

Date and Time: Saturday, May 4, 2024 2:31:00PM EEST

Job Number: 223508199

Documents (100)

1. [*Sri Lanka troops allegedly kill 30 in 'safe zone'*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers, Newswires & Press
Releases; Timeline: Jan 01, 2008 to Mar 30, 2009

2. [*Nearly 175 terror groups are active in India*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers, Newswires & Press
Releases; Timeline: Jan 01, 2008 to Mar 30, 2009

3. [*Give it up, Hamza -you're too ugly*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers, Newswires & Press
Releases; Timeline: Jan 01, 2008 to Mar 30, 2009

4. [*AMID WAR, TAMIL REFUGEE FLOW TO INDIA DROPS*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers, Newswires & Press
Releases; Timeline: Jan 01, 2008 to Mar 30, 2009

5. [*India : In the name of 'Freedom'?*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers, Newswires & Press
Releases; Timeline: Jan 01, 2008 to Mar 30, 2009

6. [*Sri Lanka Health Services care for civilians and terrorists!*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers, Newswires & Press
Releases; Timeline: Jan 01, 2008 to Mar 30, 2009

7. [*Pakistani minister: India to blame for cricket attack*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers, Newswires & Press
Releases; Timeline: Jan 01, 2008 to Mar 30, 2009

8. [*As Civil Religion turns 1, our blog is growing*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers, Newswires & Press
Releases; Timeline: Jan 01, 2008 to Mar 30, 2009

9. [*Sunday other news items: Great Britain is facing the return of 3-day week*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers, Newswires & Press
Releases; Timeline: Jan 01, 2008 to Mar 30, 2009

10. [*As Civil Religion turns 1, our blog is growing*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers,Newswires & Press
Releases; Timeline: Jan 01, 2008 to Mar 30, 2009

11. [Asia-Pacific news calendar](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers,Newswires & Press
Releases; Timeline: Jan 01, 2008 to Mar 30, 2009

12. [Sri Lankan official says army shelled hospital](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers,Newswires & Press
Releases; Timeline: Jan 01, 2008 to Mar 30, 2009

13. [Top Naxal leader makes new revelations about guerrillas](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers,Newswires & Press
Releases; Timeline: Jan 01, 2008 to Mar 30, 2009

14. [Sri Lankan hospital hit by shelling, 9 killed](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers,Newswires & Press
Releases; Timeline: Jan 01, 2008 to Mar 30, 2009

15. [Sri Lanka 's Tamils caught between Tigers and a hard place](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers,Newswires & Press
Releases; Timeline: Jan 01, 2008 to Mar 30, 2009

16. [Sri Lankan hospital hit by shelling, 9 killed](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers,Newswires & Press
Releases; Timeline: Jan 01, 2008 to Mar 30, 2009

17. [S. Asian leaders call for joint efforts to combat terrorism](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers,Newswires & Press
Releases; Timeline: Jan 01, 2008 to Mar 30, 2009

18. [Sri Lankan hospital hit by shelling, 9 killed](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers,Newswires & Press
Releases; Timeline: Jan 01, 2008 to Mar 30, 2009

19. [Report: Hospital hit](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers,Newswires & Press
Releases; Timeline: Jan 01, 2008 to Mar 30, 2009

20. [Sri Lankan official says army shelled hospital](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers,Newswires & Press
Releases; Timeline: Jan 01, 2008 to Mar 30, 2009

21. [Sri Lanka says 17 rebels killed in fighting](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers, Newswires & Press
Releases; Timeline: Jan 01, 2008 to Mar 30, 2009

22. [Sri Lanka says 17 rebels killed in fighting](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers, Newswires & Press
Releases; Timeline: Jan 01, 2008 to Mar 30, 2009

23. [1,200 Sri Lankans flee as rebels make final stand](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers, Newswires & Press
Releases; Timeline: Jan 01, 2008 to Mar 30, 2009

24. [1,200 Sri Lankans flee as rebels make final stand](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers, Newswires & Press
Releases; Timeline: Jan 01, 2008 to Mar 30, 2009

25. [Defending the North](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers, Newswires & Press
Releases; Timeline: Jan 01, 2008 to Mar 30, 2009

26. [Warning Over Child Soldiers; 'Real change' urged to protect tens of thousands](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers, Newswires & Press
Releases; Timeline: Jan 01, 2008 to Mar 30, 2009

27. [*News items from Asia-Pacific Desk of Xinhua*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers, Newswires & Press
Releases; Timeline: Jan 01, 2008 to Mar 30, 2009

28. [*Over 250 fleeing Tigers reach safe zone*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers, Newswires & Press
Releases; Timeline: Jan 01, 2008 to Mar 30, 2009

29. [*News items from Asia-Pacific Desk of Xinhua*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers, Newswires & Press
Releases; Timeline: Jan 01, 2008 to Mar 30, 2009

30. [*'We are running out of boys in this country'*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers, Newswires & Press
Releases; Timeline: Jan 01, 2008 to Mar 30, 2009

31. [*Terrorist attack will not stop IPL*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers,Newsires & Press
Releases; Timeline: Jan 01, 2008 to Mar 30, 2009

32. [Big, bigger and now better than ever Prepare to be dazzled as this year's Big in Falkirk festival looks east for inspiration and promises to deliver pyrotechnics, discovers Keith Bruce](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers,Newsires & Press
Releases; Timeline: Jan 01, 2008 to Mar 30, 2009

33. [Fill dad's Father's Day sock with his favourite escapism](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers,Newsires & Press
Releases; Timeline: Jan 01, 2008 to Mar 30, 2009

34. [India 's egregious human rights record](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers,Newsires & Press
Releases; Timeline: Jan 01, 2008 to Mar 30, 2009

35. [More civilians seek protection of Security Forces](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers,Newsires & Press
Releases; Timeline: Jan 01, 2008 to Mar 30, 2009

36. [SUICIDE BOMB KILLS AT LEAST 28 IN SRI LANKA](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers,Newsires & Press

37. [Guardian Weekly: International news: On the web this week](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers,Newswires & Press
Releases; Timeline: Jan 01, 2008 to Mar 30, 2009

38. [A SURE WINNER AT THE POLLS](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers,Newswires & Press
Releases; Timeline: Jan 01, 2008 to Mar 30, 2009

39. [Army captures Kokkavil station](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers,Newswires & Press
Releases; Timeline: Jan 01, 2008 to Mar 30, 2009

40. [New dawn for East](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers,Newswires & Press
Releases; Timeline: Jan 01, 2008 to Mar 30, 2009

41. [President Obama takes reins](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers,Newswires & Press
Releases; Timeline: Jan 01, 2008 to Mar 30, 2009

42. [Fleeing civilians seek protection in Pulmoddai](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by

Publication Type: Newspapers,Newsires & Press
Releases; Timeline: Jan 01, 2008 to Mar 30, 2009

43. [Sri Lanka . 12 killed in blast](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by

Publication Type: Newspapers,Newsires & Press
Releases; Timeline: Jan 01, 2008 to Mar 30, 2009

44. [Nallur festival in Jaffna](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by

Publication Type: Newspapers,Newsires & Press
Releases; Timeline: Jan 01, 2008 to Mar 30, 2009

45. [South Asia's \(En\)gendered wars](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by

Publication Type: Newspapers,Newsires & Press
Releases; Timeline: Jan 01, 2008 to Mar 30, 2009

46. [Army Chief's term extended](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by

Publication Type: Newspapers,Newsires & Press
Releases; Timeline: Jan 01, 2008 to Mar 30, 2009

47. [Navy rescues 31 civilians](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers,Newsires & Press
Releases; Timeline: Jan 01, 2008 to Mar 30, 2009

48. [Civilians fleeing Tigers seek Forces' protection](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers,Newsires & Press
Releases; Timeline: Jan 01, 2008 to Mar 30, 2009

49. [Student nabbed for alleged Tiger links](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers,Newsires & Press
Releases; Timeline: Jan 01, 2008 to Mar 30, 2009

50. [SHELLING KILLS NINE CHILDREN IN SRI LANKA](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers,Newsires & Press
Releases; Timeline: Jan 01, 2008 to Mar 30, 2009

51. [RULE OF ALL](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers,Newsires & Press
Releases; Timeline: Jan 01, 2008 to Mar 30, 2009

52. [ON THIS DAY 21 APRIL LOCAL LONDON](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by

Publication Type: Newspapers,Newswires & Press
Releases; Timeline: Jan 01, 2008 to Mar 30, 2009

53. [Sri Lankan bus attacked, dozens killed](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by

Publication Type: Newspapers,Newswires & Press
Releases; Timeline: Jan 01, 2008 to Mar 30, 2009

54. [Navy rescues 56 Tamils](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by

Publication Type: Newspapers,Newswires & Press
Releases; Timeline: Jan 01, 2008 to Mar 30, 2009

55. [A woman of our time](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by

Publication Type: Newspapers,Newswires & Press
Releases; Timeline: Jan 01, 2008 to Mar 30, 2009

56. [Woman Suicide Bomber Blows Herself Up](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by

Publication Type: Newspapers,Newswires & Press
Releases; Timeline: Jan 01, 2008 to Mar 30, 2009

57. [News items from Asia-Pacific Desk of Xinhua](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type

Narrowed by

News

Publication Type: Newspapers,Newswires & Press
Releases; Timeline: Jan 01, 2008 to Mar 30, 2009

58. [*Female suicide cadre triggers bomb*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers,Newswires & Press
Releases; Timeline: Jan 01, 2008 to Mar 30, 2009

59. [*Blast kills 21 in Sri Lanka*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers,Newswires & Press
Releases; Timeline: Jan 01, 2008 to Mar 30, 2009

60. [*Navy rescues 76 Tamil civilians in mullaitivu*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers,Newswires & Press
Releases; Timeline: Jan 01, 2008 to Mar 30, 2009

61. [*'All Tamils should fight Govt. forces'*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers,Newswires & Press
Releases; Timeline: Jan 01, 2008 to Mar 30, 2009

62. [*News items from Asia-Pacific Desk of Xinhua*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers,Newswires & Press
Releases; Timeline: Jan 01, 2008 to Mar 30, 2009

63. [*AFPTV Agenda for the Week Ahead*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers,Newswires & Press
Releases; Timeline: Jan 01, 2008 to Mar 30, 2009

64. [*newsweek At home....*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers,Newswires & Press
Releases; Timeline: Jan 01, 2008 to Mar 30, 2009

65. [*AFP news calendar*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers,Newswires & Press
Releases; Timeline: Jan 01, 2008 to Mar 30, 2009

66. [*The bland Grammy brand: as the music awards show turns 50, does it stillmatter?*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers,Newswires & Press
Releases; Timeline: Jan 01, 2008 to Mar 30, 2009

67. [*Canada at a Glance: AM*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers,Newswires & Press
Releases; Timeline: Jan 01, 2008 to Mar 30, 2009

68. [*Patients killed in strike on Sri Lankan hospital*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers,Newsires & Press
Releases; Timeline: Jan 01, 2008 to Mar 30, 2009

69. [FAST NEWS](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers,Newsires & Press
Releases; Timeline: Jan 01, 2008 to Mar 30, 2009

70. [485 civilians flee](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers,Newsires & Press
Releases; Timeline: Jan 01, 2008 to Mar 30, 2009

71. [Bomb blast kills 21 and injures 47](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers,Newsires & Press
Releases; Timeline: Jan 01, 2008 to Mar 30, 2009

72. [Soosai hideout bombed: SLAF](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers,Newsires & Press
Releases; Timeline: Jan 01, 2008 to Mar 30, 2009

73. [Suicide bomber kills 17 at Sri Lanka refugee camp: government](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by

Publication Type: Newspapers,Newswires & Press
Releases; Timeline: Jan 01, 2008 to Mar 30, 2009

74. [Soosai hideout bombed: SLAF](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by

Publication Type: Newspapers,Newswires & Press
Releases; Timeline: Jan 01, 2008 to Mar 30, 2009

75. [Heroes of our times](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by

Publication Type: Newspapers,Newswires & Press
Releases; Timeline: Jan 01, 2008 to Mar 30, 2009

76. [More Tigers Including Frontline Leaders Perished in Confrontations](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by

Publication Type: Newspapers,Newswires & Press
Releases; Timeline: Jan 01, 2008 to Mar 30, 2009

77. [1386 CIVILIANS REACH CLEARED AREAS IN MULLAITIVU](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by

Publication Type: Newspapers,Newswires & Press
Releases; Timeline: Jan 01, 2008 to Mar 30, 2009

78. [Tigers say lost 21,000 cadres](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type

Narrowed by

News

Publication Type: Newspapers,Newswires & Press
Releases; Timeline: Jan 01, 2008 to Mar 30, 2009

79. [*More civilians seek Security Forces protection*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers,Newswires & Press
Releases; Timeline: Jan 01, 2008 to Mar 30, 2009

80. [*Budget Speech 2009*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers,Newswires & Press
Releases; Timeline: Jan 01, 2008 to Mar 30, 2009

81. [*32 seek Forces' protection in Pesalai*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers,Newswires & Press
Releases; Timeline: Jan 01, 2008 to Mar 30, 2009

82. [*Janaka assassins allegedly paid over 6M*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers,Newswires & Press
Releases; Timeline: Jan 01, 2008 to Mar 30, 2009

83. [*More civilians come over*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers,Newswires & Press
Releases; Timeline: Jan 01, 2008 to Mar 30, 2009

84. [Navy rescues 59 civilians](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers,Newsires & Press
Releases; Timeline: Jan 01, 2008 to Mar 30, 2009

85. [Woman with explosives arrested in Sri Lanka](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers,Newsires & Press
Releases; Timeline: Jan 01, 2008 to Mar 30, 2009

86. [STATEMENT BY AMBASSADOR ROSEMARY DICARLO, ALTERNATE REPRESENTATIVE FOR SPECIAL POLITICAL AFFAIRS, ON CIVILIANS IN ARMED CONFLICT, IN SECURITY COUNCIL](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers,Newsires & Press
Releases; Timeline: Jan 01, 2008 to Mar 30, 2009

87. [Bank robbers are yesterday's villains as cybercrime pays out rich dividends](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers,Newsires & Press
Releases; Timeline: Jan 01, 2008 to Mar 30, 2009

88. [Giving peace a chance; Despite the horrors he has witnessed, Rock 'hopeful'](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers,Newsires & Press
Releases; Timeline: Jan 01, 2008 to Mar 30, 2009

89. [Business Community concerned over CM Position](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers,Newswires & Press
Releases; Timeline: Jan 01, 2008 to Mar 30, 2009

90. [Behind the gloss: Interview Nicholas Coleridge: The smooth managing director of Conde Nast UK talks to Stephen Brook about working with Tina Brown, why he takes two baths a day - and how a certain rival women's weekly doesn't bother him at all: Curriculum vitae](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers,Newswires & Press
Releases; Timeline: Jan 01, 2008 to Mar 30, 2009

91. [In pursuit of world peace ...;'How do we lay the groundwork for a lasting peace?'](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers,Newswires & Press
Releases; Timeline: Jan 01, 2008 to Mar 30, 2009

92. [Top female Black Tiger nabbed](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers,Newswires & Press
Releases; Timeline: Jan 01, 2008 to Mar 30, 2009

93. [Vehicle not ours, says UNICEF](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers,Newswires & Press
Releases; Timeline: Jan 01, 2008 to Mar 30, 2009

94. [Moment to cherish](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers, Newswires & Press
Releases; Timeline: Jan 01, 2008 to Mar 30, 2009

95. [Woman with explosives arrested in Sri Lanka](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers, Newswires & Press
Releases; Timeline: Jan 01, 2008 to Mar 30, 2009

96. [Sri Lanka 's garment industry is worried RIGHTS- SRI LANKA : War May See EU Duty Concessions Cut](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers, Newswires & Press
Releases; Timeline: Jan 01, 2008 to Mar 30, 2009

97. [Navy rescues 139 more civilians fleeing Mullaitivu](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers, Newswires & Press
Releases; Timeline: Jan 01, 2008 to Mar 30, 2009

98. [Navy rescues 12 fleeing civilians](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers, Newswires & Press
Releases; Timeline: Jan 01, 2008 to Mar 30, 2009

99. [Strengthen Drug Law Enforcement](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers, Newswires & Press
Releases; Timeline: Jan 01, 2008 to Mar 30, 2009

100. [Troops recover torpedo](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers, Newswires & Press
Releases; Timeline: Jan 01, 2008 to Mar 30, 2009

Sri Lanka troops allegedly kill 30 in 'safe zone'

Associated Press International

January 23, 2009 Friday 12:26 AM GMT

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Section: INTERNATIONAL NEWS

Length: 642 words

Byline: By RAVI NESSMAN, Associated Press Writer

Dateline: COLOMBO Sri Lanka

Body

The Sri Lankan military shelled a hospital and a village inside a government-declared "safe zone" for displaced families, killing at least 30 people in the deadliest attack on civilians in two years, health officials said.

The assault Thursday underscored the rising concern for the hundreds of thousands of war refugees reportedly trapped in the conflict zone as the military closes in on the ethnic Tamil rebels' last stronghold in the northeast.

Health officials said at least 67 civilians were killed in shelling since Tuesday.

The military denied launching the attack on the "safe zone" and accused the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam rebels of carrying out the assault themselves.

"If it has been hit and people have been injured, then definitely it is the LTTE. They are capable of this kind of thing," military spokesman Brig. Udaya Nanayakkara said.

Independent accounts of the fighting are not available because journalists are barred from the war zone.

Meanwhile, the military captured a building the rebels had used as the main operations center in their fight against the advancing army, complete with detailed maps of troop deployments throughout the region, Nanayakkara said.

The rebels appeared to have set up a new center elsewhere before the army moved in, he said.

With the civil war escalating in recent months and the government pushing the insurgents into a shrinking slice of territory in the northeast, aid groups and diplomats have expressed fears over the safety of the civilians trapped in rebel-held territory.

In an effort to coax civilians to leave, the government dropped leaflets throughout the region Wednesday announcing the establishment of a "safe zone" on the edge of rebel-held territory that it would not attack. Civilians who gathered there would then be transferred across the front lines to safety, the military said.

But an hour after the leaflet drop, two shells hit a makeshift hospital located in a school in Vallipunam, a village inside the "safe zone," said Kandasamy Tharmakulasingham, a local health official. No one was injured in that attack, he told The Associated Press.

Sri Lanka troops allegedly kill 30 in 'safe zone'

The hospital and village were hit again Thursday morning in an attack so devastating that health officials had difficulty counting the mangled bodies, he said.

Moses Piratheepan, a 17-year-old boy who had been admitted to the hospital with a chest ailment, said he was having breakfast when the shelling started.

Three shells fell into his ward during the hourlong barrage, and he was hit by shrapnel in the back, he said.

"The hospital staff gave me first aid but could not transfer me to safety because the shells were falling," he told AP by telephone.

Dr. Thurairaja Varatharaja, the district's top health official, said the bodies of at least 30 people killed in the attack five of them hospital patients were brought to the morgue. Another 117 people 66 of them women and children were injured, he told the AP.

The shells came from the government-controlled area near the town of Oddusuddan, Varatharaja said.

At least 37 other civilians were killed in shelling on Tuesday and Wednesday, bringing the three day death toll to 67, he said. That figure only included bodies brought to the morgue; many others were so badly torn apart relatives buried them immediately, he said.

The barrage Thursday would mark the deadliest attack on civilians since the military shelled a school in the east in November 2006, killing more than 40 displaced people taking refuge in the building, human rights groups said.

The rebels have fought since 1983 to establish an independent state for minority Tamils, who have suffered decades of marginalization at the hands of successive governments controlled by the Sinhalese majority. More than 70,000 people have been killed in the violence.

Associated Press reporter Krishan Francis contributed to this report.

Load-Date: January 23, 2009

Nearly 175 terror groups are active in India

Indo-Asian News Service

April 13, 2008 Sunday 12:47 PM EST

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Length: 646 words

Byline: Report from Indo-Asian News Service brought to you by HT Syndication.

Dateline: Mumbai

Body

Mumbai, April 13 -- Manipur has the highest number of terror outfits, followed by Assam and Jammu and Kashmir, according to a list prepared by the union home ministry in consultation with state governments and intelligence agencies.

The home ministry is closely monitoring the activities of nearly 175 terror organisations spread across India and attempting to ascertain their links both within and outside the country. The list includes those suspected of, or indulging in terrorist, insurgent, extremist or fanatical activities. The majority of the outfits are centred in and active in the northeast, according to intelligence sources.

Manipur tops the list with a whopping 39 organisations, followed by Assam with 36 organisations that are under the scanner of the state and central intelligence agencies.

The next is the sensitive border state of Jammu and Kashmir with 32 such groups active, semi-active or dormant. In addition to these, there are at least four other independent groups that are not based in Kashmir but are coordinating or supporting terror groups in the state from across the border.

The surprise inclusion here is Dukhtaran-e-Millat, an all-women organisation that exerts community pressures to further social norms dictated by Islamic fundamental groups.

Most of the groups named in the list are engaged in secessionist activities, mostly armed and violent, either independently or with support from across the border, mostly in regions neighbouring Pakistan and China.

A matter of concern for law-enforcing authorities is that the list - which has been obtained by IANS - is not exhaustive and keeps growing, the sources said.

Thirty groups belong to Tripura, followed by four in Meghalaya, three in Nagaland, two in Mizoram and one in Arunachal Pradesh.

This makes a total of 115 groups in seven states in the sensitive northeast, including those bordering China.

Punjab, which witnessed heavy terrorism in the 1980s, has at least 12 active or potentially dangerous terror groups in the state.

Mumbai Anti-Terrorist Squad chief Hemant Karkare said there are around 8-10 frontline terror groups on which they keep tabs on a regular basis, but he declined to identify them.

Nearly 175 terror groups are active in India

"In addition, there are more than a couple of hundred other such groups of which we have knowledge. At times, new ones suddenly crop up, like the Hindu Garjana, which attacked communist party workers in Pune last fortnight. Then we do the needful investigations," Karkare told IANS, but did not elaborate.

In addition to these state-level groups, the agencies are keeping tabs on the activities of the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (**LTTE**), Tamil Nadu Liberation Army, Tamil National Retrieval Troops, Students Islamic Movement of India (SIMI - banned since September 2001), Deendar Anjuman, Asif Reza Commando Force, Kamatapur Liberation Organisation and the Ranvir Sena.

Even some Nepalis in India have their own struggle group - the Akhil Bharat Nepali Ekta Samaj - fighting for different causes.

Left-wing extremist groups that are under a close watch include the Communist Party of India-Maoist, Communist Party of India (Marxist-Leninist)-Janashakti and People's Guerrilla Army.

As far as Mumbai Police are concerned, they are quite pleased with the recent successful investigations that led to the nabbing of important terror operatives who were reportedly targeting sensitive installations and religious places in Mumbai.

These include terror suspects caught from Goa, Karnataka and from Thane district, bordering Mumbai, in Maharashtra.

Last Thursday, police nabbed two prominent SIMI activists from Mira Road (Thane), Irshad Salim Khan (37) and Israr Ahmed Abdul Hamid Tailor (38), who may be linked to the July 11, 2006, serial bomb explosions in Mumbai's suburban trains.

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Load-Date: April 13, 2008

Give it up, Hamza -you're too ugly

The Sunday Times (London)

February 10, 2008

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Section: FEATURES; News Review; Pg. 4

Length: 880 words

Byline: Jeremy Clarkson

Body

Soweto was my generation's Baghdad. Every night, we saw pictures of it on the news, scenes of burly policemen cruising the streets in Chevrolets, shooting children for fun. Of mobs setting fire to buses and blocking the roads with burning tyres.

Now, though, just 20 years later, it's a bit like Surrey. There are well-kept lawns and lots of four-wheel-drive cars. There's a shopping centre and a forest of cranes building a stadium for the upcoming World Cup. Sure, there's Winnie Mandela's mansion, which sits like a bulletproofed blister in the middle of it all, and the "Education is good for you" graffiti doesn't quite ring true.

But I spent a day there last week and at no point did anyone put a tyre round my neck and set fire to it. I even had a jolly nice lunch under a jolly nice bougainvillea bush.

So what was it that brought about this transformation? Was it the legion of pop stars who sang about the iniquities of apartheid? Or was it the sanctions? Or could it be that pressure groups back then concentrated on real problems rather than the environment?

You do wonder, don't you? If the firebrands and the beardies would stop worrying about polar bears, could a similar transformation be achieved in Darfur and Zimbabwe and the mayoral office of London?

I'm afraid not. The main reason the war against apartheid was won is that Nelson Mandela looks good on a T-shirt.

I mean it. Look at all the successful freedom fighters and you'll note they all had one thing in common: a chiselled, romantic figurehead. Che Guevara, for instance, worked well as a screen print, and as a result the rebels still hold power in Cuba. And because Yasser Arafat looked like he'd just stepped out of that bar in Star Wars, Palestine is still a prison rather than a country.

Why do you suppose Northern Ireland is still part of the United Kingdom? Simple.

The IRA was never going to win, because with Martin McGuinness and Gerry Adams they were represented on the world stage by a ginger and a minger.

The Basques have a similar problem. I met Eta's political leader a couple of years ago and he was about as charismatic as a root vegetable.

Give it up, Hamza -you're too ugly

Potty Pol had a great name but because his face didn't work on a badge his efforts in Cambodia were always going to come to naught. And it's the same story with Shining Path, the Tamil Tigers and Nazi Germany, for that matter. If Hitler had looked like Jim Morrison who knows what shape the world might be in today?

This of course brings me neatly to the question of Muslim extremists. They are waging a preposterous campaign, trying to make all women in the world wear their headscarves back to front. And there's no doubt that if their international leader was Abu Hamza they wouldn't get anywhere.

One eye is good. Admiral Nelson pulled that off well and so does Gordon Brown. It makes you look sinister and interesting. Then there's the hook for a hand. That's inspirational. The stuff of Bond baddie legend. But I'm sorry, the rest is hopeless; especially that patchy and spartan face fungus, as threadbare as an aristocrat's carpet.

Unfortunately, however, Hamza is not the global figurehead. That role belongs to Osama Bin Laden, and let's cut to the chase on this, shall we? The man's a looker.

Teaming those gentle and kind eyes with an ever-present AK-47 keeps us guessing.

He even manages to look good in a dress and that beard. Wow. It could so easily have come across as pantomime stupid, and yet you just want to run your hands through it. You imagine it's as soft as silk.

In short the man is cool. Cold, actually, because he's almost certainly dead, buried under tons of daisy-cut Afghan rock. And yet, despite this small drawback, the Americans will never be able to beat him unless they wake up, smell the coffee and elect Johnny Depp.

Mrs Clinton really won't do. Quite apart from the fact that she seems to be a strange mix of naked ambition and lunacy, she cannot hope for victory against the forces of evil and savagery with a name like Hillary.

Think of all the songs that have been written about girls. Gloria, Emily, Clair, Peggy Sue, Laura, Mary, Nikita. It's hard to think of any name that isn't in a song. Except one. And don't you think that says something? That in all of human history, no one has ever been moved enough by someone called Hillary to write a song about them.

Names matter as much as looks. Boadicea was not called Joan, and as a result was able to whip up a sufficient frenzy among her followers that she defeated the Roman army and laid waste to Colchester. Joan of Arc, on the other hand, was called Joan and got burnt at the stake. It's not for nothing that God chose to call his only son Jesus rather than Roy or Nigel.

I'm being sensible here. Che Guevara realised that he needed the whole package to succeed -not just a beret and a wistful look -so he dropped the name his parents had given him: Ernesto. And Temujin only really got going after he rebranded himself as Genghis Khan.

There is some good news from all of this though. One day Robert Mugabe will be sunk by his silly moustache, Kim Jong-il will be defeated by his own wardrobe and Jonathon Porritt will fail because even if he were called Clint Thrust he sports the one thing that is guaranteed to end anyone's quest for global domination: a combover.

Load-Date: February 10, 2008

AMID WAR, TAMIL REFUGEE FLOW TO INDIA DROPS

Indo-Asian News Service

January 31, 2009 Saturday 6:04 PM EST

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Length: 564 words

Byline: M.R. Narayan Swamy Report from Indo-Asian News Service brought to you by HT Syndication.

Dateline: New Delhi

Body

New Delhi, Jan. 31 -- (IANS) As Sri Lankan troops sweep through Tamil Tiger strongholds, Tamils seeking to flee the war-hit island to India are finding the boat journey more and more risky, leading to a sharp drop in their arrivals.

From 566 men, women and children who sailed to Tamil Nadu in May 2008, the number fell to 155 in December. Until Jan 28 this year, only 111 Tamils had landed on Tamil Nadu's shores.

The numbers speak a story.

According to leading Sri Lankan activist S.C. Chandrachud, who has worked among the refugees in Tamil Nadu for years, Tamils wanting to escape to India are finding it increasingly difficult and dangerous.

For one, the army has captured from the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) the northwestern district of Mannar, the traditional gateway to south India. Also, the navy now dominates the strip of sea that divides Sri Lanka and Tamil Nadu.

The boat journeys were probably never this difficult in the past 25 years, Chandrachud told IANS over telephone from Chennai.

Refugees who have made it to Tamil Nadu in recent days say the normally tough sea voyage, which can take anything from an hour to a few hours, is now more risky because naval patrols are aplenty - night or day.

Indian naval patrol is also keeping an eye on Tamil Tiger vessels.

Most recent refugee arrivals are from Sri Lanka's north where the war is now raging. They take up to three days to make it from the interior to the coast, but only the lucky ones find boats to take them across.

Many refugees reach Tamil Nadu starving because they are unable to access food in the military-controlled coastal areas.

And although the boatmen are not charging more money despite the added risks, they are hesitant to cross the sea because naval patrols are now aplenty.

"If a boat is intercepted, it gets seized and the boatmen get into serious trouble," said an official in Tamil Nadu who has spoken to the refugees.

AMID WAR, TAMIL REFUGEE FLOW TO INDIA DROPS

The official quoted one refugee as saying: "Given the chance, the Tamils caught up in the war zone would make it to India. They are not happy to be in conflict areas but are equally not keen to go over to government areas due to uncertainties there."

Tamil Nadu is home to tens of thousands of Sri Lankan Tamil refugees who have sailed to India ever since anti-Tamil riots swept the island in 1983.

Most illegal boat rides take place at night, the vessels anchored by veteran boatmen who know every bit of the sea.

Once they are in India, the refugees register themselves with the Tamil Nadu government, undergo routine security checks and then get assigned to any of the 117 refugee camps in the state - unless they can live on their own.

From 566 refugees who made it to India in May 2008, the number dropped to 228 in June. It climbed to 261 in July, before again falling to 155 in August.

The number rose in September to 265 before declining to 199 in October, 168 in November and to 155 in December 2008.

On most months, male refugees have exceeded **female** refugees. But in December, there were 89 **females** to 66 males. The fleeing Tamils also include children including toddlers.

Tamil Nadu received a total of 23,168 Tamil refugees from January 2006, when the influx started to pick up following renewed fighting, to January 2009.

(M.R. Narayan Swamy can be contacted at narayan.swamy@ians.in)

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Load-Date: January 31, 2009

India: In the name of 'Freedom'?

Daily Mirror (Sri Lanka)

May 21, 2008 Wednesday 5:01 PM EST

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Length: 566 words

Byline: Report from Daily Mirror brought to you by HT Syndication.

Dateline: Colombo

Body

Colombo, May 21 -- Cities in the north, south, east and west of India have been targeted in recent times, and bomb blasts have claimed several civilian lives. Except for the bogus claims of responsibility by obscure email addresses and terror groups, these attacks have not been conclusively investigated and their perpetrators have made a mockery of our state institutions and investigating and law enforcement agencies.

The first lesson we learn about terrorism is that it is a form of political violence, a strategy in support of a particular brand of nationalism. Clearly, terrorists in India have in the last few years established that their terrorism is different from the Palestinians, the LTTE, the Chechens, Afghanis or even the Iraqis. Their terrorism stands out not as a means to an end but an end in itself. There is something nihilistic about bombing men, women and children in mosques, temples and market places, without any clear sense of who is fighting whom or how the warring sides are constructed.

Terrorism of the kinds we have witnessed in recent times cannot be attributed solely to groups operating from outside the country. The immediate response of governments that neighbouring states sponsor terrorism in India is a rhetoric we are not ready to believe anymore. Let's face it - they live amongst us, plan against us, and then surprise, maim and kill us with the lethality that gets worse with each attack.

And exactly what incentives do the Muslims have to speak out against those that are maligning their faith? None whatsoever! Communal divides have been deepening over the years, sometimes social forces responsible, but at most times the vote bank politics and devious political ideologies at play. The British initiated 'divide and rule' and today's politicians cutting across party lines brilliantly execute that policy.

The influential American writer, H. L. Mencken had once said that "the average man (also woman) does not want to be free. He (and she) simply wants to be safe." That might be the overriding concern of most Indians at this point. The deeply entrenched communal divide will not be bridged in a day, least of all by hollow appeals to peace and communal harmony by politicians.

I believe that there is little option but to enact stringent anti-terror laws and enforce them in a just and efficient manner. Terrorists attack both Hindus in temples and Muslims in mosques. Terrorism, therefore, has no religion but electoral politics in India does, votes do. This government has always been worried about minority votes, over the lives of both minorities and the majority.

Those negatively affected by the abuse of terrorism laws such as the POTA surely do not outnumber those that have to die in the absence of such laws? And what speak of a 'politically correct' government that repealed POTA

India : In the name of 'Freedom'?

(we know why), instead of working on its strengths and making it more efficient and responsive! It is like doing away with a car because one does not know how to drive it. After all there are no limits to what can and has been abused and misused - freedom, 'victimhood', religion, and most of all human life.

To conclude, freedom entails responsibilities just as rights entail duties. Terrorists exercise freedom without responsibility and the state gives us neither freedom nor acts responsibly.

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Load-Date: August 11, 2008

End of Document

Sri Lanka Health Services care for civilians and terrorists!

Sunday Observer (Sri Lanka)

March 15, 2009 Sunday

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Length: 1505 words

Dateline: Colombo

Body

Colombo, March 15 -- ECOSOC Annual Ministerial Review, the regional ministerial meeting on 'Financing Strategies for Health Care' will be held at Cinnamon Grand Hotel, Colombo from March 16 to 18 with the participation of 120 delegates from 11 countries.

There will be finance ministers, Foreign Affairs Ministers and Health Ministers will be among them. Sri Lankan Government hosts this event. The event has been organised in cooperation with the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UNDESA), the World Health Organization (WHO) and the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (UNESCAP), the meeting is part of the preparatory process for the 2009 Annual Ministerial Review (AMR). Topics to be addressed by expert panellists during the meeting will include domestic and external financing for healthcare, as well as challenges for health systems in countries in or following crisis. A special session will also be held to highlight good practices and new initiatives on financing health care. There will be four Panels and the first panel will be on 'Domestic financing for health care'. Professor of Economics, University of Colombo, Prof.

Weligama D. Lakshman will be the moderator of this panel. The discussion of the panel will be focused on the trends in the region regarding levels and sources of domestic financing, the strategies and policies can Government implement to raise adequate funds for national health systems, the mechanisms can be employed to pool risk, the actions can be taken by Governments to ensure the equitable and efficient provision of service. The same action on how are countries coping with the impact of financial crisis on financing of health care, how can public-private partnerships, domestic NGOs and local communities best complement national efforts to provide quality primary health care to all. The second panel will be on 'External financing for health care' and it will be moderated by Director, Department of Health Systems Financing (HSF), World Health Organisation (WHO), Dr. David B. Evans. The discussion will be based on the trends in the region regarding sources, quantity and quality of foreign aid for health, how can Governments ensure that inflows of external funds support the development of the domestic financing system and institutions, rather than weaken it, the impact of vertical funds on national health systems, the impact of the current financial crisis on global funding for health care, how should it be addressed, what steps can the international community take to increase or - in light of the current economic and financial crisis - maintain international funding for the social sector. The third panel will be on 'Challenges for health systems in countries in or certain crisis'. Deputy Regional Director, Regional Office for South East Asia, WHO, Dr. Poonam Singh will moderate this panel. The discussion will be based on what actions can Governments take to prepare for, respond to and recover from crisis, specifically with regard to health systems, how effective have humanitarian actors been in providing emergency assistance to meet urgent health needs and support health systems in terms of capacity, predictability, effectiveness and accountability, to what extent have emergency funding mechanism met demand and expectations and how can they be improved. The final panel will be on 'Progress and challenges in achieving the Millennium Development Goals and it will be moderated by the Minister of Health and Family, Maldives (TBC),

Sri Lanka Health Services care for civilians and terrorists!

Dr. Aminath Jameel. The discussion will be on the actions Governments have to take to promote Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), the progress Governments have made and the impediments and challenges to achieve the MDGs. Closing statements of the event will be delivered by Assistant Secretary General, United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UNDESA), Thomas Steltzer and Foreign Affairs Minister of Sri Lanka Rohitha Bogollagama. At the end of the sessions, the delegation will visit Dalada Maligawa, Kandy to observe special evening ritual. They will also visit Giragama tea factory, a handicraft centre in Pilimathalawa, Pinnawala elephant orphanage and several other significant places in Sri Lanka. Apart from those special visits, three other field visits have also been organised for them to choose from. The first field visit includes Peradeniya Teaching Hospital, Medical Faculty of the University of Peradeniya and Peradeniya Botanical Garden. The second field visit includes Primary Healthcare Regional Training Centre, Kadugannawa Divisional Hospital and Kadugannawa MOH Office. The third field visit includes Doluwa MOH Office, primary health workers in action and indigenous medical practice at the community level. According to ECOSOC the theme for the 2009 ECOSOC Annual Ministerial Review (AMR) is "Implementing the internationally agreed goals and commitments in regard to global public health". The AMR process features three main elements: national voluntary presentations, country-led regional reviews and a global review, based on a comprehensive report by the Secretary-General. These elements are complemented by an innovation fair; and, prior to the session, by a global preparatory meeting and e-forums on the theme of the AMR. In 2009, in addition to the regional meeting in Sri Lanka, regional consultations will be held on "Promoting Health Literacy" in China and on "Preventing and Controlling the Growing Burden of Non Communicable Diseases" in Qatar. The resources available for health in many of the world's countries remain extremely limited. Despite a welcome and substantial increase in external assistance for health since the Millennium Declaration was signed, discussed in the next section, total health expenditure per person - from all sources including external assistance and loans - remained lower than \$30US per capita in 33 of the world's countries in 2006. Among Asian countries, there is considerable diversity in national incomes and health expenditures, says ECOSOC. Each year, millions of people are prevented from seeking and obtaining needed health care because of they cannot afford to pay the costs. At the same time, millions more are forced to seek care and suffer severe financial problems because they need to meet the resulting costs of treatment out of their own pockets. These are some of the reasons why many countries are not yet on track to achieve the health-related Millennium Development Goals. According to 'Sri Lanka: Good Practice' in Expanding Health Care Coverage' authored by Ravi P. Rannan-Eliya and Lankani Sikurajapathy, the expansion of health care coverage in Sri Lanka with its focus on the poor dates from the 1930s and many of the initial motivations continue to be important influences. By far the most important one for health services has been democracy. Sri Lanka's health indicators were worse than much of South Asia's in the 1920s but its health reforms in the 1930s quickly reduced mortality rates. After world war II, mortality rates rapidly fell for a decade before entering a slower but still rapid and continuing phase of decline. Prior to the 1990s substantial reductions in infant, child and maternal mortality were responsible for most of the declined. Life expectancy has continuously risen but gain since the 1970s have been confined largely to women and male life expectancy has stagnated, the two authors say. According to the Healthcare and Nutrition Ministry sources Sri Lanka's average life expectancy rate is 71 years at the moment and it was only 46 years in 1948. The life expectancy for women is 76 years and it is 74 years for men. At the moment Sri Lanka records only 14 deaths of children below the age of five per every 10,000 live births and 0.1 maternal deaths per every 10,000 births. According to the same sources Sri Lanka records 3.2 hospital beds for every 10,000 persons and there are 6 doctors and 14 nurses for every 10,000 persons. The bed strength of some of the other South Asian countries are Indonesia 0.6, Maldives and Thailand 2 and Bangladesh 3.43. Sri Lanka's current HIV/AIDS prevalence rate is only 0.01 and it is one of the lowest in the world. Sri Lanka has already eradicated certain diseases such as Filaria, Leprosy and Polio. The country is about to eradicate Tuberculosis (TB) and Malaria. Sri Lanka has the best health care service in the region and also set a world record by treating the LTTE (a terrorist organisation fighting against the State) free of charge for three decades continuously. Still the Government supply all required drugs and medical equipment to them with the intention of saving innocent civilians who are living as hostages of the LTTE. At present Healthcare and Nutrition Minister of Sri Lanka Nimal Siripala De Silva holds the post of Chairman of the Executive Board of the World Health Organisation (WHO). Published by HT Syndication with permission from Sunday Observer (Sri Lanka).

For any query with respect to this article or any other content requirement, please contact Editor at htsyndication@hindustantimes.com

Sri Lanka Health Services care for civilians and terrorists!

Load-Date: April 1, 2009

End of Document

Pakistani minister: India to blame for cricket attack

The New Zealand Herald

March 3, 2009 Tuesday

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Section: SPORT; General

Length: 1116 words

Body

A Pakistani minister has blamed India for the deadly terrorist attack which killed several police officers and a civilian, and wounded members of the Sri Lankan cricket team in Lahore today.

A dozen men attacked Sri Lanka's cricket team with rifles, grenades and rocket launchers ahead of a match, wounding seven players and a coach from Britain in a brazen assault on South Asia's most beloved sport. An assistant coach was also wounded, but the players' and coach's injuries were not believed to be life-threatening.

The Reuters news agency reports that Pakistani state shipping minister Sardar Nabil Ahmed Gabol has accused India of conspiring to defame Pakistan internationally. He is reported as saying that the gunmen responsible for the attack entered Pakistan across the Indian border.

The assailants ambushed the convoy carrying the squad and match officials at a traffic circle close to the main sports stadium in the eastern city of Lahore, triggering a 15-minute gunbattle with police guarding the vehicles.

None of the attackers were killed or captured at the scene, city police chief Haji Habibur Rehman said. Authorities did not speculate on the identities of the attackers or their motives.

The attack reinforced perceptions that nuclear-armed Pakistan is veering out of control and will end any hopes of international cricket teams - or any sports teams - playing in the country for months, if not years. Even before the incident, most cricket teams choose not to tour the country because of security concerns.

The attack came three months after the Mumbai terror attacks, which were allegedly carried out by Pakistan militants.

Two Sri Lankan players - Thilan Samaraweera and Tharanga Paranavitana - were being treated for injuries in hospital but were stable, said Chamara Ranavira, a spokesman for the Sri Lankan High Commission.

Team captain Mahela Jayawardene, Kumar Sangakkara, Ajantha Mendis, Suranka Lakmal and Chaminda Vaas had minor injuries, the Sri Lankan Cricket Board said. Ranavira said British assistant coach Paul Farbrace also sustained minor injuries.

Australian head coach Trevor Bayliss was not wounded, Sri Lanka's Foreign Ministry said, refuting earlier reports he had minor wounds.

Veteran batsman Sangakkara told Sri Lankan radio station Yes-FM that "all the players are completely out of danger."

Pakistani minister: India to blame for cricket attack

Authorities cancelled the test match and the Lahore governor said the team was flying home. Sri Lankan President Mahinda Rajapaksa condemned the attack and ordered his foreign minister to immediately travel to Pakistan to help assist in the team's evacuation and ensure they are safe.

TV footage of the attack showed gunmen with backpacks - apparently the attackers - firing at the convoy as they retreated from the scene, with several damaged vehicles and a lone, unexploded grenade lying on the ground. Other video showed the bodies of three people crumpled on the ground.

"It is a terrible incident and I am lost for words," said Steve Davis, an Australian who was umpiring the match.

Nadeem Ghauri, a Pakistani umpire who witnessed the attack, said the umpires were behind a bus of Sri Lankan players when suddenly they heard gunshots.

"The firing started at about 8:40 and it continued for 15 minutes," he said, adding "our driver was hit, and he was injured."

Lahore police chief Rehman said officers were hunting down the attackers who managed to flee. "Our police sacrificed their lives to protect the Sri Lankan team."

Three hours after the attack, at least Sri Lankan eight players and team officials left the Gadaffi stadium in Lahore on a Pakistani army helicopter that took off from the pitch. It was not immediately clear where the chopper was heading.

Haider Ashraf, a senior police official, said six policemen and a civilian died in the attack. It was unclear whether the civilian was a passer-by or someone traveling in the convoy.

Sri Lanka had agreed to this tour - allowing Pakistan to host its first test matches in 14 months - only after India and Australia postponed scheduled trips.

Sri Lankan Foreign Secretary Palitha Kohona said little could be done to stop such an attack.

"I think the Pakistani authorities have provided adequate security but as we know from experience ... there is never enough security to counter a well organized and determined terrorist group."

The International Cricket Board quickly moved to condemn the attack.

"We note with dismay and regret the events of this morning in Lahore and we condemn this attack without reservation," ICC chief executive Haroon Lorgat said in a statement. "It is a source of great sadness that there have been a number of fatalities in this attack and it is also very upsetting for the wider cricket family that some of the Sri Lanka players and one match official have been injured in this attack."

Pakistan is battling a ferocious insurgency by Islamist militants with links to al-Qaida who have staged high-profile attacks on civilian targets before.

One militant group likely to fall under particular suspicion is Lashkar-e-Taiba, the network blamed for the Mumbai terror attacks. The group has been targeted by Pakistani authorities since then and its stronghold is in eastern Pakistan.

The nature of the attack - coordinated, using multiple gunmen armed with explosives - is reminiscent of the Mumbai strikes in November that raised tensions between Pakistan and India.

In the past, India and Pakistan have blamed each other for attacks on their territories. Any allegations like that will trigger fresh tensions between the countries, which are already dangerously high. The Indian government refused permission for the national cricket team to tour Pakistan last month.

Pakistani minister: India to blame for cricket attack

Authorities will also consider possible links to Sri Lanka's Tamil Tiger separatist rebels who are being badly hit in a military offensive at home, though Sri Lankan military spokesman Brig. Udaya Nanayakkara says authorities there did not believe the group was responsible.

Sri Lanka appeared on the brink of crushing the Tamil Tiger rebels after more than a quarter century of civil war. In recent months, government forces have pushed the guerrillas out of much of the de facto state.

The **Tamil Tigers**, who are fighting for an independent state for Sri Lanka's Tamil minority, rarely launch attacks outside Sri Lanka, though their most prominent attack - the assassination of former Indian Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi by a **female** suicide bomber - took place at an election rally in India in 1991.

Most of the violence in Pakistan occurs in its northwest regions bordering Afghanistan, where Taleban and al-Qaida militants have established strongholds. Lahore has not been immune from militant violence, however.

- AP, AGENCIES

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As Civil Religion turns 1, our blog is growing

St. Louis Post-Dispatch (Missouri)

March 21, 2009 Saturday

SECOND EDITION

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Section: RELIGION; Pg. A24

Length: 1007 words

Byline: TIM TOWNSEND

Dateline: 0

Body

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The model for this blog was new to the Post-Dispatch when we launched it - a band of a dozen community members who represent a number of faiths, ages, races and genders would be Civil Religion's official contributors. To mark our year of blogging, we'll be adding some new official voices to the mix. More on that later.

