

EROS MP, G Savunthararajah resigned from Parliament on Jan 30 and will revert to his former teaching post.

#### RELEASE OF LTTE CADRES

Release of LTTE members and supporters detained in IPKF camps is proceeding at the rate of ten persons per day. There are about 500 LTTE members and supporters in IPKF custody.

#### TAMIL GROUPS IN MADRAS

Representatives of four Tamil groups flew to Madras in response to an invitation from Tamil Nadu Chief Minister M Karunanidhi as part of his efforts to end the violence between them and the LTTE. The move came as Karunanidhi was scheduled to have his second round of talks with LTTE leaders in Madras. The four groups were EROS, TELO, ENDLF and PLOTE. The EPRLF will be represented by its leaders who are already in Madras. EROS is being represented by V Balakumar and Segudawood Basheer, TELO by Karunakaran and Srikantha, ENDLF by their leader Rajan and PLOTE by Siddharthan and Kandasamy.

Karunanidhi is reported to have suggested to North-East Chief Minister Varatharaja Perumal to resign from his post and face fresh elections, in order to prevent further clashes between Tamil groups in the North-East.

#### LIVING IN FEAR

Militant Tamil youths in jungle fatigues and armed with AK 47s are a common sight in Polonnaruwa and Welikanda areas. Land has been extensively allocated to landless people who are all Sinhalese. These settlers and workers on other large agricultural projects in the area are living in fear. Speculation was rife

among security forces and police officers that attempts were afoot by cadres of anti-LTTE groups to move to Siyabalaraduwa area in the Monaragala district. Cadres of some Tamil groups fleeing the Tigers have moved into the area as Siyabalaraduwa was easily accessible to areas like Pottuvil and Mahakalugale where Tamil militants operate freely.

#### MUSLIM CONGRESS BLAMED

Minister Ranjan Wijeratne indirectly blamed the Sri Lanka Muslim Congress for the recent attacks by the LTTE on Muslim Congressmen in the Eastern province, saying that intelligence reports showed that LTTE supporters had been targets of violence at the hands of the SLMC. The Minister said the Muslim Congress had been losing ground to the LTTE politically. Hence it resorted to harassing LTTE supporters, inviting LTTE retaliation. The Leader of the LTTE's political wing, Yogi, said there was tension in Kalmunai town and accused Muslim Congress supporters of beating Tamils who had been travelling on a bus, and throwing a handgrenade in the town. He said that most of the people they had taken into custody were armed SLMC members. Some people had already been released, but the others were still being kept in custody. "If we allow them to go, they will kill our members", he said. The SLMC had aligned with the EPRLF and its allies and was being armed by India to attack the LTTE.

#### LTTE WILL DISARM ?

The LTTE has given an assurance to the Sri Lankan President, Mr Premadasa that they would lay their arms once the IPKF withdrew from Sri Lanka. Foreign Minister, Mr Ranjan Wijeratne told Parliament on February 8. He said that the militant groups could be asked to disarm after the Indian soldiers left.

The LTTE spokesman said on several occasions that the LTTE did not plan to disarm once the IPKF left, but instead were going to try and get the Sri Lankan Government to absorb the Tigers into the police and army and thus legalise their

armed status.

#### GOVT IRKED

At the end of the debate on the situation in the Eastern Province, Mr Wijeratne indicated that the Government was extremely irked by the fact that the Chief Minister of the North-Eastern Province, Mr Varadharaja Perumal, had flown to India through Trincomalee on an IPKF aircraft rather than go through Colombo in the regular manner. The Government regarded this as a sign of divided loyalties on the part of the Chief Minister. Mr Wijeratne said "the Chief Minister goes in and out of the country with scarce respect for the Customs and Immigration .. I am sending Customs and Immigration officers to question him.... He must subject himself to the laws of the land... He could be carrying narcotics... My criticism of the Chief Minister is that he goes to India and asks for devolution, and argues that the IPKF should not be deinducted unless devolution takes place."

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# FOLK TALES AND HISTORICAL STORIES

by Thaatha

## THE ALL-NIGHT VEDDAH DANCE

Young and old, with painted faces and decked as Veddahs with bows and arrows, all of them do the ritual Veddah Dance all night. In the early hours of the morn they all tumble down into the beautiful Therpai Kulam waters and cool it off.

