Tamil TIMES

VOL XXII No.8 ISSN 0266-4488 AUGUST 2003 90p

22

TAPROBANE TRAVEL
SRI LANKA TOURS

TAPROBANE TRAVEL 1977 26 2003 ANNIVERSARY

The Agent with 26 Years of Excellence in Service

TOP AGENT For Sri Lankan Airlines
For 12 Consecutive Years 1991-2002

SriLankan

SriLankan

Emirates

Appointed Agent for:
Emirates
Qatar Airways
Kuwait Airways

Emirates

QATAR AIRWAYS

KUWAIT AIRWAYS

Flights to JAFFNA Available on Request

For Competitive Fares to;
Colombo, Madras, Trichi, Trivandrum, Bangalore, Bombay, Delhi,Bodh Gaya, Kochi, Bangkok, Singapore, Hong Kong, Kuala Lumpur, Jakarta, Maldives, Sydney, Perth, Melbourne, Brisbane

Call our Travel consultants;
Kamini, Chris, Leoni or Lucky
Tel: 020 7437 6272, 020 734 9078
Taprobane Travel
19 Golden Square,
London W1F 9HD
www.srilankatours.co.uk

ATOL PROTECTED

IATA

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

-Voltaire

Tamil TIMES

ISSN 0266 - 44 88
Vol. XXII No. 8
AUGUST 2003

Published by:
TAMIL TIMES LTD
PO Box 121, Sutton,
Surrey SM1 3TD
United Kingdom
Phone: 020 - 8644 0972
Fax: 020 - 8241 4557

Email: prajan@gn.apc.org
editor@tamiltimes.org
admin@tamiltimes.org
Website: http://www.tamiltimes.org

ANNUAL SUBSCRIPTION

UK/India/Sri Lanka.....£15/US$25
Australia.....Aus$45
(Australian Bank cheques only)
USA.....US$35
Canada.....Can$40
All other countries..... £20.US$35

Views expressed by contributors are not necessarily those of the editor or publishers. The publishers assume no responsibility for return of unsolicited manuscripts, photographs or artwork.

Interim Administration	03
News Review	04
Interim set-up and human rights	11
Peace -optimism and obstacles	12
Killings continue with impunity	19
Our ethnic imbroglio	22
Peace process - phase 2	25
News Track	26
Classified	37

Cover: LTTE Paris meeting on 23 August - V.Rudrakumaran, S P Tamilselvan and Col.Karuna. Prime Ministers of Thailand and Sri Lanka watch as Foreign Ministers of both countries sign bilateral agreements in Colombo

Interim Administration

It is now over 18 months since the government and the LTTE signed the Ceasefire Agreement in December 2001. The commencement of peace talks between the parties was delayed until ban imposed on the LTTE by the government was lifted and thereafter talks started on 16 September 2002. After five rounds of negotiations spanning over eight months months, the LTTE withdrew from peace talks in April 2003. Now there are indications that talks will resume in the near future.

A team led by the political head Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE), S P Tamilselvan, and accompanied by legal advisors is currently meeting in Paris. The declared purpose of this meeting which started on 21 August is to study in detail and to formulate a response to the government's proposal given to the LTTE in respect of its demand for the setting up of an interim 'politico-administrative structure' for the areas of the north-east of the island in which the LTTE should be empowered to play a predominant role. Whether the response would be in the form of amendments and additions or a complete set of counter-proposals is yet to be seen. However, what is clear is that the LTTE leadership has concluded that government's proposal is worthy of a considered response.

The government has been subjected to severe criticism by some opposition political parties and sections of the media for the proposal it has submitted to the LTTE. It has been accused of preparing to hand over the northeast to the LTTE and legitimise a de facto 'Tamil Eelam'. However, some persistent supporters of the peace process have praised the government for 'going a long way' and describing its proposal as the furthest that it could have gone under the constraints placed by the island's Constitution. If the LTTE's response were to insist on proposals that went beyond the parameters of the Constitution, then the government would find itself unable to concede. One hopes both parties recognise each other's constitutional limitations and political compulsions under which they have to operate and adopt a pragmatic approach that will enable the peace process to be taken forward.

Following the submission of the LTTE's response, one presumes that the next step would be for the parties meeting to iron out the differences between the government's proposal and the LTTE's response, thereby restarting the peace talks which have remained stalled for the last four months.

The prospect of a resumption of peace talks between the parties can be regarded as a positive development that will be welcomed by most people.

It would have been ideal, without having recourse to an interim arrangement, if the parties could have gone straight into discussing the core political issues of the conflict and arrived at a comprehensive constitutional settlement. But for whatever reason, both parties have from the very beginning given the impression that at least for the present they are averse to discussing the core political issues.

In considering a provisional arrangement of the type proposed, it is imperative that the parties agree to secure certain fundamentals.

Firstly, though the parties have, during the several earlier round of talks, refrained from discussing the core political issues of the conflict, it is significant that they agreed to work towards a political settlement within a federal framework. Hence, whatever interim arrangement for the administration of the northeast that the parties agree to shall be an instrument that will facilitate and enable such a solution to be reached. Secondly, the interim arrangement should be representative enough to adequately reflect the aspirations of all the people and communities that inhabit the northeast. Particular attention should be paid to the situation in the eastern province which is inhabited by the all three communities, Tamils Muslims and Sinhalese in almost equal proportion and where the ethnic remains quite volatile. Thirdly, while it is recognised that the LTTE will play a significant role in any interim arrangement, its composition should allow for political diversity and pluralism to be secured in practice. It must provide for the participation of not only other political parties, but also for representative civil society organisations. Fourthly, though it will not be a body elected by the people, provision must be made for those who exercise power thanks to the interim arrangement to be made accountable to the people. Fifthly, all fundamental rights and other rights to which people are entitled under the Constitution shall remain guaranteed, including the right to life, the right not to be arbitrarily arrested or detained, the right to freedom of movement, association and expression, and the right not to be subjected to any penalty unless sanctioned by due process of law. All judicial remedies that are presently available to the people shall continue to remain guaranteed.

Finally, the interim arrangement shall be for a specified period of time within which the parties will commit themselves to peace talks continuing without undue delay reaching a permanent political and constitutional settlement.

NEWS REVIEW

● LTTE team in Paris

A high-level team of the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE), headed by its political wing leader, S.P. Tamilchelvan, is meeting in Paris to prepare the response to Colombo's latest proposal for an interim administration.

A ten-member team of the LTTE arrived in Colombo from Kilinochchi in the north and Batticaloa in the east by two special helicopters provided by the Sri Lanka Air Force and stayed in Colombo under special security at the Katunayake airport premises before it left for Paris by Sri Lankan Air Lines on 20 August.

It is said that the LTTE's Paris discussions will commence on August 21 and continue for about ten days.

The Paris meeting, to be held between August 21 and 27, comes against the backdrop of a July 17 proposal by Colombo offering the LTTE a Provisional Administrative Structure (PAS) in a bid to restart direct talks, stalled since the LTTE's unilateral pullout on April 21. The PAS offers an inbuilt majority for the LTTE and gives the interim body powers over development, reconstruction and rehabilitation, but specifically excludes the authority over security, police, land and revenue. The LTTE, describing this offer as "failing to meet the expectations of the Tamils," said it would present its counter-proposals. It has also linked resumption of direct talks to Colombo's acceptance of these counter-proposals.

In addition to Mr Tamilchelvan, the LTTE team included LTTE Batticaloa-Amparai district special commander, Col. Karuna, LTTE's economic advisor, Dr.Jay Maheswaran, LTTE peace secretariat head, Mr.Pulithevan, and the chief of the now-defunct Subcommittee on Immediate Humanitarian and Rehabilitation Needs (SIHRN), Mr.Irenus Selvin.

According to LTTE sources, the Sri Lankan contingent of the LTTE will be joined in Paris by legal experts from among expatriate Tamils who are supportive of the Tamil Tigers and now resident in Singapore, Australia, Canada and some other European countries. They are expected to study in detail the proposals given to the LTTE by the Sri Lankan Government in respect of setting up of an interim administrative structure for the northeast of the island, and formulate the LTTE's response to the Government.

V.T. Tamilmaran, a law faculty lecturer in the University of Colombo, is also likely to participate in the Paris meeting, but in "an independent capacity". The U.S.-based attorney, V. Rudrakumaran who has participated in previous rounds of peace talks as legal advisor is also attending the Paris meeting.

While the London-based LTTE's chief negotiator, Anton Balasingham's reported non-attendance at the Paris meeting has been the subject of intense media speculation, it is learnt that he will be consulted and will have a significant role in respect of any future negotiations.

According to LTTE sources the team would come out with a set of "concrete proposals". There are no public indications on the LTTE's proposed response, but it is learnt that it would be "comprehensive" and could set out "broad contours" for a final settlement. The counter-offer is expected to be an evolution of the Thimpu declaration of July 13, 1985, which outlined the principles of recognising the island's Tamils as of a "distinct nationality"", the recognition of an "identified homeland" and the "right to self-determination of the Tamil nation".

It is learnt that the Paris discussions have been organised with the assistance of the Norwegian government which is playing a facilitatory role in the Sri lanka peae process. The Second Secretary in the Norwegian Embassy in Colombo accompanied the LTTE delegation to Paris, and the Norwegian special peace envoy, Mr. Erik Solheim, is expected to participate at the concluding session of the Paris talks, a spokesman at the Norwegian Embassy said.

Speaking to journalists in Kilinochchi before he left for Colombo on the previous day, Mr.Thamilchelvan expressed confidence that the Sri Lankan government would accept the LTTE's response to its interim administration proposals, which is to be prepared in consultation with constitutional and legal experts and would be submitted to the UNF government through the Norwegian facilitators.

Mr.Thamilchelvan further said that the LTTE response would fulfil the aspirations and expectations of Tamils in the northeast province and also meet the aspirations of Muslims. The LTTE's response would be prepared to safeguard the interests of all communities living in the northeast.

● Two versions of IA proposals

Even as people were beginning to make sense of the government proposals sent to the LTTE in respect of the proposed 'Provisional Administrative Structure' for the northeast, a dispute broke out between the President and the government as the former accused the latter of sending her a version of the proposal that was different from the one sent to the LTTE. Strange as it may seem, the President came to know of the existence of two versions of the same document in the columns of *The Sunday Times* which published the full text purporting to be the version sent to the LTTE through the Norwegian envoy Mr. John Westborg.

The government had intended that the details of the proposal should remain confidential and not released to the public, and in this regard Prime Minister Ranil Wickramasinghe made a specific request to the President when sending a copy to her. But how *The Sunday Times* columnist managed to obtain a copy of the exact version given to the LTTE remains a mystery.

Downplaying the differences between the two versions of the document and accusing the President of making a mountain out of a molehill, government spokesman G. L. Peiris told journalists that there was no substantial difference between the two documents, and the only differences in the copy of the document sent to the LTTE and the initial draft of proposals given to the President Kumaratunga were that one had an introduction and specific mention of defense, police, lands and revenues.

After the government sent its proposal to the Norwegian envoy, there was a series of discussions between the government representatives and John Westborg who sought clarifications to some points. Consequent to the discussions and clarifications John Westborg had made the second draft and had shown it to the government and obtained approval before it was taken to Kilinochchi, according to Mr Peiris.

According to Mr Peiris, the draft proposal given by the government to the Norwegian envoy did not have an introduction. It was John Westborg who had included an introduction to the draft proposal that was given to the LTTE. And in his view the inclusion of the introduction did not "make any substantial difference between the two documents". How such vi-

tally important subjects as defence, police, lands and revenues, which figured in one version and but omitted in the other, can be regarded as insubstantial is beyond comprehension, said a spokesman of the opposition PA.

● Colombo confident of talks

Meanwhile, the Government expressed confidence that the stalled negotiations with the LTTE would resume by late September. It also asserted that the latest offer made for a LTTE dominated interim administration would not lead to a separate state and said it was ready to face any election if the need arose.

Stating that after the LTTE's response, the positions would be clearly delineated, Colombo's chief negotiator, G.L. Peiris, told a press conference in Colombo that it was the government's "expectation that in September, the discussions will resume".

Refuting criticism from the main Opposition, the Sri Lanka Freedom Party (SLFP), that any interim administration offer should follow an agreement on the final solution, Prof. Peiris said: "One should not wait until all details are worked out. If all final details are worked out, an interim administration is superfluous". Moreover, the "basic contours" of the final solution were "agreed upon" by the Government and the LTTE and reflected in last December's Oslo declaration.

Referring to the SLFP's criticism that the offer for an interim administration would lead to separation, Prof. Peiris stressed, "My government will not agree to any proposal that appears to pave way for the division of the country" adding that there was "no question of a separate state. The Liberation Tigers have already renounced a separate state and have said it would be only as a last resort. There is no merit to the criticism."

Dismissing allegations by the main opposition People's Alliance against the government's proposal. Minister Peiris said according to the agreement reached between the then Indian High Commissioner and the LTTE leader in 1987, measures had been taken to grant the LTTE majority power in the internal administration. The other ethnic groups would not be subjected to any unfairness and injustice if the LTTE secured majority power in the proposed interim administration. The UNF government had embarked on a clear decision on the structure of the interim administration, Mr. Peiris said.

Meanwhile it has been reported that Economic Reforms Minister Milinda Moragoda who was a member of government's negotiating team during previous rounds of talks has told Prime Minister Ranil Wickremesinghe that he wants to leave the peace negotiating team. No reason has been given for his decision, but it is speculated that he has been frustrated by the slow progress that has been made so far.

Following the government's proposals regarding the interim administration being sent to the LTTE, its leadership also indicated that peace talks could resume. "We would be ready to resume negotiations if the Sinhala nation accepts our proposal for the interim administration and follows the path of peace. The Sri Lankan government cannot disregard our proposal. If it does, then (Colombo) should let the Tamils go their way to determine their own destiny. This is the reality", said Mr. S.P Thamilchelvan, the head of the LTTE's political division, addressing more than 3000 delegates from Jaffna taking part in a conference for the National Awakening Movement in Pallai, a town in the peninsula's southern sector.

"The forces inimical to peace expected the Liberation Tigers to reject outright the Sri Lankan government's latest draft so that they could orchestrate an international propaganda campaign to convince everyone that the LTTE is not interested at all in peace. But their hopes were dashed. We will prepare and submit a proposal for an interim administration that would essentially reflect the aspirations and expectations of our people. Our leadership's advice on the interim administration proposal has been completed. International legal experts and senior academics will discuss the proposal before it is given a final form", he said.

● Opposition against IA

Janatha Vimukthi Peramuna (JVP), which has been opposed from the very beginning to the Norwegian facilitated peace process, held a demonstration and rally in Colombo against what it described as the handing over the northeast interim administration to the LTTE and what the JVP said were attempts by the government to bring foreign forces into the country.

Thousands of JVP cadres participated in the demonstration. Demonstrators carried black flags and banners and shouted slogans condemning the UNF government, the LTTE and the Norwegian facilitators. A meeting was held close to the Norwegian Embassy. Journalists were not allowed to go near the leaders of the JVP who were present at the scene. More armed police were deployed with barbed wire and water cannon to prevent any possible violence.

Addressing the rally at the end of the demonstration held near the Norwegian embassy in Colombo, JVP parliamentarian Mr.Wimal Weerawanse said that establishing an interim administration council in the northeast province and handing it over to the LTTE would be tantamount to establishing a separate state.

The National Bhikku Front (NBF) of Sri Lanka commenced a propaganda campaign opposing the establishment of an Interim Administration for the northeast province. The general secretary of the NBF, Ven. Chandaloka Thera, said that the campaign would be held in Colombo and 50 other cities in the south through nearly 1500 Buddhist Vihares in the island.

The NBF's general secretary and other leading members distributed pamphlets that appealed to the masses to come forward to oppose the proposed interim administrative structure for the northeast province, saying it would lead the country's division. In its pamphlet, the NBF outlined what it said were dangers in handing over the interim administrative structure to the hands of the Tamil Tigers.

Meanwhile, the National Sangha Federation (NSF) of Sri Lanka at its press conference in Colombo said that, since the UNF government came to power, the LTTE has strengthened itself militarily and politically. "It is unwise to hand over the civil administration of the northeast to the LTTE, as it would become a threat to the sovereignty of the country," the NSF said. The NSF President, Ven. Ellawella Methananda Thera, said, "All patriotic citizens of the country should rally under one flag to oppose the UNF government's attempt to hand over civil administration of the northeast to the LTTE."

● LSSP on the peace process

In a statement issued on 14 August by its General Secretary, Batty Weerakoon, the Lanka Sama Samaja Party(LSSP) stated, "The Lanka Sama Samaja Party with its commitment to a political solution to the ethnic conflict sources the present deadlock in the peace process to the LTTE's cavalier attitude to the provisions of the Ceasefire MoU signed by it and the SL Government with the commitment of the Norwegian facilitator to ensure that it works.

The negotiations between parties can be put back on track only by parties agreeing to observe strict adherence to the pro-

visions of the MoU. The LTTE has regarded the MoU as amenable to major infringements whenever it thought it necessary to further establish its hegemony in the North and the East. Its conduct has eroded the support base for the peace process and has brought the LTTE's bona fides to serious question. The current peace process is what commenced under the PA government in 1994 and has profited from the public confidence built for it at that time. The Ceasefire MoU opened a second phase in the process and further strengthened and widened public confidence in it. But in the last few weeks it has moved to a slump from which it has to be rescued.

The LSSP is of the view that this can be best achieved only by ensuring that the LTTE that has been at fault subjects itself to the full implementation of the provisions of the MoU. Criticism of it in this regard has issued from the Tamil community itself and such bodies as Amnesty International. The LSSP does not think it feasible or constructive to commence negotiations on the projected 'interim administration' without restoring fully the validity and efficiency of the Ceasefire MoU.

The LSSP reiterates that it does not regard the question of the requisite 'interim administration' from a position of principle. Such administration and its ambit of power need to be decided in accordance with the progress of negotiations. It should not be forgotten that the PA government's August 2000 Constitutional Amendment Bill was itself an interim measure and that it had within it a further interim measure (an interim administration of 10 years) to take effect after the Amendment became operative.

This contemplated a commencement of negotiations with the LTTE in a context in which the Tamil people were assured that by this Amendment the Constitution has guaranteed to them in the North and Eastern provinces one or more autonomous regions in accordance with their aspirations.

Parties involved in the negotiations need to understand that they cannot reach finality on the 'interim administration' that has been demanded and other issues as pertain to the High Security Zones and SL's territorial waters without due regard to the anxieties of the Sinhala and Muslim people in respect of the LTTE's bona fides which have been adversely affected by its conduct.

It goes without saying that the SL Government has also the obligation to ensure that members of the Tamil community in these provinces are sufficiently safeguarded from armed LTTE aggression in the areas of their civic, political, democratic and human rights."

● NPC urges 'principled approach

The National Peace Council of Sri Lanka in statement on 20 August said, "Currently attention is focused on the LTTE's consultation in Paris regarding their response to the government's proposed interim administrative structure. The National Peace Council considers this to be an important phase in the transformation of the armed conflict to peaceful coexistence. It is expected that the LTTE will make its observations and counter proposals to the government after the Paris consultation.

At the Oslo peace talks in November last year, the LTTE together with the government agreed to explore a federal solution based on the principle of internal self-determination. The National Peace Council wishes to request the government and LTTE not to get stuck to their opening positions, and not to view each other's positions as non-negotiable. We believe that the parameters of a federal solution

CARLTON LEISURE
Worldwide Travel & Tours
"Fly with us once, Fly with us always"
SriLankan Airlines · AIR FRANCE · Emirates · QATAR AIRWAYS · ROYAL JORDANIAN · IATA · 4568 ATOL PROTECTED

WE OFFER THE MOST COMPETITIVE FARES ON ALL THE WORLD'S MAJOR AIRLINES

AUGUST SPECIAL OFFERS

QATAR AIRWAYS
COLOMBO £420 + taxes from 26th August
BUSINESS £1050 + taxes

MELBOURNE £563 + taxes
PERTH £563 + taxes
1st to 30th Sept - to be ticketed by 15th Auigust
SYDNEY £605 + taxes
BRISBANE £475 + taxes
COLOMBO £349 + taxes
MADRAS £435 + taxes
JAFFNA RTN £452 + taxes

TRIVANDRUM £435 + taxes
TORONTO £399 + taxes
NEWYORK £325 + taxes
DUBAI £229 + taxes
BILLUND £118 + taxes
OLSO £97 + taxes
ZURICH £75 + taxes

SriLankan Airlines
COLOMBO £465 + taxes
FREE extensions to any one of the following destinations
Madras, Trichi, Trivandrum, Singapore, Bangkok, Jakarta, Kuala Lumpur or Hong Kong.
(from 1st September)

FOR THE LATEST BARGAINS AND RESERVATIONS CONTACT OUR TRAVEL CONSULTANTS ANOUSHKA, DILHAN, GAJEN, USHA, VIRAJ OR ANALIN

HARROW & WEMBLEY 299 RAYNERS LANE, PINNER, HA5 5EG FREE PHONE: 0800 279 2211
CENTRAL LONDON 68 GREAT PORTLAND STREET, LONDON W1W 7NG FREE PHONE: 0800 043 1943
EAST LONDON & ESSEX TELEPHONE: 020 8220 8123

provide an appropriate framework for the interim structure.

The NPC believes that an approach based on principles can also meet the interests of all other parties and the people at large. Both parties should look at principles and not simply at their narrow political interests. Further, since the government's proposals envisage opposition participation it is advisable that the government should include the opposition in future negotiations to establish the interim administration.We are very concerned, however, that at the ground level, the ongoing political assassinations of anti-LTTE Tamil and Muslim political party members and a resumption of Tamil-Muslim disturbances undermine the confidence of people in the peace process. Given the past record of the government and LTTE, they should commit themselves to the vindication of human rights, rule of law and political and ethnic pluralism in the interim structures that they jointly establish. A principled approach to the interim administration can alleviate fears of people on both sides."

● Thailand offers support

The Prime Minister of Thailand, Dr. Thaksin Shinawatra, addressing Sri Lanka's parliament said that his government would continue to provide his country as venue again any time, if and when required to hold Sri Lanka's peace talks.

"We often regard Sri Lankans with extra appreciation. So when we were approached to provide the venue for the Sri Lankan peace talks, the Thai people and my government were very pleased and honoured to do so," said the visiting Prime Minister. "I personally instructed all the authorities concerned to render whatever was possible to facilitate the logistic arrangements of the talk venue. We were happy to be of any assistance to contribute towards peace, harmony and prosperity in this land of friendship, and wish you well in your endeavors. We shall be happy to continue to provide the venue again any time, if and when required," he said.

The Thailand Prime Minister was the second foreign dignitory to address Sri Lanka's parliament after fifteen years. The last visitor to do so was the then British Prime Minister, Ms. Margaret Thatcher, in April 1985.

"The peoples of our two countries look forward to the time when we can make use of our long history and cultural heritage to the best benefit in bringing development and prosperity for our two peoples. Thailand stands ready to extend our assistance and to work with the international community to help regain the livelihood of people in areas previously torn by the effect of wars and armed conflicts," said Dr. Thaksin Shinawatra.

He further said that his country would be pleased to share its experiences, if required, in the reconstruction of East Timor, Afghanistan, and now Iraq, especially in de-mining, education, health care, agricultural technology, and rural development, with Sri Lanka's relevant agencies.

● Monitors fear for truce

The dispute between the LTTE and the government over the construction by the LTTE of a military camp in eastern Sri Lanka continues without any resolution.

The Sri Lanka Monitoring Mission (SLMM) have said their future role in maintaining ceasefire between the government forces and the Tamil Tigers needed to be reviewed after the Tigers declined to vacate a military camp reportedly established inside government-controlled territory in the Trincomalee district in eastern Sri Lanka. Tigers insist that the camp in Trincomalee district falls within their area of control but the SLMM had ruled that the LTTE had violated the ceasefire agreement by establishing the camp in government-held territory. Talking to the BBC, SLMM's deputy chief, Hagrup Haukland said the LTTE's refusal to vacate the camp could possibly damage the 17-month long ceasefire. He warned that if the deadlock continues, then the army might be left with no other option than removing the camp by using force - which the peace monitors are not in favour of. "We want the LTTE to remove the Wan Ela camp." Haukland said.

However, Sri Lanka's Defence Ministry categorically denied reports carried by a section of the media, quoting the Defence Secretary, Mr. Austin Fernando, as saying that military force would be used if the LTTE failed to dismantle the controversial Kurankupanchan camp in the Trincomalee district.

The Defence Ministry's Operation Headquarters issued a press release signed by the Military spokesman, Brigadier Sanath Karunaratne, saying that the Defence Secretary had not made such a statement to the media, advocating military force to dismantle the LTTE camp.

