

Tamil TIMES



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(1) Prime Minister R Wickremesinghe hands over signed Ceasefire Agreement to Norwegian Ambassador Jon Westborg on 22.3.2002
(2) JVP protest rally against Ceasefire agreement on 21.2.2002; and (3) Chief Minister Ms Jayalalitha Jayaram with Tamil Nadu Governor





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*"I do not agree with a word
of what you say, but I'll
defend to the death your
right to say it."*

-Voltaire

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Towards Sustainable Peace

The Ceasefire Agreement between the Government of Sri Lanka and the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) which came into effect on 22 February 2002 served to formalise in a structured manner the temporary ceasefire declarations made by the parties on 24 December 2001. The Agreement sets the stage for achieving the "overall objectives" of the parties "to find a negotiated solution to the ongoing ethnic conflict in Sri Lanka."

The United States, India, Britain, Japan and other major powers including the European Union have wholeheartedly welcomed the Agreement announcing that they fully supported the Norwegian facilitated peace process. The United States in particular has of late been more vocal and interventionist in pushing for a negotiated political settlement of the conflict in the island.

Big business, which has been desperate for an end to the war to boost the country's economic prospects and foreign investment, also responded positively. Share prices in Colombo rose sharply following the signing of the Agreement.

There is no doubt that the Ceasefire Agreement and the ongoing peace process has the support of the overwhelming majority of the people, be they Sinhalese, Tamils or Muslims. A recent opinion poll published by the Colombo-based Social Research Unit of the Centre for Policy Alternatives found that 80.7 percent of respondents expressed confidence in peace talks.

In spite of the expressions of some concern by the President about lack of consultation with her on the final draft of the Agreement before it was formally signed, the two major parties in the country, the governing UNP-led UNF and the main opposition Peoples Alliance are committed to the Norwegian facilitated peace process. Similarly, almost all the political parties representing the minority communities are in support.

It does not mean that there is no opposition to the Ceasefire Agreement and the peace process. Even before the Agreement was signed and its terms announced, powerful sections of the Buddhist clergy, the Janatha Vimukthi Peramuna (JVP) and Sihala Urumaya (SU), organised public protest demonstrations. The JVP has denounced the Ceasefire Agreement as "an agreement of surrender" and is seeking to portray that the government has accepted the LTTE's demand for a separate Tamil state. It must be recalled that the JVP waged a vicious and violent campaign against the Indo-Lankan Accord of July denouncing it as "a betrayal of the motherland".

But happily so far the opposition to the Ceasefire Agreement and the peace process has remained muted and marginal. On the contrary, support for it, both locally and internationally, has been growing rapidly and widely. On March 15, a massive peace event, meditation for peace, took place in the city of Anuradhapura, sacred to Buddhists on account of its ancient religious shrines and its long history as the seat of Buddhism in the country. The event organised by the Sarvodaya Movement was described as a pilgrimage of peace that would bring merit both to the participant and wider national community. The event in Anuradhapura is reported to have attracted over half a million people who sat throughout the four-hour meditation in complete silence.

This favourable climate for peace must be protected and enhanced by words and deeds by those who are genuinely committed to the success of the peace process. Nothing should be done in the form of orchestrated demonstrations and rallies displaying triumphalism and sectarian aggressive nationalism by one side which might be used by extremist groups on the other as an excuse to organise and orchestrate counter demonstrations and rallies which would only serve to disturb and damage the presently prevailing conducive climate for peace.

By all accounts, the peace process is moving forward faster than one would have expected, the Government, LTTE and Norwegian facilitators acting with mutual trust and confidence. The international Sri Lanka Monitoring Mission (SLMM) constituted under the Ceasefire Agreement and manned by representatives from Nordic countries have already begun their work in earnest. The SLMM's primary task is to monitor that the parties comply with their respective obligations under the Agreement, and to inquire into any violations by the parties. Negotiations between the parties on substantive political issues are expected to commence in April. Without a settlement on the substantive political issues, no amount of confidence building measures will bring enduring peace as is amply demonstrated by the continuing Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

The parties should recognise that the legitimacy and sustainability of the peace process depend not only by an absence of armed hostilities, easing of sanctions and embargoes and removal of checkpoints, but must also be underpinned by a manifest respect for differing views and dissenting voices and commitment to the protection of human rights and democratic accountability. Making peace does not mean cutting a deal between the combatants, the State and the LTTE. It should lead in the direction of demilitarisation of the body politic and democratisation of the political process that empowers the people to live in dignity and peace able to exercise their collective and individual democratic and fundamental rights.

PM's Historic Visit to Jaffna

US Boost for Peace Process

By all accounts, the visit by Prime Minister Ranil Wickremasinghe to the battle-scarred Jaffna peninsula has been a huge success and serves to give a great boost to the fledgling peace process.

The people of Jaffna, which remained the stronghold of the Tamil Tigers until December 1995 when the city was recaptured by government troops, gave Ranil Wickremasinghe a rapturous welcome. He was mobbed by crowds of people as he began his two-day visit to the on 14 March. He is the first Prime Minister in 20 years to visit Jaffna which has been the epicenter of the country's raging ethnic conflict. Political analysts consider the PM's visit to Jaffna as historic and a demonstration of his commitment to achieve peace.

The profile of the Prime Minister's visit was significantly raised when on 14 March he was joined by the highest ranking U.S. official to visit Jaffna, Assistant Secretary of State for South Asian Affairs Christina Rocca who arrived on a three-day visit to the island.

In conformity with tradition, Wickremasinghe, a practising Buddhist, took off his shirt before entering the famous Nallur Kandaswamy Hindu shrine to attend a special religious service held in his honour on the first day of his visit. Many were visibly moved when the Prime Minister emerging after the prayers said, "I prayed for Peace," and added, "We have a ceasefire now. I need your help to convert that into a permanent peace. We must move together towards settlement. It can be done step by step. There can be no peace without your assistance."

The Prime Minister also called on Jaffna's Roman Catholic Bishop, Thomas Sauverdanayagam. Congratulating the Prime Minister for his courage in deciding to visit the peninsula, Rev. Savunderanayagam said the ceasefire

had enabled the people here to breathe again. "Thanks to you and the leader of the LTTE, since last December the guns are silent. We do not hear the sounds of rockets and cannon. We can sleep in peace at night," he said. Conceding that the task before Mr. Wickremasinghe was formidable, the Bishop promised him all support. "The people of Jaffna have only one burning desire: peace. We want peace, a just and lasting solution so that all can live as brother and sister, so that we can build a strong and united Sri Lanka," he said. "We need your blessing to continue this formidable task," Wickremasinghe said.

"Blessed are the peace makers. We are with you," the Bishop said.

"It is a significant visit. I am the first Prime Minister to come here in many years. I want to tell the people of Jaffna that we want to make their life much better and whether it is north or south (of Sri Lanka), their life will be the same," he said as he stepped down from a Sri Lankan Air Force C-130 Hercules at Palaly airfield on the first day of his visit.

The Prime Minister, who was accompanied by the Defence Minister, Tilak Marapana, later, addressing troops of the three services and the police force, made a strong appeal not to violate the terms of the Ceasefire Agreement reached with the LTTE.

"There is distrust and suspicion on all sides given past experiences, but everyone wants peace. You have suffered much in order to defend the territorial integrity of the country, but that suffering has ended with the ceasefire. Now you must ensure the agreement is implemented on the ground."

He told the troops, about 40,000, war has to be brought to an end if Sri Lanka is to survive as a nation. He allayed their fear that the LTTE would renege saying the international commu-

nity was behind him and showed the recent US warning to the LTTE as proof. He told them not to offer the LTTE any excuse to break the truce. "If we honour the truce and ensure there are no violations, it will put pressure on the LTTE to fall in line," the Prime Minister said.

He told the soldiers that even if the war was over, their jobs would be secure and they should fully support the government's peace efforts as it would not only bring peace, but also help boost the country's economy and create more job opportunities.

He, with Defence Minister Tilak Marapana and Rehabilitation Minister Dr. Jayalath Jayawardane, visited frontline at Nagar Kovil and inspected the army bunkers and the abandoned Hindu Temple. He then helicoptered to Eluthumadduwal Army Camp which straddles the Kandy Road (A9) preventing its opening. He went into bunkers just 300 metres away from LTTE positions - at a point where the Sri Lankan authorities plan to set up a checkpoint when the highway opens to civilian traffic. Watching at the LTTE bunkers through the binocular Wickremasinghe joked: "I wouldn't have come near this place if there is no ceasefire." "We would not have brought you here," army chief Lionel Balagalle said.

By visiting the front the Prime Minister demonstrated his confidence in the peace process he started and his trust in the LTTE not to attack. Returning to the camp he told journalists, about 60 representing local and international media, that he had instructed the officers to open the Kandy Road. "Before March 23?" "Yes."

The Norway brokered ceasefire agreement stipulates that Kandy Road be opened for civilian traffic within 30 days. "I intend to keep to the agreement," Wickremasinghe said.

His eagerness to comply with the ceasefire agreement and his confidence that the LTTE would reciprocate his gestures were evident in his words and deeds.

At Eluthumadduwal, Wickremasinghe said the ceasefire agreement was prelude to face-to-face peace talks which cabinet spokesman Constitutional Affairs minister Prof. G. L. Peiris said would commence in the latter part of April.

US Boost Peace Effort

The visit to Colombo, and in particular to Jaffna, on 15 March by senior US officials has been as evidence of Washington throwing its weight behind the Government's current peace making efforts. The visit by Assistant Secretary of State for South Asia Christina Rocca and Marine Brigadier General Timothy Ghormley underlined the carrot-and-stick diplomacy that helped Norway broker a truce between the Government and Tamil Tigers. On 11 March, Washington warned the LTTE against renegeing on its commitments under the Norwegian brokered ceasefire agreement.

"We strongly support the peace process and hope the two sides will reach a settlement soon," said Rocca, the highest-ranking US diplomat to visit Jaffna, disembarking from a US Marines C-130 transport plane at Jaffna's Palaly airport.

Ms Rocca's visit demonstrated that America was fully backing the Norwegian-facilitated peace process in Sri Lanka. She had a 40-minute discussion with the Sri Lankan Prime Minister, Ranil Wickremesinghe, at the Palaly military camp. Senior Sri Lankan military officials and the commander of the 3rd Division of the U.S. Marines, Brigadier-General Timothy Ghormley, were also present at the discussions. The Prime Minister and Ms. Rocca later visited the ruins of Chavakachcheri, the second most important town in the Jaffna peninsula that was devastated by artillery and rockets in long-distance fighting between Government forces and the LTTE in September 2000. They also witnessed a mock mine detection and removal exercise by the Army.

The US ambassador to Colombo, Ashley Wills, who also traveled with Rocca, made clear his government's backing for Wickremesinghe's peace initiative. "We just want him to know that we stand behind what he is doing," Wills said.

Deputy Secretary of State Richard Armitage had assured Norway on March 8 America's support. "The government of Sri Lanka and the LTTE need to grasp this opportunity to end Sri Lanka's tragic conflict," Armitage told Norway's Deputy Foreign Minister Vidar Helgesen in Washington.

Wickremesinghe told the media af-

ter his meeting with US officials that they assured him their full backing. "The world is with me," he said after the meeting held at the Palaly base and added, "Our people are also with me."

Press conference

The U.S. Assistant Secretary of State for South Asian Affairs, Christina Rocca, urged the LTTE to give up its demand for a separate state in Sri Lanka in order to consider the lifting of the ban on the organisation imposed by the US. She told a news conference in Colombo on 16 March that lifting the ban on the LTTE would depend on "the LTTE ending hostile activities, showing respect to humanity and accepting that an independent state is not a viable option".

Ms Rocca told the journalists, "By signing this ceasefire agreement, though, both parties have indicated that they have chosen peace over war, reconciliation over division. Both parties have made a solemn pledge to honor this ceasefire. The people of Sri Lanka - Tamil, Sinhalese, Muslim - as well as the international community expect no less. We applaud the efforts of the Norwegian government to assist Sri Lanka in this process of national reconciliation. We urge both sides to move forward toward negotiations on a permanent settlement of the conflict."

Referring to her visit to Jaffna Ms Rocca said, "I was privileged yesterday to visit Jaffna together with Ambassador Ashley Wills and U.S. Marine General Tim Ghormley. I met with the

Prime Minister and other Cabinet members, received a military briefing and made a brief stop at Chavakachcheri to see first hand the horrific damage caused by the war in Sri Lanka. Altogether it was a moving experience and I greatly appreciate the Sri Lankan Government's assistance in making the trip possible."

Asked if Washington's support to Colombo would go as far as military aid, Ms Rocca said the question was "speculative" and added "We (US and Sri Lanka) have a long history of military cooperation."

On whether the US was prepared to under-write any agreement between the government and the LTTE, she said: "We'll do everything to support the peace process."

US Ambassador in Colombo, E Ashley Wills, who was also present at the press conference, said the LTTE should "take advantage of the moment, and do it in such a way that the Tamil people feel safe and secure."

Asked if the tough US statement against the LTTE amounted to being anti-Tamil, Wills said: "We don't see the LTTE and the Tamil people as synonymous," adding, "It would be a moment of great joy to the US and other countries if the LTTE could do the things that were indicated in the press statement." He further said, "There are certain things the LTTE can do to re-define itself internationally and internally, in Sri Lanka. Our country will be prepared to respond positively."

SLMM Begins Work

The head of the Sri Lanka Monitoring Mission (SLMM) said on 13 March that its work in terms of the Ceasefire Agreement had begun and was moving ahead but warned that the Government and Tamil Tigers would need the will to overcome expected setbacks.

Retired Norwegian Major-General Trond Furuhoide, who arrived last month to oversee the ceasefire, said that in his talks with both sides he cautioned that there would be reverses.

He said 13 monitors from Norway, Finland and Sweden had arrived and the number would quickly rise to 22 and possibly more as district offices and

local monitoring committees were set up.

Furuhovde said he had been encouraged by his meetings with both Prime Minister Ranil Wickremesinghe and the LTTE leader Velupillai Prabhakaran. "I am very satisfied so far. Both parties have been very open as far as I can see," said Furuhoide, who headed a United Nations peacekeeping mission in Lebanon.

"They have certainly been also open to my ideas. When I presented my views on this agreement, my views on what should be the way of working, the two parties have actually spoken with one voice," he said.

Government - LTTE Ceasefire Agreement

The following is the text of the Agreement on a Ceasefire between the Government of the Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka and the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam which came into effect on 22 February 2002. The signatories to the agreement are Prime Minister Ranil Wickremasinghe on behalf of the Government, and Mr Velupillai Pirabakaran on behalf of the LTTE.

Preamble

The overall objective of the Government of the Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka (hereinafter referred to as the GOSL) and the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (hereinafter referred to as the LTTE) is to find a negotiated solution to the ongoing ethnic conflict in Sri Lanka.

The GOSL and the LTTE (hereinafter referred to as the Parties) recognize the importance of bringing an end to the hostilities and improving the living conditions for all inhabitants affected by the conflict. Bringing an end to the hostilities is also seen by the Parties as a means of establishing a positive atmosphere in which further steps towards negotiations on a lasting solution can be taken.

The Parties further recognize that groups that are not directly party to the conflict are also suffering the consequences of it. This is particularly the case as regards the Muslim population. Therefore, the provisions of this Agreement regarding the security of civilians and their property apply to all inhabitants.

With reference to the above, the Parties have agreed to enter into a ceasefire, refrain from conduct that could undermine the good intentions or violate the spirit of this Agreement and implement confidence-building measures as indicated in the articles below.

Article 1: Modalities of a ceasefire :

The Parties have agreed to implement a ceasefire between their armed forces as follows:

1.1 A jointly agreed ceasefire between the GOSL and the LTTE shall enter into force on such date as is notified by the Norwegian Minister of Foreign Affairs in accordance with Article 4.2 hereinafter referred to as D-day.

Military operations :

1.2 Neither Party shall engage in any offensive military operation. This requires the total cessation of all military action and includes, but is not limited to, such acts as:

- The firing of direct and indirect weapons, armed raids, ambushes, assassinations, abductions, destruction of civilian or military property, sabotage, suicide missions and activities by deep penetration units;
- Aerial bombardment;
- Offensive naval operations.

1.3 The Sri Lankan armed forces shall continue to perform their legitimate task of safeguarding the sovereignty and territo-

rial integrity of Sri Lanka without engaging in offensive operations against the LTTE.

Separation of forces :

1.4 Where forward defence localities have been established, the GOSL's armed forces and the LTTE's fighting formations shall hold their ground positions, maintaining a zone of separation of a minimum of

six hundred (600) metres. However, each Party reserves the right of movement within one hundred (100) metres of its own defence localities, keeping an absolute minimum distance of four hundred (400) metres between them. Where existing positions are closer than four hundred (400) metres, no such right of movement applies and the Parties agree to ensure the maximum possible distance between their personnel.

1.5 In areas where localities have not been clearly established, the status quo as regards the areas controlled by the GOSL and the LTTE, respectively, on 24 December 2001 shall continue to apply pending such demarcation as is provided in article 1.6.

1.6 The Parties shall provide information to the Sri Lanka Monitoring Mission (SLMM) regarding defence localities in all areas of contention, of Article 3. The monitoring mission shall assist the Parties in drawing up demarcation lines at the latest by D-day +30.

1.7 The Parties shall not move munitions, explosives or military equipment into the area controlled by the other Party.

1.8 Tamil paramilitary groups shall be disarmed by the GOSL by D-day +30 at the latest. The GOSL shall offer to integrate individuals in these units under the command and disciplinary structure of the GOSL armed forces for service away from the Northern and Eastern Province.

1.9 The Parties' forces shall initially stay in the areas under their respective control, as provided in Article 1.4 and Article 1.5.

1.10 Unarmed GOSL troops, shall as of D-day + 60, be permitted unlimited passage between Jaffna and Vavuniya using the Jaffna-Kandy road (A9). The modalities are to be worked out by the parties with the assistance of the SLMM.

1.11 The Parties agree that as of D-day individual combatants shall, on the recommendation of their area commander, be permitted, unarmed and in plain clothes, to visit family and friends residing in areas under the control of the other Party. Such visits shall be limited to six days every second month, not including the time of travel by the shortest applicable route. The LTTE shall facilitate the use of the Jaffna-Kandy road for this purpose. The Parties reserve the right to deny entry to specified military areas.

