

Date and Time: Saturday, May 4, 2024 2:35:00PM EEST

Job Number: 223508274

Documents (100)

1. [*Boot Tigers, but migrants deserve a hearing*](#)

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: Mar 31, 2009 to Nov 30, 2009

2. [*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: Mar 31, 2009 to Nov 30, 2009

3. [*AFPTV Updated Advisory*](#)

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: Mar 31, 2009 to Nov 30, 2009

4. [*Tiger chief ruled as a virtual dictator over a shadow Tamil state*](#)

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: Mar 31, 2009 to Nov 30, 2009

5. [*world in brief*](#)

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: Mar 31, 2009 to Nov 30, 2009

6. [*Profile of rebel leader Velupillai Prabhakaran*](#)

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: Mar 31, 2009 to Nov 30, 2009

7. [*AFP 1000 News Advisory*](#)

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: Mar 31, 2009 to Nov 30, 2009

8. [*The 1530 News Advisory*](#)

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: Mar 31, 2009 to Nov 30, 2009

9. [*Barr's schools strategy adds 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: Mar 31, 2009 to Nov 30, 2009

10. [*Profile of rebel leader Velupillai Prabhakaran*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type

News

Narrowed byPublication Type: Newspapers,Newswires & Press
Releases; Timeline: Mar 31, 2009 to Nov 30, 200911. [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 byPublication Type: Newspapers,Newswires & Press
Releases; Timeline: Mar 31, 2009 to Nov 30, 200912. [Refugees in nine-day voyage of despair to escape Tamil battles Sri Lanka](#)**Client/Matter:** -None-**Search Terms:** "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE**Search Type:** Terms and Connectors**Narrowed by:****Content Type**

News

Narrowed byPublication Type: Newspapers,Newswires & Press
Releases; Timeline: Mar 31, 2009 to Nov 30, 200913. [PRESS CONFERENCE BY REPRESENTATIVE OF UNITED NATIONS HIGH COMMISSIONER FOR REFUGEES IN SRI LANKA](#)**Client/Matter:** -None-**Search Terms:** "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE**Search Type:** Terms and Connectors**Narrowed by:****Content Type**

News

Narrowed byPublication Type: Newspapers,Newswires & Press
Releases; Timeline: Mar 31, 2009 to Nov 30, 200914. [Monster meets his Waterloo](#)**Client/Matter:** -None-**Search Terms:** "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE**Search Type:** Terms and Connectors**Narrowed by:****Content Type**

News

Narrowed byPublication Type: Newspapers,Newswires & Press
Releases; Timeline: Mar 31, 2009 to Nov 30, 200915. [Christian Leader Says India Election Results are a Vote Against Extremism](#)**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

16. [Profile of rebel leader Velupillai Prabhakaran](#)

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: Mar 31, 2009 to Nov 30, 2009

17. [WESTMINSTER TAMIL DEMO BRINGS RUSH-HOUR CHAOS](#)

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: Mar 31, 2009 to Nov 30, 2009

18. [AFPTV Advisory](#)

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: Mar 31, 2009 to Nov 30, 2009

19. [The 0530 GMT News Advisory](#)

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: Mar 31, 2009 to Nov 30, 2009

20. [The 1530 GMT News Advisory](#)

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: Mar 31, 2009 to Nov 30, 2009

21. [DIGEST - WORLD](#)

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: Mar 31, 2009 to Nov 30, 2009

22. [Karuna calls for bandh, Jaya calls it a drama](#)

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: Mar 31, 2009 to Nov 30, 2009

23. [ACTING DEPARTMENT SPOKESMAN DAILY PRESS BRIEFING APRIL 24, 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,Newsires & Press
Releases; Timeline: Mar 31, 2009 to Nov 30, 2009

24. [Xinhua Asia-Pacific news summary at 1600 GMT, June 18](#)

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: Mar 31, 2009 to Nov 30, 2009

25. [Xinhua Asia-Pacific news summary at 1600 GMT, June 18](#)

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: Mar 31, 2009 to Nov 30, 2009

26. [Be vigilant against conspirators - PM](#)

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: Mar 31, 2009 to Nov 30, 2009

27. [Indian MPs head to Sri Lanka to study Tamil relief camps](#)

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: Mar 31, 2009 to Nov 30, 2009

28. [Red Cross : Sri Lankans in 'catastrophic' situation](#)

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: Mar 31, 2009 to Nov 30, 2009

29. [Red Cross : Sri Lankans in 'catastrophic' situation](#)

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: Mar 31, 2009 to Nov 30, 2009

30. [Change we must believe in](#)

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: Mar 31, 2009 to Nov 30, 2009

31. [Red Cross : Sri Lankans in 'catastrophic' situation](#)

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: Mar 31, 2009 to Nov 30, 2009

32. [Sri Lankan prez: War to be finished in 48 hours](#)

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: Mar 31, 2009 to Nov 30, 2009

33. [Lanka slams Hillary for accusing SL of using rape as war weapon](#)

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: Mar 31, 2009 to Nov 30, 2009

34. [LETTERS TO THE EDITOR](#)

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: Mar 31, 2009 to Nov 30, 2009

35. [Asylum-seekers threaten to torch boat in Indonesia : navy](#)

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: Mar 31, 2009 to Nov 30, 2009

36. [SRI LANKA : HOPES HIGH FOR CHANGE WITH UPCOMING ELECTIONS](#)

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: Mar 31, 2009 to Nov 30, 2009

37. [Housing projects for war heroes](#)

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: Mar 31, 2009 to Nov 30, 2009

38. [Truth Must Prevail , Peninsula says](#)

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: Mar 31, 2009 to Nov 30, 2009

39. [Houses for police terrorist victims](#)

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: Mar 31, 2009 to Nov 30, 2009

40. [I hope Pak shows courage: PM](#)

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: Mar 31, 2009 to Nov 30, 2009

41. [LETS DEFEAT DRUGS AND TOBACCO MENACE: PRESIDENT](#)

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: Mar 31, 2009 to Nov 30, 2009

42. [*Regime change: there's a right way and a wrong way*](#)

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: Mar 31, 2009 to Nov 30, 2009

43. [*Cries of US and its allies*](#)

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: Mar 31, 2009 to Nov 30, 2009

44. [*RAW - A Craving Crow*](#)

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: Mar 31, 2009 to Nov 30, 2009

45. [*THE Week THAT Was*](#)

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: Mar 31, 2009 to Nov 30, 2009

46. [*My job: Kiwi with a passion for fashion*](#)

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: Mar 31, 2009 to Nov 30, 2009

47. [*'Everything is lost': victims tell of misery as UN barred from Tamil refugee camps 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: Mar 31, 2009 to Nov 30, 2009

48. [AFP 0700 GMT News Advisory](#)

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: Mar 31, 2009 to Nov 30, 2009

49. [AFP 0700 News Advisory](#)

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: Mar 31, 2009 to Nov 30, 2009

50. [50 die in attack on Sri Lanka war zone 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: Mar 31, 2009 to Nov 30, 2009

51. [Truce hope as Tigers defeated](#)

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: Mar 31, 2009 to Nov 30, 2009

52. [50 die in attack on Sri Lanka war zone 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: Mar 31, 2009 to Nov 30, 2009

53. [*'Everything is lost': victims tell of misery as UN barred from Tamil refugee camps 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: Mar 31, 2009 to Nov 30, 2009

54. [*Tamil Tiger rebels confirm leader's death*](#)

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: Mar 31, 2009 to Nov 30, 2009

55. [*Highlights of the AAP world wire at 08:00 May 25*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

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Publication Type: Newspapers, Newswires & Press
Releases; Timeline: Mar 31, 2009 to Nov 30, 2009

56. [*Lack of will*](#)

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: Mar 31, 2009 to Nov 30, 2009

57. [*Displaced increasingly returning home from camps - UN*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type

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News

Publication Type: Newspapers,Newswires & Press
Releases; Timeline: Mar 31, 2009 to Nov 30, 2009