Our original contributors dove in head first and tackled an array of topics. Just in the last two weeks, we've written about whether poor people are more generous, musings on the term "natural law," a debunking of the myth surrounding St. Patrick and a dissection of the term "pro-life."

And, of course, there's politics. It's a favorite of ours at Civil Religion. Mostly because it's a favorite of yours. We tend to get the most comments when we write about how religion and politics intersect.

Some excerpts from those posts, and from some of your comments: From a post by Pamela Dolan, a staffer at Emmanuel Episcopal Church in Webster Groves, headlined "Mission, leadership explored in Diocese of Missouri conference":

"Growing up in Hawaii (and for a couple of years before that in the western Pacific region of Micronesia) I learned to think of 'missionary' as a dirty word. My childhood experiences taught me to understand mission primarily as the thing that well-meaning but clueless people did when they were sent off to convert the natives, an enterprise that all too often ended up destroying the indigenous culture in the process.

"My understanding of mission has evolved in recent years," Dolan continued, "so that I now think of it more in terms of social justice, but social justice always rooted in the Gospel and especially the message and work of reconciliation."

What followed on the comment pages was a fascinating discussion about mission that involved Pamela, another of our official contributors, Khalid Shah and Civil Religion comment regular, "hs."

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"I, too, have carried with me much of my life experience of mission in my childhood," "hs" wrote. "And, to be honest, those memories have created a great deal of difficulty in my life."

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"They represent what has historically been some of the hallmarks shared between American evangelicalism and the Black church: theologically conservative, politically progressive. By 'history,' I mean the same strains of evangelical faith and action that propelled the anti-slavery and women's enfranchisement movements, not its more recent incarnation in the 'religious right.'"

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And earlier this week, Shah, a small-business owner in St. Louis who also teaches part time at St Louis Community College, posted "Sri Lanka children being killed," which included the following:

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Commenter "David H." responded, "Affirmative action in higher education and employment against the more successful Tamil people clearly fostered resentment. This should provide a lesson to those in the United States that continue to advocate special privileges based on race. However, the Tamils clearly upped the stakes in the conflict. When you resort to terrorist activities, you invite very harsh retaliation."

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So, if you're intrigued, please check out the blog (at STLtoday.com/civilreligion) then send me an e-mail to ttownsend@post-dispatch.com and include your: Name, age, profession, faith tradition, best phone number, best e-mail address and then tell us (briefly) why you're interested in blogging for Civil Religion. We look forward to hearing from you.

For the rest of our readers - please keep visiting the blog and sharing your comments with us. We're looking forward to another great year of religion news.

As Civil Religion turns 1, our blog is growing

Load-Date: March 21, 2009

End of Document

Sunday other news items: Great Britain is facing the return of 3-day week

Citywire

January 25, 2009 Sunday 12:01 AM GMT

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Length: 1014 words

Body

War, Strife, Conflict and Terrorism

* The BBC is in hot water and engaged in a war of words with Ministers, over its refusal to broadcast an urgent appeal for humanitarian aid to Gaza. But Director general Mark Thompson, said that by airing the appeal the BBC would risk reducing public confidence in its impartial coverage of the conflict. Government figures, the Archbishop of York, aid workers and BBC staff expressed outrage that the corporation has not backed down, as some of its rivals did yesterday, and broadcast the Disasters Emergency Committee (DEC) appeal.

* Sri Lankan troops have entered the last Tamil Tiger rebel stronghold of Mullaitivu in the north-east of the island, military sources say. The town has not been captured and heavy fighting is going on, the military spokesman said. There has been no comment from the **Tamil Tigers**, who have suffered a series of reverses in recent months.

Credit Crisis Fallout

* The Independent on Sunday leads with the story of the prospect of the 3-day week returning to haunt Great Britain, as it emerged on Saturday that Ministers are considering paying firms to cut hours in order to survive the recession. The newspaper went on to say that tens of thousands of businesses are already planning to scale back working hours this year in an effort to stay afloat. But as the country comes to terms with the reality of a recession, it emerged that the Government is looking at compensating employees, through their firms, thereby drawing comparisons with the shutdowns of the 1970's.

* The Mail on Sunday (p6) reports that Great Britain was just 3-hours away from going bust last year after a secret run on the banks, one of Gordon Brown's Ministers has revealed. The newspaper says that City Minister Paul Myners disclosed that on Friday 10th October, the country was 'very close' to a complete banking collapse after 'major depositors' attempted to withdraw their money en masse. The Mail on Sunday says that it has been told that the Treasury was preparing for the banks to shut their doors to all customers, terminate electronic transfers and even block hole-in-the-wall cash withdrawals. Only frantic behind-the-scenes efforts averted financial meltdown.

* The Government is becoming increasingly alarmed that many more **women** are losing their jobs than men as the recession bites. It fears they could be out of the workforce for a generation. A group of senior **women** ministers have warned Gordon Brown that the recession may tarnish Labour's record on equal rights.

* David 'Danny' Blanchflower, the member of the Bank of England's monetary policy committee (MPC) who consistently warned of the danger of recession, believes UK interest rates should obviously head down to America's near-zero level.

Sunday other news items: Great Britain is facing the return of 3-day week

- * Great Britain could be forced to chip in billions of pounds to rescue countries in economic crisis, by a little a little known clause in the European Union treaty, which gives the European Commission in Brussels the power to propose bailing out a state in 'severe difficulties.'
- * President Barack Obama's administration is looking to establish a \$60-billion (£43.5-billion) infrastructure bank based on the European Investment Bank (EIB), which is bailing out small UK businesses hit by the financial crisis.
- * City law firm Taylor Wessing is believed to be working on a plan to create a bank backed by six leading UK listed corporates disenchanted with the failing lending institutions in the Square Mile. The firms are thought to have sounded out Glenn Cooper, the banking veteran famed for floating Manchester United, to head the new bank (Source: Independent on Sunday p77)
- * There's talk that chef Gordon Ramsey, is facing his own kitchen nightmare after financial sources claimed a £10-million business loan is being called in by the troubled Royal Bank of Scotland.

Oil, Energy, Utilities, Commodities and Food

- * The Energy Secretary, Ed Miliband, will unveil five proposals on Monday for the Severn Barrage, the controversial tidal scheme that could become the country's biggest source of renewable energy.
- * It is thought that Royal Dutch Shell will leave no doubt that the recent 'golden age' of the oil industry has ended when it reveals what could be the largest profit ever in Europe this week despite a drop of up to 50% in profits in the most recent quarter. The sharp fall in the last three months of the year reflects the oil price, which has plummeted to \$46 per barrel after reaching an all-time high of \$147 last July. The figures are due on Thursday, with BP's due on Tuesday 3rd February

News from Home

- *An exclusive in the Sunday Times claims that the leader of the House of Lords says she is "deeply concerned" over allegations four peers were prepared to accept money to put down amendments. The Sunday paper claims they offered to help make amendments to legislation in return for up to £120,000. Lady Royall said she had spoken to the four Labour peers concerned and would be "pursuing the matter with utmost vigour".
- * The Sunday Telegraph leads on a story which claims that householders are paying up to £140-a-year in council tax to help fill a £35-billion black hole in town hall pension funds. The extra money is to bail out pension schemes for local government workers, which have been criticised as gold-plated and over-generous.
- * Climbers have been warned of a high risk of avalanches after three people were killed on a mountain near the Glencoe in the Highlands. The three men, two from Northern Ireland and one from Scotland, died after being caught in a avalanche on Buchaille Etive Mor.

News from Abroad

- * Hurricane-force winds lashed northern Spain on Saturday, bringing down the roof of a sports hall near Barcelona, killing four children, officials said. Eleven people died in separate incidents in Spain and south-western France as the fiercest storm in a decade blew in from the Atlantic. Torrential rains and winds of up to 114mph were reported. The impact of the storm was felt from the Channel Isles to Barcelona, but the strongest winds and heaviest rain were concentrated on south-western France

Load-Date: January 27, 2009

As Civil Religion turns 1, our blog is growing

St. Louis Post-Dispatch (Missouri)

March 21, 2009 Saturday

FIRST EDITION

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Section: RELIGION; Pg. A24

Length: 1011 words

Byline: TIM TOWNSEND

Dateline: 0

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Graphic

PHOTO -

Load-Date: March 23, 2009

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Asia-Pacific news calendar

Agence France Presse -- English

November 13, 2008 Thursday 11:24 AM GMT

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Length: 1197 words

Dateline: HONG KONG, Nov 13 2008

Body

Asia-Pacific news calendar from Saturday, November 15 to Friday, December 12:

Saturday, November 15

BANGKOK: Main cremation ceremony for Thailand's late Princess Galyani

SINGAPORE: Activists in Singapore may stage the community's first outdoor gay rights protest

DHAKA: First anniversary of Cyclone Sidr, which left at least 3,500 people dead

BRISBANE, Australia: Rugby League. World Cup. First semi-final

Sunday, November 16

NAGOYA, Japan: Rugby Union. Test match. Japan v United States

SYDNEY: Rugby League. World Cup. Second semi-final

TOKYO: Athletics. Tokyo women's marathon

Monday, November 17

SINGAPORE: Government releases monthly trade figures for October

SRINAGAR, India: First phase of state polling in Indian Kashmir. (Last phase on Nov 30)

NEW DELHI: Two-day visit by Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak

MANILA: Government releases September overseas workers remittance data

MANILA: Government releases October balance of payments data

INDORE, India: Cricket. Second India-England ODI

Asia-Pacific news calendar

Tuesday, November 18

BANGKOK: Fourth hearing for alleged Russian arms dealer Viktor Bout

HONG KONG: Government releases unemployment statistics

KUALA LUMPUR: Tennis. Showdown of Champions exhibition match pits Federer v Blake and Borg v McEnroe.

Wednesday, November 19

LAUTOKA, Fiji: Football. World Cup qualifier. New Zealand v Fiji

Thursday, November 20

HONG KONG: Government releases consumer price index

TOKYO: Bank of Japan opens two-day policy meeting

TOKYO: Japan releases October trade statistics

MANILA: Central bank policy rate-setting meeting

DHAKA: Last date for filing nomination for Bangladesh elections

BRISBANE, Australia: Cricket. First Test. Australia v New Zealand (until Nov 24)

HONG KONG: Golf. Hong Kong UBS Open (until Nov 23)

MACAU: Tennis. Venetian Macau Showdown involving John McEnroe, Bjorn Borg, Roger Federer and James Blake

KANPUR, India: Cricket. Third India-England ODI

Friday, November 21

TOKYO: Bank of Japan governor Masaaki Shirakawa holds a press conference after policy meeting

MANILA: Release of central bank business confidence survey

Saturday, November 22

SINGAPORE: Exhibition showcasing popular Japanese comics and toys, Anime Festival Asia, begins (until Nov 23)

BANGKOK: Tennis. Exhibition match between legends Bjorn Borg and John McEnroe

BRISBANE, Australia: Rugby League. World Cup Final

Sunday, November 23

TOKYO: Thanksgiving Day

BANGALORE, India: Cricket. Fourth India-England ODI

TOKYO: Football. J-League matches

Monday, November 24

BANGKOK: Second ruling expected for Canadian paedophile Christopher Neil

Asia-Pacific news calendar

NAGASAKI, Japan: Roman Catholic Church to beatify 188 Japanese killed for their faith in the 17th century

TOKYO: Financial markets closed

CHIBA, Japan: Athletics. Chiba Ekiden long distance relay race

Tuesday, November 25

BHOPAL, India: State elections in Madhya Pradesh

Wednesday, November 26

COLOMBO: The leader of Sri Lanka's **Tamil Tigers**, Velupillai Prabhakaran, to deliver his annual policy address marking the rebels' 'Heroes' Day'

MANILA: Philippines releases September import data

SINGAPORE: Government releases monthly manufacturing figures for October

CUTTACK, India: Cricket. Fifth India-England ODI

Thursday, November 27

HONG KONG: Government releases external trade statistics

WELLINGTON: New Zealand trade data for October released

MANILA: GDP data for three months to September

MELBOURNE. Golf. Australian Masters (until Nov 30)

Friday, November 28

BANGKOK: Bank of Thailand's monthly economic report

TOKYO: Japan releases preliminary industrial production index for October, unemployment rate for October, Tokyo's consumer price index for November and nation's consumer price index for October

PHNOM PENH: Opening of "Where Elephants Weep," Cambodia's first rock opera

ADELAIDE, Australia: Cricket. Second Test. Australia v New Zealand (until Dec 2)

TOKYO: Figure skating. NHK Trophy (until Nov 30)

Saturday, November 29

NEW DELHI: State elections in the Indian capital region New Delhi, and the northeastern Indian state of Mizoram

HONG KONG: Christie's holds annual fall sale (until December 3)

BANGKOK: Thailand International Motor Expo, Asia's second-largest car show (until Dec 10)

MALACCA: Bollywood heartthrob Shah Rukh Khan to receive his Malaysian 'knighthood' amid controversy that the state award should be given to more deserving locals

SHENZHEN, China: Golf: World Cup (until Nov 30)

TOKYO: Football. J-League matches

Asia-Pacific news calendar

GUWAHATI, India. Cricket. Sixth India-England ODI

Sunday, November 30

TOKYO: Football. J-League matches

TOKYO: Japan Cup horse racing

Monday, December 1

BANGKOK: Thai inflation report

HONG KONG: Government releases retail sales statistics

Tuesday, December 2

SINGAPORE: Australian television correspondent Peter Lloyd to be sentenced on drug charges

HONG KONG: Clinton Global Initiative hosts two-day conference, featuring the former US president Bill Clinton, world leaders and activists

SINGAPORE: OSEA, billed as Asia's largest oil and gas exhibition and conference (until December 5)

NEW DELHI: Cricket. Seventh India-England ODI

Wednesday, December 3

BANGKOK: Bank of Thailand interest rate meeting

KUALA LUMPUR: International Petroleum Technology Conference hosted by Malaysian national energy firm Petronas (until December 5)

Thursday, December 4

JAIPUR, India: State elections in Rajasthan

YANGON: Myanmar marks National Day

COOLUM, Australia: Golf. Australian PGA Championship (until Dec 7)

Friday, December 5

PHNOM PENH: Khmer Rouge war crimes court reads decision on appeal of closing order against former prison chief Kaing Guek Eav alias Duch

MANILA: Philippines releases November inflation data

MANILA: November international reserves data

SINGAPORE: Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong to address foreign journalists

Saturday, December 6

TAICHUNG: Taiwan's Golden Horse Chinese-language film awards ceremony

AUCKLAND: Football. David Beckham's LA Galaxy play Oceania All Stars in exhibition match

TOKYO: Football. J-League matches

Asia-Pacific news calendar

PERTH, Australia: Cricket. Western Australia v South Africa

Sunday, December 7

SIEM REAP, Cambodia: US rock band The Click Five plays a concert at famed Angkor Wat temple

FUKUOKA, Japan: Athletics. Fukuoka marathon

TAKARAZUKA, Japan: Japan Cup Dirt horse racing

Monday, December 8

NEW DELHI: Results of elections in five Indian states -- Chhattisgarh, Madhya Pradesh, New Delhi, Mizoram, Rajasthan -- to be announced

TOKYO: Japan releases October balance of payments data

PHNOM PENH: Khmer Rouge war crimes court hearing on request to translate case file of former head of state Khieu Samphan

SIEM REAP, Cambodia: Cambodian Open golf tournament (until December 14)

Tuesday, December 9

TOKYO: Japan releases updated estimate of gross domestic product for July-September quarter

Wednesday, December 10

MANILA: October exports data

HONG KONG: 8th Hong Kong Trade Development Council World SME Expo (until Dec 12)

TOKYO: Japan publishes October machinery orders

SEOUL: Figure skating. ISU Grand Prix at Goyang (until December 14)

Thursday, December 11

AHMEDABAD: Cricket. Start of first India v England Test

DUNEDIN, New Zealand: Cricket. First Test - New Zealand v West Indies

TOKYO: Football. Waitakere (Oceania) vs the 2008 J-League champions

Friday, December 12

TOKYO: Japan releases revised October industrial production data

TOKYO: Kano Cup judo (until Dec 14)

afp

Load-Date: November 14, 2008

Sri Lankan official says army shelled hospital

Associated Press Online

February 2, 2009 Monday 2:48 AM GMT

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Section: INTERNATIONAL NEWS

Length: 658 words

Byline: By RAVI NESSMAN, Associated Press Writer

Dateline: COLOMBO Sri Lanka

Body

Three artillery barrages struck a hospital in Sri Lanka's chaotic war zone, slamming into its pediatrics ward and its women's wing and killing many patients, the region's top health official and international aid groups said.

Dr. Thurairajah Varatharajah said the shells in one of the attacks Sunday appeared to have been fired by the Sri Lankan army and killed five. They caused extensive damage to the overcrowded Puthukkudiyiruppu hospital, one of the last functioning health institutions inside rebel-held territory, he said.

The Red Cross said an earlier artillery attack killed two people. It did not say which side fired those shells. Varatharajah said only one person was killed in that attack.

A third attack hit the hospital about midnight Sunday, said U.N. spokesman Gordon Weiss.

"It seems to have struck the pediatric ward, a 30-bed ward filled to overflowing. The last communication that we had from our staff member on the ground was that they were still counting the dead," he said Monday.

Military spokesman Brig. Udaya Nanayakkara said the army was not responsible for the attack and blamed the rebels, known formally as the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam.

"Now the LTTE is firing very desperately everywhere artillery ... one of these shells may have fallen into that area," he said.

The military has repeatedly denied killing civilians in their offensive to wipe out the Tamil Tiger rebels and end the island nation's 25-year-old civil war with the ethnic separatist group.

Independent reports from the war zone are not available because journalists are barred from the area.

The attacks on the hospital came amid reports of growing casualties among ethnic Tamil civilians trapped with the rebels inside a tiny patch of jungle and small villages. The Red Cross estimates 250,000 are in the area, while the government says the number is smaller.

Varatharajah, the top health official in the northern Mullaitivu district, estimated last week that more than 300 civilians had been killed in the recent fighting. The government denied that. Varatharajah has not updated his estimate.

Sri Lankan official says army shelled hospital

Speaking by telephone from the hospital in Puthukkudiyiruppu, Varatharajah said the facility was hit by five artillery shells after 10 p.m. Sunday, the second attack of the day. Most of the shells landed in the women's ward, he said.

"There are five dead and a lot of casualties," he said.

Hospital workers were having trouble counting the injured because many staff members were too scared to leave their fortified bunkers and the hospital was suffering power cuts, he said.

The Red Cross, which has offices in the hospital, said the earlier attack in the afternoon killed at least two people and injured at least five others.

"We're shocked that the hospital was hit, and this for the second time in recent weeks," Paul Castella, head of the Colombo delegation of the International Committee of the Red Cross, said in a statement. "Wounded and sick people, medical personnel and medical facilities are all protected by international humanitarian law. Under no circumstance may they be directly attacked."

Both the rebels and the army know the location of the hospital, Varatharajah said.

The attack took place on a day of heavy fighting in the area, he said.

"There's heavy shelling where there are civilians," Varatharajah said. "They (the shells) are coming from the army side."

Well over 100 injured people came to the hospital during the day, he said.

The Red Cross said more than 500 patients were in the hospital, and the wounded continued to arrive despite the afternoon attack on the facility.

The hospital is so crowded that many patients were forced to sleep on mattresses in the corridor, it said.

The rebels have been fighting since 1983 for a separate homeland for ethnic minority Tamils in the north and east after decades of marginalization by governments controlled by the Sinhalese majority. More than 70,000 people have been killed in the civil war.

Load-Date: February 2, 2009

Top Naxal leader makes new revelations about guerrillas

Hindustan Times

March 11, 2008 Tuesday 4:02 PM EST

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Length: 647 words

Byline: Neelesh Misra Hindustan Times

Dateline: NEW DELHI, India

Body

NEW DELHI, India, March 11 -- The highest ranking Naxal leader in custody has rubbished many claims made by security agencies about the rebels, but acknowledged new challenges - a money crunch, tackling corruption among cadres, adapting to technology and reaching out to the middle class.

Misir Besra, 47, a member of the decision-making Politburo of the Naxalite organisation, made new revelations in an interview with the Hindustan Times as he awaited his court hearing in Ranchi. He said the Naxal organisation had spread to at least 15 states - though armed fighters were present in fewer states. He declined to give precise details but said there would be between 15,000 and 20,000 armed guerrillas in the Naxalite movement - with up to 40 per cent of them women.

The Naxal movement is now described by the government as India's largest security threat. It is the strongest force among all insurgent groups in India, who together have influence in one-third of the country. Besra said the Naxalites are now embarking on its biggest-ever transformation - ending the days of guerrilla ambushes to begin attacking in much larger armed formations.

"In guerrilla warfare, the aim is to attack suddenly in small groups, then withdraw and then vanish. We will have to take it from company formation to battalion formation ... guerrilla warfare to regular warfare," said Besra, who has received combat training like most other Naxalites.

"So far we do not have RDX (explosive) ... We are not using paper bombs yet ... There are no suicide squads, and no plans immediately to set them up," Besra said, referring to claims about Naxal operations and strategy by security officials in different states.

It is not possible to establish the authenticity of those statements. Hours before the Besra interview, a top police official told HT that RDX linked to Naxalites had been found in two places in Ranchi last year. But elsewhere, Indian security officials have in the past made unverified claims that created a spectre of militants' larger-than-life strength - like Kashmir rebels gaining access to chemical weapons, several anti-aircraft guns and even a dozen Stinger missiles, or purported links between Kashmir rebels and Nepal's Maoist or Sri Lanka's LTTE militants. Besra, soft-spoken and wearing a blue T-shirt and trousers, said other challenges were emerging, meanwhile.

"I cannot tell you about our funds. But yes, we are beginning to feel a financial crunch," said Besra, who earlier had organisation-building responsibilities.

"We are trying to step up fund collection in keeping with the growth of the movement.

Top Naxal leader makes new revelations about guerrillas

"As the struggle and war evolve, we also cannot succeed without the internet or technological advancement," he said. "We are short of computer engineers."

Besra said children are part of the army but claimed that they are not in the fighting force.

"They carry arms but they do not fight. A boy of 12 can keep a gun but not fight," Besra said, asserting that it was for self-defence. "He can go into the battlefield only when he is 16 or 17." Norms remain tough: In the villages, rapists are asked to marry their victims. Among Naxalites, marriages are allowed within the ranks but no illicit relationships - a rule sometimes broken. Thieves are beaten and made to return what they stole. Those found guilty of causing the death of fighters or damage to bunkers are summarily killed. Police spies are given up to three warnings, then killed, Besra said.

But several Naxal splinter groups have been created. Besra said it was mainly related to the stealing by some people of "levy" money - a tax charged by the rebels from government contractors, officials and companies. "There are instances," he said. "But whenever they take place, there is an investigation and a self-purification campaign."

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Sri Lankan hospital hit by shelling, 9 killed

Associated Press International

February 2, 2009 Monday 4:42 AM GMT

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Section: INTERNATIONAL NEWS

Length: 673 words

Byline: By RAVI NESSMAN, Associated Press Writer

Dateline: COLOMBO Sri Lanka

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They caused extensive damage to the overcrowded Puthukkudiyiruppu hospital, one of the last functioning health institutions inside rebel-held territory, he said.

"We're at a loss to understand why people would shell a hospital," said U.N. spokesman Gordon Weiss, who did not cast blame on either side for the attack.

The three attacks hit a kitchen, a chapel and the women and children's wing of the hospital, Red Cross spokeswoman Sarasi Wijeratne said Monday.

The attacks killed nine people and wounded 20 others, she said. The aid agency, which has offices in the hospital, did not say which side fired the shells.

The U.N. confirmed the hospital was hit several times Sunday by artillery shells throughout the day.

"It seems to have struck the pediatric ward, a 30-bed ward filled to overflowing. The last communication that we had from our staff member on the ground was that they were still counting the dead," Weiss said Monday.

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"Now the LTTE is firing very desperately everywhere artillery ... one of these shells may have fallen into that area," he said.

The military has repeatedly denied killing civilians in their offensive to wipe out the Tamil Tiger rebels and end the island nation's 25-year-old civil war with the ethnic separatist group.

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The attacks on the hospital came amid reports of growing casualties among ethnic Tamil civilians trapped with the rebels inside a tiny patch of jungle and small villages. The Red Cross estimates 250,000 are in the area, while the government says the number is smaller.

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"We're shocked that the hospital was hit, and this for the second time in recent weeks," Paul Castella, head of the Colombo delegation of the International Committee of the Red Cross, said in a statement. "Wounded and sick people, medical personnel and medical facilities are all protected by international humanitarian law. Under no circumstance may they be directly attacked."

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Both the rebels and the army know the location of the hospital, Varatharajah said.

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Well over 100 injured people came to the hospital during the day, he said.

The Red Cross said more than 500 patients were in the hospital, and the wounded continued to arrive despite the afternoon attack on the facility.

The hospital is so crowded that many patients were forced to sleep on mattresses in the corridor, it said.

The rebels have been fighting since 1983 for a separate homeland for ethnic minority Tamils in the north and east after decades of marginalization by governments controlled by the Sinhalese majority. More than 70,000 people have been killed in the civil war.

Load-Date: February 2, 2009

Sri Lanka's Tamils caught between Tigers and a hard place

Agence France Presse -- English

February 3, 2009 Tuesday 2:31 AM GMT

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Length: 651 words

Byline: Mel Gunasekera

Dateline: COLOMBO, Feb 3 2009

Body

Sri Lanka's government says it is on the verge of defeating Tamil Tiger rebels and ushering in peace after decades of ethnic bloodshed, but the island's main ethnic minority is as fearful as ever.

Ethnic Tamil civilians reduced to submission by the feared Tamil Tiger rebels are equally apprehensive of government forces even as the military announced it hoped to finish off the guerrillas by April.

"We are stuck between a rock and a hard place," said a silver-haired Tamil civil servant R. Sivapragasam as he sipped black tea outside a shop in Colombo's Tamil-dominated Wellawatte area, also known as "Little Jaffna."

The town of Jaffna in the north of the country is regarded as the Tamil cultural capital and the area was wrested from rebel control in 1995, but residents there still face severe travel restrictions.

"All terrorists are Tamils. So army people and some hardline (majority) Sinhalese people think we are (also) terrorists," Sivapragasam said. "We are not terrorists."

Last year the authorities evicted hundreds of Tamils from Colombo, saying they were a threat to national security. The move was stopped following court intervention after charges that it amounted to collective punishment.

Tamils make up 12.6 percent of the country's 20 million population and have been caught up in the 37-year-old dirty war waged in their name by the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE).

Not all Tamils support the Tigers and there are half a dozen Tamil political parties militantly opposed to the Tigers, who are now boxed into a small area in the island's northeast after losing much of their territory.

Trader S. Kumaran blames politicians, military officials and hardline Buddhists for stirring up ethnic differences.

"Over the years they have said things publicly that give the idea that Tamils are terrorists, so therefore bad people... Their message is that we are not wanted," Kumaran said.

Wellawatte is still known for shops that sell Indian saris, traditional Jaffna sweets and affordable vegetarian food. Catchy Tamil and Hindi music blares from rows of shops, food outlets and communication booths.

Sri Lanka 's Tamils caught between Tigers and a hard place

The crowded tiny lanes are dotted with crowded apartment blocks and low-budget hotels which are popular among Tamils fleeing the fighting and seeking shelter in the capital before heading abroad.

But gone are the days when Tamils mingled freely, where women wore heavy gold jewellery and the distinctive "pottu," the red-dot on their foreheads which instantly identified them as a Tamil Hindu and is now rarely seen.

"We don't want trouble with the police, the army," said R. Selvarajah, who runs the low-budget Ideal Guest Inn. "If you write about us, take our pictures, they will detain us for weeks, sometimes for months," he said.

Some of the fears may be more perceived than real, but the Tamils are generally living on edge. Selvarajah feels there is an anti-Tamil sentiment despite the government's often-declared policy of national reconciliation.

Most Tamils here believe they are singled out and detained for longer at checkpoints, said Raja Letchchami, a woman who lives near the coast.

"I am waiting for a visa to Canada," Letchchami said, explaining that she had an elder brother who sought political asylum there five years ago.

"There is no freedom for us," she says with a shrug when asked what she felt ahead of Sri Lanka's 61st independence anniversary celebrations Wednesday.

"What is freedom when our houses are often checked and army people think we are Tigers?"

Opposition legislator Mano Ganeshan, who is also a Tamil, says the speed with which the military is gaining ground should be matched with political attempts to bring about a lasting peace.

"I see very high-speed activity in the war theatre, but no speed in the political theatre," Ganeshan said.

"Until a permanent solution is found, Tamils will feel vulnerable. At the moment, we feel like unwanted guests in this country."

Load-Date: February 3, 2009

Sri Lankan hospital hit by shelling, 9 killed

Associated Press Online

February 2, 2009 Monday 6:57 AM GMT

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Section: INTERNATIONAL NEWS

Length: 673 words

Byline: By RAVI NESSMAN, Associated Press Writer

Dateline: COLOMBO Sri Lanka

Body

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"We're at a loss to understand why people would shell a hospital," said U.N. spokesman Gordon Weiss, who did not cast blame on either side for the attack.

The three attacks hit a kitchen, a chapel and the women and children's wing of the hospital, Red Cross spokeswoman Sarasi Wijeratne said Monday.

The attacks killed nine people and wounded 20 others, she said. The aid agency, which has offices in the hospital, did not say which side fired the shells.

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The rebels have been fighting since 1983 for a separate homeland for ethnic minority Tamils in the north and east after decades of marginalization by governments controlled by the Sinhalese majority. More than 70,000 people have been killed in the civil war.

Load-Date: February 3, 2009

S. Asian leaders call for joint efforts to combat terrorism

Japan Economic Newswire

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Dateline: COLOMBO Aug. 2

Body

South Asian leaders attending a regional summit here on Saturday called for evolving strategies for fighting the menace of terrorism.

The strongest call for collective efforts to fight terrorism was made by Afghan President Hamid Karzai, who is attending the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation summit for the first time.

He started his speech by condemning the recent attack on the Indian Embassy in Kabul and other terrorist acts in Afghanistan and India.

"It is time that we realize that the pursuit of narrow national interests and pursuit of militant terrorism cannot serve any long-term purpose," Karzai said.

"These terrorist acts point to an alarming threat. The wild fire of terrorism is spreading," he said. "Terrorism is by far the greatest threat facing us today. It puts our future generations at risk."

Karzai said that "terrorism and its sanctuaries are gaining greater grip in Pakistan," adding that terrorists are getting institutionalized nurturing and support in Pakistan.

Earlier the chairman of the summit, President Mahinda Rajapaksa of Sri Lanka, in his inaugural address said that most countries of the SAARC region were afflicted with terrorism and called upon the member states to collectively fight terrorism in all its forms.

"No country in the SAARC region has been spared of this plague," he said. "We must ensure strengthening regional legal mechanisms and intensifying intelligence sharing."

Sri Lanka has been wracked by civil war costing over 70,000 lives in over three decades of fighting between government forces and minority Tamil rebels of the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam, but Rajapaksa and his government insists that the conflict is not an ethnic problem but a terrorist problem.

Several countries in the West and elsewhere have banned the **LTTE** as a foreign terrorist organization, and Rajapaksa thanked "all our regional partners and our many friends in other quarters that have cooperated with us in this matter."

"Terrorism anywhere is terrorism," Rajapaksa said. "There are no good terrorists and bad terrorists."

S. Asian leaders call for joint efforts to combat terrorism

He said that Sri Lanka had benefited from global cooperation in combating terrorism adding that the ongoing military campaign in his country to "combat terrorism in our midst" would succeed "sooner than many once expected."

Chief Adviser of Bangladesh Fakhruddin Ahmad said, "The deadly fangs of terrorism are spreading across the region. They threaten to disrupt peace and stability."

"We condemn the heinous terrorist attacks in Afghanistan, India and Pakistan," he added.

Pakistani Prime Minister Yousaf Raza Gillani concurred that it was the joint responsibility of the member states to rid the region of the menace of terrorism.

"Though Pakistan has suffered the most, terrorism afflicts all countries of our region. It is our joint responsibility to rid our region of this scourge. We need to fight terrorism individually as well as collectively," he said.

Indian Prime Minister Manmohan Singh said terrorism is the single biggest threat to the stability of the South Asia region.

"Terrorism continues to rear its ugly head in our region. It remains the single biggest threat to our stability. We cannot afford to lose the battle against the ideologies of hatred, fanaticism and against all those who seek to destroy our social fabric," Singh said at the summit.

"We must jointly and with determination fight this scourge. We must defend the values of pluralism, peaceful co-existence and the rule of law," he said.

Citing the recent serial blasts in Bangalore and Ahmedabad, he said, "These are gruesome reminders of the barbarity that still finds a place in South Asia."

Bhutanian Prime Minister Lyonpo Jigme Yoser Thinley also joined the chorus against terrorism by declaring that even his "peaceful country too is being afflicted by this scourge and fear from transnational crimes."

"Regardless of how peaceful, sublime or even desperate a cause may be, it can never justify the means to kill and maim innocent men, women and children in the most cowardly and barbaric ways," he said.

The two-day summit is expected to adopt the Colombo Declaration and sign agreements for the setting up of SAARC Development Fund, a convention on mutual assistance in criminal matters and setting up of the South Asian Regional Standards Organization.

Set up in 1985, SAARC comprises Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Nepal, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, the Maldives and Afghanistan.

Load-Date: August 3, 2008

Sri Lankan hospital hit by shelling, 9 killed

The Associated Press

February 2, 2009 Monday

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Section: INTERNATIONAL NEWS

Length: 673 words

Byline: By RAVI NESSMAN, Associated Press Writer

Dateline: COLOMBO, Sri Lanka

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Load-Date: February 2, 2009

Report: Hospital hit

Telegraph Herald (Dubuque, IA)

February 2, 2009 Monday

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Section: C; Pg. 3

Length: 666 words

Byline: The Associated Press

Body

COLOMBO, Sri Lanka (AP) - Three artillery barrages struck a hospital in Sri Lanka's chaotic war zone, slamming into its pediatrics ward and its women's wing and killing many patients, the region's top health official and international aid groups said. Dr. Thurairajah Varatharajah said the shells in one of the attacks Sunday appeared to have been fired by the Sri Lankan army and killed five. They caused extensive damage to the overcrowded Puthukkudiyiruppu hospital, one of the last functioning health institutions inside rebel-held territory, he said. The Red Cross said an earlier artillery attack killed two people. It did not say which side fired those shells.

Varatharajah said only one person was killed in that attack. A third attack hit the hospital about midnight Sunday, said U.N. spokesman Gordon Weiss. "It seems to have struck the pediatric ward, a 30-bed ward filled to overflowing. The last communication that we had from our staff member on the ground was that they were still counting the dead," he said Monday. Military spokesman Brig. Udaya Nanayakkara said the army was not responsible for the attack and blamed the rebels, known formally as the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam. "Now the LTTE is firing very desperately everywhere artillery ... one of these shells may have fallen into that area," he said. The military has repeatedly denied killing civilians in their offensive to wipe out the Tamil Tiger rebels and end the island nation's 25-year-old civil war with the ethnic separatist group. Independent reports from the war zone are not available because journalists are barred from the area. The attacks on the hospital came amid reports of growing casualties among ethnic Tamil civilians trapped with the rebels inside a tiny patch of jungle and small villages. The Red Cross estimates 250,000 are in the area, while the government says the number is smaller. Varatharajah, the top health official in the northern Mullaitivu district, estimated last week that more than 300 civilians had been killed in the recent fighting. The government denied that. Varatharajah has not updated his estimate. Speaking by telephone from the hospital in Puthukkudiyiruppu, Varatharajah said the facility was hit by five artillery shells after 10 p.m. Sunday, the second attack of the day. Most of the shells landed in the women's ward, he said. "There are five dead and a lot of casualties," he said. Hospital workers were having trouble counting the injured because many staff members were too scared to leave their fortified bunkers and the hospital was suffering power cuts, he said. The Red Cross, which has offices in the hospital, said the earlier attack in the afternoon killed at least two people and injured at least five others. "We're shocked that the hospital was hit, and this for the second time in recent weeks," Paul Castella, head of the Colombo delegation of the International Committee of the Red Cross, said in a statement. "Wounded and sick people, medical personnel and medical facilities are all protected by international humanitarian law. Under no circumstance may they be directly attacked." Both the rebels and the army know the location of the hospital, Varatharajah said. The attack took place on a day of heavy fighting in the area, he said. "There's heavy shelling where there are civilians," Varatharajah said. "They (the shells) are coming from the army side." Well over 100 injured people came to the hospital during the day, he said. The Red Cross said more than 500 patients were in the hospital, and the wounded continued to arrive despite the afternoon attack on the facility. The

Report: Hospital hit

hospital is so crowded that many patients were forced to sleep on mattresses in the corridor, it said. The rebels have been fighting since 1983 for a separate homeland for ethnic minority Tamils in the north and east after decades of marginalization by governments controlled by the Sinhalese majority. More than 70,000 people have been killed in the civil war.

Load-Date: February 3, 2009

End of Document

Sri Lankan official says army shelled hospital

Associated Press International

February 2, 2009 Monday 2:48 AM GMT

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Section: INTERNATIONAL NEWS

Length: 658 words

Byline: By RAVI NESSMAN, Associated Press Writer

Dateline: COLOMBO Sri Lanka

Body

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Sri Lankan official says army shelled hospital

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Load-Date: February 2, 2009

Sri Lanka says 17 rebels killed in fighting

Broadcast News (BN)

July 12, 2008 Saturday

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Section: GENERAL AND NATIONAL NEWS

Length: 197 words

Byline: CP

Body

COLOMBO, Sri Lanka - Scattered fighting across Sri Lanka's embattled north and an attack on a passenger bus in the south killed 17 Tamil Tiger rebels and four civilians, the military said Saturday.

Suspected rebel gunmen fired at a passenger bus in southern Sri Lanka, killing a nine-year-old boy and three women, the military said in a statement.

Meanwhile, clashes broke out in the Mannar, Vavuniya and Welioya regions surrounding the rebel stronghold killed 17 rebels, the statement said. It said no soldiers were killed but some were wounded.

Military spokesman Rasiyah Ilanthirayan could not be immediately reached for comment and it was not possible to verify the military's claims because reporters are barred from the war zone.

The Tamil Tigers have been blamed for scores of suicide bombings and other attacks on civilians and are listed as a terror group by the United States, Canada, European Union and India.

The Tamil Tigers have been fighting since 1983 to create an independent state for ethnic minority Tamils, who have been marginalized by successive governments controlled by ethnic Sinhalese. More than 70,000 people have been killed in the conflict.

(The Associated Press)

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The Canadian Press(CP)

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Load-Date: July 12, 2008

1,200 Sri Lankans flee as rebels make final stand

Metro (UK)

March 23, 2009 Monday

Edition 1

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Section: NEWS; Pg. 19

Length: 186 words

Byline: Joel Taylor

Body

NEARLY 1,200 refugees have fled the final **Tamil Tigers** stronghold in Sri Lanka, as government troops yesterday braced for a bloody battle to the end.

More than 1,000 people, including 380 children, reached army-controlled areas, while another 100 fled by boat.

About 150,000 civilians are still trapped in the war zone, the UN estimates, where militants are accused of using them as human shields.

The rebels - fighting a 26-year war of independence in which 70,000 have died - are confined to an area of 28 sq km (11 sq miles), along with thousands of trapped civilians.

Tamil Tigers have been fighting for an independent state for the ethnic group, long marginalised by governments dominated by the Sinhalese majority.

The long-running civil war has surged this year - about 2,800 people have died after getting caught up in fighting.

But yesterday the refugees fled Puthukkudiyirippu, the last town held by the rebels in north-east Sri Lanka. Meanwhile, thousands of Tamils who have moved to the capital Colombo were forced to register with police.

The scheme is meant to stem terrorism but rights groups call it intimidation.

Graphic

Checks: Tamils get searched arriving in Colombo, left, while **women** walk with a sentry guard

Pictures: Reuters

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End of Document

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Load-Date: March 23, 2009

End of Document

Defending the North

Sunday Observer (Sri Lanka)

September 28, 2008 Sunday 2:03 PM EST

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Length: 1637 words

Byline: Report from the Sri Lanka Sunday Observer brought to you by HT Syndication.

Dateline: Colombo

Body

Colombo, Sept. 28 -- It was very encouraging to see President Mahinda Rajapaksa addressing the United Nations General Assembly in our own languages, not just in Sinhala but in Tamil as well. It symbolizes to the global community that we are confident of a solution ending terrorism in our own way.

The North of Sri Lanka includes cleared, newly liberated and non-liberated areas - i.e. Jaffna, Vavuniya, Mannar, Mulaithivu districts as well as the Tiger bastion, the Kilinochchi district.

Separated from India by a narrow strip of sea, Jaffna is the home for 546,673 men, women and children. Out of a total area of 983.6 square kilometres, 955.7 are cleared leaving only 27.9 as uncleared areas. Only Vadamarachchi East is not fully cleared.

Jaffna is a unique set up. Since its liberation from the Tiger clutches the Sri Lanka army is in charge of the total security of the area.

Though the totally liberated Mannar is getting ready for the development activities the partly liberated Mulaithivu and Kilinochchi districts are facing a volatile situation at present.

With the current military operation taking place in the Wanni Forward Defence Lines, if the civilians trapped inside can arrive at the Government controlled areas, they will be truly well taken care of.

The Government, in association with the renowned International Non Governmental Organizations such as the UN agencies and the Sri Lanka Army have set up the necessary assistance to these innocent people coming in seeking for help, safety and above all a ray of hope for their unfortunate lives.

"We are ready to assist these innocent people on their arrival. Food stocks, shelter, water and sanitation and other health facilities are available without any room for shortcomings," the Secretary to the Ministry of Resettlement and Disaster Relief Services, A. C. M. Razik told the 'Sunday Observer'. According to Razik the Government has allocated a total sum of 1760 million rupees for resettlement programming, maintaining welfare camps and providing facilities. Under the instructions of Minister Rishad Bathiudeen the Resettlement Ministry is conducting the lengthy process of resettling displaced people in the Northern Province.

One would wonder where would be those so-called 'Humanitarian agencies' demanding respect for human rights all over the world? Aren't these innocent Tamil people creatures of this planet? Why can't they pronounce louder so that the Tigers can hear what they are saying instead of the dull statements calling the attention of 'concerned parties'? Does the Sri Lanka Army forcefully keep those people in the LTTE target spots? At times it is hilarious

Defending the North

how these international organizations are unable to understand the mere fact that these are Tiger held areas and no other activity can than nourishing and watering terrorism can take place within these territories other? What liberation does the **LTTE** seek for their own people by forcefully keeping them under their control? Aren't they are the culprits who should free these people to go to safety? What safety can they assure when they are losing heavily day by day?

With immense gratitude to the Sri Lankan Security Forces let us keep in mind that the entire Mannar district is now under Government control.

The initial ground clearing processes are going on under the Sri Lanka Army. Under the Jathika Saviya program operated by the Ministry of Nation Building and Estate Infrastructure the required heavy equipment to clear the land and level down the huge bunker lines made by excavating the fertile soil of the 'Rice Bowl' are already handed over to the Army.

The recovery

The key policy objective of the Government with regard to development is to develop all villages in the country so that they emerge as micro centre of growth on modern lines. The village should be able to retain its decent and comfortable nature for people to live, work and engage in their cultural and communal activities.

Remember, for a long time we were a nation of village communities. The large majority of the population live in the rural areas. If it to be successful, any development initiative should give due recognition to this reality.

For development

According to the 2007 performance report of the Ministry of Nation Building a total of 132.7 million rupees was allocated for the Jaffna District for many community infrastructure development and rehabilitation programs. Out of which 77.24 million rupees were allocated for a Housing scheme for people living below the poverty line in all DS divisions and another 14.334 million rupees for the repairs and rehabilitation of rural roads in Delft Island south, Valikamum East, Nallur, Kopay and Thennamarachchi DS divisions.

Kilinochchi

Though the implementation is difficult, the Government has allocated 38.5 million rupees for the development activities in the Kilinochchi district.

Mullaitivu

A total allocation of 22.64 million rupees is for the Mullaitivu district for many infrastructure development activities in the district including repair and reconstructing road networks, building libraries and public halls and developing livelihood development programs etc.

Vavuniya

A total allocation of 35.46 million rupees to serve number of sectors which includes reconstruction of roads, development of rural hospitals and school buildings, reconstructing irrigation systems as well as drainage systems etc.

Mannar

Rupees 5.43 million allocated for the Mannar district in year 2007 for supply of electricity, constructing multi-purpose buildings, improving school facilities and many other infrastructure development activities.

Resettling

The Ministry of Resettlement awaits the final report from the Jaffna District Secretary (GA) on the eligible people to be resettled in Jaffna High Security Zone. Following two fundamental rights applications that were filed in 2003 and

Defending the North

2004 in the Supreme Court, a five member special committee was set up on the directive of the Chief Justice Sarath N. Silva on June 23, 2008 under the chairmanship of the High Court Judge, Jaffna. The Committee comprises Government Agent Jaffna K. Ganesh, Jaffna Security Forces Commander Major General G.A. Chandrasiri, Rear Admiral T.S.G. Samarasinghe and the D.I.G. Police (Jaffna) W.F.U. Fernando. Applications received are being scrutinized by the GA.

According to the Jaffna GA's report, as of 18th July 2008, the Ministry of Resettlement and Disaster Relief Services provide relief items to 19,905 families and assisted by the Ministry of Samurdhi and Poverty alleviation 53,636 families are supported. Under the Ministry of Nation Building as a World Food Program project 43,103 families are supported. With the completion of the Chunnakum power generation plant which will provide 30 mega watts to the national grid under the Ceylon Electricity Board, Jaffna will be benefited with round the clock power supply in 2-3 months.

Mannar - "The plans are already finalized in resettling people in the Musali area of Mannar," Advisor and the former Secretary to the Ministry of Nation Building M. S. Jayasinghe said explaining the past and present development programs taking place in the Mannar district of the Northern Province. The MNARECAP program that commenced in 2004 with funding and technical assistance from JICA has already been completed. In 2004 March the MANRECAP program commenced with a number of MoUs signed between the Government of Sri Lanka and JICA on Japanese Technical Cooperation and Japanese experts were sent to commence this program in Mannar. By early 2008 the program finalised its scheduled development activities.

"Such development measures will continue for these people with the liberation of the un-cleared areas," Jayasinghe added. In addition the Ceylon Electricity Board is providing electricity to the areas in Mannar under a grant provided by the Asian Development Bank. The Gama Neguma and Maga Neguma programs are taking place in the area.

"Our effort is to make the returning more sustainable," UN Development Program Senior Program Manager Wuria Karadaghy told us when we met him at a discussion held at the Ministry of Nation Building. The UNDP provides the technical and management services. After the Ceasefire Agreement the UNDP had built 2300 permanent houses for returnees from Mannar, Kilinochchi, Vavuniya, Jaffna, Trincomalee - jointly assisted by the respective district Secretaries and UNHCR. Housing is part of the integrated package for the returnees, Wuria said.

Along with it livelihood development for farmers, fishermen, businessmen and even small scale entrepreneurs is provided - both financial and technical support as required. The main target is a sustainable livelihood development.