That is even today the culmination of the going-a-hunting festival of the Vanni folks at Oddichuddan. The location is halfway between Mankulam and Mullaitivu.

The story of the village is quite a legend. Once upon a time one Veerapathirar settled in the Vanni. He cleared the jungle and cultivated chena crop. Kurakkan was the main crop. One day he noticed that the Kurakkan stumps around a certain tree would never burn. So he reserved the spot; surprisingly the village folks found a Hindu deity of Siva Linga buried there. Eventually they built a temple around the spot. They called the village "Oddi-Chuddan", meaning the place where the stumps would not burn. Today Oddichuddan is quite a thriving village and an important junction of roadways.

## THE VANNI CHIEF WHO WILL NOT BE SUBDUED

During the eighteenth century, Vanni was an independent kingdom. It was ruled by several Chiefs called Vanniyanars. Each had a separate region and chief city. Notable among these were Panankamam near Surukai and Pandarakulam near Mullaitivu.

The last of the Vanniyanars of Mullaitivu was Pandara Vanniyanar, familiarly referred to as Pandara Vanniyan. He is known to have lived about the year 1785. He has been highly praised as a popular and valiant ruler.

Pandara Vanniyan resisted all attempts by the British to subdue the Vanni. At length, he was driven by the attacking British forces to meet them. He fought valiantly and showed much courage. But it was of no avail against the superior forces of the enemy. When finally he fell, even his opponents admired his courage. The British General leading the forces had a memorial built at the spot.

Today many people visit the site and pay homage to the Vanni Warrior who would not be subdued. It is off the main road near Oddichuddan.

## WHY A DOG'S EPITHET FOR A RIVER

Names of places are usually meaningful. They may sometimes be absurd. Generally it would appear so if their origins were not known. For instance there is the name "Nay Aru", for a river in the Vavuniya District; in fact, there are two of them, one to the East and another to the West. Absurd, dogs could not have had rivers, or even be the cause for them; so why?

The hinterland of the Vanni was once upon a time occupied by a tribe called the Nagas. The Nagas were then a highly civilised race. They had descended into India from the North, long before history. They gradually spread out and migrated Southwards.

Towns like Naga Paddinam, in India, bear evidence. They also are known to have occupied Northern Lanka. They

brought with them an alien civilisation. Several agricultural works would have been carried out in the area of their occupation. So much so, that even after they dwindled, subsequent folks would refer to the streams where they had been active as "Nagas Aru", the river where the Nagas carried out works. In due course Nagas Aru becomes Naga Aru and then "Nay Aru" of today.

## SIXTY ELEPHANT LOADS OF TREASURE AWAITING

Just imagine, how lucky you can become. There are sixty elephant loads of valuable treasure of a Cheddy, still awaiting. They lie buried, but of course a "Muni" has been set to guard them. The Muni would reveal them only to the person who....?

J P Lewis (1895), the British Civil Servant, has compiled an excellent saga of the Vanni folks. In it is found the following:- "The Division of Cheddikulam is said to have been colonised in the Kaliyuga 3348 (about 247 A.D) by a Chetty from Madura, who with some Parava pearl fishers had been wrecked on the coast of Ceylon. This is the account given of it: Vira Narayana Cheddi came to Adan-kapattu, settled in Cheddikulam, built or dug the kerni called Vavalai, and erected a temple to Santirasekeran. He buried in a well near the temple treasure which it took sixty elephants to carry, and left a devil Chadamuni to watch it, and local tradition has it, that this treasure will be revealed by the Muni who is guarding it to any one who rebuilds the temple that was destroyed by the Portuguese."

## HOW GANESH WAS PLACATED

The place was once the capital of the Vanni; it was the seat of the Vanni Chieftain. Ruins of places of veneration are found in the neighbourhood. At the present site of the settlement of Omantai, there is a shrine for the Hindu God Ganesh; it is about 5 miles North of Vavuniya.

Alike many Ganesh shrines, this also was on the top of an earthen embankment of a tank. There the village folk can venerate after a bath. But Ganesh here had lost his original tank; the early pioneers had run the Jaffna -Kandy Road and later the Railway across it. Probably it was not known then there was a tank here. There were several attempts later to restore the tank; but was given up because of the railway line running through it.