58. [Wanted: speech writers for State Department](#)

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: Mar 31, 2009 to Nov 30, 2009

59. [UN Secy. Gen. endorses President's stance](#)

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: Mar 31, 2009 to Nov 30, 2009

60. [No Headline In Original](#)

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: Mar 31, 2009 to Nov 30, 2009

61. [Nalini goes on hunger strike after jail staff ' maltreat' her](#)

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: Mar 31, 2009 to Nov 30, 2009

62. [Complete politician](#)

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: Mar 31, 2009 to Nov 30, 2009

63. [RAW - a terrorist organization](#)

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: Mar 31, 2009 to Nov 30, 2009

64. [France to help promote Sri Lanka tourism](#)

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: Mar 31, 2009 to Nov 30, 2009

65. [SCOPP functions to be delegated](#)

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: Mar 31, 2009 to Nov 30, 2009

66. [50 die in attack on Sri Lanka war zone 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: Mar 31, 2009 to Nov 30, 2009

67. [AFP 1400 GMT News Advisory](#)

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: Mar 31, 2009 to Nov 30, 2009

68. [UNHCR: Victim of the agenda of private individuals?](#)

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: Mar 31, 2009 to Nov 30, 2009

69. [UPI NewsTrack TopNews](#)

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: Mar 31, 2009 to Nov 30, 2009

70. [Inside Sri Lanka 's devastated battleground](#)

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: Mar 31, 2009 to Nov 30, 2009

71. [Column: Heavy concessions needed for permanent peace 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: Mar 31, 2009 to Nov 30, 2009

72. [Sri Lankan refugees traumatised after nine-day ordeal at sea](#)

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: Mar 31, 2009 to Nov 30, 2009

73. [Last gasp for Tiger rebels in Sri Lanka ; 190,000 civilians in crossfire](#)

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: Mar 31, 2009 to Nov 30, 2009

74. [INTERVIEW - SKY TV - NEWS HOUR](#)

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: Mar 31, 2009 to Nov 30, 2009

75. [Terrorists attack two villages in Trinco](#)

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: Mar 31, 2009 to Nov 30, 2009

76. [Human deluge](#)

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: Mar 31, 2009 to Nov 30, 2009

77. [RELIGIOUS LEADERS APPEAL TO PRESIDENT RAJAPAKSA](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

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News

Narrowed by

Publication Type: Newspapers,Newswires & Press
Releases; Timeline: Mar 31, 2009 to Nov 30, 2009

78. [Challenges in building a Sri Lankan brand](#)

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: Mar 31, 2009 to Nov 30, 2009

79. [MAN CLEARED OF TAMIL TIGER TERROR CHARGE](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

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News

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Publication Type: Newspapers,Newswires & Press
Releases; Timeline: Mar 31, 2009 to Nov 30, 2009

80. [MAN CLEARED OF TAMIL TIGER TERROR CHARGE](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

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News

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Publication Type: Newspapers,Newswires & Press
Releases; Timeline: Mar 31, 2009 to Nov 30, 2009

81. [Tamil Tiger rebels cornered in 'no-fire' zone Tens of thousands of civilians trapped as final act in 25-year Sri Lanka war appears ready to play out](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

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News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers,Newswires & Press
Releases; Timeline: Mar 31, 2009 to Nov 30, 2009

82. [ELECTION FREE FOR ALL TWO LAST NEW DELHI](#)

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: Mar 31, 2009 to Nov 30, 2009

83. [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: Mar 31, 2009 to Nov 30, 2009

84. [*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,Newsires & Press
Releases; Timeline: Mar 31, 2009 to Nov 30, 2009

85. [*Outrage reserved for Israel*](#)

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: Mar 31, 2009 to Nov 30, 2009

86. [*50 die in attack on Sri Lanka war zone 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: Mar 31, 2009 to Nov 30, 2009

87. [*HUMAN RIGHTS COUNCIL OPENS ELEVENTH SPECIAL SESSION ON SITUATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS 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: Mar 31, 2009 to Nov 30, 2009

88. [*SRI LANKA : CONFLICT OPENED A SPACE FOR WOMEN TO HAVE RIGHTS*](#)

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: Mar 31, 2009 to Nov 30, 2009

89. [*The attempted resolution against 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: Mar 31, 2009 to Nov 30, 2009

90. [*SRI LANKA : ANTI-MEASLES DRIVE TARGETS 36,000 IDP CHILDREN*](#)

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: Mar 31, 2009 to Nov 30, 2009

91. [*Police clash with Tamil protestors in 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: Mar 31, 2009 to Nov 30, 2009

92. [*Xinhua Asia-Pacific news summary at 1600 GMT, April 10*](#)

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: Mar 31, 2009 to Nov 30, 2009

93. [*Sri Lanka wants UN rights council to praise its efforts =*](#)

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: Mar 31, 2009 to Nov 30, 2009

94. [*'We'd rather die than go ashore here'*](#)

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: Mar 31, 2009 to Nov 30, 2009

95. [*Thousands die in Tamil 'welfare village'*](#)

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: Mar 31, 2009 to Nov 30, 2009

96. [*Sri Lanka 's camp of death ' Welfare village' toll reaches about 1,400 every week Weekly death toll rises to 1,400 in Tamil 'welfare camp'*](#)

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: Mar 31, 2009 to Nov 30, 2009

97. [*Christian charity surpass all man-made barriers - Archbishop Gomis*](#)

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: Mar 31, 2009 to Nov 30, 2009

98. [*INDEX:Entertainment*](#)

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: Mar 31, 2009 to Nov 30, 2009

99. [*Xinhua Asia-Pacific news summary at 1600 GMT, April 10*](#)

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: Mar 31, 2009 to Nov 30, 2009

100. [*400 Lankan asylum seekers reached Australia in 12 months*](#)

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: Mar 31, 2009 to Nov 30, 2009

Boot Tigers, but migrants deserve a hearing

Times Colonist (Victoria, British Columbia)

October 27, 2009 Tuesday

Final Edition

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Section: COMMENT; Pg. A12; Lorne Gunter

Length: 746 words

Byline: Lorne Gunter, Times Colonist

Body

It would be easy to say that the 76 Tamils who showed up in a cargo ship off Vancouver Island last week should be turned around and told to sail at full steam back to wherever they came from. After all, they all arrived either with forged passports or no passports at all.

That's dodgy enough, but given that many Tamils support the murderous **Tamil Tigers** separatist group, it is likely some of these would-be refugees are terrorists themselves, perhaps even looking for a safe haven from which to rebuild their shattered organization. Indeed, there is an outstanding Sri Lankan warrant in effect for at least one of the men, Kartheepan Manickavasagar, who is suspected of being a Tiger.

Under Canadian law it is illegal to belong to the Tigers or any of their fundraising front organizations.

The Tigers -- officially the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam -- were one of the most ruthless militant groups in the world, until, after more than 25 years of civil war, the Sri Lankan army brutally put down their insurrection earlier this year.

The Tigers perfected suicide bombing. They have used it far more times -- almost 500 -- than any other insurgents in the world. The civil war they conducted against the Sri Lankan government cost 70,000 lives, many of them innocent civilians on both sides.

Still, there is a lot of credibility to claims by Tamils that they are mistreated in Sri Lanka, even fearful for their lives. They cannot go back or the Colombo government might arrest and abuse them.

While the Tigers deserve no sympathy or sanctuary, the same is not true of ordinary Tamils.

During British rule, when the island nation was known as Ceylon, Tamils held most senior positions in commerce, the professions and the bureaucracy. This was partly the result of their greater willingness than their Sinhalese countrymen to accept British institutions and partly because of British unwillingness to integrate Buddhists into the upper echelons of society and government.

After independence in 1948, however, Sinhalese majority governments implemented a form of reverse discrimination known as the "policy of standardization." Sinhalese was declared the sole official language. Hundreds of thousands of Tamils were disenfranchised. Businesses were seized from their private owners -- mostly

Boot Tigers, but migrants deserve a hearing

Tamils -- and placed under the control of mostly Sinhalese bureaucrats. Government jobs and contracts were given almost exclusively to those in the ethnic majority.