1.12 The Parties agree that as of D-day individual combatants shall, notwithstanding the two-month restriction, be permitted, unarmed and in plain clothes, to visit immediate family (i.e. spouses, children, grandparents, parents and siblings) in connection with weddings or funerals. The right to deny entry to specified military areas applies.

1.13 Fifty (50) unarmed LTTE members shall as of D-day + 30, for the purpose of political work, be permitted freedom of movement in the areas of the North and the East dominated by the GOSL. Additional 100 unarmed LTTE members shall be permitted freedom of movement as of D-day + 60. As of D-day

+ 90, all unarmed LTTE members shall be permitted freedom of movement in the North and the East. The LTTE members shall carry identity papers. The right of the GOSL to deny entry to specified military areas applies.

Article 2: Measures to restore normalcy

The Parties shall undertake the following confidence-building measures with the aim of restoring normalcy for all inhabitants of Sri Lanka:

2.1 The Parties shall in accordance with international law abstain from hostile acts against the civilian population, including such as acts as torture, intimidation, abduction, extortion and harassment.

2.2 The Parties shall refrain from engaging in activities or propagating ideas that could offend cultural or religious sensitivities. Places of worship (temples, churches, mosques and other holy sites, etc.) currently held by either of the parties shall be vacated by D-day + 30 and made accessible to the public. Places of worship which are situated in "high security zones" shall be vacated by all armed personnel and maintained in good order by civilian workers, even when they are not made accessible to the public.

2.3 Beginning on the date on which this Agreement enters into force, school buildings occupied by either party shall be vacated and returned to their intended use. This activity shall be completed by D-day +160 at the latest.

2.4 A schedule indicating the return of all other public buildings to their intended use shall be drawn up by the Parties and published at the latest by D-day + 30.

2.5 The Parties shall review the security measures and the set-up of checkpoints, particularly in densely populated cities and towns, in order to introduce systems that will prevent harassment of the civilian population. Such systems shall be in place from D-day + 60.

2.6 The Parties agree to ensure the unimpeded flow of non-military goods to and from the LTTE-dominated areas with the exception of certain items as shown in Annex A. Quantities shall be determined by market demand. The GOSL shall regularly review the matter with the aim of gradually removing any remaining restrictions on non-military goods.

2.7 In order to facilitate the flow of goods and the movement of civilians, the Parties agree to establish checkpoints on their line of control at such locations as are specified in Annex B.

2.8 The Parties shall take steps to ensure that the Trincomalee-Habarana road remains open on a 24-hour basis for passenger traffic with effect from D-day + 10.

2.9 The Parties shall facilitate the extension of the rail service on the Batticaloa-line to Welikanda. Repairs and maintenance shall be carried out by the GOSL in order to extend the service up to Batticaloa.

2.10 The Parties shall open the Kandy-Jaffna road (A9) to non-military traffic of goods and passengers. Specific modalities shall be worked out by the Parties with the assistance of the Royal Norwegian Government by D-day + 30 at the latest.

2.11 A gradual easing of the fishing restrictions shall take place starting from D-day. As of D-day + 90, all restrictions on day and night fishing shall be removed, subject to the following exceptions: (i) fishing will not be permitted, within an area of 1 nautical mile on either side along the coast and 2 nautical miles seawards from all security forces camps on the coast; (ii) fishing will not be permitted in harbours or approaches to harbours, bays and estuaries along the coast.

2.12 The Parties agree that search operations and arrests un-

der the Prevention of Terrorism Act shall not take place. Arrests shall be conducted under due process of law in accordance with the Criminal Procedure Code.

2.13 The Parties agree to provide family members of detainees access to the detainees within D-day +30.

Article 3: The Sri Lanka Monitoring Mission :

The Parties have agreed to set up an international monitoring mission to enquire into any instance of violation of the terms and conditions of this Agreement. Both Parties shall fully cooperate to rectify any matter of conflict caused by their respective sides. The mission shall conduct international verification through on-site monitoring of the fulfilment of the commitments entered into in this Agreement as follows:

3.1 The name of the monitoring mission shall be the Sri Lanka Monitoring Mission (hereinafter referred to as the SLMM).

3.2 Subject to acceptance by the Parties, the Royal Norwegian Government (hereinafter referred to as the RNG) shall appoint the Head of the SLMM (hereinafter referred to as the HoM), who shall be the final authority regarding interpretation of this Agreement.

3.3 The SLMM shall liaise with the Parties and report to the RNG.

3.4 The HoM shall decide the date for the commencement of the SLMM's operations.

3.5 The SLMM shall be composed of representatives from Nordic countries.

3.6 The SLMM shall establish a headquarters in such place as the HoM finds appropriate. An office shall be established in Colombo and in Vanni in order to liaise with the GOSL and the LTTE, respectively. The SLMM will maintain a presence in the districts of Jaffna, Mannar, Vavuniya, Trincomalee, Batticaloa and Amparai.

3.7 A local monitoring committee shall be established in Jaffna, Mannar, Vavuniya, Trincomalee, Batticaloa and Amparai. Each committee shall consist of five members, two appointed by the GOSL, two by the LTTE and one international monitor appointed by the HoM. The international monitor shall chair the committee. The GOSL and the LTTE appointees may be selected from among retired judges, public servants, religious leaders or similar leading citizens.

3.8 The committees shall serve the SLMM in an advisory capacity and discuss issues relating to the implementation of this Agreement in their respective districts, with a view to establishing a common understanding of such issues. In particular, they will seek to resolve any dispute concerning the implementation of this Agreement at the lowest possible level.

3.9 The Parties shall be responsible for the appropriate protection of and security arrangements for all SLMM members.

3.10 The Parties agree to ensure the freedom of movement of the SLMM members in performing their tasks. The members of the SLMM shall be given immediate access to areas where violations of the Agreement are alleged to have taken place. The Parties also agree to facilitate the widest possible access to such areas for the local members of the six above-mentioned committees, of Article 3.7.

3.11 It shall be the responsibility of the SLMM to take immediate action on any complaints made by either Party to the Agreement, and to enquire into and assist the Parties in the settlement of any dispute that might arise in connection with such complaints.

3.12 With the aim of resolving disputes at the lowest possible level, communication shall be established between command-

ers of the GOSL armed forces and the LTTE area leaders to enable them to resolve problems in the conflict zones.

3.13 Guidelines for the operations of the SLMM shall be established in a separate document.

Article 4: Entry into force, amendments and termination of the Agreement :

4.1 Each Party shall notify its consent to be bound by this Agreement through a letter to the Norwegian Minister of Foreign Affairs signed by Prime Minister Ranil Wickremesinghe on behalf of the GOSL and by leader Velupillai Pirabakaran on behalf of the LTTE, respectively. The Agreement shall be initialled by each Party and enclosed in the above-mentioned letter.

4.2 The Agreement shall enter into force on such date as is notified by the Norwegian Minister of Foreign Affairs.

4.3 This Agreement may be amended and modified by mutual agreement of both Parties. Such amendments shall be notified in writing to the RNG.

4.4 This Agreement shall remain in force until notice of termination is given by either Party to the RNG. Such notice shall be given fourteen (14) days in advance of the effective date of termination.

Annex A : List of goods

The Parties agree to ensure the flow of non-military goods, to and from LTTE dominated areas of the Northern and Eastern Province as well as unimpeded flow of such goods to the civilian population in these areas. Non military goods not covered by article 2.6 in the Agreement are listed below:

Non military arms/ammunition; Explosives; Remote control devices; Barbed wire; Binoculars/Telescopes; Compasses; Penlight batteries;

Diesel, petrol, cement and iron rods will be restricted in accordance with the following procedures and quantities.

Diesel and petrol : The Government Agents (GA) will register available vehicles; tractors and motorcycles in the LTTE con-

trolled areas. The GA will calculate the required weekly amount of diesel and petrol based on the following estimate: Trucks/ Buses 250 litre/week; 4 wheel tractor 310 litre/week; 2 wheel tractor 40 litre/week; Petrol vehicle 30 litre/week; Motorcycles 7 litre/week; Fishing vessels 400 litre/week

Cement : Cement required for rehabilitation and reconstruction of Government property; registered co-operatives; or approved housing projects implemented by the GOSL and international NGOs and more affluent members of the society; will be brought in directly by relevant institutions under licences issued by Government Agents. The GA shall stipulate the monthly quantities permitted for such project based upon planned and reported progress. Cement required for individual shops/constructions/ house owners rehabilitation initiatives will be made available through the co-operations on a commercial basis.

Cement required for individual shops/constructions/house owners/rehabilitation - initiatives will be made available through the co-operations on a commercial basis. The monthly import for this purpose will be limited to 5000 bags during the first month and thereafter 10,000 bags/month. Individual sales by the co-operatives will be registered and limited to 25 bags per household.

Iron rods : Iron rods for building constructions will be brought in to the LTTE controlled areas under licences issued by the GA.

A monthly reassessment will be made to assess the possibilities of removal of the above restrictions.

Annex B : Checkpoints

Checkpoints agreed in section 2.7 are as follows:

Mandur; Paddirupur; Kaludaveli Ferry Point; Anbalantivu Ferry Point; Mamunai Ferry Point; Vanvunateevu; Santhiveli Boat Point; Black Bridge; Sitandy Boat Point; Kiran bridge; Kinniyadi Boat Point; Valachenai; Makerni, Mahindapura; Muttur; Ugilankulam; Omanthai.

EU Supports Peace Process

The Parliament of the European Union has declared its full support for the current peace process by adopting the following resolution on 14 March 2002:

1. Welcomes the ceasefire agreement as an opportunity to create a peaceful atmosphere in which a negotiated settlement to the ongoing ethnic conflict in Sri Lanka may be agreed; recognises that both sides have taken bold steps to conclude the ceasefire and hopes that the process on which they are now embarking will be supported and lead to a political solution and a lasting peace;

2. Strongly acknowledges the contribution of the Government of Norway and its Ambassador to Sri Lanka to facilitating direct negotiations;

3. Calls on all the political parties and interest groups in Sri Lanka to seize this historic opportunity and to actively support the truce agreement leading to future peace negotiations;

4. In this context stresses the importance of the confidence-building measures aimed at national reconciliation, including the reunification of families separated by the years of conflict and an improvement of security conditions across the whole country for the benefit of everyone; underlines particularly the importance of the measures concerning the freedom of movement of persons and all non-military goods, especially food and medicine, throughout the whole island;

5. Recalls its concern that human rights be respected, particularly by controlling the actions of the armed forces of the two camps and by putting an end to all discrimination on grounds of membership of a linguistic or religious community;

6. Calls on the Council and the Commission as a matter of urgency to consider how this agreement can be supported in practical terms, especially through financial support, so that Sri Lanka's many problems can be tackled, including the issue of reintegrating child soldiers;

7. Calls on the EU and the Member States to go to the donors' meeting in Sri Lanka in May with a comprehensive and coordinated proposal;

8. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council, the Commission and the President and Government of the Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka.

An Appeal for Peace and Democratisation

A wide spectrum of internationally renowned personalities have, in the context of the ceasefire agreement between the Government of Sri Lanka and the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) and the resumption of the Norwegian mediated peace process, come together in applauding and supporting the current efforts at peace-making and urging that the peace process be guided by, and aimed at, broader norms of democracy and human rights. The signatories to this appeal include Archbishop Desmond Tutu of South Africa.

The following is the text of their appeal:

We write to support the historic opportunity for peace in Sri Lanka. We welcome the courage of the political actors who have embarked on this road, and applaud the political will of the larger public in all parts of Sri Lanka, who have in their different ways pushed and encouraged their leadership to invest in the peace process. It is in this spirit that we would like to join our voices with those forces in Sri Lankan civil society who have urged that the peace process be guided by, and aimed at, broader norms of democracy and human rights.

In a context where our euphoria regarding the peace process may tempt us to turn a blind eye to human rights violations, some protagonists in the conflict may exploit the ceasefire to attack dissidents and quell dissent. In fact, in recent weeks some have used the fragility of the peace process to condemn human rights NGOs who have advocated closer scrutiny of ongoing human rights violations by the major protagonists.

We advance this appeal to argue that a fragile peace process is precisely the context where we have to be particularly vigilant in ensuring the space for dissent and broader civil society participation, in pressing for the demo-

cratic accountability of the major protagonists in the peace talks. This vigilance is critical, particularly in the unfortunate event that the peace process disintegrates — we should ensure that the peace process does not end up defeating movement towards democratisation. It would be the most regrettable of ironies if the ultimate impact of the peace process were to be a disempowered civil society whose dissenting voices have been crushed in the name of peace. In contrast, if open dialogue accompanies the peace process, even if a formal agreement is not reached, the broader conversation may have moved forward to a new level of understanding. Movement toward peace is often an incremental process and in encouraging wider dialogue and debate, each step that is linked with the democratic process will also be a step forward towards the long-term goal of a sustainable peace.

As we know, the Norwegian mediation will address the modalities of discussion between the negotiating teams of the Sri Lankan government and the LTTE. However, we would like to urge that the peace process be recognized as extending beyond the negotiating table to the civic life of the populace. Currently this has been interpreted primarily in terms of the easing of embargoes and the lifting of security checkpoints. These initiatives go a long way towards transforming the living conditions of ordinary citizens and should be encouraged and strengthened.

Simultaneously however, we also see 'normalization' as a political process that should move us towards the demilitarization of political institutions, the democratization of political culture and the furtherance of human rights norms. The legitimacy of the peace process depends not only on the cessation of hostilities, but also on broader questions of democratic accountability. Being open to a plurality of voices, including those critical of the participants

in the peace process, provides a crucial starting point for strengthening the legitimacy and enhancing the substantive direction of the peace process. It is from this standpoint that this appeal focuses on the space for dissent as crucial for the sustainability of a peace agreement. Among other issues, we trust that robust public debate will also help to bring to the table the concerns of Muslims, Tamils and Sinhalese not represented by the Sri Lankan government and the LTTE.

We would like to urge that the Norwegian mediators set-up a formal process of human rights monitoring; such a process could support NGOs, the media and other institutions of civil society that seek to hold the principal protagonists accountable to norms of democracy and human rights. We appeal to the Sri Lankan government and the LTTE to protect the space for dissent and affirm that their participation in the peace process is informed by a commitment to democratic principles. In closing, we also applaud those human rights advocates who have had the courage to take an independent stance in scrutinizing the conduct of the Sri Lankan government and the LTTE.

Signatories: 1. Archbishop Desmond Tutu, South Africa; 2. Lord Eric Avebury, Chair of the Parliamentary Human Rights Group, House of Lords, UK; 3. Dr. Arun Gandhi, Founder Director, M.K. Gandhi Institute, Christian Brothers University, Memphis TN, US; 4. Dr. Ursula M. Franklin C.C. FRSC, University Professor Emeritus, Massey College, University of Toronto, Toronto, Canada; 5. Prof. Henry Steiner, Human Rights Program, Harvard Law School, Cambridge, MA, USA; 6. Dr. A. Sivanandan, Director, Institute of Race Relations, UK; 7. Prof. S. J. Tambiah, Department of Anthropology, Harvard University, Cambridge, MA, USA; 8. Dr. Hanna Newcombe, Director, Peace Research Institute, Dundas, Ontario, Canada; 9. Prof. Gananath Obeyesekere, Princeton University, Princeton, NJ, USA; 10. Dr. Metta Spencer, Emeritus Professor of Sociology, University of Toronto, Toronto, Canada; 11. Prof. David Little, Dunphy Professor in Religion, Ethnicity, and International Conflict, Divinity school, Harvard University, Cambridge, MA,