A fresh attempt was made in 1948. This time God Ganesh was invoked for his help; boiling rice (pongal) and rice cakes (mothakam) were promised. Preparation of these was commenced in front of the shrine, by the women folk, while the men went to investigate. At length the men returned in glee; the project was after all feasible. So Ganesh and all the folks enjoyed the pongal and the mothakams. The tank was restored and it now feeds the village of Omantai.

The tall grass under the railway bridge had given an illusion of ground being higher.

The women folk, who will always have the last word, still maintain, that for each mothakam they made, Ganesh raised the railway line by an inch, to make the project feasible.

## SRI LANKAN NEWS

### FIRE AT VELONA

A major fire broke out at the Velona garment factory at Katubedda on Jan 20. Two sections of the garment complex, machinery and equipment and all other available linen were completely burnt. No person suffered any injury. The damage has been estimated at more than Rs 10m. Sabotage has not been ruled out.

### COLOMBO ACCUSED OF REPORTER'S DEATH

Sri Lanka's Opposition Leader blamed the Government for the murder of a foreign correspondent. Richard De Zoysa, a Sri Lankan who represented the Rome-based Inter-Press Service, was dragged from his Colombo home in the early hours of Feb 23 by armed men and driven away. His naked body was found floating in the sea two days later. He had been shot in the head and neck. The journalist had written a play called *Who Is He? What Is He Doing?* - a reference to a UNP slogan during the 1988 election campaign for President Premadasa. The producer, Lakshman Perera, has also been abducted by armed men and is feared killed.

### DEATH TOLL HIGH AS 30,000

Figures quoted by Western diplomats suggest that as many as 30,000 people could have been killed last year - most of them in the last six months. The deaths include killings by the JVP, as well as the casualties from the conflict involving the Tamils in the North. Netherlands has warned Sri Lanka that unless there was an improvement in their Human Rights record by June, it would cut the size of its aid programme. The Dutch have been working in close co-ordination with Norway, Canada, W. Germany and Sweden, who are equally taking a more critical approach. The British are pressing for the lifting of the emergency regulations that allow the armed forces to kill suspects without there being the need for any post-mortem or for families to be notified. The increasing determination of donor nations to use the leverage of

aid to obtain an improvement in the human rights situation comes at a time when Sri Lanka has been asking Western nations to finance the rupee expenditure in projects because of the country's budgetary difficulties.

### AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL

Ministers Ranjan Wijeratne and Ranil Wickremasinghe are in the midst of a controversy involving Amnesty International and the Bar Association of Sri Lanka. Minister Wijeratne said that AI was a terrorist movement and Wickremasinghe said that AI money was used for terrorist activity. The accusations were made at a news conference on Jan 18. AI's denial of the allegations was published the very next day. AI further said that it had provided relief assistance to victims of human rights violations and had funded legal work on behalf of victims of alleged abuses, through the Bar Association.

### FROM DEFENCE TO DIPLOMACY

General Sepala Attygalle has retired as the Defence Secretary and will assume duties soon as the Sri Lankan High Commissioner in the United Kingdom. He has been the country's most senior soldier and has been at the helm of the defence establishment during the last 13 years. Air Force Commander Air Vice Marshal Walter Fernando is to be the new Defence Secretary.

### DISAPPEARANCE

The Asst District Committee Secretary, NSSP, Matara who was also a USA candidate at the PC Elections held in 1988, is missing since Dec 22, 1989. He was on his way back to his residence from Matara Town, during a joint operation conducted by the army and police in search of suspected subversives. It is suspected that he has fallen into their hands along with others arrested. Information received at the NSSP headquarters reveals that he was under interrogation by the police authorities at Matara.

Both the army and the police auth-

orities, in reply to inquiries made about him, have denied his arrest. But according to information available he had been in Matara police custody between 22nd and 26th of December. Vasudeva Nanayakara, MP for Ratnapura District, believes he is still alive but the authorities decline to disclose his whereabouts due to security reasons. Dr Vickramabahu Karunaratne, General Secretary of NSSP, has appealed to the President and others concerned to have him released.