"When the people are strengthened, especially in terms of economy and socially, it directly affects the country's stability in a very positive manner. I have witnessed this even in many other countries as well," he added.

"Initially in a post-conflict situation the early recovery is essential. The people need quick impact projects," he said further explaining their plans in resettling the Musali area.

"These programs will not be stopped hereafter. When more areas are liberated by the Government we are ready to continue these development programs with the assistance from the Government," he noted. Under the reawakening project for Mannar under the World Bank funding worth of 300 million rupees the gem of the Rice bowl - the Giants' Tank - will be reconstructed along with the main irrigation canals of the system. Government servants, religious leaders or any person can reach the relevant authorities of the Army whenever they need their services. We are not paying more attention to the voices of terrorists than those of their victims.

Published by HT Syndication with permission from the Sri Lanka Sunday Observer.

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For any query with respect to this article or any other content requirement, please contact Editor at htsyndication@hindustantimes.com

Defending the North

Load-Date: October 1, 2008

End of Document

Warning Over Child Soldiers; 'Real change' urged to protect tens of thousands

National Post (f/k/a The Financial Post) (Canada)

May 21, 2008 Wednesday

All But Toronto Edition

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Section: WORLD; Pg. A12

Length: 1608 words

Byline: Mary Vallis, National Post

Body

Tens of thousands of children worldwide are being forced to fight wars by rebel groups or their own governments despite international efforts to end the problem, says a new global report by the Coalition to Stop the Use of Child Soldiers.

The 400-page report, which documents the use of child soldiers in 17 conflicts, was released days after the Pakistani military warned extremists are training children to conduct suicide attacks there.

It also follows last week's attack on two Canadian soldiers in Afghanistan by a suicide bomber believed to be no older than 13.

Nine governments deployed children in armed conflicts in 2004-07, among them Burma, Sudan, Chad and the Democratic Republic of Congo.

Armies in eight countries also used former child soldiers as spies, informants or messengers, instead of returning them to their families or enrolling them in rehabilitation programs.

"Despite the high level of attention on the issue, the impact of that attention is yet to be felt by many children who are, or are at risk of becoming child soldiers," the report notes.

"Laws, policies and practices must now be translated into real change to keep children out of armed conflict once and for all," said Dr. Victoria Forbes Adam, the coalition's director.

Her remarks were echoed by a speaker at a conference on war, immigration and trauma hosted by the Hospital for Sick Children in Toronto last week.

"Words on paper are important," Olara Otunnu, a former UN special representative for children and armed conflict, told the Conference on Child Psychotherapies & Development.

"But words on paper alone cannot save women and children in danger."

It is impossible to estimate the number of child soldiers worldwide, but the figure is in the "tens of thousands," says the coalition.

Warning Over Child Soldiers; 'Real change' urged to protect tens of thousands

Children are also fighting with rebel groups in at least 24 countries, including Sri Lanka, Colombia and Thailand.

When the coalition released its last report in 2004, children in 27 countries were directly involved in conflicts; tens of thousands have since been released from service.

But the downward trend does not represent progress, according to the report. Rather, it is "more the result of conflicts ending than the impact of initiatives to end child soldier recruitment and use."

The answer, says the Coalition to Stop the Use of Child Soldiers is more -- more funding to protect children, more political support and more action on the ground over the next four years. **Female** child soldiers are especially vulnerable and require long-term support to recover from rape and to raise children born of conflict, Dr. Forbes Adam said.

The coalition singled out Burma as the "most persistent government offender," in part because large numbers of boys below the age of 18 are forcibly recruited by its army and used in combat.

Burmese recruiters have "coerced street children and children at bus and train stations," the report says. "Some children were threatened with jail if they did not agree to join the army."

Western nations are also singled out in the report, including Britain, the United States and Canada.

The coalition praised Canada for its support of international efforts to help child soldiers. But it also criticized Ottawa as one of 63 nations that allows its military to recruit minors.

The coalition defines a child soldier as anybody who is recruited into a military force before the age of 18. The Canadian government allows citizens as young as 16 to enrol in the reserves and its Regular Officer Training Plan (junior program).

Its report says there were 139 16-and 17-year-olds in the regular Canadian armed forces as of July, 2007, while another 2,194 were enrolled in the reserves.

Dr. Forbes Adam said Canada should set its minimum voluntary recruitment age at 18.

The National Defence Act prohibits Canadian Forces members under the age of 18 from being deployed to hostile zones.

Britain deployed at least 15 soldiers aged 17 to Iraq in 2003-05, including four **female** soldiers and has "appeared to intensify its efforts to recruit under-18s."

mvallis@nationalpost.com-----

(See hardcopy for Map) - COTE D'IVOIRE

Children were recruited for use in pro-government militias and the armed opposition group Forces armees des Forces nouvelles at least until late 2005. Active recruitment of children appeared to have stopped from October 2006, but by late 2007 children reportedly continued despite concerted efforts at demobilization. - COLOMBIA

Children were both forcibly and voluntarily recruited and used by the two armed opposition groups, the FARC and the ELN. They were used as combatants and to lay mines and explosives. Girls were subjected to sexual abuse.

Government forces used captured and surrendered child soldiers as spies. - CHAD

Increased recruitment of children by Chadian armed forces and Chadian and Sudanese armed groups was reported in 2006 and 2007, along Chad's eastern border with Sudan and from its refugee camps. An estimated 7,000 to 10,000 children remained in armed forces and groups in September 2007. - Democratic Republic Of Congo

Warning Over Child Soldiers; 'Real change' urged to protect tens of thousands

An estimated 7,000 child soldiers remained in government forces and armed groups. They were used as combatants, porters, guards and sexual slaves. Children were recruited from refugee camps in Rwanda. - SUDAN

Thousands of child soldiers were recruited and used by armed forces, government-backed militias and armed opposition groups in Sudan.

Recruitment of children from refugee camps in Chad occurred in 2006. Disarmament, demobilization and reintegration (DDR) efforts were hampered by ongoing conflict in Darfur and the lack of basic infrastructure for successful reintegration in the south. - CENTRAL AFRICAN REPUBLIC

The Popular Army for the Restoration of the Republic and Democracy (APRD) and the Union of Democratic Forces (UFDR) used children in hostilities which broke out in early 2005. By Oct. 2007, children were thought to be present in government forces, but were not believed to be involved in hostilities. - ISRAEL

The minimum age of conscription was 18 with volunteers accepted from 17. Military training was widespread for under-18s. Israeli military forces continued to arrest large numbers of Palestinian children, some of whom were tortured during detention. Palestinian and Lebanese armed groups launched attacks on Israeli civilian targets, killing and injuring a number of Israeli children. - BURUNDI

Children were recruited and used by the armed opposition group FNL. Government forces continued to use captured child soldiers for intelligence-gathering. Scores of children accused of membership of or support for the FNL were illegally detained and some were tortured in detention. - IRAQ

There were no reports of under-18s serving in the Iraqi armed forces formed in 2003 after the US-led occupation. Armed political groups reportedly used children as combatants. - UGANDA

Up to 2,000 women and children remained with the opposition Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) in October 2007. They included girl soldiers who had been raped and bore children. Children were abducted and used by the LRA in combat. Children were also recruited and used by the national army. - INDIA

There were allegations that children were recruited by government-supported anti-Maoist village defence forces. Armed groups, including Maoists and groups in Jammu and Kashmir and in the north-east, were reported to be using children. Children caught in armed groups were detained in conflict areas. - SOMALIA

The recruitment and use of child soldiers significantly increased, with thousands of child soldiers involved in all parties to hostilities which escalated in 2006. Intense fighting resulted in large numbers of civilian deaths and injuries, among them many children, and massive displacement. - NEPAL

Under the 2006

Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) parties were committed not to use or enlist children in any military force. There were no further reports of government forces using children, but Maoist recruitment of children continued after the April 2006 ceasefire and there were delays in the registration and release of under-18 Maoist personnel. - AFGHANISTAN

There were anecdotal reports of under-18s serving in the armed forces. There were reports of the use of children as suicide bombers by anti-government elements including the Taliban, and of both forcible and voluntary recruitment by the Taleban of children in southern provinces and parts of Pakistan. - BURMA

Thousands of children continued to be recruited and used in the army and in armed political groups, as the army continued its expansion drive and internal armed conflict persisted in some areas of the country.

Although the government took some steps to address the issue, a formal disarmament, demobilization and reintegration (DDR) program was not in place. - SRI LANKA

Warning Over Child Soldiers; 'Real change' urged to protect tens of thousands

The Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (**LTTE**) continued to recruit and use children, despite repeated commitments not to do so. Children in the east of the country were forcibly recruited and used by the Karuna group, a breakaway group of the **LTTE**, with the complicity of, and in some instances actively working with, the security forces. - THAILAND

There were no reports of under-18s in the armed forces. Children were reported to be involved with armed separatist groups in the south. Refugees from Burma included former child soldiers recruited by the Burma armed forces and armed political groups. - PHILIPPINES

There were no reports of under-18s in government armed forces; legislation was in force to protect children from military recruitment. There continued to be reports of children being used by government-linked paramilitaries and armed opposition groups.

Graphic

Map:; (See hardcopy for Map) ;

Load-Date: May 21, 2008

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News items from Asia-Pacific Desk of Xinhua

Xinhua General News Service
March 6, 2009 Friday 9:10 PM EST

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Section: WORLD NEWS; Political

Length: 859 words

Dateline: HONG KONG March 6

Body

Following are news items from the Asia-Pacific Desk of Xinhua in Hong Kong Friday:

Dollar drops to lower 97 yen in Tokyo

Cambodia marks International **Women's** Day

India waves farewell to MiG23 BN fighters

Foreign exchange rates in Hong Kong -- March 6

S. Korea, EU face car industry opposition in FTA negotiation

DPRK, UNC finish military talks without significant outcome

S. Korea likely to issue sovereign bond issuance

UN chief concerned over attack on Sri Lankan cricket team in Pakistan

(Recast) DPRK, UNC finish military talks without significant outcome

Foreign exchange rates in India

Malaysia stock market closes higher

Foreign exchange rates in Malaysia

Malaysia tin market closes unchanged

China Enterprises Index down 1.67 pct -- March 6

Trading on Hong Kong Stock Exchange -- March 6

Foreign exchange rates in Singapore

Gold price close higher in Hong Kong -- March 6

World music festival begins in Australia's Adelaide

News items from Asia-Pacific Desk of Xinhua

Major foreign exchange rates in Sri Lanka

ADB helps Laos improve infrastructure

Indian Army analyzes non-state forces like Taliban, Hezbollah, LTTE

Singapore shares end 0.36 pct lower

Drugs seized from prisoner in HK reception center

Xinhua Asia-Pacific news summary at 1000 GMT, March 6

Roundup: HK stocks end down following U.S. markets' plunge

Colombo stocks close up

Hong Kong Flower Show to feature Cosmos as theme flower

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Malaysia's external trade down 29.7 pct in January

3 killed in tension in south Nepal district

1,000 bridges face collapse in Nepal

Thai stocks up 0.58 percent

India cull 644 birds to contain bird flu

Indian stock market closes higher

Former Pakistani president to attend seminar in India

Urgent: 2 killed in chopper crash in southern India

(Recast) Malaysia stock market closes lower

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Xinhua summary of Asia-Pacific stocks news at 1100 GMT, March 6

Weather information for Asia Pacific cities -- March 6

Indian Tamil lawyers indicted for violent clashes with police over Sri Lanka

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News items from Asia-Pacific Desk of Xinhua

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Security lapses blamed for attack on Sri Lankan cricket team in Pakistan: report

2nd LD Writethru: India successfully test fires indigenous interceptor missile

Interview: Vietnamese economic growth to slow to 4.5 pct in Q1: expert

Singapore endorses OECD standard for information exchange

Civilian shot dead in S Thailand

Bangladeshi investigators identify 100 mutineers through film footage

Thai premier to face oppositions during upcountry tour

Myanmar sees most migratory birds in 3 years

Myanmar to hold gems show this weekend

Volcano eruption in Java of Indonesia not dangerous: official

Indonesia, South Korea vow to step up cooperation in defense, energy, trade

Vietnamese export to India surges in 2008

Indian medical aid on way for Sri Lanka's war displaced civilians

Nepal forms committee to phase out older oil tankers

Nepal, India to open re-exports, trade via air

(Sports) Myanmar soccer team makes preparation for 25th SEA Games

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HK shop owners arrested for sales dishonesty

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Myanmar needs more humanitarian aid for mentally-affected cyclone victims

Malaysia's int'l reserves drop slightly in February

(Sports)Hong Kong wins first clash of 2009 Davis Cup

News items from Asia-Pacific Desk of Xinhua

(Sports)Results of Davis Cup Asia/Oceania Zone Group II Hong Kong vs Philippines

Japan hands over rice grains to Nepal to supply food deficit districts

(Sports) Bangladesh club draws with Nepal Red

Malaysian fisherman found using WWII bomb as anchor

Nepali communist PM receives message of thanks from Obama

Foreign hand not ruled out in attack on Sri Lankan cricket team in Pakistan: official

Pakistan army seizes two tons of opium

HK's major drainage project to complete in 2012

(Sports) Nepal organizes national karate championship

Hong Kong alerts patients to danger of tainted drugs

Sri Lanka says int'l aids to war displaced civilians must go through gov't

Xinhua Asia-Pacific news summary at 1600 GMT, March 6

2nd Ld-Writethru: 3 Indian air force pilots killed in plane crash

Load-Date: March 7, 2009

End of Document

Over 250 fleeing Tigers reach safe zone

Daily News (Sri Lanka)

February 5, 2009 Thursday

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Length: 182 words

Dateline: Colombo

Body

Colombo, Feb. 5 -- Nearly 264 civilians fleeing the LTTE grip in Puthukudiyiruppu had reached the safe zone in Visuamadu yesterday morning.

Military spokesman Brigadier Udaya Nanayakkara said 264 civilians including women and children had reached Visuamadu fleeing the LTTE in Puthukudiyiruppu. "These civilians who had faced LTTE hardship had arrived in the safe zone seeking protection with security forces," he added. Brigadier Nanayakkara said the number of civilians fleeing the LTTE grip was increasing daily in the Mullaitivu district. "The LTTE is using civilians as a human shield to slow down troops advancing to liberate the last area of the LTTE territory in Mullaitivu. However, civilians are reaching the safe zone by taking safe passages declared by the Security Forces amid Tiger atrocities," Brigadier Nanayakkara told the Daily News. According to military sources, civilians undergoing unprecedented hardships in the Vanni said the LTTE was dragging civilians to the battlefield to man their defence lines. Published by HT Syndication with permission from Daily News Sri Lanka.

For any query with respect to this article or any other content requirement, please contact Editor at htsyndication@hindustantimes.com

Load-Date: May 5, 2009

News items from Asia-Pacific Desk of Xinhua

Xinhua General News Service
March 6, 2009 Friday 1:18 AM EST

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Section: WORLD NEWS; Political

Length: 859 words

Dateline: HONG KONG March 6

Body

Following are news items from the Asia-Pacific Desk of Xinhua in Hong Kong Friday:

Dollar drops to lower 97 yen in Tokyo

Cambodia marks International **Women's** Day

India waves farewell to MiG23 BN fighters

Foreign exchange rates in Hong Kong -- March 6

S. Korea, EU face car industry opposition in FTA negotiation

DPRK, UNC finish military talks without significant outcome

S. Korea likely to issue sovereign bond issuance

UN chief concerned over attack on Sri Lankan cricket team in Pakistan

(Recast) DPRK, UNC finish military talks without significant outcome

Foreign exchange rates in India

Malaysia stock market closes higher

Foreign exchange rates in Malaysia

Malaysia tin market closes unchanged

China Enterprises Index down 1.67 pct -- March 6

Trading on Hong Kong Stock Exchange -- March 6

Foreign exchange rates in Singapore

Gold price close higher in Hong Kong -- March 6

World music festival begins in Australia's Adelaide

News items from Asia-Pacific Desk of Xinhua

Major foreign exchange rates in Sri Lanka

ADB helps Laos improve infrastructure

Indian Army analyzes non-state forces like Taliban, Hezbollah, LTTE

Singapore shares end 0.36 pct lower

Drugs seized from prisoner in HK reception center

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Xinhua Asia-Pacific news summary at 1600 GMT, March 6

2nd Ld-Writethru: 3 Indian air force pilots killed in plane crash

Load-Date: March 8, 2009

End of Document

'We are running out of boys in this country'

The Irish Times

February 24, 2009 Tuesday

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Section: WORLD; Other World Stories; Pg. 12

Length: 1184 words

Body

Sri Lanka has paid a terrible price for its 25-year war with the Tamil Tigers, writes **MARK MAGNIER** in Kuliyaipitiya, Sri Lanka

THE WHITE tattered strips line the main road to Kuliyaipitiya, hanging off telephone poles and fence posts, each one signifying another funeral, another loss, another hole punched in the heart of a family.

A few miles away, in the centre of town, ribbons of another sort decorate the chest of a commando at a recruiting post who is working to impress a group of teenage boys.

A recent surge by the Sri Lankan army, boosted by an aggressive expansion of its forces, has prompted the government to predict that victory is just around the corner in its 25-year war with the Tamil Tiger rebels who have sought to carve out a homeland in the north and east of this island nation.

Amid the rising euphoria, however, some question whether these hardened fighters will go away that easily, whether the human toll will really end, whether the white ribbons will stop fluttering at every turn.

Sri Lanka has paid a huge price, in economic loss, social and political strain, destroyed infrastructure and human lives, for its long civil war. Almost everyone in this nation of 20 million has been touched.

However it is the rice and coconut-growing areas such as Kuliyaipitiya district with its 150,000 population that have paid the highest toll.

The government's all-volunteer army has found fertile ground for recruiting in rural areas where job prospects are limited and the army offers adventure, a uniform and a decent pay cheque of about EUR 156 a month.

Join the winning side, says a nationwide radio advertisement.

Recently, funerals in these parts have been running about two or three a week, says Chandana Bulathsinhala, an aide to the local opposition lawmaker, adding steadily, relentlessly, to the area's estimated 5,000 casualties since the war's inception – a staggering one in 30 people.

Bulathsinhala estimates that 99 per cent of the recruits sign up for economic reasons, with many schoolchildren now wanting to be soldiers rather than doctors or lawyers.

War is always cruel, but the media has promoted good war news, so more people are encouraged to join, he says.

'We are running out of boys in this country'

As families in the community confront the human toll, the war machine continues to draw in new recruits. At the Kuliapitiya urban council complex in town, a bus ringed with loudspeakers and posters of fighting men lures new enthusiasts.

When you come to the interview, bring your stuff and be ready to go, advises a nearby poster showing a soldier in a Rambo-style pose.

A few miles away, Kusuma Gunawardana sits on a hard bed trying to make sense of it all, a cat curled at her side, tears running down her worn face. Her son, a soldier in the Sri Lankan army, has been missing since mid- January. Nationwide, the number of missing is in the thousands, the result of desertions, front lines that have shifted repeatedly and dense jungle that can decompose a body in rapid order.

Nor is she sure she can believe what the government news channels say.

Her older son, also in the army, told her the situation is often significantly different from the rosy images beamed on the channels. She just wants her family back. I can't think about what happened to my son, she says. I believe he's still alive.

Down the road, Jayantha Perera (33) has doubts about a quick end to the war, but for different reasons. It's been going on so long that to him the wrapping-up seems too fantastic.

As he talks in a living room decorated with a military calendar and the family's foot-powered sewing machine, he remembers the pride he felt when his older brother Samantha left for the war.

Samantha hasn't been heard from in more than a decade and is presumed dead, one of the 4,000 soldiers and 12,000 Sri Lankan civilians and fighters with the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam missing in the war, according to estimates by the Association of War Affected Women, a civic group based in the city of Kandy.

As he talks, Perera's ageing father suddenly erupts into a wail of grief.

It happens two or three times a day, Perera says; he's been on a downward slide since his son's disappearance. The family no longer keeps pictures of Samantha around, except for one fading shot of his regiment, to avoid upsetting his father even more.

Farther down the back roads of the community, posters glorify those who died as placards urge citizens to donate blood, using pictures of neighbours who have already signed up and shipped out as an incentive.

Brother you have not died, you bloom as a flower among us, reads a poster marking the death of a commando who died recently at Elephant Pass.

A few feet from the commando with a chest decked with ribbons, Koolitha Manchanayaka (19) waits by the recruiting bus talking to friends after signing up.

The teenager is accompanied by his father and a cousin and is ready to fulfil a dream he's had since he was 17.

His parents were reluctant to let him go, he said, but he eventually persuaded them after promising to be careful. For added security, he wears a pirith cord, a string worn around the wrist, blessed by monks at a nearby Buddhist temple.

Sure, there is a risk that he will be captured or killed, he says. It could happen to anyone, but I'm not scared, he says, his eyes alight with excitement. This is the right time to go. If I'm not involved at this decisive time, there's no point.

The military added 40,000 recruits in each of the last two years, says Brig Udaya Nanayakkara, a military spokesman, to reach the current 180,000 level for the armed forces.

'We are running out of boys in this country'

Those with missing family members receive a death settlement after one year of about \$750 for single soldiers and \$1,500 for married, along with other pension and insurance payouts.

Labourer KG Salen Fernando (63) of Galkapuyaya village, says his family didn't receive anything from the government when his son disappeared 17 years ago.

A decade or so back, the family finally conceded that their boy wasn't coming back, he said, but without ever seeing his body, the realisation was very difficult to accept. He died for the sake of the country, so I'm proud, the father says, through a toothless jaw. But they didn't even give us five cents. We'd be happy if they paid us something.

Visaka Dharmadasa, the founder of the Association of War Affected Women, says the disappearance of one of her sons eight years ago was the catalyst for starting the group, which aims to make the government and the International Committee of the Red Cross more accountable.

The association now numbers 2,000 members. Even though it has been nearly a decade since she last saw her missing son, she says she still waits expectantly. There's always hope, she says. It's not going to help anyone when you deny the existence of a person.

Gunawardana's agony is still fresh, as she reflects on Tamil mothers on the other side who must be experiencing some of the same pain.

In the north, they're going through the same suffering we have, she says. We are running out of boys in this country. We don't need a war with the north to lose more children.

Load-Date: February 24, 2009

End of Document

Terrorist attack will not stop IPL

The Sunday Telegraph (London)

March 8, 2009

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The Sunday Telegraph

Section: SPORT; Cricket; Pg. 6

Length: 1182 words

Byline: SCYLD BERRY CRICKET CORRESPONDENT

Body

INTERNATIONAL cricketers are wearing black armbands in various parts of the world this weekend. None of them can know what he or she - for the Women's World Cup is being staged in Australia - is mourning exactly.

It could simply be the eight people killed in Lahore on Tuesday when the Sri Lankan team coach was attacked. Or the black armbands could mark the demise of cricket in Pakistan, which has produced more than its share of the sport's most exciting players. David Morgan, the International Cricket Council president, said yesterday: "International cricket in Pakistan is out of the question for quite some time." Or, at the worst, the country itself could disintegrate, along with cricket's latest growth area, Afghanistan.

Whatever the future, cricket lost what was left of its innocence when the gunmen opened fire near the Gaddafi stadium and the number of security personnel who fired back, in defence of the Sri Lankan players and match officials, was suspiciously few. The process begun at Headingley in 1975, when protesters poured oil on the pitch on the fourth night of the Test against Australia, was completed last week. Nothing in cricket is sacred: everything and everyone is as vulnerable to violence as in ordinary life. Cricket is the most vulnerable of sports, partly because it takes the longest time, and there can be no stability in such an abnormal society as the present Pakistan.

Since the 1950s, the armed services have taken most of the country's budget - British High Commission officials estimate at least 70 per cent - before leaving the civilian government with the remnants. There is no state education, no health service: people are driven into the arms of wealthy extremist groups.

It is ironic that cricket's most influential administrator was born in Lahore. Inderjit Singh Bindra, as a Sikh, had to flee the violence there at Partition, and later created the stadium in the Indian Punjab, at Mohali, where England sought refuge in December after their Test at Mumbai was cancelled because of another terrorist attack. Not only the long-term brains behind Indian cricket, and a commissioner of the Indian Premier League, Bindra is 'honorary adviser' to the International Cricket Council, a post created specifically for him, and one of his briefs is the game's worldwide development.

"I was reading on the internet the other day about the Taliban and their attitude to cricket," Bindra said in Delhi yesterday. "They say that Muslims should use swords not bats. They say that cricket in Asia is like opium in China in the 19th century - a tool of the imperial powers. It is a very pernicious philosophy."

Terrorist attack will not stop IPL

Bindra believes that Pakistan should not start on the very slippery slope of playing at neutral venues. "That is a booby-trap and they will cease to be a Test-playing country," he said. "How do youngsters watch and learn the game if Pakistan do not play at home? Give Pakistan a chance to get their act together - and they must ensure presidential-style security, not just talk about it. But, ultimately, this is something that cannot be tackled by cricket administrators but by the global powers."

Pakistan may not be given the opportunity of playing anywhere soon. Their tour of Bangladesh was postponed last week: the ICC had a fit when they saw the security plan as it featured the Bangladesh Rifles, who have just mutinied. Pakistan's one-day series against Australia in Abu Dhabi in April is likely to be called off on security grounds. For political reasons as well, the Indian government won't allow India to play Pakistan in bilateral series following the Mumbai attacks.

The England and Wales Cricket Board, even before the events in Lahore, were keen to stage some of Pakistan's matches in England. The chairman Giles Clarke had identified Headingley as particularly appropriate. The summer of 2010 might well see a few one-day internationals between Pakistan and Australia, but Test matches are not going to make money as Pakistan supporters in this country have never turned up for them.

Bindra knows the game's finances like no one else: "In Pakistan's television contract, if they play against India they receive an extra amount. If they are not playing against India, they don't make more than a nominal amount. As far as their [abandoned] series against Sri Lanka was concerned, the Pakistan board was only breaking even."

So will the next World Cup be staged in Asia two years from now?

A magical wand will have to be waved by President Obama for Pakistan to be one of the four scheduled hosts. Bangladesh? Maybe the Rifles will have ceased to mutiny. Sri Lanka? The **Tamil Tigers**, cornered though they may be, still send aircraft to bomb Colombo. And then there is the question of Afghanistan...

In South Africa, in April, Afghanistan will be one of 12 countries competing for the last four places in the World Cup. "For a part of the world which has been in the news for other reasons, this is a great story," said the ICC's global development manager, Matthew Kennedy.

Recruiting players who had learned the game in refugee camps in Pakistan, Afghanistan won Divisions Five, Four and Three of the World Cricket League to reach the play-offs: they even play, on the roughest of grounds, in the areas controlled by western forces. But if Afghanistan qualify for the 14-team World Cup of 2011, and the Taliban still prefer them to wield swords not bats, the security implications will be massive.

Bindra, however, says that the World Cup will go on in India, if nowhere else. "We won't jump to that conclusion, but if the situation is bad, India is big enough to stage the competition. The IPL has 59 matches spread over eight franchises, the next World Cup has 49 matches."

Doubts were expressed last week about the second IPL taking place. But Muttiah Muralitharan, due to play with Andrew Flintoff for Chennai Super Kings, joked that he is "going to wear a bulletproof jacket for future journeys on team buses". All the Sri Lankans signed for the IPL will, at this stage, go to India - Thilan Samaraweera, the most badly injured, is not contracted - because they believe security in India will be far tighter than in Pakistan.

Among England players, Ravi Bopara, contracted with Kings XI Punjab for \$450,000, "still plans to play in the IPL," according to his agent Mike Martin, of Paragon Sports. "He will naturally listen to security advice from the PCA and the ECB as well as from his franchise, but unless this produces additional information, he doesn't foresee any reason to change his current plans to participate."

Flintoff's agent would not comment, but it would be a surprise if the other England players think differently.

"I am 100 per cent certain the IPL will go ahead," said Bindra yesterday. "Each of the venues except one has already got clearance from the Indian government. I foresee no problem." The show will go on - in India. Whatever the security situation in the rest of Asia, too much money is involved for it not to. And the more violence there is, the more people need an escape from it.

Terrorist attack will not stop IPL

Load-Date: March 8, 2009

End of Document

Big, bigger and now better than ever; Prepare to be dazzled as this year's Big in Falkirk festival looks east for inspiration and promises to deliver pyrotechnics, discovers Keith Bruce

The Herald (Glasgow)

May 1, 2008 Thursday

Final Edition

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The Herald

Section: GOING OUT; Pg. 20

Length: 1076 words

Byline: Keith Bruce

Body

NEIL Butler, artistic director of street arts festival Big in Falkirk (and the organisation UZ Events, which annually creates it), travels the world in his search for exciting work to promote in Scotland and across Europe in conjunction with colleagues in the In Situ outdoor performance promotion network. As he contrived to be in Manhattan at the time of the 9/11 attack and in Sri Lanka for the tsunami, he looks like dangerous company. However, that link with Sri Lanka has produced a piece of work for this year's Big in Falkirk that is more peacefully timely.

As visitors arrive at the Callendar Park site this weekend (and there were 100,000 of them over the two days last year), they will be met by an installation by Chandraguptha Thenuwara, a very well-known and respected artist in his Sri Lankan homeland - and a renowned peace activist there. Barrelscape, which is his first solo show in western Europe, echoes the change in the beautiful landscape of Sri Lanka which is a result of the state's continuing conflict with the **Tamil Tigers**. The army's presence on every road is marked by a checkpoint constructed from camouflage-painted oil drums and barrels. Since the collapse of peace talks in 1995, the barrels have become a common sight in Colombo and its suburbs, and his version of these barricades is a critical comment on the state of siege in his homeland. Doubtless Scots will make the connection the artist intends, but the presence of Grangemouth, clearly visible on a nearer coastline, and the dispute between operator Ineos and its workforce might also cross their mind.

That bridge between local concerns and those of the east is a serendipitous one, because once inside there will be other reminders of the other side of the world. The music stage (which continues its taste for retro-headliners with an incarnation of 10CC featuring original member Graham Gouldman), features, on Saturday, the dance music of Kissmet, an Anglo-Indian combo fronted by two Sikh brothers and performing in Punjabi, Hindi and English music that blends bhangra, rock and funk, that has already been seen at Edinburgh's Hogmanay and Glasgow's West End Festival.

Big, bigger and now better than ever Prepare to be dazzled as this year's Big in Falkirk festival looks east for inspiration and promises to deliver pyrotechnic....

On Saturday and Sunday, Callendar House itself becomes the backdrop for Nutkhut's Bollywood Steps, a spectacular celebration of all that is kitsch in Indian cinema. Choreographed by Simmy Gupta and with ambitions to the Hollywood of Busby Berkeley as well as Mumbai, the show has been specially adapted to the location and promises to be the best use of the house itself yet seen at Big in Falkirk.

"It is very sexy, but in an acceptable family way," says Butler, "and clever pastiche, although you don't really need to get the in-jokes about Bollywood films to enjoy it. It is just a fantastic music and dance show, with a lot of gorgeous male and female beauty."

Those with a knowledge of popular Indian cinema will, however, appreciate details such as the use of playback music, the subversion of narrative clichés and, of course, the obligatory wet sari scene. Pyrotechnics join the water and vast number of fast costume changes to make the show.

Fireworks are always an important part of the Big in Falkirk experience and Butler draws a clear line between two sorts of pyrotechnicians. There are those, he says, who like making bright explosions and there is another smaller group who use pyrotechnics as an artistic medium. France's Groupe F, who brought the Highland Year of Culture to a close in Inverness earlier this year, are probably the best known of those, and the Sussex-based World Famous probably the best company in the UK.

The example of their work that will be known best to people in Glasgow is Sticky, the collaboration with Improbable Theatre that took place in the car park beside the Old Fruitmarket in Ingram Street in 2002. An incredible insect-like creation of adhesive tape and clever lighting which mesmerised everyone who saw it, its creation was oddly contemporaneous with the arrival for the first time on the Edinburgh Festival Fringe of Slovenian musicians Terrafolk. A year later, that band was one of the hot tickets at the Spiegeltent in Edinburgh and its energetic take on world music will provide the soundtrack to the new commission from The World Famous that will be unveiled in Callendar Park on Sunday at 10pm.

Full Circle is a piece of work that is intended to go on to a long life on the In Situ circuit after its debut, and already has engagements in Greenwich in June and Stockton in August, with a sojourn to Turin in Italy at the end of July. Those audiences will have a better idea what to expect, but the narrative seems to be an ecological one that may chime well with the Barrescape installation at the entrance. The music of the band will bring life and colour to a wintry landscape which is succeeded by a violent storm in a show that has been designed and lit by many of the team that worked with Improbable on Sticky, including lighting designer Phil Supple and co-designer of the show, Graeme Gilmour. Although such commissions always involve an element of risk, Butler is clear in his brief about what the show should achieve.

"It needs to be artistically credible and accessible to a very wide audience - and capable of playing to an audience of up to 30,000 people."

At 40 minutes long, Full Circle will be a meaty (or, more likely, veggie) finale to this year's Big in Falkirk programme, but from 1pm on both days there will be plenty to see, and much of it highly mobile and hard to avoid. Cocoloco's Mafia Wedding and Cacahuete's Mama's Funeral seem oddly complementary narratives and the latter company's Rock Stars sound like near relations of some of the creations of Glasgow's own Mischief La-Bas. As well as the head liners (The Levellers on Saturday and 10CC on Sunday) the music programme includes the eclectic dance sounds of Peatbog Faeries, Dundee's excellent Hazey Janes and Glasgow's latest emergent young songsmith, Esther O'Connor, all playing on Sunday. Visual art includes a second year of the collaboration with Glasgow School of Art on environmental art installations and a one-man performance in the Park Gallery that recreates The Wooster Group show House/Lights. The Manhattan troupe brought that production to the Edinburgh - and in its own intimate way, Big in Falkirk has now become the Edinburgh August experience in microcosm.

Big in Falkirk, Callendar Park, Falkirk, Saturday and Sunday.

www.biginfalkirk.com

Big, bigger and now better than ever Prepare to be dazzled as this year's Big in Falkirk festival looks east for inspiration and promises to deliver pyrotechnic....

Graphic

BOWLED OVER: Dancers Alison Alexandra Ho Chee and Cem Ahmet from Bollywood Steps, left; Full Circle, top left, and emerging Glasgow songsmith Esther O'Connor. Main picture: Julie Howden

Load-Date: May 1, 2008

End of Document

Fill dad's Father's Day sock with his favourite escapism

Pretoria News (South Africa)

June 09, 2008 Monday

e1 Edition

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Section: NEWS; Pg. 7

Length: 1151 words

Body

It's time to celebrate fathers and with Father's Day coming up this weekend, Penguin Books are offering a special man a chance to win a bumper basket filled with some of his favourite books. It's not that women won't like these, it's just that they target men and, in some instances, specifically fathers.

One lucky father could win a hamper of books worth R1 600 - or a partner or child can enter for him. All you need do to enter is, sms the word "ptanews" followed by your name and the answer to a simple question to 34110 today. Sms's charged at R2. The line closes at midnight tomorrow.

Question: Who are the publishers sponsoring this brilliant prize?

The winners will be selected randomly and will be contacted by phone. Here is a list of the books to be won:

Batting in the Baltic by Angus Bell (Penguin, R160):

On the advice of a Canadian psychic, Scotsman Angus Bell sets off in a Skoda to uncover a cricketing world across Central and Eastern Europe. From tournaments on ice in Estonia to university leagues in the crumbling Crimea; from a Croatian military island to Communist Belarus, Slavs are playing the Englishman's game. With fingerless Tamil Tigers in Prague, a bomb plotter in the Austrian Alps, mafiosos and an MI6 agent making the teamsheets, 24-year-old Angus soon discovers the shadowy side of Slavic cricket. He becomes the first man to hit a ball between continents, and ends up captain of an international team.

Top 10 for Men (Hamlyn, R130)

It's a fact that men love lists: with lists, men can find the most interesting information with the least amount of effort. This book contains over 250 lists covering the most important subjects in life - cars, sports, barbecues, gadgets - and answers the most vital questions: Are Ferraris faster than Lamborghinis? What's the most common murder weapon? Who was the fattest Prime Minister? Which city has the highest proportion of women to men? and, what's the most alcoholic beer in the world? No matter what your chosen subject may be, Top 10 for Men is a must for every pub-trivia king.

Things to do Now that You're a Dad by David Baird (Octopus, R120):

Suddenly, after all the waiting - juggling excitement, fear, pride and trepidation - the big word arrives. "Congratulations! You are the proud father of ..." It is possibly the biggest news you'll ever receive.

Fill dad's Father's Day sock with his favourite escapism

Most first time fathers drop their chins to their chests and think: "What do I do now?" Some reach for cigars, others make calls on mobile phones, others faint, throw up, cry and run away. There are as many reactions to this incredible news as there are new dads who receive it. But they all have one thing in common - from that very instant onwards and for the rest of their lives - they are dads and any guy who has been a kid, can be a great dad.

The Regiment by Michael Asher (Penguin, R120)

On May 4 1980, seven terrorists holding 21 people captive in the Iranian Embassy executed their first hostage. They threatened to kill another hostage every 30 minutes until their demands were met.

Minutes later, armed men in black overalls and balaclavas shimmied down the roof on ropes and burst in through windows and doors. In seconds all but one of the terrorists had been shot dead, the others captured. Few realised that the SAS had been in existence for almost 40 years, playing a discreet, if not secret, role almost everywhere Britain had fought since World War 2, and had been the prototype of all modern special forces units throughout the world.

In *The Regiment*, Asher - a former soldier in 23 SAS Regiment - examines the evolution of the special forces idea and investigates the real story behind a military legend.

Don't Stop Me Now by Jeremy Clarkson (Penguin, R130)

Jeremy Clarkson knows there's more to life than cars. There is, after all, a whole world out there just waiting to be discovered. So, before he gets on with the job in hand, he'd like to take some time out to consider the bigger picture.

Don't worry, he'll get on to the car bit eventually, but before he does, there's time to learn about: why Galapagos tortoises are all mental; France, reduced to the size of a small coconut; why Jeremy Paxman and the bassist for AC/DC aren't so very different; the problems of being English, and God's most stupid creation. And then there's the cars.

The Golf Book (Dorling

Kindersley, R350)

Golf is one of the world's fastest growing sports, so if you're an aspiring player, or are one of the 60 million who play worldwide, this guide is for you. Discover all about golf: from its ancient origins to today's global competitions. Learn about the strokes and analyse the talents of the world's best. Check out the gear and try out the equipment, from drivers and irons to carts and clothing. Then meet the players - from Golden Bear to the White Shark - and come face to face with the stars and relive their finest performances.

Learn How To Play Golf in a Weekend by Edward Craig (Hamlyn, R200)

Have you always wanted to play golf, but were daunted by the seemingly difficult technique? This, they claim, will turn you into a complete golfer in just two days. Follow clear step by step instructions to learn how to drive, chip and putt. Simple jargon-free instructions and detailed illustrations show you how to practice effectively and achieve a competent level in every aspect of the game.

Devil May Care by Sebastian Faulks (Penguin, R180)

"My novel is meant to stand in the line of Fleming's own books, where the story is everything," said Faulks. "In his house in Jamaica, Ian Fleming used to write a thousand words in the morning, then go snorkelling, have a cocktail, lunch on the terrace, more diving, another thousand words in late afternoon, then more Martinis and glamorous women. In my house in London, I followed this routine exactly, apart from the cocktails, the lunch and the snorkelling."

Fill dad's Father's Day sock with his favourite escapism

Picking up from where Fleming left off in 1966 with *The Living Daylights* and *Octopussy*, Faulks has written the perfect continuation of the James Bond legacy. *Devil May Care* is set during the Cold War and features all the glamour, thrills and excitement that one would expect from a Bond adventure.

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Dad Rules by Andrew Clover (Penguin, R210)

"She takes my hand. 'Andrew,' she says, 'let's have children'. I know this is a historic moment. I must respond like a man. So I ignore her..."

This wise, intimate, and hilarious book is based on Clover's much-loved London Sunday Times columns. He tells stories about how he's coped with all the big parenting issues: sibling rivalry, choosing a school, winning an argument about where you're spending Christmas. He also wrestles with all the big questions: Why do I have no friends anymore? Am I turning into my dad? Will we ever have sex again? He describes the journey he made from reluctant father, to being the happiest man in north London, as he learns from his daughters that, if you want to have fun, you better start playing.

Load-Date: June 8, 2008

End of Document

India's egregious human rights record

The Nation (AsiaNet)

June 5, 2008 Thursday

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Length: 1213 words

Byline: MOHAMMAD JAMIL

Body

India does not seem to be content with the regional power status and aspires for a major power status in contemporary international politics. And it claims this status on the basis of being the world's largest democracy, nuclear power and booming economy. But by definition, democracy means government of the people, by the people and for the people, which means that all citizens irrespective of faith, caste, social position or ideology.

Keeping in view the treatment meted out to the minorities and atrocities perpetrated on Muslims, Sikhs, Dalits - untouchables and Christians, India does not even qualify to be a real democratic society. It is true that population-wise India is the second-largest country in the world, and it is because of being a big market that the US and the West turn a blind eye to India's excesses on its minorities and despicable human rights record.

Today is 24th anniversary of the four-day Operation Blue Star, the Indian army's offensive into the Darbar Sahib also known as the Golden Temple, which was the epicentre of the armed movement for Sikh autonomy in the Indian state of the Punjab. The issues that were at the root of the Sikh rebellion were never resolved and continue to fester even today. The Army action had coincided with a Sikh annual festival. Many pilgrimages, old people, women and children were inside the temple when the Army action began. Many of them were killed or injured in the conflict. As is the case in any multi-ethnic, multi-linguistic and multi-cultural country, Sikhs have been demanding political autonomy, fair distribution of river waters, the plea for Sikhism to be constitutionally recognised as a distinct religion, and the desire for holy city status for Amritsar - the site of the Darbar Sahib, the holiest shrine of the Sikhs.

Last year on Christmas Day, Hindu fanatics burnt and ransacked 14 churches in eastern India - State of Orissa - leaving four men dead and thirty injured. Christians were chased out of several churches - in many a case just mud huts with thatched roofs - before they were set ablaze, officials said. The report knocks the bottom out of India's pretence and façade of secularism, establishing conclusively that Hindu fundamentalists have zero-tolerance so far as religious minorities are concerned. Nevertheless, the international media, having soft corner for so-called the biggest democracy and secular state, have downplayed the brutal attack and burning of churches on the Christmas Eve on December 25, 2007.

This is not the first time that Christians have been targeted in India, and such incidents are taking place but are not highlighted in the local or international press. In an article published in ASIaweek written by Ajay Singh under the caption of Target: The Christians referred to brutalities on Christians presently and in the past and said: "On September 23, 1998, Preeti Sharan, a Catholic kindergarten and missionary centre was attacked and at least 22 men broke into the premises and ransacked the rooms, grabbing whatever valuables they could find. The intruders then forced their way into the chapel, dragged the defenceless 'nuns' to a field nearby and raped them. Three days later miscreants attacked a Catholic mission near Nawapara and after four days on September 27 yet another

India 's egregious human rights record

missionary centre in the state capital of Bhopal was stormed." In 1999, an Australian missionary and his two sons, aged 8 and 10, were burned to death in their car in Orissa following a Bible study class.

Though Kashmiris are the worst sufferers, yet the plight of the people even in India's own provinces is deplorable. Repressive laws such as Armed Forces Special Powers Act have provided Indian forces the powers to kill with impunity any person in Northeast India. Indian forces have shot down several innocent persons in fake encounters and custodial killings, and as such it is involved in gross human rights violations in this region. Because of inept policies of the Indian government law and order situation in all 13 Naxal affected states such as Chhattisgarh, Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh, Eastern Uttar Pradesh, Jharkhand, West Bengal, western Orissa and Bihar is hopeless. The Central Reserve Police Force also suffered heavy casualties of its men in Naxal attacks due to poor intelligence reports.

Not that India has any lesser problems in its states still it continues to interfere into the affairs of the neighbouring countries. In Nepal, India has been sometimes siding with the Maoists and sometimes with the king. Last year, India expressed concern about the situation in Balochistan, whereas it was the internal matter of Pakistan. The Communist Party of India (Maoist) in their December 2004 meeting had observed: "In the light of the growing civil war in the country (India), the United Progressive Alliance government, headed by Dr Manmohan Singh has been exhibiting its expansionist fangs against the people of Nepal right from the day it came to power."

These facts were well documented and published in the international press that exposed Indian leadership's insidious designs. Other countries of the region also face similar situation, be it Sri Lanka or Bangladesh. However, Maldives and Bhutan have acquiesced, as they are too small to put up an effective resistance. That much suffices so far as India's treatment of minorities is concerned.

On regional level, India's attitude and behaviour with its neighbouring countries has persistently tended to violate the norms of peaceful co-existence. The Indian domineering attitude demands of her neighbouring countries to act according to its dictates. India's neighbours are expected to formulate their external and internal and even defence policies according to her will and wishes. India arrogates to herself the role of determining the extent of independence and sovereignty its neighbours will enjoy.

Such bullying attitude was at display recently when India rebuked Sri Lanka for expressing a desire to procure radars and other smaller equipment from Pakistan and China as India-origin radars currently in service with Sri Lanka proved ineffective and failed to detect air attacks of Tamil Tigers. Like Pakistan and Nepal, Bangladesh has also dispute with India over river waters, because India has chosen to use river waters as a lever to force other countries to acquiesce to India. Even China claims that India has occupied its 4000 km territory of ArunaChal Pardesh.

Though composite dialogue between India and Pakistan was initiated in 2004 and there have been four rounds of talks during the last four years, yet there has been no progress on disputes like Sir Creek, Siachen and the core issue of Kashmir. At least 80000 Kashmiris have been killed since 1989 when they started armed struggle to counter state terrorism.

They are waiting for the last 58 years that the UN resolution giving Kashmiris the right to self-determination is implemented, which could not be implemented due to apathy of the international community. It is the responsibility of the big powers to help the smaller nations in the realisation of their rights by using their clout to implement the United Nations Security Council resolutions. This is the only way to make this world a safer place to live in.

Load-Date: June 10, 2008

More civilians seek protection of Security Forces

Daily News (Sri Lanka)

March 12, 2009 Thursday

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Length: 160 words

Dateline: Colombo

Body

Colombo, March 12 -- Around 378 civilians fleeing from the **LTTE** bondage in Puthukudiyiruppu sought protection with Security Forces in Vettalaikerni and Mullaitivu on Tuesday.

Military spokesman Brigadier Udaya Nanayakkara said 22 civilians escaping the **LTTE** clutches had been rescued by troops and brought to Vettalaikerni by boat. "A group comprising three children, six **women** and eight men arrived in a boat and were directed to an IDP centre", he added. Meanwhile, 298 civilians fleeing **LTTE** atrocities in the uncleared area reached Ampalanpokkanai on Tuesday at the risk of facing the **LTTE** wrath. Another group of 58 civilians sought protection with the Security Forces. They were rescued by troops of the 59 division operating in Puthukudiyiruppu. Over 40,000 people had reached the cleared areas from the **LTTE** grips and have been resettled at IDP welfare centres in Vavuniya and Mannar. Published by HT Syndication with permission from Daily News Sri Lanka.