- USA; 12. Prof. Richard Gombrich, Boden Professor of Sanskrit, University of Oxford, UK; 13. Prof. Robert Perinbanayagam, Hunter College, New York, NY, USA; 14. Dr. Vasuki Nesiiah, Senior Associate, International Center for Transitional Justice, New York, NY, USA; 15. Gary Purdy, University Professor and Director, McMaster University Center for Peace Studies, Hamilton, Ontario, Canada; 16. Prof. Robert Rotberg, Program on Intra-state Conflict and Conflict Resolution, Harvard University, Cambridge, MA, USA; 17. Prof. H. L. Seniviratne, University of Virginia, USA; 18. Prof. Jonathan Spencer, University of Edinburgh, UK; 19. Elisabeth Boetzkes, Director, Women's Studies Program, McMaster University, Hamilton, Ontario, Canada; 20. Hilary Charlesworth, Director of the Center for International and Public Law, Australian National University, Australia; 21. Dr. S. Nanthikesan, Harvard University, Cambridge, MA., USA; 22. Prof. A. Kumar David, Hong Kong Polytechnic University, China; 23. Prof. Valentine Daniel, Columbia University, New York, NY, USA; 24. Clarence Dias, President, International Center for Law And Development, New York, NY, USA; 25. Prof. Maya Chadda, Council on Foreign Relations, USA; 26. Prof. Guenter Frankenberg, University of Frankfurt, Germany; 27. Rev. Janet Garvey Stangvik, Napa Valley Center for Spiritual Living, Napa Valley, California, USA; 28. Prof. Anthony Anghie, University of Utah School of Law, Salt Lake City, Utah; 29. Prof. Malathi De Alwis, Visiting Professor, New School University, New York, NY, USA; 30. Prof. Quadri Ismail, University of Minnesota, USA; 31. Prof. Pradeep Jeganthan, University of Minnesota, USA; 32. Dr. Kashyapa Yapa, Director, Ozogoché Irrigation Project, Committee for Local Development, Guamoto, Chimborazo, Ecuador; 33. Prof. N. Shanmugaratnam, Professor of Development Studies, Agricultural University of Norway, Norway; 34. Ahilan Kadirgmar, New School University, New York, USA; 35. Prof. Yosuke Yotoryama, Niigata University, Japan; 36. Prof. Richard Young, Princeton Theological Seminary, Princeton, NJ, USA; 37. Dr. Therese Onderdenwijngaard, Free University Amsterdam, The Netherlands; 38. Prof. Fabienne Peter, University of Basel, Basel, Switzerland; 39. Rakesh Rajani, Executive Director, HakiElimu, Tanzania; 40. Dr. Dharini Rajasingham, International Center for Advanced Studies, New York University, NY, USA; 41. Ratna Kapur, Director, Center for Feminist Legal Research, Delhi, India; 42. Dr. Celestine Nyamu-Musembi, Institute of Development Studies, University of Sussex, UK; 43. Dr. Chandra Lekha Sriram, International Peace Academy, USA; 44. Sharmine Fernando, Center for Refugee Studies, York University, Hamilton, Canada; 45. Wenzhuo Hou, Migrant Worker Program, Beijing, China; 46. Ameena Hussein, Writer, Geneva, Switzerland; 47. Sangeetha Nesiiah, Creekside Education Trust, UK; 48. Dilshika Jayamaha, Journalist, New York, NY, USA; 49. Kevin Shimmin, Union Representative, UFCW Canada, Locals 175 and 633, Canada; 50. Ceylon Mooney, Board member, Mid-South Peace and Justice Center, USA; 52. Mithran Tiruchelvam, Independent Scholar, New York, NY, USA; 53. Sara Zucker, Director, Project on Justice in Times of Transition, Harvard University, USA; 54. Aaron Moore, Cornell University, Ithaca, New York, USA; 55. Benoit Pasquereau, Marconi, UK; 56. Blake-Burr-McNeal, University of Memphis, USA; 57. Christopher Pollmann, Noel Fellow at European Union Center, Harvard University, Cambridge, MA., USA and Metz University, France; 58. Cynthia Milton, Coordinator, Legacies of Authoritarianism Research Circle, University of Wisconsin-Madison, USA; 59. Darshan Ambalavanar, Department of Religion, Harvard University, Cambridge, USA; 60. Dr. Anna Doney, Clinical Psychologist, Cambridge, UK; 61. Dr. Anne M. Blackburn, University of South Carolina, USA; 62. Dr. Donald Woodside, Faculty of Health Science, McMaster University, Hamilton, Ontario, Canada; 63. Dr. Richard J Preston, Professor Emeritus, McMaster University, Hamilton, Ont., Canada; 64. Dr. Alan Keenan, Solomon Asch Center for Study of Ethno-political Conflict, University of Pennsylvania, USA; 65. Dr. David Dickson, Assistant Director, IMBA Program University of Memphis, Memphis, USA; 66. Dr. Derek Paul, Professor Emeritus, University of Toronto, Toronto, Canada; 67. Dr. Elizabeth J Harris, Honorary Lecturer, Birmingham University, UK; 68. Dr. Frederick Knight, Carter G. Woodson Institute, University of Virginia, USA; 69. Dr. Gordon McCline, Hospital for Sick Children, University of Toronto, Toronto, Canada; 70. Dr. Jack Santa-Barbara, Associate, Center for Peace Studies, McMaster University, Hamilton, Ontario, Canada; 71. Dr. Jasmin Habib, Postdoctoral Research & Teaching Fellow, Department of Anthropology, McMaster University, Hamilton, Ontario, Canada; 72. 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Colombo - It is a time of great expectations over in Sri Lanka. With the Ceasefire Agreement signed one day ahead of schedule on 22 February, leading to some hiccups in relations between the President and Prime Minister, there are rising expectations that this time round peace will indeed become a reality. A well-orchestrated, but well-deserved, media blitz about Prime Minister Ranil Wickremesinghe "taking Jaffna by storm" with his two-day historic visit to Jaffna has raised expectations to a new level. The current effort at another stab at peace-making is genuinely seen by many as the greatest hope and last chance for peace in the country.

There was no hiding the fact that the LTTE leader Velupillai Pirabakaran had made a strategically successful move, in signing the agreement before the scheduled date - February 22. Prime Minister Ranil Wickremesinghe himself admitted at a press conference on February 24, that he had indeed been taken by surprise when the Norwegian Ambassador Jon Westborg had brought him the agreement already signed by Pirabakaran, earlier than it was expected. What the LTTE leader had signed was the final draft that was taken for his approval.

This in turn led to the obvious displeasure of the President, when the Prime Minister showed her a document already bearing the signature of the LTTE leader confronting her with a virtual *fait accompli*. Her request that she should be given some time to study it was not acceptable to the Prime Minister. He said that once the LTTE had signed it, any delay on the part of the Sri Lanka Government would have given an advantage to the LTTE internationally, by being able to say that the Government was delaying over placing its signature after the LTTE had already done so. Therefore the Prime Minister proceeded to Vavuniya, where he was cheered by a very large gathering of people, and carried out the planned ritual of signing the agreement on behalf of the Government.

The Prime Minister speaking to the media at Vavuniya said the ceasefire between the government and the LTTE was the first step required for further negotiations towards achieving peace. He did say that the path ahead was not an easy one, but all efforts should be made to overcome the obstacles ahead.

Meanwhile the President issued an initial statement that the final agreement had not been shown her nor to the Cabinet before signature by the LTTE leader.

NEWS REVIEW

The Prime Minister had to admit this as correct but explained that there was no choice but to go ahead and sign it on the appointed day, as the LTTE had already signed it. He did not agree that the President had been ignored, but added that it was not possible to have given the extra time she sought to study it in depth.

● President's concerns

A few days later, the Presidential Secretariat issued the text of an 11-page letter to the Prime Minister from the President, making several observations strongly critical of the Ceasefire Agreement. In her studied observations on the Agreement that she said that final draft was shown to her only after the LTTE leader signed it and that it contained some clauses that "could impinge on national security concerns and would have to be reviewed by the Service Commanders and the National Security Council."

Although it was President Kumaratunga herself, in agreement with the LTTE, who agreed to Norway being facilitator in the Sri Lankan peace process in the year 2000, her letter said that provisions in the Ceasefire Agreement had made Norway more of a mediator or arbitrator than a facilitator. She categorically asked, "whether the nature of the mandate given to the Norwegian Government had changed to such an extent as to make it incompatible with the sovereign status of Sri Lanka?"

The letter made pointed reference to the inclusion of the phrase "line of control" referring to the checkpoints to facilitate the flow of goods and the movement of civilians from Government controlled areas and LTTE held areas and vice-versa. President Kumaratunga observed that the phrase 'line of control' "is a highly evocative expression in our region and also elsewhere in the world, where lines of control and demarcation have been endless sources of confusion, bitterness and tragedy." She was also critical of the fact that the foreign monitors have become the "final arbiters" in any dispute over the implementation of the Ceasefire Agreement.

President Kumaratunga posed the question as to why the Ceasefire Agreement makes no mention at all as to when talks with the LTTE will commence on the substantial political issues involved in bringing about peace. She noted this

as a significant omission in the Ceasefire Agreement and indicated that it did not tie down the LTTE to the need for negotiation in the future.

While assuring the Prime Minister of her support for the peace process, which she says is a continuation of what she began in 1995, President Kumaratunga said that better results could be achieved if there is more frank consultation with her by the Prime Minister, so that they could jointly act with better understanding of experiences from the past.

If there was a clear note of ire in the letter, the President sought to offset it by her final assurance that she was supportive of the peace process, and of this being a continuation of a process that was initiated by her.

Contradicting the President on the issue of lack of consultation, cabinet spokesman and Constitutional Affairs Minister, Prof. G L Peiris, told journalists that the draft was discussed at two cabinet meetings. The Government's response to the President's expressed concerns was that in essence and substance the present Ceasefire Agreement was no different to the Cessation of Hostilities Agreement signed between the PA Government and the LTTE in January 1995, although the current agreement had certain added provisions, which it said was beneficial for confidence building and the peace process. As foreign governments, particularly India, the United States, Britain and Canada expressed their support for the Ceasefire Agreement, and sensing that the President's publicly expressed comments were out of step with local and international opinion, the President's Office was quick to respond that the President was at no time interested in jeopardizing or torpedoing the agreement, and reiterated that she was fully supportive of the peace process.

At the Cabinet meeting held on March 7, the President expressed concern at media reports that continued to claim she was attempting to scuttle the peace process. She told the cabinet that she would in no way stand in the way of the Peace Process, and had reminded Ministers that she had always championed the cause of peace and even risked her life in the cause of peace. The somewhat tense Cabinet meeting came to an end with the Prime Minister light heartedly suggesting that the need now seemed to be a Memorandum of Understanding on a ceasefire between the President and Prime Minister, which won the laughter of all including the President.

● Parliamentary debate

However, as the criticism of the Agreement increased especially from the JVP, the Sinhala Urumaya and some sections of the PA (especially with local government polls just round the corner), Prime Minister Ranil Wickremesinghe was quick to respond to a request by the Leader of the Opposition for a Parliamentary debate on the Agreement, and agreed to an early date for it.

The debate that took place on March 4 and 5 was a success for the Government and the Prime Minister in particular. He opened the debate with a very statesmanlike speech that recalled the history of the ethnic crisis in Sri Lanka, and made a plea to all parties not to approach the issue of this agreement for narrow political purposes, and repeat the errors of the past. His tone of voice and the examples he gave of the previous failures in efforts to solve the crisis such as the Bandaranaike-Chelvanayakam Pact, the Dudley-Chelvanayakam Pact, District Councils and Provincial Councils, exposed the guilt of all parties involved in this futile and tragic exercise, including the UNP that he led today. In an oblique reference to the JVP, although not by name, he appealed to those who were responsible for all the violence that led to the departure of the IPKF in 1999, not to treat the Norwegians in the same manner. He said the Norwegians should be accused of nothing, as they were acting on the invitation of both the PA and the UNP, as well as, the LTTE.

The Prime Minister sought to allay fears of the Opposition by ensuring that the armed forces will be kept on constant alert due to the high level of mistrust between the two parties. He said that: "while moving ahead on the peace process we will entrust our armed forces with the responsibility of safeguarding any threat to our national security. In this context I will do what is necessary to strengthen, reform and retrain our armed forces."

Concluding his speech the Prime Minister said "today we are living in a fractured and fragmented country. It is important to unite the country, which has been fragmented over the years and put it back. He wound up quoting Abraham Lincoln: "Let us strive to finish the work we are in; to bind up the nation's wounds." It was statesmanship of a high order rarely seen in Parliament in recent times, and won much respect for the Prime Minister even from his critics in Opposition.

Virtually cutting his teeth as Leader of the Opposition, Mr. Mahinda Rajapakse of the PA, followed in the measured tones of the Prime Minister,

laying emphasis on some of the doubts raised by the President in her letter, but overall calling for a consensual approach to the matter, whereby any errors could be corrected. With his having set this tone as leader of the Opposition, it was not possible for other speakers of the PA to go into extremes of opposition. However, MEP leader Mr. Dinesh Gunawardane, a constituent party of the PA, warned against any attempts to lift the ban on the LTTE, while underscoring the possible threats to the country's sovereignty. The JVP, as expected condemned the Agreement as a complete sell out of Sri Lankan sovereignty to the LTTE through the agency of the Norwegians, and threatened to organize the masses against it.

However, the biggest advantage for the Government came from the PA itself, in the form of the Rev. Baddegama Samitha Thera, MP, the first Buddhist monk elected to Parliament, who is a member of the LSSP that is so far unequivocal in its support for the Agreement, and even openly critical of the President's declared reservations about it.

In words rarely to be heard from a Buddhist monk on the ethnic issue, the Rev. Baddegama Samitha Thera said the Agreement demanded and deserved support from all. He was critical of those who were "nit-picking" about certain clauses in the agreement and called on all who valued peace to support the agreement. He too spoke at length on the need not to repeat the errors of the past in seeking to gain cheap and narrow political gain through the ethnic crisis, and called for a united stand in support for peace. He recalled the warning by Dr. Colvin R de Silva in the speech on the Sinhala Only Bill in 1956 that one language would mean two nations, while two languages would ensure one nation. He called for national unity and peace to be considered the highest priority, and therefore for all to extend support to the Prime Minister in his efforts to achieve peace. This speech, although coming from a single Buddhist monk made the "Daily News" of the next day to lead with it, giving it the headline "Bhikkhus back peace process - Ven. Samitha Thera".

Two days later, however, a delegation of Buddhist monks handed over a letter of protest against the Ceasefire Agreement and the role of Norway to the Norwegian Embassy in Colombo.

Ironically, sections of the media and some Buddhist organisations that questioned the very propriety of a Buddhist monk sitting in Parliament, have now found in Ven. Samitha Thera a new hero in the campaign for peace.

The Government had the better of it in the two-day debate. The Prime Minister readily agreed to a request by the Leader of the Opposition, earlier proposed by the LSSP, for a Parliamentary Committee to oversee the implementation of the Ceasefire Agreement.

However, one significant contribution, dealing with another aspect of the Agreement came from Mr. Douglas Devananda, leader of the EPDP which cannot be counted as a friend of the LTTE. He expressed support for the Ceasefire Agreement, and said it was the sincere desire of his party to see that the steps that follow too would be successful. However he had much to criticise the LTTE, and to warn of placing too much trust in it. He said: "The people of this country, the diplomatic community and the international community are well aware of the culprits who, lacking faith in negotiations and in democracy, sabotaged the negotiations of the past," adding, "The LTTE used every stage of negotiations to their own advantage and further attempted to strengthen themselves militarily. They did not in honesty seek any lasting political solution. They could not even come to terms with the people's support for a political solution." He added that: "Judging from the past, one is not sure whether the LTTE is joining the peace process with real faith in such a process, or an LTTE weakened by the international events which followed the attack on American cities on September 11, 2001 by the bin Laden group has only compelled it to buy time as part of its overall tactics."

● Disarming para-military groups

The EPDP leader's main concern, apart from mistrust of the LTTE's motives in signing the agreement, was the clause in it that required all other Tamil militia groups to surrender their arms within 30 days of signing of agreement, or for their members to come under the ambit of the armed forces and to serve in areas outside the North and East. The EPDP, he said carried arms only to protect themselves from the LTTE. To ask that they and other such organisations be disarmed, would expose them to grave danger, and the further proviso that those who retained arms should come under the armed forces and serve in areas outside the north and East, was giving free rein to the LTTE in these areas, and preventing any other political activity from being carried out in the North & East, other than by the LTTE.

He added that the day the LTTE declares publicly that it would not engage in fratricide, political killings, threats and

harassments and that political dissent would be respected in the North and East and they implement these promises, they (EPDP) would gladly and willingly part with their weapons, but continue political work among the people.

The requirement that Tamil political parties that carry arms and Tamil paramilitary groups surrender their weapons or be absorbed into the army has become a major problem for these parties. The EPRLF (Perumal faction) says that the group carries arms provided by the Government itself for their protection, and denies that it is para-military group. PLOTE and TELO have para-military groups. Their carrying out any political activity that is opposed or even critical of the LTTE in the North & East is effectively prevented by the requirement in the Agreement that they be disarmed. PLOTE has already begun surrendering the weapons of their cadres in Vavuniya. TELO has made no move yet and similarly the EPRLF (P). But by D+30 days, i.e. 30 days from signing the agreement the military will hunt them for their weapons.

While these groups express concern for their own safety and inability to carry out political activity, there is another side to this issue too. Some of these paramilitary groups, particularly PLOTE and

TELO have used their armed cadres to carry out extortion from the people, particularly in the Vavuniya area. It is the view of some analysts that although the reason for including this clause may not be the same, that by absorbing auxiliary groups that work side by side with the army, to the regular forces, the Government is better placed as the LTTE would no longer be able to cite the existence of these groups as an excuse in the event of any violation of the Ceasefire Agreement. These Tamil groups consider themselves as political parties and would not want to be absorbed into the military. It is certainly a complex issue. Whatever the problems, there is little doubt that the LTTE will have its way with regard to the future of these armed or unarmed Tamil political groups.

Commenting on these developments "The Hindu" (International) of 07 March 2002 said: "Sri Lanka's former Tamil militant groups, which gave up the armed struggle in 1987 at India's persuasion, are now coming to grips with the reality that their decision to join the country's democratic political mainstream has got them nowhere. After nearly 15 years of holding their own as political parties in and outside Parliament, these anti-LTTE outfits of ex-militants now find themselves

facing total oblivion. The ceasefire agreement between the Government and the LTTE has effectively seen to that. It has given on a platter to the Tigers what they tried so hard to do all these years with guns and suicide bombers: get rid of all their political rivals."

● "Pongu Thamil" Campaign

With no Tamil party other than those in the Tamil National Alliance (TNA) who act in support of the LTTE being able to function in the North and East, the LTTE has already begun to openly carry out its political activities in these areas, with no obstruction from the security services. The main aspect of this is the "Pongu Thamil" or Tamil Awakening campaign that was initially launched in Mannar, later held in Batticaloa before the Ceasefire Agreement was signed, and had its biggest show at Vavuniya, after the Agreement. The "Pongu Thamil" campaign is described as a Tamil cultural festival laying emphasis on Tamil identity. However, there is little doubt that it has both the blessings and the organisational hand of the LTTE behind it. The first show in Mannar is reported to have had about 25,000 participants. The one at Batticaloa about a week later is said to have been double in size.



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A delegation from "Satyodaya" comprising Fr. Paul Caspersz, S Rajalingam, Rohan Benjamin, and K Babuji, who visited Batticaloa on a fact finding mission at the time of the celebrations has this to say: "First, all sections of the people are unanimous in their desire for an end to the war and violence and for the restoration of peace. The first person we met in Batticaloa town told us, "The dogs went scampering under the beds and tables when they heard the guns fire, so now even they want peace." Second, after peace negotiations began following the ceasefire of 24 December there is tremendous hope, bordering on certainty, that this time the negotiations will be successful. There will be peace with honour for all. "At the "Pongu Thamil" or "Tamils Awake" celebrations which were held in Batticaloa the day after our arrival our impressions were confirmed. We were able to see for ourselves the massive support given to the peace process by the several thousands who flocked to the spacious grounds for the celebrations. Some Tiger groups used the opportunity to cry themselves hoarse with the demand for de-proscription, but the loudest and most persuasive cry of the People was for a just peace."

The crowd at the Vavuniya celebrations of "Pongu Thamil" is reported at anything from 50 to 70 thousand. By any account it was massive. Journalists who covered it had differing reports, but there was general agreement that the LTTE played a major role in its organisation and success. "Donations" were obtained from traders or anyone carrying out any occupation in the area. The principals of schools were asked to bring all their students, dressed in the proper manner, wearing the LTTE rosettes; carrying pictures of Prabhakaran with the caption "Tamil is our life" (Thamil Engal Uyir); the children had been taught to sing pro-LTTE songs. All shops and trade stalls had to be closed. The celebrations went on through the night, and many loud de-

mands were made for the de-proscription of the LTTE, especially by MPs of the parties of the TNA who are a regular part of this new road show of Tamil culture and awakening. Several speakers spoke of the dream of a separate homeland for the Tamils being a reality very soon.