### INDO - SRI LANKA TREATY

Sri Lanka's charge that a friendship treaty was sought to be thrust on it by India evoked a sharp disclaimer from the Indian External Affairs Minister, I K Gujral, on February 16. He said "Let me make it clear that there was and is no pressure from India on Sri Lanka to sign the treaty early. The proposal came from Sri Lanka. India is happy with the Indo-Sri Lankan agreement in its present form. It was only to accommodate Sri Lanka that we gave a draft". By the "agreement in its present form", Mr Gujral obviously meant the letter exchanged at the time of signing of the agreement between Mr Raji Gandhi and Mr J R Jayewardene. He further said "The proposal came from Sri Lanka and the pressure for signing it early came from Sri Lanka all along... I am somewhat surprised and pained that, instead of the universally recognised procedure, distorted versions of our draft are being leaked in Sri Lanka and statements are being issued to create the impression that it is India which is trying to thrust the treaty."

### FUNDAMENTAL RIGHTS COMMISSION

President Premadasa appointed 10 members to the Commission for Elimination of Discrimination and Monitoring of Fundamental Rights. These appointments are for a period of three years from January 1.

*Man's dearest possession is life since it is given to him to live but once; he must so live as to feel no torturing regrets for years without purpose; so live as not to be seared with the shame of a cowardly past; so live that dying he can say - all my life and all my strength were given to the finest cause in the world - the liberation of mankind."*



ROOT

# தமிழீழ ஆய்வு நிறுவனம்

## RESEARCH ORGANISATION OF TAMIL EELAM

### SEMINAR

**RESEARCH & DEVELOPMENT: GRASS ROOTS INITIATIVES IN TAMIL EELAM**  
24th and 25th March 1990

**Venue: CITY UNIVERSITY, NORTHAMPTON SQUARE, LONDON EC1 0HB**

The objective of this seminar is to identify opportunities for maximising the peoples' participation in the socio-economic development of Tamil Eelam. It will examine the role of Science and Technology in meeting the aspirations, of the Tamil Nation for undertaking meaningful and sustainable development taking into account the cultural history and prevailing political reality in the Tamil homeland.

### PAPERS

#### INEQUALITY AND INJUSTICE IN DEVELOPMENT: THE REALITY

**Mr M Sri Shanmugarajah**, Chairman, Dry Zone Development Foundation, Sri Lanka. (Formerly Secretary to the Ministry of Finance; Secretary, Development & Planning, North-Eastern Provincial Government).

#### VIALE INDIGENOUS TECHNOLOGIES FOR THE RECONSTRUCTION AND DEVELOPMENT OF TAMIL EELAM

**Prof Kopan Mahadeva**, M Sc, Ph D, C Eng, F I Prod E, Visiting Professor, Birmingham Polytechnic, (Formerly P W D Executive Engineer and Director of UNDP/ILO's Small Industries Service Institute of Sri Lanka, Chairman and Executive Director of MITE Organisation, Sri Lanka).

#### BEYOND RELIEF TOWARDS SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

**Dr Ponna Wignaraja**, Consultant on Developments in South Asia, United Nations University. (Formerly Advisor with World Bank and the United Nations).

#### CO-OPERATIVE / COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT OF TAMIL EELAM WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO SMALL INDUSTRIES

**Mr K Paramothayan**, Educationist, whose speciality is Co-operative / Community Education and Development.

#### COMMUNITY BASED LIVESTOCK DEVELOPMENT

**Dr C Perumal Pillai**, D V M, F R C V S, Ph D, Head of Animal Industry Consulting Services, Sri Lanka. (Formerly Head of Food and Agricultural Organisation (FAO) Regional Office, South-East Asia & Pacific, Bangkok).

#### DEVELOPMENT OF A VIALE DAIRY NEEDS FOR RADICAL APPROACH

**Dr R Narendran**, M Sc, Ph D, Herd & Crop Manager, Alothman Agricultural Establishment. (Formerly Associate Professor, Dept of Animal Science, King Faisal University, Saudi Arabia, Lecturer, Faculty of Veterinary Science, University of Peradeniya).

#### EXPLOITATION OF SEaweEDS OF ECONOMIC IMPORTANCE FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF COASTAL AREAS OF NORTH-EAST OF SRI LANKA

**Prof M Durairatnam**, B SC, M Sc, D Sc, C Biol, F I Biol, Scientific Adviser, International Foundation for Science, Sweden; Fellow, Marine Biological Assoc, India; Ad Hoc Assessor, National Council for Research & Development, Brazil. [Formerly Senior Research Officer (Marine Botany), Dept of Fisheries, Sri Lanka; Director of Research & Development, Seaweeds Industry, Sri Lanka].