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Load-Date: April 1, 2009

SUICIDE BOMB KILLS AT LEAST 28 IN SRI LANKA

NEW YORK TIMES

February 10, 2009 Tuesday

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Information Bank Abstracts

Section: Section A; Column 1; Pg. 10

Length: 75 words

Body

Sri Lankan government says **female** suicide bomber hiding among refugees fleeing war zone in northern Sri Lanka killed at least 20 soldiers and 8 civilians at checkpoint; string of victories in recent weeks raised hopes that civil war between government and **Tamil Tigers** would soon be over, but recent attack raises prospect that Tigers will revert to guerrilla warfare and suicide attacks if they lose control of their final patch of. territory; photo.

Graphic

Photograph

Load-Date: July 22, 2009

Guardian Weekly: International news: On the web this week

Guardian Weekly

January 16, 2009 Friday

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*The***GuardianWeekly**

Section: Pg. 6

Length: 75 words

Body

Caught in a war zone

A teacher in Sri Lanka describes ongoing civilian suffering as fighting rages between government forces and **Tamil Tigers**

guardianweekly.co.uk/conflict

Guardian Weekly podcast

Julian Borger on the crisis in the Middle East and Rory Carroll on the Cuban revolution at 50

guardianweekly.co.uk/podcast

Women in Uganda

Climate change is hitting **women** the hardest in Katine, home of the Guardian's development project

guardian.co.uk/katine

Load-Date: January 24, 2009

A SURE WINNER AT THE POLLS

Daily Mirror (Sri Lanka)

February 12, 2009 Thursday

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Length: 1775 words

Dateline: Colombo

Body

Colombo, Feb. 12 -- If the present public euphoria on war serves as an indicator to the possible pattern the electorate votes coming next Saturday will be an endorsement of the un-wavering policy on the war of the Mahinda Rajapaksa regime which the voter expects to continue.

What is unfolding in Sri Lanka right now is the utmost desire of the people of all communities for peace, economic stability and protection of law and order in their country. They do not care who is capable of doing that and how it would be done. The message of the voter of Saturday's Provincial Council elections would be that whoever has the vision to fulfill their aspirations has the backing of the voter. The euphoria among voters on military victories in the north with Rajapaksa's pledge to rid Sri Lankan society of the scourge of conflict and lawlessness, improve infrastructure and economic conditions of the people, provide better governance, employment for the younger generation so that next generation could face the challenges of the 21st century as a result of the benefits of peace following the annihilation of the **LTTE** militancy have no doubt received positive response in the width and breadth of the electorate. The most significant phenomena that any one can witness in this PC polls is the relatively low key propaganda campaign of the two main parties in the fray, the UPFA and the UNP. The UNP in particular has a lethargic and lukewarm approach to its PC polls campaign with only a few front line candidates in Nuwara-Eliya, Matale and Kandy launching fairly vigorous propaganda programme. But as can be expected the Chief Ministerial aspirant of the UNP, S.B.Dissanayaka is an exception. He has launched the most active election campaign with several dozens of vehicles and several hundreds of propaganda managers and activists. Despite the war not having much impact on their day-to-day lives the Central Province populace of whom the majority represent Tamil labourers of Indian are keenly awaiting the conclusion of the war which will give a priority to peace in the rest of the country. As succinctly said by Radha Krishnan the leader of the three nominated by the CWC who is contesting under the betel leaf symbol of the UPFA "Today's trend is supporting President Rajapaksa winning the war. "Even the traditional UNP supporters are backing the government's war efforts with the hope that if the war comes to an end, many of the burning issues in the country could be resolved" Mr. Krishnan, a minister himself in the previous PC council added. He expressed fear about the alleged internal conflict for preferential votes among the three candidates nominated by the Upcountry Peoples Front adding that it might affect the margin of victory of the UPFA. He expressed his remorse over the sufferings of the Tamils in the North but said the problems facing Northern Tamils are different from those in the estates. "We are living with the Sinhalese. We want to live in peace and harmony with them. This could be achieved only when there is peace in the entire country. Only President Rajapaksa can bring about a permanent peace" he emphasized. However, rejoicing over military victories and supporting the war effort is not an exclusive advantage for the UPFA as manifested by the views expressed by UNP Mayor, Nuwara Eliya, Chandralal Karunaratna. "The young educated Tamils are alienated from the CWC . They do not accept its doctrine anymore. The young Tamils do not want to live on the estates life. They want to break free from the traditional and poverty stricken life their parents led under the CWC leadership. The CWC does not have

A SURE WINNER AT THE POLLS

any influence on young educated Tamils. Hence, the CWC is now not a factor in deciding the political destinies in the Central Province anymore," Karunaratna stressed. The estate Tamils employed in other parts of the country are not pleased with the treatment meted out to them. They are constantly subjected to midnight raids, interrogations and checks. Hence, they have no reason to vote for the UPFA at this PC polls", he said.. "If the war brings prosperity we must feel it. The request of the government from us to eat rice for all three meals does not work as Tamils are used to food such as rotti and other food stuffs made of wheat flour as their main meal. The rise in the price of flour and kerosene has made their lives more difficult." But M. Pushparajah (32) of License Bridge in Hawa -Eliya has already decided to vote for the betel leaf. 'I have always been a UNP supporter. But this time I will vote for the UPFA as we all hope that peace will dawn in all parts of the country sooner than later.' " Only when we can live in peace can we engage in our trade without fear," A sweep tickets seller at the main Bazaar in Nuwara Eliya said. Though the influence of the victories in war play a major part in the minds of voters in deciding their support, there are other local factors at work during the time of a PC elections as manifested from the sentiments expressed by Nalaka Marasingha, (32) a vegetable vendor in Kandy. He is unhappy about the escalation of prices of almost all commodities and slack business. Marasingha says that he has no reason to vote for the UPFA. "I had a plot of land on which I grew vegetables. But with the increase of fertilizer, labour costs and pesticides I had to give up. Growing vegetables by small scale growers has become impossible. Only large scale growers can survive under the circumstances," he lamented. "What about leasing out the plot of land to someone else?" was a question posed to him "No, I can't do that . It is a state land without a deed. I cannot lease it or mortgage it to the bank," he said. He lamented that no government had been able to free the vegetable farmer, seller or the customer from the middleman who dictates terms on the vegetable trade. N.M.. Mohammed Mansoor (30) a father of one child doing retail cloth business at the Kandy town said there is no much impact of the war in the lives of many people in Matale as only a few families have sent their children to join the services .. "The majority of the youth here either work on an estate, do small business or grow vegetables, We will think carefully before we cast our votes," he said. A group of Muslim women from Gampola who did not like to reveal their identity said they would not vote on the 14. "No government or a provincial Council has done any service for us. Our problems and difficulties which existed 10 years ago remain unattended, unresolved even today. We do not therefore trust what any politician promises and so will and refrain from voting," was their unanimous stance.. G. Nissanka of Waratenna, Haloluwa, (41) a father of three had been a UNP supporter right throughout. But will vote for the UPFA merely because the government has prosecuted the war in the north successfully. There are various local factors at work during the time of Provincial Council Elections. It could be economics, social, religious, educational or even ethnic or caste. However it is quite clear that the most prominent factor that would compel the voter to make up his mind whether to vote, or for whom to vote if he votes at all at the February 14 PC elections is certainly the war and its merits or demerits. This is what R.P.G. Nishan Kumara (26) of Akurana, Hettipola in Kurunegala has to say on the PC polls. "Many voters are disappointed about politics and politicians. We are used to being traditional UNP supporters. But this time we vote for the UPFA only because the war," he said. P.G. Indranee (37) of Kadugannawa, a king coconut seller thinks there will be peace in the country shortly and that the prices of essential commodities will come down. With voting for the UPFA candidate she is dreaming that her expectations would be realized .Tushara Swarnatilaka of the JHU contesting from the Kandy District under the UPFA ticket has similar views. "Our priority must be to crush terrorism. With the eradication of terrorism many of our burning problems would be half solved. What we have to do is to resolve ourselves to achieve speedy economic progress utilizing the funds used for the war. The only person the country has today to do that is President Mahinda Rajapaksa. That is why the JHU supports him," Swarnatilaka who is also a member of the Yatinuwarqa Pradeshiya Saba stressed. Under the Rajapaksa administration Rs. 500,000 had been allocated for every Grama Niladari Division in 2007. Rs. 2 million for each GS division has been allocated from 2009. After the war the amount would be doubled, he said. The JVP group leader in the Matale District Gamagedara Dissanayaka said he was able to raise a voice in the last PC council on behalf of the people. "Our party is backing the war. But winning the war alone cannot solve all the problems in the country. We need a correct vision for that which is lacking right now," he said. The Chief Ministerial candidate of the UPFA in the Central Province former CM Minister Sarath Ekanayake has no hesitation whatsoever of the astounding victory his party will receive in the three districts. He has now drawn his attention to the number of PC slots the UPFA could secure. "We were able to garner 30 seats at the 1994 PC polls without the support of the UPFA and the CWC. In that election the UNP won the Nuwara - Eliya district while the UPFA won Matale and Kandy. This time we will win all three districts with a minimum 35 seats," he said. Despite confronting many obstacles UNP's S.B.Dissanayaka is satisfied with his election campaign."Yes, there was a setback in our campaign when President Rajapaksa

A SURE WINNER AT THE POLLS

descended on Kandy and started personally to spearhead the UPFA's election campaign. Now we have reorganized and are carrying out our campaign with a new vigour. My coming to Kandy has generated a new enthusiasm among UNPers in the province and UNP's victory is inevitable," he said "I have a work plan for the next administration in the Central Province. The last administration has done nothing for the province. A colossal Rs 6 billion was sent back to the Treasury from the Rs. 9 billion allocated for the province in 2007 Infrastructure, education, .health and many other services had been totally neglected in the last few years. My plan for the central Province under the slogan 'Herawumaka Arambuma' or the beginning of a turning point would usher in a new era to the province, Dissanayaka emphasized. He hoped that the government would agree for talks with the **LTTE** and mentality of war victories would disappear soon. Published by HT Syndication with permission from Daily Mirror Sri Lanka.

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Load-Date: April 1, 2009

End of Document

Army captures Kokkavil station

Indo-Asian News Service

September 27, 2008 Saturday 3:11 PM EST

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Length: 161 words

Byline: Report from Indo-Asian News Service brought to you by HT Syndication.

Dateline: Colombo

Body

Colombo, Sept. 27 -- The Army captured the Kokkavil railway station in the Kilinochchi district on Thursday, further getting closer to the A-9 main highway, the military said yesterday.

Military sources revealed following fierce fighting throughout the past few days troops of the 57 division gained control of the railway station while consolidating the area.

"Troops are just 400 metres away from the A-9 road," a senior military official said. Meanwhile, the defence ministry said that at least 11 **LTTE** cadres were killed in a series of clashes in the Akkarayankulam area in the Kilinochchi district.

On Thursday troops also captured two **LTTE** trench lines in the Kokkavil area after heavy clashes. Four **LTTE** cadres were killed during the battle. During subsequent search operations conducted in the area troops recovered the body of a **female LTTE** cadre along with one T-56 assault rifle.

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Load-Date: September 27, 2008

New dawn for East

Daily News (Sri Lanka)

November 13, 2008 Thursday 2:00 PM EST

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Length: 822 words

Byline: Daily News Sri Lanka

Dateline: Colombo

Body

Colombo, Nov. 13 -- According to an inside page news item in our edition yesterday quoting Vocational Training Minister Dayasritha Thissera more than 60 per cent of youth recruited for vocational training this year are from the newly liberated Eastern Province.

Speaking at an event in Paris organised by the SLFP Paris Branch the Minister noted that Tamil youth in the East were keen to get the maximum advantage of the training schemes of his Ministry.

This certainly is an encouraging trend that would enable us to harness the talents and skills of this segment of our countrymen who remained only on the fringes of national consciousness all these years. Of course the raging conflict prevented any noteworthy attempt to draw in these youth into the mainstream of events. They thus languished with their talents untapped and potential unrealised. Today the situation has changed offering a place in the sun to these hapless youth giving them a chance to pick up the pieces of their lives.

The East today is undergoing transformation at a frenetic pace and as another Minister remarked is the envy of the rest of the country. All credit is due to President Mahinda Rajapaksa by making this possible by liberating the Easterners from the grip of terrorism. Now that the sounds of guns have fallen silent they could divert the attention to productive pursuits and improving their lot with the opportunities provided.

Their talents which were lying dormant during the long years of conflict would now be brought to the fore and put into use in the massive infrastructure development projects earmarked for the East, transforming their lives from being mere spectators of the passing scenario into active participants in the country's development programmes.

It is no exaggeration that these youth had been long neglected over the years. No Government was able to implement any permanent scheme for their benefit that would have realised their true potential under the conditions that prevailed.

There is no knowing how much the country may have lost in terms of skills and expertise as a result. We say this because it is commonly accepted that youth from the North-East are an industrious lot, their perseverance and drive almost legendary. In the past some of the best known intellectuals and professionals who hailed from the North and East made a great contribution to the country's advancement. The recent emergence of a winner of a scholarship exam from among inmates of a refugee camp, hailing from the East is testimony to this unique spirit. Now that the guns have fallen silent creating a conducive climate for academic activities there is no knowing how many such genuineness would emerge from the region.

New dawn for East

The country could only be richer by their contributions. The shocking revelation in today's edition of how one of four **female** Tigers captured by the Security Forces turned out to be a Government English teacher shows how much of this talent is wasted and diverted towards evil. It is known that all fighters in the **LTTE** are brainwashed. There is no knowing how much brilliant minds have been perverted and distorted in this fashion. How many talented and skilled youth have gone astray. The eagerness of the Eastern Youth to join in the Vocational training programmes is certainly an encouraging sign which ought to be seized upon by the authorities for the country's benefit.

Hopefully the war would be brought to an end soon so that the Eastern scenario could be replicated in the North where no doubt there would be immense talent lurking to be tapped.

Not stopping at this the Government should supplement these skills development programmes by increasing more and more people to people contact with our brethren in the East. The recent arrival to Colombo of a cricket team from the East is an ideal start. More such programmes should be organised to improve fraternity and brotherhood with our brethren in the North-East.

The idea mooted for an International Cricket stadium by world cup winning Captain Arjuna Ranatunga too should be pursued with vigour. It is by such projects that this segment of our population who were once living in isolation could be integrated into the national polity. Our artistes too could undertake visits to the East.

Now that the region is returning to normal it could be an ideal site for film location with its beautiful beaches and a host of other attractions. Steps should also be undertaken to rebuild all abandoned and destroyed cinema halls so that Easterners could indulge in their favourite pastime. The bottom line is to bring normality to the region on par with the rest of the country. If this is done there would be no more accusations of discrimination that gave rise to the present divisions. This and steps to mend fences on all other fronts would bring about the national unity that we all yearn for.

Report from Daily News Sri Lanka brought to you by HT Syndication.

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Load-Date: November 13, 2008

President Obama takes reins

PNG Post-Courier (Australia)

January 19, 2009 Monday

1 Edition

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Section: FOCUS NEWS; Pg. 20

Length: 1574 words

Body

Tomorrow the United States inaugurates its new President.

There are high public expectations, not only within the US, but around the world. Barack Obama faces massive challenges, including addressing the faltering US (and global) economy; serious regional conflicts, notably in the Middle East and Africa; restoring the US's tarnished international image (resulting partly from its perceived insularity and ambivalence to international conventions and law), and particularly addressing health, social and poverty, climate and environmental issues at a time when funds are tight.

Of course he will be merely US President, not world president, which be a surprise to some across the planet, who perceive the US having universal responsibilities and capacity.

His first attention must be focussed back home, but, in an increasingly globalised economy and with global social, resource and environmental (and security) problems which can only be addressed collaboratively, the US, as the world's largest economy and mandate of a liberal democracy, has a particular responsibility for providing leadership. Barack Obama seems willing and eager to perform that positive role, but global and regional difficulties and conflicts require leadership, commitment and collaboration from the rest of the world.

Some issues and problems need a global approach, others need resolving regionally, nationally or locally. Leadership entails taking responsibility and good leadership means abandoning entrenched positions, hearing and understanding different views (including contrary views from other social and ethnic groups) and addressing them collaboratively.

Leadership is not about casting blame, sidetracking responsibility or expecting others to fix one's own problems.

The US has gained a determined new leader, though time will assess his performance. Hell certainly need all the support and cooperation available. Does PNG have any leadership ready to really acknowledge this country's many problems and address them, rallying support from across the community, even if it entails forfeiting apparent immediate political or financial gain?

Who will stand up and be counted, struggling to restore infrastructure and services to rural communities (which formerly had access to health facilities with medicines and MCH clinics, district banking facilities, local roads or government air/boat charters)?

Who will acknowledge that current district funding systems are largely unsuitable? Who will acknowledge that particularly our rural schools are inadequate and substandard, or that law and order problems (and particularly

President Obama takes reins

violence against women and children) and levels of corruption in this country are appalling and destroying lives and the fabric of society and the prospects for the country? And who will take some action?

The silence on these issues is almost overwhelming from the national leadership, often seemingly content in their cocoons, oblivious or even denying that problems exist; suggesting sensationalism by foreign reporters or political opponents or blaming deficiencies upon the public service. It's true the public service, and particularly some institutions, have collapsed substantially, in many cases merely serving its own interests.

But it reached this condition partly owing to lack of commitment and foresight by the political leadership, which encouraged appointment of wantoks and other cronies, progressively undermining professionalism, integrity and morale in the public service, until it became a shell without drive, operational resources or capacity to target and implement.

Failure can also be assigned to inappropriate political structures, undermining traditional and local leadership structures, and allowing power to be wrested increasingly in the hands of a small national elite, with access to public and private assets.

PNG must be careful to avoid the way of Zimbabwe, where a tiny elite of politicians and associates entrench themselves to power, regardless of their country's economic hardship or popular will. PNG should ensure it reflects and respects the country's multi-cultural and regional nature, which is its great strength, as well posing challenges.

While awareness or commitment to tackling social priority issues seems sadly deficient among public leaders, others within the community itself demonstrate the needed dedication and firm leadership skills. Chimbu Province alone, for example, has hundreds of volunteers, mostly women, but also men, showing commitment and leadership in challenging and addressing family and sexual violence and promoting community peace and harmony, and this is repeated to different degrees in other provinces.

Such commitment comes at a risk, as highlighted by a volunteer in East Sepik recently part-paralysed while protecting a woman's welfare from domestic violence. Unless the wider community, including political leaders, take a firm stand against such abuse and against atrocities like so-called sorcery killings and torture, then the prospects are grim. Those who make the effort, at some risk to themselves, are PNG's true leaders.

Early this month the outspoken editor of one of Sri Lanka's newspapers was assassinated, apparently by persons close to their Government. Lasantha Wickrematunge was dedicated to exposing the truth, particularly calling upon Sri Lanka's leadership to address the underlying issues and respect human rights even during their long and ruthless conflict with the Tamil Tigers. Often derided by political leaders in PNG and overseas, good journalists play a critical role, usually for modest reward, and too often face threat and intimidation (or worse). PNG's good journalists and network of bloggers play a valuable role of opinion shaping and leadership. The press and blogsites have bemoaned the start of 2009 in PNG, with tragic murders of prominent citizens and other innocent victims. PNG must address our crime problem concertedly, through thoroughly reinforcing our police and justice system and addressing the lack of management and pervasive corruption undermining components, combined with a major public awareness exercise. But we must not merely address symptoms, but also the underlying problems, including lack of employment, education and training opportunities and effective rural health services, which have encouraged urban migration to settlements. Unexplained and excessive mortality also encourages superstition and payback killings.

While political leaders buy property and travel incessantly overseas, escaping domestic pressures, they cannot really hold up their heads in international forums while PNG's social indicators and progress on achieving Millennium Development Goals remains so inadequate and while human rights violations and particularly abuse of PNG women and children prevails at appalling levels. PNG could make a significant contribution to addressing global social and political, environmental/climate, and even economic issues. It retains a relatively pristine environment, with significant though not unlimited natural resources, which could provide sustainable (and in some cases increased) contributions (or CO₂ absorption) towards domestic and international demand, given increased care in extraction, resource and waste management.

President Obama takes reins

Better care of PNGs natural environment is needed, including in urban areas, as with Governor Powes Parkops NCD clean-up campaign. PNG is not one of the major polluters, like various East Asian industrial economies, but some extractive industries have bad track records, jeopardising other natural resources and livelihoods. International fishing fleets also compete increasingly anarchically for declining marine stocks in PNGs maritime zone, wasting extensive bycatch (other fish, turtles and mammals), sometimes falsifying records.

Our cities, and increasingly coastal villages, discard increasing quantities of plastics and other waste into the sea, combining with a growing cesspit of other global (including industrial and agricultural) waste dumped ultimately offshore, now swirling around the Pacific, killing turtles and other marine life, and threatening coastal and deep sea resources, especially when combined with effects of global warming on reefs and coastal communities.

However, while betelnut stains are unsightly, they are not seriously damaging the environment. Simply banning betelnut from NCD isnt the solution, when it is a major source of income for rural producers and urban informal traders. A more comprehensive program of waste and sanitation management, awareness and penalties is required, combined with respect for human rights by authorities, provision of suitable facilities for safe and hygienic informal sector use, rather than merely removing settlements, sellers and other prohibitions.

Let 2009 be the year when the authorities seriously work with the community, and its (including business) leaders, in acknowledging and addressing PNGs main law and order and other social problems, while facilitating competitive private sector (including informal sector) development to sustain economic and employment growth.

We must improve natural resource management to meet PNGs own and wider global needs, but like the USA we must start with recognising and addressing our own problems, before being able to contribute meaningfully to regional and global issues. Will PNG produce its own new generation of dedicated leaders, or who might PNGs Obama be?

Load-Date: January 24, 2009

Fleeing civilians seek protection in Pulmoddai

Daily Mirror (Sri Lanka)

July 9, 2008 Wednesday 2:48 PM EST

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Length: 172 words

Byline: Report from Daily Mirror brought to you by HT Syndication.

Dateline: Colombo

Body

Colombo, July 9 -- The Defence Ministry said that 12 Tamil civilians including 7 males and 5 females from un-cleared areas, north of Puthukkudiyiruppu sought protection with security forces at Pulmoddai yesterday.

Among those who sought protection were 3 children and 3 youth.

The Defence Ministry said that this was the first time, a group of civilians reached cleared areas from the north of Puthukkudiyiruppu, where the majority of hardcore LTTE supporters were living.

"We were living in our native lands facing huge difficulties and hardships under the LTTE. They (LTTE) have transformed the whole area into a war zone. People are forced to labour for long hours and families of those who refuse face grave repercussion by the outfit" The Defence Ministry quoted an escapee as saying.

He reportedly also said that the LTTE was preventing civilians from fleeing the area and that the Tigers are using civilians as human shields when attacking the security forces.

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-724640

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Load-Date: August 11, 2008

Sri Lanka. 12 killed in blast

The Gazette (Montreal)

February 4, 2008 Monday

Final Edition

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Section: NEWS; Pg. A11; Fast Track

Length: 96 words

Byline: AFP; Reuters

Dateline: COLOMBO

Body

A suicide bomber attacked a train at Colombo's main railway station yesterday, killing at least 12 and injuring 100 others on the eve of Sri Lanka's independence day celebrations, officials said. The blast came just hours after six people were hurt in a hand-grenade attack at Sri Lanka's main zoo on the outskirts of Colombo, prompting authorities to boost security. A police spokesperson said the train attack was carried out by a **female** operative of the **Tamil Tigers**, the rebel group fighting to carve out a separate homeland in the ethnic Sinhalese-majority island nation.

Load-Date: February 4, 2008

End of Document

Nallur festival in Jaffna

Sunday Observer (Sri Lanka)

September 7, 2008 Sunday 2:17 PM EST

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Length: 788 words

Byline: Report from the Sri Lanka Sunday Observer brought to you by HT Syndication.

Dateline: Colombo

Body

Colombo, Sept. 7 -- The heat of the sun did not burn our skins, the large gathering did not make us sweat, long hours of standing did not make us tired; it may be the miracle of god's blessings. We were at the prestigious Nallur Sri Kandaswami Kovil in Jaffna.

Devotees were gleaming with the glitter of gold and bright coloured attire. This is one of the loveliest sights in our island nation. This festival is sacred to Hindus seeking the blessings of God Skanda. To devotees this holy event is as important as the annual 'Esala Perahera' of the Temple of The Sacred Tooth Relic in Kandy and the procession of the Katharagama Hindu temple.

This is a series of rituals paying homage to God Skanda also known as Murugan, a son of God Shiva, that lasts for a total of 27 days, nearly a month that requires massive devotion to continue with a dedicated soul. According to the calendar of Hindus, the festival starts in the 'Aadi' month.

This commences with the hoisting of the flag of the Nallur Kovil and on specific days they conduct special 'poojas' while carrying out daily 'poojas' as usual during other days. The series of poojas pay homage not only to God Skanda but also to his two wives, Valli and Devani and the six women who believed to have brought up God Skanda since his childhood - as Hinduism depicts.

On the 24th day of this series of events, statues of the God Skanda and his two wives are carried in a procession in a single cart throughout the city streets giving the blessings of the god and goddesses to the people. This is the special day that attracts devotees from all over the country. On this day people dance with 'Kawadi' and some hang themselves with hooks torturing themselves showing their unconditional devotion to Gods.

While roaming around among this mammoth sized crowd of Hindu devotees I just did not feel that there was a threat from the ruthless LTTE on these innocent people. The success of the untiring efforts of the Army in creating a secure setting was evident. It was a glorious event.

"All of us want to live in peace. We want, somehow, the A9 road to be opened," R.V. Kandaswami (70), a retired veterinary surgeon, told me.

He said, "Now I spend more time in the kovils serving the gods. And it gives me such pleasure."

"I have worked with many Sinhala, Muslim officers and of course with many belonging to other ethnicities as well during my years of service. We never felt any difference. We were so united. We need to bring back that past," Kandaswami said recollecting the golden years of his life. His wife and the younger daughter came to him and I bid

Nallur festival in Jaffna

adieu to this wonderful person. They all prayed for peace and so did we. These people were unbelievably devoted to this religious event. The young crowd was highly enjoying this colourful event. But little ones knew only to play under the watchful eyes of their parents and grandparents.

For amma, appa and thangachchi....

Carrying the lunch packets distributed by the Army

The unconditional devotion

Little Rithika, who was just four years , was happily running around with her mother and father, Inbasothy and Yoganadan. Yoganadan, 47, runs a small business in Chavakachcheri after he returned from a foreign job in the Middle East. "We are quite satisfied with the security situation. Average people like us feel very safe and the number of robberies and thefts have gone down drastically," Yoganadan said.

The Army personnel were seen giving their utmost support to the people to make the event a great success.

The support these officers and soldiers received from the Jaffna Security Forces Commander Maj. Gen. G. A. Chandrasiri was the true force behind their success. From the top ranker to the average soldier there was such devotion and dedication in making the lives of these people happy.

The Army brought 10,000 lotus flowers all the way from Vavuniya by air and distributed them among the devotees. They provided food parcels, especially for the people who came from distant villages.

"For these people there are three treasures in life. One is education, the other is gold, and the third is religion. They have such an affection towards their religion," Jaffna Town Commandant Brigadier Ruwan Kulathunga said when we met him that evening. They have very well understood the thinking of these people, the true owners of this land.

"This is not our home, none of the soldiers were born or brought up here. But we have a duty to protect this land and give it back to their owners," he added.

Jaffna is blessed with such wonderful people. We have always prayed to see a day blessed with peace of mind and I'm sure, we have not given up that prayer.

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Load-Date: October 1, 2008

South Asia's (En)gendered wars

Daily Mirror (Sri Lanka)

October 28, 2008 Tuesday 2:55 PM EST

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Length: 814 words

Byline: Report from Daily Mirror brought to you by HT Syndication.

Dateline: Colombo

Body

Colombo, Oct. 28 -- The reports on communal violence in Orissa, violent politics of the Maharashtra Navnirman Sena (MNS) in Mumbai, the war in Sri Lanka: all of these remind me of prominent feminist scholar, Cynthia's Enloe's pertinent question, 'where are the women?' Each of these events and the debates around them are gendered, and yet there is no analysis that throws light on the fact that violence in Mumbai, Orissa or even in Sri Lanka is part of the militarised and macho politics of a male centric worldview. All of these events tell us how deeply entrenched the gendered hierarchies and norms are in our socio-political environment.

The masculinity of our 'God loving' political and religious extremists and terrorists does not make them 'God fearing' as they wreak havoc and rape nuns (and when questioned audaciously tell the world 'she' consented to the sexual orgy!), in their service to their religion and God.

The rage that I have felt, I am sure has been experienced by other women and men too. Which God gave you the permission to rape and kill? Which or whose 'religion' were you representing or 'protecting'? What happened to the social and political contract we (women included) had with the state, that in return for the sovereignty and powers we bestowed on it, we would be protected and our human rights guaranteed?

It bothers me that while we so easily classify wars and terrorism as religious, political and economic, we never think of gender as a category. Women are at the receiving end of the violent masculinist politics of extremist groups.

I do not think it necessary to remind the informed readers of this column how rape is often the big weapon in these macho wars of supremacy. Women's bodies become the territories on which the warring sides play out their ideologies. In South Asia we have seen how rape has been a war strategy in communal riots like in Gujarat and Orissa recently, as also in inter-state wars like in 1947 between India and Pakistan and in 1971 between East and West Pakistan.

Further, militarised masculine states in the region have made women's cultural identities the battle turf. The Taliban needed the women to be veiled and excluded from public spaces.

The 'hudood ordinance' of 1979, in Pakistan, targeted specifically at women, was part of then military ruler Zia-ul-Haq's Islamisation programme. Based on Shariah laws, the 'hudood ordinance' ensured that hundreds of women were subjected to rape or even gang rape and were eventually accused of adultery and incarcerated. This, along with honour killings, has been defended as punishment ordained by God. The rape of Bangladeshi women was part of the 1971 war strategy of West Pakistan and was deployed together with 'effeminising' the Bengali males.

South Asia's (En)gendered wars

The Bangladeshis were not 'Muslim' or 'man' enough and their masculinity had to be restored through the rape of their women. The Indian state has been no better than its neighbours in the 'gendered' wars it has waged in Kashmir and in the North East, not to forget the rape of Sri Lankan women by the IPKF. The agents of the state enforce the state's diktat through harassing and raping women.

Gujarat and Orissa are recent additions in the states' 'gendered' wars because the perpetrators were aided by the states' inactivity and apathy. In Orissa, when innocent citizens were being subjected to hooliganism and violence and women being humiliated, the state and the central governments were busy levelling charges at one another and debating the necessity of 'President's rule', to score political points (not withstanding that the President is a woman herself!).

It will also not be appropriate to claim that women have nothing to do with these 'gendered' wars and are mere 'victims'. Women have participated in male orientated violent projects, voluntarily and sometimes through various forms of coercion.

From the LTTE's women cadres to the female Afghan suicide bombers, from the women who have supported the militancy in Kashmir to the women activists of the Shiv Sena, Maharashtra Navnirman Sena (MNS) and the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS); these women have been perpetrators, planners and patrons of violence and compel us to look at the gendered composition of violent conflicts, an otherwise neglected terrain.

Even as I write this, news is pouring in about the 38 year old 'sadhvi', Pragya Singh Thakur who along with two radical Hindu activists has been arrested by the Maharashtra Anti-Terrorism Squad (ATS), for her suspected role in the blasts in Malegaon and Modasa. The Shiv Sena Mahila Aghadi (women's wing) and the RSS (Durga Vahini) women have consistently dispelled notions of women's passivity or their agency appropriated by masculine ideologies and have shown how women challenge and displace gender hierarchies in violent nationalisms.

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Load-Date: October 29, 2008

Army Chief's term extended

Daily News (Sri Lanka)

November 18, 2008 Tuesday 3:30 PM EST

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Length: 199 words

Byline: Daily News Sri Lanka

Dateline: Colombo

Body

Colombo, Nov. 18 -- The tenure of office of the Army Commander Lt. General Sarath Fonseka has been extended by another one year with effect from December 18, 2008 by President Mahinda Rajapaksa, Military Spokesman Brigadier Udaya Nanayakkara said yesterday.

Lieutenant General Sarath Fonseka took office as Commander of the Army on December 6, 2005 and this is the third time his service has been extended by the President.

The extension of his service comes at a time Sri Lanka Army is recording highest achievements against the **LTTE** in its effort to liberate the North and East from the clutches of the **LTTE**.

"My only expectation is to defeat the **LTTE** fully during my extended tenure. During the past two years we were able to advance more than 70 Kms to the North and I would be able to defeat the **LTTE** and reach the Eastern coast if we can advance another 70 Km to the East from our current positions," Army Commander Lt. General Sarath Fonseka commenting his future plans said yesterday.

Lt. Gen. Fonseka survived an assassination attempt by a **female** suicide cadre on April 25, 2006, just four months after assuming office.

Report from Daily News Sri Lanka brought to you by HT Syndication.

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Load-Date: November 19, 2008

Navy rescues 31 civilians

Daily Mirror (Sri Lanka)

March 4, 2009 Wednesday

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Length: 133 words

Dateline: Colombo

Body

Colombo, March 4 -- Thirty one civilians fleeing **LTTE**-controlled area were rescued by the navy in two fiber glass dinghies off Nayaru.

The navy said the group comprising 17 adults -- 8 males and 9 **females** -- and 14 children who fled Puthumathalan the previous day and had been moving surreptitiously when the naval vessels came to their rescue. They huddled together hugging the bottoms of the boats in an attempt to evade the hawkish eyes of the **LTTE** cadres who were reported to shoot escaping civilians. They were safely brought ashore at Pulmudai and provided with much-needed food and refreshments. Some had reportedly lost their children since the **LTTE** had forcibly conscripted to replenish their dwindling fighter-cadres. Published by HT Syndication with permission from Daily Mirror Sri Lanka.

For any query with respect to this article or any other content requirement, please contact Editor at htsyndication@hindustantimes.com

Load-Date: April 1, 2009

Civilians fleeing Tigers seek Forces' protection

Daily News (Sri Lanka)

November 21, 2008 Friday 2:39 PM EST

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Length: 137 words

Byline: Daily News Sri Lanka

Dateline: Colombo

Body

Colombo, Nov. 21 -- Around 14 civilians fleeing **LTTE** clutches sought protection with the Security Forces yesterday afternoon in Karaitivu, Jaffna.

Military spokesman Brigadier Udaya Nanayakkara said the 14 civilians comprising six males and four **females** including four children arrived from Vaddakkachchi, Mullaitivu to Karaitivu seeking Forces' protection.

Brigadier Nanayakkara said the civilians had narrated the sufferings they had and undergone in the hands of the **LTTE**.

Meanwhile, Security Forces handed over 18 **LTTE** bodies on Wednesday afternoon to the ICRC. The Tigers were killed in clashes in Mannar and Vavuniya battlefield.

The Tiger bodies, 11 males and seven **females** were handed over to the ICRC in Vavuniya at around 2.30 p.m. on Wednesday.

Report from Daily News Sri Lanka brought to you by HT Syndication.

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Load-Date: November 23, 2008

Student nabbed for alleged Tiger links

Daily Mirror (Sri Lanka)

August 5, 2008 Tuesday 2:16 PM EST

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Length: 132 words

Byline: Daily News Sri Lanka

Dateline: Colombo

Body

Colombo, Aug. 5 -- A final year student of the Peradeniya University who allegedly had contacts with the **LTTE** has been arrested by a special Police team along with 12 mobile phone connections (SIM cards), Police sources told the Daily News.

Police suspect the student had close contacts with a person living in the Pundalu Oya area and has provided vital information to the **LTTE** from Kandy.

Twelve SIM cards from various mobile telecommunication services were also seized along with this student.

Investigations has revealed that some of these mobile phone connections belonged to a **female** from Jaffna.

Police investigations also revealed that the suspect has found places of lodging for suspected **LTTE** cadres in the Kandy area.

Report from Daily News Sri Lanka brought to you by HT Syndication.

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Load-Date: September 16, 2008

SHELLING KILLS NINE CHILDREN IN SRI LANKA

The Evening Standard (London)

February 2, 2009 Monday

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London **Evening Standard**

Length: 135 words

Byline: ED HARRIS

Body

Nine children were killed and many more injured when heavy artillery struck a paediatrics ward and women's wing in a Sri Lankan hospital, the Red Cross reported today.

Dr Thurairajah Varatharajah, the top government health official in Puthukkudiyiruppu in the north of the country, said the shells in at least two of the attacks appeared to have come from the Sri Lankan army.

However, the army, which has been locked in a battle with Tamil separatists for 25 years, denied responsibility and spokesman Brigadier Udaya Nanayakkara said that Tamil Tigers were firing shells "very desperately".

Paul Castella, in charge of the Red Cross delegation in the capital Colombo, said: "We're shocked that the hospital was hit." The Red Cross called on both sides to provide safe passage for the wounded to leave the war zone.

Load-Date: February 14, 2009

RULE OF ALL

Daily Mirror (Sri Lanka)

March 26, 2009 Thursday

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Length: 956 words

Dateline: Colombo

Body

Colombo, March 26 -- In past debates on a political solution to Sri Lanka's ethnic crisis, devolution has tended to be over-emphasised and democracy has been under-emphasised. Within an overall democratic framework, devolution can certainly be a democratic measure. Instead of decisions about what happens in your municipality, village or province being made by people in a distant capital, who have little knowledge and less concern about the place where you live and the effects of their decisions, you would be empowered to have more say in the decisions that concern you. But if it is not specified clearly that the purpose of devolution is to promote democracy, there could be many dangers.

One potential danger is that there is insufficient devolution of powers, and the central government could interfere unnecessarily in the affairs of the province, without any justification in terms of protecting people's human rights or civil liberties. This has happened in India in the past, and such interference was an important reason why the earlier experiment with provincial councils in Sri Lanka failed, and why the present regime's determination to go no further than that experiment will also fail. But it is also possible that it is the provincial government that is violating the people's rights. In 2002, the state government in Gujarat carried out a genocidal pogrom against Muslims in the state, and the central government, which ought to have intervened to protect the victims from mass rape and slaughter, did not do so. Even after a Congress-led coalition came to power at the Centre, Muslims continued to be persecuted and prevented from returning to their homes by the state government in league with the police, while the judiciary in the state was subverted to allow the criminals to go free while incarcerating innocent Muslims. In essence, Gujarat was a fascist state within the framework of a more democratic one - a strange example of devolution gone wrong. In fact, if we try to imagine what would have happened if Velupillai Prabhakaran had been more flexible and had accepted a federal arrangement when it was offered to him during the peace talks following the 2002 Ceasefire Agreement, it probably would have been something very similar to the situation in Gujarat. There would have been a fascist Tamil Provincial Council in the northeast, with Muslims of the north having no chance to exercise their right of return, and Muslims of the east facing ethnic cleansing. The courts would have functioned according to the dictates of the **LTTE**, and democratic rights and freedoms would be non-existent. At the same time, violations of the rights of Tamils in other parts of the country could continue, despite devolution, if the Provincial Council ruling over their area happened to be dominated by Sinhalese nationalists. In Sri Lanka, the central government has long been displacing people in the name of High Security Zones and Special Economic Zones (SEZs). But in India, pitched battles have been fought by state governments against local communities facing displacement by SEZs. A democratic framework for devolution would allow neither the central nor the provincial government to dispossess people of their land, livelihoods and homes, but rather would insist on the need not only to obtain their consent as well as to compensate them adequately. Moreover, the usual practice of denying workers basic rights in SEZs, whether they are under the jurisdiction of the central or the provincial government, would also be impossible. Even at the lower level of village councils, devolution may not result in democracy if the

RULE OF ALL

councils are controlled by the village elite. The movement in India that culminated in the Right to Information Act actually began at this level, when villagers demanded to know what was happening to development funds allocated to their villages, large quantities of which had gone missing. Subsequently, this Act has become a potent weapon against corruption and abuse of power. Moreover, until legislation was passed reserving 33 percent of the seats in the village Panchayats for women, the latter were rarely able to get elected. (A struggle for one-third reservation for women in Parliament and state assemblies is still in progress.) There may be cases where women are used as fronts for their menfolk, but in many cases the influx of women into local government has made a real difference, with priorities shifting to development and welfare measures that have truly benefited the mass of local people. Unitary or united? This is a useful lesson for Sri Lanka, where women are conspicuously absent from government, despite the relatively high level of female literacy and large number of extremely able women. This is a significant loss, both for the women whose abilities are not being exercised and for the country. But it is a problem that will not be addressed by devolution alone. Nor will devolution in itself ensure respect for the rights of children, which are violated in so many ways: forced conscription, sexual abuse both commercially and within the family, physical violence, psychological trauma and neglect. As such, it simply cannot be assumed that devolution by itself will guarantee democracy. It is vitally important to spell out a bill of rights that will protect the fundamental rights of all citizens in all parts of the country, and to make it the duty of government at all levels to defend those rights. Only within such a framework would devolution become a genuinely democratic measure, putting decision-making more securely into the hands of those who are affected by the decisions. Published by HT Syndication with permission from Daily Mirror Sri Lanka.

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Load-Date: March 27, 2009

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ON THIS DAY 21 APRIL; LOCAL LONDON

The Evening Standard (London)

April 21, 2008 Monday

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London Evening Standard

Section: A; Pg. 20

Length: 123 words

Body

GERMANYS RED BARON KILLED

1509: Henry VIII ascends the throne.

1918: German fighter pilot Manfred von Richthofen, aka The Red Baron, is shot down and killed over France.

1944: French women are given the vote.

1945: The Red Army enters the outskirts of Berlin. Germany surrendered unconditionally on 7 May.

1955: Fleet Street newspapers are published for the first time in almost a month after a maintenance workers strike over a £2-a-week pay rise is resolved.

1987: More than 100 people are killed in an explosion in a bus garage in the Sri Lankan capital of Colombo. The Tamil Tigers were blamed.

1989: About 100,000 students gather in Tiananmen Square to commemorate Chinese reform leader Hu Yaobang. Several hundred were killed seven weeks later.

Graphic

Shot down: von Richthofen

Load-Date: April 21, 2008

ON THIS DAY 21 APRIL LOCAL LONDON

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Sri Lankan bus attacked, dozens killed

UPI Energy

January 16, 2008 Wednesday 1:38 PM EST

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Length: 175 words

Dateline: LIYANWELA HELAGAMA, Sri Lanka, Jan. 16

Body

The Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam terrorist organization is being blamed for an attack on a bus carrying about 80 passengers Wednesday.

Sri Lanka government officials say a bomb exploded and then gunfire showered a bus in Liyanwela Helagama that was carrying schoolchildren and peasants among others. Those who attempted to escape the bus were alleged gunned down after jumping out. The violence resulted in more than dozens injured and 23 dead, the Sri Lanka Ministry of Defense reported.

Official say among the dead were 13 women and 10 men. Those injured, including two schoolchildren and two infants, have been taken to area hospitals.

LTTE, fighting for a monoethnic separate since 1983, is considered a terrorist organization in the West. Defense officials in Sri Lanka say that LTTE "has built its deadly image through heinous crimes against soft targets as women, children and unsuspecting civilians. During the last two years alone, when the cease-fire agreement was still in operation, LTTE killed more than 4,000 people," the release said.

Load-Date: January 17, 2008

Navy rescues 56 Tamils

Daily Mirror (Sri Lanka)

February 25, 2009 Wednesday

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Length: 191 words

Dateline: Colombo

Body

Colombo, Feb. 25 -- The navy personnel rescued 56 Tamil civilians who were fleeing from the **LTTE**-controlled areas in the seas off Mullaitivu, the Navy said.

It said the refugees comprising 21 males, 18 **females** and 17 children had reportedly fled from the **LTTE** in four fiber glass dinghies fitted with out board motors when the naval personnel rescued them on Monday, the Navy said. The refugees were later brought ashore at the Point Pedro Naval base where the naval personnel provided the escapees with much needed food and refreshments; the sick and the weary were given medical treatment by the naval medical personnel. The refugees thanked the navy for saving their lives and expressed their heart felt gratitude for the warm hospitality and the care shown to them by the naval personnel. The Navy has made special arrangements to receive innocent Tamil civilians fleeing from the **LTTE** and naval personnel and vessels along with stand-by rescue and medical teams are being specially deployed for this humanitarian assistance mission in the North-eastern seas, the Navy added. Published by HT Syndication with permission from Daily Mirror Sri Lanka.

For any query with respect to this article or any other content requirement, please contact Editor at htsyndication@hindustantimes.com

Load-Date: April 1, 2009

A woman of our time

Sunday Observer (Sri Lanka)

May 25, 2008 Sunday 2:28 PM EST

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Length: 1949 words

Byline: Report from the Sri Lanka Sunday Observer brought to you by HT Syndication.

Dateline: Colombo

Body

Colombo, May 25 -- Sivageetha Prabhakaran, alias Padmini, is a quiet, soft spoken person, polite yet firm, deeply confident, knowledgeable and diplomatic. She is the first **female** Mayor of the Batticaloa Municipal Council. She is 26 years of age.

She was elected with a majority of the votes at the Local Government Elections held on 10 March 2008, representing the TMVP through the UPFA list. She 'only' shares her last name in common with the **LTTE** Leader Piribakaran or as many spelt it, 'Prabhakaran.' The contrast in their values are however, significant. She lost her father to the **LTTE** and in turn she shares the suffering of a majority of the people in the East.

Professional in her approach, it is evident, that she has wasted no time since taking office as she has planned every detail of the Municipal Council's future, in consultation with her fellow elected members.

She firmly believes that development work in the East in particular and in Sri Lanka as a whole cannot take place without the people's participation. Thus she says.

"When you say development it should not only be determined by officials and merely on paper. It should however be fortified with the ideas of the people. We the elected body, the officials and the people should work together to build a brighter future".

Development work

She speaks with confidence about the plans of the Batticaloa Municipal Council which reflect a clear vision, focus and commitment towards uplifting the people of Batticaloa and the land which were destroyed by the wrath of terrorism. Ms. Prabhakaran by her conduct illustrates the idiom "actions speak louder than words". She places emphasis on the smooth implementation of the development work:

"The first session of the Municipal Council was held on 17 April 2008. In keeping with the Municipal Ordinance, we formed four Committees, in order to ease and speed up the work. Each Committee consists of six elected members.

These committees can prise Finance, Workers' Committee, Health and Librarian Services." Under her guidance a "90 Day" programme has been planned as the Municipal Council's inaugural task.

This is in order to address the most urgent matters in the Municipal area. Currently the foundation required for this programme is being laid by the four Committees referred to above, as they are in the process of gathering data and

A woman of our time

information in consultation with the people of the area, in order to identify the urgent sectors that must be given priority.

Ms. Prabhakaran has spoken proudly of what can be considered a striking feature of this initiative i.e. the Municipal Council aims to conduct this "90 day" programme, relying solely on its own financial resources and man power drawn exclusively from the Batticaloa District itself. This is proof of people in the East working towards their development priorities.

Furthermore, she emphasized that the "90 day programme" would be implemented only when all the preparatory work and assessments have been completed, in order to ensure, maximum results through implementation.

North-East Community Restoration Development (NECORD) has pledged a sum of 5 million rupees for the purpose of developing damaged roads in Batticaloa.

Ms. Prabhakaran explained that this sum is not sufficient to reconstruct all the roads, nor can it be used at random. Therefore a systematic approach has been adopted to enable the Council to identify the roads which require reconstruction as a priority.

Thus Ms. Prabhakaran presents an extremely methodical approach to the Council's actions, avoiding inconsistencies at the very inception. She thus adopts a process of prioritizing all the development work that is required in the areas for which she is accountable.