This culminated in what became known as "Black July" in 1983. After a band of Tigers ambushed a Sri Lankan army convoy, Sinhalese mobs rampaged through the streets of the country's major cities. They went door to door looking for Tamils (who are predominately Hindu) and either bludgeoned them to death with clubs or placed gasoline-soaked tires around their necks and lit them so the victims would be burned alive.

Most of the victims were civilians. Many were women and children.

If I were a Tamil, I too would harbour a great deal of resentment against the Sinhalese-dominated central government. Before the Tigers took over the cause, Tamil legislators proposed many peaceful solutions.

All their ideas were rejected. The Sinhalese reasoned that they needn't compromise because they controlled all the levers of power.

The problem with the Tigers is that far from being mere freedom fighters, they became a criminal organization preying on their own people as often as not.

For instance, Tamils in the diaspora -- hundreds of thousands of whom were rightly welcomed to Canada following Black July to shelter them -- were threatened with death if they did not make substantial monthly contributions to the Tiger war effort.

Following the Boxing Day tsunami in 2004, Tiger soldiers swept through refugee camps and orphanages forcing hundreds of children to fight the Sri Lankan army and carry out suicide missions against civilian targets.

The Sri Lankan government has been far from angelic itself, kidnapping, torturing and killing Tamils against whom mere rumours of Tiger sympathy have been made. Last spring's final offensive against the Tigers caught hundreds of innocents in the crosshairs.

The Tamils floating off Vancouver Island cannot be dismissed en masse. Many might have legitimate refugee claims. Many might need Canada's protection. Being returned to Sri Lanka might be a death sentence.

But Ottawa must be equally certain not to admit any Tigers. We don't need them bringing their violence and corruption to our shores.

Load-Date: October 27, 2009

News items from Asia-Pacific Desk of Xinhua

Xinhua General News Service
August 7, 2009 Friday 1:15 AM EST

Copyright 2009 Xinhua News Agency

Section: WORLD NEWS; Political

Length: 818 words

Dateline: HONG KONG Aug. 7

Body

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

Three injured in New Zealand shooting

Dollar at mid-95 yen in Tokyo

Nikkei opens 0.23 pct lower

Major news items in leading Philippine newspapers

Major news items in leading Japanese newspapers

Islanders' concern over climate change is worrisome: Australian PM

29 foreign warships to participate in Indonesia's marine activities

Major news items in leading New Zealand newspapers

Deeper integration in ASEAN promotes growth

Gold price opens lower in Hong Kong -- Aug. 7

Indonesian prominent poet dies at 74

Major news items in leading Sri Lankan newspapers

ADB takes commitment fee on loans to Indonesia

Foreign exchange rates in Thailand

Roundup: More than 60 people still missing in Tonga ferry sinking accident

Japan's foreign reserves rise to 1,022 bln USD in July

8 passengers killed, 23 injured in head-on trucks collision in Myanmar

Cambodian sees illegal fishing drop in Tonle Sap

News items from Asia-Pacific Desk of Xinhua

Hong Kong stocks open 0.87 pct lower -- Aug. 7

Nikkei down 1 pct in morning trading

Foreign exchange rates in Nepal

Influenza cases increase to 15 in Myanmar

Major news items in leading Nepali newspapers

S. Korea, India sign bilateral trade pact

Major news items in leading Vietnamese newspapers

Major news items in leading Thai newspapers

More Cambodian workers go abroad in first six months this year

Major news items in leading Singapore's newspapers

Major news items in leading Pakistani newspapers

EC's 500-mln-Euro financial instrument welcomed by Pacific states

News Analysis: Lay-judge trials bring dramatic changes to Japan's legal system

Vietnam's A/H1N1 flu cases rise to 1,043

Pakistan Taliban chief likely killed: minister

Major news items in leading Indian newspapers

2 suspected bombers arrested in Nepali capital

Fiji PM says willing to have dialogue with PIF

2 Canadians, Filipino killed in flood in N. Philippines

Foreign exchange rates in Cambodia

Dollar at lower 95 yen in Tokyo

Hong Kong stocks widen losses at midday -- Aug. 7

Indian stocks open lower

Philippine stocks close 2.05 pct lower

Australia, New Zealand to aid Tonga after ferry disaster

Urgent: Tribal sources confirm death of Pakistan Taliban chief: TV

Vietnam to invest 2.3 bln USD on vocational training

Roundup: Tonga's sunken ferry seaworthy: PM

Sri Lanka arrests new leader of **Tamil Tigers**

Vietnam's overseas investment reaches 1.6 bln USD in first seven months

News items from Asia-Pacific Desk of Xinhua

Japanese police seek to arrest missing actress Sakai

New leader of the Tamil Tiger not arrested in Bangkok: Thai gov't

Indonesian police nab hotel cook linked to bomb attacks

Vietnam targets to produce 1.7-2.16 mln tons of vegetable oil by 2020

Australia takes new measures to tackle organized crime

Landslide kills at least 3 in N. Philippines

1st LD Writethru: Tribal sources confirm death of Pakistani Taliban chief: TV

Vietnamese people urged to use more local products

Cambodia records 24 flu A/H1N1 cases

Foreign exchange rates in Philippines

Indonesian gov't seeks for 250 mln USD dividend addition

Xinhua Asia-Pacific news summary at 0600 GMT, Aug. 7

Poll shows Australians oppose Tasmanian pulp mill

Nikkei closes 0.23 pct higher

New Zealand sharemarket closes 0.42 percent higher

Foreign exchange rates in New Zealand

Foreign exchange rates in Laos

Australian PM plans to visit India

Foreign exchange rates in Vietnam

Pakistan's KSE hops on IMF hopes

Vietnam stock market index ends down

Thai co-pilot injured in plane improving in condition

Foreign exchange rates in Indonesia

Indonesia's economic growth to slow in 2nd quarter: central bank

Roundup: Tokyo stocks close mixed ahead of key U.S. jobs data

Australia's food labeling policy risks jobs: opposition

Urgent: Intelligence sources confirm death of Pakistani Taliban chief: FM

Hong Kong stocks close 2.51 pct lower -- Aug. 7

1st LD: Intelligence sources confirm death of Pakistani Taliban chief: FM

Laos' economy grows 7.1 pct in first half

News items from Asia-Pacific Desk of Xinhua

Insurgents kill 1 at police checkpoint in N. Afghanistan

Indian foreign exchange rates

Germany helps Laos in rural development

2nd LD Writethru: Intelligence sources confirm death of Pakistani Taliban chief: FM

Malaysia to filter porn from internet

HSBC praises Indonesia's plan to issue Islamic bonds

Protesters oppose expansion of uranium mine in South Australia

Indonesia's first lady stresses women's role in creative economy

Thai RSS3 rubber price

Two constructions for HK's Bridge project to complete in 2015- 2016

Load-Date: August 9, 2009

End of Document

AFPTV Updated Advisory

Agence France Presse -- English

April 24, 2009 Friday 5:47 PM GMT

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Length: 774 words

Dateline: PARIS, April 24 2009

Body

We have filed the following videos:

Taliban control Pakistani district near capital

BUNER, Pakistan

International powers watched with concern as the Taliban advanced this week on a district close to the capital Islamabad. The Islamic militants moved into the northwest district of Buner from their stronghold in the neighbouring Swat valley this week, and were patrolling the streets of main town, but on Friday said they would withdraw by the evening. Images of armed Taliban hardliners on the streets of Buner and interviews from locals.

NEWS

1. Images and soundbites

RAW - VID79728

WEB - MMV79729

UN: 50,000 civilians trapped in Sri Lanka conflict

UNDISCLOSED LOCATION, Sri Lanka

As Sri Lanka's army pursues a final offensive to crush the **Tamil Tigers**' decades-long insurgency, the United Nations has warned that 50,000 civilians are still trapped in the crossfire, stranded in the narrow strip of jungle still held by the rebels. Images of wounded civilians in the rebel-held area, released by the Tamil Rehabilitation Organisation, an NGO considered linked to the Tigers.