Mr.S.P.Thamilchelvan, the political head of the LTTE speaking to journalists at the LTTE secretariat in Sampur in Muttur East, said that there was no need for him to inspect the Kurankupanchan LTTE camp, which has been the subject of recent controversy, adding that the area had been under the LTTE's control for a long time and it was "unjust" for the SLMM or the Sri Lankan Army to ask the LTTE to remove the camp.

Mr. Thamilchelvan said the disputed camp had been there for a long period but the government troops did not know the existence of the camp for several years, as they couldn't go close to the LTTE held area during the war. "We do not want to make a big issue out of this Kurankupanchan camp issue. But a section of the media and elements bent on disrupting the present peace initiative are using the camp issue to the maximum to achieve their ends," said Mr. Thamilchelvan.

● Conflicting Muslim position

The proposal for an interim administrative structure, aggravated by recent violent incidents in the eastern province has brought the issue whether the Northern and Eastern Provinces should remain merged as one administrative unit. Politicians representing the Muslim community have also come up with conflicting positions on the issue.

The Tamil people were forced to have recourse to an armed struggle as a result of the oppressive policies of the Sinhalese political leadership, and when finding a political solution to this problem, "we are clear that a similar situation should not be created for the Muslim minority in the merged North East, and that is why we have told the [Sri Lankan] President that we want the North and East to be separate," said Mr. A.L.M. Athaulla, Member of Parliament (MP) from the Ampara district in eastern Sri Lanka.

Mr. Athaulla, who is also the Minister of Highways in the current United National Front government of Sri Lanka, was speaking at a meeting held in Eravur to discuss the Muslim community's stand in the current political situation..

The Ampara MP, who heads a breakaway group from the Sri Lanka Muslim Congress, is a rival of the SLMC leader, Mr. Rauff Hakeem. Mr. Athaulla is said to be conducting meetings in areas where support for Mr. Hakeem is considered strong. In what the observers said was a clear reference to Mr. Hakeem's leadership, Mr. Athaulla said: "The Muslim leadership has been saying for a long time that it is not the time for Muslims to be vocal about their rights and disrupt the peace process. But what we are saying is only that our community's rightful share

absolutely must be obtained when peace talks result in a political solution."

On the Tamil leadership's stand on the issue that there should be unity among Tamils and Muslims as a Tamil speaking people, Mr. Athaulla said, "The Tamil leadership has often said that the Muslims are Tamil-speaking people when it is convenient to them, but it is regrettable that when the Muslim community is speaking about its fundamental rights, Tamil leaders criticize it," Mr. Athaualla said.

He continued: "That there should be Tamil-speaking leadership in the North is not in dispute. The North and East should be separate, however, with a separate Tamil Chief Minister for the North and a Muslim Chief Minister for the East. Only in such an administrative structure could differences in opinion in the future between Muslims and Tamils be resolved."

"The North-East merger was only a temporary measure under the Emergency Regulations," Mr. Athaulla said. "Since the ER no longer exists, we have asked the President to de-merge the North and East and appoint separate governors for each province."

However, on 13 August, the North East Muslim Parliamentarians' Alliance (NEMPA) said that the problems of Muslims could be solved only within the merged northeast province. "We cannot find solutions to the problems of our community by dividing the merged northeast province," said M.L.A.M.Hisbullah, General Secretary of the NEMPA, in an interview to a private television in Colombo.

Mr Hisbullah is a parliamentarian and member of the National Unity Alliance (NUA) led by Mrs. Ferial Ashraff, wife of the late Mr.M.H.M.Ashraff, who founded the Sri Lanka Muslim Congress now being led by Minister Mr.Rauff Hakeem.

Parliamentarians of the NUA, SLMC and Ashraff Congress, a breakaway group of the SLMC, have formed the North East Muslim Parliamentarians' Alliance to consolidate the position in the present peace process.

The stand of Mr. Hisbullah and the NEMPA comes in the wake of demands by the Ampara district parliamentarian and Minister of Highways in the United National Front Government, Mr. A.L.M. Athaulla, that he wanted the Northern and Eastern provinces de-merged.

"It is meaningless to argue that problems of Muslims could be solved by separating the merged northeast province," Mr.Hisbullah said adding that Muslim areas should be brought under a separate interim administration in the merged northeast. "Tamil areas should be brought under one interim administration. Likewise, Muslim areas should be brought under separate interim administration. Both interim administrations should be within the merged northeast province. Any future talks should be held on this basis. We are very clear in our stand," he said.

Mr.Hisbullah said that no solution could be found to the ethnic conflict by splitting the merged northeast province. "We today speak of bringing an interim administrative structure for northeast to stop the war and to bring permanent peace. We cannot bring peace by dividing the merged province. This is our firm and clear stand. The merger of the northeast should be the basis for a political solution. No Tamil parties or any other political groups would endorse the division of the merged province," said Mr.Hisbullah.

The NEMPA has decided to request the Sri Lankan government for a seat in the future peace talks as the sole representative of the North East Muslims, Mr.Hisbullah further said.

● President's threat

Sri Lanka's President, Ms. Chandrika Kumaratunge, issued a warning through her media spokesman, Mr.Harim Peiris, that she would not hesitate to de-merge the northeast province if the United National Front government failed to quell the violence and restore peace in the east.

Mr. Peiris, addressing a press conference on 20 August, said that people and religious leaders of the eastern province are making repeated requests to the President to de-merge the province to ensure their rights and safety. "Requests for the de-merger of the northeast province are closely studied by the President and she would take action in this regard at the appropriate time," he said at the press briefing.

"President Kumaratunga is of the view that people have started losing confidence in the Norwegian monitoring Mission in the country, as they are not taking prompt steps against the ceasefire violations by the LTTE," said the spokesman for the President.

The northern and eastern provinces were merged according to the Indo-Sri Lanka agreement signed in 1987 by the then Sri Lankan President, J.R.Jayawardene, and the then Indian Prime Minister, Mr. Rajiv Gandhi, with a condition that a referendum should be held to merge the provinces permanently after one year. However, the temporary merger of the two provinces still continues even after sixteen years and a Governor who has been appointed by the President is now administering the North East Provincial Council established under the 13th Constitutional Amendment.

The NEPC has had no elected administration since it was dissolved by the then President Mr.R.Premadasa in 1989. The other seven provincial councils in the south are being administered by elected administrations. However, elections to the NEPC have not been held since 1989 because of the armed conflict between the Tamil Tigers and government forces and due to the opposition of the LTTE to hold any election to the Council.

● The Indo-Lankans

The Sri Lankan Constitutional Affairs Minister, G.L. Peiris, described the island's relationship with India as a "source of strength", particularly during the current "challenging phase".

Releasing a book "The Indo-Lankans - Their 200-year saga", Prof. Peiris, who is also the Government's chief negotiator in the latest peace process, described the centuries-long ties between the two countries as "a relationship which straddles every sphere of human activity". India, he said, was the third largest investor in Sri Lanka, its fifth largest importer and the largest contributor in terms of tourist arrivals. India was "one sheet anchor, one solid bedrock and one source of strength" for both the Government and the people of Sri Lanka.

'The Indo-Lankans', a publication by the Indian Heritage Foundation, is authored by the noted writer, S. Muthiah, a former senior journalist attached to the Times of Ceylon and The Island, and puts together the contributions by the people of Indian origin who settled in Sri Lanka since 1796. The book brings to life the aspirations, strivings and achievements of people who are a part of the success story of Sri Lanka. Muthiah's book brings to life the Toilers who opened up the plantations, The Early Traders who followed them, The Professionals, The Players who came from the highlands, The Entrepreneurs, The Faithful and the Leaders who contributed significantly to the labour movement in Sri Lanka.

In a clear attempt to broaden the canvass from the already known Tamil links between the two countries, the book chronicles the contributions made by various sections of Indians such as the Parsis, the South Indian Moors, the Borahs, the Memons, the Gujaratis, the Sindhis and

the Malayalees.

In a video message, the Sri Lankan President, Chandrika Kumaratunga, lauding the contributions by the Indo-Lankans, described the Indian community in Sri Lanka as the island's legacy. The External Affairs Minister, Yashwant Sinha, who postponed his visit to Sri Lanka due to the no-confidence motion against the NDA Government, in a message, termed the recent moves to grant citizenship to disenfranchised Indians as a "positive development".

High Commissioner for India in Sri Lanka, Nirupam Sen says, "The book is outstanding in its content and will doubtless be considered a seminal contribution to literature in this field. The book illuminates one aspect of the close and friendly ties that have always existed by persons of Indian origin in Sri Lanka." And the former Indian High Commissioner Gopal Gandhi says that more than the story of a people, the story of an epoch is covered in this pictorial narration - an epoch wherein a nation has helped to attain the fullness of a padakkam (pendant) studded with gems, both indigenous and from the ancient land that lies across the Mannar shore.

The Indian High Commissioner to Sri Lanka, Nirupam Sen, recalling the contributions made by the people of Indian origin, to the development of Sri Lankan economy, said the Indian Tamils in the estates were more Sri Lankan than the Sri Lankan Tamils.

● LTTE to mend fences with India

The LTTE, which is banned in India since the assassination of the former Prime Minister, Rajiv Gandhi, want to repair its ruptured relations with New Delhi. Mr.V.Balakumaran, a leading political activist of the LTTE, and one time leader of EROS (a Tamil militant group), speaking at a literary function held at the Kailasapathy auditorium of the Jaffna University, expressing confidence that India would soon come to know the true position of the LTTE, said that if India came forward to improve its relationship with sincere heart, the LTTE was prepared to consider it. "The LTTE will not engage in activities that could disrupt the regional politics of India," he said, adding that the LTTE leadership was also very keen to mend fences with India. Mr. Balakumaran reportedly blamed India for using the LTTE's freedom struggle for its political interests, but said that the Tigers "would not engage in any confrontation with India or work against its interests'".

Mr. Balakumaran said. "The LTTE has a clear vision in the international arena and it is taking forward its political activities accordingly," adding, "Through the present peace process after the unsuccessful Agni Kheila military operation of the Sri Lankan government, the LTTE has taken a new path in the international arena."

Like the Tamil Nadu Chief Minister, J Jayalalithaa, the LTTE too opposes the proposal to construct a bridge between Tamil Nadu and north Sri Lanka. Jayalalitha had recently written to the Prime Minister A B Vajpayee expressing her opposition to the bridge on the grounds that it was a security risk. She said that link would lead to infiltration by the LTTE, which in the eighties had introduced and fostered the "gun culture" in Tamil Nadu.

Balakumar said that he personally welcomed the stand taken by the Tamilnadu Chief Minister, Ms Jayalalitha, against the proposal for constructing a bridge between India and Sri Lanka. If a bridge were constructed between Talaimannar in Sri Lanka and Rameswaram in India, "it would ruin our culture." By opposing the construction, Ms Jayalalitha has "come to the rescue of our culture," said Mr. Balakumaran.

If Jayalalitha said that the bridge would lead to the infusion of the LTTE's dreaded "gun culture" into peaceful Tamil Nadu, the LTTE says that the bridge will lead to the annihilation of Jaffna's Tamil culture. Jayalalitha's opposition to the bridge actually helps us preserve our culture," said Balakumar.

Responding to the report about the LTTE's wish to mend fences with India, senior Indian political leader Subramanian Swamy said that if the Sri Lankan Tamil Tigers genuinely cared about India, their leaders should surrender and face trial for former Premier Rajiv Gandhi's assassination. "If the LTTE truly cares about Indian sentiments, then it should ask its supremo Prabakaran and his deputy Pottu Amman to surrender at a Chennai police station and face trial for Rajiv Gandhi's assassination," Janata Party leader Swamy said in a statement.

Meanwhile, *The Island* daily proposed that Sri Lanka should consider giving to India, on "perpetual lease", the island of Katchchativu, as demanded by the Tamil Nadu Chief Minister J Jayalalithaa. Since the Sri Lankan Navy and Air Force did not seem to effectively control the seas in this region and terrorists (meaning the LTTE) were running rings around them, Jayalalithaa's request for Katchchativu, which was just a huge rock, deserved consideration, the paper said in its editorial.

However, the proposal to give theKachchativu island on perpetual lease to India is strongly opposed by a Tamil fisheries expert in Jaffna. "Under no circumstances should Kachchativu be leased out to India," senior lecturer in Fisheries at Jaffna University, Soosai Anandan said at a seminar on the problems of Sri Lankan Tamil fishermen.

Anandan said that poachers from other countries were already invading the seas around the Tamil-speaking Northeast. "While our own fishermen are not being allowed to fish freely in our waters, Indian (Tamil Nadu) fishermen are having a free run," he pointed out. "So, Kachc-hativu should not be leased out to India," he added.

After the February 2002 cease-fire agreement between the Sri Lankan government and the LTTE, Sri Lankan Tamil fishermen have been allowed to fish deeper into the sea and use more powerful boats. But in recent times they found hundreds of Tamil Nadu boats fishing within Sri Lankan waters. The Sri Lankan Tamil fishermen seek to prevent this poaching and detain them, their boats and crew.

The LTTE and the Sri Lankan Tamil fishermen accuse the Sri Lankan Navy of deliberately allowing the Tamil Nadu fishermen to intrude in order to precipitate a clash between Tamil Nadu and Sri Lankan Tamil fishermen and set India and the Sri Lankan Tamils against each other.

● Ban on unethical conversions

Minister of Buddha Sasana W.J.M.-Lokubandara has presented a cabinet memorandum to prevent unethical conversions by various religious elements. He said that this anti-unethical conversion Bill would be further strengthened by the Supreme Court ruling made on July 25 that according to Article 9 of the constitution unethical conversions were illegal. Mr.Lokubandara also said that the protection of Buddha sasana is enshrined in the constitution and other faiths could exercise their rights as long as it does not infringe upon the survival of the Buddha Sasana.

The Minister was making reference to the petition filed in Supreme Court by one Anula Irangani Fernando, against a private members Bill titled "Provincial of the Teaching Sisters of the Holy Cross of the 3rd order of St: Francis in Menzingen of Sri Lanka [Incorporation]". The bill was challenged in the Supreme Court on July 14 and was presented to Parliament as a

private members' Bill in the order book for July 9.

Mr. Lokubandara said that the Sri Lankan constitution did not guarantee a fundamental right to propagate religion as in Article 25(1) of the Indian Constitution. He said Archbishop Oswald Gomis had complained the Minister about unethical conversions exploiting poor people. Even the Hindu affairs Minister also complained about the situation, The Minister had alleged that money, food, medicines and education are used in unethical ways to convert the poor, the majority of whom are Buddhists. He said the new laws would prevent the illegal conversions and it can impose heavy sentences on those elements that violate this law.

• Media Watchdog criticises LTTE

Reporters Without Borders (Reporters sans frontières) has condemned the persistent attempts of the Tamil Tigers (LTTE) to silence the Tamil-language weekly Thinamurasu, in particular the ambush of a Thinamurasu distribution truck on 7 August by some 50 armed LTTE activists, who torched 5,000 copies of the newspaper after forcing the truck to stop at Sunkankeni, near the eastern town to Batticaloa.

In a letter to S. P. Tamilselvan, the head of the LTTE's political wing, the organisation called on the LTTE to put an end to its threats and acts of violence against Thinamurasu's editorial staff and distributors.

Reporters Without Borders said it was essential for the Tamil population to have access to a diverse range of news sources, all the more so now that Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch have just made very serious accusations against the LTTE.

Following the ambush, the newspaper's managing editor filed a complaint with the Norwegian observers in charge of monitoring compliance with the truce between the LTTE and the government. Thinamurasu (which means Daily Drumbeat) is one of the biggest-circulation newspapers in Tamil and it often reports human rights violations, including executions and abductions, by the LTTE in the east and north of the country.

Editor T. Baskaran told Reporters Without Borders that his newspaper was the only Tamil-language one to report human rights violations. "We must pay the price of our independence because the LTTE expects all the Tamil news media to say nothing about its violence. Those who don't obey are harassed."

Thinamurasu supports the EPDP, a Tamil political party that is radically opposed to the LTTE, and it has been the target of threats and attacks for years. In June, the LTTE leader in the northwestern district of Mannar threatened Thinamurasu's local correspondents with "the worst consequences" if the newspaper continued to be distributed in the region.

The newspaper's distributor in the east of the island pulled out of his distribution contract in March 2002 after receiving LTTE threats. In May and in June 2002, the LTTE banned the newspaper from circulating in Batticaloa. Norwegian observers had to intervene to get it back on sale.

LinkAir Travels Limited

Main Agent For SRILANKAN AIRLINES

NEW BRANCH IN WEMBLEY
LINK AIR TRAVELS LTD.
WHEN YOU NEED THE BEST IN SERVICE & PRICES JUST POP INTO
5 LANCELOT PARADE, LANCELOT ROAD, WEMBLEY, MIDDLESEX HA0 2AJ
TEL: 020 8903 8676
FAX: 020 8900 2332

THE WINNRES OF THE RAFFLE DRAW

1ST PRIZE (COURTESY OF SRILANKAN AIRLINES) - MR. K. NARENDRAN FROM HESTON
2ND PRIZE (COURTESY OF QATAR AIRWAYS) - MR. RAJARATNAM FROM ILFORD
3RD PRIZE (COURTESY OF QATAR AIRWAYS)- MR K. RAVEENDERAN FROM LONDON N7
4TH PRIZE (COURTESY OF EVEREST INTERNATIONAL) - MISS. VIVEKANANDARAJAH OF NEW MALDEN
5TH PRIZE (COURTESY OF HOLIDAY INN COLOMBO) MR. N. SIVAGNANAM FROM TOOTING

SriLankan Airlines - FREE extensions
Colombo rtn. £465 + tax
GET A FREE TRIP TO ANY ONE OF THE FOLLOWING DESTINATIONS:
Madras, Trichi, Trivandrum, Singapore, Bangkok, Kuala Lumpur, Jakarta or Hong Kong.

QATAR AIRWAYS
Taking you more personally
Qatar Airways now offer fast connections to Colombo. And there are more of them. With fantastic prices and luxurious service, give Qatar a try and you won't look back.

e-mail: sales@ linkair.co.uk
CALL NOW FOR THE LATEST BARGAINS
website: www.linkair.co.uk

FREE PHONE: 0800 279 0523
020 8665 0206
361 London Road, Croydon, Surrey CR0 3PB, Fax: 0208 689 2576
IATA
5047 ATOL PROTECTED

Interim setup should be based on pluralism and human rights

Kethesh Loganathan

At the time of writing this article, a UNF government proposal laying out the broad contours of an interim provisional government for the North-East, under the control of the LTTE, is now occupying center stage in the political arena.

The Norwegian mediators (they ceased to be facilitators long time ago) are presently engaged in shuttle diplomacy in trying to work out a common ground for direct negotiations between the Government and the LTTE on the subject of establishing a North-East interim or provisional administration. As such it is premature to comment on the proposal(s) which in any case is in the process of evolving. What I wish to place before the readers are some fundamentals that need to be taken into account while shaping an interim arrangement for the North-East. In fact, this intervention is prompted by some concerns I have relating to the on-going process.

At the outset, it must be noted that following the decision by the LTTE to suspend its participation in direct, official negotiations and not attend the Tokyo donor conference, the public discourse has shifted to interim arrangements and interim administration. Matters such as human rights, popular participation and core political issues, which were beginning to claim their due place in the peace agenda in the run-up to the Tokyo donor conference, have been placed in the backburner. It is therefore imperative that we remind ourselves once again of the fundamentals.

Firstly, it is important to take cognizance of the fact that there is a vital difference between interim arrangements prior to the reaching of a negotiated political settlement and transitional arrangements following a political settlement. In this, we need to recognize that Sri Lanka is not in a post-conflict situation. It is only the guns of the two standing armies that have fallen silent - and, even there, only against each other. The causes that led to the conflict remain unaddressed. The Government and the LTTE have displayed pathological aversion to addressing the core political issues and to initiate a process of constitutional reforms aimed at a negotiated political and a constitutional settlement to the ethnic question. That there are detractors is no excuse, just as much as detractors did not impede the signing of a ceasefire agreement and are not impeding the on-going initiatives at arriving at an interim arrangement.

The second fundamental relates to the question of the composition of the proposed interim arrangement for the North-East. Representation of the Muslims and the Sinhalese in the proposed interim arrangement is in the process of being addressed and should not pose too much difficulties. Suffice it to say that the issue of regional minorities need to be factored into any interim-arrangement and cannot wait till a final settlement.

Another vexed issue relating to the composition of the proposed interim administration or the provisional administration relates to political diversity and the role of the non-LTTE organization. It must be recognized that the history of the Tamil resistance against State repression and discrimination did not begin with the LTTE; neither would it end with the LTTE, if that State repression and discrimination persists. It is remarkable that just as much as LTTE has shown tremendous resilience in the face of adversities, some of the non-LTTE ex-militant Tamil political parties, which have faced the brunt of LTTE's pursuit of hegemony through the force of arms, are still in the political arena and simply refuse to turn over and play dead. This is despite the spate of political killings which have reached the proportions of a killing field in the North-East. They, like the LTTE, have also made tremendous sacrifices in resisting state repression and discrimination against the Tamil people. To exclude them from an interim arrangement just because they do not conform to the LTTE's way of seeing and doing, is to deny the Tamil people their fundamental right to political diversity and freedom of association. This is particularly important, if any interim arrangement preceding a final negotiated political and constitutional settlement becomes protracted without any possibility of direct elections to a North-East devolved unit.

This brings me to the question of popular participation in the task of resettlement, rehabilitation, reconstruction and development - a basic task that the proposed interim administration would be entrusted with. One lesson that could be learnt from the experience of the now defunct Sub-Committee on Immediate Humanitarian Needs (SIHRN) is that as long as the central and regional bureaucracies suffer from inertia and inefficiency, and as long as the LTTE sees any institution dealing with rehabilitation, reconstruction and the development as its own appendage that has no existence independent of itself, the people of the region are not going to benefit. Likewise, an interim arrangement aimed at primarily giving pride of place to the LTTE by marginalizing civil society may serve to strengthen the organization, but at the expense of weakening local community initiative, participation and capacity building. The mere replacement of SIHRN with an interim administration without a corresponding transformation of the key actors, and appropriate checks and balances and countervailing measures, would be counter-productive as far as the interests of the people of the North-East are concerned.

Another important plank in any interim arrangement is human rights. As a group of human rights activists and intellectuals noted in a recent joint statement, to which I was a co-signatory, since "interim" arrangements have the power to help shape long-term political and social developments, it is imperative that human rights guarantees must be built into any new administrative structures for the north and east from the very beginning. Clear and enforceable human rights "benchmarks" must be made central to the process of monitoring the disbursement of reconstruction funds. The right to life and right to livelihoods of all persons living and working in the north and east must be guaranteed, with full respect for their economic and social rights. Any interim arrangement that does not make human rights principles and concerns integral to its functioning will undermine the potential for lasting peace in Sri Lanka.

In sum, to me peace, whether interim or final, has no meaning if it is not firmly grounded on the principles of pluralism, political diversity and human rights. Further, the task of addressing core political and constitutional issues aimed at a final settlement cannot be delayed any longer. I do recognize the complexities in the process of transformation, but I am certainly not going to be content with arguments that rely on pragmatism, practicability and ground realities that seek to dodge these vital issues.

* *Kethesh Loganathan is a member of the Board of Directors of the Centre for Policy Alternatives (CPA) and Head of its Conflict and Peace Analysis Unit.* The views expressed are his own. (Sunday Times, 3 Aug 2003)

Optimism and Obstacles in the Peace Process

Jehan Perera

Several years ago during the height of the civil war an international scholar studying ethnic conflicts around the world referred to the Tamils of Sri Lanka as reluctant secessionists. As recently as 1970 the Federal Party, which was the largest Tamil party at that time, made a call to the Tamil people not to vote for any party or individual who advocated "bifurcating the island". Even after the TULF sought a mandate from the Tamil people for a separate state this was widely seen merely as a bargaining ploy on the part of the Tamil political leadership.

Certainly the members of the TULF who were voted into Parliament, and who constituted the preponderant majority of elected Tamil MPs in Parliament in 1977, behaved more as a responsible opposition of a united country than champions of separation.

This same ambivalent, or more properly, distant attitude towards separation seemed to prevail in the Wanni when I visited it recently in the company of the Tamil poet V I S Jayapalan who took me to his home deep within the Wanni near the town of Mallavi. Until the LTTE recaptured the main town of Kilinochchi, Mallavi was the capital of the LTTE's administrative system. Today it still has the left overs of a large market area, although all important LTTE and NGO offices have left the town for Kilinochchi.