She acknowledges and understands the importance of her responsibilities, to the people of Batticaloa. Therefore, she plans to prevent duplication of development work and thus avoid wastage of time, financial and human resources.

While the Municipal Council has identified key development projects and have plans to begin work shortly, she acknowledges that everything cannot be done by the Council/Government itself.

Thus she has already requested all UN Organizations to provide her with details of their mandate, in order to enable her to approach the most appropriate Organization with the relevant project proposal, thus saving valuable time and effort for all concerned parties.

"I was given an opportunity to meet most of the heads of the UN Organisations working in Sri Lanka. At that meeting I emphasized the needs of Batticaloa and requested them to provide us with details of their projects to match. It was a very useful meeting. I am thankful to the SCOPP for providing all the necessary support and guidance in meeting the right people and setting the right goals", the Mayoress said.

She expressed her appreciation of the development projects done by the international community including the United Nations, not only in the East but whole of Sri Lanka.

She is also optimistic that the international community will continue to help develop not only the Municipal area of Batticaloa, but the entire District by using the elected local body to help identify and prioritize future development activities hand in hand with all other aid agencies.

"Aid agencies with the assistance of the international community have worked well in the Batticaloa District over the years. Now I hope they work in harmony with us all in the elected body, in order to focus their work resources to the most critical spheres".

She is truly a person dedicated to serving her people. When one inquires about the well being of the people of the East, Ms. Prabhakaran's face lights up. She sincerely believes in them, understands that they have a critical role to play in developing their lives and therefore speaks passionately about them:

"The then leaders did not really feel the needs of the people. The people do not want a separate state (Eelam). They want their province which is rich in resources to be developed very well. Because of terrorism in the past, they could not do anything.

A woman of our time

However now, within a united Sri Lanka, as democracy now prevails, they want to meet their basic needs and the province developed. The people are also very happy with the election of the local body after 14 years, as their most basic issues will now be addressed."

She further expressed her views on the franchise used by the people after 14 years as a warrant to work for them.

"The people in Batticaloa gave us the power to serve them. Our victory in the local government election reveals how much trust the people have in the TMVP. We will not disappoint them. Our doors are always wide open and they can always share their thoughts with us".

Women's role in building peace

In Sri Lankan politics as a whole, only a small number of women is involved at the Local, Provincial and Central levels. In the Batticaloa District, it is even smaller, compared to that of the other Districts. As an educated young woman, holding one of the key administrative positions in Sri Lanka, Prabhakaran speaks of the important role women should play in uplifting our country from decades of devastation.

"Today the world is moving fast, we too should act accordingly. There are many talented women in a variety of fields, they should all come forward and shine. In the Eastern Province, due to the past war, the women in particular have endured much hardship.

There are many widows among them. I hope that in the near future we can encourage these widows to come forward and rebuild their lives by helping them to engage in self employment."

She reflects back on her father's life with much love, admiration and respect. Being a woman, she says that she has no regrets about her decision to enter the unpredictable world of politics amidst grave threats to her life. She is driven by her love for her people and commitment towards making her father's dream a reality.

"Everyone is happy and appreciates that I have come forward to carry out my father's dream. His dream was to see the development of Batticaloa and thus he focused on development. The public say, I must make his dreams come true.

So I have the support and encouragement of the public and especially that of all my family members", she claimed.

Communal harmony

The Eastern Province is significant for its multi-ethnic dimension, thus making it a unique Province of Sri Lanka. It is this multi- ethnic dimension that is the cause of glory as well as devastation.

However, the most crucial element is ensuring a peaceful co-existence among all communities, within the East's splendour and building a truly 'Sri Lankan' spirit. Ms. Prabhakaran explains with a sense of urgency that there is a need for "a strong bond of relationship to be built among the communities.

Whenever small problems arise within the community, the communal organisations that play a key role in each community need to sit, talk and sort each issue out". She explains that the TMVP adopted this approach in the past to resolve any issues that posed a threat to communal harmony.

She also recommends that immediate steps be taken by the policy-makers in this regard. They are, teaching English as the link language and introducing English medium syllabuses into selected schools, teaching Tamil or Sinhala as per the requirement as an official language, inter-communal and inter-faith dialogue.

Importance of Sri Lankan diaspora

The diaspora is expected to play a critical role in Sri Lanka. Even from thousands of miles away, they contribute to an ongoing global dialogue on Sri Lanka's situation, future plans and are available to compliment and even criticize when necessary. Ms. Prabhakaran says.

A woman of our time

"Although they are far away, still say they are prepared to help in our development activities".

She warmly welcomes communication with the Diaspora and considers them to be an extremely valuable source of encouragement and appreciates their support. She explained that very often they refer to the need for "the people of the North to be able to breathe the air of freedom just as the people of the East do now".

The Tamil Makkal Viduthalai Pulihal (TMVP)

The one time General Secretary of the TMVP she places emphasis on the fact that the TMVP believe in democracy and furthermore their respect for the rights of all persons, in particular, that of all children.

It is this principle that led to their decision to come forward with a strong commitment and dedication to serve their people and released all the under aged cadres and now work towards securing a better future for all people and children in the East.

"Today's children are tomorrow's leaders, hence for a brighter future, first we should provide them with a good education. In addition to school education, they must be provided the opportunity to study English and Information Technology. It is with the children in mind, that the Council has set up a committee on 'Librarian Services' and would also host reading competitions among students as part of the 90 Day programme".

She is also of the opinion that at present it is essential to undertake special programmes for young adults who have missed their childhood and education for a number of reasons.

"It is our duty to involve not only the Municipality but the entire province as well in conducting programmes for the 3,000 young adults, who have lost their education. They need recovery programmes to get back to their livelihoods.

I take this opportunity to make an appeal to the Government and other policy-makers to draw their attention on this group of people, if they want a stable peace in the East".

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For any query with respect to this article or any other content requirement, please contact Editor at htsyndication@hindustantimes.com

Load-Date: October 1, 2008

Woman Suicide Bomber Blows Herself Up

Colombo Times

March 3, 2009 Tuesday

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Length: 172 words

Body

Colombo, March 3 -- ONE more **LTTE** woman-suicide bomber blew herself up late Monday (2) afternoon in the general VANNANKULAM area, to the east of ELEPHANT PASS and to the south of VETTALAKERNI when the 55 Division troops tried to go closer to her on suspicion.

The **female LTTE** terrorist, believed to be in the age range of 16-26 years has apparently crept into cleared areas with the vicious intention of harming troops serving the area, ahead of her, but observation of her presence from a distance by the troops would have upset her plans, prompting her to blow herself up before she was caught, ground troops said.

It is believed she had carried herself at least a 1-2 kg of explosives in the company of a few more suicide cadres, but she has parted from others, minutes before she herself detonated her suicide jacket. Information reaching the troops now engaged in the final phase of the war for peace asserts that Tiger leadership has ordered many more **LTTE** suicide cadres to perform their final missions against advancing troops.

Load-Date: May 5, 2009

End of Document

News items from Asia-Pacific Desk of Xinhua

Xinhua General News Service

March 19, 2009 Thursday 2:10 PM EST

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Section: WORLD NEWS

Length: 1106 words

Dateline: HONG KONG March 19

Body

Following are news items from the Asia-Pacific Desk of Xinhua in Hong Kong on Thursday:

Philippine mining giant hikes stake in U.S. firm

Indian businessman arrested for suspected Fritzl-like incest crime

(Sports) Latest badminton rankings for women's doubles

(Sports) Latest badminton rankings for mixed doubles

Civilian death evokes renewed protests in Indian-controlled Kashmir

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Dollar briefly down to lower 95 yen in Tokyo.

12 members of family burnt to death in central India

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Singapore shares end 0.57 pct higher

Xinhua Asia-Pacific news summary at 1000 GMT, March 19

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Jakarta to join Earth Hour global campaign

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Australia helps Philippines upgrade aviation safety

1st LD: Vietnam confirms 3rd human case died of bird flu this year

2nd LD Writethru: Vietnam confirms 3rd human case died of bird flu this year

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Xinhua Asia-Pacific stocks news at 1100 GMT, March 19

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Xinhua Asia-Pacific news summary at 1600 GMT, March 19

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Competition for Universities gets tougher amid crisis: Singapore PM

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Roundup: Global financial crisis showing heavier effects on Indonesia

Over 20 **LTTE** rebels killed in northern Sri Lanka: military

Over 45,000 civilians flee from rebel area: Sri Lankan gov't

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Pakistan's supreme court rejects review petition against Sharif brothers' disqualification

URGENT: 8 killed in clashes in Pakistan's tribal area

2nd Ld Writethru: Explosions heard in Pakistan's northwestern Peshawar city

1st Ld Writethru: Eight killed in clashes in Pakistan's tribal area

Load-Date: March 20, 2009

Female suicide cadre triggers bomb

Daily Mirror (Sri Lanka)

March 4, 2009 Wednesday

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Length: 177 words

Dateline: Colombo

Body

Colombo, March 4 -- An **LTTE** woman-suicide bomber, who infiltrated into cleared areas in Mullaitivu blew herself up on Monday in Vannankulam area, to the easaat of Elephant Pass and to the south of Vettalakerni when the 55 Division troops tried to go closer to her on suspicion.

The army headquarters said that the **female LTTE** cadre, believed to be in the age range of 16-26 years has apparently crept into cleared areas."Observation of her presence from a distance by the troops would have upset her plans, prompting her to blow herself up before she was caught," the army said. It further said that she had carried herself at least a 1-2 kg of explosives in the company of a few more suicide cadres, but she has parted from others, minutes before she herself detonated her suicide jacket. Few weeks ago, an **LTTE** suicide woman pretending as a displaced civilian had entered the cleaned area and blew herself in the Kilinochchi area killing more than 25 including civilians and military personnel. Published by HT Syndication with permission from Daily Mirror Sri Lanka.

For any query with respect to this article or any other content requirement, please contact Editor at htsyndication@hindustantimes.com

Load-Date: April 1, 2009

Blast kills 21 in Sri Lanka

Weekend Australian

June 7, 2008 Saturday

1 - All-round Country Edition

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Section: WORLD; Pg. 17

Length: 155 words

Body

COLOMBO: At least 21 commuters were killed and 47 wounded yesterday in a suspected Tamil Tiger mine attack on a crowded bus south of the Sri Lankan capital.

The state-run bus was peppered with shrapnel, suggesting a powerful fragmentation mine placed on the roadside had been detonated as the bus was passing.

“Twenty-one people have been killed, eight of them are women,” said police spokesman Ranjith Gunasekera, adding that 47 others were hurt.

The military's spokesman, Brigadier Udaya Nanayakkara, blamed the Tamil Tigers, who are fighting to carve out a separate Tamil state within the Sinhalese-majority island.

The incident is the latest in a string of attacks against commuters in and around Colombo.

Each attack has followed Tamil Tiger complaints of mine attacks against civilians inside the rebel-held north by government commandos.

Victims of yesterday's bombing said the bus was knocked over by the force of the explosion.

Load-Date: June 6, 2008

Navy rescues 76 Tamil civilians in mullaitivu

Daily Mirror (Sri Lanka)

January 27, 2009 Tuesday

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Length: 172 words

Dateline: Colombo

Body

Colombo, Jan. 27 -- The Navy on Sunday rescued a group of 76 Tamil civilians, who were found stranded in the Mullaitivu seas while fleeing from **LTTE** held areas.

The Navy headquarters said the group had been struggling in the seas to save their lives on board four fiber glass dinghies (FGDs) when the Naval patrol craft came to their rescue.

The rescued escapees comprised 30 male adults, 26 **female** adults and 20 children.

Those found to be fatigued and sick due to the bitter and dangerous ordeal during their escapade were provided with immediate medical care.

The escapees revealed how ruthlessly the **LTTE** was holding the innocent civilians captive against their will, the Navy said.

The Navy has made special arrangements to receive hapless Tamil civilians fleeing from the **LTTE** clutches. Naval personnel and vessels along with stand-by rescue and medical teams have been deployed for this humanitarian mission in the North-eastern seas, the Navy headquarters added.

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Load-Date: May 6, 2009

'All Tamils should fight Govt. forces'

Daily Mirror (Sri Lanka)

August 26, 2008 Tuesday 3:10 PM EST

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Length: 164 words

Byline: Report from Daily Mirror brought to you by HT Syndication.

Dateline: Colombo

Body

Colombo, Aug. 26 -- Two top **LTTE** leaders have said that time has come for the entire Tamil populace to fight the government forces in order to what they say "liberate the motherland from the enemy."

LTTE political wing leader B. Nadesan at a get-together under the name "resurgence for war" held in Killinochchi said that the "enemy" should be given an appropriate reply accumulating the whole strength of the Tamil people, Puthinam website said.

He said if people fight for the "liberation" in unison no power on earth can defeat them.

At the same meeting **LTTE Women's** political wing leader S. Thamilini said that this was a time when all Tamils must join hands for the war. She said that the only way for the Tamils to protect their lives was to fight the enemy, according to Puthinam. Tamil people have been trained some way or the other and they must live with a sense that those in the battle front have, she said.

Published by HT Syndication with permission from Daily Mirror.

-783400

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Load-Date: August 26, 2008

News items from Asia-Pacific Desk of Xinhua

Xinhua General News Service

March 19, 2009 Thursday 1:19 AM EST

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Section: WORLD NEWS

Length: 1106 words

Dateline: HONG KONG March 19

Body

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1st Ld Writethru: Eight killed in clashes in Pakistan's tribal area

Load-Date: March 21, 2009

AFPTV Agenda for the Week Ahead

Agence France Presse -- English

February 6, 2009 Friday 7:48 PM GMT

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Length: 1488 words

Dateline: PARIS, Feb 6 2009

Body

We plan to file the following videos over the next week. Please check the daily advisories for any additions or amendments.

Saturday, February 7

TOURS, France: Inspecting the humble head louse up close is enough to make you itch. And a team of researchers in France spends its time doing just that, examining ways to keep the pesky critters from roaming from head to head. Voiced report.

Sunday, February 8

HARTLEPOOL, England: Weather permitting, the asbestos-tainted French aircraft carrier Clemenceau is expected to arrive Sunday in the port of Hartlepool on the northeast coast of Britain. The former pride of the French navy is to be broken up despite initial protests from green campaigners. Voiced report.

Monday February 9

JERUSALEM: Israelis go to the polling stations on Tuesday to elect 120 deputies to parliament. The latest opinion surveys show the right headed for victory, with a healthy showing for the extreme-right party Yisrael Beitenou. Voiced report.

NORTHEASTERN SRI LANKA/NEW DELHI: Monitoring the situation as the Sri Lankan army continues its offensive against **Tamil Tigers**. News report including an interview with the former commander of Indian peacekeeping forces in Sri Lanka. Voiced report.

MOSCOW: Plans to blow up the Bolshoi theatre should Nazis occupy Moscow, the former belongings of Stalin and Hitler -- these are parts of a new exhibition charting 90 years of military counterespionage. Voiced report.

KAMPALA: Water treatment in Uganda's capital city is becoming more and more expensive because of the increased pollution of Lake Victoria. As a result, for the people that live there, paying the water bill is getting harder and harder. Voiced report.

AFPTV Agenda for the Week Ahead

BEIRUT: It's an uphill battle, but Lebanon's traffic police are determined to have their way over an nation of unruly drivers. With the help of French police, they are stepping up operations to impose basic safety rules on the road. Voiced report.

GENEVA: Some say dirty money circulates in Switzerland -- and researchers in Geneva would have to agree. They study how Swiss franc bills carry flu viruses and all sorts of bugs, saying winter illnesses spread as quickly as money changes hand. Voiced report.

Tuesday, February 10

JERUSALEM: News coverage of the Israeli general election. Images and soundbites. Voiced report.

GAZA CITY: The 22-day Israeli offensive has left Gaza in ruins. The victims of the war are not only the enclave's dead and wounded, but also thousands of others made homeless or forced to live and sleep in the ruins of their former abodes. Voiced report.

BERLIN: The ongoing Berlin Film Festival is devoting much attention to the 20th anniversary of the fall of the Berlin wall which will be marked in November. A series of films dating from the end of the Cold War era will form part of a special retrospective. Voiced report.

GENEVA: Even Switzerland's famous clock-making industry is suffering from the economic downturn. Well-known brands have slowed production and retailers have seen a drop in sales. But this is not the first slump for the industry, which has become increasingly resilient on the Asian market for its survival. Voiced report.

PARIS: Denmark, which hosts a key conference on climate change in December, wants to show that the choice of Copenhagen for a possible landmark treaty is no coincidence. The government asked a group of Danish architects to come up with sustainable concepts using hundreds of empty vegetable boxes. The result is being shown in Paris. Voiced report.

TELLURIDE, Colorado: As "backcountry", or "freestyle", skiing becomes more popular in the United States, the risks of braving uncharted ski areas come into focus, especially for one recent avalanche survivor in Colorado's elite Telluride ski town. Voiced report.

Wednesday, February 11

JERUSALEM: What is the face of Israel's future leadership? A news report following the general election. Voiced report.

CAIRO: It is not common practice to enjoy an alcoholic drink in many Muslim countries, but in Egypt, at least one company is seeking to change that. It is offering wine-tasting courses, though its main target is not locals, but some of the 13 million tourists who visit the country each year. Voiced report.

CHENGDU, China: As China's economy falters, local authorities are offering some free job training to boost the employment prospects for migrant workers. With a limited welfare system in China, it's a desperate struggle to find work as millions are competing for a limited number of jobs. Voiced report.

DAKAR: An increase in violence, desecration of graves and a toughening of laws against homosexuality... homophobia is on the march in Senegal. Voiced report.

NEW YORK: Famed funky New York designer Betsy Johnson is one of the fashionistas who pulled out of New York's February 2009 Fashion Week. She tells AFPTV how tough economic times are affecting her craft. Voiced report.

Thursday, February 12

AFPTV Agenda for the Week Ahead

TIJUANA, Mexico/SAN DIEGO, California: People from both sides of the US-Mexico border come to "Friendship Park" monument to embrace relatives who cannot cross the frontier. But smooching through the loosely built fence will soon be a thing of the past, since the US government will be removing it in order to extend the wall dividing the two countries. Voiced report.

WASHINGTON: Repair it! Borrow it! As economic austerity sets in, many Americans are changing their habits from buying new items, to making do with the old. AFPTV looks at businesses that are getting a boost despite a dismal economy. Voiced report.

PHNOM PENH: Chum Mey is one of only a handful of people who survived Cambodia's infamous Tuol Sleng prison where the Khmer Rouge regime tortured an estimated 12,000 people between 1975 and 1979. Prison leader Duch goes on trial on February 17 for his role in the massacre. Chum Mey intends to testify and hopes the process will bring him some closure. Voiced report.

MWANZA, Tanzania: According to UN figures, there are about 100 million children across the world living in the street. Over the last decade, the situation has got much worse in Africa because of the alarming rate of urbanisation. An AFPTV report on the welfare of children in Mwanza, Tanzania's second largest city. Voiced report.

PRISTINA: The European Union Rule of Law Mission (EULEX) started work on Kosovo last December. Its aim is to help the local authorities maintain the rule of law, especially in the police, judiciary and customs areas. Voiced report.

MALMOE, Sweden: Environmentalists say "passive" houses are the most exciting development in ecological construction, bringing energy consumption for heating, ventilation and hot water close to zero. Most of the world's passive houses are located in Germany and Scandinavia, but the concept is spreading. We accompanied a Swedish couple about to move into their new "passive home". Voiced report.

Friday, February 13

MELBOURNE, Australia: Australian singer Archie Roach was stolen from his parents as a child. February 13 marks the first anniversary of the apology by Prime Minister Kevin Rudd to Indigenous Australians for the stolen generations. A dark period of time when Aboriginal children were removed from their families and placed in boarding schools or missions by the Australian government between 1869 and 1969. Voiced report.

BREZOVICA, Kosovo: When Kosovo declared its independence last year, one ski resort not far from the capital Pristina refused to recognise it as an independent nation. In protest, it shut for business. But this snow season, Brezovica is back up and running... for the greater good of skiing. Voiced report.

CAIRO: "Uncensored" is the title of a film that has Egyptians wide-eyed and talking. The full-length feature focuses on the looser morals of the country's younger set -- it shows a liberal indulgence in alcohol and drugs, and some homosexuality. But what really has conservatives agog is the part played by one bisexual ***female*** character. Voiced report.

MOSCOW: The ruble has lost almost a quarter of its value since last November -- a disaster for middle-class Russians who have run up credit, or who pay their rent in dollars and euros. Voiced report.

PHILADELPHIA: The US military is employing creative means to bring in new recruits as numbers are low and troops are spread thin across two wars. One is video games simulating life as a soldier that are available to passersby and teenagers in malls across America. Voiced report.

KABUL: On Liberation Day Friday Afghans mark the 20th anniversary of the withdrawal of the Soviets. It is an occasion for former Mujahideen fighters to reflect on the past occupation and, for some, to draw parallels with the US presence in their country. Voiced report.

AFPTV Agenda for the Week Ahead

MIKOLAJEK, Poland: Ice sailing -- or bojery' -- is an extreme sport practised on the northern lakes of Poland. Without the friction of water to slow them down, some of these "boats" can reach speeds of up to 100 kilometres per hour. Voiced report.

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newsweek At home....

Townsville Bulletin (Australia)

January 5, 2008 Saturday

1 - Edition

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Section: WEEKEND EXTRA; Pg. 61

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Body

MONDAY

- * Deadly stonefish struck twice within an hour, with a 56-year-old man and a girl, 9, rushed to hospital.
- * Townsville police worked to the core on Saturday night handling a record number of jobs.
- * Black River rodeo has canned its New Year's Eve rodeo, blaming cashed-up council-run events for their downfall.

TUESDAY

- * Townsville's mayoral candidates are being targeted with threatening phone calls and threats against their families.
- * A cool \$1.4 million will start 2008 off in the best possible way for one lucky Townsville lotto winner.
- * Townsville's New Year's Eve celebrations were a cracker as locals flocked to organised events across the twin cities.

WEDNESDAY

- * A young mother was murdered after a fight broke out at a New Year's Eve party in Bowen.
- * A Crystal Creek couple had a horrible start to the New Year when their house burned to the ground.
- * The boom city of Townsville will need a another 8400 dwellings over the next four years.

THURSDAY

- * A heartfelt letter from a nine-year-old girl speaks volumes about the extent of the housing crisis in the twin cities.
- * A young mother murdered on New Year's Eve was holding her two-year-old daughter when she was stabbed in chest.
- * A team of 'stinger chasers' are scouring the North for irukandji jellyfish to create a cure for the deadly creatures' venom.

FRIDAY

* Having shed tears of despair after months without a home, Caitlin and Leanne Jones were inundated with offers of accommodation.

* A storage shed was gutted after fire tore through a West End premises.

* Green sea turtles have been breeding like rabbits and are now estimated to be in the millions on the Great Barrier Reef.

... and abroad

A PAIR of outsize cotton underpants doused in water stopped a family home in Britain from burning down over the New Year holiday. Jenny Marsey's size 18-20 cotton Marks & Spencer pants, retrieved from a laundry pile, were used by her son to cover a frying pan fire at their home in Hartlepool, north-east England, on Sunday. Marsey, who was out shopping when the incident happened, said: "My parachute knickers have come in handy for something. We've had a good laugh that they were a bit like a fire blanket."

HUNDREDS of cancer patients and staff were evacuated earlier this week after a devastating fire ripped through London's Royal Marsden Hospital. Dozens of firefighters battled the blaze as it tore across the roof and upper floors of the building in central London. Two operations at the hospital, which is Europe's largest comprehensive cancer centre, had to be stopped and 79 in-patients were transferred to neighbouring hospitals for continuing care. Out-patients were taken to the nearby church of St Paul in Onslow Square before being admitted to other hospitals or assessed on whether they could go home.

ELEVEN new year revellers in Mongolia died and dozens more fell seriously ill after drinking vodka that contained industrial alcohol. The incident has led to a temporary ban on selling vodka -- the nation's favourite alcoholic drink -- in the capital Ulan Bator, where the tainted liquor was purchased, Mayor Tudev Bilegt said. The 11 people died shortly after drinking the vodka on New Year's Eve, while at least 35 others were taken to hospital suffering from poisoning, the National Emergency Management Agency said.

THAILAND is mourning Princess Galyani, only sister of revered King Bhumibol Adulyadej, whose death from cancer has also put a temporary halt to post-election coalition haggling. Thousands of Thais flocked to Bangkok's Siriraj Hospital where the king's elder sister died after battling abdominal cancer for about six months. Many of them were wearing black and clutching pictures of the princess, while Thai television stations interrupted their regular programming to report her death with footage showing her life. All newscasters wore black.

BURMA'S military junta has ordered a massive 166-fold rise in the annual satellite television levy in an apparent attempt to stop people watching dissident and international news broadcasts. With no word in state media of any licence fee increases, the first satellite dish owners knew of the hike was when they went to pay the 6000 kyat levy, only to be told it was now one million kyat (\$892), three times the average citizen's yearly income.

MALAYSIA'S health minister resigned this week, a day after he shocked the nation by admitting he was the man in a widely circulated sex video. Health Minister Chua Soi Lek, who has apologised after two DVDs showing him engaging in sexual acts with an unidentified woman hit the streets, said he was certain Prime Minister Abdullah Ahmad Badawi would accept his resignation. The scandal is the latest in a series of problems plaguing Abdullah's government, which has been widely expected to call a snap election in the coming weeks.

PEACE mediator Norway says a Nordic ceasefire monitoring mission was likely to be withdrawn from Sri Lanka after Colombo said it would annul a 2002 truce with the Tamil Tigers. Norway's Development Aid Minister Erik Solheim, who brokered the six-year-old ceasefire, said Norway was willing to continue to serve as facilitator of Sri Lankan peace talks as long as it enjoyed the confidence of the parties to the conflict. "I think it is most likely that it will have to be withdrawn," Mr Solheim said, referring to the Nordic monitoring mission.

TWO foreign aid workers who were released after a week's captivity in Somalia arrived at Madrid's Torrejon air base late yesterday. Spanish doctor Mercedes Garcia and Argentine nurse Pilar Bauza Moreno were seized in Somalia on December 26 by six gunmen while driving to a centre where the aid group Doctors Without Borders

treats children with malnutrition. The pair were seized in Puntland, a semi-autonomous region in northeastern Somalia known as a hub for human traffickers running boats into Yemen, and a source of marine piracy. Spain's Foreign Minister Miguel Angel Moratinos greeted the women on the tarmac.

KENYA'S former colonial ruler Britain sought this week to use its diplomatic muscle to help end deadly violence there, backing Commonwealth and African efforts to resolve a standoff over disputed elections. Prime Minister Gordon Brown spoke to Ghanaian President John Kufuor, chairman of the African Union, and the head of the Commonwealth's observer mission in Kenya about overseeing a process of reconciliation, his office said. ``They agreed on the urgent need to establish a process of reconciliation in Kenya facilitated by the Commonwealth and the African Union," said a Downing Street spokesman.

A PENNSYLVANIA couple has a new tradition for ringing in the new year: spending it in the maternity ward. For the second year in a row, Kyle and Becky Armstrong welcomed the first baby of the year at Gettysburg Hospital. Faith Lynn Armstrong arrived on New Year's Day at 5.23am. Her sister, Kaden Skye, was the hospital's first baby in 2007 -- also born on January 1. Nurse manager Laura Swomley said she had never seen anything like it in 25 years at the hospital. ``It's strange," agreed Becky Armstrong, of Gettysburg. ``It's all very weird."

... what they said

`First and foremost, I would like to recognise the huge debt of gratitude that I owe the Australian public for getting me home. I will not forget, or let you down.'

-- Convicted terrorism supporter and former Guantanamo Bay inmate David Hicks, in a statement upon his release from Adelaide's Yatala Prison.

`Good. I feel as free as he is.'

-- Terry Hicks, who campaigned tirelessly to free his son David, after his son's release.

`I'm reading all this stuff that he was trained in these terrorist training camps, but I'm telling you any American soldier who has gone through basic training has had 50 times more training than this guy.'

-- Former United States Muslim army chaplain James Yee who counselled Hicks in Guantanamo Bay.

`It's amazing, awesome, makes London look awful.'

-- Londoner Charlie Wells, impressed by the New Year's Eve fireworks display at Sydney Harbour.

`There will always be a strong cop on the beat in the building industry under Labor.'

-- Workplace Relations Minister Julia Gillard insisting industry-wide strikes will be illegal under Labor's industrial laws despite pressure from the construction industry.

`We've just started a new life, and we don't want to die at this age.'

-- John Tauranga, who was in a limousine with his new bride Laina, when it was stopped by police after being involved in street racing.

`I've come outside and seen a bit of activity up on the hill, a lot of neighbours running around, so I raced up. No big deal.'

-- Nick Barrett, who has been nominated for a bravery award after helping to rescue a neighbour from his burning home in Sydney's south.

`I tried one time and the board almost hit me in the head. It missed my head by two inches. That was the end of Brian Wilson the surfer.'

newsweek At home....

-- Former Beach Boy Brian Wilson, who is in Australia to perform at the Sydney Festival.

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AFP news calendar

Agence France Presse -- English

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Dateline: PARIS, Nov 21 2008

Body

The AFP news calendar

Monday, November 24 to Sunday, December 21

Monday, November 24

AMSTERDAM: Dutch court rules on demand by shareholders of Fortis bank for a probe into its collapse and nationalisation

ATHENS: Chinese President Hu Jintao visits (and 25)

BAGHDAD: Iraqi parliament votes on accord with Washington on the timetable for withdrawing US forces from the country

BANGKOK: Second ruling expected for Canadian paedophile Christopher Neil

BUDAPEST: Canada's governor-general Michaelle Jean starts tour of eastern Europe (to Dec 6)

DOHA: Jordan's King Abdullah II and Queen Rania visit Qatar

GENEVA: Conference of signatories to convention banning anti-personnel mines (to 28)

GENEVA: World Trade Organisation meets at Russia's request (and 25)

HANOI: Indian President Pratibha Patil visits Vietnam (to 28)

JERUSALEM: Israeli parliament holds a special session to discuss violence in the Gaza Strip

LE PUY EN VELAY, France: European conference on employment of seniors

LONDON: Confederation of British Industry annual conference

AFP news calendar

NAGASAKI, Japan: Roman Catholic Church beatifies 188 Japanese killed for their faith in the 17th century

OSLO: International conference titled "Women in the land of conflict"

TEHRAN: Lebanese President Michel Sleiman visits Iran (and 25)

WASHINGTON: Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Olmert visits for talks with US President George W. Bush

Tuesday, November 25

BHOPAL, India: State elections in Madhya Pradesh

BRASILIA: Russian President Dmitry Medvedev visits Brazil

BRNO: Czech constitutional court publishes ruling on Treaty of Lisbon

DUBAI: Verdict on appeal of case in which two Britons were sentenced to three months in jail and deportation for having sex on the beach

GENEVA: UNESCO-sponsored international conference on education (to 28)

JERUSALEM: Italian President Giorgio Napolitano starts a three-day visit to Israel and the Palestinian territories

KRAKOW, Poland: Exhumation of remains of General Wladyslaw Sikorski, wartime leader in exile, in bid to determine if his death in a plane crash in 1943 was accidental

MUSCAT: Gulf Cooperation Council foreign and finance ministers meet

NUUK, Greenland: Greenland, a semi-autonomous Danish territory in the North Atlantic, votes in a referendum on wider autonomy

PARIS: Conference on migration and development

STOCKHOLM: Croatian Prime Minister Ivo Sanader visits

THE HAGUE: European space ministers meet (and 26)

Wednesday, November 26

BEIRUT: Arab League Secretary General Amr Mussa visits Lebanon

BEIRUT: Paraguayan Foreign Minister Alejandro Hamed Franco visits Lebanon

CAIRO: Arab League foreign ministers discuss Middle East peace progress

CARACAS: Russian President Dmitry Medvedev visits Venezuela

COLOMBO: The leader of Sri Lanka's Tamil Tigers, Velupillai Prabhakaran, delivers his annual policy address marking the rebels' 'Heroes' Day'

DUBAI: Arrival of the liner Queen Elizabeth 2 (QE2) bought for 100 million dollars to be converted into a luxury hotel and moored in the Palm Jumeirah complex

PARIS: Portion of original spiral staircase from Eiffel Tower auctioned

Thursday, November 27

ANDORRA: Summit on future of Europe, focusing on durable economic development (and 28)

AFP news calendar

BUDAPEST: Hungarian unemployment figures for August to October published

BRUSSELS: Meeting of EU interior and justice ministers

BRUSSELS: EU ministers responsible for telecommunications meet

HAVANA: Russian President Dmitry Medvedev visits Cuba

JERUSALEM/RAMALLAH, West Bank: First anniversary of the formal relaunch of Israeli-Palestinian peace talks in the US city of Annapolis

KANO, Nigeria: Next hearing in the trial of drug giant Pfizer said to have tested drugs in Nigeria in 1996, with sometimes fatal consequences

LAGOS: Dalai Lama visits

VIENNA: Governors of International Atomic Energy Agency meet, with nuclear programmes of Iran, North Korea and Syria on the agenda (and 28)

Friday, November 28

BLOEMFONTEIN, South Africa: High Court verdict that quashed graft charges against ruling party chief Jacob Zuma reviewed in the appeals court

BRUSSELS: Special meeting of EU agriculture ministers on international food aid

DOHA: Summit on global financial crisis, expected to be attended by some 40 heads of state and government

PARIS: Court rules on appeal of President Nicolas Sarkozy against earlier dismissal of complaint against sale of voodoo doll in his effigy

PHNOM PENH: Opening of "Where Elephants Weep," Cambodia's first rock opera

UPPSALA, Sweden: Swedish Lutheran Church hosts Interfaith Climate Summit (and 29)

VIENNA: Austria's conservative OeVP party holds a congress to confirm the nomination of Josef Proell as its leader

Saturday, November 29

BEIRUT: Belgian Prime Minister Yves Leterme visits

CAIRO: Extraordinary meeting of the Organisation of Petroleum Exporting Countries amid speculation of an output cut to boost plunging oil prices

DOHA: Opening of UN-organised International Conference on Financing (to Dec 2)

NEW DELHI: State elections in the Indian capital region New Delhi, and the northeastern Indian state of Mizoram

Sunday, November 30

BUCHAREST: Legislative elections in Romania

SRINAGAR, Kashmir: Final phase of polling in Indian-ruled Kashmir

STUTTGART, Germany: Congress of Chancellor Angela Merkel's Christian Democrats (to Dec 2)

Monday, December 1

World AIDS day

AFP news calendar

BRUSSELS: Eurozone finance ministers meet, followed by a meeting of EU-27 finance ministers

LYON, France: EU-China summit

POZNAN, Poland: Climate change conference grouping Tokyo Protocol signatories (to 12)

ROME: Conference on wildlife protection at Food and Agriculture Organisation headquarters (to 5)

SEOUL: Starting date for North Korea's threatened closure of the inter-Korean border

THE HAGUE: Dismantled and partly privatised former Belgian-Dutch banking group Fortis holds a general shareholders meeting

Tuesday, December 2

BRUSSELS: NATO foreign ministers meet (and 3)

HONG KONG: Clinton Global Initiative hosts two-day conference, featuring the former US president Bill Clinton, world leaders and activists

LONDON: Opening of the new Egyptian gallery at the British Museum

PARIS: Western European Union defence organisation meets (to 4)

SINGAPORE: Australian television correspondent Peter Lloyd sentenced on drug charges

THE HAGUE: Conference of member states of organisation to ban chemical weapons

Wednesday, December 3

BERLIN: Lebanese President Michel Sleiman begins official visit (to 5)

DAKAR: 15th international AIDS in Africa conference (to 7)

OSLO: Representatives of more than 100 countries sign a treaty banning cluster bombs

Thursday, December 4

BRUSSELS: EU environment ministers meet

HELSINKI: OSCE ministerial meeting (and 5)

JAIPUR, India: State elections in Rajasthan

MECCA, Saudi Arabia: Start of the hajj, the Muslim pilgrimage to Islam's holiest sites

PERUGIA, Italy: American Amanda Knox and Italian Raffaele Sollecito go on trial for the 2007 murder of British exchange student Meredith Kercher

YANGON: Myanmar marks National Day

Friday, December 5

BANGUI: "Inclusive political dialogue" grouping government, opposition and rebel groups in bid to restore stability and economic health to Central African Republic (to 20)

GDANSK, Poland: Ceremony to mark the 25th anniversary of awarding of Nobel Peace Prize to Lech Walesa, attended by other prizewinners, the Dalai Lama and French President Nicolas Sarkozy

AFP news calendar

PHNOM PENH: Khmer Rouge war crimes court reads decision on appeal of closing order against former prison chief Kaing Guek Eav alias Duch

Saturday, December 6

GDANSK, Poland: Central and East European summit on energy and climate

STOCKHOLM: French author and winner of the 2008 Nobel Literature Prize Jean-Marie Gustave Le Clezio holds a press conference

STOCKHOLM: The 2008 Nobel Medicine Prize winners, Françoise Barré-Sinoussi and Luc Montagnier of France and Harald zur Hausen of Germany, hold a press conference

Sunday, December 7

ACCRA: General elections in Ghana

MOSCOW: Argentine President Cristina Kirchner visits

TEL AVIV: Trial opens of Ronny Ron on charges of killing his French granddaughter Rose in Israel

Monday, December 8

BRUSSELS: European foreign ministers meet

BRUSSELS: European transport ministers meet

MONTREAL: Provincial elections in Quebec

NEW DELHI: Results of elections in five Indian states -- Chhattisgarh, Madhya Pradesh, New Delhi, Mizoram, Rajasthan -- to be announced

PHNOM PENH: Khmer Rouge war crimes court hearing on request to translate case file of former head of state Khieu Samphan

THE HAGUE: International Criminal Court reviews accusations of war crimes and crimes against humanity against former Democratic Republic of Congo vice-president Jean-Pierre Bemba (to 12)

TIKO, Cameroon: Trial of 23 members of banned secessionist Southern Cameroon National Council accused of illegal assembly

Wednesday, December 10

BEIRUT: Former US president Jimmy Carter visits Lebanon (to 12)

Thursday, December 11

BRUSSELS: European summit (and 12)

Friday, December 12

LISBON: 100th birthday of veteran Portuguese film director Manoel de Oliveira

MANAMA: Fifth Regional Security Summit organised by the International Institute for Strategic Studies (to 14)

Sunday, December 14

ASHKHABAD: Parliamentary elections in Turkmenistan

AFP news calendar

GAZA CITY: Tenth anniversary of Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat renouncing terrorism and acknowledging Israel's right to exist, as well as of Bill Clinton becoming first US president to visit the Palestinian territories

JERUSALEM: Austrian President Heinz Fischer starts visit to Israel and the Palestinian territories (to 17)

Monday, December 15

CHIANG MAI, Thailand: ASEAN summit (to 18)

Thursday, December 18

AMMAN: European Union and Mediterranean states hold a water conference in Jordan

DHAKA: Bangladesh holds its first parliamentary elections in seven years to return the country to democracy after two years of emergency rule

Friday, December 19

GENEVA: New round of Russia-Georgia talks (and 18)

Saturday, December 20

CAIRO: Trial resumes of tycoon Hisham Talaat Mustafa accused of paying a retired policeman to murder pop singer Suzanne Tamim

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End of Document

The bland Grammy brand: as the music awards show turns 50, does it still matter?

Canwest News Service

February 8, 2008 Friday

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Byline: Amy O'Brian, Canwest News Service

Body

One of the biggest reasons to watch the 50th Grammy Awards show had her big brash beehive denied entry earlier this week to the United States.

The deeply troubled yet supremely talented Amy Winehouse will remain in rehab program in the U.K. as her fellow artistes walk the red carpet, make benign speeches and look generally amused and perhaps slightly sedated.

There are reports that Winehouse - who is nominated for six awards - will still perform and accept any awards she might win via satellite.

But without the Winehouse wild card sitting in the audience, the allure of this year's Grammys is sadly diminished.

Sure, we can look to the notoriously outspoken and egotistical Kanye West to say or do something outrageous. He's nominated for an astounding eight awards and is scheduled to perform.

There's a handful of Canadian reasons to tune in - namely B.C.'s own Michael Buble, Nelly Furtado and, perhaps most importantly, Feist, the delightful indie chanteuse who finally gained recognition south of the border when one of her songs appeared in an iPod commercial.

And there are some unusual duets, which might make for interesting TV. It could be - fingers crossed - a battle of the divas when Tina Turner and Beyoncé take to the stage. There's no guessing what will happen when Fergie duets with John Legend. And Andrea Bocelli and Josh Groban will perform together for the first time.

But even with the fantastic Ms. Turner - or maybe because of her - it all seems so behind-the-times, so safe, even irrelevant.

There's little about the awards show that makes it a need-to-watch affair when you can catch the highlights on YouTube the next day.

I'm a sucker for red-carpet glamour and the possibility that someone will say or do something spontaneous and outrageous. But that seems increasingly unlikely.

And while I also enjoy a good musical performance, I'm not optimistic that I'll see something risky or truly original.

The bland Grammy brand: as the music awards show turns 50, does it still matter?

The Grammys are celebrating their 50th year, meaning the show will be framed by highlights from years gone by, ramping up the nostalgia factor rather than focusing on what the Grammys are supposed to do - recognize and celebrate the best of contemporary music.

Even the artists named in the best "new" artist category are not really all that new. Feist has been a notable name in music since 1999, when she collaborated with Peaches and released her debut solo album.

Ledisi, also nominated in the best new artist category, has released three solo albums since 2000, while the notorious Winehouse released her first album back in 2003 and was nominated for a Mercury Prize in 2004.

Instead of being shiny and "new," Amy Winehouse's career sadly appears to already be careening toward its demise.

So much for being current and relevant.

Radiohead's online release of *In Rainbows* - an album that was on almost every best-of list for 2007 - isn't eligible for a Grammy this year because it was released after the Sept. 30 deadline. But one also has to wonder if its risky pay-what-you-want online release - without a major label, no less - might have prevented it from earning a nomination even if it were eligible. We'll have to wait until next year to find out.

M.I.A., the politically-outspoken U.K. artist, was overlooked despite having one of the most original and infectious albums of the year. But maybe the sound of gunshots, not to mention her connections to the *Tamil Tigers*, were too much for the voters to grasp?

Kudos must be given though for the slew of nominations for Kanye West and his album, *Graduation*. The rapper is not only known for making controversial statements during live televised appearances, he's also a superb performer.

My eyes and ears are sure to perk up every time he appears on the screen.

But as much as I agree with West's haul of nominations, others are downright baffling.

As I scrolled through the exhaustive list of nominees (there are 110 categories), I let out an audible gasp of amazement at the name Nickelback.

Yes, millions of people love them and they're based in B.C. - so I should be proud - but do they really deserve to be recognized for musical excellence when so many of their songs sound the same? And, as far as I can recall, they didn't put out an album in the past year.

In fact, they're nominated for the single, *If Everyone Cared*, which was recorded for their 2005 album, *All the Right Reasons*, meaning the song is well over two years old.

But I suppose the academy can be partly forgiven for some of its stale choices, as the voting process is complex and cumbersome, requiring many months before the shortlist can be announced.

Part of the problem likely lies in the huge list of categories. If the academy were to whittle down the list to just those categories they bother to announce on television, (that is, the relevant ones) imagine the time they could save in the voting process.

Is it really necessary to award a Grammy for best classical crossover album? Best surround sound album? Or, my favourite, best album notes?

In a world where fewer and fewer people are buying hard copies of albums, and instead buying - or downloading them illegally - online, it would be far more relevant to be awarding a Grammy for best website, rather than best liner notes. But a Grammy Award for either is excessive.

This has all been said before, by other music writers and television critics.

The bland Grammy brand: as the music awards show turns 50, does it still matter?

But the icing on the griping cake this year is the announcement of a Grammysalute to fashion. The esteemed academy - along with In Style magazine - celebrated musicians-cum-designers with a fashion show featuring the designs ofBeyonce, Sean (Puffy) Combs, Jennifer Lopez, Justin Timberlake and JessicaSimpson, who's singing career has always been something of a joke.

The academy has also launched its own Grammy Brand clothing collection, marking an end to any pretending that the Grammys are about musical integrityand excellence, rather than commercialism.

Ah, well. Despite all my whinging, I'll still watch the show.

Even via satellite, Amy Winehouse is worth watching.

aobrian@png.canwest.com

SIDEBAR:

We won't predict who will trip on their way up the podium or slur theiracceptance speech. But we're happy to share our thoughts on who should winGrammy awards in five of the night's biggest categories.

1. Album of the Year: Who knew Herbie Hancock even had a new album out lastyear?

Well, he's nominated for Album of the Year, along with the Foo Fighters, country singer Vince Gill, rapper Kanye West and troubled rehab soul singer AmyWinehouse.

But considering Herbie's efforts were barely recognized by the public andthe critics, it's unlikely he'll walk away with the award.

Then again, this year's ceremony is all about nostalgia, so who knows?

But my guess is that this, the biggest award of the night, will go to Ms.Amy Winehouse. As good as Kanye West's album is, it hasn't made an indeliblemark the way Back to Black has.

2. Best New Artist: It may be that Amy Winehouse cleans up in all of the sixcategories in which she's nominated, including this one. But if there's anyjustice in the world (or at least at the Grammys), it will go to the lovelyLeslie Feist, even if she's not exactly "new" in our eyes.

3. Best ***Female*** Pop Vocal Performance: There are two Canadians in thiscategory, but as much as I enjoy that warm feeling that comes with patrioticpride, I don't think Feist or Nelly Furtado will win. Feist is nominated for1234, in which she gives a gorgeously honest and almost adolescent- soundingvocal performance. But I have to go with Amy Winehouse. She deserves it.

4. Best Male Pop Vocal Performance: We have another Canadian in thiscategory. Michael Buble is nominated for his song Everything. But John Mayer,Paul McCartney, Seal and Justin Timberlake round out this competition, makingchances for our hometown boy kinda slim. My bet's on McCartney, not because hedeserves it (sorry, Beatles fans), but because, well, he's a former Beatle andSunday's show is set to include a Beatles tribute with Cirque du Soleil.

5. Best Alternative Music Album: I'm not sure who chose to categorize LilyAllen or the White Stripes "alternative." And Arcade Fire, fair fellowCanadians, were featured in nearly every mainstream publication with a musicsection last year. The Shins and Bjork round out this category, making it atough call, but my guess is it'll go to the White Stripes.

Load-Date: February 9, 2008

The bland Grammy brand: as the music awards show turns 50, does it still matter?

End of Document

Canada at a Glance: AM

Resource News International
April 14, 2008 Monday 10:35 AM EST

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Length: 1484 words

Byline: Resource News International

Dateline: WINNIPEG, MB

Body

The following is a quick glimpse of the news making the headlines in Canada.

POLICE MOVE ON NON-PROFIT ACCUSED OF FINANCING TERRORISM

MONTREAL - Counterterrorism police in Quebec and Ontario effectively shut down a non-profit organization for Canadian Tamils this weekend due to allegations it has been raising money to finance terrorist activities in Sri Lanka.

The RCMP was expected to announce details of its unprecedented actions as early as April 14, but several sources said police had moved in to enforce a Federal Court restraining order against the World Tamil Movement.