The writ of the LTTE to close down shops applied to Sinhala traders at Vavuniya too. The slogans shouted were largely anti-military and one of the highlights of the festival was the burning of a large military boot, symbolizing military oppression. The LTTE also raised funds on this occasion by screening and selling video recordings of the capture of the Mullaitivu Army Camp and also the attack of the Katunayake Air Force Base and civilian airport. It is said that this led to considerable mutterings of discontent in the Army camps.

● Up Country Tamils

An event of special significance at the Vavuniya event was the presence of Mr. P. Chandrasekaran, leader of the Up Country People's Organization, a Minister of non-Cabinet rank at the time (since elevated to Cabinet rank) who, making a fiery speech to the huge crowd present said that 1.5 million Tamils of the Up Country fully supported the struggle of the Tamils for a separate state, and that very soon the Up Country Tamils too would begin agitation for the right to self-determination and the establishing of a separate state in their own homeland. This was worry enough for Prime Minister Ranil Wickremasinghe, in defusing whatever fears the Sinhalese have about the Ceasefire Agreement and its outcome. Mr. Chandrasekaran does not have much of a following among the Up Country Tamils, and his election to Parliament was largely due to his alliance with the ruling United National Front (UNF). However, the holding of a Cabinet portfolio will enable him to expand his support base in the coming months.

If this was not worry enough for the


Prime Minister, there was also the sudden decision by Minister Arumugan Thondaman, leader of the CWC, to visit the Vanni and meet with the leaders of the LTTE. All this activity gave some cause for credence and fear among the Sinhalese, easily exploitable by extremist groups, that there were moves for an axis with the LTTE and the Up Country Tamil youth. This is something the LTTE failed to achieve through the long years of leadership of the Up Country Tamils by the late Mr. S. Thondaman.

The LTTE has announced it will soon hold "Pongu Thamil" festivals in Colombo, Nuwara Eliya and other places outside the North-East raising fears of the prospect of "Counter Sinhala Awakening" campaigns by extremist Sinhala groups. Not unpredictably, the Sihala Urumaya (SU), wrote to the Prime Minister asking him not to permit the holding of these festivals in these locations. The Secretary of the SU, Mr. Thilak Karunaratne said at a press conference that the Prime Minister had been informed that holding such an event especially in Colombo could well lead to clashes "turning Colombo into a reservoir of blood."

The SU in its letter to the Prime Minister states: "It is not possible that you are unaware of the fact that the LTTE, under cover of the MoU which you signed with that organization, are engaged in activities aimed at establishing control in areas they did not have access to previously... We predicted that the LTTE will use the ceasefire to launch a propaganda campaign to gather support from people in these areas to their separatist cause. It is this propaganda war that has found expression in the form of the so-called "cultural celebrations" such as the "Pongu Thamil" event."

The SU wants the Prime Minister to ban these events as being illegal. Legal or not, under the terms of the Ceasefire Agreement there appears to be hardly any possibility for the Prime Minister to prevent these festivals being held in places that are not under LTTE control after D+90, when the LTTE members are free to move in any part of the country, excluding security zones, and carry out any political activity. Any attempts to impose restrictions to such free movement and activity are likely to be considered by the LTTE as a breach of the agreement.

Meanwhile the SU and JVP have separately filed action in the Court of Appeal challenging the legality of the Ceasefire Agreement. They have been given leave to proceed.

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● Norway becomes mediator

The LTTE leader met with the Head of the Norwegian-led monitoring mission when Mr. Pirabaharan observed that the signing of the Ceasefire Agreement was an historic event. He said that the return to normalcy could be expedited if the opening of the A9 route - the Kandy - Jaffna road was expedited. He is reported to have assured retired General Trond Furuhojve that the LTTE will give its entire support to make the ceasefire effective and lead to the intended talks.

Meanwhile Norway, which so far played the role of facilitator in bringing the Government and LTTE to the negotiating table, has now confirmed its role as a mediator between the two parties. This news did not come from a Sri Lanka Government source but was made known when the Norwegian Foreign Minister, Jan Petersen, in a statement on Foreign Policy to the Norwegian Storting (Parliament) said: "Norway has been a mediator in the process of reaching an agreement. We have indicated our willingness to assist the parties in new attempts, since we have noted a new will to make progress."

Some political observers are concerned as to how Norway as mediator could also be arbitrator in disputes over

implementation of the Ceasefire Agreement, and also not only be a party but head the International Monitoring Mission, comprising members from Norway and the other three Nordic countries.

Meanwhile the LTTE has already (March 9) announced its 12 representatives to serve on the 6 local monitoring committees the ceasefire agreement. The names were disclosed as the international monitors from the Nordic countries were preparing to open their headquarters in the Kilinochchi District. The monitoring missions will be located in the districts of Jaffna, Mannar, Vavuniya, Trincomalee, Batticaloa and Ampara, but will have access to other areas too. The names submitted by the LTTE are: Jaffna : Fr. Benedict Gnanaratnam, the Parish Priest, Pantharippu and Mr. Asai Pillai Kailasapillai, an audit accountant; Vavuniya : Mr. Velupillai Sivanathan and engineer and Mr. K. Ratneshwara Kurukkal, a chartered accountant; Mannar : Fr. Anthony Xavier Cruz and Mr. Mariyanagam Cruz, Assistant Director of Education; Batticaloa : Mr. K. Chinniah, retired officer of the administrative service and Mr. K. Krishnapillai a retired school principal; Ampara : Mr. S. Soundaranayagam, Attorney-at-law and Mr. R. Shanmuganathan, Assistant Director of Education;

and Trincomalee : Mr. K. Sivapalan, Attorney-at-law and Mr. Selvarajah Dharmalingam, retired Grama Sevaka.

● LTTE sets up offices

With the Ceasefire Agreement permitting free political activity to the LTTE, it has opened its first political office at Government controlled Vavuniya, signaling their entry into the political scene. The first office was opened at Kurukkalmadam, 01 km from the LTTE opens offices.

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The LTTE announced they would be setting up offices in the Batticaloa, Trincomalee, Mannar and Ampara districts in the coming few weeks. The moves to establish political offices come as rival Tamil groups began withdrawing from their positions held earlier in key towns where they dominated the scene over the past decade.

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The Bishop of Jaffna, Thomas Savunderanayagam, speaking to the foreign media has called on the Sri Lankan Government and the LTTE to begin early talks to convert the current ceasefire into a permanent peace. "Both sides should move towards negotiations so that there is a political settlement to the problems of the Tamils through devolution," Rev. Savunderanayagam, who heads the Catholic Church in the Peninsula, said.

The Tamil political parties that have now been compelled to give up their arms claim that with the signing of the Ceasefire Agreement the path has been made easy for the LTTE to levy its own "taxes" from the people. Earlier, there were many allegations that these rival political parties also levied "taxes" especially in Vavuniya. There are reports that the LTTE collects 30 per cent on goods taken to the Vanni area, and no change in this has been made since the volume of goods increased after the Government lifted restrictions on the transport of goods, bringing in much more revenue to the LTTE as well. All public servants in the areas held by the Government are also required under compulsion to give a minimum of 20 per cent of their monthly earnings to the LTTE. It is a matter of silent compliance through fear.

Commenting on these illegal levies on the people, this is what the "Sathyodaya" team that recently visited Batticaloa District led by Fr. Paul Caspersz has to say: "As for extortion the team learnt that this was not merely a post-ceasefire phenomenon, but in the form of "Taxes to the Finance Unit" had already been taking place for months before the ceasefire. Before and after the ceasefire this form of "tax" payment often seemed to pass far beyond the bounds of what might be considered to be legitimate taxation and to be pure and simple unjustifiable extortion. ... There have undoubtedly been cases both of forced abduction and extortion. The international ceasefire monitors will almost certainly investigate them. Who is guilty of these violations of human rights is yet to be known. While some residents tell us that these are acts of the essence of Tiger operations in their area, the Tigers have on more than one occasion denied responsibility."

● The Muslim factor

There are signs that the leader of the SLMC Mr. Rauff Hakeem, whose expulsion from the PA led to series of developments resulting in its ultimate defeat in the last elections, is in anyway happy about the situation of the Muslims vis-à-vis the Ceasefire Agreement which

makes only a passing reference to the 'Muslim factor': "The Parties further recognise that groups that are not directly party to the conflict are also suffering the consequences of it. This is particularly the case as regards the Muslim population."

A SLMC spokesman said that it will be increasingly difficult for Mr. Hakeem and any other Muslim politician to remain silent about how the Ceasefire will ensure the safety and rights of the Muslims, and about what plans the Government and LTTE have to ensure the rights of the Muslims in any future negotiations.

In fact speaking to the "Times of India", recently Mr. Hakeem said that his community had not benefited sufficiently from the permanent ceasefire, and the only respite for the Muslims would be if the ceasefire were monitored effectively. He said the LTTE continued to harass and extort from Muslims in the East of the country, despite the ceasefire. Mr. Hakeem said that the SLMC had tried to include certain clauses beneficial to the Muslims in the Ceasefire Agreement, but was unable to reach a compromise on the issue. "In the Ceasefire Agreement it looks as if the Muslims have been lumped together with the residue" he said.

Admitting there had been a slight de-escalation of the harassment faced by the Muslims in the East after the Ceasefire Agreement, Mr Hakeem referred to reports in recent months (of the unilateral ceasefire) of extortions, kidnapping and stealing of vehicles from Muslims by the LTTE for fund raising purposes. Dozens of Muslim families in the North & East who were to make the annual Haj Pilgrimage last month, had to cancel their plans after the LTTE demanded huge sums of money from them, Mr. Hakeem added.

Hakeem said the only hope for the Muslims would be if there was effective monitoring of the cease-fire, which states clearly that either party cannot harass or extort civilians. "Our only salvation for the moment is for the cease-fire to be enforced properly. It is incumbent on the monitoring groups to ensure that the Muslims are not harassed," he said. Hakeem said the Muslims would look at the peace process positively but were not entirely confident about it. "We don't want to approach it with a lack of faith but it does not mean we have confidence. We will have to watch and see," he added.

Senior PA Member of Parliament and former minister Mr. A. H. M. Fowzie was more outspoken on the matter. While welcoming the ceasefire between the Government and LTTE, he maintained that the Government had failed to ensure

the security of the Muslims in the agreement. He added that: "Reports from the East are very disturbing. There's a lot of disillusionment and disappointment among the Muslims over the failure by the Government to take adequate measures in the Ceasefire Agreement to ensure their safety."

Strange as it may seem, the Sihala Urumaya too has taken up the cause of the Muslims in its own campaign against the Ceasefire Agreement and so has the JVP.

● Rifts in the PA

While the main focus these days is on the Ceasefire Agreement and its aftermath, the opposition PA led by President Chandrika Kumaratunga is showing signs of major rifts within it. The main cause of the trouble is the announcement by Mr. Anura Bandaranaike that he would be the next PA nominee for the Presidency, and his snide comments belittling the new Leader of the Opposition, Mr. Mahinda Rajapakse. Mr. Bandaranaike added hereditary rights to leadership of the SLFP, the main constituent of the PA, to his other claims of political experience, and referred to Mr. Mahinda Rajapakse as being only a 'street fighter'.

Mr. Rajapakse has so far pulled his punches in the battle, except to state that even a street fighter requires good organizing skills, and the ability to take quick decisions. There is little doubt that President Kumaratunga is not in anyway happy that Mr. Rajapakse was the choice of the larger number of PA MPs and SLFP members to lead the Opposition. As senior vice president of the SLFP he has a clear stake in any future leadership contest within the SLFP, and it now appears that President Kumaratunga would not be happy to see her mantle going out of the family to the Rajapakse's from Hambantota. In fact Mr. Anura Bandaranaike has asserted that he is a national leader, with both parents having been Prime Ministers and his sister the President, while Mr. Rajapakse is only a district leader. Mr. Rajapakse's observation is that the contest for the presidency is far away and there is no need to bother about it, just now. But he has made it very clear that he will certainly be in the running to be the PA candidate.

However, there is every sign that in the coming months the in-fighting within the PA will increase, specially in the SLFP, as it did during the previous 17 year regime of the UNP, denying the country of an effective democratic opposition.

● UNP - rifts and strategies

All is not well within the UNP too. There appears to be an open clash for power between the Prime Minister Ranil Wickremesinghe and the Minister for Power and Energy, his deputy leader Mr. Karu Jayasuriya. UNP insiders say that the decision by the PM to give the portfolio of Power & Energy in the midst of a grave power crisis was to weaken the position of Karu Jayasuriya. The power-cuts, lasting several hours every day, is as unpopular as it is damaging to the economy. On being appointed Minister, Jaya-suriya made a pledge to resign from office if the power crisis is not solved within six months from January 1, 2002.

Meanwhile, the Prime Minister has decided to preside over meetings of the officials of the Ceylon Electricity Board and make public announcements about possible solutions to the power crisis. Barely a week after the Prime Minister gave the public the assurance that the power cuts would not be extended from the then prevailing two-and-a-half hours a day, the Ceylon Electricity Board had to announce the increase of the power cut to five hours a day. The Prime Minister had to make an apology to the public for the increased power cuts.

With speedy action being taken to import heavy duty generators, with little respect for accepted tender procedures, and signs that the long awaited rains may in fact come in time, Mr. Jayasuriya may not have to keep to his promise of resigning at the end of six months. But, the rifts within the UNP remain. It is learnt that most of the names submitted by Mr. Jayasuriya for the forthcoming local elections have been turned down. The Prime Minister in fact asked Mr. Navin Dissanayake, the son-in-law of Karu Jayasuriya, and son of the late Gamini Dissanayake to resign from all his offices, including that of a deputy minister when he submitted his resignation from being the UNP organiser for Nuwara Eliya, as his nominees for the local polls had been deleted.

● An expanded Cabinet

The wait was of no avail. Prime Minister Ranil Wickremesinghe did not swear in some of his close aides in the UNP as Cabinet Ministers in the original swearing in ceremony in December 2001, when a Cabinet of 25 ministers, and a large number of ministers of non-cabinet rank and deputy ministers were sworn in, making a total of 63. Eight places were kept for possible cross-overs from the PA, who were talking of supporting the Prime Minister to form a National Government. But the much anticipated cross-over did not materialise.

Therefore, the Prime Minister saw to it that eight new Cabinet Ministers were sworn in on February 28. The swearing in was delayed by several days due to the absence of the President or the Prime Minister. While the Prime Minister could not get the expected cross-overs from the PA, President Chandrika Kumaratunga was certainly unhappy at having to give the additional portfolio of Samurdhi Affairs to her erstwhile cabinet minister turned arch rival Mr. S. B. Dissanayake. At the original swearing in last December, she refused to give this portfolio to Mr. Dissanayake, as some matters about how he handled funds as Samurdhi Affairs Minister in her Government were under investigation by the Bribery Commission. The Commission has since informed that the file on the subject has been closed. Therefore, it was clearly with much displeasure that the President had to swear in Mr. Dissanayake, who is already Minister of Agriculture, as Minister of Samurdhi Affairs, too.

● US Warning to LTTE

The United States in an official statement issued March 11, cautioned the LTTE that it faced the prospect of further isolation internationally, and do harm to Sri Lanka's Tamils it claims to represent, unless it honoured the Ceasefire Agreement with the Government of Sri Lanka. The unusually hard-hitting statement came in the wake of many reports that the LTTE was still engaged in the

smuggling of weapons, recruitment of child soldiers, abductions, ransom demands, collection of protection money and generally threatening the people in areas both within and out of its control, especially in the East.

The stick and carrot statement also said the US would respond positively to the LTTE if it chooses the path of peace and ends its reliance on terrorism, and the demand for a separate Eelam.

Following is the text of the statement issued through the US Embassy in Colombo 11 March:

"We have heard credible reports that the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) are engaged in activities that could jeopardize the recent indefinite ceasefire accord reached with the Sri Lankan Government.

"These reports recount increased LTTE recruitment in Sri Lanka's north an east, including children, as well as kidnapping and extortion, especially of Muslims. To be fair, we understand that incidents of recruitment, kidnapping and extortion have apparently decreased in recent days, a trend that we hope will continue.

"There also have been credible reports of LTTE resupply operations since the ceasefire. Continued smuggling of weapons by the LTTE could undermine the trust needed to move from a cessation of hostilities to a lasting peace.

"The US understands that both sides, not just the LTTE, have responsibilities under the terms of the ceasefire accord. In the current international context, however, in which terrorism is being condemned in more and more countries, the LTTE should be especially vigilant about observing the terms of the ceasefire accord. If it does not, it will increase its international isolation and do harm to the group it claims to represent, Sri Lanka's Tamils, who earnestly want an end to the war. On the other hand if the LTTE chooses the path of peace, ends its reliance on terrorism, accepts that an independent "Eelam" is both unobtainable and unnecessary, and honours democratic

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and human rights norms, the US will respond positively.

"We urge that the government and LTTE take advantage of the ceasefire accord, and work with the Norwegian government to negotiate a permanent settlement of the conflict."

● **LTTE Dismayed**

The Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam Monday denied categorically the accusations levelled against the organisation that it is involved in activities that could jeopardise the permanent truce reached between the Sri Lankan government and itself and which came into effect on February 22.

Mr. Anton Balasingham, chief negotiator and a senior leader of the LTTE, commenting on the press statement released by the United States Embassy in Colombo said that the LTTE leadership had issued strict instructions to all its cadres in the North East to strictly observe the terms, conditions, ground rules and other modalities enunciated in the ceasefire agreement.

"Those [LTTE] members who are found guilty of violating the ceasefire will be severely punished," Mr. Balasingham said. Expressing reservations over the reports the US embassy claimed "credible," Mr. Balasingham explained that elements and forces seeking to subvert the peace process are engaged in criminal activities in the name of the LTTE in bid to discredit the organisation.

"We wish to assure the US government that the LTTE is sincerely and seriously committed to peace and to a peace process aimed at a negotiated political settlement," Mr. Balasingham said.