#### HEALTH OF THE TAMIL AREAS IN SRI LANKA: SOME ISSUES & IDEAS

**Prof C Sivagnanasundram** M B B S (Cey), Ph D (Lon), D P H (Lon), (Dean Faculty of Medicine, University of Jaffna, Professor Community Medicine).

#### AN ANALYTICAL VIEW ON THE HEALTH DEVELOPMENT AND PLANNING FOR OUR FUTURE NATION

**Dr S P R Seeramaran**, Formerly attached to the Jaffna Teaching and General Hospital and now doing an M Sc in Health Information Science for Health Management and Health Planning Services at the School of Postgraduate Medicine in the University of Warwick, UK.

#### HEALTH CARE TEAM FOR VILLAGES

**Dr S Shanmugadasan**, General Practitioner, Secretary for Administration & Regional co-ordination MIOT.

#### FISHERIES DEVELOPMENT IN TAMIL EELAM

**Mr K Sivarajah**, Fisheries Advisor, Norwegian Directorate of Fisheries.

#### FREE MARKET OR CO-OPERATIVES - WAY FORWARD FOR EELAM

**Mr K Manoranjan** A C A, A C M A, C P A.

Any one who wishes to participate in the seminar is requested to send his/her name and address along with a cheque for £25 (cheque should be made payable to R O O T) being registration fee to:

**Programme Secretary, ROOT, 8 Herm House, Clephane Road, London N1 2TP. Tel: (01) 359 2834**

**CLOSING DATE: 15th MARCH**

## ஊரும் பேரும்

திருக்குணமலையா திருகோணமலையா? அல்லது திரிகோணமலையா?

தமிழ் ஈழம் திரண்டு வருகின்ற நேரத்திலே கூட இந்த இயற்கைத் துறைமுகத்தின் பெயர் அதுவா இதுவா என்ற மயக்கமா என்று கேட்கத் தோன்றும் சிலருக்கு.

இந்த ஏட்டிலே 'தாத்தா' அவர்கள் எழுதி வரும் ஊரும் பேரும் பற்றிய குட்டிக் கதைகள் பயனுள்ளவை; சிந்திக்கத் தூண்டுபவை. ஊர்களின் பேர்களுக்குள் ஒளிந்து மறைந்து கிடக்கும் வரலாற்றுச் சம்பவங்களையும் மரபுக் கதைகளையும் எடுத்துச் சொல்வதன் மூலம், சிங்களப் படைகளாலும் இந்தியக் கூலிப்படைகளாலும் அழிபாடு உற்று வரம்பும் எல்லையும் இழந்து கொண்டிருக்கும் தமிழீழ ஊர்களுக்கும் பட்டினங்களுக்கும் புத்துயிர் கொடுத்து நினைவில் நிறுத்திய இடங்களில் திருகோணமலையும் ஒன்று. அவ்விடம் அப்பெயரை எப்படிப் பெற்றது என்பதற்கான விளக்கத்தைத் தாத்தா மரபு முறைப்படி சொல்லியுள்ளார். ஆனால் அந்த இடம் எப்படி அப்பெயர் பெற்றது என்பதற்கு இன்னொரு விளக்கமும் உண்டு. அதனையும் தமிழர் அறிந்து கொண்டால் உண்மை புலப்படும் என்பதால் அதனையும் இப்பக்கத்தில் எழுதுகின்றோம்.

சொற்களும் சொற்றொடர்களும் காலப்போக்கில் அவற்றின் முழுமையான தோற்றத்தை இழந்து விடுதல் இயல்பு. இது எல்லா மொழிகட்கும் பொருந்தும். NIGER AREA என்பது NIGERIA என்று ஆகி விட்டது. MAL AIR என்பது MALARIA என்று மாறி விட்டது.

தமிழிலும் இப்படி நிகழ்ந்திருக்கின்றது. 'அருமருந்து அன்னபிள்ளை' என்பது 'அருமந்த பிள்ளை' என்று திரிந்து விட்டது. 'சோழநாடு' என்பது 'சோனாடு' என்று பொருந்தாய் புணர்ச்சி பெற்றுள்ளது. இவ்வாறு சொற்களும் சொற்றொடர்களும் சிதைந்து போவது மொழியின் பண்பு. இதனை இலக்கணகாரர் மருஉ என்பார்கள்.