NEWS

1. Images

RAW - VID79735

AFPTV Updated Advisory

2. Voiced report - New offer

NSV - VID79785

BROADCAST-READY - VID79786

WEB - MMV79736

South Africa's Zuma 'smells victory'

JOHANNESBURG

South Africa's ruling party leader Jacob Zuma says he can smell victory in general elections, addressing 2,000 cheering supporters at the African National Congress party headquarters in Johannesburg. The ANC was hovering around the two-thirds mark in initial poll returns in a vote expected to launch Mr. Zuma into the presidency.

NEWS

Images and soundbites

RAW - VID79703

WEB - MMV79704

We have also recently filed the following related report:

Zuma, controversial leader, in spotlight

JOHANNESBURG

As the results from South Africa's elections keep pouring in, the ruling party the African National Congress is expected to keep its sweeping majority -- led by its charismatic but controversial figure of Jacob Zuma.

NEWS

Voiced report

NSV - VID79606

BROADCAST-READY - VID79633

WEB - MMV76607

Friday, May 1, marks the fifth anniversary of the enlargement of the European Union, when 10 mostly Eastern European nation joined the bloc. We begin a series of related reports with the following:

For Poles, EU membership still a plus

WARSAW

Nearly five years after their arrival in the European Union, Poles are still finding much to celebrate. On the whole, subsidies from Brussels have helped drive their economic growth, while the 27-nation bloc has provided fertile ground for employment.

SPECIAL REPORT/ECONOMY

Voiced report

NSV - VID79693

BROADCAST-READY - VID79694

WEB - MMV79695

Hong Kong architect makes shoebox apartment a 'palace'

HONG KONG

In the densely populated city of Hong Kong, space is at a premium and one architect has found an ingenious way to expand his cramped apartment into a multi-roomed "palace." For many other residents, however, life in the metropolis is far less cosy.

CULTURE & LIFESTYLE

Voiced report

NSV - VID79454

BROADCAST-READY - VID79455

WEB - MMV79629 - Please note new number

India's missing children, a growing problem

NEW DELHI

Parents in India's sprawling capital, New Delhi, are becoming increasingly alarmed by the disappearance of thousands of children over the past year. While authorities have dismissed allegations that organised trafficking rings are responsible, parents fear their children are being sold into prostitution and forced labour.

SPECIAL REPORT

Voiced report

NSV - VID79742

BROADCAST-READY - VID79743

WEB - MMV79744

Iraq's illiterate hit the books

BAGHDAD

First repression, then war, have kept some Iraqi women from learning how to read. A new programme financed by the United States is changing that, based on the belief that education will empower poor women and keep them from joining radical groups.

SPECIAL REPORT

Voiced report

NSV - VID79739

BROADCAST-READY - VID79740

WEB - MMV79741

Smoky debate over Jacques Tati's missing pipe

PARIS

The agency overseeing advertising in the Paris Metro created a stir last week when it doctored a poster of cult film director Jacques Tati to take out his signature tobacco pipe. The agency says it was merely respecting France's anti-smoking laws but fans of the comic and exuberant Tati say it amounts to no less than censorship.

CULTURE & LIFESTYLE

Voiced report NSV - VID79412

BROADCAST READY - VID79415

WEB - MMV79416

Russians ring in 'Bell Week'

MOSCOW

It's 'Bell Week' in Russia which means that churches throughout the land will put on bell-ringing concerts. A look inside Moscow's campanology school.

CULTURE & LIFESTYLE

Voiced report

NSV - VID79676

BROADCAST-READY - VID797677

WEB - MMV79746

Contact:

Michelle Hoffman: +33 1 4041 4862

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Load-Date: April 25, 2009

Tiger chief ruled as a virtual dictator over a shadow Tamil state

The Canadian Press(CP)

May 18, 2009 Monday

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Section: FOREIGN GENERAL NEWS

Length: 720 words

Byline: RAVI NESSMAN, AP

Body

COLOMBO, Sri Lanka _ Velupillai Prabhakaran transformed a small band of poorly armed rebels into one of the world's most sophisticated and ruthless insurgencies and then made a string of miscalculations that led his **Tamil Tigers** to total defeat at the hands of the Sri Lankan military.

Sri Lanka announced Monday that it had finished off the last of the rebels in the northern war zone and killed Prabhakaran, 54, and his top deputies.

To his followers, Prabhakaran was the steadfast heart of the battle to establish a breakaway state for Sri Lanka's ethnic Tamil minority. But his many detractors saw him as the brutal ruler of a suicide cult who repeatedly sabotaged peace deals in his pursuit of power.

Over more than a quarter century of civil war, Prabhakaran's Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam perfected the art of suicide bombings, assassinated top politicians including former Indian prime minister Rajiv Gandhi, and fought the Sri Lankan government to a near-standstill.

At the height of his power, the portly rebel leader with the bushy moustache and trusty Browning pistol ruled as a virtual dictator over a shadow state of hundreds of thousands of people across a swath of northern Sri Lanka that had its own flag, police force and court system.

His guerrilla force was armed with heavy artillery, a rudimentary air wing that once bombed Colombo's international airport and a squad of suicide attackers. Its navy consisted of small attack craft, suicide boats laden with explosives, crude submarines and huge smuggling ships that plied the deep seas of the Indian Ocean.

The rebels reportedly earned as much as \$300 million US a year from their arms and drug smuggling, a network of fake charities and donations from Tamil expatriates.

But Prabhakaran was also a shadowy figure who rarely appeared in public, preferring to communicate in a sort of state of the nation radio address he delivered every November.

Tamil Tiger fighters, some of them forcibly recruited by the group when they were children, saw Prabhakaran as their unquestioned leader. He ordered them to abstain from sex, cut personal ties and carry glass vials of cyanide on necklaces, so they could kill themselves upon capture.

"He is their brain. He is their heart. He is their god. He is their soul. And the whole organization runs around him," said Indian journalist M.R. Narayan Swamy, who wrote a biography of the rebel leader.

Tiger chief ruled as a virtual dictator over a shadow Tamil state

Prabhakaran orchestrated surprise attacks on Sri Lankan bases that killed hundreds of Sri Lankan troops and retaliated against government offensives with devastating counterattacks.

The group's penchant for suicide attacks _ including the 1998 bombing of the Temple of the Tooth, Sri Lanka's holiest Buddhist shrine _ led several countries to outlaw it as a terror organization. The group also assassinated several Sri Lankan politicians, including former president Ranasinghe Premadasa.

Though Prabhakaran was sometimes hailed as a master strategist, he also made a series of misjudgments over the years that eventually led to his downfall.

He alienated his strongest allies in India by sending a ***female*** suicide bomber to kill Gandhi in 1991, apparent retaliation for sending an Indian peacekeeping mission here that turned sour.

During negotiations that followed a 2002 ceasefire, he rejected a deal that would have given the rebels broad autonomy over the north and east but not full independence, according to a diplomat with knowledge of the offer. It was widely seen as the best deal he could ever get.

Prabhakaran said he could not accept anything less than a separate Tamil state, dubbed Eelam. "Thousands of my boys have laid down their lives for Eelam," he told Indian journalist Anita Pratap in 1990. "Their death cannot be in vain."

In 2004, a top commander known as Col. Karuna ran afoul of the Tiger leadership and split from the group with thousands of his fighters.

Prabhakaran then called a Tamil boycott of the 2005 presidential election, which helped propel the hardline Mahinda Rajapaksa to victory. After new peace talks failed, the rebels cut off the water supply to more than 60,000 people in eastern Sri Lanka, provoking an unrelenting government offensive that drove the group out of the east, captured their administrative capital of Kilinochchi and eventually destroyed them on the battlefield.