"We are surprised and dismayed that the US Embassy has thought it a proper protocol to issue a critical statement on ceasefire violations at this critical time when an international team of monitors are assuming responsibilities to supervise the agreement. Yet, we are encouraged by the fact the US government is seriously concerned about the establishment of peace and stability in the island and had appealed to both parties in conflict to observe the terms of the accord," Mr. Balasingham said.

● **PTA Suspects to be Released**

Following several campaigns of fasting by LTTE suspects held in prisons under the Prevention of Terrorism Act (PTA), the Government has decided to discharge all those against whom no charges can be framed, and to expedite bringing to Courts those on whom indictments could be served.

The Attorney General has agreed to this procedure as demanded by the suspects held in custody, and suggested by the Prime Minister.

Dr. Jayalath Jayawardana, Minister of

Reconstruction, Rehabilitation and Refugee relief, took a letter to this effect from the Attorney General to LTTE suspects being held at the Kalutara Prison, who were carrying out a fast and persuaded them to give up their fast. The AG's Department is reportedly acting with speed on this matter.

This is considered by Government as a further measure aimed at building of trust between the Government and LTTE and creating conditions conducive for the peace process.

● **Child Recruitment**

At least 18 more children have reportedly been recruited as soldiers by the armed political group, the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE), in the Vavuniya district in Sri Lanka, the London-based human rights organisation, Amnesty International, said in a statement dated 11 March 2002.

In its previous statement issued on 14 February 2002, the AI expressed concern for the safety of the following children, who are thought to have been recruited as combatants by the LTTE:

Duncy Mary (f), aged 15; Sudharshini Tharmalingam (f), aged 12; Gunasekaram Kananayagam (m), aged 16; Kathiresan Ruban (m), aged 16; Ravindran Sanjiv (m), aged 13; Anantharasa Gunaseelan (m), aged 14; Baba Thambirasa (m), aged 12; Mahendran Kapilan (m), aged 16; Mathuraveeran Selvarasa (m), aged 15; Thiyagarajah Suthaharan (m), aged 12; Selvaraji Suthahar (m), aged 13; Vellaisamy John (m), aged 13; Selvarasa Vishaharan (m), aged 15.

Duncy Mary was last seen as she returned from a tuition class near a bus stand in Tannamunai, north of Batticaloa town, eastern Sri Lanka on 11 February. She is a Grade 9 student at St. Joseph school in Tannamunai, where she has reportedly excelled in sports. She is originally from Jaffna, northern Sri Lanka, but together with her family was displaced from there in 1995.

Kathiresan Ruban, Ravindran Sanjiv and Anantharasa Gunaseelan were reportedly among a group of seven boys who were recruited by the LTTE on 2 January at Chettikulam, Vavuniya district.

Thiyagarajah Suthaharan, Selvaraji Suthahar and Vellaisamy John told their parents on 10 December 2001 that they were going to play at the playground in Sivapuram, Vavuniya district, but they did not return home afterwards.

The latest statement (11 March) of the AI lists the following 18 more children who have been recruited:

Selvarajah Selvalogani (f), aged 16; Rasalingam Selvarajah (m), aged 15; Ranjan Ravikumar (m), aged 12; Nahandram Nagulendran (m), aged 14; Samikandu Sivasothy (m), aged 14; Thangarasa Kangatharan (m), aged 15; Sellaiya

Logeswaran (m), aged 15; Ganesalingam Jeevakanthan (m), aged 16; Balasingam Sasikumar (m), aged 16; Sivapalan Sivaneshan (m), aged 15; Raveendran Sanjiv (m), aged 13; Viraputharan Gavanashan (m), aged 16; Anantharajah Keenseelan (m), aged 13; five others, names not known.

Rasalingam Selvarajah and Ranjan Ravikumar, both students from Kalmadu, were last seen on 1 March when they attended a *Pongu Tamil* (Tamil awakening) program held in Vavuniya town.

Samikandu Sivasothy, who was living at the Poonthotam camp for internally displaced people, did not return home after he went to play at the local playground on 26 February. Another student living at the camp, Selvarajah Selvalogani, was last seen on 28 February.

Sellaiya Logeswaran and Thangarasa Kangatharan, both students from Tharanikulam, Sasthreekulankulam, were last seen on 25 February. They are suspected to have been recruited by the LTTE with two others whose names are not known.

Ganesalingam Jeevakanthan, from Thonikal, who was working at a communication center in Vavuniya town, was last seen on 16 February. He did not return home from work that day.

Balasingam Sasikumar, Sivapalan Sivaneshan, Raveendran Sanjiv, Viraputharan Gavanashan and Anantharajah Keenseelan were last seen on 2 January when they went to the camp of the Eelam People's Revolutionary Liberation Front (EPRLF) (Premachandran faction). According to eyewitnesses, at around 6pm they were taken through the jungle in the direction of areas under the control of the LTTE. Nahandram Nagulendram, a student at the Tamil *maha vidyalam* (school) in Vavuniya town, was allegedly similarly recruited by members of the EPRLF (Premachandran faction) on 24 February, together with three others whose names are not known to Amnesty International.

Since Amnesty International appealed to the leadership of the LTTE in mid-February, the group is known to have started investigations into the alleged recruitment of children. Parents of several of the children recruited in and around Vavuniya town were reportedly called to an LTTE office in the area and questioned about how their children were allegedly recruited. None of the children have yet returned home, and during the meeting the LTTE leaders apparently denied that these children had been recruited. Similarly, a team of LTTE members have reportedly arrived in Batticaloa district to investigate reports that the LTTE have recruited children as combatants and committed other human rights abuses in the area. ●

'Let us bind up the nation's wounds'

"Today, we are living in a fractured and a fragmented country. It is important to unite the country, which has been fragmented over the years and put it back. In the words of Abraham Lincoln, let me quote, 'Let us strive on to finish the work we are in; to bind up the nation's wounds,'" Prime Minister Ranil Wickremesinghe told parliament on 4 March when he opened the special two-day debate on the ceasefire agreement between the Government and the LTTE. Defending some controversial clauses in the agreement and sharply rebuking some of his critics, the Prime Minister said, "Often where one stands on an issue depends on where one sits at that particular time and this is especially the case in Sri Lankan politics, where parochial, opportunistic and divisive politics often overwhelm statesmanship and a united national outlook."

Following is the text of the Premier's speech:

"It is the Government's policy to keep this House informed of each new development on our search for a political solution to the ethnic crisis. This is why I readily agreed with the request of the Leader of the Opposition for a debate. All of us who are citizens of this country are stakeholders in the peace process. What we say and do here would have an impact on 18 million people. It is the same people who gave this Government a mandate to bring a negotiated political solution to the ongoing North East conflict, while safeguarding the country's territorial integrity. It is a mandate to end the North East conflict.

Our approach to finding a political solution is based on the past experiences of negotiating with the LTTE. I have had the opportunity starting from the Thimpu talks, to participate in or to observe all developments at close quarters either from the Government side or from the Opposition.

I have also had time to analyse and reflect on the mistakes we all have made. Therefore this time, our approach is going to be a step-by-step process, where each step stands on its own, but is sequentially connected to the next. The first step was to deal with the humanitarian issues that concerned the Tamil people. The previous rounds of negotiations with the LTTE broke down on the humanitarian issue. We have tried a different approach to resolve the humanitarian issue. As the new UNF Government we gave priority to implementing this pledge. Thus, when we relaxed the ban on the transportation of goods to the Vanni there were two unilateral declaration of cessation of hostilities in place; one by the LTTE and the other by the Government.

The two declarations whose terms and conditions were different have now been replaced by a mutually agreed and more stable cease-fire. The next step will be talks about talks which will lead to political negotiations. Since there are crucial issues including the ban, to be addressed by both sides prior to the starting of talks, the agreement on political negotiations has to follow a stable Ceasefire Agreement. Otherwise, there would have been a further delay in arriving at the Ceasefire Agreement. This itself was an unhealthy situation since extending the two unilateral declarations on the cessation of hostilities created uncertainty especially in the East. In the Ceasefire Agreement, both parties have accepted as its overall objective the need to find a solution to the ongoing ethnic conflict in Sri Lanka. Furthermore, both parties have reiterated to the Government of Norway their commitment to begin talks as soon as possible. This is why a full implementation of the Ceasefire Agreement would take three months, the period we think necessary to begin talks.

What was signed on the 22nd of February was a Ceasefire Agreement.

It was not aimed at arriving at a final political solution to this important national problem. But this Agreement takes us half way down the road to not only meeting the concerns of the LTTE but also towards addressing important issues raised by the Tamil population regarding discrimination.

Humanitarian issues associated with the Ceasefire Agreement address several day-to-day problems faced by the Tamil people by ensuring free movement of people and goods throughout the country. This would present the people in the North and East with the Government service or businesses. This is a right that should be available to all Sri Lankans. Therefore, we as a Government will ensure that all Sri Lankans are given access to the same quality of life regardless of race, sex, religion or where they live. When we achieve this and the people of this country believe that they can live in security without discrimination and harassment, we as a nation and society would have travelled half way down the road to peace. What remains thereafter would be to determine a constitutional framework that would ensure equality of treatment and the extent to which powers should be devolved to the provinces so as to enable the people in these areas to determine their own social and economic future, and cultural advancement. The Agreement is based on the recognition that civilians, who are not directly a party to the conflict, are also suffering and as such, require both parties to take confidence building measures with the aim of restoring normalcy to all inhabitants of Sri Lanka. It also prohibits both parties from engaging in hostile actions such as abductions, extortion and harassment. This Agreement is wide enough to cover the unacceptable incidents that occurred during the period when the two unilateral declarations were in force. This includes extortion of money from traders - especially Muslims, and the abduction of people in the East. The Agreement is also wide enough to cover forcible recruitment of children by the LTTE. The Police have to maintain law and order in all these areas. One of the groups who were most affected by the hostile acts against civilians, are the Muslims and this Agreement specifically refers to the Muslim population

in this context. The Government is committed to ensuring that the Muslim population can live in safety and security in their villages in the North and East. Furthermore, we have taken steps to strengthen the Police in some of the troubled areas.

Under this Agreement the free movement of armed cadres of the LTTE is limited to the areas presently dominated by the LTTE. Outside these areas, the LTTE members have to be unarmed and are to be governed by the Agreement. While the Government is responsible for the civil administration throughout the country, we have no control over law and order on significant portions of land in the North and East. The armed units of the LTTE dominate these areas. The armed forces have so far been unable to regain control. We all know this is the reality but we do not want to speak about it. We have been fooling the people and in the process we have fooled ourselves. The forward defence lines in the Northern province demarcate the areas, dominated by the armed units of the LTTE. The then Government for the first time admitted to the areas in which we have no control in the Eastern Province in the Report on Census of Population in 2001. In the Districts of Trincomalee and Batticaloa, the census was fully carried out in 12 DS divisions, partially in 8 DS Divisions and could not be carried out in 3 DS divisions. If the writ of the Government ran in all parts of the Eastern Province, we would have been able to carry out the census without excluding any DS Divisions. In these provinces the two parties have to draw up lines of demarcation by D Day + 30. The monitoring mission will assist the two parties in drawing up the demarcation lines. Without such an exercise, separation of combatants in the Eastern Province, where there are no bunker lines (as in the case of the Northern Province), will not be possible. Therefore, it is incorrect to say that the Norwegian facilitators have been given the final responsibility for demarcating. Another important aspect of this Ceasefire Agreement is that there is provision for monitoring. The Agreement for Cessation of Hostilities signed in 1995 also made provision for monitoring though circumstance did not allow this to be implemented. The Draft Agreement to permit free movement of goods to the Vanni prepared in April

2001 also contained provision for monitoring by the Norwegian Government and this is now included in this Agreement. The monitoring provision is important to the Sri Lanka Government, which has always complained of the LTTE having violated the previous agreements.

This is not the first time a foreign country is helping to bring the two parties together in this long drawn conflict. India did this in 1987. The Indo-Lanka Accord further provided for a Peace Keeping Force. We sent them away. What was said of India then, is now being said of Norway by the same detractors. I tell them, do not make the same mistake again.

This Agreement has been welcomed by a vast majority of people in this country. However, many are still concerned as to the true intentions and motivations of the LTTE. Given the history of this conflict, it is not surprising that there is a high level of mistrust between the two parties. Therefore, while we go forward to implement this Agreement, we will continue to keep our armed forces on constant alert. Most Sri Lankans want us to move ahead with the peace process cautiously and a step at a time, while keeping or guard up at each stage. With this in mind, I have spoken to our soldiers and our military leaders and explained to them our thinking and our approach.

This dialogue has reaffirmed my belief, that all Sri Lankans want a lasting peace. While moving ahead on the peace process we will entrust our armed forces with the responsibility of safeguarding any threat to our national security. In this context, I will do what is necessary to strengthen, reform and retrain our armed forces. I have already begun work on this important task. Through this process, on an incremental basis, we would be able to build confidence on a solid foundation based on mutual respect. Then we can correspondingly disengage military involvement as the ground situation improves.

I will not go into the technical details of the Agreement, the Ministers speaking after me will undertake this responsibility. However, I wish to assure the House that the best minds in this country and abroad have studied the text. In fact, the Agreement is a continuation of the processes begun by the PA Government. It has since evolved into a much more comprehensive docu-

ment. The Government has acted in a responsible and prudent manner in drafting the Agreement. It should be seen as a reasonable and practical foundation on which a political solution to this seemingly intractable problem can be built upon and not as an end in itself.

Often where one stands on an issue depends on where one sits at that particular time and this is especially the case in Sri Lankan politics, where parochial, opportunistic and divisive politics often overwhelm statesmanship and a united national outlook.

Having engaged in politics for over two decades, I realise that this attitude is an intrinsic part of the Sri Lankan political process. This has been the very reason why this conflict has become almost impossible to solve. My intention is to seek a viable consensus for this most critical national issue bearing in mind the fact that the Government has a clear mandate from the people to search for a political solutions. We have to be mindful of the fact that this is the first instance in which the LTTE has accepted the alternative of a negotiated political solution to the crisis. That position was amply reflected in the statement made by the leader of the LTTE on November 27 last year.

We also have to be mindful of the fact that the international community has fully backed the policy of my Government at every stage. They too have called for political negotiations with a view to resolving this crisis. Finally, I would like to warn this House and the nation, as it has been the case with other peace processes around the world, the road to peace will have more pitfalls and setbacks than successes. Our collective character and resolve as a nation and society will be tested and challenged at every turn. Every setback will be criticised by our detractors, with an "I told you so" and successes, more often than not, will be trivialized or ignored. But our people yearn for peace and they plead that we unite as a nation to address this important cause ignoring political and philosophical allegiances. Today, we are living in a fractured and a fragmented country. It is important to unite the country, which has been fragmented over the years and put it back. In the words of Abraham Lincoln, let me quote, "Let us strive on to finish the work we are in; to bind up the nation's wounds." ●

Beyond the Ceasefire: Presidential Fury or Purposeful Cohabitation

Rajan Philips

After nineteen years of beggarly fighting, a permanent ceasefire agreement smells as good as permanent peace. It smells good for almost every section of Sri Lankan society, except for the predators who have political and material interests, or just plain psychopathic compulsions, in carrying on the beggarly fight. The ceasefire smells bravely on the embattled Sinhalese soldiers most of whom, like soldiers everywhere, are pushed into the army by the poverty of their parents, while the real predators in Colombo will never send their children to defend the 'line of control'. It is sweet smell for a whole generation of Tamil boys and girls for whom war has become the way of life. They will celebrate this peace and there is no better way to end their voluntary enrollment and involuntary conscription than to keep it (the peace) rolling. The ceasefire also offers a well-deserved respite to the millions (one would think) of Sinhalese, Tamils and Muslims who have been displaced, dispossessed and even disabled by nearly two decades of fighting.

Would it be too much for all these sections of Sri Lankans to ask President Kumaratunga, Prime Minister Wickremasinghe, LTTE Leader Prabhakaran, the JVP Politburo, the Muslim and Indian Tamil political leaders to desist from doing anything to undermine the current ceasefire agreement. The last few years have seen concerted attempts in different parts of the world to get out of prolonged conflict situations. In Northern Ireland, the emphasis has been on interim arrangements; in the Middle East, the Oslo Accord envisaged multiple stages with deadlines for each stage, while the Clinton and the recent Saudi proposals have focussed on the final status. Politically, Sri Lanka is not ready for identifying a staged path, an interim arrangement, a final status proposition, or a constitutional solution. Sri Lankans deserve a commitment from their politicians of consequence to remain committed to tackling the long list of unresolved matters incrementally, one by one, and as 'work-in-progress', while

avoiding the compulsive but fruitless constitutional gyrations of the past.

Error in protocol

The controversy over how President Kumaratunga was consulted in the preparation of the ceasefire agreement and her public criticism of the terms of the agreement show how fragile the situation is. The fact that she was not properly briefed is an error in protocol, but she need not have gone public with her criticisms of the agreement, thereby giving the excuse to the ever present hotheads to rush to Court for a ruling on the constitutionality of the agreement. Hopefully, their petition will be dismissed with the disdain it deserves.

The President's criticisms of the ceasefire agreement amount to legal pettifogging unworthy of the agreement's political import, and her assertion that the country's sovereignty has been compromised is no more than mendicant triumphalism. The reference to Kashmir is plain mischief. The ceasefire agreement, if it lasts, will protect the country's Holy Shrines, the Central Bank, the Trade Centre and the National Airport more than they were ever protected by the island's legal sovereignty. Ordinary Sri Lankans can, once again, get on with their lives without the fear of being raped in the north or suicide-bombed in the south. The President's comments are also unworthy of the memory of many Sri Lankans, including the late Vijaya Kumaratunga, who even laid down their lives in supporting the earlier Indo-Sri Lanka agreement that too was criticised for its alleged infringement of the island's sovereignty. The role of the Norwegian Head of the Monitoring Mission is limited to the interpretation of the ceasefire agreement and nothing more. This is not unusual in conflict resolutions. The omission of a deadline for beginning direct talks is not a bad thing, given experiences in other situations where the fixation with deadlines has led to half-baked solutions and precipitous failures. Let us not forget that the agreement can be amended

by mutual consent and can be ended unilaterally with a two weeks notice.