In conversation with people in Mallavi, the dominant impression from them was that they wanted normal lives free from the fear and destruction of war. There was no overt manifestation of hostile or separatist sentiment that was shown to me on account of my being a Sinhalese. Just as in the south of the country, after the horrors of the JVP insurrection, the victims seldom if ever took revenge on the perpetrators or their relations, so it seemed to be in the Wanni. Those who had supplied their sons and daughters to the LTTE to fight against a predominantly Sinhalese army seemed to be prepared to let bygones be bygones.

When I asked the people in the marketplace what they expected in terms of an interim administration, they said that they wanted the powers of education, resettlement and economic development to be with the interim administration. These are standard devolved powers in any federal system of governance. The government's recent proposals to the LTTE regarding an interim administration, and providing it with all the powers that the central government currently wields with the exception of police, security, land and revenue would seem to go a considerable way to satisfying the aspirations of the people I met with.

Optimism

Government and NGO officials working in the Wanni whom I also spoke to were also optimistic that the LTTE would make a positive response to the government's proposals. They said that there was considerable pressure being put on the LTTE by the people to deliver to them the economic benefits of peace that could only be accessed if the LTTE re-entered the peace process to take it forward with the government. However, it is both possible and likely that the LTTE would wish to obtain changes in the government's proposals before making the decision to come back to the negotiating table.

In its proposals the government has stated that powers over police, security, land and revenue will not be granted to the interim administration. In virtually all federal states, whereas security remains the domain of the central authorities, the powers of police, land and revenue are either devolved to the regions or shared between them and the centre. On the other hand, it must be kept in mind that the interim administration is just that, it is only a step, albeit a major step, on the path to a federal solution.

In addressing their likely differences over the interim administration proposals, the government and LTTE need to adopt a principled approach. The basis for this principled approach should not be fear and mistrust of the other; instead it should be the vision of the final solution that the government and LTTE jointly spelled out in their famous Oslo declaration that they would together explore a federal solution based on the principle of internal self-determination.

Further, the government has proposed a double majority concept, as found in the Northern Ireland Parliament, whereby the representatives of the Muslims and Sinhalese minorities in the north east would have to give their consent to any decision that specifically impacts upon their interests. In effect this would give the minorities a veto power over decisions that concern themselves. By making these proposals, the government may have have been seeking to reassure the Sinhalese majority in the rest of the country, and the Muslims whose electoral support is crucial to the government's political survival, not to oppose the interim proposals.

On the other hand, the system of double majority is a highly relevant one for ethnically divided societies. It has been utilised by the British government in trying to resolve the Northern Ireland problem.

If the double majority system proves workable in the interim administration of the northeast, the experience so obtained could provide a basis for incorporating the system into other provinces of the country, and also into the national parliament. The provision of a double majority should not be seen as a limitation on the power of the LTTE in the interim administration, but as a part of the transformation that will eventually include the whole of the country.

Petty politics

While the government's interim administration proposals have much to commend in them, the unfortunate part of it is the shabby way the government has once again dealt with the President and opposition. For some inexplicable reason the President was sent only an earlier draft of the proposals. This draft

was substantially different from what was eventually sent to the LTTE. For instance, the removal of the police, security, land and revenue powers from the domain of the interim administration were not notified to the President. On the face of it, the President has once again been snubbed in the eyes of the general public.

There is no question that the vast majority of people believe that without a bipartisan approach it will not be possible to find a permanent solution to the ethnic conflict. Since 1957 governments have tried to find a solution to the ethnic conflict over the protests of the opposition, and have failed. It is unlikely that the present government has some extraordinary quality in it that would permit it to overcome fifty years political solution to the ethnic conflict.

Apprehensions about IA

There has been apprehension in Colombo and the rest of the south that the peace process, being struck those past three months, may also not last much longer. Incidents such as the destruction of the LTTE ships by the Navy, their refusal to go to the Tokyo donor conference and now its defiance of a directive by the international monitors of the Sri Lanka Monitoring Mission to dismantle their newly established military camp in government-controlled territory loom large in the minds of most Sinhalese and also of the international community.

The campaign carried out by a section of the opposition against the ceasefire agreement also add to these appre-

to in Jaffna believe it is the LTTE's effort to keep up its military strength that is the mainstay of Tamil bargaining strength. Where democratic leaders of the calibre of S J V Chelvanayakam could not succeed, the militant leadership of Velupillai Prabhakaran has succeeded in forcing the government to take the Tamil negotiating position seriously.

There is no doubt that the LTTE is using the period of the ceasefire to continue to strengthen themselves both politically and militarily. But the people are not apprehensive that the military build up is for the purpose of launching a new war at this time.

LTTE'S task

Wresting Tamil rights and autan-

problems at the speed that the people want them to. Without close cooperation it is also likely that the interim administration will have neither the economic resources nor the institutional competence to deliver to the people what they expect.

This can lead to a dangerous situation, the government and LTTE blaming each other for being the reason for the problem. From a civil society point of view, the interim administration should also be seen as a stepping-stone to federalism, democracy, freedom of speech and elections. These factors need to be carefully considered when the structure, powers and composition of the interim administration are being negotiated.

Assuaging Sinhalese apprehensions

To those who are accustomed to having governmental rule from Colombo, either solving problems or interfering even in the country's distant parts from the centre, the peace process contains elements that cause them grave apprehensions. The chief among the present causes for agitation is the LTTE's demand for an interim administration. In the impending governmental recognition of LTTE dominance over the northeast, many Sinhalese fear the possibility of formal secession. Or in the alternative they see a Cyprus-style division of the country in which the separatist part did not receive formal international recognition but exist nonetheless for over 30 years.

When viewed from a static perspective there is reason for people to fear an LTTE dominated interim administration as paving the way for eventual secession. There is a legitimate perspective from which the country appears to be poised at the brink of separation into two parts. Even now the LTTE has established its own administrative system in those areas of the north east that they control, including separate judicial, police, tax and customs authorities, not to mention its standing army and navy. In addition, the LTTE has its ideology of a separate Tamil state backed by its own flag, anthem and history. During this period of ceasefire, the LTTE has not been content to remain within its areas of control, but has been doing effective work in expanding outside of it. The most important Tamil city of Jaffna, which is under government control, is nevertheless subject to LTTE taxation of business. There is LTTE canvassing of secondary schools extolling the virtues of joining the organisation. All privately owned pre-schools in Jaffna are expected to fly the LTTE flag whenever they organise any special functions and invite an LTTE member to be in attendance and little toddlers have to sing the LTTE anthem.

So there is reason for those whose main aspiration is the unity of the country to be worried. This is especially the case if they think in static and unchanging terms of a monolithic LTTE with a single minded ambition of getting a separate state. They would tend to disregard evidence of differences of opinion existing within the LTTE and even surfacing openly as in the case of LTTE's chief negotiator Dr Anton Balasingham, and also the LTTE's own redefinition of what it means to liberate Tamil society from Sinhalese domination. Those who are apprehensive about the LTTE's true intentions would also tend to give more importance to what the LTTE wants than to what the Tamil people as a whole want.

But there is one important fact to be remembered. The LTTE is the army (and navy) of Tamil nationalism and the struggle for Tamil rights. The LTTE's military power has equalised the bargaining strengths of Sinhalese and Tamil nationalisms, even though the Tamils are numerically much smaller than the Sinhalese. But no peace, freedom and democracy loving people, which the Tamils are, would like an army, even one composed exclusively of Tamils, to end up ruling over them. So right here there is a source of tension between the LTTE and the Tamil people.

Whatever gratitude the Tamil people have towards the LTTE for warding off Sinhalese domination, the LTTE cannot simply frog march the Tamil people to where it wants to go. The Tamil people must also be persuaded, and when it comes to an interim administration they want to see one that paves the way to human rights, pluralism and democracy. This is what the Sinhalese, who fear and distrust the LTTE, fail to see. The Tamil people and the LTTE are not one and the same when it comes to the internal administration of the northeast.

Three phases

Recently I encountered a Sinhalese friend going for his morning walk. When we began to talk about the present situation in the country he got livid talking about what the Prime Minister was doing, which he described as the division of the country. Prime Minister Wickremesinghe was ruining the country, he said. He added that this was not simply his opinion and that the Sinhala language media were also taking the same line. Not wishing to be an anti-Tamil person, my friend added that he did not approve of the anti-Tamil line that the media were taking, but he shared their concerns about the manner in which the peace process was taking place.

After my friend's initial outburst against the Prime Minister, he admitted that the people liked the ceasefire aspect of the peace process and wanted it to continue. Also that these same people who approved of the ceasefire would prefer President Kumaratunga to do the negotiating with the LTTE. He was also concerned that if the President took charge with the same team that waged war for peace the ceasefire might collapse entirely. On the other hand, he also felt that the LTTE could not go back to war because of the current international environment. And also that the LTTE was itself facing internal problems with its eastern command not following instructions from the northern one.

When we parted, my friend seemed to be in a much calmer mood, as he had himself given the answers as to why the present peace process was not going to lead to two separate countries. But there is, in many Sinhalese, a feeling of anger that what is happening is something they do not like, but they also do not have an alternative to it. In the rather confused and contradictory line of argumentation of my friend is to be found a summary of the thinking of many Sinhalese people.

They are torn between the desire for a peaceful end to the ethnic conflict and their apprehension of and reluctance to see a new form of governance take shape in the country. For most Sinhalese, whether middle class and living

in Colombo, as my friend is, or living in the distant villages, a united country means having a single centre of power, which is the government in Colombo. However, those who are not possessed of this centralising mindset would see the interim administration as a prototype of the federal solution, which is about having multiple centres of power in a united country. Most people who have had experience of living in federal countries, and see the non-threatening nature of shared and divided power, would be supportive of the principle of an interim administration that has a comprehensive federal solution as its goal. By its very definition, a federal solution cannot be a one party dictatorship. By federal solution has to contain a division of powers, protection of human rights, political pluralism and a single military structure.

In the case of Sri Lanka those who are supportive of a federal solution have a responsibility to ensure that the interim arrangements are made in three main phases. In the first phase (and all subsequent ones) human rights would need to be protected. The child recruitment and political assassinations of the LTTE, denounced by all human rights groups, must stop and credibly so.

In the second phase, political pluralism must exist, and the LTTE's desire to be the sole representative of the Tamil people has to be earned in elections and not be imposed by their diktat. In the third phase the LTTE's army and navy would have to be integrated into the one united and restructured Sri Lankan military.

Unrealistic fear

There is little reason to doubt that when the interim administration is established, and even in its first phase, those at its helm would become extremely burdened with meeting the needs of the people rather than simply pursuing their own agendas whatever they may be. The people's priority is to live in their homes and in a place where there is an infrastructure of roads, markets, hospitals and schools, and to earn their livelihoods. The interim administration would have to speedily draw up plans, coordinate them and implement them. They will have to meet not only the expectations of the people, but also the standards set by the foreign donors.

In effect, the interim administration will have to confront the same challenges that politicians all over the world face when a year has passed, and the honeymoon has ended, and the people's unlimited wants and needs still remain far from being satisfied. It is easy to imagine the LTTE, which has little experience of macro governance, facing problems of limited human resources when it comes to the administration of the north east. The LTTE's request to other Tamil parties to discuss with them the contours of the proposed interim administration is a welcome recognition that they need the support of other experienced leaders to make a success of the interim administration.

As for the Sinhalese fear of a Cyprus-style partition: that is extremely unlikely. A Cyprus-style partition implies ethnic cleansing which is what happened in Cyprus, with all Greeks moving to the southern part and all Turks moving to the northern part. In Sri Lanka, such ethnic cleansing is im-

airfare direct

Colombo fr £465 + Tax
Offer Valid till 31 October

Free extension to following destinations
Bangkok / Singapore / Jakarta / Hong Kong / Kuala Lumpur
Madras /Trichi or Trivandrum

Colombo	Qatar Airways	fr £420 + taxes
Colombo	Royal Jordanian	fr £360 + taxes
Colombo	Kuwait airways	fr £350 + taxes
Colombo	Gulf Air	fr £390 + taxes
Madras		fr £410 + taxes
Madras	Direct Flight	fr £550 + taxes

Hotels available in Colombo and Madras.

Czech Airlines Fares to Colombo available on request.

Toronto 08 Sept - 31 Oct 03 £330 | 01 Nov - 12 Dec 03 £260

ABTA 6009 ATOL PROTECTED

Call us on
Tel: 0870 350 0045

218 Archway Road,
Highgate,
London N6 5AX
Fax: 0870 350 0153
Email: info@holidays2srilanka.com

possible. There are far too many Tamils living in the south of the country and too many Sinhalese living in the east to be sent out of their homes for there to be ethnic cleansing.

Second, the partition in Cyprus was only made possible by the active and direct military intervention of the great power in the region, which was Turkey. Even to this day, northern Cyprus is occupied by tens of thousands of Turkish troops. By way of contrast, the great power in this region, which is India, is resolute in its support for the unity of the country. India would not wish to see Sri Lanka become a base for a north east dictatorship or for long term international intervention that a Cyprus-style partition would bring. Sri Lankans whose aspiration is the unity of the country above all other good things of life must view India as the most important country, over and above those that can offer economic aid and the prospect of immediate economic prosperity.

Defying MoU and SLMM

The recent failure of the Norwegian facilitators to impress upon the LTTE the self-defeating nature of some of their recent actions, such as the establishment of a new military camp in Trincomalee, is an unfortunate sign that their facilitative role may be faltering. This is doubly unfortunate for it comes at a time when public opinion polls are showing that public confidence in them is on the ascendant. One of the key functions of a facilitator is to explain the multiple sides of reality to parties in conflict. It would be anyone's experience of conflict that personal involvement increases the ability to see one's own side very well. But at the same time it diminishes the ability to see the other side. The LTTE's present day actions suggest that they see the reality in the north east much better than they see international relations.

The LTTE may be over estimating the sympathy and regard they have internationally. There is no doubt that their entry into the peace process and the general adherence to the ceasefire agreement, have significantly improved their international standing. But the LTTE needs to realise that they carry with them very heavy baggage from the past, that includes a record number of suicide bombings, including the assassination of the man who was the Indian prime minister. Any breakdown of the ceasefire would see the LTTE lose everything they have gained during these past 20 months. And the sense that they are endangering the ceasefire by their actions would also tend to reverse those gains.

The LTTE's repeated refusal to vacate the military camp it has been setting up in the strategic Trincomalee district despite repeated calls for it to dismantle the camp by the international monitors clearly undermines the role of the Sri Lanka Monitoring Mission. Its latest refusal to do so even to Norway's special peace envoy Erik Solheim, against whom Sinhalese nationalists once carried out a campaign of calumny, also undermines the Norwegian facilitatory role as it indicates that the LTTE is listening only to its own counsel and to no one else.

These actions of the LTTE, and the demonstration of its unheeding attitude, provide grist for the mills of the nationalist parties in the south, and a springboard from which they are launching their campaign against the ceasefire agreement and the government that signed it. Even reasonable people, who are striving to be fair by all communities in their approach to the ethnic conflict, are having their doubts multiply. And waiting in the wings is the opposition led by the President who swears not to yield to the LTTE in the manner that the government led by the Prime Minister has.

Different focus

By violating the ceasefire agreement, and appearing to get away with it, the LTTE is harming the credibility of the peace process and those who are involved in it. Just as in a court of law, both parties may believe that they should win the case, but one side loses, the whole system of justice will collapse if the losing side has the liberty and license to ignore the verdict of the judge. It is reported that the LTTE believe that the area in Trincomalee that they have built their camp on is territory that was controlled by them during the time of war. They may also believe that the evidence they possess to prove their case is indisputable. But having seen all this evidence, the international monitors have ruled against the LTTE.

The LTTE needs to respect this verdict if it is to gain the trust of the government and people and the respect of the international community.

The LTTE is also harming itself, because its actions are seen as motivated by bad faith. It was only the day after I had returned from a short visit to the Wanni and Jaffna that I encountered a young western diplomat. It was at the Neelan Tiruchelvam commemoration lecture. The very first thing he said to me was to express his concern at the ongoing spate of political assassinations. These were of people of lesser standing than the late Dr Tiruchelvam, MP and international human rights expert. But it still concerned this young man who has grown up in a tradition that says no to political assassination of even the littlest human being. Being present at the commemoration of a true Sri Lankan who was the heir to a great Tamil political heritage, slain by the LTTE, would have made the issue even more compelling to him.

Having just returned from an entirely different environment in Jaffna and the Wanni, and having witnessed thousands of destroyed homes and tens of thousands of people living in very poor conditions, I wished to speak to him of that reality. In the part of Sri Lanka I had just returned from people did not seem to be thinking of political assassinations, but rather they were thinking about how to reclaim their lost homes and start the process of living normal lives. Outside of the northeast, however, the perceptions and priorities are entirely different, and the LTTE needs to open its mind and realise this also if it is to negotiate fruitfully on behalf of the Tamil people.

Assassinations

The issue of political assassinations looms large. It is the poison at the root that undermines any hope that the LTTE might be sincere and about to transform themselves to be a democratic party in a fear free society. The level of seriousness with which the international community views political assassinations was brought up in the joint statement issued by Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch.

Both of these organisations directly and pointedly condemned the spate of assassinations and called on the LTTE to halt them immediately. Regrettably, not even two or three days after the joint human rights statement, the LTTE assassinated yet another rival Tamil political party member. To add gall to the bitterness of this deed they killed their rival when the Norwegian peace envoy was at a meeting a few kilometers away.

The LTTE leadership appears to believe in deeds, and not words. In the past they have always done what they wanted, and have gone from strength to strength. But this time around it can be clearly seen that the LTTE is making a big mistake. They need to make a broad assessment of what it means to be strong in a peace process. This is the type of analysis that an educated man of Dr Anton Balasingham's calibre could have done with his international exposure. It was clear that he had built up a special rapport with the government's chief negotiator Prof. G L Peiris, an intellectual of a similar calibre with a breadth of knowledge of international affairs. It is unlikely that those who have grown up as guerillas in the jungle can do likewise.

When the LTTE persists in violating the ceasefire agreement and openly defies the rulings of the international monitors, it sets itself up to be condemned and judged negatively by the international community. Of course the international community, together with the Sri Lankan government, realise that the LTTE simply has to be accommodated in the peace process. They know that there can be no peace in Sri Lanka without the LTTE's consent and so will endeavour to keep them in the peace process. But there is a limit beyond which neither the government nor international community will go to appease the LTTE because the LTTE's power is also limited.

Prior to the September 11 US led war against terrorism, and when it was fighting a war, it may have been possible for the LTTE to focus exclusively on its enemies and single mindedly eliminate them. However, in the post September 11 world, and in the context of an internationally supervised peace process, the LTTE simply cannot go on in the old way. It cannot achieve success simply by strengthening itself militarily when, for practical purposes, it can no longer resort to war in the post September 11 period. If it is to achieve success in being internationally accepted as the leader of the Tamil people, and bring in the resources for the development that can sustain that leadership, it has to get the international community on its side. But so long as the LTTE defies international norms of human rights, and flagrantly ignores the rulings of the international monitors, it is highly unlikely that the international community will either give the LTTE the legitimacy or the economic resources it so keenly seeks.

Nor will they lift the international ban which hangs like an albatross round the LTTE's neck and downgrades the just struggle of the Tamil people to mere terrorism. Instead they will see it as an organisation that has not given up terrorism as an instrument of coercion, and which has no respect for international institutions, of which the Sri Lanka Monitoring Mission is one. Therefore the asymmetry between the government and LTTE will continue to the detriment of the interests of the Tamil people that the LTTE strives mightily to represent.

Honorary Head, Tamil School
London Tamil Centre

London Tamil Centre manages a Tamil School, which is at the forefront of teaching Tamil language and cultural studies in London. The School holds classes on Sundays in the premises of the Wembley College of Technology (Formerly Wembley High School), East Lane, Wembley. It serves in excess of 300 pupils of all ages from Nursery to GCSE classes.

London Tamil Centre is currently seeking a suitable candidate as the Honorary Head of the School. The person must be enthusiastic, dynamic and committed to serve the community on a voluntary basis. Good management skills, ability to influence both internal and external contacts and fluency in both Tamil and English languages is a prerequisites for the position. It is desirable that the candidate is a degree holder with previous teaching experience.

The post is initially for a period of 2 years which is extendable by mutual agreement. Although the position is primarily of a voluntary nature, a successful candidate will be offered suitable financial compensation to reflect efforts and expenses.

The position is open only to persons already resident in the UK and having no restrictions to take up employment in the country.

Reply to:
The London Tamil Centre,
PO Box 740, Wembley, HA0 3XG

London Tamil Centre
is an Equal Opportunity Employer.

Closing date 20.09.2003

Rights groups say killings continue with impunity

There is convincing evidence that the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) are taking advantage of the cease-fire with the Sri Lankan government to murder political opponents, the US-based Human Rights Watch and the London-based international human rights organisation Amnesty International said in a joint statement on 12 August.

"The end of the fighting in Sri Lanka has not meant an end to the killing," said Brad Adams, executive director of the Asia Division of Human Rights Watch, adding "Members of Tamil political parties are being gunned down and the available evidence points to the Tamil Tigers."

Human Rights Watch issued a briefing paper today urging the Norwegian-led Sri Lankan Monitoring Mission to aggressively investigate and make public its findings in cases of alleged political violence.

In an open letter published on August 12, Amnesty International called on the LTTE, the SLMM and the Sri Lankan police to take immediate action to stop these human rights abuses, and bring to justice those responsible for these crimes.

At least 22 people with links to Tamil political parties opposed to the LTTE have been killed in politically motivated attacks since the government of Sri Lanka and the LTTE signed a cease-fire in February 2002. Many others have been abducted, their fate still unknown. In several instances witnesses have identified the perpetrators as members of the LTTE. All available evidence points to a systematic campaign by the LTTE to silence opposition voices.

"Any improvements to the human rights situation in Sri Lanka are now at risk of being undermined by these killings," said Ingrid Massage, interim director of the Asia Pacific Program of Amnesty International. "The use of political assassinations and violence threatens to seriously undermine moves made towards establishing a just system of governance that will serve all citizens of Sri Lanka."

The Sri Lankan Monitoring Mission consists of about 50 monitors from Norway, Finland, Sweden, Denmark, and Iceland. To date the monitoring mission has interpreted its mandate narrowly. Although it has increasingly addressed complaints of abuse against civilians, especially abduction of children for recruitment and extortion cases, it has not pursued substantial investigations of alleged political killings.

"We are concerned that Norway may be reluctant to investigate these crimes for fear of compromising its role mediating talks between the LTTE and the government," Adams said. Human Rights Watch urged the Sri Lankan Monitoring Mission to develop its capability to conduct in-depth investigations of such cases.

The Sri Lankan police and the LTTE also need to act to stop the killings. "While recognizing the difficulties the police face in investigating these crimes, this does not excuse their failure so far to bring to justice those responsible," said Massage. "Given the weight of evidence, it is the responsibility of the LTTE to immediately halt these killings and ensure its members fully abide by human rights provisions in the cease-fire agreement. They must also fully cooperate in any investigations conducted by the Sri Lankan Monitoring Mission."

Open Letter On Political Killings and Abductions

Ingrid Massage, Interim Director Asia and Pacific Program, of the London-based international human rights organisation, Amnesty International has on 12 August 2003 sent the following "Open letter to Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE), Sri Lanka Monitoring Mission (SLMM) and Sri Lankan Police concerning recent politically motivated killings and abductions in Sri Lanka":

Amnesty International is writing to all the above parties to express its grave concern over the killing and abduction of tens of Sri Lankan citizens by the LTTE since the signing of the cease-fire agreement in February 2002. The organization has received information documenting at least 22 killings and 16 attempted killings, abductions and other human rights abuses against members of Tamil political parties, their families and supporters. The fate of some of those who have been abducted is still unknown. Amnesty International is concerned that these human rights abuses are part of a systematic campaign by the LTTE against other Tamil political groups opposing them.

On 23 February 2002 the Government of Sri Lanka and the LTTE signed a cease-fire agreement (hereinafter referred to as the Agreement) which offered fresh hope that there would be an improvement in the human rights situation in the country. Despite a continuing lack of commitment to address impunity in regard to past human rights abuses, and widespread reports of recruitment of children by the LTTE, Amnesty International was encouraged by the initial improvements to the human rights situation after the Agreement came into force. This was further demonstrated by an agreement in February 2003 to engage Ian Martin, former Secretary General of Amnesty International, as an independent human rights expert to the peace process.