The WTM's offices in Montreal and Toronto have been under police investigation for six years, and were raided by police in 2006. While no charges have yet resulted, the decision to seek a restraining order suggests Ottawa is aggressively pursuing the group.

The restraining order pertains to real estate in Montreal and other assets in Toronto.

The recent events are focused mostly on Montreal. Police sealed off the Montreal WTM office on April 11, said Steven Slimovitch, the group's lawyer. He said his clients were barred from entering the premises, disrupting community programs.

The order was issued under a section of the Criminal Code dealing with terrorism financing, but Slimovitch said no defence counsel were present for the hearing and his clients deny the allegations they are financing terrorists.

Canada at a Glance: AM

The action is the latest development in two related RCMP-led investigations called Project Osaluki and Project Crible. The probes, by the Integrated National Security Enforcement Teams in Ontario and Quebec, are examining allegations the WTM has been funnelling money to the Tamil Tigers to finance civil war in Sri Lanka.

The **Tamil Tigers** are an outlawed terrorist group in Canada. Knowingly raising money for the group or financing its activities is against the law and punishable by up to 10 years in prison. Many members of Canada's large ethnic Tamil community support the Tigers and their fight to create an independent state for Sri Lanka's Tamil minority.

Police went to court last week to ask for restraining orders against WTM properties in Toronto and Montreal, said a source familiar with the case. Officers were in the process on April 13 of serving official notice to the people associated with the properties.

Police officers were having difficulty finding at least one person linked to the group and its properties. The RCMP was apparently waiting for that to take place before publicly announcing the moves it had taken. (The National Post)

MEXICAN COURT TO DETERMINE ONT. WOMAN'S FATE THIS WEEK

GUADALAJARA, MEXICO - A Canadian woman imprisoned in Mexico will attend a crucial hearing April 14 when a judge could rule either to free her or send her back to jail for up to 15 years.

Brenda Martin, 51, from Trenton, Ont., has been in a Guadalajara prison since February 2006 for allegedly laundering money and helping Alyn Richard Waage of Edmonton defraud 15,000 victims of \$60 million US through an internet investment scam called Tri-West Investment Club.

Martin insists she is innocent. She said she had only worked as a chef in Mexico for Waage, who is now serving a 10-year jail sentence in a US prison. He has testified that she was unaware of his fraudulent activities.

Martin, who friends say is depressed and has been on 24-hour suicide watch in Puente Grande **women's** prison, will argue her case with the help of her Toronto lawyer, Guillermo Cruz Rico, at a final hearing before the judge, who has said he will try to issue a ruling by April 18.

Martin said she has been told by the judge he is working very hard to expedite her verdict, and the case is considered a very delicate matter.

Observers have said both Canadian and Mexican leaders want the issue resolved by the time Prime Minister Stephen Harper and President Felipe Calderon meet with US President George W. Bush on April 20 for the People's Summit in New Orleans.

If the judge rules her not guilty, Martin will be released from prison immediately, Rico told CBC News. If she is found guilty, she could be sentenced to between five and 15 years for the offences, he said.

Either way, Martin will likely return to Canada, since her friends have said she will file paperwork requesting a transfer to a Canadian jail rather than appeal a guilty verdict. (CBC)

KARZAI SHOULD REPLACE KANDAHAR GOVERNOR: BERNIER

KANDAHAR, AFGHANISTAN - Foreign Minister Maxime Bernier has suggested that President Hamid Karzai should replace the governor of Kandahar province.

Reporters asked Bernier, at the end of a three-day visit to Afghanistan, what Karzai needs to do about corruption in the south.

"They're a sovereign state, they're going to have to decide, it's a decision that the president will have to take in the near future about the future of the government we're having here (in Kandahar)," Bernier said April 14 at the Kandahar Airfield.

Canada at a Glance: AM

"Is it the right person at the right place at the right time? President Karzai will have to answer these questions as soon as possible."

The current governor of Kandahar province, where Canada's 2,500 troops operate, is Asadullah Khalid. He strenuously denied reports earlier this year that he had been involved in the torture of an Afghan prisoner.

Bernier said he told Karzai during their meeting in Kabul on April 12 that the Afghan government must get serious about fighting corruption.

"I think (Karzai) can work with us to be sure the (new) governor will be more powerful ... (and) will do what he has to do to help us."

Bernier didn't elaborate on his remarks.

Khalid survived an apparent assassination attempt early this year when a bomb detonated near his motorcade. Other blasts targeted him in May 2007 and in June 2006.

An ethnic Pashtun, the dominant group in Kandahar province, Khalid fought with the Northern Alliance against the Taliban.

Karzai first named Khalid governor of Ghazni province in 2002 before transferring him to Kandahar in 2005. (CTV)

CREW MAINTAIN SEIZURE BROKE INTERNATIONAL LAW

SYDNEY, NS Stunned and angry crew from the anti-sealing vessel Farley Mowat emerged from a Cape Breton jail April 13, maintaining the dramatic seizure of their ship by a black-clad RCMP squad brandishing submachine-guns violated international law.

The Mounties' elite marine team was called in April 12 by federal Fisheries Minister Loyola Hearn two weeks after a group of seal hunters complained that the Mowat came dangerously close to them in the Gulf of St. Lawrence.

The flat-black, 54-metre ship, operated by the US-based Sea Shepherd Conservation Society, was towed to a secure jetty in Sydney, where a few dozen curious but quiet onlookers snapped souvenir photos.

David Nickarz, the Mowat's engineer, said Canada had no right to board the ship and arrest the 17 crew members because the Dutch-registered vessel was in international waters, where Canadian rules don't apply.

Crew member Merilee Nyland, one of the six activists who spent the night in a cold jail cell after refusing to submit to immigration checks, said the arrest of the crew in the Cabot Strait was traumatic.

Earlier, the Mowat's captain and chief officer made brief appearances in a Sydney courtroom to face charges under federal marine mammal regulations and the Fisheries Act.

Captain Alexander Cornelissen who hails from the Netherlands and First Officer Peter Hammarstedt are accused of steering the Mowat to within 900 metres of the hunt. That's an offence under the marine mammal regulations unless an observer's permit has been granted. The Mowat does not have one.

The charges could result in fines of up to \$100,000 or up to one year in jail, or both. The case resumes May 1 and the two accused are free to leave the country once they post bail, their lawyer said.

Canada's provocative move came on the same day that the largest part of the annual hunt opened off the north coast of Newfoundland in a vast and forbidding area known as the Front.

Hearn said he had to take action before someone was killed on the ice.

Canada at a Glance: AM

He also rejected the claim that the Mowat was beyond Canada's reach, saying the Fisheries Act gives him the authority to take action beyond Canada's 12-nautical-mile territorial limit.

The Mowat will be detained in Sydney for as long as it takes Transport Canada officials to conduct a full inspection, Hearn said.

That means Watson's group will remain on the sidelines as the bulk of the hunting get underway a political plus for Hearn, who represents Newfoundland in the federal cabinet.

In Newfoundland, the head of the Canadian Sealers Association said the federal government "did the right and proper thing."

Despite Hearn's insistence that Canada acted within its jurisdiction, the Fisheries Department has confirmed that on March 29 one day after the hunt started Foreign Affairs issued a diplomatic note to the Netherlands requesting help dealing with the Mowat "as it is flying a Dutch flag."

A spokesman for the Dutch foreign ministry said the department was looking into the matter. (The Canadian Press)

Load-Date: April 15, 2008

Patients killed in strike on Sri Lankan hospital

Hobart Mercury (Australia)

February 3, 2009 Tuesday

1 - Edition

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Section: WORLD; Pg. 13

Length: 167 words

Body

ARTILLERY shells have hit an overcrowded hospital in Sri Lanka's northern war zone, killing at least 11 patients.

The attack on the hospital intensified concern for the fate of about 250,000 civilians trapped in the shrinking war zone where the Tamil Tigers have been boxed in.

The Sri Lankan army believes it is on the verge of destroying the rebels and ending one of the world's longest running civil conflicts.

The Tigers said they had killed 150 soldiers and injured at least 300 since Sunday. The army denied it lost any men.

The fighting is taking place in Puthukkudiyiruppu area, where the Red Cross said three artillery barrages slammed into the pediatrics and women's wards of the Puthukkudiyiruppu hospital.

Government health official Thurairajah Varatharajah said two attacks appeared to have come from the army.

Meanwhile, the army said it had discovered an underground, luxurious, three-room apartment in Vishwamadu, believed to be the hideout of the elusive rebel leader Velupillai Prabhakaran.

Load-Date: February 2, 2009

FAST NEWS

The Courier Mail (Australia)

February 10, 2009 Tuesday

6 - Late City Edition

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Section: WORLD; Pg. 28

Length: 163 words

Body

Mummies found

CAIRO: Egyptian archaeologists say they have discovered 30 mummies inside a 4600-year-old tomb, in the latest round of excavations at the vast necropolis of Saqqara, 20km south of Cairo. Egypt's chief archaeologist, Zahi Hawas, said the new tomb was found on Sunday at the bottom of a 11m-deep well. Eight of the mummies were in sarcophagi and the rest had been placed in niches in the wall. Mr Hawas has described the new site as a ``storeroom for mummies".

Suicide bomber

COLOMBO: A **female** Tamil Tiger suicide bomber yesterday struck at a camp for civilian refugees from Sri Lanka's ethnic war, killing 28 people. The bomber triggered her explosives as she was being searched by soldiers outside the camp near Visuamadu, a northern area the military recently captured from the rebels, a military spokesman said. The blast came as Sri Lanka's military completes the final stages of a two-year-long offensive to defeat the **Tamil Tigers**, who have been fighting since 1972.

Load-Date: February 9, 2009

485 civilians flee

Daily Mirror (Sri Lanka)

March 9, 2009 Monday

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Length: 92 words

Dateline: Colombo

Body

Colombo, March 9 -- About 485 civilians consisting of men, women and children escaped from the LTTE-held areas and reached Army controlled areas of Munani, Champianpattu, Vettalaikeni and Chundikulam. The army said that those civilians were directed to relief villages after giving them refreshments by the troops. On the previous day that LTTE cadres fired and killed three Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) and injured two more while they were escaping to cleared areas in boats. Published by HT Syndication with permission from Daily Mirror Sri Lanka.

For any query with respect to this article or any other content requirement, please contact Editor at htsyndication@hindustantimes.com

Load-Date: April 1, 2009

Bomb blast kills 21 and injures 47

Geelong Advertiser (Australia)

June 7, 2008 Saturday

1 - Main Edition

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Section: WORLD; Pg. 40

Length: 162 words

Byline: SRI LANKA Colombo, Friday

Body

AT least 21 commuters were killed and 47 others wounded today in a suspected Tamil Tiger mine attack on a crowded bus south of the Sri Lankan capital, officials said.

The state-run bus was sprayed with shrapnel, an AFP photographer at the scene said, suggesting a powerful fragmentation mine placed on the roadside had been detonated as the bus was passing.

“Twenty-one people have been killed, eight of them are women,” police spokesman Ranjith Gunasekera said, adding that about 47 others were hurt.

The military's spokesman, Brigadier Udaya Nanayakkara, blamed the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam.

Survivors said the bus was knocked over by the force of the explosion.

The bomb was the latest in a string of attacks against commuters in and around Colombo.

Hostilities have escalated sharply since the start of the year when the Government pulled out of a truce with the Tamil Tigers, who are fighting to carve out a separate Tamil state within the Sinhalese-majority island.

Load-Date: June 23, 2008

Soosai hideout bombed: SLAF

Daily Mirror (Sri Lanka)

November 1, 2008 Saturday 3:30 PM EST

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Length: 91 words

Byline: Report from Daily Mirror brought to you by HT Syndication.

Dateline: Colombo

Body

Colombo, Nov. 1 -- Air force fighter jets yesterday pounded a hideout of Sea Tiger leader Soosai at Jayantinagar in the Kilinochchi district, the Air Force claimed.

Air Force spokesman Janaka Nanayakkara said the target was destroyed by the attack carried out after air and sea surveillance.

A day before the jets raided an **LTTE female** suicide squad training facility located at Vallipuram, in Mullaittivu said to be frequented by the **LTTE's** intelligence wing chief, Pottu Amman.

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Load-Date: November 1, 2008

Suicide bomber kills 17 at Sri Lanka refugee camp: government

Agence France Presse -- English

February 9, 2009 Monday 8:00 AM GMT

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Length: 107 words

Dateline: COLOMBO, Feb 9 2009

Body

A suspected Tamil Tiger suicide bomber attacked a camp for civilians fleeing Sri Lanka's war zone on Monday, killing 17 people and wounding 45, the defence ministry said in a statement.

It said the female bomber from the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) targeted a camp near Visuamadu, an area the military recently captured from the rebels.

"At least 17 people were killed and 45 others reported injured when an LTTE woman suicide bomber blew herself up at an IDP (internally displaced persons) rescue centre in Sugandirapuram, north of Visuamadu," the ministry said.

It said military personnel, women and children were among the casualties.

Load-Date: February 10, 2009

Soosai hideout bombed: SLAF

Daily Mirror (Sri Lanka)

October 31, 2008 Friday 5:12 PM EST

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Length: 91 words

Byline: Report from Daily Mirror brought to you by HT Syndication.

Dateline: Colombo

Body

Colombo, Oct. 31 -- Air force fighter jets yesterday pounded a hideout of Sea Tiger leader Soosai at Jayantinagar in the Kilinochchi district, the Air Force claimed.

Air Force spokesman Janaka Nanayakkara said the target was destroyed by the attack carried out after air and sea surveillance.

A day before the jets raided an **LTTE female** suicide squad training facility located at Vallipuram, in Mullaittivu said to be frequented by the **LTTE**'s intelligence wing chief, Pottu Amman.

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Load-Date: October 31, 2008

Heroes of our times

Daily Mirror (Sri Lanka)

August 8, 2008 Friday 2:20 PM EST

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Length: 933 words

Byline: Daily News Sri Lanka

Dateline: Colombo

Body

Colombo, Aug. 8 -- The 16th death anniversary of the late Lieutenant General Denzil Kobbekaduwa, the legendary War Hero of our times and eight other military leaders including Major General Wijaya Wimalaratne and Rear Admiral Mohan Jayamaha falls today (August 8).

16th death anniversary of Lt. Gen. Denzil Kobbekaduwa, Maj. Gen. Wijaya Wimalaratne, Rear Admiral Mohan Jayamaha falls today

The 16th death anniversary of the late Lieutenant General Denzil Kobbekaduwa, the legendary War Hero of our times and eight other military leaders including Major General Wijaya Wimalaratne and Rear Admiral Mohan Jayamaha falls today (August 8).

Lieutenant Colonel H.R Stephen, Lieutenant Colonel G.H. Ariyaratne, Lieutenant Colonel Y.N.

Palipana, Lieutenant Commander Asanga Lankathilaka, Major Nalin de Alwis, Lieutenant Commander C.B. Wijepura and Private W.J. Wickremasinghe were the other war heroes who perished in an **LTTE** terrorist blast at Araly point, Jaffna.

Kobbekaduwa the veteran soldier was fondly loved by his officers and soldiers alike. He was also equally loved by a majority of Sri Lankans of Buddhist, Hindu, Catholic and Islam denominations.

His untimely demise shocked the Nation as people plunged into shock and grief when the radio broke the news on that fateful day. A sea of mourners and patriots attended his final funeral rites.

Kobbekaduwa was deeply loved by his subordinates for his inspirational leadership and humanity. The massive crowds at his funeral proved the love and respect that people had towards him. His demise drove the entire country into mourning.

This valiant warrior who earned the sobriquet officer and gentleman should be revered and his name perpetuated so that the present generation can learn about his noble qualities.

We can take heart that even today there are a number of officers leading the battle field who were trained by him. Today the nation is remembering with gratitude this gallant officer on the 16th anniversary of his death.

Heroes of our times

I have been to his Rosmead Place residence, where I have seen a row of his photographs decorated with fresh white flowers by his beloved wife Lali Kobbekaduwa. But it is not only at the Kobbekaduwa residence that his photographs are displayed.

There are homes across the island which have at least one photograph of the smiling General, the very epitome of compassion.

The book written by Soma Jayakody on the late General gives intricate details about this national hero. During my 15 year career in the Army I can recollect several occasions where I happened to come into contact with him.

In 1982 I was a young 2nd second Lieutenant and I, together with two of my batchmates Vajira and Nishani had to sit for an exam to determine our seniority after returning from the Women's Royal Army Corps College in UK.

We were ordered to report to Army Headquarters to get instructions on the Map Reading exam which was scheduled to be held out of Colombo. We were taken before Lt Colonel Denzil Kobbekaduwa who was the Grade 1 Staff Officer at the G branch (responsible for training and operations) as it was called those days.

Three young girls appearing in combat uniform at the Army Headquarters for the first time was an unusual scene. Everyone was looking at us and we were a bit excited. But Lt Colonel Kobbekaduwa spoke to us encouragingly making us comfortable and briefed us about the exam.

I saw him a few times since then at various military functions but we heard a lot about his battlefield exploits and qualities from my male counterparts serving under him at the height of the conflict.

The late Lt Colonel Nalin de Alwis, the Staff Officer to the late General and a good friend of mine who died in the same incident told me many stories about how much General Kobbekaduwa was concerned not only about his officers and men but also about the innocent civilians in the North.

Then again when my own younger brother Lt. Senany Bandara went missing in action during Operation Balawegaya in the Mullaitivu jungles he spoke to me over the phone to my office at Kynsey Road where I was serving as the Second in command of the Army Women's Corps.

I was a Major at that time and I was surprised to get a call from General Kobbekaduwa, but that was his true nature despite his busy schedule. He remembered my first name after many years and expressed his sympathy. "I am very sorry about what happened to your brother but we are trying our best to get him back," he said.

I was deeply touched by this phone call at that moment of sorrow and it was that incident which made me decide that I must write a book dedicated to him and hand it over when he comes to Colombo.

I was in the middle of writing a book of poetry titled Poppy Mal about my military experience on the war. Unfortunately the opportunity of handing over this book to him when he was alive never materialised. Instead I had to march in his funeral parade along Baudhdhaloka Mawatha to the General Cemetery.

As a consolation however the book Poppy Mal was published silently and the little profit earned from the sales proceeds was donated to the Kobbekaduwa Trust Fund at a commemorative event organised by me on his third death anniversary.

Sir, Your name will be written in golden letters in the history of our Motherland and will be etched in the collective memory of a grateful public.

The Denzil Kobbekaduwa Trust Fund chaired by your beloved wife Lali continues to support fallen war heroes. Still there is an opportunity for the public to show their gratitude by way of donations to the Trust.

Report from Daily News Sri Lanka brought to you by HT Syndication.

Heroes of our times

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Load-Date: August 13, 2008

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More Tigers Including Frontline Leaders Perished in Confrontations

Colombo Times

March 26, 2009 Thursday

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Length: 172 words

Body

Colombo, March 26 -- FRONT line Tiger leaders, VARADA ANNAN, CADER SOORIYAN, ELAVAN and a dozen of Tiger terrorists perished on Wednesday (25) during clashes in PUTHUKUDIRIPPU with valiant troops of the Army, ground troops confirmed.

Tigers fighting their last battle in PUTHUKUDIYIRIPPU attacked the troops after sending their frontline best cadres Wednesday (25) with the intention of preventing the advance of the troops towards the east of PUTHUKUDIYIRIPPU.

LTTE gunfire was effectively countered by the troops killing many of them in the battle field.

Troops intercepting Tiger communication and other sources confirmed **LTTE** leaders, VARADA ANNAN, CADER SOORIYAN and ELAVAN were among the dead.

Meanwhile, fresh confrontations occurred in the south of PUTHUKUDIYIRUPPU caused more damages to terrorists, the same day.

Subsequent search and clear operations conducted recovered five dead bodies including two **females**, fifteen T- 56 weapons, one I-com radio set, one double cab, one T-81 weapon and one Light Machine Gun (LMG).

Load-Date: May 5, 2009

1386 CIVILIANS REACH CLEARED AREAS IN MULLAITIVU

Daily Mirror (Sri Lanka)

March 26, 2009 Thursday

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Length: 121 words

Dateline: Colombo

Body

Colombo, March 26 -- A total of 1,386 civilians reached security forces held areas north of Iranapalai and Andampuram in Mullaitivu, throughout Tuesday.

The Army said that these civilians were fired upon by **LTTE** cadres using small arms and heavy mortar and rocket propelled grenades (RPGs) from the declared 'No Fire Zone,' citing a few escapees. "People who have fallen inside the **LTTE** controlled area were seen dragged by terrorist hunter squads in pursuit of the civilians," Army Headquarters said quoting the escapees. 413 men, 378 **women**, 315 boys and 330 girls were among the civilians who had arrived seeking protection with security forces on Tuesday. Published by HT Syndication with permission from Daily Mirror Sri Lanka.

For any query with respect to this article or any other content requirement, please contact Editor at htsyndication@hindustantimes.com

Load-Date: March 27, 2009

Tigers say lost 21,000 cadres

Daily Mirror (Sri Lanka)

June 5, 2008 Thursday 3:57 PM EST

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Length: 108 words

Byline: Daily News Sri Lanka

Dateline: Colombo

Body

Colombo, June 5 -- The Tigers have lost 21,051 cadres during the last 26 years, pro-**LTTE** websites announced.

The 21,051 cadres include 16,516 males and 4,535 **females**. The period cited for the numbers is from November 27, 1982 to May 31, 2008. The Tigers lost their first cadre Shankar on November 27, 1982.

The number includes 348 Black Tigers as well. In 2008, the first five months saw the slaying of 918 cadres, 616 males and 302 **females**. In 2006 the Tigers lost 1,004 cadres, 745 males and 259 and in 2007 they lost 1,196 - 1,037 males and 159 **females**, the **LTTE** has announced.

Report from Daily News Sri Lanka brought to you by HT Syndication.

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Load-Date: September 16, 2008

More civilians seek Security Forces protection

Daily News (Sri Lanka)

October 24, 2008 Friday 3:03 PM EST

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Length: 133 words

Byline: Daily News Sri Lanka

Dateline: Colombo

Body

Colombo, Oct. 24 -- Civilians seeking protection arrived in Pulmodai yesterday morning escaping from the **LTTE** clutches in Kattakadu, Mullaitivu district.

A spokesman for the MCNS said 13 civilians from five families comprising eight men, three **women**, a boy and a girl had arrived in Pulmodai yesterday at around 11.30am from Kattakuda an uncleared area fleeing the Tiger grip.

"The 52 civilians left Mullaitivu on Wednesday at around 12.30pm seeking protection of Security Forces to protect their lives from the **LTTE** cadres. All five families boarded a boat powered by an out-board motor to reach the cleared area", the spokesman added.

The Security Forces directed civilians to the IDPs centre providing them with essential needs.

Report from Daily News Sri Lanka brought to you by HT Syndication.

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Load-Date: October 24, 2008

Budget Speech 2009

Daily Mirror (Sri Lanka)

November 7, 2008 Friday 2:21 PM EST

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Length: 10219 words

Byline: Report from Daily Mirror brought to you by HT Syndication.

Dateline: Colombo

Body

Colombo, Nov. 7 -- 1 Hon. Speaker, it is with great pleasure that I am presenting my fourth Budget to this august house. Mahinda Chinthana, Ten Year Horizon Development Framework is being widely implemented across the country. The humanitarian operation to relieve the country from the grips of terrorism has reached its final phase. A democratic environment for a political solution in which the power of all people will be amply strengthened is emerging. A revival of religions, cultural and moral values has taken place. We have reached a decisive juncture in our journey towards peace and development. Exactly half of my term of office has been completed. At this point, it is important for all of us to look at our achievements during the past 3 years in retrospect and to know how we propose to go on our journey in the 3 years that is ahead of us.

02. Hon. Speaker, I wish to commence my speech with a brief note on the situation that prevailed in this country at the time I assumed office. I am sure you would recall that the North and East of our country were controlled by terrorists. These areas were even declared as L.T.T.E controlled areas. Illegal banking and Court operations were paid a blind eye. Innocent children were used as child soldiers and women were used as suicide bombers while operating large terrorist outfits in those areas. Terrorism was permitted to be operated in wide scale not only allowing damage to human lives and property but also our economy and the democratic image of our country. There was no stable policy towards defeating terrorism. Innocent civilians in the North and East were subject to the inhuman acts of terror and harassment for over 25 years. The LTTE carried out brutal terrorist attacks and destroyed not only key economic centers such as the Central Bank, Oil Refinery, Airport, and the World Trade Center in Colombo but also globally acclaimed places of worship such as the Sri Maha Bhodiya and the Sacred Tooth Relic. Virtually, all our Tamil leaders who were widely respected in our society were brutally murdered. The LTTE killed more Tamil leaders than Sinhala leaders and virtually eliminated democratic representatives of the Tamil people. The LTTE murdered not only those leaders who were dedicated towards peace and development but even a Prime Minister of India who was a close friend of our country.

2 When Provincial Councils were established in 1988, the LTTE terrorists did not permit them to be functioned in the North and East. Although many Governments put forwarded many proposals from time to time towards achieving peace, the LTTE was not interested in moving away from terrorism. I am sure you would also remember that there was even a Peace Accord that was signed with these brutal terrorists in 2002. It is a known fact that this Accord even acknowledged that the LTTE could administer as per their plans, in the LTTE controlled areas. In the pretext of Tsunami rehabilitation efforts, the LTTE was in fact consolidating their strength through Tsunami Rehabilitation Committees. The ulterior motive behind all these attempts was to strengthen as an armed force but not to embrace the democratic process. This situation became uncontrollable and spread outside the North and East, affecting the entire country. The situation got further complicated due to external interferences. Whatever the

remaining democratic machinery that was in existence in the North and East was also destroyed with the signing of the Peace Accord by the United National Front Government in a short-sighted and hasty manner. Tamils, Muslims and Sinhalese in the East were demeaned and stressed. Security Forces were weakened. What I promised in Mahinda Chinthana is to move away from this unsuccessful old path already taken. The path towards a undivided country, a majority consensus and a dignified peace as chosen in Mahinda Chinthana, after having realized the dire consequences of the old unsuccessful path that the country had already travelled.

04. Hon. Speaker, on the other hand the Neo-liberal globalization process that was followed by our country for over 30 years, paid economic dividend only to a very small segment of our society. We were fast realizing that this process is unsuccessful. More than half of the GDP was Colombo based. Agricultural development was forgotten. Paddy fields were neglected. They were filled and used for other commercial activities. Rubber and tea cultivation was destroyed by permitting such lands to be blocked out and sold. The need to develop irrigation, highways, electricity, water supplies and rural development was also forgotten. In short, rural villages were so neglected and were made to distant from Colombo as though they were no longer a part of Sri Lanka. The country suffered a tremendous mental setback, realizing that not only the Government is unable to fulfill its primary obligation of being able to combat terrorism and bring about peace but that it has no will to construct even a rural road. Pushing aside the Professionals and the intellectuals of our country and using foreign consultants instead, became a habit. The public sector was pruned to a destructive level. Picketing campaigns by unemployed graduates became a common sight. Workers engaged in industrial actions due to closure of large factories such as those at Ambilipitiya and Thulhiriya. State Institutions such as the Food Department, CWE, Paddy Marketing Board, CTB , State Engineering Corporation and the Government Factory were being wound up. Alternate Institutions were being setup in place at Sri Lanka Customs, Inland Revenue Department, Railways and People's Bank. Tax Amnesties that were introduced made a detrimental impact on the tax system. Large scale tax frauds took place. Banks such as Pramuka Bank, crashed. State revenue was low. Debt burden of the country increased having raised debt without building - up corresponding national assets.

05. The negligent attitude adopted towards building national roads and a network of bridges, transportation, electricity, irrigation and port development for over 25 years, hampered opportunities towards developing a modern economy. The oil dependent power generation process that was adopted was not only environmentally unfriendly but also proved to be expensive and created a debt burden that was difficult for the country to bear. Although over 40 years has lapsed, no action had been taken to improve facilities at the Sapugaskanda Refinery in order to strengthen the national economy. In fact there was a plan to hand over this facility to the private sector. There was a fictitious belief that all activities could be done through the Private Sector. While boasting of achievement of other countries in the region, action that should have been taken to place our country on par with them was neglected.

3 Hon. Speaker, our moral values deteriorated. Drugs and gambling was widespread in the country. Religious rituals and cultural bonds began to slip away from the society. People got distant from places of worship. Our sacred land became a country that consumes a high quantity of alcohol. Social discipline deteriorated to an extent that even children were susceptible to drugs, casinos and night clubs. Related activities were admired as attractive investments. Such investments were promoted with the grant of even BOI concessions. Child molesting, rape and underworld as well as organized crime, were widespread. Mahinda Chinthana Ten Year Horizon Development Framework for a New Sri Lanka was introduced with the hope of changing the dangerous economic, social and terrorists associated political path, which I just spoke of. It is to implement this that we got the mandate of our people in 2005. The main objective of Mahinda Chintana Ten Year Horizon Development Framework for a new Sri Lanka was to bring about an economy and a civilized society in which there is no fear or suspicion and in which value could be added to our national heritage and national resources. We are dedicated to bring about the required changes in all spheres during the past three years. In this process, adverse forces also got activated and surfaced in many forms. Despite all odds, we are determined to move forward on the chosen new path.

Our Approach

07. Hon. Speaker, we have come to a stage in which we believe that we should and we can, eradicate terrorism. However, we have not disregarded the need for a political settlement. Terrorists were initially permitted for 10 months, to enter into a peaceful approach. Brutal terrorists who were not amenable to a democratic solution

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proceeded to escalate violence with the massacre of innocent civilians including mothers and infants at Kebithigollewa and proceeded to close the Mavil Aru anicut, denying even drinking water that is a gift of nature to the people. It is in this background that humanitarian operations were launched by our armed forces in the East, to rescue civilians, eradicate terrorism and to bring about a lasting peace to our country.

2 Hon. Speaker, the humanitarian operation that commenced in July 2006, and extended to cover the entire Eastern Province was completed with the liberation of Thoppigala (Barans hat). All displaced people were resettled within 9 months. Basic facilities were reconstructed. By the end of 2007, Local Authority elections were also conducted in those Districts. In early 2008, Provincial Elections were conducted and a democratic administration was established in terms of our Constitutional framework. Rs. 25,000 Million had been spent upto now, for the development of the East. Revival of the East as promised in Mahinda Chintana was made a reality. These areas have become giant contributors of our national production process.

3 It is our responsibility to eradicate terrorism to create a democratic environment and development in the North as well as to enable people to have a free life. This is also the expectation of people living in those areas. Our security forces were successful in liberating Mannar and Vavuniya Districts, and boarder areas in Trincomalee, Anuradhapura, Mullativu Districts and Weli-Oya. The secret Madhu Shrine was also liberated and our forces have develop this holy place of worship. 26th page of Mahinda Chintana states that, the Madhu church and the surrounding would be developed to protect the sacred area and propose to provide opportunities to all Catholics to visit this holy place, that they could not visit for over 25 years.

4 Hon. Speaker, I am glad to note that at this moment the Budget is being presented, our troops are advancing their operations having rescued a vast area in the Kilinochchi and Mulativu Districts. I am so glad not only on account of the bravery and victories of our armed forces. I also value the thoughts from a humanitarian point of view, that the day on which we can rescue around 200,000 of our own fellow citizens living in the affected areas from the brutal grips of terror, is near. Our security forces are fighting against the worst terrorist group in the world, without causing any destruction to civilians, dams, hospitals, school, temples or churches. These operations are truly commendable. Hon. Speaker, I propose a special honour of this august house, be offered to our security forces.

5 Hon. Speaker, it is to eradicate terrorism through this true humanitarian exercise that we spent a substantial amount of money on national security during the last three years. This Parliament has fulfilled a tremendous social responsibility by giving the required approvals to incur such expenditure. Unfortunately, certain liberal members in the opposition and peace agents saw these as wasteful expenditure. However, we view such expenditure as a priority need towards establishing a stable economic environment to restore democracy, consolidate human rights and achieve economic development. People are committed to make any sacrifice to relieve our country from terrorism and restore a peaceful living environment, since they do not intend to permit their future generations to go through the same sufferings experienced for over 25 years. A country that is free of terrorism is also the prime need of private sector investors.

12. The entire East and the liberated areas in the Vanni and Northern Province have rejoined the domestic production process. Major improvements will thereby be achieved in agriculture, fishery, milk production and tourism sectors. Terrorist activities are now confined to a few Divisional Secretariat divisions and their strength is gradually deteriorating. I know, that the day on which such Divisional Secretariat divisions will be relieved by our heroic forces without harming any civilians or public property, is not far away. Even during this period the terrorist can join the democratic process. We are committed to rehabilitate such terrorists and to absorb them to the society as productive citizens. Therefore, my earnest plea to the terrorist is to lay-down arms and join the democratic process, even at this last moment. If not, they would be militarily defeated. Further, we should also take steps to conduct Local Government elections, and Provincial Council Election in the North. We should also take simultaneous action to implement our development plans on an urgent basis to re-build infrastructure facilities which had been destroyed by terrorists themselves in the North and also take immediate action to develop the North which remained neglected without any development for nearly 30 years. 6 Hon. Speaker, We must liberate the innocent people living in Kilinochchi and Mulativu mortally scared of the firearms of the terrorists. We should assist them. They have had enough sufferings. We must improve the livelihood of these innocent people by developing schools, hospitals and electricity and transport facilities in those areas. The people in those areas will

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act with patience till we affect these measure on a priority basis. Our security forces are engaged in operations in such areas to liberate such people in the name of humanity. I appeal to such innocent people to join hands with the forces.

7 Hon. Speaker, we rejected "Regaining Sri Lanka" which underestimated local entrepreneurship and viewed any problem with a blind eye in the guise of globalization and neo-liberalism. We proposed an alternate strategy through 'Mahinda Chinthana' which would strengthen the domestic economy, domestic identity, and a new value to national wealth. We have realized through our own experience and by looking at the global experience, that economic and social welfare cannot be successfully achieved through total reliance on the private sector or only through a market economy.

8 Notwithstanding funding constraints, we stopped relying on sale proceeds of public assets to bridge the budget deficit. Leave alone compromising deployment projects, we did not abandon constructing even rural roads, saying that there are no funds available. We neither compromised development or welfare expenditure placing emphasis only on defense expenditure. We did not rely solely on the World Bank to raise funds. Measures were taken to increase bilateral aid and Government revenue. We commenced the construction of mega irrigation projects such as Moragahakanda, Uma Oya, Kirindi Oya and Daduru Oya to make an economic revival in irrigated and backward regions. Funds were raised and steps were taken to modernize our road network in a manner that would cater the demands of at least another 20 years. Priority was given for the development of rural and provincial roads and bridges. Development of railways and the highways system has also been given priority in the Government's investment program.

9 Mega projects such as the development of Colombo, Hambantota and Olivil Ports have been commenced to link our country with the global economy. Steps were taken to construct large power generation plants at Norochcholai, Upper Kotmale and Kerawalapitiya. Water supply projects are in progress in all main districts to enhance the availability of drinking water. Although the required funds were in place, it is unfortunate that terrorists did not permit us to construct the Jaffna Teaching Hospital and the Jaffna water supply project. We believe that these projects can be commenced next year. 17. Hon. Speaker, in addition to the large number of private investments that have taken place towards meeting urban needs of Colombo, construction of the Performing Arts Theater is also in progress. The International Convention Centre and the Administrative Complex being build at Hambantota, the Greater Colombo Urban Developemnt Project, International Stadium at Diyagama and new townships being built under 'Nagenahira Nawodaya' are also key projects in this transformation. Many projects have been commenced to preserve the environment, as envisaged in Nilla Pirunu Ratak - Pivithuru Parisarayak. A mega project for garbage disposal will be commenced next year, at a cost of Rs.150 Billion.

10 The disparities that prevail in education as well as in health infrastructure at provincial level are a problem. Steps have to be taken to avoid the resultant effect of overcrowding in urban schools and the eminent closure of rural schools. We propose to eliminate these disparities by developing over 300 Isuru Schools across the country and also by introducing information technology and sports related facilities to such schools. Priority was accorded to upgrade technical colleges to university status, setting up the Rajarata Medical Faculty, increase the number of vocational training centers and improve facilities in universities. We also upgraded the Defence Academy to University status. We have adopted an approach to minimize inter-provincial disparities by equipping district hospitals with all modern facilities and by setting up teaching hospitals with improved technology, operating theatres and staff accommodation facilities and setting up of Godagama new hospital.

11 Hon. Speaker, recent Governments of country tried to create a picture of economic development that is detached from agriculture and local industries. A trend was created to import rice, flour, sugar, wheat, milk powder, vegetable, fish, medicine and crops which can be produced locally and even industrial products such as textile, footwear, boats and vehicles. Through the provision of duty rebates, people were tempted towards consuming milk powder. The local dairy industry was neglected. There was a failure to ensure encouraging prices for farm products. BOI concessions were extended not only to import food for human consumption but even animal feed. Local producers were not given any concessions for parallel investments. This clearly demonstrates that we did not even attempt to produce animal feed within the country.

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12 Our country being an island did not even have a strategy to make itself self sufficient in salt. The potential to use rain water for agriculture purposes and even as an export had been totally disregarded. Since imported goods were provided at concessionary prices , local producers were trapped in a framework within which they had to face unfair competition . Even our leaders had started to endorse this policy as correct and effective.

13 Hon. Speaker, the policy of 'Mahinda Chinthana' is to encourage local producers and production. As such, imposition of Cess, introduction of loan schemes and extension services were done to promote local production. Our country managed to escape from the prevailing global food crisis since we took a firm stand to move away from the aforesaid economic policy in 2006 itself. We were able to give encouraging prices to farmer for crops such as paddy, wheat, onion, potatoes, fruits and liquid milk. A subsidy of around 96 percent of the price of fertilizer, was given to paddy farmers. Substantial investments were made to promote the production of high quality seed paddy, provide extension services and loans to farmers and to revive the rice milling industry. Our policies helped farmers to get richer and enabled large foreign exchange savings. However, still we spend about US\$ 800 Mn. to import food items. We need to develop agriculture, milk production, fisheries etc. on an accelerated basis if we are to make further savings. The income of farmers could thereby be increase and poverty could also be alleviated. Food security could be ensured. Our external reserves could also be increased. This is why we are implementing 'Api Wawamu - Rata Nagamu' policy strategy as a national priority.

14 Hon. Speaker, the industrial sector also experienced a reawakening. Production of motor cars, fishery boats, high value tea, garments, footwear, gem & jewellery, perfumes, furniture etc. have seen new beginnings within the country. Even security forces have ventured into producing their uniforms, boats, security vehicles etc. within the country in addition to being engaged in the important task of combating terrorism.

23. Hon. Speaker, I was able to mobilize aid to commence mega investment projects from every state visit that I have made so far. Substantial development aid was received from countries such as China and Iran. Increased aid was mobilized from countries such as Japan, India, Pakistan, USA, France, Australia, The Netherlands, Denmark, Sweden, Hungary, Spain, UK, Korea, Saudi Arabia and Kuwait. This is how we were successful in increasing foreign aid up to US\$ 1,000 million towards development activities, within the last 3 years. If not for development assistance extended by our friendly countries, we would not have been able to proceed with mega development projects such as Norochcholai coal power plant, Moragahakandanda and Uma Oya irrigation projects and Hambantota port. Operations of the Sapugaskanda oil refinery were proposed to be given to the private sector for the next 25 years. However, with assistance from the Government of Iran steps are now being taken to increase the production capacity of this CPC refinery to 100,000 barrels per day. We will thereby be able to refine the entire national demand of oil. We should appreciate the 7 month credit facility extended by the Government of Iran that helped us to successfully face the global oil crisis. World Bank and the Asian Development Bank have allocated a US\$ 1,700 Million for development projects, for the next 4 years. In the above programs, priority has been given to increase the capacity of 11 main irrigation tanks including Parakrama Samudraya, Ridiyagama, Kaudulla, Thabbowewa, Chandrikawewa, Ingimitiya and Giritale and to develop provincial and rural roads.

Challenges

24. Hon. Speaker, the global oil prices hikes witnessed during the last 3 years are massive. A barrel of oil that was US\$ 40 went up to US\$ 147 by July this year. Foreign exchange spent to import oil in 2005 was US\$ 600 Million. Although the oil prices are presently low, we have to spend around US\$ 3,000 Million towards importation of our oil requirement. It was around US\$ 2,500 Million last year.

The foreign exchange required to import fertilizer and raw material also increased consequent to the steep escalation of oil prices.

15 During this year, the price of all essential commodities increased by 100 percent. The crisis escalated to such extent that compelled even certain countries with open economic policies to proceed to ban exporting food. Consequent to the oil price escalation, inflation rose to around 25 percent. In spite of pressures that were exerted to import rice and predictions given that a kilo of rice would be around Rs.100, we successfully overcame such issues.

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Those who belong to the working class faced this situation with the Government, with a proper understanding and responsibility. This was indeed a strength to us.

16 Hon. Speaker, we have completed constructing over 100,000 houses for those who were displaced by the Tsunami disaster and also reconstructed the affected fishery harbours, roads, bridges, schools, hospitals etc. During the past 3 years, not only we were able to successfully rebuild the affected regions faster than other countries that faced this disaster, we also managed to implement a program through which the impact of such a disaster could be minimized.

17 Hon. Speaker, one of the greatest challenges we are faced with is to rebuild the public sector. We experience a severe shortage of man power of teachers, doctors, nurses, tax and Customs officers, technicians due to the employment freeze that was there in the state sector for many years. The operations of state institution were consequently weakened. Substantial quantum of money had to be spent to resolve salary anomalies which have gone unattended for many years and due to the new salary structure that was introduced. I wish to note that we are the only government that took care of security concerns and development priorities while also not forgetting to develop the public sector, while ensuring annual recruitments and salary increments as well.

18 Hon. Speaker, the global economy is presently facing a serious crisis. Key Financial Markets including the United States and Japan have collapsed. In this backdrop, the United States alone has allocated US\$ 700 Billion in an attempt to prevent their economy from crashing. In this background, the United States and United Kingdom have moved to nationalize major banks and financial institutions. In the meantime, the economic crisis has started to affect Asia and the Middle East as well. Major foreign currencies have weakened. As a result, the prices paid for our main exports such as tea and rubber, are going down.

19 Hon. Speaker the European Union has adopted a new trend, wherein conditions are being attached to concessions granted by them such as GSP+. It is unfair to engage in international trade and investment within a framework through which political objectives are tried to be achieved. As much as we do not permit terrorists to operate in the North at the cost of innocent people, we will also not permit other countries to accomplish their political agendas through our export industry. We are a proud nation that is not second to any developed country which respects fundamental rights, human rights, rights of women, respect labour laws, laws preventing the use of child labour, environmental laws, gender equality, election and civil rights

30. Hon. Speaker, We propose to implement Mahinda Chinthana - the Ten Year Development Strategy, giving consideration to views and proposals of everybody. We have direct dialogues with Trade Unions to be able to address problems of the working class who are serving amidst economic hardships. Through this process we have worked towards developing industrial peace within the country. Around 90 strikes that we experienced during the year 2002 had reduced to less than 20 by the year 2008. Workers are conducting themselves with greater dedication and tolerance, being aware of global trends and the situation that is prevailing in the country as well as the Mahinda Chinthana development program. We have maintained an economic growth of over 6 percent in the last 3 years.

Economic Progress

20 Amidst economic challenges, country's GDP has grown by an average of 7 percent. The Per capita income which was US\$ 1,000 in 2004 increased to US\$ 2,000 this year.

Unemployment was reduced to 500,000 from 800,000. We generated 300,000 new job opportunities. The rural income thereby increased since those who benefited most through these new job opportunities were the youth of such areas.

We have constructed a large number of concrete roads under the Maga Naguma program connecting many villages. Many Gama Naguma and drinking water projects were also implemented at village level. During the past 3 years, we have spent around Rs.39,000 Million on account of such projects. In addition the villagers also contributed with a 20 to 30 percent labour input. As such, the amount of money spent towards village development as well as participation of villagers was immense.

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Capital Expenditure that was Rs. 177 billion in 2006 was increased to Rs. 278 billion to implement ports, power plants, railways and irrigation projects that were so far neglected. Rs. 360 billion has been allocated in the Budget estimates for such projects.

Government income that was Rs. 400 billion was increased to Rs. 700 billion.

Tea sector was transformed to be a US Dollar 1 Billion export industry. Tea, Rubber, coconut and minor export crops became very popular among tea Small holders and contributed towards improving their income.

Despite a heavily competitive environment, necessary encouragement was provided for the garment industry to move forward and record itself as a US\$ 3,500 million industry. Numerous incentives were granted to this sector throughout the last 3 years. A construction boom was created to revive the local construction industry that had collapsed and this sector has now recorded over a 9 percent annual growth. Today several of our own construction firms have come to the forefront. These firms are entrusted with a lot of responsibility in the backdrop of major construction and development work that are envisaged in the North and East. The minimum monthly wage of a public servant was increased from Rs. 7,900 to Rs. 11, 730. The Cost-of- Living allowance wa

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Part II

Mahinda Rajapaksa

President and Minister of Finance & Planning 06th November 2008

PART II

Budget Proposals -2009

1 Hon. Speaker, We have now come to an important juncture. Having liberated the East from the grips of terror we are now in the final stage of liberating Vanni and the North. While Nagenahira Udanaya has become a reality, we are hopeful of Uthuru Vasanthaya as well. Democracy has to be strengthened in the North through Provincial and Local Government elections. In the same manner that a political consensus is sought, urgent development activities that need to be implemented in the North should also receive priority. After many decades, there is an opportunity immerging to implement a development strategy that would bridge the North and South. On the other hand, virtually all major development projects in terms of Mahinda Chinthana Development Framework for a New Sri Lanka, are being implemented at various stages. Oil exploration work has also commenced. National security has been strengthened to enable the private sector to expand investment and production. Lacunas in the public sector are being addressed to make it productive and people friendly. Action should also be taken to ease the cost- of- living. In the midst of all this, the sudden collapse of the global economy has posed new challenges to our economy. We have to steer the economy forward, while managing these challenges as well. This Budget has been prepared having taken into consideration all these facets.

2 Hon. Speaker, the security forces are liberating the North for all of us. Their lives are equally valuable as the lives of those living comfortably in Colombo. They are protecting the country at the cost of their lives not for any political gains but targeting the future of this country and for peace and development for the next generation. Before I outline the proposals, I request all of you that we unite and dedicate ourselves to bring about sustainable peace, development and welfare in our country. As much as soldiers are fighting to liberate the country from terrorist at the cost of their lives. I strongly believe that our country can achieve national security, peace and economic prosperity through such unity.

3. Flourishing Society - Sustainable Development Hon. Speaker Mahinda Chinthana Development Strategy envisaged a realistic national economic policy. Its thrust was to promote local producers, utilize foreign investment productively and blend all this to bring about our national identity. We believe that we should produce all what we can, within our country. I therefore, wish to initially make certain proposals to promote domestic production.

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o I propose to increase import duty on wheat grain from 6 percent to 10 percent to discourage the consumption of wheat flour and to promote the production of paddy and other grain.

o A 5 percent Cess will be imposed on wheat flour to promote the production of locally made flour such as rice flour and kurakkan flour.

o To promote local agricultural produce such as black gram, kurakkan, cowpea and sesame seed, I propose to impose a 15 percent Cess on similar imports.