Contrasting styles

When Ranil Wickremasinghe first mooted the idea of 'interim administration for the northeast provinces' in November 1999, a perceptive Sri Lankan saw a great deal more between the lines in Wickremasinghe's proposition than some of his sluggish friends including this writer. After the ceasefire agreement, our friend reminded us of his private prophesy and the old wisdom that a one-eyed rascal is king in the land of the blind! It is a moot point whether the connection between the 1999 kite-flying and the 2002 agreement is a simple straight line or involved a more tortuous path of uncertain outcomes. What is clear, however, is that from 1999, if not earlier, Ranil Wickremasinghe and Chandrika Kumaratunga have faced the same opportunities and choices, but Kumaratunga 'dropped the ball' while her nemesis has held on to it for dear life. Their separate political paths and contrasting political styles offer some clues about the possibility of their political cohabitation.

Wickremasinghe began his political career as a timid young man, walking between his parents for his first swearing in as a junior minister in 1977. His political strength is his long apprenticeship during which he mastered the ropes and learnt the art of surviving by working with others. Having been an insider in the UNP's war administration against the JVP and the LTTE, and having seen the war devour everyone around him without any compensating benefit, Mr. Wickremasinghe appears to have become a genuine war-phobe without ever being idealistic about peace. Equally, he has shown no enthusiasm for the constitutional approach, perhaps tired of all the years of constitutionalism under J.R. Jayewardene.

In contrast, Mrs. Kumaratunga who is occasionally charismatic, selectively charming, frequently combative, chronically unpunctual and never lacking in hubris, took the shortest road to absolute power in Sri Lankan politics. She rode the wave of an idealistic yearning for peace, but eventually led herself to be advised by her cousin-Colonel that she could do better than the UNP - defeat the LTTE militarily and bring in a new constitution. She put all her political eggs in the Constitutional basket and dropped the container in the end, while her military efforts went one from setback to another including allegations of corruption by many of her officials.

Reading the signals

In fairness to Chandrika Kumaratunga, her dealings with the LTTE were circumscribed by the chameleon politics of the non-LTTE Tamil groups and busybodies, who abandoned the UNP for the winning PA in 1994, created the appearance of Tamil support for the PA government, and undermined effective contacts between the LTTE and the PA government. Kumaratunga totally misread the seasonal disenchantment of the Tamils with the LTTE as a sign of their solid support for her government. She also failed to discern a similar ambivalence on the part of foreign governments and international agencies, which clearly loathe the LTTE for its terrorism but acknowledge it as the principal Tamil representative of consequence.

Ranil Wickremasinghe read the international signals well, more so because international opinion is all that matters to his main constituency, the Sri Lankan business class. But Mr. Wickremasinghe's strength can quickly become his Achilles Heel, as it became evident during his first statement in Parliament on the peace process, when he referred to 'international opinion' more than a dozen times. The PA critics caught his slip but could not make a storm out of it. It is not the slip in Parliament that should concern Wickremasinghe and his advisers, but his well known inability to mediate between the business class and international opinion, on the one hand, and the rural Sinhalese on the other. Neither can Chandrika Kumaratunga, who faces the opposite dilemma: she can easily connect with the rural Sinhalese but has no credibility with the business class, large sections of the Sinhalese middle class and the minorities. If the two can mediate each other, then, together, they can mediate between Sri Lanka's different social, ethnic, political and economic categories.

Need for mutual mediation

Curious as it may seem, the Presidential and Prime-ministerial roles are more conducive to mutual mediation than it would have been possible in the old Parliamentary system which, given Sri Lanka's combative political culture, counterposed the Prime Minister and his opposition counterpart, the Leader of the Opposition, as irreconcilable adversaries. In a parliamentary system, the Leader of the Opposition is only a shadow Prime Minister, or PM in waiting, and has no functional role in governance. In Sri Lanka's present system, with the President and Prime Minister belonging to oppos-

ing parties, the two are forced to work together to keep the wheels of government turning. The alternative is to countermand each other, bring the government to a grinding halt, and draw the people on to the streets, a scenario that will not be congenial to either of them or to anybody else. As well, if one of them is seen to be intransigent and uncooperative, he or she will lose all credibility with the outside world and, worse, will have to face the wrath of a long annoyed public. Regardless of what the Jayewardene Constitution says or does not say, the two have no alternative but to cohabit.

Given their relative circumstances, the onus would appear to be on Mr. Wickremasinghe to bend over backwards and keep the President in the decision making loop, particularly on matters relating to the peace process. Since the President seems understandably reluctant to attend every Cabinet meeting and suffer her quondam followers who walked out on her, the Prime Minister may have to initiate as a practice, if not a convention for Presidents and Prime Ministers belonging to different political parties, regular pre or post-cabinet meetings with the President. He could also institute, by mutual agreement, an informal council of advisors to offer advice and the benefit of 'sober second thought' to the President and the Prime Minister. In the absence of such a council, we have the anomaly of the President relying on the advice of Lakshman Kadirgamar, an Opposition Member of Parliament, to criticise the work of 'her' cabinet. The President is free to obtain informal advice from anyone, but without a formal arrangement for consultation between the President and the Prime Minister, the two will never stop working at cross-purposes.

Impeachment, a costly distraction

More important, the Prime Minister should rein in his attack dogs and scandal-mongers who are straining at the leash to impeach the President. The idle paranoia that the President will dissolve Parliament at the end of one year after the elections, and throw the UNP out of power, will become a self-fulfilling prophecy if the President is isolated and threatened with impeachment. Hardly any commentator has noted the fact that the constitutional provision against dissolution within the first year after an election originated in the 1972 Constitution, where it was solely intended to avoid the 1960 experience when Sir Oliver Goonetilleke, the then Governor General, capriciously inflicted on the country a

second election in July 1960 after the UNP government elected in March had been defeated in Parliament on its first Throne Speech. The criticism against Sir Oliver was that he should have invited the SLFP-led Opposition to form an alternative government without favouring the defeated Prime Minister, Dudley Senanayake, by acceding his request to dissolve Parliament. The restrictive provision in the present constitution served its purpose by preventing President Kumaratunga from dissolving Parliament when her government lost its majority in Parliament, in 2001, within one year of its election. However, she contravened the spirit of the provision when she prorogued Parliament without giving the main opposition Party, the UNP, an opportunity to form an alternative government.

In the current situation, it would be a perverse abuse of Presidential powers to dismiss the UNF government while it has a majority in Parliament and force an election before the end of its full elected term of six years.

Conversely, it would be a travesty to move to impeach the President without letting her complete term. In fact, both the President and the Prime Minister should be allowed to complete their elected terms. The argument that the President should be impeached in order to protect the peace process is a ludicrous argument. The circus of impeachment will be a costly distraction to the peace process; it will provide a rallying point for all those who want the process to fail and potentially alienate nearly a half of the Sinhalese population. In or out of office, she will be seen as the victim of impeachment and will emerge politically stronger than what she is now. On the other hand, if Kumaratunga stays in office and creates roadblocks to the peace process, she will be exposed for what she is and will be finished politically.

President Kumaratunga is still capable of discharging her enormous responsibility to redefine the Presidency in the changing political circumstances and play a pivotal role in facilitating the participation of her SLFP constituency and the JVP in the peace process. She can either succumb to her smaller instincts and spoil the show, or summon even flashes of her husband's courage in more difficult days and draw inspiration from her father's idealism - that was posthumously frustrated by her mother, to act responsibly and leave behind a positive political legacy. But she also needs all the help she can have from her Prime Minister. ●

The Ethnic Issue, Muslims and the Peace Process

S.M.M. Bazeer

Attorney-at-Law

Having endured the agonising time of civil war, peace is now desperately sought after by all the peace loving Sri Lankans. In the period of ethnic crisis we have had alternating war and peace. We have seen several models from Pondicheri to the Basque claim, being occasionally suggested, at the expense of thousands of lives and the tangible loss of millions of Rupees. In pursuit of peace, however, the politicians may have a hidden agenda. The people seem to have subscribed to the optimistic view, well above their party politics. The government and the LTTE are very much concerned about the installation of civilian administration with a reasonable return to normality. Until recently, there was no indication of whether the peace initiative would be based upon any identifiable principles.

However, it has emerged that the LTTE would like the Canadian Federal System (Quebec) to be used as a possible guide for an agreement in the North East Sri Lanka. In a climate where the entire nation has to bear the burnt of the civil war, it is incumbent on every Sri Lankan to express his solidarity with those who aspire for peace.

Peace process and Muslims

Any solution to the ethnic problem should be a permanent one and ought to satisfy the legitimate right of the Tamils and Muslims. As for Muslims any peace process should accommodate their aspirations in the North East provinces on the basis of social justice. Ignoring the Muslims resolute and distinctive identity in any peace process will escalate to unpalatable scenarios.

In the backdrop of peace initiatives in Sri Lanka led by the Norwegian Government it is indispensable for the Tamils and Muslims living in the North and East to arrive at some consensus in order to marginalize the regressive forces, which have always been a stumbling block to peace. The time has now come for the Tamils to realize that the Muslim ethnicity is also a reality in the resolution of ethnic crisis. Being victims of war for over a

decade, Muslims are weary of the ongoing war like rest of the population. Unfortunately Muslims living in the North and East tend to realize that their problems are unique by being territorial part of the Tamil traditional homeland with distinctive identity of their own.

Tamil-Muslim political reality

The Tamils who claim for self determination, without further hesitation, should agree that there is a Muslim factor in the North and East which by all means, self-dependant politically, religiously and culturally although simultaneously being interdependent economically, linguistically and geographically. It has been unfortunate that the Tamil politicians have distanced themselves from the Muslims by simply claiming that there is a Muslim party to solely deal with the Muslim affairs and never attempted to include the Muslims who could jointly stand for the overall Tamil Muslim territorial integrity and political stability. This was especially since the 1990s rift between the Muslims and Tamils. No Tamil parties or groups sincerely stepped up any effort to bring the Muslims in line with a common political solution for the North East Tamil speaking communities. Nor did Tamil parties dare to look at the Muslim issues in the light of Thimpu principles. However some of those parties or groups frequently claim that the Muslims are a kind of cultural ethnic group, which should be allocated a reasonable delegation of power sharing by institutional arrangements within the merged North East provinces without seeking any territorial partition of the administration. It is a proposal of harmony with mutual recognition between the two communities living in the North and East Provinces. This is less than what was envisaged by S.J.V. Chelvanayagam who even supported autonomy for Muslims in the North East. In spite of this, what lacked in every proposal and accord was the recognition of Muslim nationality.

The LTTE and The Muslims

The independent view of the Muslims living in the North and east on ethnic is-

sues has now been delegated not only to the SLMC but also to other national parties, as there have been significant castings of votes for the national parties. As the LTTE is the major party to Peace it is time for the LTTE to clarify their stance about the Muslims who form substantial claim to the territory and administration and are prepared for reconciliation in order to achieve a durable solution to the ethnic crisis. It was devastating to learn that the Muslims were subjected to ill treatment by the LTTE after they had signed a historical Pact with the Muslim delegation in Chennai in April 1988.

Revisiting the (Muslim-Tamil) Accord 1988

It would be prudent to look back and evaluate the essence of the pact and re-view it in the light of the political development that has taken place in Sri Lanka since it was signed. Despite being an agreement between the LTTE and the then MULF it was an agreement of foresight but unfortunately it lacked commitment. The significant changes are now that the LTTE has started to address Muslims as "Muslims" in ethnic or political sense and have acted cautiously in its efforts to reconcile with Muslims. It is again for the LTTE to come to terms with the fact that the Muslims are an integral part of the territorial Tamil traditional Homeland.

I wish to highlight some aspects of the agreement that was a milestone so far as the LTTE and Muslims were concerned.

- It is understood that although the Muslim people living in Sri Lanka speak the Tamil language, they are a distinct ethnic group falling within the totality of Tamil nationality.
- The Muslim people recognize that the area composed of the Northern and Eastern provinces are as much their traditional homeland as it is of the rest of Tamil-speaking people.
- The Muslim people believe that their interests could be safeguarded only in their homeland, and this could be achieved only through a greater unity between all Tamil-speaking people.
- Since the Muslim people constitute a minority in their homeland, and hence it is important that they should be assured of a life free from fear and insecurity, the LTTE will take all steps to ensure this and extend all co-operations in the future to have the security of the Muslim people guaranteed by law.
- Whatever steps taken to safeguard the interests of the Muslim people and the

arriving at a reasonable power sharing agreement will be done in such a way as not to undermine the territorial integrity of the Tamil homeland

● While the Muslim people form 33% of the population in the Eastern province and will comprise 18% in the combined Northern and Eastern provinces, it is agreed that in order to ensure maximum safeguard for them and enable them to enjoy an equitable power-sharing, they will be entitled to not less than 30% of the representation in the provincial council and the cabinet.

● It is agreed that in all future land distribution, the Muslim people will be entitled to not less than 35% in the Eastern province, not less than 30% in the Manner district and not less than 5% in other areas.

● Unless otherwise a Muslim has been appointed chief Minister of the Northern and Eastern provincial council, legal provision should be made to ensure that a Muslim is appointed as the deputy chief Minister of said council.

● A de colonization policy should be evolved in order to redress the adverse effect caused by planned government

colonization.

● It was agreed that in order to alleviate the sufferings of the vast mass of innocent civilians who are the ones who are truly affected by the military actions, and to enable them to return to normal, peaceful life.

Some of the implications that follow from this agreement are: the Muslims in the North eastern Provinces have decided that their future well-being lies in identifying themselves with the other Tamil-speaking people in these two provinces, and not look for succour outside; that they are no longer prepared to be led by Muslim leaders in the south-west; that they recognize in the LTTE its Tamil representative character, above all, they have decided to support the concept of the traditional Homeland.

Muslim Tamil Unity- A Way Forward

As the LTTE is the cardinal party to the peace process it is anticipated that the LTTE has to acknowledge its position in the light of the LTTE -MUSLIM Accord (1988) so as to encourage the Muslims of the regions to express their solidarity with the Tamil people in the prospective Nor-

way led peace initiative, thus obviating any interference by the parties with vested interests.

We, Muslims need now to emphasise the development of facts that affected the Muslim Tamil relationship in the North East since the so called Tamil- Muslim Accord and redefine our place in any future agreement with the LTTE which has to play a greater role in the overall peace process. Given the past experiences, it would be more effective if the LTTE and the Muslims would make common proposals without Muslims legitimate claim to nationality being subordinated to a generalised Tamil speaking category. The joint proposals should incorporate the aspirations of Muslims as they stand as an individual nationality. In that process, the views of the non-political Muslim organizations and religious institutions representing Muslims of the North and East should also be consulted with, if lasting peace is to be attained. At this point in time, it is worth recalling what Martin Luther King once said about peace: "True Peace is not merely the absence of tension, but it is the presence of justice and brotherhood." ●

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The Myth of Ram's Temple has Become a Licence to Kill in India

Peter Popham

05 March 2002 - India is a big country, and it is usually big-hearted enough not to betray signs of being bothered by what we Delhi-based foreign correspondents write. So it was a rare event when, nearly a year ago, I was politely summoned to the office of Raminder Singh Jassal, then Chief Secretary for External Publicity in the Ministry of External Affairs, and given a sound ticking off.

The main complaint was that I had written at some length about Hindu-Muslim clashes that had broken out in several towns and cities across India following the Taliban's demolition of the Bamiyan Buddhas.

The Indian officials didn't question the veracity of my report, but they made it plain that they regarded it as "unfriendly" of me to have written on the topic of communal disturbances at all. "Relations between majority and minority communities have been far better under this government than they were before," Mr Jassal told me. "So when there is some little incident, why focus on it?"

I expect no such call from the ministry this week. The deaths of at least 450, and probably more than 1,000, Gujaratis, nearly all Muslims, in four days of communal bestiality have exploded for ever the Hindu nationalist Bharatiya Janata Party's (BJP) claim to have presided over an era of communal peace.

And now, riding the crest of that particular wave, the Vishwa Hindu Parishad (VHP, or "World Hindu Council"), an extremist group within the same Hindu nationalist family as the BJP, is pressing ahead with its plans to begin construction of the long dreamed-of temple to the god Ram in Ayodhya, on the ruins of the mosque torn down by a mob of the same people in December 1992. These two events, the Gujarat bloodbath and the Ayodhya temple, are intimately connected. Taken together they throw into urgent focus the question: what sort of people are ruling the world's biggest democracy today? Where are they headed?

The first man on earth was an Indian, and a Hindu. Hinduism was the primeval

religion, not just of India but of the world. There was no Aryan invasion of India, no enslavement of the southern Dravidians. Hindus were here from day one. Other people arrived on these shores, but eventually they bent the knee to Bharat Mata, Mother India, and were knitted into the Hindu fabric. Only the Muslims (and to a lesser extent the Christians) stood out. They smashed temples and erected mosques on the rubble, with sword and fire they tore millions of Hindus from the breast of Mother India and brought them forcibly over to Islam. It is the duty of patriotic Hindus to reverse that historic wrong.

That, reduced to its crude essentials, is the Hindu nationalist creed, and it helps to explain why the primary goal of the most powerful political party in this vast, impoverished country, with all its desperate problems, should be the construction of a temple in a squalid little town in Uttar Pradesh. Ayodhya, goes the mythology, is "Ramjanambhoomi", the birth place of Ram, an avatar of Vishnu. The Muslim invader Babur (and this, too, is myth) tore down the great temple that stood here and built the Babri Masjid mosque, demolished by the mob in 1992. "Hindu Rashtra", the true Hindu nation, cannot come into being until the temple is rebuilt.

The men who have been ruling India for nearly four years, including the Prime Minister, Atal Behari Vajpayee, and his powerful second-in-command Lal Krishna Advani, the Home Minister, are true believers in this, India's exotic variety of neo-fascism. But the world at large has gradually lost sight of that fact. The nuclear tests conducted in May 1998, immediately after they came to power, gave due warning that they meant business. But the need to keep a squabbling and disparate coalition intact forced Ayodhya off the government's agenda. Mr Vajpayee's became the first Indian government to develop cordial relations with the US. Last September, India became a front-line ally in the war against terrorism.

But while India's stature grew abroad, at home Mr Vajpayee was often described by critics on the left as the "mask" of the BJP, the acceptable face of a neo-fascist movement that was only biding its time.