Both parties agreed to set up an international monitoring mission, called the Sri Lankan Monitoring Mission (SLMM), to verify the implementation of the Agreement through on-site monitoring. (Article 3 of the Agreement on a ceasefire between the Government of Sri Lanka and the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam.) The SLMM consists of representatives of Nordic countries and reports to the Royal Norwegian Government. Six district level monitoring committees were established, each consisting of five members; two appointed by the Government of Sri Lanka; two appointed by the LTTE and one international monitor. These committees serve the SLMM in an advisory capacity in relation to implementation of the Agreement in the districts they represent.

Commitments made by both parties during the sixth session of peace talks in Hakone, Japan from 18 to 21 March 2003, appeared to demonstrate a serious intent to address continuing human

rights abuses covered by the Agreement. These commitments included giving priority to improving the security situation, to enforce better compliance with the Agreement by their personnel, and asking Ian Martin to develop a Declaration of Human Rights and Humanitarian Principles (Human Rights Principles) to be adopted at the next session of talks. Amnesty International calls on both parties to work towards the adoption and implementation of these principles as soon as they are ready. The organization believes this would address the urgent need to defend the human rights of civilians in Sri Lanka.

Any improvements in the human rights situation since the beginning of the ceasefire are now at risk of being undermined by the political killings occurring in the country. The use of political assassinations, abductions and other human rights abuses threatens to seriously undermine the moves made towards establishing a representative system of governance grounded in human rights principles. They are also a source of continuing insecurity and fear for a population that has already suffered years of extremely grave abuses to their human rights.

Amnesty International believes that to date there has been a lack of credible and timely investigations into these killings, and adequate measures to guarantee the safety of those who are most at risk have not been implemented. Amnesty International calls on the LTTE, SLMM and the police to act in accordance with their individual responsibilities in order to stop these human rights abuses, and hold to account those responsible for these abuses.

Since the signing of the Agreement there have been tens of killings, abductions and other human rights abuses against civilians in Sri Lanka. The majority of the victims have been members or ex-members of the Eelam People's Democratic Party (EPDP) and the Eelam People's Revolutionary Liberation Front - Varathar (EPRLF-V). Attacks have also occurred against members of the People's Liberation Organization of Tamil Eelam (PLOTE), and the Tamil Eelam Liberation Organization (TELO). There is substantial evidence that members of the LTTE are responsible for the majority of these attacks. The LTTE however have so far denied responsibility.

Amnesty International has documented 22 killings, 16 abductions and other human rights abuses, details of which have been submitted to the leadership of the LTTE. Below are three illustrative cases. Amnesty International believes they each demonstrate failures by the LTTE, the SLMM and the Sri Lankan police to safe guard the fundamental rights of citizens in Sri Lanka.

Poobalapillai Alahathurai [m]

Poobalapillai Alahathurai was a 35 year old member of EPRLF(V) and chairman of Porativu Local Council, Theevukkadu, Mandur, Batticaloa district. He was abducted from his house on 16 December 2002. Alahathurai was found dead on 18 December 2002. His body had marks indicating that he may have been subjected to torture. Poobalapillai Vijayarajah, brother of Alahathurai, reported the abduction and killing to the police. Vijayarajah had previously been attacked at his house by individuals he claims were members of the LTTE on 13 November 2002. He was so badly beaten he was hospitalized. After he had complained to the police members of the LTTE tried to take him from the hospital but were prevented from doing so by staff. Vijayarajah was transferred to another hospital for his own safety and has since gone into hiding. He has received threats from the LTTE to withdraw his complaints to the police.

The police reportedly issued arrest warrants against two individual for the murder of Alahathurai. However, to date both men remain at large. Reports suggest that one is seen regularly in government controlled territory, whilst the other is in LTTE controlled territory. Alahathurai's mother and siblings claim to have been visited and threatened by one of the suspects.

Vijayarajah gave testimony to the police identifying those who attacked him. His mother and sister have also given testimony. Vijayarajah has stated his willingness to be a witness. He has not sought police protection since his abduction due to fear of reprisals. The incidents have also been reported to the SLMM.

To the knowledge of Amnesty International, no one has been arrested for the killing of Alahathurai or the assault and abduction of Vijayarajah.

Pooniah Ramachandran [m]

Pooniah Ramachandran was a 42 year old member of EPDP. He was shot dead on 15 June 2003 in Batticaloa while returning home from work along the Thiruchchenthur Road. He was shot by two men traveling on bicycles. Pooniah Ramachandran's son witnessed the killing of his father and has stated his willingness to give evidence. The killing was reported to the police and the SLMM.

To the knowledge of Amnesty International, no one has been arrested for this killing.

Sivapunniam Rathirani Varatharajah [f]

Sivapunniam Rathirani Varatharajah, is the 37 year old wife of Murugesu Varatharajah, the vice-chairman of the Porativu local council, and member of EPRLF(V). Due to violence against other members of the EPRLF(V) Murugesu Varatharajah went to live at the party office in Chenkalady for protection. Sivapunniam Rathirani and her two children continued to live in Kallady. On 15 July 2003 she went to the EPRLF(V) office in Chenkalady by bus. On her return journey she was reportedly abducted by the LTTE and taken to their office in Chenkalady. She was transferred to another location during the night and interrogated and beaten. She was told that her husband must leave the EPRLF(V) and that she must work for the LTTE. Her captors told her that if she failed to abide by this and other demands they would come to her house and kill her. On 18 July 2003 she was returned to Chenkalady. She is currently in hiding.

The abduction of Sivapunniam Rathirani Varatharajah has been reported to the SLMM and the police. To the knowledge of Amnesty International, no one has been arrested for this abduction.

In the Agreement signed by the Government of Sri Lanka and the LTTE, both parties recognized the need to end hostilities and to improve "the living conditions of all inhabitants affected by the conflict." It was also stated that provisions within the Agreement "regarding the security of civilians" applied to "all inhabitants" of Sri Lanka

In particular, commitments made in Article 2.1 of the Agreement specifically require the Government of Sri Lanka and the LTTE to "in accordance to international law abstain from hostile acts against the civilian population, including such acts as torture, intimidation, abduction, extortion and harassment." Given the available evidence the current killings and abductions are a clear violation of Article 2.1 and should be investigated by the SLMM within the terms of the Agreement. In addition, criminal investigations should be promptly and robustly conducted by the police.

Amnesty International recognizes the difficulties the SLMM and police face in investigating these cases, particularly in regard to securing the testimony of witnesses. Although acknowledging these difficulties, Amnesty International is aware of several cases (including the cases detailed above) where witnesses who claim to be able to identify those responsible for the crimes in question have been willing to give evidence. In these cases both the police and SLMM should, if they have not already done so, initiate investigations. The police should take strenuous measures to apprehend those responsible.

Securing the cooperation of witnesses can only be achieved in the majority of cases by creating a secure environment free from the fear of reprisals. To the knowledge of Amnesty International, the SLMM inquiry procedures do not provide for a witness protection program. In part 11 of the SLMM inquiry procedures ("Interview Techniques") it specifically states that interviews must not be conducted in private. Amnesty International is concerned by this stipulation and is urging for it to be reconsidered. The SLMM and police need to ensure at the earliest opportunity the systematic protection of witnesses involved in their investigations in order to guarantee their safety and facilitate the collection of evidence.

In addition, police should provide protection to those who request it. Although the police are giving protection at the party offices to members of some political parties who have been targeted, this protection does not extend to their day-to-day political work or visits to members of their family. Such a situation severely restricts their right to freedom of expression, association and freedom of movement. Amnesty International urges the police to make available credible protection to those thought to be most at risk, including the family members of such individuals. If necessary this protection should extend to their peaceful work as political activists.

The SLMM has stated that if the LTTE are responsible for the killings then they represent a violation of the Agreement. ("If LTTE killed opponents it's a violation of MoU – SLMM") The Island, 6 May 2003 Amnesty International welcomes statements by the SLMM condemning these killings, and the investigations that they have reportedly initiated into some cases. ("Any type of violence a serious threat to MoU – SLMM", The Island, 8 May 2003)

However, to date Amnesty International is unaware of the publication of any findings from such investigations, and calls on the SLMM to make such findings public at the earliest opportunity. Amnesty International is also concerned that investigation into some incidents may not be being initiated by the SLMM due to, what it claims, is a lack of evidence available at the initial stages of enquiries. Amnesty International urges the SLMM to react promptly and robustly, by conducting investigations into any incident involving the killing, abduction, torture or attack against any civilian by either of the parties to the Agreement. The SLMM should ensure it has enough resources and expertise to conduct such investigations thoroughly and promptly.

To Amnesty International's knowledge, police investigations have so far failed to produce any convictions in relation to these killings. Although Amnesty International recognizes that the police face difficulties due to the political situation, both at present and historically, in Sri Lanka, it is still their responsibility to maintain law and order. As such we urge the police to conduct thorough and prompt investigations into these incidents, including by dedicating an appropriate level of resources and expertise, in order to ensure that the perpetrators of these crimes are apprehended and brought to justice without delay.

The LTTE has denied any involvement in these killings and abduction, stating that they are perpetrated by elements who wish to derail the peace process, or that the LTTE could not be responsible for incidents that occurred in government controlled areas. Reports of meetings between the SLMM and the LTTE indicate that the LTTE leadership has been unable or unwilling to thoroughly investigate these reports, giving vague commitments to investigate brea-ches of the Agreement. Amnesty International calls on the LTTE to abide by international humanitarian law, in particular Common Article 3 of the Geneva Conventions which gives protection to individuals not taking part in hostilities in armed conflicts. The LTTE should immediately stop the killing and abduction of all civilians, and give instructions to its members to abide fully with the human rights provisions in the Agreement. The LTTE must also cooperate fully with any investigations conducted by the SLMM.

TERM/MORTGAGE INSURANCE

Premium/Cover provided over the phone

No more proposal forms
No more immediate payment
No more Direct Debit Mandate

All the details are taken over the phone.

But Immediate Quotation at a Competitive Premium from leading Insurer and Instant Cover.

Term Insurance - A plan that pays a guaranteed amount of money if you die during the chosen term.

Mortgage Protection Insurance is a decreasing life insurance plan designed for use with a repayment (capital and interest) mortgage.

If you chosen Critical Illness Cover the plan will pay the guaranteed lump sum if, during the period of cover, you are diagnosed as having one of the critical illnesses covered.

Comprehensive range of covers
- **Life Insurance**
- **Life and Critical Insurance**
- **Mortgage Protection**
- **Mortgage Protection with Integrated Critical Illness**
- **Independent Critical Illness**
- **Accident, Sickness and Unemployment Plan**
- **Mortgage Payment Protection**
- **Premium Protection**

Please ring us for a quotation/Cover

020-8763 2221

P. Srinivasan IF A

P. SRINIVASAN IFA 30th 1973 ANNIVERSARY 2003

ARM Associates, 32 Abbots Lane, Kenley, Surrey CR8 5JH

Our Ethnic Imbroglio

Izeth Hussain

We Sri Lankans have been caught up in an ethnic imbroglio, from which we cannot extricate ourselves unless we recognise and take corrective action over the core problem behind it. In the alternative, the de facto Eelam which the LTTE has been busily establishing will almost certainly lead to the permanent breakup of Sri Lanka.

In arguing the case stated in the preceding paragraph, I will begin by explaining what I mean by "imbroglio" and then situate it in an international perspective. "Imbroglio" is defined in the dictionary as a confused heap, and as applying to complicated situations, particularly political or dramatic situations. In other words, an imbroglio is not just another ordinary problem. A multitude of ethnic problems have been solved, without too much difficulty, right across the globe. But a few have defied solution over many decades and led to costly and protracted civil wars, as in Sri Lanka. It is appropriate to refer to these as ethnic imbroglios rather than ethnic problems.

Two views

I will now set our ethnic imbroglio in an international perspective. Two views are possible about the present ethnic revival which became the object of scholarly scrutiny and of widespread international concern, from about 1970. One view, exemplified by Daniel Moynihan, is that it is the wave of the present and of the future, the importance of which we can decry only at our peril. In his book pandemonium, he pours scorn of the British Marxist historian Eric Hobsbawm, who exemplifies the other view that the ethnic revival has its salience in the contemporary world only because it represents the death throes of a passing order, that of the nation state. I myself am a partisan of the Hobsbawm thesis.

You can, on the one hand, tot up all the ethnic problems in the world, ranging from those in which there has been some degree of inter-ethnic dissonance to the ones in which there has been raging conflict, and conjure up the image of a world that is simply boiling over with ethnic problems. On the other hand, in support of Hobsbawm's view, you can note that so few ethnic problems have become ethnic imbroglios. We must consider the implications of the striking fact that there is an enormous disparity between number of states in the world and the number of ethnic groups. The number of states are less than two hundred, whereas ethnic groups can be numbered by the hundreds or the thousands depending on the criteria used to define an ethnic group. On a linguistic criterion, there are more than six thousand ethnic groups in the world. We must note also the fact that there are only a very few mono-ethnic states, meaning states with only one ethnic group or with minority ethnic groups that are so minuscule that they cannot conceivably give rise to serious ethnic problems. According to one count there are only four such states in the world, while according to another there are just twelve.

The African case

The fact that the globe pullulates with an immense multitude of ethnic groups with no states of their own should be considered together with one of the cardinal facts about the nation state. It is that it tends to privilege the ethnic majority at the expense of the ethnic minorities, with the majority seen as the bhumiputras who have a primordial relation with the sacred soil of the national territory. It has to be expected consequently, that the globe will pullulate with a vast multitude of serious ethnic problems. It may be that there is some degree of inter-ethnic dissonance on a widespread scale. But serious ethnic problems are, proportionately speaking, certainly few in number. And strikingly fewer still are the ethnic imbroglios which have defied solution for decades and led to protracted conflict.

I cannot in this article go into much detail to illustrate my argument. Instead, I will refer broadly to developments in black Africa in the era of independence after 1960. It has an immense multiplicity of ethnic groups without states even though many of them have all the attributes to claim recognition as nations. Furthermore the lines demarcating the African states are entirely artificial, drawn for the convenience of the European imperial powers in the 1880s. Sometimes they divide huge ethnic groups between two states.

Understandably, it was widely expected that the African states would smash themselves into smithereens sooner rather later. Some states have indeed broken up, and a few ethnic problems became horrendously genocidal. But an examination of the details with certainly show that serious ethnic problems in black Africa have been few, and ethnic imbroglios even fewer, in proportion to the immense multiplicity of ethnic groups without states.

It would be foolish in debunking the excessive claims made for "The ethnic revival" to go to the other extreme and decry its importance altogether. It may not be the most pleasant of fates to be born into an ethnic minority. But the record does suggest that the greater proportion of ethnic minorities do manage to live in peace and dignity with ethnic majorities, evidently because they feel that they are given reasonably equitable treatment.

Recognising common humanity

It is crucial to understand the explanation for that fact if we are to reach a balanced perspective on the ethnic revival. The explanation is that while ethnic divisions are a fact of life, so is the human ability to transcend them. It is mistaken therefore to focus solely or mainly on the point that most ethnic groups have shown propensity to view the other in negative terms. The paradoxical fact is that they have shown at the same time the ability to recognise the common humanity they share with the other.

The most convincing illustration of that argument can be found in Sri Lanka itself. We can read our past in terms of the "Mahavamsa ideology", "the Dutugemunu complex", "Sinhala Buddhist chauvinism" and so on, and project an image of irreconcilable Sinhala-Tamil hostility, anachronisti-

cally interpreting past in ethnic terms where as they in fact had dynastic and other motivations behind them. On the other hand, we can note the long periods in which Sinhalese and Tamils have lived in amity and co-operation. We can note the religious syncretism in the Buddhism actually practised in Sri Lanka and the symbiosis that goes to the extent of South Indian immigrants becoming fully accepted as Sinhalese.

Coming to our present ethnic imbroglio, we can argue that July 1983 set up a permanent Sinhalese-Tamil ethnic divide. Alternatively, we can note that innumerable Sinhalese saved their Tamil neighbours, sometimes at considerable risk to themselves. We can note further that all the LTTE terrorist provocations in subsequent years never produced a backlash in the south. We can argue on that basis, not altogether facetiously, that the ethnic problem has already been solved in promising embryo in Wellawtte. My conviction is that July 1983 was the mad genocidal apogee of the state terrorism inaugurated with an anti-Tamil pogrom shortly after the 1977 government came to power. The Sinhalese people certainly have their prejudices like practically all other ethnic groups, but as a whole they were not guilty of that state terrorism. In any case, it can be shown that even in one of the worst ethnic imbroglios of all time, the human ability to transcend ethnic divisions has been amply demonstrated.

The argument developed above shows that when an ethnic imbroglio is set in an international perspective, it can be recognized as some thing of an exceptional order. That perspective suggests that an ordinary ethic problem, usually susceptible to solution without too much difficulty, becomes an imbroglio because of a failure on the part of the power elite to build on the human ability to transcend ethnic divisions. In such cases there has been a failure in nation-building, in building the nation-state. For a nation-state is not part of the natural order of things but something that has to be built, something that has come to prevail only during the last few centuries. The historical record beginning with the first two successful nation-states, England and France, shows that it is the state that builds the nation. In a successful multi-ethnic state, it is the state that builds the sense of a national identity common to all ethnic groups. The point that I want to bring out for the further argument of this article is that behind the state in a multi-ethnic state is a power elite drawn mainly from the political class of the majority ethnic group.

External factor

An obvious exception to my generalisation that ethnic imbroglios are caused by the failure of power elites is that sometimes they are certainly caused by an external factor, specifically by support for a separatist movement by a foreign government. It is known that the vicissitudes of the Kurd rebellion in Iraq over the decades have had external factors behind them. India has an imbroglio in Kashmir, which would have been solved long ago as yet another of India's many ethnic problems, if not for Kashmir's territorial contiguity with Pakistan.

A popular view in Sri Lanka is that an external factor has likewise been crucial in our own ethnic imbroglio. The government in New Delhi can never be indifferent to the potential fallout in Tamil Nadu of developments on the ethnic front in Sri Lanka. What that could mean in practise was shown when under the 1977 government the Vadamarachchi operation was halted at the insistence of New Delhi, if not for which our troops would have proceeded to Jaffna and there might conceivably have been a military solution to our ethnic problem. Such a solution was conceivable again in 1987 when it appeared that the LTTE could be forced to submit through starvation, which is regarded as a legitimate tactic in warfare. But there was Indian intervention which began with the air-drop.

However, though the Tamil Nadu factor perhaps precluded a military solution, there was always the option of a peaceful solution. The governments in New Delhi and majority opinion in Tamil Nadu never backed a break-up of Sri Lanka. What they wanted was a peaceful solution through devolution. Why has that not been possible up to now? This question should lead us to an understanding of the core problem behind our ethnic imbroglio.

Two strategies have been recognized as particularly efficacious in dealing with restive ethnic minorities. One is to give them fair and equal treatment within a liberal democratic framework in which they have a direct and unmediated relationship with the state. They have rights as citizens, and are given equal treatment both in theory and in practise.

The other strategy applies to ethnic minorities who claim a homeland, and therefore regard themselves as nations with a right to self-determination inclusive of a right to set up a separate state. In such cases devolution has to be tried out. No one argues that devolution by itself will always be successful. Ethnic problems could have complex processes behind them, and may not be amenable to solution through legal and constitutional changes. Devolution is therefore held to be a necessary though not a sufficient condition for a solution.

Meeting Tamil aspirations

For some years after independence most of us had the illusion that Tamil aspirations could be met within a liberal democratic framework, and understandable illusion because it was shared by mainstream Tamil politicians exemplified in the figure of G. G. Ponnambalam. But very quickly the then peripheral figures of Chelvanayagam and Naganathan, inveterate federalists, moved to centre stage. S. W. R. D. Bandaranaike acknowledged the need for devolution, which was consistent with the conclusion reached by him long before independence about the need for a federal system. But the resistance to the idea of devolution remained fierce and it took fifty four years for a Sri Lankan government to acknowledge the need for a federal system.

That fierce resistance was striking for its irrationality. The argument was that any devolution, however modest, would only whet the Tamil appetite for more and lend ineluctably to Eelam. But devolution by definition can take place only within a unit and there can be no linear progression from devolution to separation. For that to happen some other process has to come into operation making it impossible for the state to prevent separation, such as military debacle in conjunction with an economic one. That conjunction was precisely what took place in Sri Lanka in the first quarter of 2000.

Resistance to devolution

The irrationality of that argument was spectacularly demonstrated by what actually happened. For under the 1977 government Sri Lanka broke up, with the writ of the government in Colombo no longer running in part of the North. Obviously, that was the consequence not of allowing devolution, but of refusing to allow it. Furthermore, by that time, there was plenty of evidence showing the efficacy of devolution in defusing dangerous separatist problems. Most impressively just across the Palk Straits in India. But none of that made the slightest difference to the continuing fierce resistance to devolution on this side of the Palk Straits. Behind that resistance, which looks totally irrational, there had to be a hidden factor, perhaps some kind of peculiar rationality. What was it? The answer prompts itself when we take count of the distinction between decentralisation and devolution. Under decentralisation the centre delegates some of its powers to regional or other local units, as a way really of efficiently extending the powers of the centre. Under devolution the centre relinquishes some of its powers to local units, which enjoy some degree of autonomy. That implies some degree of sharing of power and equality between the centre and local units.

It does seem that behind the resistance to devolution there was a resistance to treating the Tamils as equals. In the contemporary world a refusal to treat ethnic minorities as equals is taken as amounting to racism. I hold, therefore, that it is racism in the Sinhalese political class which has been preventing the solution of what should have been a straightforward ethnic problem and made it into an ethnic imbroglio, the very terrible consequences of which we now have to face.

A possible counter-argument is that the core problem preventing a solution has really been Sinhalese divisiveness, and not racism. The horrible anti-national record of our two major parties in obstructing solutions is well-known. However, the UNP had virtually absolute power for the greater part of seventeen years from 1977, and could easily have implemented a meaningful system of devolution. Instead, it chose to make the District Development Councils farcical by withholding the funds to make them properly operative. Behind that choice was a racist dread of what devolution could come to spell by way of equality for the Tamils.

I must state parenthetically at this point that I strongly suspect that a peculiar racism in the Sinhalese political class and a peculiar Sinhalese divisiveness both arise from common factors in the past of which the Sinhalese people have been victims. But it is too complex a problem to be addressed in this article. In drawing to the conclusion of this article I must revert to the point made above that in nation building the state has to play the primary role. What this means in practical terms in a multi-ethnic society is that the state must build on the human ability to transcend ethnic divisions, and also keep in check the racism that arises from ethnic divisions.

Inability to address racism

In recent years Governments led by both our major parties have taken to celebrating our multi-ethnicity and our multi-culturalism, our ability to transcend ethnic divisions, with much fanfare particularly over the Sinhala-Tamil New Year festivities. In a way they are elaborately missing the point. All ethnic groups in Sri Lanka, Sinhalese, Tamils, Muslims, just like all ethnic groups all over the world, share the propensity to view the other in negative terms, but at the same time we in Sri Lanka have strikingly demonstrated our ability to transcend ethnic divisions right down the centuries, and even during independent Sri Lanka's darkest hour, July 1983. The problem lies elsewhere, in the racism that our two major parties cannot even recognise, let alone address.

That inability to address racism is not at all surprising. The ugly truth is that Sri Lanka does not have even a single credible national party, after the manner of the truly trans-ethnic and national Indian Congress. Both of our two major parties have come to be increasingly seen by our minorities as basically Sinhalese ethnic parties. In other words, they are powerful expressions of the racism that has been rampant in the Sinhalese political class. Since those two parties have dominated the Sri Lankan state since 1948, it becomes easily understandable that the state has failed disastrously in nation-building.

And, of course, it becomes easily understandable that they have been unable to address the problem of racism. It is now imperative to do so. The government and the LTTE have agreed that a solution has to be on the basis of a federal system. Unfortunately, that is no more than a polite fiction for the LTTE which really wants a confederal system under which it is dominant in the North East, where the writ of the Colombo government will run only to the extent that it gets the concurrence of the LTTE. That will not by itself break up Sri Lanka permanently. But the task of preventing that will become much more problematic. Our counter-strategy should be to make the Tamils stop wanting Eelam. For that they have to be made to believe that they are given absolutely fair and equal treatment and also they have to be integrated into the central institutions of the state. One of the practical desiderata for that purpose would be an Equal Opportunities Bill which could help correct among other things a grotesque imbalance in the state sector where 92% of the jobs are held by the Sinhalese who are 74% of the population. That was part of the rationale for that Bill set out by G. L. Peiris when it was mooted by the PA government.