கீழ்க்கு இலங்கையில் இருக்கும் இயற்கைத் துறைமுகத்தை இன்று திருக்கோணமலை என்றும் திருகோணமலை என்றும் வாய்க்கு வந்தபடி சொல்லி வருகின்றோம். இந்தத் துறைமுகப் பட்டினத்தைச் சிங்களவர் திருக்குணமலை என்கிறார்கள். இந்த இடப்பெயர் தமிழில் ஏன் இப்படி எல்லாம் கோணிப்போய் இருக்கின்றது என்று யோசித்தேன். பலசிந்தனைகள் வந்தன. தேவாரப் பாடல்கள் நினைவுக்கு வந்தன. அவற்றுள் வரும் 'கோணமாமலை அமர்ந்தாரே' என்றசொல்லுக்கு நினைவில் மிதந்தது. இவை எல்லாம் நினைவுக்கு வந்தும், திரிகோணமலையா, திருக்குணமலையா என்ற ஐயங்கள் என்னை விட்டுப் போகவில்லை. திருஞானசம்பந்தரே கோணமாமலை என்று சொல்லியிருக்கிறார்; சந்தேகம் ஏன்? என்றது ஒரு மனம். கி. பி. எட்டாம் நூற்றாண்டிலேயே அந்தத் துறைமுகத்தைக் கோணமாமலை என்று தானே அழைத்திருக்கிறார்கள் என்றது இன்னொரு கோணல் மனம். அந்த மலையைப் பார்க்கும் போது திரிகோணங்கள் அதாவது மூன்று கோணங்கள் தெரியவில்லையா? என்றது மூன்றாவது ஐதிக மனம். இப்படி மாறிமாறி மயங்கியும் சிங்களவர் சொல்லுகின்ற. 'திருக்குணமலை' என் மனதை விட்டு நீங்கவில்லை. உண்மைப் பெயர் என்ன என்பதை அறிவதற்குச் சிங்களப் பெயர் வழிகாட்டக்கூடும் என்று எண்ணி அந்தப் பெயரை அலசி ஆராய்ந்தேன். ஆராய ஆராய அந்தச் சிங்களப் பெயரே முழுக்க முழுக்கத் தமிழாக இருக்கக் கண்டேன். 'திரிகோணமலை' யில் 'திரி? யும் 'கோணம்' உம் சமக்கிருதச் சொற்கள். 'திருக்கோணமலை' யில் 'கோண' என்பது சமக்கிருதச் சொல். ஆனால் 'திருக்குணமலையில்' எல்லாமே தனித் தமிழ்ச் சொற்கள். ஆகவே இந்தப் பெயர் தான் உண்மையான பெயராக இருக்க வேண்டும் என்று தேறி மேலும் எண்ணிப் பார்த்தேன்'.

கோயில் இருக்கின்ற இடங்களுக்கு 'திரு' என்ற அடை சேர்ப்பது தமிழ் மரபு என்பதால் 'திரு' வை நீக்கி விட்டு அந்தப் பெயரை ஒலித்தேன். 'குணமலை' என்று ஒலித்தது. சற்று ஒளி துலங்கியது. 'குணமலை' என்பது சிங்களவரின் வாயில் 'குணமலை' என்று ஆகி விட்டது என்பதை உணர்ந்தேன்.

தமிழிலே வடக்கு, தெற்கு, கீழ்க்கு, மேற்கு என்பதை வடக்கு, தெற்கு, குணக்கு, குடக்கு என்றும் சொல்வார்கள். கம்பராமாயணத்தில் கும்பகர்ணன் வதைப்படலத்தில் இராமனுடைய அம்புகள் அறம் புறமாக எய்யப்பட்டதைச் சொல்ல வந்தபோது கம்பன் 'குடக்கதோ குணக்கதோ கோணத்தின் பாலதேயோ, வடக்கதோ தெற்கும் தானோ' என்று கூறிய அடிகள் நினைவுக்கு வந்தன.

தமிழ் இலங்கையின் மேற்குத் திசையில் இருந்த மலையைத் தமிழர் (குடக்கு மலை) குடமலை என்று வழங்கினர். இந்தத் தமிழ் மலை பிற்காலத்தில் சிதைந்து போய் குதிரைமலை எனப்படலாயிற்று. இன்றும் அது குதிரைமலை என்றே குறிக்கப்பட்டு வருகின்றது. மலையாள நாட்டில் மேற்றிசையில் இருக்கும் மலைத்தொடர் இன்னமும் குடக்குமலை எனப்படுகின்றது.