I believe that these proposals will encourage maximizing the production of rice and other grain throughout the country in the forthcoming Maha season.

o Only a small quantity of around 25 percent of the demand of liquid milk is produced locally. I have stated in Mahinda Chinthana that we should get away from this dependency on imported milk powder and instead become a country that is self sufficient in milk. Our dairy farmers are engaged in production of milk in the North, East, South and North West, North Central and Central Provinces. I propose to increase the special commodity levy on imported milk powder import from Rs. 5/- to Rs. 15/- per kg. to further encourage dairy farmers. Money will be set aside from the levy so collected to import milking cows, promote breeding centres and set up small and medium milk

farms on a scientific basis and to broaden the veterinary services. This will also enable milk farmers to secure remunerative prices.

o Cultivation of sugar cane and manufacturing of Sugar was progressing in Badulla and Monaragala districts. These industries faced a draw back due to the closure of Hingurana and Kantale Sugar factories. I propose to increase the special commodity levy on imported sugar from Rs. 14/- to Rs. 16/- per kg. in order to encourage the local sugar industry and sugar cane cultivation. This will also promote the Palmyrah industry in the North and Kithul industry in the South.

o A Cess of Rs. 25 / kg on rubber latex and Rs. 4 / kg on tea will be imposed on imports in order to maximise domestic usage of tea and rubber.

o There is injustice caused to local producers of animal feed since BOI registered companies engaged in such production enjoy tax concessions. I propose to impose a 25 percent Cess on imported maize and animal feed applicable to all importers including those in the BOI regime. This will be a major incentive to those farmers getting ready to cultivate around 70,000 hectares of maize in the forthcoming season.

o Paper manufacturing factories at Ambilipitiya and Valachchenai were closed down due to neo - liberal policies that were followed. We took steps to revive these two factories. I propose to impose a 5 percent Cess on paper imports to modernize these two factories and make them commercially viable.

o Furniture manufacturing industry in various parts of the country including Moratuwa has witnessed a speedy improvement. Local manufactures are in fact exporting high quality household and office

furniture. I propose to impose a 15 percent Cess on all imports of such items to further incentivize related local manufacturers.

o To incentivize the manufacture of foot-wear, hand bags, belts and other leather goods, I propose to impose a Cess of Rs. 200 / kg. on all imports of such products. I propose to exempt all raw material required for such manufacturing from import duty and VAT. Steps will be taken to improve the leather industry alongside the garment industry.

o I propose to increase the Cess on polythene and plastic from 1 percent to 5 percent to discourage the usage of such products, in order to preserve the environment.

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- o We have achieved good results in our efforts to improve the manufacture of ayurvedic medicine by implementing Osu Gammana -projects cultivating ayurvedic plants. I propose to increase the Cess on ayurvedic medicine imports to prevent the undue competition faced by our indigenous medicine industry.
- o The importation of fruits and vegetables has caused a heavy threat to domestic agriculture. I therefore, propose to increase the existing Cess on all imports of fruits and vegetables.
- o I propose to increase the Cess on sarees, sarongs, ready made garments and material imported for local consumption by 50 percent to improve the quality of handloom and other material manufactured in Sri Lanka.
- o Our manufactures have graduated to be able to export fridges, fans and ceramic-ware. I therefore, propose to increase the cess on imports of such items by 50 percent.
- o Chocolate, biscuit and sweets manufacturing are businesses that our manufacturers are very familiar. As a further incentive to promote the production of such items, I propose to increase import Cess on Chocolates, biscuits and sweets by 50 percent. I propose to implement regulatory standards on such imports with immediate effect, to ensure that they do not contain melamine.
- o We promoted domestic motor vehicle manufacturing. Locally manufactured vehicles are now in the rise. Manufacturers of motor bicycles should also be promoted. I propose to continue the incentives given to such industries.
- o Funds and technological know-how required to improve product standards of the handicraft industry are arranged by the National Craft Council. I therefore, propose that the Cess imposed on all related substitute imports to be increased by 100 percent. Import duty and VAT on raw material such as copper, silver will be exempted to minimize the production cost of local entrepreneurs.
- o I feel that it is a shame having to import around 50 percent of our salt requirement. I therefore, propose to impose a cess of Rs. 10/kg of imported salt to promote local salt production to reach self-sufficiency and develop as an export industry.

Consequent to the above proposals that were made for local industries, we will be able to produce high quality products using latest technology. The Production economy will thereby broaden at district level. Local entrepreneurial community will thereby emerge and we will be able to achieve sustainable development. In the backdrop of the global economic crisis, our main objective should be to improve local production. We managed to face the recent global food crisis since our rice requirement was produced within the country.

1 Milk Subsidy for children of low income families I propose to give a monthly allowance of Rs.200 for children between the age of 1 to 5 in Samurdhi and low income estate families, to reduce the cost-of-living of such families and also to promote liquid milk consumption among such children. This will also promote the production of liquid milk. The Ministry of Child Development and Women Empowerment and the Samurdhi Authority will issue stamps for all eligible families from January 2009. I propose to allocate Rs. 900 million for this purpose.

2 A Land in harmony with nature Hon. Speaker, I have explained in Mahinda Chinthana that my aim is to achieve sustainable development in close liaison with the earth, the animals and fauna and flora. Environmental preservation should be ensured by growing trees alongside roads as a part of highways and urban development that is taking Place Island wide. Special projects should be launched to plant trees in temple, kovil, mosque, and church and office premises. Fauna and flora in river banks all over the country should be nourished and cared for. It is proposed to develop such areas as Green Circles. I proposed to allocate Rs. 150 million to setup plant nurseries, avail plants and provide other required facilities.

3 Preservation of native habitats Preserving Dambana, Rathugala, Pollabadde, Henanigala, Dalukana being villages occupied by our native inhabitants will do proud to our nation. I propose to allocate Rs. 50 million to preserve the natural habitat of such villages, their life style and earning patterns as well as their traditional customs and rituals.

7. Preservation of Elephants The human elephant conflict has reached a peak and is a concern for both parties. These conflicts have caused loss of human life, destruction to agricultural assets and affected day to day lives of those living in such areas. This has also caused major harm to elephants. The construction of electric fences is estimated to cost Rs. 950 million. I propose to give special priority to

construct these protective fences within the next two years and allocate required fund.

4 Co-operatives and supermarkets (Co-op City outlets) Hon. Speaker, we exempted the entire cooperative sector from all taxes in order to revive cooperative societies. Many cooperative societies which have benefited by these concessions and have made satisfactory progress. At present there are over 300 Co-op City outlets in operation. I propose to allocate Rs. 300 million to further popularise Co-op City outlets in rural areas and also to setup around 1,000 mini Co-op City outlets at village level.

5 Serving the public and simplifying administrative procedures A program is underway through the Ministry of Public Administration to provide an administrative service that is closer to the people. Public proposals have revealed that forms and procedures used in the public service delivery process are cumbersome. Even charges levied for public services rendered and the receipts issued have not been simplified to suit the present era. I propose to appoint a task force to be headed by the Minister of Public Administration to simplify the administrative process and the systems and procedures through which these services could be extended to the people in a simpler manner. I have proposed in Mahinda Chinthana to setup Jana Sabha Secretariats, to make villages prosperous by bringing together the efforts of field level public servants and community organizations in such villages. This Task force will take steps to ensure that village level development officers such as Samurdhi officers, and agricultural officers will render their services through these Jana Sabha Secretariats. This will enable to provide facilities to rural people under one roof. I propose to allocate Rs. 150 million for this task.

10. Training of National Languages Ordinary people in our country face many difficulties when they obtain services from public as well as private institution owing to the non-usage of Sinhala and Tamil languages. In order to overcome this problem, working knowledge of Sinhala and Tamil languages among public servants needs to

be developed. I therefore, propose to allocate a sum of Rs. 50 million to conduct related training programs by the National Language Institute.

6 Mathata Thitha and protection of milking cows Excise Department, religious places of worship, schools and voluntary organizations have done a tremendous service under the Mathata Thitha programme to eliminate the drug menace from the society and to rehabilitate those who are addicted to liquor, drugs and cigarettes. I propose to allocate Rs. 100 million to consolidate these measures at village level, to assist religious places of worship, voluntary organizations and schools which are dedicated toward such services and to eradicate from the society the slaughter of milking cows. 7 International level facilities to rural sportsmen I propose to allocate Rs. 300 million to broaden training programs for rural youth in international sports such as badminton, tennis and swimming, to upgrade related stadium facilities and to widen opportunities for rural youth with exceptional talents, to take part in international sports events.

13. Compensation for acquisition of lands for road development Heavy compensation is required to be paid on account of land acquired for road development throughout the country. The compensation payable for this purpose as of now is around Rs. 10,000 million. Those who are entitled to receive compensation are confronted with various difficulties consequent to delays associated with such payments. Further road development activities also suffer various setbacks, consequently. To resolve this issue, it is proposed that compensation less than Rs. 1 million would be directly paid by cash. In relation to compensation in excess of Rs. 1 million, action will be taken to issue Treasury Bonds by the Central Bank of Sri Lanka through Bank of Ceylon, with a 1 -2 year maturity period and attracting an annual interest rate of 17 percent. These Treasury Bonds could either be used as security to obtain a loan, be discounted or be redeemed at the end of the two years along with interest. If needed the owner could even obtain interest at six monthly intervals. This arrangement will enable property owners to receive their

compensation in a timely manner. I propose to allocate Rs. 10 billion to issue Treasury Bonds for this purpose.

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8 Coordination of development activities at rural and provincial levels Enhanced foreign aid had been mobilized for rural and provincial road development, supply of drinking water, electricity and minor irrigation projects. I propose to set up a Presidential Task Force consisting of representatives from the Provincial Council Ministry, the Nation Building Ministry, Finance Commission, Provincial Councils and other relevant state institutions and the Ministry of Finance and Planning to coordinate the implementation of such projects operated at village and national level.

9 Small scale hydro power plants Around 600 small scale hydro power projects have been identified which are capable of adding around 300 MW of power to the national grid. Such electricity generation will help to save fuel used for power generation substantially. However, many obstacles have surfaced in implementing these projects. I propose to setup a Presidential Task Force that could assist in resolving expeditiously, issues pertaining to provision of land, bank loans, environmental certificates and administrative approvals.

16. Mihin Lanka Airline and Weerawila Airport Our Government is taking measures to expand domestic and international airline services, operate Mihin Lanka Airline to be able to offer an affordable service to the general public and to construct the Weerawila International Airport. Although Mihin Lanka Airline suffered a setback due to increasing oil prices and inadequate capital, the operations could be revived by providing the required capital, since we have secured long - term financing to acquire the required aircrafts. This move will improve domestic and regional air travel and also be a major concession to the export of fruits and vegetables. We have already included the required allocation of Rs. 6,000 million in the Budget Estimates. The Airport and Aviation Authority will make the required investments to construct the Weerawila International Airport. I propose to allocate Rs. 500 million as the Government contribution for the year 2009 for this construction.

10 Universities for all As stated in the Mahinda Chinthana, steps have been already taken to provide hostel accommodation, lecture hall facilities and curricula development to provide opportunities to a greater number of students who qualify for university education. The facilities available in universities outside Colombo are insufficient. Steps need to be taken to improve facilities of such universities and also to develop areas in the vicinity as university townships. Priority has to be given to improve faculties of these universities on par with other universities and to develop the area in the vicinity to be able to cater to the needs of the campus community. We also need to give priority to immediately fill vacancies in the academic staff and to provide foreign post graduate opportunities for such staff. I propose to allocate an additional allocation of Rs. 950 million to improve Rajarata, Wayamba, Sabaragamuwa, Uva Wellassa, Northern, South Eastern and Jaffna universities.

11 50 year commemoration The celebrations to mark 50 years since the establishment of the Vidyodhaya University and the Vidyalkankara University that gave our country an intellectual revival are scheduled for next year. I propose to allocate Rs. 100 Million to conduct programmes planned to value this memorable event.

19. E - Villages Allocations were made in the 2006 Budget to connect rural villages in backward areas with the rest of the world and enable them to blend with the global community and economic trends, through Information Technology. This program has enabled online connectivity through around 500 Nana Sala Centres, between villages, schools and state and public institutions, and also facilitates to broaden the knowledge of English and Information Technology. I propose to name the year 2009 as an year dedicated to expand the

knowledge of English and Information Technology and allocate Rs. 100 million to broaden the scope of this programme.

12 A knowledge economy Our people reawakened with knowledge with the expansion of free education in our country. The children of remote villages were empowered with knowledge. The way forward in the next 10 years for our country should be based on a knowledge economy. Our agriculture, industry and services should be directed with a high level of technological and intellectual input. At the same time our knowledge should also be utilized for services which are internationally acclaimed. Therefore, income tax concessions available to professionals for services rendered either in or outside Sri Lanka should be further expanded to serve such economies. I therefore propose that income tax payable by any Sri Lankan professional serving a company or a partnership based in Sri Lanka and providing international services and earning in foreign currency, should be confined to 20 percent. This will avail tax concessions to professionals such as lawyers, accountants, engineers, doctors and computer

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technicians for services rendered by them while being based in Sri Lanka. I believe that this will enable our country to become an international hub providing professional services and also encourage our professionals and the institutions to which they are attached, to adopt mechanisms to provide such services while being based in Sri Lanka.

13 National Research programme The attention that we have given for scientific research is inadequate. We need to improve scientific research into agriculture, new products, national security, history and culture. I propose to allocate Rs. 300 million to expand such research work steered by the National Research Council with the help of universities, other research institutions, various ministries and the intellectuals in our country to promote new revelation in various fields and to promote research work.

14 A quality health service to all The main objective of Mahinda Chinthana is to provide a quality health service to people in less developed regions. Priority was given to develop hospitals in remote areas, to build doctors quarters in such hospitals and also to develop estate hospitals. I propose an allocation of Rs. 350 million to further improve the quality of health facilities available to people in remote areas, to develop Akkaraipattu base hospital, to introduce a cancer treatment unit at the Batticaloa teaching hospital, to develop the Monaragala base hospital, to modernize estate hospitals in Kandy, Kegalle, Ratnapura, Nuwara-Eliya and Badulla districts and to provide ambulances to hospitals with less facilities.

15 Indigenous Medicine We possess a great knowledge in indigenous medicine that we can proudly impart to the world. I have gone on record in Mahinda Chinthana that I treat it as a duty cast upon me by history, to preserve and disseminate indigenous medicine related knowledge to the world. Based on a request made by indigenous doctors, I propose to allocate Rs. 100 million for research related work in this field, by enhancing research on ancient treatment methods that will contribute towards improving health standards of our country.

16 Revival of Arts Mahinda Chinthana accords special priority to enrich Art and Culture. Several concessions were provided through the last Budget, to uplift the local film industry and the tele drama industry. A greater acceptability was ensured to local art and culture by imposing a tax on foreign films, tele dramas and advertisements. The construction of Ranminithanne universal tele cinema village has now been commenced in order to provide training and studio facilities to improve talents of local film and tele drama artists. Phase I of this project is proposed to be completed and declared opened next year.

Duty concessions have been already provided for various essential equipment required to be imported for the production of films and tele dramas. Tax concessions are also provided to construct cinema halls with high tech facilities or for renovation purposes. Since there is a notable revival in the local film and tele drama industry and since related activities are of a lower commercial value, I propose to continue the tax concessions already availed to this industry for a further period of two years.

I also propose to provide income tax concessions to producers including authors, singers, musicians and stage drama artists on income arising from such creations. I propose to amend the Intellectual Properties Act to make it mandatory to provide financial benefits for script writers, composers and singers of songs, when their songs are transmitted via radio or television channels.

1 One Village - One Crop A programme is underway to identify a conventional crop for each province and to ensure the successful cultivation of such crops in those provinces. This program will prioritize the promotion of crops such as onions, chillies, tomatoes, beans, lime, papaya and bananas. In order to provide extension services, high quality seeds, fertilizer, financial assistance, storage facilities, preservation mechanisms and post harvest management facilities to relevant farmers from one central location, to improve facilities required to transport such crops, to develop Agrarian centers and link them with economic centers, I propose to make an allocation of Rs. 300 million for these purposes.

2 Agro Exporting Zones The Export Development Board has proposed a program to establish export zones with the involvement of farmer villages in order to provide high quality, value added agri products to the export market. Through this program selected products such as Palmyra products, cinnamon, ginger, vanilla and drinking water

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could be produced with high quality standards, to be exported. I propose to make an allocation of Rs. 500 million to the Export Development Board for this purpose.

3 Community tourism villages The Mahinda Chithana emphasises the need to develop attractive tourist destinations in selected traditional villages situated in cultural and environmental surroundings. Under the Gama Naguma programme, I propose to allocate Rs. 100 million to develop selected villages in each province, as tourist villages.

4 Development of world heritage - Galle We need to give priority to develop Galle as a World heritage city. Already the Government of Japan has allocated funds to develop Galle port as tourist port. I propose to allocate Rs. 100 million to develop Galle city, alongside this port development project.

5 Salutation to soldiers

Hon. Speaker, people who are away from the ground reality and living luxury lives in Colombo often underestimate the dangers associated with the humanitarian operations carried out by our soldiers in the North. At present, our soldiers are engaged in a perilous operation of combating terrorism at the cost of their lives. As a result, people in the South, specially those in Colombo have got sufficient security. We should be lifelong indebted to such soldiers and their families for their sacrifices and we should constantly admire them. We in fact built a monument to commemorate all soldiers who died in action. I propose to increase the monthly allowance paid to soldiers engaged in action from Rs. 3,000 to Rs. 5,000. I also propose to allocate Rs. 4,500 million for this cause.

30. Ranaviru Gammana - villages dedicated for soldiers We promised to construct 50,000 houses under the Ranaviru Gammana in the Mahinda Chinthana. In phase I, we constructed a Ranaviru Gammana in Ippologama consisting of 1,500 houses with other facilities such as roads, water, electricity, telephones, banks, market places, schools and hospitals. The abandoned building at Malay Street which belonged to the Ministry of Education has been renovated and converted into a modern education institute to enhance education of children of soldiers who are engaged in

security operations. I propose to allocate Rs. 3,500 million to commence the construction of few more Ranaviru Gammana with all facilities during the next year.

2 Value Added Tax - VAT VAT need to be simplified. I therefore, propose to decrease the present 15 percent VAT to 12 percent with effect from 1st January, 2009. This will provide a substantial relief to tourism, industries, leasing, construction insurance and telecommunication sectors and also to the entire production sector. With reduced production costs, the overall cost-of-living will also come down. The 20 percent VAT on motor vehicles, luxury goods and liquor will continue to be applicable. The registration limit applicable to VAT will be increased from Rs. 1.8 million to Rs. 2.5 million to simplify VAT administration and also to provide relief to small and medium entrepreneurs. Gama Naguma, Maga Naguma, Samurdhi and community water supply schemes carried out by community based organizations, with community participation will be totally exempt from VAT.

3 Economic Service Charge - ESC Hon. Speaker, I propose that the annual maximum ESC liability of Rs. 60 million, be increased to Rs. 120 million. This increase will affect only to large businesses not paying any income tax.

4 Telephone Levy The telephone levy of 10 percent presently applicable to mobile and codeless telephones will be expanded to be applicable to fixed line telephones as well. However, fixed line telephones used by any surviving spouse of service personnel killed in action and disabled soldiers will also be exempt from this tax.

34. Port and Airports Levy - PAL Hon. Speaker, our government has made large investments to develop ports. Around US\$ 1,000 million is being invested to develop Colombo port, Hambantota new port, Olivil new port, Trincomalee port, Galle tourist port,

and Kankasanthurai port. Since environment related issues that hampered the progress of the second international airport at Weerawila has now been resolved, the construction of this airport is due to be commenced. We need to allocate counterpart funds to complement foreign aid secured to construct six ports and the second international airport. I therefore propose to increase the PAL from 3 percent to 5 percent.

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5 Nation Building Tax Hon. Speaker, this country faced a total draw back consequent to terrorist activities that prevailed for over 30 years. Terrorists destroyed railways, ports, highways, bridges, state institutions, hospitals and schools in the North and East. Once congested areas became uninhabited. A large number of brave soldiers of security forces sacrificed their lives. Some became disabled and helpless. A large number of people become homeless and shifted themselves to temporary shelters. Public and private properties were destroyed in various parts of the island including Colombo. Places of worship were also destroyed. The time has now come to rebuild these. As such we should accord priority for development and welfare, whilst seeking a political solution. We need to pay greater attention to the people in the North and South who were affected by terrorism and thus became helpless and also to the brave soldiers who sacrificed their lives to combat terrorism and their families. As such I propose to impose a Nation Building Tax as a social contribution towards welfare of security forces, and to rebuild communities and infrastructure facilities affected by terrorism. This tax which would be 1 percent, will be applicable on the turnover on imports, manufacturing or services other than on the banking and financial sector, for a period of 2 years. In addition to the revenue collected from this tax, we will also seek the assistance of our friendly countries to obtain additional aid to implement nation building programs.

6 Preparation of a National Tax Policy Our tax base got eroded as a result of various tax concessions granted from 1977 to promote investment. Different tax rates prevail in country, for similar entrepreneurs in the same region. Local entrepreneurs have been accorded second class status. We have to be mindful of effects on local entrepreneurs due to changes that have taken place in the area of international trade consequent to free trade agreements , duty concessions etc. A tax system that lacks transparency has evolved consequent to there being no consolidated or coordinated approach between revenue administration institutions such as Inland Revenue and Customs and the Board of Investment that grants major tax incentives. Further a high tax rate of 55 percent applicable to banking and financial institutions.

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Load-Date: November 7, 2008

32 seek Forces' protection in Pesalai

Daily Mirror (Sri Lanka)

July 11, 2008 Friday 4:06 PM EST

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Length: 117 words

Byline: Daily News Sri Lanka

Dateline: Colombo

Body

Colombo, July 11 -- Thirty two civilians fleeing from the **LTTE** grip in Nachchikuda, Mullaitivu, sought Security Forces' protection at the Navy outpost in Pesalai on Thursday evening, the Media Centre for National Security (MCNS) said.

A MCNS spokesman said 32 civilians comprising 19 **women** and 13 men had reached the cleared area at the Pesalai Navy outpost around 5.30 p.m. seeking protection under the Security Forces. "Thirty two civilians reached the Navy outpost in a boat from the uncleared area in Nachchikuda following **LTTE** harassment and intimidation," he added. He said the 32 were provided with essential needs and shelter.

Report from Daily News Sri Lanka brought to you by HT Syndication.

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Load-Date: September 16, 2008

Janaka assassins allegedly paid over 6M

Daily Mirror (Sri Lanka)

March 3, 2009 Tuesday

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Length: 151 words

Dateline: Colombo

Body

Colombo, March 3 -- The CID informed the Anuradhapura Magistrate that inquiries had revealed that a sum of Rs. 6,300,000 had been apportioned by the **LTTE** to the suspects arrested in connection with the assassination of Major General Janaka Perera. The CID revelation was made yesterday (2) when the case in connection with the assassination of Major General Janaka Perera was taken up before the Anuradhapura Chief Magistrate and Additional District Judge Ruchira Weliwatte.

The CID further informed court that a sum of Rs. 3,500,000 had been credited by the **LTTE** to the Medawachchiya People's Bank accounts of the main suspect in the murder and another **female** suspect who are in CID custody now. Further interrogations had revealed that in addition, a further sum of about Rs. 2,800,000 had been given to the suspects from time to time. Published by HT Syndication with permission from Daily Mirror Sri Lanka.

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Load-Date: April 1, 2009

More civilians come over

Daily News (Sri Lanka)

February 3, 2009 Tuesday

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Length: 159 words

Dateline: Colombo

Body

Colombo, Feb. 3 -- Civilian arrivals are on the rise to the cleared areas from the **LTTE** dominated areas as a result of the safe passage provided by the Security Forces.

Around 96 civilians from the uncleared areas have reached the Security Forces controlled area crossing the Omanthai entry/exit point over the weekend. Brigadier Udaya Nanayakkara said 96 civilians had reported to the cleared area crossing the Omanthai entry/exit point in two groups on Sunday. "Ten men and nine **females** fleeing the **LTTE** clutches had sought protection with the Security Forces on Sunday morning," he added. Meanwhile, another 77 civilians had reached the cleared areas crossing the Omanthai entry/exit point. "These people would feel the breath of freedom after undergoing severe difficulties and many hardships," Brigadier Nanayakkara said. The IDPs had been directed to the Vavuniya welfare centre. Published by HT Syndication with permission from Daily News Sri Lanka.

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Load-Date: May 5, 2009

Navy rescues 59 civilians

Daily News (Sri Lanka)

February 28, 2009 Saturday

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Length: 143 words

Dateline: Colombo

Body

Colombo, Feb. 28 -- Around 59 civilians seeking protection with the Security Forces have been rescued by the Navy on Thursday morning in the North-eastern seas.

Navy spokesman Commander D.P.K. Dassanayake said 59 civilians including 17 children, 21 **females** and 21 males were rescued by the naval patrol when they were in five fiber glass dinghies waving white flags for help. "The group was exhausted and was stricken with fear due to the exposure to terror in the hands of the **LTTE**, he added. They were brought to Munai beach and provided with refreshments and meals. Those found sick were provided with prompt treatment by the Naval medical personnel. Commander Dassanayake pointed out that the Navy made special arrangements to assist Tamil civilians fleeing the **LTTE** clutches in Mullaitivu. Published by HT Syndication with permission from Daily News Sri Lanka.

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Load-Date: April 1, 2009

Woman with explosives arrested in Sri Lanka

Xinhua General News Service

November 4, 2008 Tuesday 6:55 AM EST

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Section: WORLD NEWS; Political

Length: 179 words

Dateline: COLOMBO Nov. 4

Body

A Sri Lankan woman carrying explosives from the north to the capital Colombo has been arrested in the north, police said Tuesday.

The woman was arrested with 500 grams of C4 explosives at the Irattaperiyakulam security checkpoint in the northern district of Vavuniya Monday night, police spokesman Ranjith Gunasekera said.

The arrest followed information received from the capital Colombo and she was believed to have couriered explosives from the north to the south several times, police said.

The explosives were found hidden in a false bottom in her luggage, police added.

A Tamil Tiger woman suicide bomber was blamed on the failed attempt to assassinate the senior government minister Maithripala Sirisena in Colombo last month.

Police said the rebel Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (**LTTE**) has widely used **women** suicide cadres on assassination missions in Colombo and elsewhere in the island.

The government has imposed tighter security measures in the country as government troops and the **LTTE** fight a fierce battle in the north.

Load-Date: November 4, 2008

**STATEMENT BY AMBASSADOR ROSEMARY DICARLO, ALTERNATE
REPRESENTATIVE FOR SPECIAL POLITICAL AFFAIRS, ON CIVILIANS IN
ARMED CONFLICT, IN SECURITY COUNCIL**

States News Service

January 14, 2009 Wednesday

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Length: 1098 words

Byline: States News Service

Dateline: New York

Body

The following information was released by the U.S. Mission to the United Nations:

Thank you Mr. President. I would like to thank Under Secretary General Holmes for his briefing. And I would also like to thank him and his staff for their work in updating the aide memoire on the protection of civilians in armed conflict.

Mr. President, the United States shares the concerns of the international community regarding the vulnerability of civilians who find themselves in the midst of conflict through no choice or fault of their own. **Women** and children are particularly vulnerable in these situations. While the need for protection of civilians is clear, how to achieve this goal is one of our most pressing collective challenges.

The primary responsibility for protecting civilians lies with all the parties to an armed conflict. The United Nations also has an important role. Protection of civilians is now specifically included in half of the mandates of current peacekeeping operations, and is a core mandate of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees, the UN Childrens Fund, and UN High Commissioner for Human Rights.

Mr. President, the United States shares the view that we must stand ready to help promote the safety and security of the dedicated humanitarian workers who attempt to provide relief for civilian populations throughout the world. As we all know, there is a lack of humanitarian access in many areas of conflict that should be urgently addressed.

The situation in Gaza provides us all with pause, as we contemplate how the conduct of hostilities and violence in both Gaza and southern Israel impacts the civilian populace. As suggested by Resolution 1860,

intra-Palestinian reconciliation and the implementation of the two-State solution will provide the ultimate guarantee of the protection of civilians in both Gaza and southern Israel.

For the immediate term, the United States reiterates the call recently made in Resolution 1860 that all violence against civilians, including acts of terror, be halted, with an eye toward a durable and fully respected ceasefire.

We must not forget, however, that this outburst of violence was instigated by Hamas, a terrorist organization that called for the destruction of Israel, by its barrage of rockets and mortars that deliberately targeted Israeli civilians. Ongoing hostilities in Gaza have exacerbated the plight of the Palestinian people by making it more difficult for the

STATEMENT BY AMBASSADOR ROSEMARY DICARLO, ALTERNATE REPRESENTATIVE FOR SPECIAL
POLITICAL AFFAIRS, ON CIVILIANS IN ARMED CONFLICT, IN SECURITY COUNCIL

international community to deliver much needed humanitarian assistance and goods to the people of Gaza. The United States echoes the call for the unimpeded provision and distribution of adequate humanitarian assistance to meet the growing humanitarian needs of Palestinians in Gaza, including provision of food, fuel, shelter and medical treatment and protection for the displaced.

We further note an additional obligation of all parties to refrain from deliberately using the civilian population, and religious, educational and civic institutions to shield active combatants, command and control facilities, and munitions stockpiles. The United States calls on Hamas to immediately cease this reprehensible and cowardly practice that places innocent civilians at grave and unacceptable risk.

While Israel has an unquestionable right to defend itself against terrorist attacks, we urge the Government of Israel to take all appropriate steps to ease access and movement for humanitarian goods and workers, to avoid civilian casualties and to minimize the impact on innocent civilians.

Mr. President, my government also remains gravely concerned about the ongoing and widespread use of sexual and gender-based violence in conflict situations throughout the world. This is one of the most significant protection challenges, and one that is too often ignored. Sexual and gender-based violence must be more effectively addressed, and UN peacekeeping missions have a clear role to play in preventing this violence and addressing its impact.

The United States condemns sexual violence as an instrument of policy and calls for an end this gross injustice. We urge states to take concrete steps to end both the use of rape as an instrument of war and impunity for perpetrators.

We are also deeply concerned about the recruitment of child soldiers by governments and rebel movements in the Democratic Republic of Congo, in Sudan, by the Lords Resistance Army, by the Burmese regime, by the LTTE in Sri Lanka, by the FARC in Colombia, and by other groups and governments too numerous to name here.

Mr. President, the United States continues to seek comprehensive approaches to resolve protracted refugee situations in all parts of the world through support for durable solutions. We also seek innovative approaches to develop livelihood strategies and to maximize opportunities for the self-reliance and empowerment of refugees.

Where conflict is causing civilians to flee and seek asylum, we are working actively with other governments to provide protection to those in need. We call on Member States to renew their commitment to uphold the right to asylum, to protect civilians from forcible return to situations where they fear persecution, and to provide durable solutions for refugees and stateless persons. The United States, for its part, provides a significant portion of the funds needed by UN agencies to do their good works, as evidenced, in part, by our recent pledge of

85 million dollars to assist UNRWA in its work to care for Palestinian refugees.

Mr. President, the United States is working in other ways to actively promote the protection of civilians. A primary example is the United States work in training peacekeepers through the Africa Contingency Operations Training and Assistance Program, or ACOTA. Through ACOTA, we provide training for African peacekeepers preparing to deploy to regional or international missions on their continent. In 2008, the United States trained 26,039 African peacekeepers in 2008. 92% of these ACOTA-trained peacekeepers are deployed to UNMIL, MONUC, UNAMID, UNOCI, UNIFIL, and AMISOM, with the additional 8% standing by for planned deployment.

Mr. President, the United States remains committed to the protection of civilians in armed conflict, both in connection with the work of the Council and our activities throughout the world. We applaud efforts by OCHA and other UN offices to assist the civilian victims of armed conflict, fully endorse the work of the UN in this realm, and pledge continued U.S. support to prevent and mitigate the effects of conflict on the civilian populations of this world.

Thank you Mr. President.

STATEMENT BY AMBASSADOR ROSEMARY DICARLO, ALTERNATE REPRESENTATIVE FOR SPECIAL
POLITICAL AFFAIRS, ON CIVILIANS IN ARMED CONFLICT, IN SECURITY COUNCIL

Load-Date: January 17, 2009

End of Document

Bank robbers are yesterday's villains as cybercrime pays out rich dividends

Yorkshire Post

April 29, 2008

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Length: 1495 words

Body

Criminals are bringing old-fashioned scams into the 21st century. Sarah Freeman asks if anyone really knows the whole truth about the cybercrime phenomenon.

David Wall admits that he fell hook line and sinker for the vision of the future presented on Tomorrow's World.

In this technological utopia, robots took care of household chores, major operations were completed in minutes and our every want was

satisfied by a touch of a button. In short, the advances in computers would make the world a better place.

While some of the predictions did come to pass, with society's eye on faster and ever more efficient technology, an enterprising criminal element also saw an opportunity to diversify.

"Back when I was growing up, we were promised a world of hovercrafts, jet packs and cures for pretty much everything," says the professor of criminal justice at the University of Leeds. "It was inherently optimistic; new technology was either benign or in some way promoted the human cause.

"Sadly, when I began my academic research my youthful optimism was shattered; the chilling reality was quite different."

Cybercriminals may have initially operated in the pages of science fiction novels, but with the rise of home computers, online banking

and internet shopping, the public have been warned to be vigilant against a new type of thief.

Unsolicited emails from Nigerians looking for help in releasing money from the troubled country have popped up in in-boxes, fraudsters masquerading behind apparently legitimate financial companies have tried to persuade individuals to part with vital identity details and

just when it looked like the public had caught onto the scam, they moved on to some other con.

"People tend to learn very quickly about scams, but changes in technology mean the criminals can adapt just as quickly," says Prof Wall. "Most people have now heard of phishing, where the fraudsters ask individuals to update or confirm security details, but now you also get smishing which uses texts to the same end.

"The latest development is vishing where someone leaves a voice message on people's landlines claiming to be from a bank or credit card company asking them to ring a certain number because they've detected a problem with their accounts."

Bank robbers are yesterday's villains as cybercrime pays out rich dividends

While raids like the Great Train Robbery went down in history for the sheer audacity of the gangs who masterminded them, armed robbery is a high risk career and the vast majority are brought to justice before they can enjoy the rewards. However, the internet not only allows criminals to spread that risk, crucially it also provides the priceless luxury of time.

"There is absolutely no point carrying out a £40m bank robbery these days," says Prof Wall, who has spent a lot of time pondering the perfect online crime.

"Given the amount of people who need to be involved the cut is likely to be small and the chances are you will get caught. Money is not easy to launder at short notice and the best you can hope is that you have enough time to secret some of the cash away, but is a million pounds really worth 10 or 15 years in prison?

"However, if in a matter of seconds you could take just £1 from 40 million different accounts, then suddenly a life of crime starts to look a little more attractive. The internet also has an advantage in

terms of covering tracks. Electronically transferring money from one place to another takes a fraction of the time to physically move

cash around and obviously there's no need for elaborate getaway plans."

While the remoteness of the internet provides a convenient cover for shady characters, the public's imagination has been left to fill in the gaps. However, just as murderers don't fit one easily identifiable profile, the image of computer hackers as socially dysfunctional geeks is far removed from reality.

"Films like War Games probably have a lot to answer for," says Prof Wall. "In the past, hackers wanted the world to know what they were capable of and they liked to think of themselves as the little guy taking on the establishment.

"Often they would send viruses which would print out their CV and ask for jobs, now the last thing they want is for anyone to be able to identify them.

"It's possible to write viruses which kill themselves off after a few hours or which lie dormant except for a 20 minute period when they let the hacker in through a virtual backdoor. Stealth is key to current criminal activity."

If the idea of faceless hackers disappearing into online shadows seems like the stuff of a Hollywood thriller, the scams themselves are often surprisingly simple, promising as most successful cons do that there is something such as a free lunch.

"One day you could launch the online equivalent of the traditional pyramid selling scheme," says Prof Wall, who wrote Cybercrime, an account of the phenomenon aimed at academics during his daily

train ride to Leeds from his home in York.

"Early on, it seems like a win win situation, but at some point the cash runs out and the only people to profit are those at the top of the pile. The next day you could move on to an auction site scam, building up a reputation for selling say gadgets at less than their market value. Once you've earned people's trust, you offer the people who missed out on a particular bid the chance to buy off line. The trick is to ask for a deposit up front, but of course the goods will never arrive.

"One relatively new development is the online dating scam where people strike up a relationship with someone. Flattery is a powerful thing and it is amazing how many people will hand over money for an air fare if they think they have found true love.

"When people realise they have fallen victim to a scam like that there is understandably a sense of embarrassment, so they don't contact police."

Bank robbers are yesterday's villains as cybercrime pays out rich dividends

This reluctance means statistics linked to cybercrime are often viewed as just the tip of the iceberg and has fuelled the belief that no one is safe from the online fraudsters.

However, while figures as to the true cost of internet fraud are regularly bandied about, Prof Wall insists that not only are such calculations impossible, but that there is little evidence to support claims that it is a major funder of terrorist activities like al-Qaeda and the Tamil Tigers

"It's all hypothetical," he says. "There has been a lot of publicity recently about the BBC investigation which discovered a number of

websites selling identity details. The inference was that internet fraud was much greater than anyone realised, but it is still not clear whether these sites are actually attempting to scam the buyers with useless information rather than individuals.

"If cybercrime is used to fund large-scale terrorist activity, there is a much more complex relationship between the two than anyone has yet discovered. Yes, there is an element of organised crime, but it's not

like the Mafia with an

identifiable command and control, it's more that people come together to commit one particular scam and they go their separate ways."

Personal responsibility inevitably plays a part in defeating the cybercriminals, but as Prof Wall has discovered whatever Tomorrow's World might have promised, the world is always going to be a fallible place.

"Computer security systems are pretty robust, the big problem is the human element," he says. "It is possible to install software which acts as a filter stopping people receiving emails or accessing internet

sites which contain certain words or images. The idea is that it filters out anything undesirable, but we have to be very careful that we don't fall victim to some kind of Orwellian hysteria.

"When it comes to the internet, like many other things in life, people will always be the weakest link. Some will choose to exploit the technology, but what we don't want is for all users to be affected by the sins of the few."

THE FRAUDSTERS: CRIMINALS WHO EXPLOITED THE INTERNET

Bryn Wellman

Bryn Wellman was jailed for 12 years for his part in two international scams which could have netted the criminals involved up to £16m. In May last year, Leeds Crown Court heard how the elaborate cons involved stolen credit card information and a computer virus which transmitted confidential data back to the criminals.

Mark Watkins

Last year, the 30-year-old from Scarborough narrowly escaped a prison sentence for ripping off internet shoppers by trying to sell them mobile phones which did not exist. Judge Jonathan Durham Hall QC told Mark Watkins his efforts to con eBay customers, which netted him little more than £800, were so "harebrained and stupid" it was inevitable he would be caught.

David King

Claiming to be the cousin of John Prescott, David King swindled thousands of pounds from women he met through the Dating Direct website. The 61-year-old presented himself as a clean-living Christian, but his double life was uncovered after he convinced two women to hand over £10,550 for a bogus publishing venture. King was jailed for four years at Preston Crown Court in 2006.

Bank robbers are yesterday's villains as cybercrime pays out rich dividends

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Giving peace a chance; Despite the horrors he has witnessed, Rock 'hopeful'

Windsor Star (Ontario)

April 26, 2008 Saturday

Final Edition

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Section: NEWS; Pg. A5

Length: 1490 words

Byline: Craig Pearson, Windsor Star

Body

It's his memory of the children with mutilated faces that Allan Rock can't shake.

The former federal cabinet minister and Canadian ambassador to the UN has amassed an impressive resume as a lawyer, politician and diplomat, but Rock feels most transformed in recent years from touring wartorn countries.

The message of peace hit home at a mud-hut refugee camp.

"In the camps of northern Uganda you commonly come across people, sometimes children, whose ears and lips have been cut off," said Rock, about a militia practice to rule by force and fear. "Going to Africa and working in the midst of conflict has changed me profoundly."

In Sri Lanka, as part of a campaign to prevent the use of child soldiers, he encountered more ruined lives.

"People told me about armed men arriving in the middle of the night, ransacking the homes, taking the children, threatening the family if they tried to do anything about it," Rock said. "I met with young men, 15 and 16, who had escaped after spending a year or two in the service of the Tamil Tigers. They were beaten to maintain discipline, forced into battle."

Without peace, Rock said, horror prevails.

"I remember how stunned I was when I came back from Africa the first time and walked into a drugstore and saw 60 kinds of toothpaste," said Rock, now a Windsor lawyer with Sutts Strosberg whose father served as a UN peacekeeper in the '50s and '60s. "Seeing the absolute poverty and violence in Africa makes it impossible for you to carry on like before."

Peace is an elusive concept.

Experts say peace requires a change in societal thinking, though as the Rotary World Peace Summit this week in Windsor shows, the concept of peace resonates powerfully.

More than 1,000 people from around the globe have registered for the Windsor peace summit, the fourth and final such event Rotary has sponsored around the world over the last year in Sofia, Bulgaria, Istanbul, Turkey and Nairobi, Kenya.

Giving peace a chance; Despite the horrors he has witnessed, Rock 'hopeful'

The Peace Summit represents the first truly global Rotary event Windsor has hosted. The summit has expanded to the community with a Parade of Flags Friday night and an interfaith service featuring keynote speaker Robert Kennedy Jr. Sunday morning at the St. Clair Centre for the Arts.

"Peace is more than the absence of war," said Rotary International president Wilf Wilkinson, the first Canadian in 57 years to head the 1.2-million-strong service organization. "Peace is an understanding of people, a willingness of people to recognize that we all share this planet together."

Wilkinson said Rotary programs address basic human conditions required for peace: development, literacy and intercultural communication.

"If we could expand that to more people, I think we could be well on our way to peace," Wilkinson said. "But it's got to be followed up by action, such as clean water, better health, preventing hunger, eradicating disease. And unless we educate children (in developing countries) and give them opportunity, they could become the soldiers of tomorrow, because they have nothing to lose."

It can be hard to look at today's political landscape and see peace. Consider Iraq and Afghanistan, as well as conflicts in Africa, Asia and elsewhere. There is a renewed arms race, particularly in the United States and China. There is nuclear proliferation. There are suicide bombers, riots, rape, genocide and hatred.

And there is religious and cultural intolerance that entrenches it all, where governments and people lean toward force more than understanding.

Beyond the political, experts say violence in pop culture fosters a general tolerance of aggressive behaviour.

"We see it all the time," said Tim Donais, who teaches peace and conflict studies at the University of Windsor. "Every time you turn on the television you see violence celebrated in some way."

From movies and TV shows to video games and mass media, violence often reigns supreme.

"The valorization or the celebration of violence within various cultures in different ways legitimizes violence as a means of resolving conflict," Donais said. "We also see it with international relations, the argument that war is still a legitimate expression of national foreign policy."

As an example, Donais said, Canada has changed its traditional peacekeeping role in Afghanistan to actually helping fight a war.

Donais said the only way to create lasting peace is to deal with the root causes of violence, not the symptoms. Simply enforcing a ceasefire is doomed to fail over time, he said, since anger still percolates below the surface.

Dealing with root causes of violence is difficult, but Donais says if societies seek justice and equality peace is a likely byproduct.

But peace does not mean a world free of conflict. Conflict is part of the human experience. It's how we resolve conflict that matters.

"Conflict is endemic within society," Donais said. "The conflict resolution field suggests it's impossible to eliminate conflict. Rather, it's about managing conflict non-violently."

But there is reason to hope.

The Human Security Report -- first published in 2005 by Simon Fraser University in British Columbia, and updated last year -- indicates that wars have subsided by 40 per cent since 1992.

The three-year study also shows that "international crises" have dropped by 70 per cent since 1981, and that the deadliest conflicts (with more than 1,000 battle deaths) have plunged by 80 per cent in the same period.

Giving peace a chance; Despite the horrors he has witnessed, Rock 'hopeful'

Simon Fraser Prof. Andrew Mack, who led the study, believes the reason wars are less common are because of a reduction in colonialism, the end of the Cold War, and an upsurge in the amount of international peacekeeping efforts.

In the end, perhaps the greatest reason humans should strive for peace -- specifically, a violence- and oppression-free society -- is the same reason that might provide the most hope. It's good for everyone. In other words, treating someone else well helps you.

American film director Martin Doblmeier, who showed his documentary *The Power of Forgiveness* to about 400 youth delegates at the World Peace Summit, considers letting go of anger an effective balm.

"I hope the message that the film conveys is that it takes courage to be able to walk away, and to actually forgive, to let go of a grievance that's happened to you," Doblmeier said. "Not only is forgiveness good for others, it's good for you."

"There is clear scientific evidence -- from studies on forgiveness, from a medical/health point of view -- that forgiving someone and not carrying a grudge is good for your health. It lowers your blood pressure, it lowers your heart rate, it can stem the tide of depression."

Doblmeier suggests that letting go works on a personal as well as a societal level -- where hatred can run deep for centuries. Yet it requires a certain spirituality.

"How do we lay the groundwork for a lasting peace?" Doblmeier asks. "Part of it is how we remember grievances against us, which isn't easy."

"The truth of the matter is forgiveness is the hardest thing we're asked to do -- and may be the most difficult word in our culture today."

Rock said one African village, attacked just a few months prior to his visit -- where militia killed, raped and set fire to homes -- indicates how much people can overcome adversity.

Villagers were rebuilding, painting, and even installing a cellphone tower on a local hill, thanks to community spirit and the help of 125 UN peacekeepers at a nearby camp.

"It was wonderful to see what a difference these 125 men with blue helmets could make in the lives of these townsfolk," Rock said. "I was impressed by the indomitable human spirit of these people who remain positive despite all that has happened to them."

He thinks the world has a way to go. Canada, he notes, has yet to provide 0.7 per cent of its gross domestic product for foreign aid, despite that rich countries, including Canada, agreed at the UN General Assembly of 1970 to provide that percentage by the mid-'70s.

Faraway strife represents something comfortable societies often ignore.

"The international community has to do more to draw attention to these crimes, to put them on the front page," he said. "We have to single out the people and governments responsible and demand an end to this kind of conduct. Countries escape the consequences for this kind of misdeed, in part because there's so much of it going on in the world."

Despite the horrific tales Rock has heard on peace missions. Despite what he has witnessed: bombed-out schools, mutilated children, women devastated by sexual assaults so vicious they are left incontinent. Despite experiencing the grief that poverty and injustice wields, he feels optimistic.

"I remain very hopeful," said Rock, noting that peace agreements have recently been negotiated in Angola, DRC, Sudan and may soon come in Uganda. "I am hopeful that with proper leadership from the West, we can stop some of the violence."

Giving peace a chance; Despite the horrors he has witnessed, Rock 'hopeful'

"It's a matter of will. It's a matter of priorities. But peace is possible."

Graphic

Photo: Aaron Vincent Elkaim, Special to The Windsor Star; 'PEACE IS POSSIBLE': Allan Rock, former federal justice minister and Canadian ambassador to the UN and now a Windsor lawyer, has dedicated much of his years to visiting wartorn countries in an attempt to stop the use of child soldiers. ;

Photo: Aaron Vincent Elkaim, Special to The Windsor Star; OVERCOMING ADVERSITY: Allan Rock meets with children at a displaced persons camp in Northern Uganda. Witnessing poverty and violence in Africa "makes it impossible for you to carry on like before," Rock says. ;

Load-Date: April 26, 2008

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Business Community concerned over CM Position

Daily Mirror (Sri Lanka)

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Dateline: Colombo

Body

Colombo, May 16 -- The business community has expressed concern over who is to be appointed as the Chief Minister of the Eastern Province. "As the Pillayan faction is reported to be armed, it is definitely not a positive sign. However, he did contest the elections" Ceylon Chamber of Commerce Chairman Mahen Dayananda said while adding that opposing parties have complained to the Elections Commissioner about flaws in the Eastern PC polls, which is a sign for concern.