Getting to grip with reality

But it was withdrawn because of objections from racists. I use that term because it is used by the international community to describe majority ethnic group members who cannot bear the thought of giving equal opportunities to minorities. Should there be a repeat performance under the present government, the international community may draw two conclusions. One is that our two major parties are in the grip of inveterate racists. The other is that the permanent breakup of Sri Lanka, if it cannot be prevented, might after all be richly merited.

Our mistake has been to focus exclusively on the Tiger in the North, on the mistaken assumption that it constitutes the entirety of the ethnic problem. We have ignored the other Tiger, the Tiger of Sinhalese racism in the South, which in the first place spawned the Northern Tiger and kept on preventing the solution of what should have been a straightforward ethnic problem.

We now have an imbroglio on our hands and Sri Lanka is threatened with a permanent breakup. That can be prevented only if we get to grips with a horrible reality. The Tiger is within the gates.

PEACE PROCESS: TOWARDS PHASE TWO
LTTE to push for 'Thimpu principles'?

Kumar Rupesinghe

The temporary suspension of talks has given the Sri Lanka Government, the LTTE, the Norwegian facilitators and the international community the opportunity to reflect and rectify shortcomings in the negotiations process so as to strengthen the process. I assume that all parties have done their homework before approaching the second phase.

There is still sufficient time for such a reflection since I do not think that the talks will begin until mid October. I have argued elsewhere that Phase Two of the negotiations should be qualitatively different to Phase One which would involve substantial re-design and a review of the architecture that govern the negotiations process.

Review

The first phase of negotiations was characterized by the foundation laid by the Ceasefire Agreement, which was signed on February 22nd 2002. The Ceasefire agreement provided the basis for a cessation of hostilities. The parameters for signing the Ceasefire Agreement were based on the understanding that there was parity of military power between the government and the LTTE. It was recognized that the LTTE had a conventional army, a navy, control over territory and an administration governing their areas of control. The Ceasefire agreement also established the Norwegian government as the facilitator of talks and adopted the Sri Lanka Monitoring Mission to monitor the ceasefire agreement.

The main characteristic of the peace negotiations was that they were conducted according to a 'problem solving' approach. The negotiating parties were primarily interested in confidence building measures to ensure normalization of relations between the Government and the LTTE. Since the unilateral declaration of a truce in December 2001 the Government took steps to remove roadblocks, withdraw troops occupying houses and property belonging to Tamil people in the North and the East and to relax the embargo on the provision of commodities allowed to the uncleared areas. The first phase was characterized by the uneasy and capricious cohabitation between President Chandrika Kumaratunga and Prime Minister Ranil Wickremesinghe. It was also characterized by the volatility and fragmentation of the Muslim polity.

One of the most significant gains under Phase I of the negotiating process was the LTTE's willingness to declare a cessation of hostilities. The subsequent signing of the Ceasefire Agreement provided a blood-transfusion for the business community in Sri Lanka and an improvement of the country's economic growth.

Further the LTTE pronounced during negotiations in Sattahip, Thailand that they were prepared to consider internal self-determination for the Tamil People and in talks held in Oslo they declared a commitment to explore terms of a federal structure. Another significant achievement was the ability of the United National Front government to mobilize and gain unprecedented commitment from the international community to provide an umbrella of support for the peace process.

Failures

A significant loss that occurred during Phase I of the negotiations was the inability of the Government to secure LTTE participation at the Tokyo Donor meeting which has resulted in disenchantment and a loss of commitment by the international community to provide substantial aid until and unless there is a negotiated solution.

The government, it would seem, was not involved in preparing the administration to transform the highly centralized state structure of the country. Finally the government whilst relying heavily on the Peace Process has neglected to focus on the country's economy, social issues and other matters demanding urgent attention.

The LTTE's decision to suspend its participation in the peace negotiations on April 21st 2003 brought to light some fundamental weaknesses of the negotiations process.

These weaknesses can be categorized under the following points:

- There were no follow up mechanisms for decisions taken at the peace negotiations which meant that assistance for reconstruction and rehabilitation was delayed.
- Suspension of committees on de-escalation meant that problems of High Security Zones and other security issues could not be handled through a problem solving approach. The situation was substituted by positional bargaining and attrition on the High Security Zones and other matters dealing with security.
- The negotiations also failed to develop mechanisms for supplying development assistance to the North and the East and the instruments developed for this purpose such as the Joint Task Force (JTF) and SIHRN were found inadequate in addressing the situation at hand.
- There developed over time asymmetry between the two parties. Whilst the Ceasefire Agreement recognized equality between the parties the LTTE perceived a growing imbalance in the

NATHAN & CHELVA
SOLICITORS
We Work For Your Interest
Contact us for prompt & proper service in all Legal matters including Immigratiom & Conveyancing
Domestic & Commercial
Legal Aid Work also undertaken
Partners: K. Chelva-Nayagam LLB., T. Sri Pathma Nathan
169 TOOTING HIGH STREET, LONDON SW17 0SY
TEL: 0181-672 1800
FAX: 020-8672 0105

relations governing the two parties.

The LTTE perceived the international community as imposing unwarranted conditions and imposing its will on the organization's political project. Third party interventions from the United States and Japan were misinterpreted by the LTTE and the benchmarks, developed by the international community were seen by the LTTE as a peace trap carefully laid out by the Government. The so-called 'conditionality school' that influenced this thinking assumed that the role of the international community was to impose such conditions that would eventually persuade the LTTE to resume negotiations through a carrot and stick policy. It was believed that a quick disbursement of foreign aid would be sufficient to ensure that the LTTE would comply with human rights, democratic principles and agree to a state of pluralism.

This line of thinking however was defeated when the LTTE refused to participate in such a normative framework. The organization took a strategic decision to withdraw from talks to restore symmetry between the parties. This ensured that partnership with the LTTE meant equality and symmetry in the relations governing the negotiations process.

Federalism

The suspension of talks was followed by a discussion on the Interim Administration. The government has already sent several draft proposals to the LTTE, two of which have been rejected by them. The argument put forward by the LTTE was that the proposals were too little and too late and that they did not adequately satisfy the aspirations of the Tamil people.

The third Interim Administration proposal of the Government, which is currently under study, is itself presented as a document for discussion. What is characteristic of all three drafts presented to date is the failure to understand the political dimensions and the aspirations of the Tamil national struggle.

The draft proposal is bereft of politics, lacks vision and does not provide a goal post that both sides could reach out to. The roadmap of the peace process must be clear to the parties and the Interim Administration solution must have a clear direction. The word 'federalism' hardly enters this discourse. The fact that an Interim Administration has to substantially change the balance of power and transform the state from a unitary state to shared power is not alluded to.

Further, the third proposal also underwent a metamorphosis when the actual text sent to the LTTE had fundamental changes made to it such as the deletion of the Muslim participation in the negotiations, which had already been agreed upon by the Prime Minister and the Sri Lanka Muslim Congress.

Phase II

The second phase of the peace process will be qualitatively different from the first phase of the peace process.

The LTTE Leader Velupillai Pripaharan has taken personal control of the negotiations process. Anton Balasingham, the principal negotiator has, due to his illness and other reasons, been replaced by a formidable team of political and intellectual personalities who will be meeting in Paris and in Germany in the next few weeks.

A careful analysis of the team demonstrates that it is a more fundamentalist group which would intend to revert to the basic principles of Thimpu and reassert those principles as the guiding principles of the negotiations process. They would be submitting a draft proposal of their own which is likely to outline the parameters governing their aspirations of the Tamil national struggle. The LTTE would submit detailed proposals with guiding principles for negotiating the final solution. It would highlight the strategy of maximization stopping short of a declaration of Ealam but going further than a federal solution, i.e. the parameters governing this thinking will be a confederate model.

Another feature characterizing the team is that it is led by Thamilselvan who has gained maturity and experience after spending many years on the battlefield. Several other members of the team are drawn from the military command.

Necessity

The debate regarding the distinction between normalization and confidence building is over. The negotiating stance of the LTTE would be positional bargaining. Positional bargaining would mean that the organization would use the opportunity to argue the principle of the 'Doctrine of Necessity', which means that the solution to the Tamil national question should be sought through extra-Constitutional measures. The principle of the Doctrine of Necessity has been used to explore how an unlawful act can be excused if the circumstances justify it.

The LTTE could justify a resumption of hostilities under the Doctrine of Necessity on the basis of the incapacity of the Sri Lankan political class to resolve the Tamil national question within the existing constitutional parameters. It could use the Doctrine for international consumption. The Doctrine of Necessity was successfully adopted in several international situations. How the Doctrine of Necessity is applicable to Sri Lanka will be a matter of intense debate.

Muslim Question

Today the Muslim parties have formed a unified front, which must be seen as a positive factor. However there are deep-rooted fears in the Muslim community following various atrocities committed against their people in parts of the North and the East. Muslims are being killed, abducted, assaulted and their properties seized. The LTTE has been blamed for the majority of these attacks though the organization's hierarchy is adamant that normal relations

DIY General Insurance
www.armassociates.co.uk - useful links - ARM Online Insurance

relations governing the two parties.

The LTTE perceived the international community as imposing unwarranted conditions and imposing its will on the organization's political project. Third party interventions from the United States and Japan were misinterpreted by the LTTE and the benchmarks, developed by the international community were seen by the LTTE as a peace trap carefully laid out by the Government. The so-called 'conditionality school' that influenced this thinking assumed that the role of the international community was to impose such conditions that would eventually persuade the LTTE to resume negotiations through a carrot and stick policy. It was believed that a quick disbursement of foreign aid would be sufficient to ensure that the LTTE would comply with human rights, democratic principles and agree to a state of pluralism.

This line of thinking however was defeated when the LTTE refused to participate in such a normative framework. The organization took a strategic decision to withdraw from talks to restore symmetry between the parties. This ensured that partnership with the LTTE meant equality and symmetry in the relations governing the negotiations process.

Federalism

The suspension of talks was followed by a discussion on the Interim Administration. The government has already sent several draft proposals to the LTTE, two of which have been rejected by them. The argument put forward by the LTTE was that the proposals were too little and too late and that they did not adequately satisfy the aspirations of the Tamil people.

The third Interim Administration proposal of the Government, which is currently under study, is itself presented as a document for discussion. What is characteristic of all three drafts presented to date is the failure to understand the political dimensions and the aspirations of the Tamil national struggle.

The draft proposal is bereft of politics, lacks vision and does not provide a goal post that both sides could reach out to. The roadmap of the peace process must be clear to the parties and the Interim Administration solution must have a clear direction. The word 'federalism' hardly enters this discourse. The fact that an Interim Administration has to substantially change the balance of power and transform the state from a unitary state to shared power is not alluded to.

Further, the third proposal also underwent a metamorphosis when the actual text sent to the LTTE had fundamental changes made to it such as the deletion of the Muslim participation in the negotiations, which had already been agreed upon by the Prime Minister and the Sri Lanka Muslim Congress.

Phase II

The second phase of the peace process will be qualitatively different from the first phase of the peace process.

The LTTE Leader Velupillai Pripaharan has taken personal control of the negotiations process. Anton Balasingham, the principal negotiator has, due to his illness and other reasons, been replaced by a formidable team of political and intellectual personalities who will be meeting in Paris and in Germany in the next few weeks.

A careful analysis of the team demonstrates that it is a more fundamentalist group which would intend to revert to the basic principles of Thimpu and reassert those principles as the guiding principles of the negotiations process. They would be submitting a draft proposal of their own which is likely to outline the parameters governing their aspirations of the Tamil national struggle. The LTTE would submit detailed proposals with guiding principles for negotiating the final solution. It would highlight the strategy of maximization stopping short of a declaration of Ealam but going further than a federal solution, i.e. the parameters governing this thinking will be a confederate model.

Another feature characterizing the team is that it is led by Thamilselvan who has gained maturity and experience after spending many years on the battlefield. Several other members of the team are drawn from the military command.

Necessity

The debate regarding the distinction between normalization and confidence building is over. The negotiating stance of the LTTE would be positional bargaining. Positional bargaining would mean that the organization would use the opportunity to argue the principle of the 'Doctrine of Necessity', which means that the solution to the Tamil national question should be sought through extra-Constitutional measures. The principle of the Doctrine of Necessity has been used to explore how an unlawful act can be excused if the circumstances justify it.

The LTTE could justify a resumption of hostilities under the Doctrine of Necessity on the basis of the incapacity of the Sri Lankan political class to resolve the Tamil national question within the existing constitutional parameters. It could use the Doctrine for international consumption. The Doctrine of Necessity was successfully adopted in several international situations. How the Doctrine of Necessity is applicable to Sri Lanka will be a matter of intense debate.

Muslim Question

Today the Muslim parties have formed a unified front, which must be seen as a positive factor. However there are deep-rooted fears in the Muslim community following various atrocities committed against their people in parts of the North and the East. Muslims are being killed, abducted, assaulted and their properties seized. The LTTE has been blamed for the majority of these attacks though the organization's hierarchy is adamant that normal relations

DIY General Insurance
www.armassociates.co.uk - useful links - ARM Online Insurance

be maintained with the Muslim community.

The continued harassment of Muslims by the LTTE in the Eastern Province could be a reflection of the inability of the LTTE hierarchy to control its leadership and cadre in the East. These developments could be a sign of a power-struggle developing between the LTTE Supreme Command in the North and its Eastern Leadership, which seems to have taken a more complex form. Another dimension is the power struggle within the Eastern Leadership itself. Further new and more militant groups are emerging from among Tamil and Muslim youth groups, which would destabilize the situation in the East.

The establishment of an LTTE base in Kurangapanchan in the Trincomalee District has led to increased tensions between the LTTE and the Government. Under the terms and conditions of the Ceasefire Agreement both the Government and the LTTE agreed to maintain a balance of forces and to refrain from expanding its military positions.

The LTTE is unmoved by a ruling and a deadline issued by the Sri Lanka Monitoring Mission to withdraw the base signalling a breakaway from its 'Rule Bound' position in the Memorandum of Understanding.

If this dispute is not resolved it could pose a serious threat to the Government's position in the South as it could undermine public support and trust in the peace effort.

Challenges

The challenges facing the Sri Lanka government are indeed formidable. There are rumours in the press that Minister Milinda Moragoda will be withdrawing from the Government's team of negotiators. Professor G.L. Peiris as the Chief Negotiator will face the challenge of forming an equally formidable negotiations team comprising constitutional lawyers and conflict resolution experts.

The Government would have to ensure that the country does not misunderstand its strategy as an appeasement of the LTTE. It will have to be conditioned by the upcoming elections for the Provincial Councils and a fair amount of attention will be paid to winning these elections which is necessary for seeking a further mandate from the people.

The design and architecture of the negotiations process should also be reviewed. The venue, agenda-setting, timing and duration of the talks should be qualitatively different. Whilst the LTTE would wish to have a change in venue for the talks so as to gain further legitimacy the Government may also have to consider whether the talks be held in Colombo or Kilinochchi.

With regard to the agenda-setting and protocols governing the negotiations process, the first phase of the negotiations process allowed for free discussion on numerous subjects, which were not minuted.

The second phase should receive a more rigorous agenda and minutes taken of the talks so as to ensure follow up of the decisions taken. While Phase One comprised two-day meetings with long, intermittent intervals the second phase should be characterised by longer meetings spanning one to two weeks. It would also require a set of resource persons to be available throughout the talks.

The elections will take the attention of the Government away from the peace process whilst the LTTE's full and undiluted attention will be on achieving its objectives in the negotiations process. The attention of the Government will be much focused on the terms of negotiations. There will be a wide gap between the position of the Government and the LTTE with regard to the negotiations process. It will require all the efforts of the facilitators to bridge the gap in an atmosphere of incredible contention and attention in the entire country.

The Joint Opposition comprising the People's Alliance and the JVP will use all its resources to undermine the Government's efforts by engaging in extra-parliamentary agitation. They will carry the slogan that the Government is on the verge of appeasing the LTTE.

The Government would have to reconsider whether the current capricious cohabitation policy should be further pursued or whether a structured and sustainable process of consensus building is necessary.

Peace trap

The international community is, in many ways, the custodian of the peace process. The Government of Sri Lanka was able to develop a broad umbrella of support which, in comparison with the situation of many other developing countries, is a significant achievement considering there were no purely strategic reasons for doing so. The umbrella of support provided by the international community however became too one-sided where a position was developed that the balance of international support tilted in favour of the government.

This made the LTTE lash out against the role of the international community, which it said had formed a safety net around the government to prevent it from falling. The LTTE accused the government of laying a 'Peace Trap' with the assistance of the international community.

However the Government and the LTTE are equally dependent on the international community for its support and to some extent the international community is dependent on the success of the peace process. In Phase II of the negotiations process the international community would be more cautious and the LTTE could try to develop a realignment of forces within the international community through an alignment with the European and Scandinavian powers.

(Dr. Rupesinghe, sociologist and internationally recognised conflict resolution expert, once headed the London-based International Alert, and now heads the Foundation for Co-Existence, Colombo, which is busy supporting local leaderships in participating in the peace process.)

SRI LANKA INFORMATION SITE
WWW.srilankans.co.uk

NEWS TRACK

Demining team hands over cleared land: July 21 - An area of 72,208 square meters, consisting of residential and agricultural lands in Sarasalai in the central of Thenamaradchchi division in Jaffna district that has been fully demined, was handed over to the Thenmaradchchi Divisional Secretariat by the US demining team known as RONCO.

The Thenmaradchchi Divisional Secretary, Mr.B.Balasubramaniam, took charge of the de-mined area from the team leader of RONCO, Mr.Don Smith, at an event held at the Sarasalai Central Community Centre. Mr.Don Smith said his team had recovered 321 anti-personal mines and other explosives in the area between March 31 and July 17 this year.

RONCO is to recommence its de-mining work in the Jaffna district with effect from August 15 in collaboration with the Sri Lanka Army, team leader Mr.Don Smith said.

The RONCO team came to work in Jaffna under an emergency assistance scheme to de-mine the district. The team brought well-trained Mozambique de-miners to Jaffna, as there were no locally trained personnel, said Mr. Smith. The RONCO team leader said that he hoped that people could return to their lands now declared free of mines without any fear of buried anti-personal mines and other explosives.

Reconstruction in the Vanni: July 22 - Approximately forty contractors have signed up for the rehabilitation and reconstruction of the Kilinochchi and Mullaitivu districts according to information revealed in a recent meeting where the head of the Institute for Construction, Training And Development (ICTAD) participated.

Sri Lankan government officials in the two districts said that only those contractors who have signed up with the ICTAD would be eligible to do the rehabilitation and reconstruction work. The officials said that until recently they had several problems in hiring the contractors, but those problems are easing now.

The Government Agent (GA) for Mullaitivu, Ms. Imelda Sukumar, said that more than 20 contractors have signed up with the ICTAD in Mullaitivu so far. The Kilinochchi GA, Mr.T.Rasanayakam, said that out of the 22 contractors signed up for the district, 6 contractors have been qualified for individual contracts of Rs.10 million, and 4 contractors are eligible to take on larger projects, each worth Rs.30 million.

Minister prevented from holding function: July 22 - Jaffna undergrads and some members of the public prevented an European Union function attended by Sri Lankan cabinet minister Dr.Jayalath Jayawardene from being held at the Kailasapathy auditorium, Jaffna University. The function was organised for handing over fifty five schools renovated with the funds provided by the EU. The protesters have been reported as saying that they would not allow any Sri Lankan minister to hold any function inside the university premises until students in the peninsula were allowed to pursue their studies free of military pressure of the Sri Lankan government.

The European Union (EU) allocated six million Euros for the renovation of fifty-five schools, which were badly affected by the two decade-old war in the Jaffna district. The German Technical Co-operation (GTZ), an international aid organization, implemented this project. Mines laid in and out of these fifty-five scho-ols were removed under this project. New furniture was provided, GTZ sources said.

The principals of the 55 schools were invited to take charge of the renovated schools at the function scheduled at 11 a.m. at the Jaffna University's Kailasapathy Auditorium.

When the chief guest, Sri Lankan Minister for Rehabilitation, Resettlement and Refugees Dr.Jayalath Jayawardene, arrived with the EU Charge de Affairs in Colombo, Mr.Wouter L Wilton, a group of undergrads and members of public gathered at the main entrance of the Jaffna University and protested that they would not allow any function attended by Sri Lankan ministers in the university until normalcy was fully restored in the peninsula, enabling the students to attend schools without military pressure.

Later, Minister Jayawardene made an attempt to hold the function outside the main entrance of the university on the main road. Students and members of the public, sources said, also thwarted that attempt.

The function was finally held at the office of the GTZ organization, which is located close to the St John's College in Jaffna in the afternoon. The fifty-five principals at that function took charge of the renovated schools.

Minister Jayawardene addressing the gathering at the GTZ office said that media should not report these events as an attempt to sabotage the peace process. "I will not be deterred by these incidents. I am not bothered about my life. I will pursue my mission to achieve peace with a lasting political solution to the ethnic conflict," he said.

President appoints committee: July 23 - Sri Lanka's President, Chandrika Kumaratunge, has appointed a four member committee to study and report on the interim administrative structure proposals which have been submitted to the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam by the United National Front government of Prime Minister Ranil Wickremasinghe.

Ms.Chandrika Kumaratunge is also the leader of the People's Alliance, the main opposition in the current parliament of Sri Lanka.

The former Foreign Minister, Mr.Lakshman Kadirgamar, is to head the four-member committee. The other members are former Ministers Nimal Sripala de Silva, Susil Premajayanth and the current leader of the opposition, Mr.Mahinda Rajapakse. Mr. Kadirgamar is a close confidante and special adviser on international affairs to the Sri Lankan President.

Meanwhile, Mr.Mahinda Rajapakse has requested the Speaker of the parliament to allocate time for a two-day debate on the interim administrative structure proposal submitted to the LTTE by the UNF government.

Ground water situation in Jaffna 'alarming'

July 25 - Speaking at a seminar held at the International Water Management Institute in Colombo on the potential of rainwater harvesting in the Jaffna peninsula, Mr. Herald Kraft, a consultant to the Jaffna Rehabilitation Project, funded by the German Technical Cooperation (GTZ), revealed that the ground water situation in the Jaffna peninsula was alarming, given the thin cover of soil over the ground water table that provides no protection against pollutants, a press release from the GTZ said.

The German expert said that as the Jaffna peninsula has a scarcity of uncontaminated underground fresh water, new methods of harvesting rainwater should be considered to meet the increasing demand, according to the press release.

The GTZ said that Mr. Kraft had spent several months study-

ing Water Supply, Rain Water Harvesting, Waste Water and Solid Waste Management in the Jaffna peninsula.

According to Mr. Kraft, the sandy soil has a very low purification capacity, and pollutants such as agricultural fertilizers, pesticides, fungicides and herbicides, as well as liquid and solid industrial wastes, oil, diesel and petrol can easily penetrate to the ground water.

Mr. Kraft also said that the lime stone cover, which is widespread in the Jaffna peninsula, "provides almost no purification capacity, permitting all pollutants reaching the ground water to spread far and wide."

"Salination, along with contamination from the surface," he said, "has made it vital for such drinking water from local ground water sources to undergo sophisticated chemical treatment before it can be considered safe for human consumption."

The GTZ said that it would launch a pilot project at the Kopay Christian College. The school buildings at this college provide 1,845 square metres of roof surface and will be connected to a cistern of 600 cubic metres. GTZ estimates that this collection will be sufficient to provide drinking water to the students and teachers of the college for 365 days a year.

According to GTZ water resource experts, schools, hospitals, and public buildings that have large roof areas are perfectly suited for rainwater harvesting, as they are usually covered with clay tiles.

The experts hope that such an alternative source of fresh water will be beneficial as more and more refugees return to their homes in Jaffna, which is expected to exacerbate the ground water situation.

SLA constructs new camp: July 25 - The Sri Lanka Army commenced constructing a large camp at Potpathi, a fishing hamlet in the Vadamarachchi East division in Jaffna district, amidst a sit-in-protest by local people in front of the new camp demanding its removal. Soon after the launch of the sit-in-protest campaign, the SLA authorities invited three representatives of the protestors to their camp and told them that they would convey their final decision later.

The SLA has warned the protestors that they would be dispersed forcibly with the assistance of the Police if they did not withdraw their sit-in-protest causing obstruction. The protesters requested the SLMM monitors to take immediate steps to stop the construction of the new camp.

Junior LTTE officers pass out: July 26 - At a ceremony held in the Vanni in northern Sri Lanka to mark the completion of training of the junior officers of the LTTE, its leader Mr. V. Pirapaharan, participated, made a speech and awarded certificates to the officers.

Senior LTTE military commanders, Col. Theepan, Col. Soosai, Col. Bhanu, Col. Sornam, Col. Vidusa and Col. Thurka, and the political head of the LTTE, Mr. S.P.Thamilselvan and many other political and military cadres participated. At the end of the ceremony, a cultural and arts program by the junior officers was held.