Mr Vajpayee, increasingly doddering at the age of 78, remains in place; but in the past week the party's mask has been ripped away. The war on terrorism and India's long military stand-off with Pakistan, which continues undiminished, have given a new licence to the Hindu nationalists. Muslim equals terrorist, they tell each other: we have it on American authority; we have 140 million terrorists in our midst. At the same time, recent BJP losses in state elections both in Gujarat and Uttar Pradesh have given the hardliners a new urgency and a new determination. Strike, they have been told, while the BJP still holds power. Strike to maintain and increase that power. Now is the moment for dramatic, decisive action.

Mr Vajpayee has fostered the illusion of being a truly national leader, but in Gujarat there is no such pretence: the BJP state government is starkly partisan. After the killing of 58 Hindus in a train last Wednesday, the event that ignited the violence, Gujarat's Chief Minister, Narendra Modi, quickly announced compensation of 200,000 rupees, about £3,000, to the bereaved families. Hundreds of Muslims have died since, but there is no word of compensation for them. Mr Modi endorsed the VHP's call for a strike last Friday, his official nod to the ensuing bloodbath. The police have stood idly by while the mob did its work; sometimes, victims allege, they actively led the violence.

The BJP rose to power, as fascists do, through violence and the threat of more: the Ayodhya demolition signalled its rapid rise from obscurity, the vision of a state where Hindus rule supreme continues to excite its ideologues. In this amazing but horrifyingly immature democracy, muscle power – and that includes the mass burning alive of women and children – can yield political power. The liberal, English-language papers here have tut-tutted in a worried way, but encouraging communal carnage has done Mr Modi's government no harm at all. With the parliamentary opposition still weak and divided, India has set off down a nightmare road.

(Courtesy of "The Independent")

TAMIL NADU

Jayalalithaa's Victory

T.S. S ubramanian

On March 2, Jayalalithaa will be sworn in Tamil Nadu Chief Minister by Governor P.S. Rama Mohan Rao at the Madras University centenary auditorium in Chennai. The All India Anna Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (AIADMK) general secretary registered a convincing victory over her Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (DMK) rival Vaigai S. Sekar in the by-election to the Andipatti constituency in Theni district. Chief Minister O. Panneerselvam, who held the fort for her for five months, will now be "an ordinary volunteer of the party" again.

Unlike in May 2001, when she was in a hurry to take over as Chief Minister despite being disqualified from contesting elections, she was prepared this time to wait for an auspicious day to be sworn in. A few hours after she was declared elected on February 24, AIADMK Members of the Legislative Assembly met at the party headquarters in Chennai and passed a resolution electing Jayalalithaa Legislature Party leader. Panneerselvam drove to the Raj Bhavan to submit to the Governor his resignation and a copy of the resolution.

Again, unlike last May, Jayalalithaa did not attend the Legislature Party meeting this time, which was seen as a sign of her confidence that everything was under control. The Legislature Party resolution last May said: "This meeting categorically decides that it will not accept anybody or even consider anybody other than the party general secretary as the Leader of the Legislature Party." (Jayalalithaa had to step down in September after the Supreme Court struck down her appointment as Chief Minister by Governor M. Fathima Beevi because she had been disqualified from contesting elections. She attracted the disqualification after a Special Judge sentenced her to three years' and two years' rigorous imprisonment in two corruption cases in October 2000. The Madras High Court acquitted her

in these two cases on December 4, 2001.)

Jayalalithaa defeated Vaigai Sekar, her nearest rival, by an impressive margin of 41,201 votes, which is attributed to her hectic five-day campaign in the vast constituency, a string of promises that she made to the electorate, and the special treatment that the constituency received in terms of development work. Jayalalithaa pointed out that she won despite the fact that all her allies in the last Assembly elections, such as the Tamil Maanila Congress, the Congress(I), the Communist Party of India (Marxist) and the Communist Party of India, had walked out of the AIADMK-led alliance and decided not to participate in the by-election.

The DMK put up a good performance, thanks to the united rearguard action by the rank and file and an effective one-day campaign by party president and former Chief Minister M. Karunanidhi. His sons M.K. Azhagiri and M.K. Stalin (Chennai Mayor) put aside their sibling rivalry and conducted a joint campaign.

The Marumalarchi Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (MDMK) came a cropper again. Despite hectic electioneering by the party, led by general secretary Vaiko, its candidate V. Jayachandran received only 8,421 votes.

Out of 1,34,734 valid votes, Jayalalithaa received 78,437 votes; Vaigai Sekar 37,236; Jayachandran 8,421; and Dr. K. Krishnasamy (Puthiya Tamizhagam) 5,126. The independents together polled 5,514 votes.

Jayalalithaa's victory came on her 54th birthday. "It is the best birthday gift that I have received so far," she said, and declared that she would fulfil all the promises that she had made to Andipatti's voters. She vowed to make "Andipatti the No.1 constituency in the State, and Tamil Nadu the No.1 State in India."

Karunanidhi's reaction to the vic-

tory was tongue-in-cheek. He said, "I convey my good wishes to the winner on her birthday." He criticised the Election Commission for its "apathy and contradictory stances" regarding the DMK's complaints. The DMK, he said, would go to court against the "activities" of the Election Commission in Andipatti. Karunanidhi argued that the DMK's allegation that the AIADMK had enrolled 17,000 bogus voters in the constituency had been proved right by the fact that the AIADMK, which polled about 60,000 votes in the last Assembly election, had polled 78,000 now. The DMK president was unhappy with the Election Commission's decision to allow people carrying nativity certificates issued by Village Administrative Officers (VAO) to vote. The Commission had listed 16 documents as valid proof of the voters' identity, besides the photo identity card. But on February 19 it added the nativity certificate to the list. Karunanidhi said: "VAOs, in a pre-arranged move, sat near the polling booths and dispensed nativity certificates to bogus voters... This is an injustice (done to us)." Another document in the list was the post-office savings passbook. According to Karunanidhi, many savings accounts were recently opened in post offices in Andipatti.

Karunanidhi said: "We did not stay away from the democratic process. DMK cadres were up against money power, the misuse of official machinery and the Election Commission's prejudice." The more than 35,000 votes the DMK had secured, he said, were a morale-booster for partymen.

Vaiko alleged that the AIADMK had won by misusing the official machinery.

For the AIADMK, Jayalalithaa's victory was a foregone conclusion. Several days before the result was out, the Madras University centenary auditorium was reportedly spruced up for her swearing-in ceremony. However, Education Minister M. Thambidurai denied reports about this and said that the auditorium was undergoing "usual" maintenance works. A day before the counting, posters appeared all over Chennai with the message: "You (Jayalalithaa) are entering age 54. You are going to wear the crown just as people desired you to."

As counting progressed and the

trend became clear, AIADMK workers burst firecrackers continuously before her residence in Poes Garden, Chennai. Ministers and party cadre made a beeline to her residence. They queued up and some of them prostrated before her in the portico.

During the campaign, Jayalalithaa made several promises: a new arts college in Andipatti; a medical college in Theni district; desilting of the Adhikari canal; construction of a reservoir at Theppampatti for which, she said, Rs. 1.20 crores had been allotted; redress of the grievances of weavers; and so on. She evoked memories of the charismatic M.G. Ramachandran, or MGR, AIADMK founder and former Chief Minister, who was elected from Andipatti in 1984. She kept telling people that she was unnga veetu pillai (the title of a Tamil film starring MGR, meaning 'a child in your family'). Karunanidhi countered this campaign by saying that Vaigai Sekar was the "real child of your family and the son of the soil". Karunanidhi asked, "Why should an election be held from Andipatti when she could have contested from Saidapet or Vaniyambadi?" (While Thanga Tamilselvan, AIADMK legislator from Andipatti, resigned his seat to enable Jayalalithaa to contest from there, the Saidapet and Vaniyambadi seats fell vacant following the death of the MLAs representing them).

The message from Andipatti is : MGR's charisma still works in the constituency, 14 years after his death; people voted for Jayalalithaa on the expectation that Andipatti would enjoy benefits on account of being the "Chief Minister's constituency"; the non-participation of the TMC, the Congress(I), the CPI(M), the CPI and the Dalit Panthers did not materially alter any candidate's chances; and there is an underlying angst among the voters that they had unfairly punished the DMK in the last Assembly elections despite the development work that the Karunanidhi government had done from 1996 to 2001.

(FRONTLINE 4.3.2002)

Dreaming of Murali at 'Bedi-time'

Nigel Kerner

Bedtime beckons sleep and sleep beckons the unreal. Here in this state of sleep the physically apparent gets confused with myth and symbol in a plethora of mental confusion and out of it all comes something of a catalogue of subconscious sense that is supposed to keep us all sane when we are awake. This is a distinct state from what is known as 'Bedi-time' - a unique refuge for thoughts on cricket that bears no relation to what is consciously perceived in wakefulness. It is a place of opinions, ideas and strange interpretations of things wooden and leathery. It is a place in the head of the great Indian spinner Bishen Bedi.

'Bedi-time' is the ideal place for old worn out shoes. It exists to maintain the familiar the similar and the same. A place where what can be termed the 'classic' is admired and old ways are cherished. It is authored hailed and maintained by Bishen Bedi an archetypal admirer of old ways. A charming be-turbaned gentleman. The definitive spinner of a cricket ball in the classic old way.

Classicist or not, Bishen, you have done it now old boy. You have consigned your reputation for good cricket thinking to the old drains of Calcutta, or is it Chennai now, and earned the suspicion that age related mental retardation might be knocking on the old turban. You have called one of the world's great bowlers - a 'chucker'.

Some opinions thunder into the psyche like liberal dollops of untreated sewage fall into fragmentation pits. They leave a stink that lingers awhile and is then gone. But the smell tends to stick in some cases and your opinion of the Sri Lankan bowler Muralitharan's action will be a Roman candle of verbal excrement that will cover you now from head to foot and keep com-

ing back to haunt you, no matter how many showers you are caught in.

Of course you are entitled to your opinion and no one questions your right to voice it, but I have a suspicion that you are too cricket intelligent to really believe what you said about the bowling action of the Sri Lankan mage. Cleared by all the experts in the world, that matter, as an unusual action based on a bone fide physical impediment, and not one that 'throws' or 'chucks' in terms of both the definitions and spirit of the laws of cricket. Your view will of course be consigned to within a Hair's breath of where a stump enters the ground.

You are an interesting old Teddy - Bishan Bedi - but if you go down to the woods today - you are sure of a big surprise....and a big burly quirky one at that. Don't go down any rabbit holes, because apart from Alice and the Cheshire cat who no doubt will give you a great wide sarcastic grin, you will have to dine with Ross Emerson wearing a hat. If you eat anything he does, you will shrink so small you might never grow up to be a grown up and be taken seriously ever again. In fact you will always have your head beneath the ground.

I suspect that you have the cricket sense of a classicist. Classicists like scientists are not folk in any time. They are not ahead of time or behind it. They just stand still and hate change or innovation. They are not testaments to imagination or truth either and end up tunnelling in straight lines like Mr Mole in Wind in the Willows going nowhere and being pointed the wrong way. They live in the tunnel vision of their own short-sightedness. So it has proved to be with scientists too. The self proclaimed purveyors of truth. Yet with ultimate irony, almost all the corner



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stone truths of science have in the end proved to be wrong.

Copernicus put the sun into the darkness of man's vanity when man tried to be the centre of the universe; Einstein did not like Newton's 'clockwork' 'same old boring bowling action' Universe and proved there were no clocks and Newton wrong with his theory of Relativity. Heisenberg and others in turn set Einstein adrift in waves of doubt and uncertainty. And of course most important of all Kerry Packer the arch anti-conventionalist, pulled a cracker and tumbled in the one day game to rescue cricket as an international game, to have it loved all over the world as a paying spectator sport. I guess if you restrict your view in any way, or don't allow for change, you tend to end up wrong. Look out Darwin.

A little island at the foot of your great and beautiful nation, with a population one thousand times less than the numbers you have to trawl cricketers from, has taken your guys (our brothers) on, and more often than not recently, given you the thrashing of your lives. Sri Lankan cricketers stand head and shoulders above the Indians in every department, in both the one-day and Test game. Would you not be better served asking why such a thing is so, and finding answers as to why a nation with one of the strongest and most exciting batting line-ups, on paper at least, in the world, cannot find an effective

bowling attack from a fund of the labours of over a billion cricket mad people. Why can't they be gelled together to believe in themselves and fight with and for each other, as Dav Whatmore has managed to get the Sri Lankans to do with the help of his captain.

'Bishen dear Bishen. How I wish you see this as your mission.' I know you were once set the task and are still looking for the answer. Perhaps Indian mothers cherish their sons too much and make them all milk sops. Perhaps they are just not tough enough for the modern game. There now. There's a quirky enough opinion to match your opinion on Murali's action! See, silly isn't it!

Incidentally, if the Sri Lankan bowler you indict could throw a cricket ball, in the way you define a javelin is thrown, the dynamics of the procedure will ensure that the only casualty would be the great bowler himself, not the batsman at whom he is bowling.

I remember Sir Neville Cardus saying to a bunch of my school friends, nearly 50 years ago, that the rule preventing the throwing or chucking of a cricket ball was originally conceived to prevent fast bowlers from killing their 'prey'. It was simply a means of restricting speed. To even consider any slow bowler a chucker is preposterous anyway. There is an utterly convincing argument that the physical dynamics involved in chucking a cricket ball at slow pace severely handicaps the bowler in getting turn and varying bounce on

the pitch.

Muralitharan is not just his action - thoroughly vindicated though it is by the experts, including the ICC. He stands for character, determination and stainless steel strength when the chips are down. Qualities that, with respect, India could do with to make the difference between winning and losing. Particularly losing, as they so often do these days.

Your carping over Muralitharan's action will sound like 'sour grapes' to a great many cricket fans around the world. It will tend to make you a smaller man than you really are. We know and love you on this island of Sri Lanka for the mighty cricketing force you once were. You knew about guts! Wherever the taste of the wine from these sour grapes is sipped, no fair, perceptive cricket fan who drinks a drop of that wine can deny that this young man from Sri Lanka is 'wine' of the finest vintage and one of the greatest exponents of the art of bowling, (at whatever pace) the world has ever seen. As long as I have sons who love the game and can take me into the future with them, they will be able to say that they were privileged to see the great Muralitharan bowl. You ain't seen nothin' yet Bishen. Take out the pebble glasses and open that big heart of yours and just watch!

I'll be in the crowd looking for a smile on your face to match the sight of that spectacular blue turban and fabulous beard. ●



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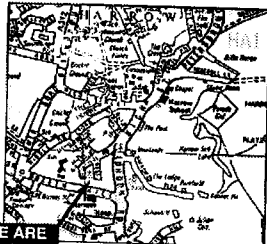


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OBITUARIES

Kathiraveloo Ponnampalam, from Chundikuli, Jaffha; Retired O.A., Paranthan Chemical Corp.; beloved husband of Jayathilakam (Pappa); loving father of Shyamala, Nirmala (both of UK), Brindhavan (Ben), K a n a g a s u n d r a m (Kumarr/Ken) and Manoharan (Mano) (all of New Jersey, USA); father-in-law of Dubsy Kanagaratnam, R. Ratneswaran (both of UK), Thevaki and Donna (both of USA); grandfather of Arani, Anuja (UK), Harm, Brandon (USA); brother of late Kanagasundram (Ward Place), late Nadarajah (both of Colombo), late K.S.Nathan (UK), late Mrs. S.S.Pillai, late Mr. K.Somasundram, K.Aria-ratnam (all of Malaysia) and Mrs Siva Sithambaranathan (Lawyer, Tellipallai) expired in New Jersey, USA.

The funeral rites were performed on 11th February 2002 in the presence of a large gathering of relatives and friends and the cremation took place at 2 p.m. New Jersey.

Beloved wife, children and family members sincerely

thank all relatives and friends who attended the funeral service, sent floral tributes and messages of condolence and who had helped in numerous ways at the time of their bereavement. They regret their inability to thank them individually - Mrs Jeyam Ponnampalam, 9 Cornell Drive, East Brunswick, NJ 08816, USA. Tel: 732 390 9144 (USA) and Shyamala, 19 Huxley Place, Palmers Green, London N13 55U. Tel: 208 886 5966 (UK)



Suppaiah Kanagalingam; Retired Chief Engineer, Ceylon Theatres; beloved husband of Pavalam; precious and loving father of Jayanthi, Lingabala, Skanthabalan, Shanmugabalan, Khabalan, Suganathi and Amirithi; elder brother of Tharmalingam; much loved father-in-law of Balendra, Dr. Sivanesan, Yogeswaran, Vasuki, Iamathi, Vasanthakumari and of late Aggie; dearest brother-in-law of R.C. Rajarayan (London), R.C. Mahathevarajan (Epo, Malaysia), Mrs Vivekanantharajah (Canada), late Mrs Muthubalasuriyar, late R.C. Mannavarayan and late R.C. Manmatharayan; dearest loving grandfather of Karthika, Kavitha, Archana, Viboo-shana, Myuresh, Kumaresh, Sandra, Robert, Josephine, Kishanie, Nirushan, Shivanthan, Vimalan, Keerthana, Shankari and Gajan and beloved great grandfather of Kumaran passed away peacefully on 27th February 2002 at the age of 80 years.

The funeral rites were performed on 2nd March 2002 in Lichfield, Staffordshire and the cremation took place at Stafford Crematorium.

The wife, children and other family members sincerely thank all friends and relatives who attended the funeral, sent

floral tributes and messages of condolence and who had helped in numerous ways at their bereavement - Mrs P.Kanagalingam & family, 9 Fosseyway, Lichfield, Staffordshire WS14 0AD. Tel: 01543 417744

"May his soul rest in peace"

IN MEMORIAM**In Memoriam**

First Anniversary
Mrs Someswary Kanagasabai

Birth: 26.01.1916 Rest: 17.03.2001

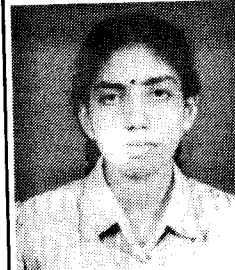
Sadly missed and lovingly remembered by children Chandra, Indra, Logendra, Yogendra, Ambi, Gowri and Jayanthi; daughters-in-law Sakunthala, Kamalasan, Rathy and Yoga; son-in-law Ragu. - 34 Woodcote Valley Road, Purley, Surrey CR8 3AJS

**Tenth Death Anniversary Remembrance**

Miss. Rathini Ananthamoorthy, B. Sc.(Hons)

Lecturer, Eastern University, Sri Lanka.