மேற்குமலையைக் குடமலை என்று அழைத்த தமிழர், கிழக்கிலிருந்த மலையைக் குணமலை என்றனர். இந்தக் குணமலையில் கோயில் அமைந்தவுடனும் அதற்குத் 'திரு' என்ற சொல்லைச் சேர்த்து 'திருக்குணமலை' என்றனர் ஈழத்தமிழர். தமிழர் திருக்குணமலை என்று அழைத்த இடத்தைச் சிங்களவர் உச்சரிக்க முற்பட்ட போது அது 'திருக்குணமலை' ஆயிற்று. தமிழரும் காலப்போக்கில் 'திருக்குணமலை' யை 'திருகோணமலை' என்று அழைக்கத் தலைப்பட்டனர். இத்தக் காலகட்டத்திலே தான் திருஞானசம்பந்தரும், சுந்தரரும் இந்தத் திருக்கோயிலைத் தமது தேவாரத்தில் வைத்தனர். தேவார காலத்திற்குப் பின்னர் 'திருகோணமலை' என்பது 'திரிகோணமலை' என்று திரிந்து வழங்கியது, திரிகோணமலை எப்படி வந்தது என்று சொல்லாராய்ச்சி செய்ய வந்தவர்கள் அதிலே மூன்று கோணங்களைக் கண்டுபிடித்து, திரிகோணமலைக்கு வாழ்வு கொடுத்து உண்மையை மறைத்து விட்டனர். காலமும் கருத்தின்மையும் மறைத்தவற்றைத் தேடி எடுத்தல் தமிழர் கடன்.

பருத்தித்துறை மறைந்து 'பேதுறுதுவே' தோன்றாமலும் 'மணல் ஆறு' மறைந்து 'வெலி ஓய' நிலவாமலும் காத்தல் தமிழர் பணி. தூங்கும் இனத்துக்கு உதவத் தெய்வமும் தயங்கும்.

செ. சிறீக்கந்தராசா

## CONFERENCE OF THE PEOPLES' FRONT OF LIBERATION TIGERS

Following is a summary of the resolutions adopted at the conference of the PFLT held in Vakara, Batticaloa district for five days ending on March 2:

1. North-East Provincial Council should be dissolved with immediate effect and new elections should be held.

2. The Tamil and Muslim people should come together and fight under a revolutionary political organisation as a single force. The conference appealed to the Tamil and Muslim people that they should be vigilant in this respect.

3. The 6th Amendment of the Constitution is contrary to our political rights and should be scrapped.

4. Appealed to the Sri Lankan Government to stop forthwith the continuing state-assisted Sinhala colonisation of Tamil Eelam.

5. The Sri Lankan armed forces should not be used in any way to enforce the law and order situation in Tamil Eelam and provincially based security set-up should be established soon for this purpose.

6. The Tamil community settled in the Hill-country should be granted all political rights and meaningful steps

should be taken by the Sri Lankan Government to improve its social and economic life.

7. As peace and normalcy have returned to the North-East Province the application of the Emergency Regulations to this province should be stopped.

The conference also adopted a resolution establishing sub-committees on Finance, Ideological propagation, Information, and Disciplinary matters in order to develop the party. Another resolution appointing a Special Committee to speed up establishment work of the party. Mr Mahendrarajah presided over the conference on the last day.

### IPKF WAS A MONUMENTAL FAILURE

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that peace can return in the southern province. The ongoing talks between the LTTE and the Sri Lankan government may achieve the same in the North-East given a modicum of goodwill. The recognition of the political wing of the LTTE by the Election Commission is also a pointer in that direction. Speaking to all the groups is not going to lead to a consensus as the talks of the Tamil Nadu chief minister M Karunanidhi will show in the end.