Police protection for non-LTTE groups: July 26 - The Sri Lankan police in Batticaloa have advised the Eelam People's Democratic Party (EPDP), the People's Liberation Organization of Tamil Eelam (PLOTE) and the Eelam People Revolutionary Liberation Front (EPRLF-Varathar wing) cadres not to move unnecessarily outside their offices in the district, and if there was a serious need to move out, the police would provide security to them, sources said.

The sources said that the police have increased security to the district leaders of these groups in eastern Batticaloa and the advice for their members to not move out follows the abduction and assassination many members of these groups in recent times.

Minister's Trinco visit cancelled: July 26 - A four-day mobile service scheduled to be inaugurated at the Trincomalee district secretariat this morning by the Lands Minister of Sri Lanka, Dr..Rajitha Senaratne, was called off at the last minute as a one-day hartal was observed in the eastern port town the same day, sources said.

Minister Senaratne cancelled his Trincomalee visit without fixing a new date, district secretariat sources said.

The Land Ministry organized the four-day mobile to solve land related problems faced by the villagers in the Trincomalee district. The first day mobile service was to be held today. Mobile services were also to be held at Nilaveli, Chenaiyoor and Eachilampathu on the following three days.

All arrangements were made by the Trincomalee district secretariat to hold the mobile service and media persons from Colombo were also brought down to Trincomalee to cover the minister's visit. When the Minister learnt that Tamil groups in Trincomalee had organized a hartal, he immediately cancelled his visit to eastern port town. Some Colombo reports said the LTTE was behind the hartal.

However, a large number of Sinhalese villagers and a handful of Tamils gathered at the district land office with their land related problems. The Government Agent, Mr.N.H.K.Nelumdeniya, asked them to hand over their complaints to respective officials as the Minister had cancelled his Trincomalee visit and the mobile service until further notice, secretariat sources said.

"We cannot accept any hasty decision taken regarding land related problems in the Trincomalee district at a time when all attempts are made to take forward the peace process and serious consideration is given to the establishment of an interim administrative structure with adequate powers," said the Trincomalee district parliamentarian, Mr.Rajavarothiam Sampanthan, to the media following the cancellation of Lands Minister's visit to Trincomalee.

LTTE to submit counter-proposals: July 28 - "The Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) are keenly studying the proposal for an interim administrative structure sent by the Sri Lankan government although it fails to meet the expectations of the Tamil people", said Mr. S. P Thamilchelvan addressing more than five thousand troops of the LTTE's southern front forces on the grounds of 'Meenaham', a sprawling military base complex in Tharavai, about 40 kilometres northwest of Batticaloa, according to a TamilNet report.

The head of the political wing of the LTTE, Mr. S.P. Thamilselvan, arrived at the Illupadichenai school grounds in Batticaloa by a Sri Lankan Air Force helicopter on 27 July, and was received by the LTTE's senior commander for Batticaloa-Ampara, Col. Karuna, and other commanders on his arrival on a weeklong tour and consultations. He declared open the Anparasy Memorial at the 'Meenaham' grounds.

The IA proposal sent by Colombo to the LTTE had several shortcomings and the LTTE leadership was now studying the proposal in consultation with its legal/constitutional experts, Mr. Thamilchelvan said.

"We will submit our counter proposals to the UNF government which could satisfy the expectations and reflect the interests of our people. We are prepared to recommence peace talks if the government accepts our counter proposals. We would be glad if the government comes forward to solve the Tamil people's problem through peaceful means, understanding our stand," he added.

"We are keeping the doors to peace wide open. We would

five member bench of the Supreme Court. The Chief Justice, Mr.Sarath N.Silva, said he would not serve in the bench for "personal reasons," when the case came up for inquiry before a three-member bench of the Supreme Court on 30 July.

The six soldiers were charged with the rape and murder of Krishanthy and murder of another four people in the year 1995 when the Sri Lanka Army captured Jaffna district in Operation Riviressa. All the six soldiers were sentenced to death by the three High Court judges at the trial-at-bar held in Colombo. The six accused filed the appeal in the Supreme Court following an unsuccessful attempt at the Court of Appeal.

LTTE leaders meet govt. officials: July 31 - The Deputy Political Head of the LTTE, Mr.Thangan, addressing Jaffna district government officials this afternoon, stressed that there was an urgent need to co-ordinate all development works in the district. He added that the decision on launching new development projects in the peninsula should come from Jaffna itself.

"No room should be given to outside interference in making a decision to develop our land," he told district officials involved in formulating development proposals, according to TamilNet. Mr.C.Ilamparuthi, the LTTE's Jaffna district political head, presided over the conference, which was held at the Navalar Cultural Hall in Jaffna.

Meanwhile, the LTTE political head, Mr.S.P.Thamilchelvan, met with government officials in the districts of Ampara and Batticaloa separately and obtained first hand information about the situation in the eastern areas.

Chopper facility to LTTE condemned: July 31 - The Sri Lanka Freedom Party, the chief constituent of the main opposition People's Alliance in Sri Lanka, has demanded that the United National Front government immediately withdraw the helicopter facility provided to the Political Head of theTamil Tigers, Mr.S.P.Thamilchelvan, to tour the eastern province, reports from Colombo said.

The SLFP general secretary, Mr.Maitripala Sirisena, in a statement condemned the decision of the government to provide helicopters for Mr.Thamilchelvan's use.

"As the LTTE has withdrawn from the peace talks since April this year, there is no justification for providing helicopter facility for Mr.Thamilchelvan to take forward the peace process. Instead, the LTTE is using this transport facility to fulfill their needs," the SLFP statement charged.

Shortage of doctors: July 31 - There is a dearth for medical officers in government hospitals in the northeast, admitted the Health Minister of Sri Lanka, Mr.P.Dayaratne, while addressing meetings that followed the opening of the renovated Intensive Care Unit of the Batticaloa Teaching Hospital and a district Ayurveda hospital at a cost of seven million rupees at Puthukudiyiruppu in the Batticaloa district.

The Minister said, however, that he would take prompt steps to appoint about one hundred and fifty medical officers to the northeast government hospital to ease the shortage. He would also take steps to rectify the shortcomings prevailing in the NE hospitals.

Minister Dayaratne further said that all citizens irrespective of racial and religious differences should come forward to support the government's peace initiative to find a lasting political solution to the national conflict that has ruined the country in all spheres for the last five decades. "Without permanent peace, the country cannot be developed and this should be borne in the minds of the every citizen in the country," he stressed.

Protesting teachers tear-gassed: July 31 - Sri Lanka Police today used tear gas and water cannon to disperse three hundred school teachers demonstrating in front of the Education Ministry in Colombo, in protest of what they said was the denial of salary increase and promotions and the Sri Lankan government's privatization policy in education.

The demonstration was organized by the Ceylon Teachers Service Union (CTSU), which has close connections with the Jantha Vimukthi Peramuna. The teachers started the demonstration march about 100 meters from the Education Ministry building. Shouting slogans and carrying placards, they marched to the entrance of the building and tried to enter the Ministry offices, but police officers denied permission for them to enter the building.

Thereafter, the demonstrating teachers brought down the police barrier and tried to go inside the ministry. Senior police officers then gave an order to the police to use tear gas and water cannon. Some Buddhist monks and three teachers were admitted to the Colombo General hospital with injuries sustained in the police charge. However, CTSU secretary, Mr. Mahinda Jayasinghe, said that twenty of teachers were injured by the police charge. After the clash between the teachers and the police, the CTSU secretary addressed the demonstrators and burned the letter he had brought to deliver to the Education minister, sources said.

RWB protests against Minister's threat: Aug 2 - The Paris-based media watchdog, Reporters Without Borders, has urged the Sri Lankan government to investigate a Cabinet minister's alleged death threat against a newspaper editor.

In a statement issued on 2 August RWB called on the government to "disown" Fisheries Minister Mahinda Wijesekera for allegedly threatening to kill the editor of the weekly "Sunday Leader", Lasantha Wickrematunga, after he published articles accusing the minister of corruption.

"We deeply deplore the minister's behaviour and ask you to take action against him," the statement said, adding the group had sent a letter to Prime Minister Ranil Wickremesinghe.

It said the newspaper reported that the minister made the threat in front of another Cabinet minister, who later confirmed the incident with the RWB.

The report also said the Minister had boasted that he helped plan the killings of three journalists during the previous government of Chandrika Kumaratunga, who is now the Sri Lankan President.

Wijesekera in response reportedly said he would give his side of the story when an investigation is launched. "Let them conduct an inquiry. There I will say what I want to say," Wijesekera told journalists.

Reporters Without Borders described Wijesekera's alleged comments as a "serious blow" to the government's credibility in protecting media freedom. Wickremesinghe's government has promised reforms to ensure media freedom. Last June, Parliament repealed a criminal law under which journalists could face jail terms if found guilty of defamation.

Eelam police expands: Aug 2 - Twenty-four policemen from the Tamil Eelam Police Service (TEPS)'s headquarters in the Vanni have reached Batticaloa with the guidance of the Sri Lanka Monitoring Mission, and the policemen are staying at the LTTE-controlled Vakarai area, 32 km to the north of Batticaloa town, TEPS sources said.

The TEPS personnel will help in expanding the police services in the Batticaloa district, and will train and guide new police recruits in the district, the sources said.

The Batticaloa district main police station of the TEPS is functioning at Palugamam. Though additional police stations were opened at Karadiyanaru and Vakarai, these stations have

not started functioning. The newly arrived TEPS personnel will help these stations to function normally, the TEPS sources said. According to the sources, a district headquarters of the TEPS will be opened in Kokkadicholai soon.

Following the ceasefire agreement between the LTTE and the Government of Sri Lanka, a group of TEPS personnel were allowed to use a sea route to reach Batticaloa from the Vanni in 2002 for the first time. This second group of TEPS personnel used a land route.

Thamilchelvan addresses govt. officials: Aug 3 Mr. .S. P.Thamilchelvan, the political head of the LTTE, this morning addressed about three hundred government and provincial council officials in the Trincomalee district regarding the rehabilitation, reconstruction and resettlement process now being handled by the Sri Lankan state organizations in the district since the ceasefire agreement came into operation. Mr.Thamilchelvan stressed the urgent need for the state government and the provincial government agencies to play a constructive role in reconstructing the war-ravaged Trincomalee district, sources said.

The Chief Secretary of the North East Provincial Council, Mr.S.Rangarajah, Provincial Governor's Secretary, Mr.A.Amirthalingam, provincial secretaries and special commissioners of local authorities in the district attended the conference, which was held at the Chenaiyoor Central College in the LTTE held Muttur east area.

The conference, which commenced around ten in the morning, continued till noon. The LTTE's Trincomalee district political head, Mr. Tilak and the LTTE district commander, Colonel Pathuman, also participated at the conference.

In another public event declareing open a Computer Training Centre at Chenaiyoor in Muttur east, Mr. Thamilchelvan said, that in the past, Tamil leaders had failed in their fight against the Sinhala-dominated Sri Lankan governments in power then to regain the Tamil people's lost rights and land. The Sinhalese leaders in power those days used negotiations and agreements signed with Tamil leaders to enhance their political, military and other powers in the country.

"You all know the situation today. A new chapter has been written in the annals of Tamils' history in the country The Sinhala nation has now been subjected to pressure by the international community and with the facilitation of the international monitors; it has signed a ceasefire agreement with the LTTE, accepting the LTTE as the sole representative of the Tamils in the country because of the strength it maintains on the ground," he said adding, "Our national leader has brought a revolutionary change in the lives of Tamils in the country who have been subjected to oppression. We have brought about this change by sacrificing more than 17 000 Tamil youths in the freedom struggle. Our leader has been successful through his armed liberation struggle to safeguard Tamils from being eliminated by state suppression. Tamils in the country live with self-respect today because of our leader's vision."

Japanese Deputy FM visits Jaffna: Aug 3 - Accompanied by Sri Lanka's deputy foreign minister, Mr. Dharmapriya Gamage, and the Japanese ambassador in Colombo, Mr.Serichiro Otsuka, the Japanese Senior Vice Foreign Minister, Mr.Tetsura Yano, visited Jaffna and inspected the conditions of a refugee camp at Inuvil where hundreds of internally displaced people from Valigamam north.

On arrival in Jaffna, Mr. Yano held discussions with the acting Jaffna SLA commander, Major General Parami Kulathunga. During his discussions with the visiting Japanese Minister, Major General Kulathunga reportedly told the Mr Yano that the SLA had removed seven times more land mines and anti-personnel mines from Jaffna than other de-mining agencies. However he told Mr.Yano that it would take another four years to declare Jaffna a mine free area.

It is reported that the IDPs at the Inuvil camp made a plea to Mr.Yano to help them to resettle in their own lands. They told the Japanese Minister that the camps where they live now are in a dilapidated state and they will suffer when the rainy season started.

Mr.Yano reportedly replied to the IDPs that resettlement in lands which came under High Security Zones would be possible only after a permanent solution is found to the conflict. However, he promised in the meantime to assist the displaced people in repairing the existing refugee camps before the rainy season starts.

Later, Mr.Yano visited the Duraiappah Maha Vidiyalyam in Jaffna-Colombagam where he handed over an X-ray machine to the UNICEF representative. According to Mr. Yano, Japan will continue to extend its immediate humanitarian assistance in the North and East, in line with international community's wishes. "It is my pleasure to announce that Japan has decided to extend approximately US $ 2.6 million to the UNICEF for the improvement of maternal and child health care as a part of such assistance," announced Mr. Yano before returning to Colombo.

Gunmen kill two in Muttur: Aug 4 - Gunmen shot dead two persons in Muttur, south of Trincomalee district in eastern Sri Lanka within two days in separate incidents, police said. On Sunday early morning 3 August, a fifty six year old former police sergeant L.Rilvan was shot dead while on his way from home to a boutique. Six bullets were found on his body, Muttur police said.

On Monday early morning a Tamil youth Gunam Subaraj aged twenty-one was shot dead while asleep in his house. The deceased was a labourer engaged in construction work. The reason behind this killing is not yet revealed, police said.

Mystery deaths in jewelry shop: Aug 5 - Mr. Sinnathamby Thambipillai, 38, of Batticaloa, was found dead with head injuries inside a jewelry shop in Kasthuriyar Street in Jaffna town on 3 August, and he was the third person to die in a jewelry shop in Jaffna mysteriously, police sources in Jaffna said.

The body of Mr. Thambipillai was lying in the mortuary of the Jaffna Teaching Hospital, as there was no judicial medical officer to conduct autopsy to find the cause of death, medical sources said. When the matter was mentioned at the Jaffna Magistrate's Court on 5 August, the parties concerned raised suspicion over the death of Thambipillai and wanted a postmortem held on the body to find the cause of death.

Police have taken steps to transfer the body from Jaffna to Galle for postmortem examination by the Judicial Medical Officer there.

Resettlement of IDPs in Trinco district: Aug 5 - Around 3350 people from 920 displaced families have been staying in thirteen refugee and welfare camps in the Trincomalee district awaiting resettlement in their own villages, said the North East Community Restoration Development (NECORD) Deputy Project Director, Mr.N.Puhendran, addressing a gathering at the opening of a new building at Mahavelipura Vidiyalaya in Kantalai, Trincomalee district. The Asian Development Bank-funded NECORD has constructed the new building at a cost of about 1.5 million rupees at the Mahavelipura Sinhala Vidiyalaya in the Kantalai education zone.

Mr.Puhendran further said that NECORD has undertaken three projects to resettle IDPs in the Trincomalee district at a cost of five million rupees. According to him, Tamil IDPs in

Kinniya village, Sinhalese IDPs at Vilgam village and Muslims at Pudavaikaddu, north of Trincomalee district, would be resettled. He said that NECORD has been working with commitment to implement the Rehabilitation, Reconstruction and Reconciliation program formulated by the Sri Lankan Prime Minister's secretariat to achieve peace.

NECORD Trincomalee District Deputy Director, Mr. R.Umakanthan, said that, of the 76 projects selected for implementation in the Trincomalee district, 35 projects were now under implementation. Of the 35, five projects have been completed. School buildings for two Tamil schools and two for Muslim schools have been opened. The Mahavelipura Vidiyalayam is the first Sinhala School that benefited under the NECORD project in the Trincomalee district.

The Kantalai Zonal Director of Education, Mr. Herath Kulasooriya, was the chief guest at the event. School Principal Mr.P.H. Gamini Bandara presided. At the commencement, Mr.Puhendran and Kantalai Zonal Director of Education, Mr.Herath Kulasooriya, declared open the new building and unveiled the plaque.

Permits for arms to politicians: Aug 6 - The Sri Lankan Government plans to issue permits to politicians to carry automatic pistols and revolvers in a bid to have greater control over the use of firearms, officials said on Wednesday. The latest move by the interior ministry is aimed at keeping a track of the firearms already in the hands of local politicians, officials said. A ministry spokesman said many guns were in the hands of politicians since the mid 1980s when they were given weapons to guard against attacks by the JVP, or the Tamil Tigers.

Grenade lobbed at TRO office: Aug 7 - Unidentified men who came in a motorbike hurled a grenade at the office of the Tamil Rehabilitation Organization (TRO) in Mahiladi Veethi in Batticaloa last night around 8.30 p.m. The grenade fell inside the premises of the TRO office damaging a vehicle, police said. The vehicle belonged to a de-mining group. The grenade was lobbed soon after the vehicle entered the TRO office, police said.

On receipt of information monitors of the Sri Lanka Monitoring Mission in Batticaloa and Police rushed to the site and conducted investigation.

LTTE urged to renounce terrorism: Aug 7 - The United States has expressed concern over the activity of the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) saying that this is undermining confidence in the peace process at a "critical juncture", and has called on the Tamil Tigers to renounce terrorist acts, including political assassination.

"The U.S. looks forward to a timely resumption of peace talks in Sri Lanka. Through the good offices of the Norwegian facilitators, the Government of Sri Lanka submitted a proposal on July 17 to the LTTE for discussion of an interim government for the North and East of the country. The Tamil Tigers are still reviewing the proposal. With a constructive approach and willingness to compromise, a negotiated solution to the conflict is possible," Philip Reeker, deputy spokesman of the State Department, said.

"We note with concern, however, activity by the Tamil Tigers that is undermining confidence in the peace process at this critical juncture. More than three dozen people - all of whom were alleged to be political opponents of the Tamil Tigers or anti-Tiger informants - have been assassinated in Sri Lanka so far this year."

"Also the Tigers continue to maintain a military camp in Trincomalee district, identified by the Sri Lanka Monitoring Commission as a violation of the February 2002 ceasefire agreement," the deputy spokesman said. "The U.S. calls on the LTTE to renounce terrorism and cease terrorist acts, including political assassination, and to comply with the terms of the ceasefire agreement they signed," Mr. Reeker said.

President on 'dangerous' period: Aug 8 - President, Mrs Chandrika Kumaratunge, addressing a workshop of members of the Sri Lanka Freedom Party women organizations today said that the country was facing the most dangerous period in its history as the United National Front government was preparing to "hand over the power to rule a part of the country to the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam, in the name of taking forward the present peace process."

At the workshop, held at the Sri Lanka Foundation Institute in Colombo, Mrs. Kumaratunge further said that the present peace of the UNF government is a "bogus peace" as it "deceived the masses of all communities in the country." She accused Prime Minister Mr.Ranil Wickremasinghe of taking steps to hand over the administrative structure for the northeast province to the LTTE. She said that he was trying to divide the country without using the word "Tamil Eelam" for the provincial structure. She said that Mr.Wickremasinghe has failed to tell her what his government intended to hand over to the LTTE in the name of the interim administrative structure.

She repeated what she has been saying in recent months that the military power of the LTTE has increased to about 16,000 cadres, which, she said, stood only at 6,000 at the time of signing the ceasefire agreement last year.

STF informant shot dead: Aug 9 - A thirty five year old Tamil informant to the Special Task Force of the Sri Lanka Police in Akkaraipattu in the Amparai district was shot dead today around six pm when he was proceeding to his home in a push bicycle through the Sagamam road,

The victim was was shot dead by two gunmen who came in a motorbike using a pistol. He was a former member of the Eelam People's Revolutionary Liberation Front (EPRLF) and later is reported to have become a become an informant to the STF.

Doctors shun Jaffna: Aug 10 - "As the medical graduates of Jaffna University are reluctant to serve in the North East," the North East Health Services has been forced to "beg doctors from other districts to serve in the North East," lamented the director of the NEHS, Dr. Kumaravetpillai.

Though a sizable number of doctors graduate from the University of Jaffna, not even ten of them are coming forward to serve in the Jaffna district, preferring to work in the South, in places like Colombo, Kandy and Galle, said Dr. Kumaravetpillai.

"Already there are many Tamil doctors in such hospitals in the South in excess of what is needed. But graduating Tamil doctors are not coming forward to serve in Tamil areas. Where there is an acute shortage of doctors. This is deplorable," said the NEHS director.

Meanwhile, some divisions in the Jaffna Teacghing Hospital are severely affected as a result of lack of specialists, said Dr. S.Sathurmugan, the Director of the Hospital.

SLA to recruit 4000 soldiers: Aug 10 - The Sri Lanka Army (SLA) is to launch a massive recruitment drive to recruit about 4000 soldiers and interviews will commence on 18 August in several locations islandwide, Brigadier Jammika Liyanage, Director, Personnel Administration, of the SLA told the press.

The recruitment will continue till end of this month and the new recruits would be given a fourteen weeks training in 15

army training centres located in Boosa, Panagoda, Diyatalawa, Kandy, Embilipitya, Colombo and Saliyapura in the south and in Ampara in the eastern province. Brigadier Liyanage further said that there were more than ten thousand vacancies for soldiers at present.

This is the first time the army is carrying out a large scale recruitment after the United National Front government signed the ceasefire agreement with the LTTE. Meanwhile, the army has postponed the pilot project to issue discharge-certificates to the deserted soldiers in the Gampaha district till September, giving priority to the new recruitment drive. The SLA headquarters had earlier said it would start issuing discharge-certificates to about five thousand deserted soldiers now living in the Gampaha district.

University Non-academic staff strike: Aug 12 -The All-University Non-Academic Staff Unions' Federation (AUNASUF) and six non-teaching staff unions in Sri Lanka struk work indefinitely starting today presenting a 21-point demand, including the call for a salary raise and the payment of a monthly cost of living allowance. The strike has paralysed all activities in the universities.

The Sri Lanka Independent Service Workers Union, National Workers Union, All-University Workers Services Union, Independent Workers Union, All-University Assistant Warden's Union, Peradeniya Clerical Workers Union are the unions that joined the AUNASUF in the strike.

The President of the AUNASUF, Lionel Malwathage, said that his Federation had held discussions with the Minister of Tertiary Education, Mr. Kabeer Hashim, more than three times, and with the University Grants' Commission more than five times, but there had been no favorable response to their demands. He said that there has been no pay increase to the non-academic staff since 1995.

Meanwhile, the Ministry for Tertiary Education in Sri Lanka said Tuesday that it had acceded to several demands put forward by the non-academic staff of the universities, and described the strike as politically motivated.

Muslims observe hartal: Aug 12 - Muslim communities in Kattankudy, Eravur, Oddamavadi and some parts of Valaichchenai in the Batticaloa district in eastern Sri Lanka observed a general shut down (hartal) in remembrance of Muslims thirteen years ago on August 12, 1990 at Meerakerni in Eravur, about 15 km north of Batticaloa town, at the request of the Mosques' Federation, It was then alleged that the Tamil Tigers had carried out the massacres.

Shops and schools were closed down in Muslim areas. Low attendance in government offices was recorded. Local bus services were disrupted but long distance buses ran as usual. Roads were deserted in Muslim areas due to the hartal.

In Valaichchenai, though Muslims areas observed a general shut down, normal life of the Tamil areas was not disrupted. Special prayers were held in mosques in the district, and police and security forces intensified their patrolling, police sources said.

In Batticaloa town too, while Muslim shops were closed and white flags were seen in Muslim areas, government offices and schools functioned and Tamil shops opened as usual, police said.

Muslim fishermen's complaint: Aug 12 - The head of the Sri Lanka Monitoring Mission in Batticaloa district today held discussions with the fishermen's representatives in Kattankudy regarding a complaint that some armed persons allegedly belong to the LTTE had robbed them of their boats and fishing gear in sea.

Kattankudy fishermen had lodged a complaint with the SLMM in Batticaloa district in which they alleged that the unidentified members responsible for robbing their boats and fishing gear in mid-sea on 7 August were from the LTTE. At the discussion, the SLMM head in Batticaloa reportedly told the fishermen that as the identity of the robbers was not known, he could not act immediately, but assured them that he would take their complaint seriously and take appropriate action.