Load-Date: May 19, 2009

world in brief

Sunday Herald Sun (Australia)

April 26, 2009 Sunday

1 - FIRST Edition

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Section: NEWS; Pg. 34

Length: 695 words

Body

Tamil Tigers warn of famine

TAMIL Tiger rebels in Sri Lanka say 165,000 civilians still living in the small area under their control are almost out of food, comparing the situation with the crisis in Darfur.

The Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam said the starvation of innocent people was "imminent" because the Sri Lankan Government was blocking supplies.

The Tigers, facing defeat after almost four decades of fighting, said the military had blocked land routes leading to the rebel areas, leaving sea transport the only option to deliver food and medicine.

It is not clear how many people are trapped in the small rebel-held area, with the UN putting the number at 50,000 and the Government at 15,000-20,000.

The Tigers said they welcomed a visit to Sri Lanka during the week of UN rights chief John Holmes.

"We are prepared to address the humanitarian crisis," the rebels said.

AFP

Pirate hostage expected to die

FORMER hostage Richard Phillips thought he might never escape the lifeboat where Somali pirates held him after an aborted hijacking attempt.

In the American's first interview, he said at times he was resigned to dying during his five-day Indian Ocean ordeal, which ended on April 12 when US Navy SEALs on the USS Bainbridge shot his three captors.

Phillips, 53, said he discussed escaping in front of the pirates, whom he described as "a little lax in their control on some things".

"I did have radio contact with the Maersk Alabama, and I told them if you see a splash in the water. . . I'm coming," he said.

Phillips said his escape attempt made the atmosphere in the lifeboat worse.

Phillips also reiterated his praise for the US Navy.

AP

Flood danger for New Orleans

NEW levees being built after Hurricane Katrina devastated New Orleans are not strong enough and a breach could allow catastrophic flooding, according to a new report.

The city should strengthen levees, elevate more houses and abandon neighbourhoods below sea level.

The National Academy of Engineering and the National Research Council report also says the \$19.6 billion levees and floodgates under construction are not being built to a high enough flood protection standard.

The Army Corps of Engineers is raising levees and building floodgates able to withstand a ``100-year" storm, or a moderately dangerous hurricane.

``For heavily-populated urban areas, where the failure of protective structures would be catastrophic -- such as New Orleans -- this standard is inadequate," the report says.

Instead, New Orleans should be protected by a ``500-year or maybe 1000-year protection".

AP

Two charged over grisly finds

BRITISH police say they have charged two people with the murder of a man whose body parts were found scattered around the English countryside.

Hertfordshire police said a man and a woman were charged during the week with killing 49-year-old Jeffrey Howe.

Authorities did not reveal a possible motive.

The victim's legs, arms and head were found by police hidden near roads and in fields in the English counties of Hertfordshire and Leicestershire in recent weeks.

Police first launched a murder inquiry after a left leg and foot were found by the side of a road on March 22.

Stephen Thomas Marshall, 37, and Sarah Bush, 20, appeared before Stevenage Magistrates Court in Hertfordshire on murder charges during the week.

AP

Teen mum tried to sell her baby

A MOTHER is in a US jail, accused of trying to sell her five-month-old son for \$14,000 to get money for a new apartment.

Rebecca Sue Taylor, 19, allegedly offered to sell her baby to another woman after saying she was unable to bond with the infant and needed money for a new apartment, according to a criminal complaint filed in Kanawha County Magistrate Court.

Police said Taylor later cut the asking price to \$7000 when the women had been talking about Taylor serving as a possible surrogate mother.

Sgt El Hodges, of Charleston Police, said the woman reported the offer to authorities on April 19 and Taylor was arrested three days later.

world in brief

Sgt Hodges said the child was in state custody and he did not know anything about the baby's father.

He said the two women were acquaintances, but he did not know the extent of their relationship.

Load-Date: April 25, 2009

End of Document

Profile of rebel leader Velupillai Prabhakaran

Colombo Times

May 18, 2009 Monday

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Length: 738 words

Body

Colombo, May 18 -- Velupillai Prabhakaran transformed a small band of poorly armed rebels into one of the world's most sophisticated and ruthless insurgencies and then made a string of miscalculations that led his **Tamil Tigers** to total defeat at the hands of the Sri Lankan military.

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To his followers, Prabhakaran was the steadfast heart of the battle to establish a breakaway state for Sri Lanka's ethnic Tamil minority. But his many detractors saw him as the brutal ruler of a suicide cult who repeatedly sabotaged peace deals in his pursuit of power.

Over more than a quarter century of civil war, Prabhakaran's Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam perfected the art of suicide bombings, assassinated top politicians including former Indian Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi, and fought the Sri Lankan government to a near-standstill.

At the height of his power, the portly rebel leader with the bushy mustache and trusty Browning pistol ruled as a virtual dictator over a shadow state of hundreds of thousands of people across a swath of northern Sri Lanka that had its own flag, police force and court system.

His guerrilla force was armed with heavy artillery, a rudimentary air wing that once bombed Colombo's international airport and a squad of suicide attackers. Its navy consisted of small attack craft, suicide boats laden with explosives, crude submarines and huge smuggling ships that plied the deep seas of the Indian Ocean.

The rebels reportedly earned as much as \$300 million a year from their arms and drug smuggling, a network of fake charities and donations from Tamil expatriates.

But Prabhakaran was also a shadowy figure who rarely appeared in public, preferring to communicate in a sort of state of the nation radio address he delivered every November.

Tamil Tiger troops, some of them forcibly recruited by the group when they were children, saw Prabhakaran as their unquestioned leader. He ordered them to abstain from sex, cut personal ties and carry glass vials of cyanide on a necklace so they could kill themselves upon capture.

"He is their brain. He is their heart. He is their god. He is their soul. And the whole organization runs around him," said Indian journalist M.R. Narayan Swamy, who wrote a biography of the rebel leader.

The rebel leader orchestrated surprise attacks on Sri Lankan bases that killed hundreds of Sri Lankan troops and retaliated against government offensives with devastating counterattacks.

The group's penchant for suicide attacks - including the 1998 bombing of the Temple of the Tooth, Sri Lanka's holiest Buddhist shrine - led the United States, European Union and India to outlaw it as a terror organization. The group also assassinated several Sri Lankan politicians, including former President Ranasinghe Premadasa.

Profile of rebel leader Velupillai Prabhakaran

Though Prabhakaran was sometimes hailed as a master strategist, he also made a series of misjudgments over the years that eventually led to his downfall.

He alienated his strongest allies in India by sending a **female** suicide bomber to kill Gandhi in 1991, apparent retaliation for sending an Indian peacekeeping mission here that turned sour.

During negotiations that followed a 2002 cease-fire, he rejected a deal that would have given the rebels broad autonomy over the north and east but not full independence, according to a diplomat with knowledge of the offer. It was widely seen as the best deal he could ever get.

Prabhakaran said he could not accept anything less than a separate Tamil state, dubbed Eelam. "Thousands of my boys have laid down their lives for Eelam," he told Indian journalist Anita Pratap in 1990. "Their death cannot be in vain."

In 2004, a top commander known as Col. Karuna ran afoul of the Tiger leadership and split from the group with thousands of his fighters.

Prabhakaran then called a Tamil boycott of the 2005 presidential election, which helped propel the hard-line Mahinda Rajapaksa to victory. After new peace talks failed, the rebels cut off the water supply to more than 60,000 people in eastern Sri Lanka, provoking an unrelenting government offensive that drove the group out of the east, captured their administrative capital of Kilinochchi and eventually destroyed them on the battlefield.

Published by HT Syndication with permission from The Colombo Times.