**The first step in this process of reconstruction should be the holding of fresh elections for the provincial council which is presently in the hands of the EPRLF.**

It will take time to heal the wounds, and much effort and substantial measures to re-build the ravaged

economy of the North-Eastern Province of Sri Lanka, as indeed of the country itself. The first step in this process of reconstruction should be the holding of fresh elections for the provincial council which is presently in the hands of the EPRLF. It may be necessary for India to provide asylum, more or less on a permanent basis, to some of the senior cadres there to minimise the bloodshed. More importantly, there should be no fresh injection of arms to any of the groups, since it is next to impossible to take back the arms once they are given, whether to the Civilian Voluntary Force or the Tamil National Army or any other, as experience would show. It is the solemn responsibility of the Sri Lankan Government, and of no one else, to ensure equal treatment to all its citizens and to protect their safety and security, so that history does not repeat itself. [Courtesy: *The Sunday Observer*, Jan 21, 1990]

**LATE NEWS****INDIA CAUTIONS SRI LANKA**

India cautioned Sri Lanka against any failure on its part to guarantee the safety and security of the Tamils following de-induction of the IPKF. "The Government of India would take a very serious view of this," a spokesman of the External Affairs Ministry said while reacting to the allegation of the Sri Lankan Foreign Minister about involvement of RAW in attempts to kill key functionaries of the Sri Lanka Government.

Describing it as a baseless allegation against an Indian agency, the spokesman felt that perhaps the Sri Lankan authorities were trying to prepare an alibi for the possible exodus of refugees in view of the apprehensions about clashes among Tamil groups and their failure to guarantee the safety and security of Tamils following the de-induction of the IPKF.

He recalled in this context the bogey of involvement of Indian intelligence agencies raised when some of the Tamil leaders were assassinated, though it was widely known that the LTTE was responsible and subsequently owned by the LTTE itself.

Earlier, the External Affairs Minister Mr I K Gujral, had issued a statement accusing Sri Lanka of inaction in enforcing a ceasefire among the warring ethnic Tamil factions which was leading to a fresh influx of refugees to India.

**INDEPENDENT EELAM**

The North-Eastern Provincial Council re-named itself on March 1 the National Assembly of the Democratic Republic of Eelam, as a first step towards setting up an independent state.

Mr Varatharaja Perumal, the Chief Minister, who resigned to head the new body, said they would restore the old name if the Government met 19 demands of his party, the Eelam People's Liberation Front, by March 1 next year.

**PRABAHARAN TO APPEAR**

The LTTE leader, Veluppillai Prabaharan, who has not been seen in public for over two years, is expected to make a dramatic appearance soon, probably at Suthumalai from where he addressed his people last.

**LTTE FORCE OF TAMIL NATIONALISM AND SYMBOL OF TAMIL RESISTANCE**

In the fast changing political scenario in the North-East provinces, where the LTTE has established its "undisputed dominance", the Eelavar Democratic Front has begun a fence-mending exercise with the LTTE. At a three day meeting of the EDF leadership and its policy making central committee last fortnight, it was decided that both the EDF style of functioning, as well as its future strategy, would be changed.

"Looking back now, we know we made a mistake. Although we didn't fully accept the accord we thought of it as an interim measure and handed over our weapons. That was our biggest mistake. We made ourselves so vulnerable to other armed groups like PLOTE, ENDLF and EPRLF. We thought of politics without arms and believed we could mediate between the LTTE and India, when the IPKF launched an offensive against the LTTE in October 1987. But nothing came of it and we were accused of sitting on the fence. The LTTE felt that if we were committed to the liberation struggle like them, then we should have joined hands with them. They have always thought of themselves as the only group that fought a single minded battle for the Tamil cause. Their recent meeting concentrated on three main issues: their strained relationship with the LTTE, the future of the EDF representatives in parliament, and in the face of the LTTE dominance in the North-East Council, their own political future.

The first issue brought the policy decision to mend fences with the LTTE, the second a consensus to call for the resignation of all their members in Parliament, and the third a new style of functioning. We already have the letters of resignation of our MPs", said Balakumar.

With the changing fortunes of his party and the new decisions taken Balakumar hopes for a new phase in LTTE-EDF relationship. Disarmed forcibly in the East by the LTTE and their party offices closed they have now been disarmed in the North as well.

"It was mainly to defend ourselves from the North-East Provincial Council powers. It was essentially a defence mechanism, not to fight anybody else. Now that the threat has been eliminated and the LTTE has taken on the role of defending the Tamils and affording them protection we don't find the need for arms." According to him the LTTE is the force of Tamil nationalism, and upto now the symbol of Tamil resistance.