Two Muslims shot dead: Aug 13 - Two Muslim youths, Mohamed Riyaz, 27, and Abdul Kuthoos Fareed, 35, were shot dead at Chelvanayakapuram, a suburb in the Uppuveli police division of Trincomalee, about two km north of the eastern port town, around 9 p.m according to police sources. The victims were identified as members of the Sri Lanka Muslim Congress.

The deceased were residents of Muttur town. They were shot with a T-56 pistol while they were riding a motorbike in the Chelvanayakapuram area.

Around 39 persons abducted: Aug 13 - Around 39 women and men have been abducted by the LTTE in Vauniya in northern Sri Lanka last month. A spokesman of the Human Rights Commission office in Vauniya said that the parents and the guardians of the abducted forwarded their complaints to the office. Investigating officer of the Human Rights office in Vauniya R. Priyadarshana said such abductions were on the increase. The Human Rights Office spokesman said some are School going children and the others are between 18 and 39 years. We want our children back said the parents of the abducted persons. Details of the victims are now with SLMM.

Killings have a 'negative impact': Aug 13 - Cabinet Spokesman, Professor G. L. Pieris said that LTTE's killing of democratic politicians and Army informants had created a negative impact on the peace process and what was needed at present was a high level of public confidence. Pieris told the weekly cabinet press briefing today, "Public confidence should remain at a high level. Nothing must be done to erode it. Nothing must be done to erode confidence of the people in the peace process at this point of time when crucial issues are about to be addressed," when questioned about the statement issued by Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch this week, which condemned the killing of innocent democratic politicians, by the LTTE after the government and the LTTE entered in to a ceasefire agreement.

254 Pakistanies fined and jailed: Aug 14 - Two hundred and fifty-four Pakistani men, arrested by the Sri Lanka Police in Tangalle in southern Sri Lanka and handed over to the Crime Investigation Department, were fined 50,000 rupees each totaling 12.7 million rupees and sentenced to 1 year of rigorous imprisonment. When produced before the Tangalle Magistrate todyay.

The 254 Pakistani men were traveling in a ship in the Tangalle seas when the Sri Lanka Navy arrested them. Press reports said that the men were being trafficked to foreign countries.

EPDP member shot dead: Aug 14 On 14th August 2003, at 1.05 pm, in Batticaloa town, while two members of the EPDP.

namely Arasaratnam Ratheeskaran (age 32) alias Rathees of Adhikar Road, Batticaloa and Samsudeen Asmin alias Das, were on their way on a motorbike to the EPDP office on Buntings Lane, their motorbike was blocked near the Batticaloa Minibus Stand, opposite the VV United Bookshop, by a bicycle carrying two youths. The two youths on the bicycle were allegedly LTTE cadres. When the motorbike was brought to a halt, the two LTTE assailants pulled out pistols and shot at both members of the EPDP. Ratheeskaran who received a shot on his head died on the spot. Das fell with the motorbike and as a result escaped the bullets.

The two assailants left their bicycle on the spot and escaped by running away, before members of the public could help. According to the Police in Batticaloa, the dead person, Aarasaratnam Ratheeskaran was a long time member of the EPDP. Ratheeskaran, a resident of Adigar Road, Batticaloa.

The EPDP in statement said, "This armed attack on two EPDP members, and the assassination of one of them Arasaratnam Ratheeskumar by the LTTE, have taken place while the Norwegian Special Envoy Eric Solheim was in Batticaloa for talks with the LTTE. The action of the LTTE clearly shows the scant respect that the LTTE has for the cease-fire agreement, the Norwegian facilitators and the international community."

SLA distributes handbill: Aug 15 - The Sri Lanka Army today started distributing anonymous handbills in the Jaffna district, stating that the removal of military camps from civilian houses and government buildings would get delayed if the people held demonstrations against relocating camps in abandoned state lands, civil sources said.

The handbill typed in Tamil under the caption "Why this unnecessary demonstration?" addressed to the "Intelligent Jaffna people," states: "You have got an opportunity to lead a peaceful life under the present peace environment.

"People are now resettling in areas which were abandoned in the past. Government armed forces are also now taking steps to remove their camps from civilian homes and government buildings to assist in the resettlement of the internally displaced people. The government troops are selecting abandoned state lands to relocate their camps once they vacate civilian homes and government buildings.

"Civilians are being induced by some sections to demonstrate against relocating camps in abandoned state lands. We bring to your notice that such demonstration will only delay the removal of camps from civilian homes and government buildings. Army camps have been located in state lands, not only in the Jaffna district, but in the rest of the country as well."

New identity cards for farmers: Aug 15 - The Sri Lanka Army today asked farmers and agricultural workers in the Thenmaradchi division in the Jaffna district to produce new identity cards if they wanted to enter paddy lands that were released recently from the High Security Zones for rain-fed paddy cultivation this year. The SLA has further directed that military identity cards will be issued to each farmer and agricultural labourer on the production of a photograph attested by the Grama Sevaka officer of the respective division and the authority letter of the Kaithady Agrarian Service Centre.

While some farmers are objecting to the additional requirements imposed by the SLA, its spokesman is reported to have said that they were necessary to ensure that only genuine farmers are allowed to enter these areas for cultivation.

Protest against killing of EPDP member: Aug 15 - The Eelam Peoples Democratic Party (EPDP) members today held a demonstration in Batticaloa town against the killing of their member Mr. Arasaretnam Ratheeskaran on the previous afternoon. EPDP blamed the LTTE for the killing of its member Ratheeskaran.

EPDP members took the body of the slain member in a procession from the residence of Arasaretnam Ratheeskaran.EPDP Batticaloa deputy organizer Mr P.Pratheepan, PLOTE organiser Rathan and EPRLF (Varathar wing) activists Mathan and Baskaran led the procession. They shouted slogans and carried banners condemning political killings.

After keeping the coffin at the Clock Tower Square for some time and shouting slogans, they carried coffin containing the body and deposited it at the office of the Sri Lanka Monitoring Mission Batticaloa in what they described as the SLMM's in-action against the LTTE's campaign of assassination of EPDP members".

SLMM Batticaloa delegate viewed the body of Ratheeskaran, at the request of the EPDP members. The women member of the SLMM in Batticaloa expressed her sympathy to the family and relatives of the deceased and party members. She told protestors she would be informing her superiors about the incident.

The protest campaign ended at around 9 p.m and the coffin with Ratheeskaran's body was removed from the premises of the SLMM''s office.

US NGO to assist IDPs in Jaffna: Aug 16 - A US based non-governmental organization called C.A.S. Farm is reported to have come forward to provide assistance to maintain at least ten refugee camps which give accommodation to thousands of internally displaced people and who are unable to resettle in their lands which come under the high security zones of the Sri Lanka Army in Jaffna district.

The NGO Saturday agreed to provide necessary assistance to repair and maintain the 10 refugee camps before the commencement of the northeast monsoon rain. The UNHCR would provide necessary financial assistance to this international NGO.

The 10 refugee camps that the NGO will maintain are located in Uduvil, Sanidilipay, Kopay, Chankanai and Tellipallai divisional areas.

Meanwhile, the Japanese Deputy Foreign Minister during his visit to Jaffna recently also promised assistance to rehabilitate all refugee camps in Jaffna district before the commencement of rainy season.

Action against detaining Indian poachers: Aug 17 - Sri Lanka's Inspector General of Police Mr.T.E.Anandarajah has issued a directive to police officials in the Jaffna district to take action against northern fishermen who detain or fail to hand over captured Indian poachers to the police, according to Jaffna police sources.

The Senior Superintendent of Police for the Jaffna district informed the representatives of the Vadamaradchi North Fisheries Society of the IGP's directive at a hurriedly summoned conference held at the Point Pedro police station located inside the 524 Brigade headquarters of the Sri Lanka Army complex. The Jaffna SSP further informed the fisheries representatives that the police have been instructed by the IGP to take action only on Indian boatmen who poached into Sri Lankan territorial waters and also to keep the Indian trawlers in police custody for further action.

(continued on page 41)

Motor & Home Insurance

All Classes of Insurance Transacted
At Very Competitive Rates
Young Drivers Specialists
Special Rates for Ladies/Mature Drivers

● Building ● Fire Liability
● Shop/Office ● Health Insurance

Instalment Terms Available
Computerised Quotes

J. Kulendran

MEMBER
General Insurance
STANDARDS COUNCIL

Beddington Insurance Services
(Wimbledon) Limited
157A, Hartfield Road, Wimbledon,
London SW19 3TJ.

Tel: 020 8543 5181
Fax: 020 8543 7158

We Excel in The Personal Service We Provide

COLOMBO £350 | MADRAS £400 | TORONTO £265

AIR SAVERS

ATOL BONDED TRAVEL AGENTS

SYDNEY MELBOURNE FROM £465

AGENTS FOR ALL MAJOR AIRLINES THROUGHOUT THE WORLD

Singapore: £339, Kuala Lumpur: £355, Bangkok: £310,
Delhi: £280, Bombay: £280, JFK: £150,
San Francisco £185, Lagos: £310, Accra: £340,
Jamaica: £403, Karachi: £250, Lahore: £300

For Cheaper Fares Available for Summer Holidays
Please contact

ATOL 74848

TEL: 020 - 8540 2226
FAX: 020 - 8540 6131
MOBILE: 0961 401 260

236 Merton High Street
South Wimbledon, London SW19 1AU

Major CREDIT CARDS Accepted for bookings

OPEN 7 DAYS A WEEK

LONDON TAMIL CENTRE

(Registered Charity Number: 101833)

★VACANCIES★VACANCIES★VACANCIES★VACANCIES★VACANCIES★VACANCIES★

The London Tamil Centre is at the forefront in the teaching of Tamil Language and Cultural studies in London and is renowned for its academic excellence. We conduct classes in Bharathanatyam Dance, Carnatic vocal music, Flute, Miruthangam, Key Board, Veena and Violin as well as Tamil Language (up to GCSE Level - Cambridge Board)

To maintain the high standard and also to cope with the increase in demand, we seek additional teachers for:

★ Tamil Language ★ Carnatic Vocal Music ★ Miruthangam
★ Flute ★ Bharatha Natyam Dance ★ Violin ★ Veena

[Candidates will be of graduate('Sangeetha Vidwan') calibre with a minimum of five years relevant experience]

Remuneration package will be commensurate with qualification and experience.

Please apply in writing to:
The Secretary,
London Tamil Centre,
253 East Lane, Wembley, Middx. HA0 3NN

Closing Date:
15th September 2003

London Tamil Centre is an Equal Opportunities Employer

CLASSIFIED ADS

First 20 words £10. each additional word 60p charge for Box No.£3..Prepayment essential.

The Advertisement Manager,
Tamil Times Ltd., PO Box 121,
Sutton, Surrey SM1 3TD, United Kingdom
Phone: 020 - 8644 0972
Fax: 020 - 8241 4557
E-Mail: admin@tamiltimes.org

Classified Advertisements

MATRIMONIAL

Christian Tamil sister *seeks for a professionally qualified brother working in Australia, a suitable bride aged between 25 to 30 years, of similar background. Please give all details (date of birth, home town, educational qualification, height, family details, telephone number etc.) in the initial letter.*
M 1358 c/o Tamil Times.

Jaffna Hindu parents residing in Colombo *seek a professional or well self employed partner resident in UK for their only presentable daughter, 31, CIMA, Mars afflicted. Please send horoscope, details.*
M 1259 c/o Tamil Times

Jaffna Hindu parents *seek professional partner for fair, attractive graduate daughter, 37, Canadian citizen, innocent divorcee without encumbrances, employed in the accountancy field. Please send details.*
M 1360 c/o Tamil Times.

Jaffna Hindu parents in UK *seek professional partner for their daughter in employment in London, 35, British citizen. Please send details with horoscope.*
M 1361 c/o Tamil Times.

Professional parents in UK *seek partner, Christian, sober and caring for daughter, 29, with considerable assets of her own, trained in IT, B.Sc. Honours in Pharmacology.*
M 1362 c/o Tamil Times.

Jaffna Hindu parents *seek a professional for UK educated daughter, Chartered Accountant, 30 years, Australian citizen, presently working in Melbourne. She is pleasant, fair, sober. Relocation possible if necessary.*
M 1363 c/o Tamil Times

About People and Events

OBITUARIES

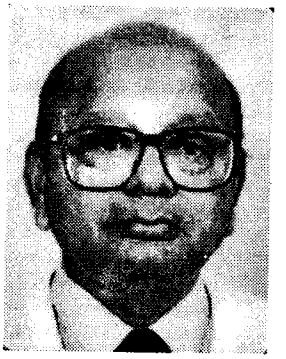
SIVASUBRAMANIAM, Mrs Poo, *(Poo Aunty) Retired Principal, School of Dressmaking, Lily Avenue, Wellawatte, Sri Lanka; Beloved wife of Siva (Rasa, Cargills, Colombo); loving mother of Niran and Menaka; Mother-in-law of Thanen and Yaso; Grand mother of Arjun, Abbi, Hari & Arthi; Sister of late Mahadeva and Yogam (Auckland, NZ); Aunt of Vathsala (Sydney, Aus) and Sushila (Auckland, NZ); Grand aunt of Asha (Sydney, Aus) and Pradeep (Auckland, NZ); passed away peacefully in her sleep on 8th August 2003, aged 73 years. Funeral was held on 13th August 2003 in Southend, Essex.*

Sincere thanks from the family to all who attended the funeral, provided support and sent floral tributes and messages of condolences.- 60 Belgrave Road, Eastwood, Leigh-on-Sea, Essex SS9 5ET, UK; Phone: +44 1702 526875/ 01442 259122; e-mail:siva.niranjan@btinternet.com

Mr. Chellappah Balasingam *of Kokuvil, Sri Lanka and Retired Telecommunications Engineer, son of the late Chellappah and Chellamma; son-in-law of the late Alagarajah and Jayalakshmy; beloved husband of Balasaraswathy; loving father of Ragulan, Renuka (both of UK), Ravichandran (Chennai, India), Ragavan and Rathika (both of UK); father-in-law of Sujatha, Shriananda, Shanthi and Rajaloganathan; grandfather of Hariharan, Rishiharan, Sindhuja, Bhairavi, Sriram and Piranavan; passed away in Colombo on 10th August 2003 and was cremated at the General Cemetry, Colombo on 13th August.*

The members of the family wish to thank all relatives and friends who attended the funeral, sent floral tributes and messages of sympathy and assisted them in various ways during the period of sadness.- 3A The Drive, Northwood, Middlesex HA6 1HQ.Tel: 01923 842 275

IN MEMORIAMS



In loving memory of ***Mr. Thambiayah Mahadewa*** *J.P., formerly Lieutenant Commander, Sri Lankan Navy, who passed away in Sydney, Australia on 24th August 2002, on the first anniversary of his passing away*

Missing you with profound sadness. You are always in our hearts and minds for the love, joy and wisdom you gave us all your life

With much love and affection from your brothers Parameshwara, Vickneshwara, Rajeshwara, Sahadewa and their families.

-10 Lancaster Walk, Hayes, Middx UB3 2QL.

On the third anniversary of the passing away of ***Mrs Ruby Amirtharanee Ratnasingham*** *on 21st August 2000.*

Sadly missed and Lovingly remembered by her son Kumaran, sister Thevaranee and other members of the family.

Miss. J. T. Rasiah,
64 Jessup Close,
London SE18.

GEORGE'S LODGES

Two Bedroom Luxury Self Contained Apartments with cook available on request.

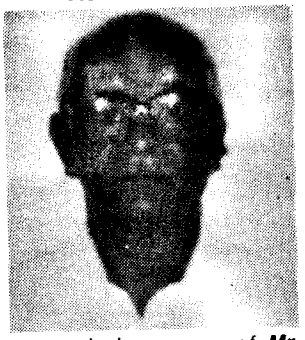
£20 per night.

Available in Colombo
Hewa Avenue, Cinnamon Garden
St. Lawrence Apartment, Fredrica Road, Wellawatte
Sea Gull Court, Rohini Road, Wellawatte
Aruthusa Lane, Wellawatte
Falcon Court, Amarasekera Mawatha, Havlock Town
Contact George: **020-8689 0236 or 07931 587 168 (UK)**

Second Year Remembrance
Dr. Chelvadurai Manogaran
(1935 – 2001)
Emeritus Professor
of Geography
University of Wisconsin Parkside, (USA)

Sadly missed and fondly remembered by his beloved wife Santhana Thevi (Kili); daughters Anita and Shakila; son-in-law Douglas Shimp; grandson Nathaniel Arjun Shimp, family and friends.

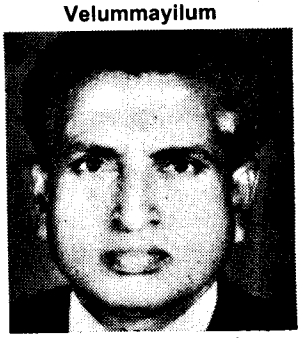
First Anniversary Remembrance



In ever loving memory of ***Mr. Sinnathamby Sivapiragasam*** *of Sandilipay, formerly of Irrigation Department, Colombo on the first anniversary of his passing away on 23rd August 2002.*

Fondly remembered and sadly missed by his children Radha, Sivakumarran, Rajini, Ramani, Rohini and Renuka; daghter-in-law Navamani; sons-in-law Viswanathan, Dr. Salama, Sivagurunathan and Umasuthan; grandchildren Sivaruby & Sivayogi, Krishnakumar & Ahilan, Shireen, Vidya & Menaha, Jenani & Richard; great grand daughter Yalini; and sister Kanmani – 10 Orchard Court, The Avenue, Worcester Park, Surrey KT4 7LD. Tel. 020 330 6722.

Death Anniversary Remembrance
Mr. Mayilvaganam Velummayilum

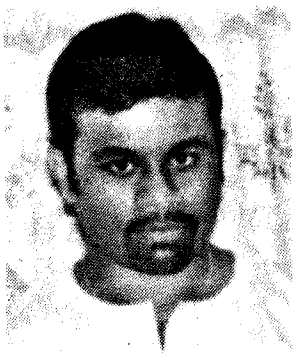


Mr.Mayilvaganam Velummylum *J.P., U.M., Attorney-at-law and former Chairman, Urban Council, Point Pedro, Sri Lanka passed away on 31.8.89 and the fourteenth anniversary of his demise falls on 31.8.2003.*

Sadly missed and lovingly remembered by his loving wife; children Thayanandarajah (UK), Nithianandarajah (New Zealand), Mayilvaganarajah (UK), Chitra (Colombo), Anandarajah, Krishnarajah and Jayanthi (all of Madras); grandsons Cameron, Ewan and Atharsan; son-in-law Kamaleswa-ran (Colombo); daughters-in-law Sumitra (UK) Devi (New Zealand), relatives, friends and a host of grateful constituents.

"Hillcroft",
14 Howards Wood Drive,
Gerrards Cross, Bucks SL9 7HN.

Seventh Death Anniversary
Mr. Selvarajah Kiritharan



Mr. Selvarajah Kiritharan, *Engineer, London also of "Notary Walawu", Thunnalai Nor-th, Karaveddy. Sri Lanka* ***passed*** *away suddenly on 22nd August 1996 and the seventh anniversary of his passing away falls on 22nd August 2003.*

Affectionately remembered by his loving parents Mr. Naganathan Selvarajah and Mrs Kamalakumari Selvarajah (Wembly, Middx); loving brother Mr. Muraleedaran and sister-in-law Dr. (Mrs) Sukaniya Muraleedaran (Australia), loving sisters and brothers-in-law Dr. (Mrs) Subathini Ramesh and Mr. K.Ramesh (University of Jaffna), Mrs Shantini Shanmuganathan and Mr. S.Shanmuganathan (Greenford, Middx), loving sister Miss Shamini Selvarajah (Monash University, Australia) uncles, aunties, nephews, nieces, other relatives and friends.

"We missed you
for seven years,
But your memories are
always in our thoughts"

28 Bridgewater Road, Alperton, Wembley, Middx HA0 1AJ. Tel: 020 8422 4627.

Thirteenth Anniversary Remembrance
Mr. Apputhurai Gunaratnam

In loving memory of ***Mr. Apputhurai Gunaratnam,*** *formerly Divisional Superintendent of Post Offices, Sri Lanka of Point Pedro on the thirteenth anniversary of his passing away on 28th August 1990.*

Sadly missed and fondly remembered by his loving wife Rani; children Thirukumar (Australia), Vasuki (Sri Lanka), Devaki (Austrakia), Sutharsan (UK), Sarathadevi (Australia); sons-in-law Ravindran, Radhakrishnan and Sashikanth; daughter-in-law Vasanthi; grandchildren Ashvini, Yathurshini, Prushoth, Mayurikka and Mayuran.

67B St. Ann's Road,
London N15 6NJ.
Tel: 020 8802 5601.

FORTHCOMINGS EVENTS

Sep 1 *Shashti*
3 *Feast of St. Gregory, the First*
4 *Avani Moolam*
6 *Sukkla Eekathasi*
7 *Avani Sunday 4; Avani Onam*
8 *Pirathosam; Feast of the Birthday of the Blessed Virgin Mary*
9 *Avani Sathurthashi*
10 *Fullmoon*
11 *Maalaya Padsam starts*
14 *Sankadakara Sathurthi; Avani Sunday 5;Feast of the Triumph of the Holy Cross*
15 *Feast of Our Lady of Surrows*
16 *Karthigai; Feast of St. Cornelius*
17 *Feast of St. Robert Bellarmine*
19 *Feast of St. Januarius*
20 *Puradasi Sani 1*
21 *Feast of St. Mathew*
22 *Eekathasi*
23 *Pirathosam*
25 *Amavasai; Maalaya Padsam ends*
26 *Navarathiri starts; Durga Pooja*
27 *Puradasi Sani 2; Feast of St. Vincent de Paul*
28 *Feast of St.Wenceslaus*
29 *Sathurthi; Luxmy Pooja starts*
30 *Shasti; Feast of St. Jerome*
At Bhavan Centre, 4A Castle town Road, London W14 9HQ. Tel: 0207 381 3086/4607. Website:WWW.bhavan.net.
Sep 13 Open Day *10.30 a.m. to 4 p.m. Registration for the New Academic Year*
Sep 28 *6 p.m. Bharatanatyam by Lavanya Prabhu from India*

WEDDING BELLS

We congratulate the following couples on their recent wedding

Shirani, *daughter of Mr. & Mrs Sabaratnam of 4 Beechfield. Banstead, Surrey SM7 3RG and* ***Dr. Stuart Cosgrave,*** *son of Mrs Alice Cosgrave, of 1, The Cooperage, 44, Kinnoull Street,* ***Perth,*** *Scotland on 24th July 2003 at The Dutch House, Upper Dixon Road. Galle, Sri Lanka.*

Shivanthy, *daughter of Mr. & Mrs Srikanthan of 526 Washington Street, Winchester, Massachusetts 01890, USA and* ***Dermot,*** *son of Mrs Gat-ely, Lissacarrow Fuerty, Co. Roscommon, Ireland on 1st August 2003 at St. Joseph's Church, Castleconnell, County Limerick, Ireland.*

Kulasuri R. Sivagurunathan

- A Tribute

Kulasuri R. Sivagurunathan (1931 – 2003) who passed away peacefully on the 9th of August in Colombo occupied a pivotal position in the field of Tamil journalism in Sri Lanka for nearly four decades.. He joined the Lake House group in 1956 and had an uninterrupted career there having been the Chief Editor of the ***Thinakaran*** *for well over thirty five years.*

Our friendship started when both of us joined the Jaffna Hindu College in the Lower First year class on the 22nd of January 1940 and continued till the completion of the SSC class in 1948. Thereafter for the University Entrance class he joined the Maradana Zahira College and was a loyal student of one of Sri Lanka's eminent educationists A.M.A.Azeez who was the Principal of Zahira. then. (himself and old boy of Jaffna Hindu College)

Sivagurunathan, at school was Ratnanathan until we sent our application for the SSC government examination in 1948. Then only both of us were in for a surprise when we were told that our birth certificate names were different and thereafter both of us went by our registered names.. Ratnanathan was a popular figure at school as he was the one who always sang the Thevaram at the morning assembly in the down stair assembly hall. He had a melodious voice and always had a flair for the fine arts – specially music. It was in the fitness of things that he was awarded the coveted KALASURI award by the President of Sri Lanka in 1962. His sister and her other three brothers were talented in music and they too appeared on the college platform.