Load-Date: May 21, 2009

AFP 1000 News Advisory

Agence France Presse -- English

May 24, 2009 Sunday 10:22 AM GMT

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Length: 765 words

Dateline: PARIS, May 24 2009

Body

Duty Editor: Andrew Gully

Tel: +33 1 40 41 46 36

-- TOP STORIES --

- + Pakistan army fights to control key town
- + Deadly crush at Morocco world music festival
- + 18 US troops in Kuwait catch swine flu
- + Ban, Gore to address Copenhagen climate meet
- + French prison drama tipped for Cannes glory

Pakistan-unrest,lead-WRAP

PESHAWAR, Pakistan

Pakistan's military says it had seized several key areas in the Swat valley's Taliban-held main town, as their battle to regain control of the northwest reaches a crucial phase.

650 words 1200 GMT by Lehaq Ali

We have also moved: Pakistan-unrest-Taliban-military,FOCUS

Pakistan-unrest-economy,FOCUS

Entertainment-Morocco-music-disaster,3rdlead-WRAP

RABAT

AFP 1000 News Advisory

A stampede on the final night of a world music festival in Morocco which featured top names such as Kylie Minogue, Alicia Keyes and Stevie Wonder leaves at least 11 people dead, most of them women and children.

500 words 1200 GMT

Health-flu-world,WRAP

KUWAIT CITY

Eighteen US soldiers test positive for swine flu at an American military base in Kuwait, as Australia shuts down a school after identifying two more cases of the disease.

650 words 1100 GMT. Picture. Graphics.

UN-climate-talks-Demark,lead-WRAP

COPENHAGEN

UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon, former US vice-president Al Gore and hundreds of top business leaders meet in the Danish capital to find ways companies can tackle climate change and boost the "green economy".

500 words 1300 GMT by Slim Allagui. Picture

Entertainment-film-festival-Cannes,lead-WRAP

CANNES, France

The Cannes showdown between the world's greatest film directors reaches its climax with a bleak French prison drama tipped to let France take the top prize for the second year in a row.

650 words 1030 GMT by Rory Mulholland. Video, pictures

FILING PLANS BY REGION

-- EUROPE --

Britain-royals-security,newseries

LONDON

Buckingham Palace suspends a royal chauffeur after he reportedly allowed two undercover journalists into Buckingham Palace grounds for cash, letting one of them pose for photographs sitting in Queen Elizabeth II's Bentley car.

450 words 1130 GMT

France-UAE-Gulf-military-diplomacy,ADVANCER

PARIS

President Nicolas Sarkozy is to open France's first military base in the Gulf on Monday, giving Paris a strategic role in a region roiled by Iran and a key supply route for oil.

500 words 1030 GMT.

EU-vote-treaty-Poland-Ireland-Walesa,INTERVIEW

GDANSK, Poland

Poland's Solidarity icon and ex-president, Lech Walesa, says he is prepared to head to Ireland in a drive to persuade voters there to change their minds and approve the EU's Lisbon Treaty.

550 words 1030 GMT by Adam Ganski. File Picture

-- MIDDLE EAST --

Iran-Afghanistan-Pakistan-summit,lead

TEHRAN

Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad hosts a summit with his Pakistani and Afghan counterparts aimed at finding ways to combat Islamic extremism and drug smuggling.

500 words 1130 GMT by Farhad Pouladi. Picture

Mideast-conflict-diplomacy-Israel,4thlead

JERUSALEM

Ultra-nationalist Foreign Minister Avigdor Lieberman rules out a return to Israel's pre-1967 war borders, as its largely right-wing cabinet rebuffs calls to remove Jewish settlements built on Palestinian land.

600 words 1100 GMT by Ron Bousso. Picture

Lebanon-UN-tribunal-Hariri-Hezbollah

BEIRUT

Hezbollah rejects a German magazine report that a UN probe believed it was behind the 2005 murder of ex-premier Rafiq Hariri as a ploy to influence Lebanon's election two weeks away.

500 words 1030 GMT by Rouba Kabbara

-- ASIA --

SriLanka-unrest,2ndlead-WRAP

COLOMBO

Sri Lanka says it will allow UN aid workers access to civilians detained in camps after the defeat of the **Tamil Tigers**, but only after it has weeded out rebels hiding among the refugees.

550 words 1100 GMT by Amal Jayasinghe. Picture

SKorea-politics-Roh,2ndlead-WRAP

BONGHA, South Korea

Thousands of South Korean mourners pay their last respects to former president Roh Moo-Hyun, whose shock death by apparent suicide comes as he faces a massive corruption scandal.

650 words 1100 GMT by Jung Yeon-Je Picture

Myanmar-politics-SuuKyi,lead-WRAP

YANGON

Lawyers for Myanmar pro-democracy icon Aung San Suu Kyi say they are preparing to open the defence case at her trial this week, as the junta looks set to face further pressure from the West.

700 words moved

-- AMERICAS --

US-space-astronomy-Hubble,lead

CAPE CANAVERAL, Florida

Rain or shine, the crew of the US space shuttle Atlantis will have to attempt to land Sunday after bad weather forces delays in their return to Earth for two consecutive days.

600 words 1030 GMT by Patrick Baert

afp

Load-Date: May 25, 2009

End of Document

The 1530 News Advisory

Agence France Presse -- English

May 24, 2009 Sunday 3:53 PM GMT

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Length: 752 words

Dateline: HONG KONG, May 24 2009

Body

Duty Editor: Eleanor Wason

News Desk: +852 2829 6211

-- WORLD HEADLINES --

PESHAWAR: Pakistan army battles in Swat Taliban-held town

MOGADISHU: Suicide bomber kills seven in Somalia

COLOMBO: Sri Lanka to allow aid access

KUWAIT CITY: Swine flu hits US soldiers, more Asian countries

-- ASIA --

Pakistan-unrest,lead-WRAP

PESHAWAR, Pakistan

Pakistan's military says it had seized several key areas in the Swat valley's Taliban-held main town, as their battle to regain control of the northwest reaches a crucial phase.

650 words moved by Le haz Ali

Pakistan-unrest-Taliban-military,FOCUS

BINAI BABA ZIARAT, Pakistan

From the dizzying heights of a Taliban rebel command centre, Pakistani generals sense victory in Swat as they tour an elaborate warren of tunnels and caves built into a mountain ridge.

700 words moved by Jennie Matthew. Picture

The 1530 News Advisory

Pakistan-unrest-economy,FOCUS

KARACHI

Growing Islamist violence has crippled the economy in northwest Pakistan, made tens of thousands of people unemployed and exacerbated the poverty that breeds fundamentalism, business leaders say.

700 words moved by Hasan Mansoor

SriLanka-unrest,3rdlead-WRAP

COLOMBO

Sri Lanka says it will allow UN aid workers access to civilians detained in camps after the defeat of the **Tamil Tigers**, but only after it has weeded out rebels hiding among the refugees.

550 words 1630 GMT by Amal Jayasinghe. Picture

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700 words moved

Mongolia-politics-vote,3rdlead

ULAN BATOR, Mongolia

Voters in Mongolia go to the polls to choose a new president less than a year after allegations of vote-rigging in parliamentary elections triggered deadly riots that shocked the nation.

550 words moved by Peter Oetzmman. Picture

-- EUROPE --

Entertainment-film-festival-Cannes,3rdlead-WRAP

CANNES, France

The Cannes showdown between the world's greatest film directors reaches its climax with a bleak French prison drama tipped to let France take the top prize for the second year in a row.

650 words moved by Rory Mulholland. Video, pictures

Ceremony starts 1715 GMT. Winner announced around 1800 GMT

UN-climate-talks-Denmark,2ndlead-WRAP

COPENHAGEN

UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon, former US vice-president Al Gore and hundreds of top business leaders meet in the Danish capital to find ways companies can tackle climate change and boost the "green economy".

500 words moved by Slim Allagui. Picture

Britain-royals-security,lead

LONDON

Buckingham Palace suspends a royal chauffeur after he reportedly allowed two undercover journalists into Buckingham Palace grounds for cash, letting one of them pose for photographs sitting in Queen Elizabeth II's Bentley car.

600 words moved by Michael Thurston. File Picture.