Birth: 26.03.1964 Death: 05.03.1992



Ten years have drifted by since you
Were taken away from our midst
So many things have happened
Since you were called away.

Everyday in a small way
Memories of you come our way
Though absent you are ever near
Still missed, loved always.

Sadly missed and always lovingly remembered by Appa Ananthamoorthy, Amma Yogarani; brother Sivapalan and Sivakaran; sisters Mathini, Rajini, Sivarubini...- 835 Clemens Crescent, Mississauga, Ontario L5V 2S8, Canada. Tel: 905 814 5875

In Memoriam

Pradeep Jeganathan - Fifth Anniversary

01.12.1964 - 31.03.1997

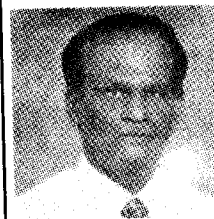


It's five long years ago today
You were so tragically taken away
There is still so much grief and pain
Life has not been the same again.

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

Fifth Death Anniversary

Dr. C. Perumal Pillai (16.02.1920 - 02.03.1997)



Appa

Five years have gone by, since you left our midst. Your loving care and inspiration are strongly missed. In your peace we find solace.

Your ever loving children Ravi, Usha, Jeeva, Ranjit and families.

Fifth Death Anniversary of late Mr Ponniah Pathmanathan F.I.C.E



Born: 25.08.1934
Died: 11.02.1997

Worked in Zambia on contract for several years and as City Engineer too.

Dearest husband of Balayogam (Pathma); devoted father of Mrs Arunthathy, Yohan and late Mohan.

We all miss you very badly and sadly and you are still very fondly loved by your wife and children.

First Death Anniversary of late Mr. Mohan B.Sc., A.C.C.A.



Born: 29.09.1970
Died: 07.04.2001

Passed away immediately after an accident. Greatly missed beloved son of late Mr. Ponniah Pathmanathan and Mrs Balayogam Pathmanathan; very dearly loved brother of Mrs Arunthathy and Yohan. Very much deeply and sadly missed by all of us.

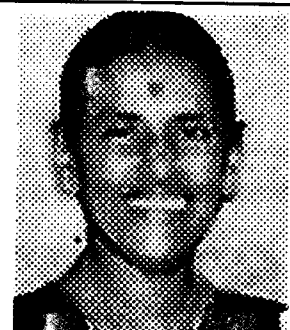
May your Athma rest in peace.
Very deeply loved by mother, sister and brother.

In Loving Memory of our



Daddy
Ponnampalam
Kanagaratnam
Born: 11.10.1908
Rest: 02.03.1982

Mummy
Vemalaranee
Kanagaratnam
10.07.1923
31.03.1990



*We speak of you with love and pride
Years may pass and time may fly
Memories of you both will never die
And shall live in our hearts for ever.*

Sadly missed and fondly remembered by sons Sara, Dubsy; daughters-in-law Lalitha and Shyamala; grandchildren Janarthan, Mehala, Uthistran, Arani and Anuja - 19 Huxley Place, Palmers Green, London N13 5SU. Tel: 020 8886 5966.

Forthcoming Events

- Apr 1** Easter Monday; Shasti
Apr 2 Feast of St. Francis
Apr 4 Feast of St. Isidore
Apr 6 6.30p.m. London Tamil Centre presents "Kalachara Maalai". Tel: 0208 904 5939
Apr 7 Feast of St. John Baptist
Apr 8 Krishna Eekathasi
Apr 9 Pirathosam
Apr 11 Feast of St. Stanislaus
Apr 12 Amavasai
Apr 14 Cithirapanu Hindu New Year
Apr 15 Karthigai
Apr 16 Sathurthi
Apr 18 Shashti
Apr 19 Feast of St. Alphega
Apr 21 Feast of St Anselm
Apr 23 Eekathasi
Apr 24 Pirathosam
Apr 25 Feast of St Mark
Apr 26 Full moon
Apr 29 Sankadakara Sathurthi; Feast of St. Catherine

At Bhavan Centre, 4A Castletown Road, London W14 9HQ. Tel: 020 7381 3086/4608.

Apr 19 7.45p.m. Bharatanatyam by Alankrita from India

- Apr 21** 6p.m. Ram Navami celebrations; Bhajans, Puja and Prasad
Apr 23 Vedantha Discourse by Mahamandaiwara Swami Veda Bharati

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1st year Remembrance

Born
12.06.1918



Joined the
Stars
10.03.2001

Emeritus Professor

Christie Jayaratnam Eliezer

Order of Australia & Maamanithar of Tamil Elam
(PhD Camb., DSc Lond., F.I.R.M.A. Bar at Law, Middle Temple)

Treasured by Ranee, Dhamayanthi, Bala Karalapillai, Ratna, Nesa, Anandhi, Sharmini, Renuka, Tamara, Kirk, Sumanthiran, Dharshi, Anjali, Arjunan, Tanya, Stewart, David, Shelley, Ranjan, Anthea, Yashoda, Anand, Ruben, Chandlar, Jordan, Ahila, Narendran, Freya and Beau

"யாநும் ஊரே Every Country is Our Homeland
யாவரும் கேவர்" Every Child, Man, Woman, Our Kinsfolk
(Tamil Puranam, 102BC)

If I am not for myself
Who am I?

If I am for myself alone
Who am I?

If not now, when? (Helier the Elder, 1AD)

Some people come into our lives and quickly go
Some people move our souls to dance
They awaken us to new understanding
With the whisper of their wisdom.
Some people make the sky more beautiful to gaze upon
They stay in our lives for awhile
Leave footprints on our hearts
And we are never ever the same.

(Author unknown)

Australian Newsletter

Varuna Homam – Vast areas of the state of New South Wales and even parts of Metropolitan Sydney were devastated by bush fires in late December and early January, which were the worst in decades. The Sri Venkateswara Temple in Helensburgh was also affected, but by God's grace, the Temple itself was undamaged. However the fire raged through the surrounding compound destroying countless trees. The smoke and the heat became intolerable and the priests had to be evacuated. It was a tense time for everyone associated with the Temple.

There has been no rain for a continuous period of 18 days, with high temperatures. The previous record had been 22 days without rain in the summer of 1930. Some people suggested that a Varuna Homam should be done to appeal to Varuna for rain. It was performed on Sunday, January 6th 2002 at the Sri Venkateswara Temple in the presence of a large number of devotees. That night, after 19 days the heavens opened and the rain continued for two or three days. The Weather Bureau was completely taken aback and the Head of the Rural Fire Service said that the rain had saved thousands of acres of vegetation. The miracle wrought by Lord Venkateswara was the subject of Talkback Radio, Sydney.

Concert in Aid of Temple in Jaffna

– A grand concert took place on February 16th 2002 in aid of the Sangarathai Pittiumpathi Pathirakali Ambal Temple. This ancient temple is situated in the midst of paddy fields in Sangarathai near Vaddukoddai in Jaffna, Sri Lanka. According to tradition, in the 17th century, a local gentleman named Muthanayinar had attempted to cut down a Tamarind tree as birds nesting there were consuming the grain. A cobra chased him away and that night Ambal appeared in a dream and requested him to build her a shelter. That shelter eventually became the Pathirakali temple.

The concert was organised by Mrs Krishna Segaram, a well known teacher of Bharatha Natyam in Sydney, a disciple of Mrs Subathira Sivathasan of UK and a descendent of Muthanayinar. The first half of the programme consisted of Alarippu, Jatheeswaram, Chembu dance etc and the second half was the Dance Drama "Athi Parasakthi". The students of Mrs Krishna Segaram performed the whole programme with grace and technical perfection. The accompanying artistes were Nattuvangam – Mrs Krishna Segaram, Vocal – Vasumathy Gopathidas & Pathmini Sivarajah, Violin – Gopathidas Narayanadas,

Dolki - Sridas Narayanadas, Veena - Ravindrakumari Samivel and Miruthangam - Balasri Rasi ah.

Just before the interval Mrs Devi Balasubramaniam spoke about the history and significance of the temple. At the end of the performance, the students thanked their Guru, the accompanying artistes and the audience.

Tamil Community Centre, New South Wales

– A group of Tamil Senior Citizens got together with the ultimate purpose of building a Community Centre for the Tamils of New South Wales. A seminar and workshop were conducted on 9th December 2001. A steering committee of eleven members with Mr. Samy Pasupati as President and Mr. C. Sri Pathmanathan as Secretary was elected and given the task of drafting a constitution. A concept plan of the actual building was drawn by Mr. V.S.Thurairajah.

The members of the steering committee drew up a constitution which was presented at the inaugural meeting held on 3rd March 2002. A lively discussion took place and a Management Committee of the following was elected. President: Mr. A. Sivathondan, Vice President: Mrs Devi Balasubramaniam, Secretary: Mr. C. Sri Pathmanathan, Asst. Secretary: Mr.K. Nadarajah, Treasurer: Mr. Samy Pasupati, Asst. Treasurer: Mr. R.Naganathan, Director of Development Works: Mr. S. Jayaveerasingham, Director of Public Relations: Mr.G. Santhiran, Committee Members: Dr.V.Manamohan, Mr. S. Dharmapalan and Mr. E.Vijayaratham.

A Memorial Meeting for the Late Mr. Kumar Ponnambalam

was held on 3rd February 2002 at the Homebush Primary School Hall. It was well attended and several speakers eulogised Mr. Kumar Ponnambalam. The meeting was specially significant because Dr. (Mrs) Kumar Ponnambalam and her son Mr. Gajendrakumar Ponnambalam who was recently elected to the Sri Lankan Parliament were present. Mr. G. Ponnambalam spoke on the future of the Tamils of Sri Lanka.

Saiva Sangam Celebrates Silver Jubilee

The Saiva Munneta Sangam (UK Branch) had a successful cultural evening (the first in a series of functions to be organised to celebrate their Silver Jubilee year) on Saturday, 22nd February 2002 at Grove Hall, Carshalton, Surrey. The Sangam has plans to hold similar functions all over Greater London culminating in a grand finale on 31st August 2002 at the Assembly Hall, Walthamstow, London E17.

The proceedings commenced with a poojah around 7.30p.m. when the hall had filled to capacity. Mr. V. R. Ramanathan in his presidential address, referred to the vast progress made during the last 25 years to assist the Hindus in the UK, particularly those of the younger generation to practise their religion and be conversant in the Tamil language. He outlined the plans to have several meetings during the jubilee year and appealed to all present to attend the final meeting at Walthamstow. He welcomed the Guests of Honour, Dr. Rajan Namasivayam and Mr. S. Yoganathan, who in their speeches complimented the Sangam for their devoted service over the years.

After fluent speeches by Sahana Kulendran and Pratheepa Kuharajah, vocal and instrumental music by Muthucumaraswamy Sarma, Kiru-santh Sivarajan, Nisanth Sivarajan, Thivasanthan, Senthuran Rajamanoharan, Sivakami Rajamanoharan, Saravanan Theivendran, Kumar Visvanathan and Soundaralaksmy Selvarajah crowned by Bharat Natyam recitals from Menaka Indirakumar and Mathini Kukapalan the cultural entertainment ended with an ovation from the audience. A sumptuous dinner brought the proceedings to a close.

Mr R.Kandiah – An appreciation

Mr R. Kandiah, a distinguished gentleman of Kokuvil, passed away on 21st January in Colombo after a brief illness. Eldest in a family of five boys and a girl, he grew up in comfortable circumstances under the loving care of his parents, Mr R.Rasiah and Mrs Sellamma Rasiak.

He had his primary education at Kokuvil Hindu College and then moved to Jaffna Hindu College, where he studied up to the London Matriculation. There he came under the influence of great men of letters, who inspired him to read avidly and write precisely. Also it was there that he honed his talent for speaking. A moment, Mr Kandiah fondly cherished, was when he was congratulated by the then Principal, Mr Nevins Selladurai, for making an excellent speech. From Jaffna Hindu he went to the Training College at Tinneveli, to undergo teacher training. A very popular figure among the fellow trainees, he was called upon to preside over their meetings, deliver speeches and edit their magazines.

In 1938, having completed his training, he joined hands with Mr R. Thambithurai, Retired Postmaster, to found the Ramakrishna Mission School at Kokuvil. Swami Vipulananda, the manager of the school, quickly

discovered Mr Kandiah's merits and appointed him Head Master. Thus, the burden of running a new school fell on his broad shoulders just at the very beginning of his career. But as the annals of the school would reveal, he was more than equal to the task. The school opened its gates to everybody in the community showing no discrimination, the teachers co-operated with their head in all that he undertook to do for the benefit of the school and the students. As the tributes paid to his memory by one of his former colleagues, Mr. P.Kandiah (Gandhi master) and by one of his old students, Mr. N. Puvanendiran, Director of Rehabilitation and Planning, Trincomalee, bear out, it was his charisma that ensured all his success. In the midst of all his duties, he had also been relentlessly pursuing his studies. To equip himself better for the career, he underwent a short training under Maria Montessori in Colombo, and he also successfully completed his Bachelor of Arts Degree.

To him teaching was not a discipline in isolation but a means by which he could indulge in other activities equally beneficial to the society. A well-read man and a gifted writer and speaker, he attained positions of leadership in many organisations, through merit and sustained them for long with respect. When one goes through a list of such organisations, one finds it staggering and begins to wonder how he found time to actively engage in them. He was a true believer in Mahathma Gandhi and was drawn into the Ghandian Movement. The Gandhi Seva Sangam elevated him to the position of President and benefited from his leadership. He had been the President of the All Ceylon Tamil Teachers' Union for many years, leading the teachers in their struggles. He had also been the President of The Saiva Sithantha Samarsam, as President of the Board of Trustees of Nanthavil Amman Kovil, he supervised the restoration work and helped, conduct the Kumbabhisekam creditably. Being a voracious reader, he amassed a personal library of books and magazines - books on Tamil Literature, Hinduism, English Literature, Biographies etc. Incidentally, it should be recorded that he made a donation of all his books - six hundred in all - to the University Library, Jaffna. He also wrote extensively on many topics. The book titled, "Essence of Hinduism", has been widely received and the Ministry of Hindu Cultural Affairs chose to publish it. It also decorated him with an award at a ceremony in Colombo. He had also been a historian and has done some research on temples and families in Jaffna. A research paper, he published on the history of Nanthavil Amman Kovil, is a remarkable one.

His devoted wife, Sornamma, herself a teacher, had been his constant companion for sixty years. They had been devoted parents to their children, had seen them grow and do well in life. In 1987, compelled by the unfolding, tragic events in our homeland, they left home and lived with their son, Ravindran, in Colombo.

Invited to the UK by their daughter Uma and sons Narendran and Sucindran, they came to London on a visit last year. Despite all the comforts provided for them they felt that the rigours of another winter would be too much for them and prevailed on them to take them back to Colombo. Mr Kandiah really believed that he could live for some more years there but Fate had willed it otherwise. Within two months his health turned worse and he breathed his last.

The pain of loss deeply felt by his bereaving family is shared by hundreds of his relatives friends old students and admirers.

May his soul rest in peace.

K. Kanthapillai.

Dr K KANDIAH OBE

Wrangy was born in Jaffna, Ceylon (now Sri Lanka) in 1916. He excelled in mathematics, which enabled him to win a place at Cambridge before the war. His friends and relations who saw him off to England expected him to become a Senior Wrangler. This is how he became called Wrangy.

After graduating at Cambridge, he became interested in the electronic aspects of the nuclear research at the Cavendish Laboratory. Here Wrangy's maths background helped him to design his electronic circuits rigorously and so to achieve good performance and good reliability. In 1947 Wrangy and his team moved to the newly-opened Atomic Energy Research Establishment at Harwell. It was then that I first met him.

In nuclear research, the quality of the results depends largely on the performance of the electronics used. So Harwell needed the best electronic techniques available. Over the years, electronics advanced with incredible speed. In the 1940s there was no alternative to electronics using thermionic valves, which were large, inflexible, hot and unreliable. In the 1950s, transistors began to replace valves, bringing huge advantages. Then came microcircuits, in which arrays of thousands, and later millions, of transistors were made on a single silicon wafer. Wrangy was quick to take advantage of these astonishing advances.

Wrangy also saw the need for special

low-noise transistors and saw a way of getting them developed. The Ministry of Defence had a central organization, originally set up during the war, for developing thermionic valves, and later transistors, for all three of the Armed Services. Wrangy became Chairman of their Technical Committee. This gave him control of the development of special ised transistors for all the Services.

Fortunately, some of the Service requirements were similar to Harwell's. Wrangy evaluated manufacturers' prototype transistors rigorously in his laboratory. This enabled him to specialise in subtle design changes which improved transistor performance. It is an attribute to his high reputation, both in the Services and in Industry, that this arrangement - was accepted on all sides.

When the Rutherford Laboratory became an organisation separate from Harwell, we set up a joint electronics laboratory, staffed 50-50 by Rutherford and Harwell people. Everyone agreed that it should be headed by Wrangy. This sensible arrangement worked well for a number of years.

Wrangy was happiest running a small team of hand-picked people doing careful investigations of physical processes in transistors and radiation detectors. His enthusiasm for this work was infectious. The computerised test equipment he developed could perform sequences of accurate measurements automatically over periods of days or weeks, and could register the movements of a single electron. This work threw light on the physical factors which affected the precision with which nuclear particles could be analysed and counted.

Wrangy published many important papers on this and related topics. He acquired a world-wide reputation. At international conferences he was usually surrounded by a knot of people anxious to talk to him.

When the time came for Wrangy to retire from Harwell, he moved with his equipment to the Rutherford Appleton Laboratory and carried on much as before. By then he was collaborating world-wide with other workers in the field, making good use of the Internet in the preparation of joint papers. Eventually his equipment went to the Max Planck Institute at Munich, where it is still in use. He was preparing a joint paper with this Institute when he died.

He was not only a good scientist, but also a delightful and stimulating person. It was a privilege to be his colleague and friend for so many years.

E H Cooke-Yarborough
30 January 2002

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