He had a passion for journalism when he edited the ILANG KADIR and the HINDU DHARMA during his university days. His journalistic experience and his depth in that field elevated him to be a member of the Press Council. He is deeply religious and committed to a variety of literary activities which saw him as the President of the prestigious Colombo Thamil Sangam for two years from 1998. His piety and religious fervour was evident from the holy ash that we used to see always and I had the pleasure of observing this on his forehead over the years.

After retirement, he took to Law and continued to be a successful lecturer/ examiner in the Ceylon Law College and the Law Faculty of the Colombo University.

Our school day friendship stood in good stead when in the late sixties when I was fully involved in teacher trade union activities through the NPTA and the NUT., I used to fall back on him for front page leads and flash news in the THINAKARAN. This media footage was a strong arm for our Teachers' Unions.

In Sivagurunathan we have lost a good friend, a social worker, a literary and religious figure and above all a HUMANIST.

May His soul attain eternity.

V.Sivasupramaniam **Seychelles**

Houston audience acclaims an amazing artiste

An appreciative audience in Houston, Texas, USA was tre-ated to a sparkling demonstration of Bharata Natyam when Asita Vinayagalingam took the stage at the city's Kaplan Theatre for her debut performance Saturday August 16, 2003. A sishya of Guru Srimati Rat-hna Kumar who herself was trained in the Vazhuvoor School of this ancient dance form and also an exponent of Kuchipudi, Asita, a student of William P Clements High School, is the daughter of Sri and Sarojini Vinayagalingam of Sugar Land, Texas.

In a spell-binding display of her devotion to this dance tradition and her proficiency, Asita got off to an enchanting start with Pushpanjali and Ganesha Stuti rendered in the Tilang and Brindavani ragas and continued to carry her audience captive with an awe-inspiring exhibition of dances traditional to Bharata Natyam. As she moved on to Jatiswaram, a pure dance replete with rhythmic sequences in the Reetigowla raga, she radiated with joyous vibrations that resonated and resounded throughout the auditorium. A romantic episode followed in Sabdam in Ragamalika expressing the boundless love of a nayika to Lord Krishna lifting the audience to the rapturous delights of the gentle rhythmic sounds and honeyed melodies of the peaceful pastureland.

In portraying Goddess Meenakshi to a lyric in the Simhendramadhyamam raga, Asita in an exhilarating exposition of Varnam, the piece de resistance of the evening, gripped her debut performance invitees rapt and enthralled throughout the entire 40-minutes of this dance. As she did her final steps in this most elaborate and complex of all dances, a deafening roar of applause arose in appreciation, acclaim and approval.

This was graduation in excellence expressed spontaneously for the debut dancer.

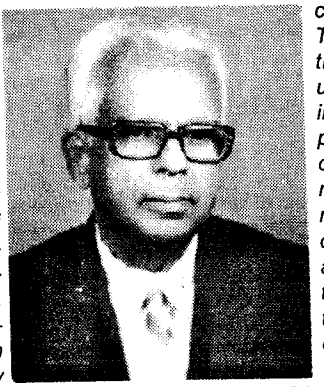
As befits a divine classical dance tradition, Padam aptly followed Varnam with a devotional liturgy, Shankara Maha Deva, from the authorship of Tulsidas in praise of the Deity of the Dance and His consort Parvati. The vocal for this dance was rendered by the guest artiste, Srimati Jamuna Murali in the raga Jogkauns. Asita followed this with a scintillating demonstration of Panchali Sabatham, the Vow of Draupadi, from the epic Mahabharata written by Subramania Bharathiar. Portraying the various characters of this saga, Asita astounded her admirers with the ease with which she changed her expressions from one to another, from Duryodhana to Lord Krishna and many others in this dance-drama as a soloist artiste. The melody for this dance was in Ragamalika.

Asita's Tillana, was a fitting finale as she danced the intricate rhythmic patterns and froze from time to time into beautiful sculptural poses unique to this dance tradition, to the ecstatic enjoyment of an audience awestruck with rapturous bliss. She concluded an amazing performance with Mangalam expressing her gratitude to God, her Guru, Mother Earth and the audience. Tillana and Mangalam were performed in the ragas Madhuvanthi and Madhyamavathi.

Sri Gaurang Nanavati, the Acharya of the Chinmaya Mission of Houston graced the occasion as the Guest of Honour accompanied by Srimati Nanavati. Mr Victor Karunairajan and Mrs Pam Foster were the guest speakers. Mr Nandakumar conducted the proceedings as the Master of Ceremonies. Asita's vocal and instrumental supports were provided by a highly accomplished team presented to the audience by her cousin Mrs Saumiya Narendra. It headed by Guru Rathna Kumar (nattuvangam), Sri J Ramesh (vocals), Sri N. K. Kesavan (mridangam), Sri B Muthukumar (flute), and Dr Venkat Raman (violin).

Arani Aravindan

Order of Australia Honour for Thangarajah



Mr. Kandiah Thangarajah, a native of Urumpirai was recently awarded the medal of The Order of Australia for his outstanding services to the community in Melbourne. He had a colourful career as Superintendent of Prisons in his native Sri Lanka, where his contribution has been for the upliftment of young offenders. He recounts that memorable part of his career when during the JVP insurgency in 1971, Rohan Wijeweera and others were under his custody in Jaffna Prison.

In Melbourne, Mr. Thangarajah devotes much of his time voluntarily for the betterment of the community. He participates in various religious and social activities and endeavours to promote the Tamil identity in the broader community. He was actively involved in the management of North-West Migrant Resource Centre providing support to migrants and is its President. His decade long contribution at the centre and his leadership skills have enhanced his standing and that of the Tamil community. No doubt, Mr. Thangarajah contributed to the fortification of multiculturalism in Australia, being from a community that pioneered such a noble concept from time immemorial. His role in the Community Referral Panel in one of the local councils and his involvement in introducing Tamil numbers in the local library are a few of his bountiful activities.

He founded the Tamil Australian Friendship Society and has created an opportunity for the younger generation to broaden their exposure to Tamil Art and Culture and to preserve it. This society seeks to serve as a launching pad for youngsters in the sphere of community work and promotes integration of Tamils in mainstream community.

Mr. Thangarajah personifies universal peace and brotherhood and the **Medal of The Order of Australia** is a great honour bestowed on him.

Sivasupramaniam Sitsabesan

"Valvagam", Home for the visually handicapped children, Jaffna

Valvagam was initially organised at Tellippalai by a group of enterprising social workers of the area in the early eighties, headed by Miss A. Sinnathamby, a Braille trained teacher. With the advent of the armed conflict, it was shifted to Uduvil and later with the mass exodus of civilians from Valikamam, its functions were disrupted.

In 1996, this Home was reorganised in Manipay. As the need for a larger permanent Home was paramount, the committee with the help of organisations abroad purchased a plot of land in extent 32 lachams at Maruthanamadam in Chunnakam .A government organisation called RRAN gave the funds needed to put up the present buildings.

At present about 30 visually handicapped children are being accommodated at this Home. Miss A. Sinnathamby, a dedicated teacher continues to be in charge along with a band of devoted staff and a committee in running this Home. The children are given educational training in Braille and are being provided with their day-to-day needs. A few of them have gained admission to the university and some have obtained government employment.

Compared to similar organisations in the south, the facilities available at Valvagam fall far short of requirements. Better educational facilities with more Braille trained teachers, furniture , computers, audio equipments are some of the urgent needs

With more funds, the committee proposes to establish a Trust fund for the future development and care of inmates. Valvagam appeals to humanitarian organisations and generous helpers all over to help them to continue this humanitarian service. Valvagam's address is Sabapathypillai Lane, Maruthanamadam. Chunnakam, Sri Lanka.

International Tamil Foundation

The 15th Anniversary Seminar / Lunch of the Foundation will be held on Sunday, 21st September 2003 at the Putney Leisure Centre (Corner of Upper Richmond Road & Dryburgh Road, London SW15; nearest tube: East Putney).

Proceedings will commence at 10.30 a.m with Coffee, followed at 11 a.m. by a Presentation by Mr. Gajen Ponnampalam M.P. on "Expatriate Contribution to the development of North and East" and lunch at 1 p.m.

Lunch tickets priced at £ 10 are available from Messersr. C.J.T.Thamotheram- 0208 567 3221, R.Ganeshalingam – 020 660 6121, S.Muthulingasamy – 020 777 8986, Y.M.Yoganathan – 0208 390 5630, R.J.Gunaratnam 020 427 8047 and N.Sidamparapillai – 0118 942 9467.

Book Review

DECADE OF GROWTH

Authored by V. Sivasupramaniam,

Seycelles

I consider it a rare privilege to review a noble and historic booklet **DECADE OF GROWTH.** The author is well experienced in the educational field in Sri Lanka, Nigeria and Seychelles. Although it is intended to trace the origins and the growth of the first and only Hindu temple in the paradise island of Seychelles – the Arulmihu Navasakthi Vinayagar temple – the author has made it a useful handbook for the global tourists who visit this enchanting islands and also for the historian in tracing the early Tamil settlements and the geo-eco system of the floating island pearls of the Indian Ocean.. Apart from the text of about eighty-three pages, the colourful thirty-two page pictorial album portrays at a glance all the efforts and activities that have gone into the making of this holy shrine.

The nine chapters are well arranged, chronicled and the data that is provided is a mine of information for the discerning reader. Siva's practice of maintaining personal diaries systematically has gone a long way in meticulously presenting all minute details about the temple surpassing professional statisticians. Chapter four and five on Lands and Buildings and on Finance make emotional reading to understand the dedication and the suffering the society underwent to have this beautiful temple in place which is worth millions today. The author has faithfully acknowledged the special discount of SR 100,000 made by Vijay Construction who undertook the construction when the finances of the project were low. Due credit is given to the support given by the President and the Government of Seychelles to the first common venture of the Hindu community which clearly portrays the religious tolerance that is there in this multi-ethnic peaceful country.

The Indian High Commissioner, His Excellency Malay Mishra while releasing the book in a packed hall observed "I find in the author a dedicated, unassuming person who has given all his time and energy, a significant part of his own life to the cause of the community. This book is nothing but a result of his life-long dedication in the service of the community. Siva has brought us right inside the sanctum sanctorum to see what actually happened to put the temple in place."

It is worthy of note that the author is very particular not only to provide the historical events of the temple and the country to the community but makes it a point to reach the generations to come, thus in the concluding chapter nine

(continued on next page)

"The younger generation should be more interested, should get more involved and not only shoulder more responsibilities but also should act with a high sense of responsibility to pass on the mantle to the succeeding generations. The attitude of sharing the pains and pleasures of community activities and welfare should be carried forward in the correct and acceptable way. The Hindu temple in Seychelles is a well-prepared base set up by the sincere and the selfless efforts and sacrifice of many dedicated individuals of our community. Hence it is a challenge for our community to ensure that the first temple put in this beautiful island becomes a model for others to follow."

Finally, credit goes to Kanthalagam of Chennai for having brought out this noble document in a presentable way.

***S.Rajasunderam,** Attorney-at-Law, Seycelles*

[Copies of the booklet are available from the auther,
Address: Post Box 644, Victoria, Seychelles; Tel: 00248 321507.]

Romesh Honoured by the Queen

Mr Romesh Vaithilingam was awarded the MBE by Her Majesty the Queen on the occasion of the presentation recently of birthday honours in recognition of his brilliance as a writer and a media consultant.

He is the author of numerous articles and several successful titles in economics, finance and public policy, including The Financial Times Guide to Using Financial Pages, now in its fourth edition. He has also edited a number of major research-based reports. One of them is the handbook on Trade Liberalisation and Poverty prepared with Alan Hunter, a project supported by the UK Department for International Development.

As a specialist in translating economics, financial and other social science concepts into everyday language, Romesh has advised a number of top management consultancies and investment managers as well as various UK government agencies, including the Economics and Social Research Council. His work also involves media consultancy for the international social science research community, notably advising the Royal Economic Society, the Centre for Economic Policy Research and the Institute for Social and Economic Research on the management and development of their public profile.

Romesh is the son of Mr. & Mrs Angela Sriskandarajah Vaithilingam of Bristol and grandson of Mr. N. Vaithilingam, the proprietor of N.Vaithilingam & Co., the leading business house for the hardware trade in Sri Lanka.

(Continued from page 35)

According to the IGP's directive, the police will not take action against poaching Indian fishermen. Instead, they will be handed over to the Indian coast guard in midsea, the SSP said.

The Indian High Commissioner in Colombo had promised the IGP that Indian authorities would take action to prevent Indian fishermen straying into the Sri Lankan territorial waters in future.

Two more Muslims shot dead: Aug 18 - Forty-year-old father of four children Mr.A.Ibralebbai and a twenty one old father of two children Mr.K.L.Ismail were shot dead August 17 night by unidentified gunmen at Nelluchchenaivettai in Sammanthurai police division in Amparai district, according to police sources. Their bodies were recovered the following morning at the site, they said.

Sammanthurai police immediately launched an investigation into the killing which has escalated tension among the population in Sammanthurai and its suburbs.

LTTE suspects remanded: Aug 19 - Two political activists of the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam, Mr.Kanthasamy Pugalmaran and Mr. Yogarajah Maya-van, were arrested by Sri Lanka Army soldiers at the Muhamalai checkpoint on August 19 afternoon around 2 p.m and later handed over to the Kodikamam police, TamilNet reported. The Kodikamam Police produced them before the Chavakachcheri Magistrate, Mr.Annalingam Premashankar, with a report by soldiers stating that the suspects had been arrested when they were taking arms from Manipay in Jaffna to the Vanni. The police handed over the cyanide capsules and identity cards of the two LTTE members to the courts, stating these had been removed by the soldiers using force on the LTTE cadres when they threatened to swallow cyanide capsules if they were arrested, police told the court, the legal sources said. However, the LTTE members said they were arrested while coming to Jaffna from Killinochchi.

The Magistrate ordered that the two suspects be remanded, and directed its registrar to hand over the cyanide capsules and identity cards to the LTTE Jaffna district political office, TamilNet reported.

Presidential directive on security for non-LTTE groups: Aug 20 - Following a series of politically motivated killings, President Chandrika Kumarat-unga has directed Defence Minister Tilak Marapana to provide adequate personal security to members of the non-LTTE Tamil political parties and groups.

In a letter addressed to Marapana she stated that the EPDP and several other groups had given up arms and entered mainstream politics long ago, on the request of the government. Subsequently they were provided the arms necessary for self-protection. However, after the signing of the Ceasefire Agreement these arms were also withdrawn at the request of the LTTE. Since then, these groups that entered the main democratic stream (including their elected representatives) are left without adequate personal protection.

Once these groups had returned the firearms issued for personal protection, it was the duty of the security forces and the police to provide them adequate protection. Unfortunately this protection had not been provided. As a result several leading persons identified with the EPDP and the EPRLF have been gunned down by the LTTE. They continue to do so with impunity and the last such victim was an EPDP member who was shot dead in broad day light by a suspected LTTE pistol group, in the Batticaloa town, last weekend.

This situation cannot be tolerated any further. In the circumstances, I direct that immediate action be taken by the armed forces and the police to provide them with adequate personal security. I wish to have a report within a week of receipt of this letter on the course of action that you propose to take to remedy this situation, the letter stated.

M & J Dental Surgery

Experienced Srilankan Dentists

Fellowship in Dental Surgery of the Royal College of Surgeons of England Periodontal, Restorative, Orthodontic and Cosmetic Treatment. NHS, Private Patients Welcome.

Contact:
356 PRESTON ROAD,
HARROW, HA3 0QJ
Phone: 020 - 8904 2678

PRIVATE TUITION

11-19 Years
Science & Mathematics
By Qualified Teacher

For details contact:
Mrs. N. Latha
0208-578 6201

We welcome you to our New Branch

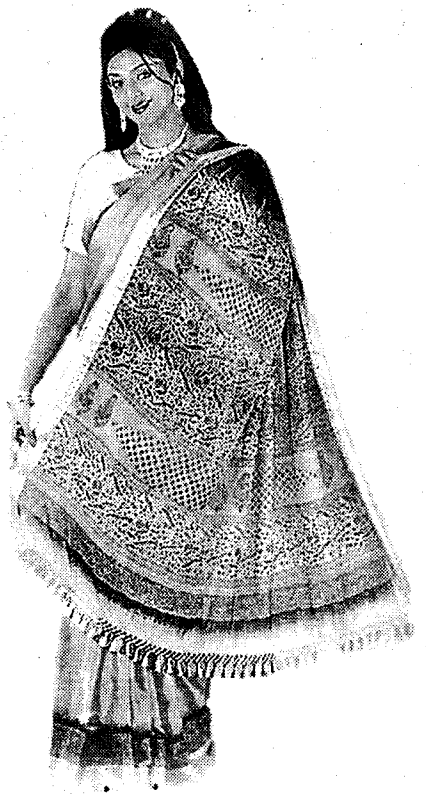
Jewellery Shop and Silk Palace

At Ealing Road, Wembley

வெஸ்டர்ன் ஜுவல்லர்ஸ் & ரெக்ஸ்டைல்ஸ்

Western Jewellers & Textiles

(Adjoining Eelapathiswarar Temple)



வாடிக்கையாளர்களின் அமோக
நம்பிக்கையைப் பெற்ற
ரூட்டிங் வெஸ்டர்ன் ஜுவல்லர்ஸ்
ஸ்தாபனத்தினர் தமது பிரமாண்டமான
கிளையை வெம்பிளியில் 24.08.2003
ஞாயிற்றுக்கிழமை 11.00 மணிக்கு
திறந்து வைக்கிறார்கள்.

புதிய டிசைனில் 22 கரட் தங்க தகைத்
தேர்வுகளுக்கு நீங்கள் நாடவேண்டிய இடம்

வெஸ்டர்ன் ஜுவல்லர்ஸ்
& ரெக்ஸ்டைல்ஸ்

Opening Ceremony
of our spacious new premises
Sunday, 24th August 2003 at 11 a.m.

We look forward to celebrate the occasion by serving you with our quality Jewellery at greatly reduced/prices for the next three months

WESTERN JEWELLERS & TEXTILES

5 PLAZA PARADE, 29 - 33 EALING ROAD, WEMBLEY
MIDDLESEX, HA0 4YA

TEL: 020 - 8903 0909

Experienced Tamil Jeweller In London

✪ VISIT US NOW
FOR LATEST 22CT. GOLD JEWELLERIES
✪ WIDE RANGE OF STOCKS ALWAYS AVAILABLE

✪ Thali Kodi ✪ Necklace sets
✪ Pathakkams
✪ Various types of Ear Studs
✪ Jimmikkies ✪ Panchayuthams
✪ Chains, Bangles Etc. Etc...

✪ WE ARE AT YOUR SERVICE
SEVEN DAYS A WEEK
✪ WE PERFORM THALI POOJA AS WELL

WESTERN JEWELLERS

230 UPPER TOOTING ROAD, TOOTING
LONDON SW17 7EW
TEL: 020-8767 3445 FAX: 020-8767 3753
Web: http://www.luxmi.com/western

Travel RIGHT

82 MITCHAM ROAD
TOOTING
SW17 9NG

The **RIGHT** *people to do business with*

PREFERRED MAIN AGENT FOR
Colombo, Madras
& Far East

SriLankan Airlines · Qatar Airways · Royal Jordanian · Air India · Garuda Indonesia · Egyptair

APPOINTED AGENT FOR LIONAIR

"To Jaffna... With Love"
Jaffna Return £513+ tax

BOOK NOW WITH OUR PARTNERS IN COLOMBO

Holiday Inn HOTELS · RESORTS COLOMBO

TRANSFER FROM AIRPORT PLUS ONE NIGHT B&Bin WELLAWATTE ONLY £15

ROYAL JORDANIAN FROM £339

Return Fares to Colombo

Qatar Airways FROM £390

TRANSFER FROM AIRPORT PLUS ONE NIGHT B&Bin WELLAWATTE ONLY £15

COLOMBO(rtn)
FROM £465+ TAX
GET A FREE TRIP
TO ONE OF THE FOLLOWING DESTINATIONS:
Madras, Trichi, Trevandrum, Singapore, Bangkok, Kuala Lumpur, Jakarta or Hong Kong.
TERMS & CONDITIONS APPLY TO ALL FARES

Call now for the best fares to Colombo

TERMS & CONDITIONS APPLY TO ALL FARES

ONLY £385+ TAX
TO ONE OF THE FOLLOWING DESTINATIONS:
SINGAPORE,
KUALA LUMPUR, BANGKOK,
JAKARTA OR HONG KONG.
TERMS & CONDITIONS APPLY TO ALL FARES

WE ACCEPT ALL MAJOR CREDIT CARDS

MasterCard · VISA · Access · American Express

020 8767 7775

FAX: 020 8767 5991, MOBILE 07850 876921
E-MAIL: info@skybooker.com

IATA

ATOL 75766

✪ TRAVEL ✪ SHIPPING ✪ AIR FREIGHT ✪ TRAVEL ✪ SHIPPING ✪ AIR FREIGHT ✪

GLEN CARRIERS LTD

4 Allied Way, off Warple Way, Acton, London W3 0RQ

020 8740 8379, 020 8749 0595, 020 8743 7353
E-mail: glencarriers@aol.com (Fax: 020 - 8740 4229) Website: www.glencarriers.co.uk

18 YEARS OF EXCELLENCE IN SERVICE TO THE SRI LANKAN COMMUNITY

UNACCOMPANIED BAGGAGE

PLEASE RING US FOR THE LATEST SAILING DATES

AIRFREIGHT TO COLOMBO
TWICE WEEKLY

YOUR FREIGHT WILL GO TO OUR ULTRA MODERN BONDED WAREHOUSE:
LAKSIRISEVA (PVT) LTD, 66 NEW NUGE ROAD PELIYAGODA, TEL: 575 576
DOOR TO DOOR SERVICE AVAILABLE ON REQUEST

HOTEL ACCOMMODATION AVAILABLE IN MOST LEADING HOTELS
HOLIDAY INN - £23 PER PERSON PER NIGHT - SHARING BASIS

Most Competitive Airfares to Colombo & other worldwide destinations

ON SRILANKAN AIRLINES - COLOMBO FROM £ 465
FREE EXTENSION TO MADRAS, TRIVANDRUM, TRICHI, SINGAPORE KUALA LUMPUR, BANGKOK OR JAKARTA
(1st September to 9th December)

Special Return Fares from £380 Special Business Fares from £1050

MAIN AGENT FOR SRILANKAN AIRLINES

APPOINTED AGENT FOR LION AIR

Czech Airlines Kuwait Airways Royal Jordanian

SELLING AGENTS FOR EMIRATES & OTHER AIRLINES
PLEASE RING US FOR SPECIAL OFFERS

020 8743 7353

ATOL 4395

ALL FARES EXCLUDING AIRPORT TAXES & HANDLING CHARGES
CREDIT CARDS ACCEPTED - CONDITIONS APPLY

IATA

SKY WINGS

TRAVEL AGENTS

MAIN AGENT FOR SRI LANKAN AIRLINES, QATAR AIRWAYS, EGYPT AIR, GARUDA INDONESIA, AIR INDIA & ROYAL JORDANIAN

MAIN AGENT FOR SriLankan Airlines, Qatar Airways, Royal Jordanian, Air India, Garuda Indonesia, Egyptair

APPOINTED AGENT FOR LIONAIR

"To Jaffna... With Love"
Jaffna Return £513+ tax

BOOK NOW WITH OUR PARTNERS IN COLOMBO

HOTELS · RESORTS COLOMBO

TRANSFER FROM AIRPORT PLUS ONE NIGHT B&Bin WELLAWATTE ONLY £15

ROYAL JORDANIAN FROM £339

Return Fares to Colombo

Qatar Airways FROM £390

TRANSFER FROM AIRPORT PLUS ONE NIGHT B&Bin WELLAWATTE ONLY £15

COLOMBO(rtn)
FROM **£465+ TAX**
GET A FREE TRIP
TO ONE OF THE FOLLOWING DESTINATIONS:
Madras, Trichi, Trivandrum, Singapore, Bangkok, Kuala Lumpur, Jakarta or Hong Kong.
TERMS & CONDITIONS APPLY TO ALL FARES

Call now for the best fares to Colombo

ONLY £385+ TAX
TO ONE OF THE FOLLOWING DESTINATIONS:
SINGAPORE, KUALA LUMPUR, BANGKOK, JAKARTA OR HONG KONG.
TERMS & CONDITIONS APPLY TO ALL FARES

WE ACCEPT ALL MAJOR CREDIT CARDS

119 TOOTING HIGH STREET, LONDON SW17 0SY
TEL: 020- 8672 9111 (6 LINES)
FAX: 020-8672 0951 MOBILE: 07850 876 921 (24 HOURS)
Internet: http:// www.skywings.co.uk e-mail: bala@skywings.co.uk

IATA

ATOL 75766