-- AFRICA --

Somalia-unrest,2ndlead

MOGADISHU

A suicide car bomber kills seven people, mostly soliders, in an attack on a Somali government military camp, as residents flee embattled Mogadishu where foreign fighters have reportedly joined the insurgency.

450 words moved Mustapha Haji Abdinur

Entertainment-Morocco-music-disaster,4thlead

RABAT

A stampede at a world music festival in the Moroccan capital Rabat, which featured top names such as Kylie Minogue, left at least 11 people dead, most of them women and children, police said Sunday.

500 words moved. Picture.

-- MIDDLE EAST --

Health-flu-world,lead-WRAP

KUWAIT CITY

Eighteen US soldiers who tested positive for swine flu are removed from a military base in Kuwait, as most new cases are reported in Asia where Australia was forced to shut down a school.

650 words moved. Picture. Graphic

Iran-Afghanistan-Pakistan-summit,3rdlead

TEHRAN

Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad and his counterparts from Afghanistan and Pakistan declare their joint commitment to battling Islamist extremism and drug smuggling in the region.

650 words moved by Farhad Pouladi. Picture

-- AMERICAS --

The 1530 News Advisory

US-space-astronomy-Hubble,3rdlead

CAPE CANAVERAL, Florida

NASA says the crew of the US space shuttle Atlantis will have to land in California after bad weather in Florida forced delays in their return to Earth for three consecutive days.

650 words 1600 GMT by Patrick Baert

afp

Load-Date: May 25, 2009

End of Document

Barr's schools strategy adds up

Canberra Times (Australia)

May 19, 2009 Tuesday

Final Edition

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Section: A; Pg. 12

Length: 780 words

Byline: The Canberra Times

Body

School students in the ACT are going to be encouraged to do even better in literacy and numeracy. The strategy issued yesterday by Education Minister Andrew Barr to create this impetus is, therefore, good news.

The territory's students already score well on national assessment testing but the Government is not being complacent about this outcome. Barr's aim is to boost the overall score of students and, most importantly, to improve the performance of lower-scoring students.

His goal is a marked improvement in ACT primary and secondary government schools over five years, and he has put his money where his ambition is by hiring 17 specialist literacy and numeracy officers. This will help students compete for jobs, apprenticeships and university places.

Parents will be able to see the results for each school when they are made public later this year by the Federal Government. This decision is already creating tension that league tables ranking schools' performances on the national testing will lead to parents taking their children out of lower-performing schools, thereby reducing the resources available to those schools.

The Australian Education Union, representing teachers, is vehemently against league tables and says the overseas experiences shows they create greater inequality and increased segregation as a result of shifts in student enrolment patterns. However, the decision was made last month by education ministers that national transparency meant the new Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority would publish nationally comparable information on all schools. The reports to be put online will include schools' testing results and a comparison with the national average. Education Minister Julia Gillard says this will give parents more information and is not about the production of league tables, but the union believes the information could easily be used to create crude tables ranking schools on their performances.

A more immediate concern for the ACT Government is teachers' pay. Yesterday, the union broke the silence surrounding negotiations for the next enterprise bargaining agreement to criticise the Government's offer.

The Government has not inflamed the situation by hitting back but must be realistic about this issue. Dedicated teachers are crucial to producing well-balanced students with the academic skills to achieve their potential, but less than satisfactory pay relativities in the community will lead to teachers leaving the profession or going interstate.

Barr's schools strategy adds up

At a time when ACT teachers are being asked to lift students to new heights, we must be prepared to offer satisfactory remuneration.

Restraint needed The critical problem facing Sri Lanka is to find a way forward to take into account the needs of majority and minority ethnic groups. The urgent need for this arises because Asia's longest-running civil war appears to be at an end after the remnants of the **Tamil Tigers** announced a ceasefire. They are surrounded by the Sri Lankan army as the Government vows to kill or capture the remaining members of the Tiger army which has used **women** as suicide bombers and assassinated political opponents without compunction.

The decades-old battle has resulted in the deaths of more than 70,000 people in bombings, military battles and suicide attacks. But the country needs a new start and that should begin with the military showing restraint. There are serious concerns for the thousands of civilians trapped in the war zone and the United Nations says thousands of innocent lives have been lost in indiscriminate shelling.

Few could blame the Sri Lankan Government for appearing intent on a total military victory but it must be realised that annihilating the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam does not guarantee an end to the conflict. Many more civilians will die in future years if the reasons for the Tamil uprising are not addressed by the Government.

The Government went to war over the Tamils' demands for a separate state but the impending military victory should not cloud the judgment of the nation's leaders. An examination of minority struggles in other countries shows a military outcome will not stand in place of a political outcome and measures to build a lasting peace. The international community will be watching to see how Sri Lanka deals with the Tamils' demands for local autonomy and rights to equal opportunities.

Police are investigating incidents in Sydney that are believed to stem from tension between Tamil and Sinhalese ethnic groups. The point cannot be made too strongly that there is zero tolerance in Australia for importing the ethnic tensions that have debilitated Sri Lanka for so long.

Load-Date: May 18, 2009

Profile of rebel leader Velupillai Prabhakaran

Associated Press Online

May 18, 2009 Monday 4:40 PM GMT

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Section: INTERNATIONAL NEWS

Length: 727 words

Byline: By RAVI NESSMAN, Associated Press Writer

Dateline: COLOMBO Sri Lanka

Body

Velupillai Prabhakaran transformed a small band of poorly armed rebels into one of the world's most sophisticated and ruthless insurgencies and then made a string of miscalculations that led his *Tamil Tigers* to total defeat at the hands of the Sri Lankan military.

Sri Lanka announced Monday that it had finished off the last of the rebels in the northern war zone and killed Prabhakaran, 54, and his top deputies.

To his followers, Prabhakaran was the steadfast heart of the battle to establish a breakaway state for Sri Lanka's ethnic Tamil minority. But his many detractors saw him as the brutal ruler of a suicide cult who repeatedly sabotaged peace deals in his pursuit of power.

Over more than a quarter century of civil war, Prabhakaran's Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam perfected the art of suicide bombings, assassinated top politicians including former Indian Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi, and fought the Sri Lankan government to a near-standstill.

At the height of his power, Velupillai Prabhakaran (Ve-LU'-pi-lay PRAH'-bah-ka-ran) a portly leader with a bushy mustache and trusty Browning pistol ruled as a virtual dictator over a shadow state of hundreds of thousands of people across a swath of northern Sri Lanka that had its own flag, police force and court system.

His guerrilla force was armed with heavy artillery, a rudimentary air wing that once bombed Colombo's international airport and a squad of suicide attackers. Its navy consisted of small attack craft, suicide boats laden with explosives, crude submarines and huge smuggling ships that plied the deep seas of the Indian Ocean.

The rebels reportedly earned as much as \$300 million a year from their arms and drug smuggling, a network of fake charities and donations from Tamil expatriates.

But Prabhakaran was also a shadowy figure who rarely appeared in public, preferring to communicate in a sort of state of the nation radio address he delivered every November.

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Profile of rebel leader Velupillai Prabhakaran

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The rebel leader orchestrated surprise attacks on Sri Lankan bases that killed hundreds of Sri Lankan troops and retaliated against government offensives with devastating counterattacks.

The group's penchant for suicide attacks including the 1998 bombing of the Temple of the Tooth, Sri Lanka's holiest Buddhist shrine led the United States, European Union and India to outlaw it as a terror organization. The group also assassinated several Sri Lankan politicians, including former President Ranasinghe Premadasa.

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Prabhakaran said he could not accept anything less than a separate Tamil state, dubbed Eelam. "Thousands of my boys have laid down their lives for Eelam," he told Indian journalist Anita Pratap in 1990. "Their death cannot be in vain."

In 2004, a top commander known as Col. Karuna ran afoul of the Tiger leadership and split from the group with thousands of his fighters.

Prabhakaran then called a Tamil boycott of the 2005 presidential election, which helped propel the hard-line Mahinda Rajapaksa to victory. After new peace talks failed, the rebels cut off the water supply to more than 60,000 people in eastern Sri Lanka, provoking an unrelenting government offensive that drove the group out of the east, captured their administrative capital of Kilinochchi and eventually destroyed them on the battlefield.