President of the Federation of the Chamber of Commerce of Sri Lanka (FCCISL) Nawaz Rajabdeen stated that people should not consider Pillayan as a terrorist when allowing him to sort out the problems in the east. "If you consider him a terrorist and draw differences, then you create animosity" Rajabdeen affirmed. He pointed out that if there are internal conflicts in the east, it would not be a peaceful environment for the locals.

Rajabdeen further observed that although all politicians have their own personal agendas, they should set aside their differences and support the people. "How many politicians visited the area when the tsunami hit? But for the Eastern polls all of them went there and promised various things," he noted.

The UPFA won the election, with the Chief Minister's position falling vacant for either L.A.M Hizbullah or Pillaiyan. Despite entering the democratic process, the TMVP faction still carry arms claiming it is for personal security purposes.

Infrastructure essential

"Infrastructure leaves much to be desired. Electricity, water and basic requirements are some of the necessities that are in need of immediate action," Dayananda said. He divulged that the Chamber had been supporting the East with financial assistance through their regional chambers particularly Batticaloa. "We will continue to support them and if all goes well on a structured framework a noticeable change will occur in the economy with the East contributing. It will definitely be converted into a realm of possibility."

Rajabdeen in the meantime claimed that the private sector was positive about the elections in the East so long as development takes place.

They had established several 'Back to Business' initiatives in the aftermath of the tsunami which had assisted those victimised entrepreneurs to get back on their feet. It was revealed that now that the elections have been held, the FCCISL is examining the possibility of commencing a similar project to this as well in addition to a project to boost the livelihood of women. Rajabdeen furthermore conveyed that if a conducive environment remained, investments

Business Community concerned over CM Position

were bound to increase. "Poverty alleviation is a priority. The government must think of this and also regional development and should especially support the agro based industry," he stated.

Tourism foresees boost in benefits

Sri Lanka Tourism is anticipating a bright future with the Eastern Province contributing. Sri Lanka Tourism Development Authority Chairman Renton De Alwis stated that the country should not rush-in for international tourism and that we should first boost the local tourism sector. When questioned if revenue from tourism will increase due to the recent political developments in the East, he said "Certainly it would increase but not as direct revenue to the government but as benefits to the local community."

He added that even before the elections, the government was attempting to promote tourism but now further stability was evident in the area. Delving into the programmes they intend to conduct in the area, Alwis said that they are going to build an exquisite resort in Pasikuda with the help of seven investors and the Institute of Architects. Sri Lanka Tourism plans to revive the areas of Kalkuda, Nilaweli and Arugam Bay. Other plans include steps to overcome the issue of shortage in accommodation through measures such as recreational vehicle parks (Caravans).

"The East can help reduce the economic imbalance"- Trade Minister

Commenting on the impact of the recent elections, the Minister of Trade Bandula Gunewardena said "Business people cannot control terrorism, which is a huge obstacle to conduct business and trade." According to Gunewardena, the elections were of high importance as it enabled the removal of terrorism, which was a high risk factor in the region. Liberating the East from **LTTE** control has opened avenues for the initiation of development projects relating to infrastructure and healthcare the Minister added. "Now the people have an opportunity to address their own issues. The 'Nagenahira Navodaya' programme of the National Task Force can now confer its power to the Provincial Councils because of election," he added.

The province is rich in natural resources and contributes to the industries of agriculture and fisheries. "If utilized properly the region can contribute to the increment of the country's GDP, and work towards achieving a balance in the economic development," the minister opined.

Entrepreneurs don't see any significant change for the future

Although the ground situation doesn't look as favourable, Anwer*, an entrepreneur from Trincomalee said the elections have not expressed the voice of the people. "It was a government election. Initiated by them and finally carried according to their own advantage. Tamils are not happy with the result," he said. Anwer divulged the plight of large scale businessmen who have to pay bribes to the TMVP in order to continue their business. "The Stuffing of ballot boxes and obstructing voters were issues for us at the election but we are more worried about the consequences that will follow the election," he said adding that the fear instilled in traders and civilians by the armed personnel have restricted the movements of the public. "How can there be a change when the same government that ruled before the election will continue to rule hereafter?"

In contrast was Haroun* from Batticaloa who is engaged in the agricultural sector said "we are happy that the elections were finally held in the East after two decades. This will give us an opportunity to address several regional problems which have long been neglected by the central government," he added. His optimism comes with hopes of expanding his business in the future.

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Business Community concerned over CM Position

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Behind the gloss: Interview Nicholas Coleridge: The smooth managing director of Conde Nast UK talks to Stephen Brook about working with Tina Brown, why he takes two baths a day - and how a certain rival women's weekly doesn't bother him at all: Curriculum vitae

The Guardian - Final Edition

June 2, 2008 Monday

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the **guardian**

Section: GUARDIAN MEDIA PAGES; Pg. 5

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Byline: Stephen Brook

Body

Two hours with Nicholas Coleridge is like time spent with a particularly diverting glossy - witty, entertaining, anecdote-tastic, you depart with a warm glow but a curious doubt about penetrating the heart of the matter. Lunch was with Gore Vidal; tonight it's drinks at Christie's or Sotheby's, one or the other. Then there is the costing to attend to for the 300th anniversary party next year of Tatler, whose editor, Georgie Greig, has just co-hosted a party with the former Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev.

Coleridge, managing director of Conde Nast UK for 17 years, says that he liked the film *The Devil Wears Prada*, which many thought parodied the company, "very much", and is frequently asked if it was a true depiction. "I always say yes. Of course it isn't at all like that, but it invests the magazine world with a slight excitement."

He has reason to be cheerful. The company has expanded its volume of lucrative advertising pages in the upmarket sector - it used to trail in third in advertising volume, but has held the No 1 spot for the past two years. But with the looming credit crunch, can the good times last?

It seems very unlikely. There's an old adage that luxury is recession-proof - but the credit crunch promises to be a very different type of downturn. Glamour, the company's most mid-market title, has seen its ad volume drop 10% in the first half of this year. Already Coleridge, the eternal optimist, worries about advertising for top-end US retail, although European luxury houses are holding up. "If we could match 2007 I'd be happy," he says.

Beneath the charm, Coleridge, a former British Press Awards young journalist of the year who was flung in jail briefly in Sri Lanka after reporting on the ***Tamil Tigers***, is a sharp operator. He spots a scrawled reference to the legendary Tina Brown upside down in my notebook across his glass-topped desk. "She was a ballbreaker," he recalls of their time on Tatler from 1979 to 1982, when Brown edited the magazine and it struggled for survival. "She was very inspiring and she was also very ruthless. When I joined I was either No 13 or 14 on staff - three years later I was her deputy because everyone else was axed. It was like being a member of Idi Amin's cabinet. Each day another body was found floating."

Behind the gloss: Interview Nicholas Coleridge: The smooth managing director of Conde Nast UK talks to Stephen Brook about working with Tina Brown, why he takes....

Stellar celebrity covers

Coleridge hasn't followed her example, it seems. Conde Nast editors are noted for their longevity: Alexandra Shulman has been editor of Vogue for 16 years, Sarah Miller has edited Conde Nast Traveller for 10, Dylan Jones has run GQ for nine. They are some of the best-known names in the industry. And circulations at the top end continue to grow: GQ enjoys a rising circulation, just, and Vogue has enjoyed its 12th consecutive circulation rise (again, just). "It's to our advantage that they (the editors) personify their magazines," says Coleridge.

The strategy pays. In April, his star editors produced some stellar celebrity covers. Victoria Beckham on Vogue upped sales 10% on last year. Princess Eugenie on Tatler sent circulation soaring 35%. So had the celebrities approved copy and photographs beforehand? "It's very rare for a magazine here to give prior sight of a piece. We do everything we can not to get involved in those kinds of agreements," Coleridge says. Which presumably means that, sometimes, it does happen.

Not all Conde Nast's titles are doing so well - the younger, middle-market magazines launched on Coleridge's watch are faltering. Glamour fell a painful 6.5% year on year, although it still comfortably outsells NatMags' Cosmopolitan by about 90,000. But Conde Nast's Easy Living, down 2% year on year, puts up little resistance to NatMags' mighty Good Housekeeping, more than 260,000 ahead.

The company still, however, achieved a record profit in the UK last year - it is whispered that its margin was a very healthy 20%. Coleridge feels magnanimous towards rivals. "I get on well with (NatMags' chief executive) Duncan Edwards, (the two share a distributor) so I am going to try and avoid my usual snipey remarks." And yet, didn't you once say that everyone at NatMags wanted to work for Conde Nast? "I think that I was stating the obvious there," he laughs.

How annoying, then, that the magazine lauded by the Periodical Publishers' Association as a "media icon of our times" was Bauer Consumer Media's glossy fashion title Grazia - a weekly. It sells more copies in one week than Vogue manages in a month. Coleridge praises it as a "fantastic success" and admits he wanted to buy it last year before Bauer did. But it isn't all admiration; its circulation has "hit a glass ceiling", he says, noting that outside of London Grazia is price-cutting - he sees the local TV adverts at his weekend home in Worcestershire.

Conde Nast won't launch a weekly against Grazia, says Coleridge. It would only contemplate a more upmarket rival, but that would be less profitable. While in Italy and Germany the company launched Vanity Fair as a weekly - a success in Italy but not in Germany - the "much breezier" weekly VF won't be seen here. Stand by, says Coleridge, for falls in women's weekly magazines. "There may simply be too many. You do not feel any shame, after reading a weekly, leaving it on the tube seat."

After a spate of launches over the past five years (Look, First, In the Know, Love It!, Grazia, Pick Me Up, Nuts, Zoo) the magazine industry seems to have lost its enthusiasm for risking new products. But not Conde Nast. "I would be very surprised if we didn't launch something next year, and quite surprised if we didn't launch something the year after a s well," Coleridge says. "We are quite advanced in our planning." Those launches will occur "irrespective" of the advertising downturn, of which "we haven't seen any real evidence in our upmarket titles".

So what will he launch? Neat freak that he is, Coleridge admits to have tidied away evidence before our arrival. He skilfully bats away attempts to press him, but expect something upmarket and niche. Something, perhaps, like the technology glossy Wired, or possibly Portfolio, the US business magazine that launched last year with a budget reported to be an eye-watering \$100m-plus. (When Conde Nast and the Financial Times launched the UK glossy title Business in 1986, it was killed by the 1991 recession.)

Completely obsessed

But you have to wonder if people really want more monthly magazines, if they don't want weeklies. Who has the time to read it all? Coleridge says he takes two baths a day. "I have a bath in the morning and in the evening. I have a lot of magazines to read."

Behind the gloss: Interview Nicholas Coleridge: The smooth managing director of Conde Nast UK talks to Stephen Brook about working with Tina Brown, why he takes....

Most readers, however, are surely more likely to be found using a laptop than in the tub? Coleridge defends his company against accusations that it doesn't have a digital strategy. For many years, magazine sites were dismissed as little more than subscription sites. Conde Nast was a digital pioneer, "like the Guardian", he says, online for 13 years with a staff of about 40 in London and profitable for the past five.

Indeed, Vogue.com attracts about 1.3 million unique users a month and has just relaunched, expanding its fashion show reporting, so readers can expect all 250 pieces from the Chanel runway uploaded online with a "loved it, darling!" commentary within an hour of the show.

Coleridge believes magazine conferences are "completely obsessed" by digital, even though the revenue is not there. "The percentage of advertising that comes into magazines dwarfs it and is still growing." Digital revenues at the company might be growing at 40% a year, but they account for just 7% of total revenues.

With Coleridge also a vice president of Conde Nast International, and India a particular area of responsibility - "such fun" - he spends a lot of time on his BlackBerry. "My wife won't allow me, but if she's away I will sleep with it in my left hand. If I see the red light flashing my curiosity gets the better of me and I can't not answer it."

Vogue India, which launched last year, will break even in its first full year. GQ India, all Bollywood stars, cricketers and playboys, launches in September with a print run of 40,000. Conde Nast stole a march on rivals by gaining sole ownership of its Indian subsidiary and has seen growth in Russia and China. "In the long run I am backing India. It's a democracy and a very sophisticated democracy."

But start talking about the economic downturn and the good cheer drops. It is only at this point that Coleridge reveals that he is "always cautious". The very words jar with the bravado on display for the last two hours. Maybe it is a brief peep at the private Coleridge. "I have been braced for a downturn for more than five years now and each year I have thought, 'it can't go on this good forever'." He is about to find out if he is right.

Curriculum vitae

Age 51

Education Eton College and Trinity

College, Cambridge

Career

1979-82 associate editor of Tatler 1982-86 columnist for the Evening Standard 1986-89 editor, Harper's & Queen 1989-91 editorial director, Conde Nast 1991-present managing director, Conde Nast UK 1999-present vice president, Conde Nast International 2005-present special responsibility for Conde Nast, India

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In pursuit of world peace ...; 'How do we lay the groundwork for a lasting peace?'

Canwest News Service

April 25, 2008 Friday

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Byline: Craig Pearson, Windsor Star

Body

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* * *

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In pursuit of world peace ...;'How do we lay the groundwork for a lasting peace?'

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Beyond the political, experts say violence in pop culture fosters a general tolerance of aggressive behavior.

"We see it all the time," said Tim Donais, who teaches peace and conflict studies at the University of Windsor. "Every time you turn on the television you see violence celebrated in some way."

From movies and TV shows to video games and mass media, violence often reigns supreme.

"The valorization or the celebration of violence within various cultures in different ways legitimizes violence as a means of resolving conflict," Donais said. "We also see it with international relations, the argument that war is still a legitimate expression of national foreign policy."

As an example, Donais said, Canada has changed its traditional peacekeeping role in Afghanistan to actually helping fight a war.

Donais said the only way to create lasting peace is to deal with the root causes of violence, not the symptoms. Simply enforcing a ceasefire is doomed to fail over time, he said, since anger still percolates below the surface.

Dealing with root causes of violence is difficult, but Donais says if societies seek justice and equality peace is a likely byproduct.

But peace does not mean a world free of conflict. Conflict is part of the human experience. It's how we resolve conflict that matters.

"Conflict is endemic within society," Donais said. "The conflict resolution field suggests it's impossible to eliminate conflict. Rather, it's about managing conflict non-violently."

But there is reason to hope.

The Human Security Report - first published in 2005 by Simon Fraser University in British Columbia, and updated last year - indicates that wars have subsided by 40 per cent since 1992.

In pursuit of world peace ...;'How do we lay the groundwork for a lasting peace?'

The three-year study also shows that "international crises" have dropped by 70 per cent since 1981, and that the deadliest conflicts (with more than 1,000 battle deaths) have plunged by 80 per cent in the same period.

Simon Fraser Prof. Andrew Mack, who led the study, believes the reason wars are less common are because of a reduction in colonialism, the end of the Cold War, and an upsurge in the amount of international peacekeeping efforts.

In the end, perhaps the greatest reason humans should strive for peace - specifically, a violence- and oppression-free society - is the same reason that might provide the most hope. It's good for everyone. In other words, treating someone else well helps you.

American film director Martin Doblmeier, who showed his documentary *The Power of Forgiveness* to about 400 youth delegates at the World Peace Summit, considers letting go of anger an effective balm.

"I hope the message that the film conveys is that it takes courage to be able to walk away, and to actually forgive, to let go of a grievance that's happened to you," Doblmeier said. "Not only is forgiveness good for others, it's good for you.

"There is clear scientific evidence - from studies on forgiveness, from a medical/health point of view - that forgiving someone and not carrying a grudge is good for your health. It lowers your blood pressure, it lowers your heart rate, it can stem the tide of depression."

Doblmeier suggests that letting go works on a personal as well as a societal level -- where hatred can run deep for centuries. Yet it requires a certain spirituality.

"How do we lay the groundwork for a lasting peace?" Doblmeier asks. "Part of it is how we remember grievances against us, which isn't easy.

"The truth of the matter is forgiveness is the hardest thing we're asked to do -- and may be the most difficult word in our culture today."

* * *

Rock said one African village, attacked just a few months prior to his visit -- where militia killed, raped and set fire to homes -- indicates how much people can overcome adversity.

Villagers were rebuilding, painting, and even installing a cellphone tower on a local hill, thanks to community spirit and the help of 125 UN peacekeepers at a nearby camp.

"It was wonderful to see what a difference these 125 men with blue helmets could make in the lives of these townsfolk," Rock said. "I was impressed by the indomitable human spirit of these people who remain positive despite all that has happened to them."

He thinks the world has a way to go. Canada, he notes, has yet to provide 0.7 per cent of its gross domestic product for foreign aid, despite that rich countries, including Canada, agreed at the UN General Assembly of 1970 to provide that percentage by the mid-'70s.

Far-away strife represents something comfortable societies often ignore.

"The international community has to do more to draw attention to these crimes, to put them on the front page," he said. "We have to single out the people and governments responsible and demand an end to this kind of conduct. Countries escape the consequences for this kind of misdeed, in part because there's so much of it going on in the world."

He urges more cross-cultural communication, more trips abroad, especially for young people.

"When you see it and live it and experience it, you cannot just walk away from it," Rock said.

In pursuit of world peace ...;'How do we lay the groundwork for a lasting peace?'

Despite the horrific tales Rock has heard on peace missions. Despite what he has witnessed: bombed-out schools, mutilated children, women devastated by sexual assaults so vicious they are left incontinent. Despite experiencing the grief that poverty and injustice wields, he feels optimistic.

"I remain very hopeful," said Rock, noting that peace agreements have recently been negotiated in Angola, DRC, Sudan and may soon come in Uganda. "I am hopeful that with proper leadership from the West, we can stop some of the violence.

"It's a matter of will. It's a matter of priorities. But peace is possible."

Load-Date: August 6, 2008

End of Document

Top female Black Tiger nabbed

Daily Mirror (Sri Lanka)

July 24, 2008 Thursday 11:21 AM EST

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Length: 161 words

Byline: Report from Daily Mirror brought to you by HT Syndication.

Dateline: Colombo

Body

Colombo, July 24 -- A suspected top **LTTE female** suicide cadre belonging to the Black Tiger Brigade was nabbed by a special police team - at a garment factory in Horana last afternoon.

The 34-year-old woman, who is reportedly from Killinochchi, was arrested following a tip off by a prospective employer who had noticed something suspicious about her.

Police Media Spokesman SSP Ranjith Gunasekara told Daily Mirror that the suspect was

reportedly a higher ranker in the **LTTE Female** Black Tiger Brigade. She had gone to seek employment in a garment factory.

It is reported that she had undergone intensive training in the field of suicide attacks. It is believed she had been sent to Colombo to target the upcoming SAARC Summit.

The suspect is being detained at the Horana police station for questioning. She is likely to be transferred to the Terrorist Investigation Division for further interrogation.

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Load-Date: August 11, 2008

Vehicle not ours, says UNICEF

Daily Mirror (Sri Lanka)

January 30, 2009 Friday

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Length: 164 words

Dateline: Colombo

Body

Colombo, Jan. 30 -- UNICEF yesterday said that "a Toyota double cab" which the Army says it has seized from the **LTTE** does not belong to UNICEF.

An Army website had claimed the vehicle belonged to UNICEF. UNICEF said in a statement it does not have any double cabs in its fleet. However, in the past years UNICEF has donated a large number of this type of vehicles to Government partners such as the Ministry of Healthcare and Nutrition, Ministry of Education, National Water Supply and Drainage Board and the Ministry of Social Services and Social Welfare to support their activities. UNICEF said it is extremely regrettable that this donated vehicle might have been illegally taken away from a partner implementing programmes for **women** and children. The army website said troops were startled to come across a wide assortment of **LTTE** heavy and light vehicles, including a UNICEF owned Toyota double cab in Vishnamadu. Published by HT Syndication with permission from Daily Mirror Sri Lanka.

For any query with respect to this article or any other content requirement, please contact Editor at htsyndication@hindustantimes.com

Load-Date: May 5, 2009

Moment to cherish

Sunday Observer (Sri Lanka)

March 22, 2009 Sunday

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Length: 1136 words

Dateline: Colombo

Body

Colombo, March 22 -- MORAWEWA is a desolate and threadbare village located 22 kilometres from the Trincomalee town on the Anuradhapura road; a border village that earlier came under sporadic **LTTE** attack. We felt the emptiness of life in that part of the country. But one thing we felt immensely was the unforgiving sun.

A few years ago marauding terrorists hacked to death the innocent villagers and left behind a trail of pillage and destruction. Even last month several service personnel and civilians travelling in a tractor were seriously wounded when their tractor was caught up in a land mine explosion. However, with the liberation of Morawewa by the Security Forces, the re-settlement program of displaced families became a top priority of the government. It was at this juncture that the Seva Vanitha Unit of the Sri Lanka Air Force (SLAF) decided to step in to give a helping hand to the government's effort of re-settling displaced persons. We visited the Morawewa village a fortnight ago with the Seva Vanitha personnel of the Sri Lanka Air Force led by its Chairperson Nelum Goonetilleke. The occasion marked the opening of a pre-school named Nipuna Kekula and the commissioning of four tube wells to provide safe drinking water to the inhabitants of Morawewa. We travelled by coach to Gunawardenapura where the pre-school was located. A number of pre-school kids, dressed in multi-coloured clothing, were awaiting our arrival. They had thronged the school premises when we reached there. They clung to the bodies of their mothers. These kids had been traumatised by brutal, savage attacks and mayhem caused by terrorists in the past. The signs were visible on their little faces. But thanks to the Security Forces, they are now quite safe, being provided security by the Sri Lanka Air Force and the Security Forces. On our way to the pre-school, we witnessed several bunkers alongside the road. The soldiers manning them were steady and alert and saluted our convoy as we passed by. On our arrival at the Nipuna Kekula School, a tiny tot garlanded the Chairperson Mrs. Nelum Goonetilleke with a bouquet of flowers. It was a small gesture made by a poor girl. But it left an indelible impression in our minds realising how innocent these kids were. Impoverished kids These impoverished kids, waited anxiously till the ceremony began. It was a big, proud moment in their lives. A pre-school was going to be started in their village after several years. The kids had been deprived of pre-school education due to the civil conflict in the past. But now they have an opportunity to learn basic things at the pre-school before they enter mainstream school. In fact, the kids were eyeing the goodies on display they were going to receive. They included books, plastic water bottles, shoes, socks etc. The items had been gifted by members of the Seva Vanitha Unit. Incidentally, the event coincided with the International **Women's** Day. The ceremony commenced with the hoisting of the national flag by the Chairperson and the Morawewa Base Commander. A shy tiny tot welcomed the guests as she mumbled a few followed by an applause by parents. A glass of milk was provided for each kid by members of the Seva Vinitha Unit before the ceremony commenced. Squadron Leader Sureka Dias then read out the Seva Vinitha Chairperson's message. She said that a mother plays a big role in bringing up a family and the aim of Seva Vanitha was to strengthen the role of **women** and uplift their living standards. The pre-school was refurbished by the Seva Vanitha to provide a sound education for kids affected by the civil war. She urged parents to send their children above three years to the Pre-School. Assistant teacher

Moment to cherish

The Seva Vanitha was ready to enlist the services of an assistant teacher with A/Level qualifications to serve at the pre school. Funds had been allocated for this purpose and the SLAF is planing to provide medical treatment to inhabitants of the area, she said. Meanwhile, chairs, tables, racks, blackboards, sports goods, books and other utensils were provided for Nipuna-Kekula pre school. The kids were provided with flasks, shoes, socks and school bags, by the Seva Vanitha. To provide nourishment to malnourished kids, every parent was provided with 10 kilos of rice with dry rations. Meanwhile, a tube well was also commissioned to provide safe drinking water to the school kids. We spoke to Nillanka Dilhani, a native of Moragaswewa who was born and bred in the village. She was happy that her daughter Chamudhaya Probodaya was admitted to the pre-school. We then spoke to Chandani Amarasinghe, the Secretary of the Mothers' Association of Moragaswewa. She was proud that the pre-school was renovated by the Sri Lanka Air Force. "Earlier the pre-school was in a state of neglect. The area was surrounded by shrub jungle and the kids could not walk safely to school. The whole area had been cleared up now. Our children can now walk safely to school", she marvelled. The pre-school garden was neatly kept. For the recreation of kids four sea-saws and four swings had been installed in the garden. The kids received prizes from the Chairperson Nelum Goonetilleke. Distributed They were Bhagya Sandaruwani, Mithun Methsara, M. Chamudhya and Danandaya Jayaratne. The remaining prizes were distributed among other kids by Group Captain Leonard Rodrigo of the Morawewa camp and Morawewa's Divisional Secretary N. Wijeyatileke and ASP, M. Dissanayake. The recipients were Udesha Lakmali, Ayesha Weragoda and M. Puimantha. The Chairman of the Morawewa Pradeshiya Sabha, L. Banda said the Sri Lanka Air Force had even provided farmers in the area with seed paddy for harvesting their fields. He was happy the Gunawardenapura pre-school had been renovated, he said. We then visited the Pankulama Village at Morawewa to commission the tube wells provided by the Seva Vanitha Unit. Hundreds of re-settled families were awaiting the arrival of the Chairperson of the Seva Vanitha Unit. Re-settled families in Pankulama village, were provided four tube wells by the Seva Vanitha Unit of the Sri Lanka Air Force (SLAF). The tube wells were commissioned by Chairperson Nelum Goonetilleke following the unveiling of the plaque. On earlier occasions villagers had to trudge long distances to find drinking water. Providing safe drinking water would alleviate the sufferings of the inhabitants. The ceremony concluded with the distribution of 10 kg of rice packs, dry rations, clothing, aluminium pots, rubber slippers among 75 families. Five wheelchairs were also distributed among five disabled persons in the area. Chairperson Mrs. Goonetilleke and Morawewa Camp's Group Captain Leonard Rodrigo, distributed the goods among the villagers. Published by HT Syndication with permission from Sunday Observer (Sri Lanka).

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Load-Date: March 25, 2009

Woman with explosives arrested in Sri Lanka

Xinhua General News Service

November 4, 2008 Tuesday 1:28 AM EST

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Section: WORLD NEWS; Political

Length: 179 words

Dateline: COLOMBO Nov. 4

Body

A Sri Lankan woman carrying explosives from the north to the capital Colombo has been arrested in the north, police said Tuesday.

The woman was arrested with 500 grams of C4 explosives at the Irattaperiyakulam security checkpoint in the northern district of Vavuniya Monday night, police spokesman Ranjith Gunasekera said.

The arrest followed information received from the capital Colombo and she was believed to have couriered explosives from the north to the south several times, police said.

The explosives were found hidden in a false bottom in her luggage, police added.

A Tamil Tiger woman suicide bomber was blamed on the failed attempt to assassinate the senior government minister Maithripala Sirisena in Colombo last month.

Police said the rebel Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (**LTTE**) has widely used **women** suicide cadres on assassination missions in Colombo and elsewhere in the island.

The government has imposed tighter security measures in the country as government troops and the **LTTE** fight a fierce battle in the north.

Load-Date: November 6, 2008

Sri Lanka's garment industry is worried; RIGHTS-SRI LANKA: War May See EU Duty Concessions Cut

IPS (Latin America)

April 9, 2008 Wednesday

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Byline: Feizal Samath

Body

Sri Lanka's garment industry is worried that the duty free access it enjoys to European markets will soon be cut as a result of alleged human rights violations related to the government's pursuit of a military solution to a long-standing ethnic conflict.

EU trade concessions, known as GSP+, end this year and will come up for review in October.

Already EU has indicated that continuance of the GSP+ depends on how well the Sri Lankan government is seen to be implementing 27 international conventions on human rights, labour rights and environmental standards. 'It is totally based on fulfilling these conventions. This (current review) is a technical exercise on compliance with these conventions. This means not just having the laws, but also implementing them,' said Julian Wilson, head of the European Commission (EC) delegation to Sri Lanka.

The GSP+ scheme allows duty free exports of almost all major Sri Lankan products, into the EU, but the garment industry has been the main beneficiary.

Wilson, speaking at a recent meeting on EU trade, denied charges that the ongoing conflict -- where Tamil rebels are fighting government troops for autonomy in the Tamil-majority north and the east of the island -- will affect the review.

In January, the government unilaterally ended a Norwegian-brokered ceasefire accord with the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (***LTTE***) after several rounds of talks, conducted in Europe, failed. Tamils make up 11.9 percent of the population and Sinhalese almost 74 percent in this island nation of 20 million people.

'This is simply a matter of 27 conventions,' said Wilson. 'It is not related to the issue of the conflict. It depends on the ratification and effective implementation of the conventions. The war and other internal matters are not an issue here.'

However, the EU has been severely critical of the government's human rights record. There is fear that such issues as the harassment of journalists and rising political abductions, could be used as a reason to discontinue the GSP+ scheme.

As one of the four Co-Chairs of the 2003 Tokyo Conference on the Reconstruction and Development of Sri Lanka, the EU helped raise pledges for post-conflict rehabilitation and development worth 4.5 billion US dollars -- but this was tied to progress in the peace process.

Sri Lanka 's garment industry is worried RIGHTS- SRI LANKA : War May See EU Duty Concessions Cut

Wilson denied that the EU is using the GSP+ as a political tool. 'We have a commercial relationship with Sri Lanka that spans 300 years. This is not to be thrown out on a whim. So the entire exercise will be undertaken with absolute professionalism. There will be no political games.'

Last month, the government appointed a four-member ministerial team to work with the garment industry and dispel some of the concerns raised by the EU.

Mid-March, trade minister Prof. G.L. Peiris led delegation to Europe for a series of meetings, including one with Benita Ferrero-Waldner, European Commissioner for External Relations and European Neighbourhood Policy, Benita Ferrero-Waldner, on the issue.

The garment industry is the biggest employer in the manufacturing sector in Sri Lanka and provides direct employment to nearly 300,000 people, mostly rural **women**. Losing the GSP+ could directly impact the competitiveness of Sri Lankan garments and hurt employment and export incomes, the industry says.

Last week, Peiris briefed his cabinet colleagues on the impending danger of non-approval of GSP+ for another term. He told the cabinet that both Tamil rebels and the country's political opposition were involved in a campaign to harm the country's prospects of securing this facility.

While the issue has become a hot political potato, trade unions familiar with the programme say that the fact is that the government has not implemented the roadmap set by the EU when the scheme was first approved in 2003.

In 2005 when it came up for renewal, Sri Lanka made a plea for extension on compassionate grounds as the country had been badly hit by the December 2004 tsunami and was also recovering from the end of garment quotas offered by the United States.

Last month, the government gained unexpected support from local trade unions, which once said that employers and government violated core labour conventions and therefore should not be benefit from the GSP+.

'They don't comply by the labour standards but if Sri Lanka loses the GSP+ the impact will be on the workers. So we do not want to see the GSP+ being taken away. But we do want some indication that core labour standards will be adhered to,' said Anton Marcus, general secretary of the Free Trade Zones and General Services Employees' Union, last month.

Marcus said the labour groups met a EU delegation visiting Colombo last month and said that they would back the government request for an extension of the special concession if the roadmap is implemented and international trade unions are also appointed as monitors in this process. 'We have no problem in supporting this as long as the workers get their rights,' he said, adding that one of the issues in the roadmap is the right to freedom of association and collective bargaining.

'This is a key element in the core labour standards agreed by the government in 2003 to the EU which is yet to be implemented,' Marcus said.

Under the original agreement between the EU and the government in 2003, Sri Lanka was obliged to 'ratify and fully implement' a set of 27 international conventions including the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR).

While most or all of these covenants were ratified by Colombo, far ahead of countries like China or India, it's the implementation that concerns workers. 'Yes we have ratified these covenants but the implementation is the problem,' Marcus said.

Last week, U.S. Ambassador Robert Blake told a meeting of the garment trade, that while Sri Lanka is trying to convince U.S. policy makers to give preferential trade treatment, on the grounds of being a vulnerable economy and on the basis of ethical manufacturing standards, the country's negative human rights image 'eclipsed' everything else.

Sri Lanka 's garment industry is worried RIGHTS- SRI LANKA : War May See EU Duty Concessions Cut

The U.S. is the biggest market for Sri Lanka's garment industry which expects to bring in three billion US dollars this year. © 2008 NoticiasFinancieras - IPS - All rights reserved

Load-Date: April 9, 2008

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Navy rescues 139 more civilians fleeing Mullaitivu

Daily Mirror (Sri Lanka)

March 25, 2009 Wednesday

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Length: 165 words

Dateline: Colombo

Body

Colombo, March 25 -- The Navy rescued another 139 civilians who had fled **LTTE** clutches in the Mullaitivu areas on two occasions on Monday. The first group consisted of 126 persons while the second group consisted of 13 persons, the Navy said.

The first group had been found fleeing in 7 white-flag hoisted dinghies around 10.50 a.m. They consisted of 43 adult males, 43 adult **females** and 40 children. The second group was rescued around 12.50 p.m. while struggling on board two dinghies to save their lives from the **LTTE** cadres who are on the prowl to gun down anyone that dares to escape from their grip. The second group consisted of 8 adult males, 3 adult **females** and 2 children. After the rescue, all were safely brought ashore at Pulmudai and provided with much-needed food, refreshments and medical assistance. The rescued expressed their heart-felt gratitude to the Navy for coming to their rescue, the Navy said. Published by HT Syndication with permission from Daily Mirror Sri Lanka.

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Load-Date: March 26, 2009

Navy rescues 12 fleeing civilians

Daily Mirror (Sri Lanka)

February 24, 2009 Tuesday

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Length: 186 words

Dateline: Colombo

Body

Colombo, Feb. 24 -- Twelve Tamil civilians fleeing from the ***LTTE*** were rescued by the Sri Lanka Navy in the seas off Mullaitivu on Sunday, the Navy said.

The civilians consisting of six male, four ***female*** and two children were on board a fibre glass dinghy fitted with a 15 horse power out board motor (OBM) when they were rescued and brought ashore at the Pulmudai Naval base. After being brought ashore, the escapees were provided with food and refreshments. Those who were found sick and weary were provided with immediate treatment by naval medical personnel. The escapees thanked the naval personnel for saving their lives and expressed their gratefulness to the naval personnel for the benevolent and kind nature in which they were treated. Sri Lanka Navy has made special arrangements to receive innocent Tamil civilians fleeing from the ***LTTE*** clutches. Naval personnel and vessels along with stand-by rescue and medical teams are on special deployment for this humanitarian assistance mission in the North-eastern seas, a Navy statement said. Published by HT Syndication with permission from Daily Mirror Sri Lanka.

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Load-Date: April 1, 2009

Strengthen Drug Law Enforcement

Daily Mirror (Sri Lanka)

June 27, 2008 Friday 1:36 PM EST

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Length: 2538 words

Byline: Report from Daily Mirror brought to you by HT Syndication.

Dateline: Colombo

Body

Colombo, June 27 -- Understandably, terrorism has overtaken the attention of the Law Enforcement Officers in comparison to Drug Law enforcement and crime investigation. However, drug trafficking has its tentacles spread in financing terrorist organisations and other criminal activities. Therefore, Law Enforcement Officers cannot and should not give low priority to drug law enforcement. Analysing the statistics available and the information gathered from the mass and electronic media, one cannot be satisfied that sufficient attention has been given to drug law enforcement.

There is a steady increase in the number of drug dependents addicted to heroin and ganja. At the same time there has been a noticeable decrease in the number of detections made, number of persons arrested and the number of persons prosecuted for drug offences during the past year. This reduction in the detection does not reflect the actual situation if it is to be considered that the availability of drugs has decreased due to drug law enforcement. On the contrary, due to slack drug law enforcement the seizures and detections have dropped.

It is a fact that the drug menace cannot be wiped out completely by drug law enforcement. But by a strong drug law enforcement, reasonable success can be achieved in the reduction in both the demand for, and supply of narcotic drugs.

Heroin

Heroin continues to be the preferred narcotic drug by drug dependents, and almost all of them are using the inhaling method. Mercifully the method of intravenous injection of liquid heroin has not spread or has not been preferred by drug dependents. This method could have led to worse disasters through dependents falling victims of HIV Aids.

The low detection of heroin compared to the previous year, does not project the truth of the actual situation of the availability of heroin. Heroin - the brown sugar type, is being smuggled into this country mainly from India and from Pakistan. Professional smugglers haul in large quantities of heroin through the fishing boats which ply between the sea coast of Sri Lanka and the sea coast of Tamil Nadu. Air passengers, some of them who are paid couriers, regularly bring in heroin in small quantities. The demand is always there and therefore the suppliers too are ever willing and are eager to make a little extra money in spite of the risk of being detected by the customs or the Police.

Ganja

Strengthen Drug Law Enforcement

The raids on ganja cultivations have been undertaken both by the police and the excise department and from statistics and press reports, a large number of cannabis plants have been detected and destroyed. Cannabis or ganja is a second preferred drug by the youths, hardworking labourers and also some influentials. Some of the youths get used to smoking ganja cigarettes as a form of relaxation of mind and body, unaware that they are heading for disaster. It was reported this week that two students of an International School were arrested by the police for smoking ganja cigarettes.

This habit is popular among the upper class students of most of the leading Schools. College functions, Get-togethers, "Big Matches" are the opportunities made use of by them to experiment with the use of ganja.

Synthetic drugs

Children of affluent parents or children who harass parents or steal money and who frequent night clubs and karaoke joints, are used to smoking narcotic drugs such as Amphetamine, Ecstasy etc. These children, both males and **females**, who have got used to clubbing out during weekends and public holidays, are the victims of such use of drugs.

Preventive educational programmes

The Law enforcement authorities have not educated the younger generation sufficiently on the dangers of the consumption of narcotic drugs. Organising seminars and programmes only during Anti-Drugs Day has not been the answer for a sustained and regular campaign of educational programmes to reduce the demand among the younger generation. Law enforcement agencies, the education department and all non-governmental organisations, should jointly draw up a plan and implement it to continuously conduct drug prevention programmes in all leading schools to prevent the younger generation falling victims to drug traffickers. Even to the extent of having a regular period of the subject on the dangers of some kind of drugs and tobacco smoking, could be envisaged, so that the students of higher classes will realise the folly of being lured towards the use of cigarettes and other Narcotic drugs.

Police Narcotics Bureau (PNB)

The Police Narcotics Bureau is the only specialised unit in the police department which deals with all aspects of drug trafficking. In the exclusive legislature dealing with narcotic drugs, the PNB has been recognised as the only enforcement agency which has been empowered with wide legal powers. The (PNB) is the focal point for all international law enforcement agencies and other international agencies who are engaged in drug law enforcement both preventive and enforcement.

Strengthen the PNB

It is disheartening to observe that the (PNB) has not been augmented or strengthened by way of men and materials; instead the strength has been depleted and officers who could be trained and kept in the (PNB) for a considerable period of time because of their experience and knowledge in drug law enforcement which is an essential requirement, are being transferred on and off out of the (PNB). At present, there are only two gazetted officers (ASP and above), the Director and his Assistant serving the (PNB), which is totally inadequate. They are short of men and materials, vehicles, modern equipment, computers etc. This is a specialised unit where selected officers have to be inducted, trained and sustained to undertake preventive educational programmes, as well as engaging in tracking down the financiers and the drug smugglers who are the criminals behind the scene in ensuring steady supply of narcotic drugs, thereby luring more and more victims, who are our future generation. This focal point must be strengthened so that they will service the international agencies engaged in drug law enforcement and bring to book local drug barons.

\x{2003}

Testing the waters for a General Election

Colombo, June 27 -- Without any public indication that the Government was going to hold elections for the seven provincial councils other than the Northern Provincial council and the council in the East for which election was held

Strengthen Drug Law Enforcement

on May 10, the People's Action for Free and Fair Elections (PAFFREL) chairman Kingsley Rodrigo urged that the elections for all provincial councils be held simultaneously.

He must have sensed or got wind of the Government's move to hold elections for the remaining seven provincial councils on a staggered basis.

Given the fact that the Government utilized all powers and privileges vested in the ministers and the members of parliament and provincial councils at the recently concluded Eastern Provincial Council election Rodrigo may have made this extremely reasonable request, but to no avail. Government has announced elections for two provincial councils to be held in August.

The selection of Sabaragamuwa and North Central Provincial Councils to be dissolved and to go for elections was attributed by the authorities to the spontaneous requests of the chief ministers of the two provincial councils. It was said that the Governors of the two provincial councils have dissolved the councils under their purview on the advice of the respective chief ministers, as specified by law.

In fact before that President Mahinda Rajapaksa had summoned the Chief Ministers of North Central Provincial Council and Sabaragamuwa Provincial Council Berty Premalal Dissanayaka and Mahipala Herath and inquired as to whether they can run the councils smoothly since the ruling United People's Freedom Alliance (UPFA) did not have the majority in the councils. They had answered negatively. After the discussion the Governors dissolved the councils.

The very summoning of the two chief ministers indicates that it was not the chief ministers who decided on the dissolution. Although they did not command a majority support in their respective councils no chief minister would have wanted to go for premature elections given the uncertainty of winning a fresh election.

Last time in 2004 the Sri Lanka Freedom Party led People's Alliance headed by the then President Chandrika Kumaratunge contested at the provincial council elections under the new coalition-UPFA with the Janatha Vimukthi Peramuna (JVP). Now that the JVP has fallen apart, most of the chief ministers might be fearing to face the election without the support of the JVP especially given the unprecedented sky rocketing prices of essential items.

Although there is no legal barrier for the Governors of the Provincial councils to dissolve their councils as ruled by the Supreme Court on June 20, there is also no provision for a chief minister, as argued by the UPFA to request dissolution of his council in the face of a lack of majority support for his party in the council. The constitution just specifies that the "Governor may dissolve the council" on the advice of the chief minister so long as the board of ministers commands in the opinion of the Governor, the support of the majority of the provincial council."

That is the reason why the UNP and the JVP contended that without the majority support the chief minister of a provincial council cannot request the dissolution of the council. However what matters most here is the "opinion of the Governor" which cannot be contested under the law.

If the UPFA contends that the two provincial councils were dissolved due to the fact that the ruling party has no majority support in the council, the first step of the chief ministers should have been to resign from the posts and allow the Governor to find a person "who in his opinion, is best able to command the support of a majority of the members of the council." But the stand of the UPFA has been that "either we or nobody" would rule the province.

This reminds us of the crisis following the elections for the seven provincial councils outside the North and the East in 1993 where the then United National Party rulers of the Central Government undemocratically attempted not to hand over the power to the combined larger opposition in the Southern and North Western Provincial Councils.

In both councils the UNP bagged the highest number of seats, but the combined opposition, the SLFP and the Democratic United National Front (DUNF) led by UNP dissident strongmen Lalith Athulathmudali and Gamini Dissanayake commanded the majority support in the councils. After struggling to retain the power in the two councils for some time, the UNP ultimately caved in, and unlike the present scenario UNP Government did not

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advice the Governors to dissolve the councils on the ground that they did not have the majority support in the councils.

The North Central Provincial Council and the Sabaragamuwa Provincial Council are not the only councils where the ruling party does not have the majority support. In fact following the split in the UPFA which comprised the PA and the JVP, ruling parties of many provincial councils lost the majority support.

For instance, the ruling UPFA of the Western Provincial Council lost in the voting last week on a motion against the Government in respect of the current economic situation.

In point of fact, UPFA was a coalition between the PA and the JVP under an agreement and following the breaking away of the JVP after President Chandrika Kumaratunge signed the Post- Tsunami Operational Mechanism Structure (P-TOMS) or the Joint Mechanism meant for the tsunami affected areas in the North and East in June 2005, UPFA was no more in a practical sense.

Government is apparently testing the waters in the face of, on the one hand, unprecedented economic hardships faced by the people and breaching of many promises enunciated in its own Mahinda Chinthanaya and on the other hand, the recent military victories in the East and in the Mannar sector in the North, before the next general election and Presidential election.

Trade and Consumer Affairs Minister Bandula Gunawardene who was the harshest critic of the UPFA's economic policies when he was in the UNP ranks has many times recently admitted that the economic burden on the ordinary people was unbearable and that Government has no remedy.

The counterargument of the leaders of the Government against the scathing attacks by the opposition parties on the soaring prices has always been that the war victories take its toll on the economy. It is incomprehensible as to how the war victories could be gained by expending more public money. And the war has been going on for the past three decades and the security forces have been fighting the separatist rebels throughout the period. Also it was not only this Government that gained victories over the LTTE.

Capturing the Jaffna peninsular towards the end of 1995 was equal or more significant and may be more difficult than the capturing of the East by the same forces last year since the East is inhabited by all three communities- Tamils, Muslims and Sinhalese- unlike the homogeneous Jaffna peninsula and the LTTE's eastern force had broken away during the liberation of the East, from the outfit. However the then Government of Chandrika Kumaratunge did not attribute the war victories to the increased state expenditure.

However government must be appreciated for its admission that the monies paid by the people by way of exorbitant prices end up in the public coffers, a point that is impossible for a common man to comprehend. Government claims that these monies are spent on the war whereas the opposition accuses that they are misappropriated by way of corruption and waste by the leaders of the Government.

It is vital for the Government in this backdrop to test the waters before major elections and also arrange a strategy to encounter them successfully. It seems that the Government has by holding the elections for the two provincial councils taken the first step towards both objectives. The leaders of the UPFA are apparently planning to hold the provincial council election this year on a staggered basis rather than to hold them next year as scheduled according to the constitution.

Their calculation may be that all provincial councils would come under their purview if they are held in a phased manner and full strength of the party and the state apparatus is utilized. And at the second phase, they seem to assume, that they would be able to win a premature General Election, fresh from the provincial victories which would create a public wave towards the victors and pave the way for the UPFA to misuse in turn, all the provincial administrative machinery towards its advantage.

The next General Election will be so vital personally for President Mahinda Rajapaksa since it would serve as a stepping stone for the next Presidential Election in which Rajapaksa is supposed to contest for a second term.

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Therefore Government seems to expect a chain reaction from the two provincial elections to the next Presidential Election.

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Troops recover torpedo

Sunday Observer (Sri Lanka)

March 15, 2009 Sunday

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Body

Colombo, March 15 -- Troops attached to the 53 Division, commanded by Major General Kamal Gunaratne, have recovered an improvised underwater torpedo during their search and clear operations in the cleared areas, Army sources said.

The contraption was recovered along with a body of a **female LTTE** cadre, 14 claymore mines, nine battery chargers, four anti tank mines and 15 kilograms of TNT explosives left behind by the fleeing **LTTE** cadres. Later they discovered another body of a **female** cadre and a mine detector along with a load of T-56 weapons. According to the information received by Sri Lanka Army, troops engaged in the search and clear operations in the areas of Pattikkarai, Puthukudiyiruppu, Visuamadu, Palamodai, Kokavil and Oddusuddan in Vanni have recovered 122 anti personnel mines last Friday. Along with these, troops recovered one 40mm grenade launcher, one Multi Purpose Machine Gun (MPMG) two Light Machine Guns (LMG), one improvised mortar launcher, several T-56 weapons, one I-com set. Published by HT Syndication with permission from Sunday Observer (Sri Lanka).

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