Load-Date: May 19, 2009

News items from Asia-Pacific Desk of Xinhua

Xinhua General News Service

August 7, 2009 Friday 10:40 PM EST

Copyright 2009 Xinhua News Agency

Section: WORLD NEWS; Political

Length: 818 words

Dateline: HONG KONG Aug. 7

Body

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

Three injured in New Zealand shooting

Dollar at mid-95 yen in Tokyo

Nikkei opens 0.23 pct lower

Major news items in leading Philippine newspapers

Major news items in leading Japanese newspapers

Islanders' concern over climate change is worrisome: Australian PM

29 foreign warships to participate in Indonesia's marine activities

Major news items in leading New Zealand newspapers

Deeper integration in ASEAN promotes growth

Gold price opens lower in Hong Kong -- Aug. 7

Indonesian prominent poet dies at 74

Major news items in leading Sri Lankan newspapers

ADB takes commitment fee on loans to Indonesia

Foreign exchange rates in Thailand

Roundup: More than 60 people still missing in Tonga ferry sinking accident

Japan's foreign reserves rise to 1,022 bln USD in July

8 passengers killed, 23 injured in head-on trucks collision in Myanmar

Cambodian sees illegal fishing drop in Tonle Sap

News items from Asia-Pacific Desk of Xinhua

Hong Kong stocks open 0.87 pct lower -- Aug. 7

Nikkei down 1 pct in morning trading

Foreign exchange rates in Nepal

Influenza cases increase to 15 in Myanmar

Major news items in leading Nepali newspapers

S. Korea, India sign bilateral trade pact

Major news items in leading Vietnamese newspapers

Major news items in leading Thai newspapers

More Cambodian workers go abroad in first six months this year

Major news items in leading Singapore's newspapers

Major news items in leading Pakistani newspapers

EC's 500-mln-Euro financial instrument welcomed by Pacific states

News Analysis: Lay-judge trials bring dramatic changes to Japan's legal system

Vietnam's A/H1N1 flu cases rise to 1,043

Pakistan Taliban chief likely killed: minister

Major news items in leading Indian newspapers

2 suspected bombers arrested in Nepali capital

Fiji PM says willing to have dialogue with PIF

2 Canadians, Filipino killed in flood in N. Philippines

Foreign exchange rates in Cambodia

Dollar at lower 95 yen in Tokyo

Hong Kong stocks widen losses at midday -- Aug. 7

Indian stocks open lower

Philippine stocks close 2.05 pct lower

Australia, New Zealand to aid Tonga after ferry disaster

Urgent: Tribal sources confirm death of Pakistan Taliban chief: TV

Vietnam to invest 2.3 bln USD on vocational training

Roundup: Tonga's sunken ferry seaworthy: PM

Sri Lanka arrests new leader of **Tamil Tigers**

Vietnam's overseas investment reaches 1.6 bln USD in first seven months

News items from Asia-Pacific Desk of Xinhua

Japanese police seek to arrest missing actress Sakai

New leader of the Tamil Tiger not arrested in Bangkok: Thai gov't

Indonesian police nab hotel cook linked to bomb attacks

Vietnam targets to produce 1.7-2.16 mln tons of vegetable oil by 2020

Australia takes new measures to tackle organized crime

Landslide kills at least 3 in N. Philippines

1st LD Writethru: Tribal sources confirm death of Pakistani Taliban chief: TV

Vietnamese people urged to use more local products

Cambodia records 24 flu A/H1N1 cases

Foreign exchange rates in Philippines

Indonesian gov't seeks for 250 mln USD dividend addition

Xinhua Asia-Pacific news summary at 0600 GMT, Aug. 7

Poll shows Australians oppose Tasmanian pulp mill

Nikkei closes 0.23 pct higher

New Zealand sharemarket closes 0.42 percent higher

Foreign exchange rates in New Zealand

Foreign exchange rates in Laos

Australian PM plans to visit India

Foreign exchange rates in Vietnam

Pakistan's KSE hops on IMF hopes

Vietnam stock market index ends down

Thai co-pilot injured in plane improving in condition

Foreign exchange rates in Indonesia

Indonesia's economic growth to slow in 2nd quarter: central bank

Roundup: Tokyo stocks close mixed ahead of key U.S. jobs data

Australia's food labeling policy risks jobs: opposition

Urgent: Intelligence sources confirm death of Pakistani Taliban chief: FM

Hong Kong stocks close 2.51 pct lower -- Aug. 7

1st LD: Intelligence sources confirm death of Pakistani Taliban chief: FM

Laos' economy grows 7.1 pct in first half

News items from Asia-Pacific Desk of Xinhua

Insurgents kill 1 at police checkpoint in N. Afghanistan

Indian foreign exchange rates

Germany helps Laos in rural development

2nd LD Writethru: Intelligence sources confirm death of Pakistani Taliban chief: FM

Malaysia to filter porn from internet

HSBC praises Indonesia's plan to issue Islamic bonds

Protesters oppose expansion of uranium mine in South Australia

Indonesia's first lady stresses women's role in creative economy

Thai RSS3 rubber price

Two constructions for HK's Bridge project to complete in 2015- 2016

Load-Date: August 8, 2009

End of Document

Refugees in nine-day voyage of despair to escape Tamil battles; Sri Lanka

The Times (London)

May 7, 2009 Thursday

Edition 1

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THE TIMES

Section: NEWS; Pg. 37

Length: 654 words

Byline: Jeremy Page

Body

A group of refugees from Sri Lanka's conflict with the *Tamil Tigers* has described drifting at sea on a small boat for nine days and watching ten of their number die before being rescued by Indian fishermen last week.

The 11 survivors, who say that they fled northeastern Sri Lanka after repeated heavy artillery raids, are being treated at a hospital in the southeastern Indian state of Andhra Pradesh, the doctor caring for them told The Times yesterday.

At least four Tamil refugees have also died in the internment camps where Sri Lankan authorities are holding almost 190,000 civilians attempting to reach government-held territory, The Times has learnt.

Three *women* were found dead at a bathing area in one camp on Monday, and a child was crushed to death at another in a stampede last week over scarce food supplies, UN officials said.

The two stories show the choices facing Tamil civilians trying to escape from the tiny strip of northeastern coastline where the army has pinned down the Tigers and is poised to defeat them after 26 years of civil war.

The group that took the sea route left on April 20, thinking that they could get to India in nine hours, according to Dr M. B. R. Sharma, who is treating them in the town of Kakinada. "They were at sea for almost ten days," he said. "They had no water or food. They were all severely dehydrated, but they are OK now..

They said they left because they were afraid of both sides." The New York-based rights group Human Rights Watch interviewed the refugees. It quoted one of them, S. Indra Meenan, 25, an engineer, as saying that the boat's captain had promised to take enough food and water, but ran out after he got lost and the outboard motor stopped working.

"We were drinking salt water," Mr Meenan said. "One by one, the people started dying. First it was the children.

My brother's little daughter died." Mariyada Yesudas, the boat's owner, said that his father, sister, nephew, two brothers and uncle - who skippered the boat - all died during the journey.

Refugees in nine-day voyage of despair to escape Tamil battles Sri Lanka

Sivadasa Jagdeshwaran, a mason, said that his four-year-old son died after four days at sea, then his wife's father died and her two brothers jumped into the water.

"My wife was in shock," he said.

"She was weak and not even able to move. That morning, April 29, she asked for some water. We gave her sea water. She vomited and then she passed away." Their eight-month-old son survived, having suckled at his mother's breast until she died.

The four deaths in the barbed-wire camps over the past week were the first to be reported.

Some Tamil activists and MPs have likened the enclosures to concentration camps. Tamils fleeing the front line are held in them and screened to make sure that they are not rebels.

UN officials said that the three women were found in a camp called Manik Farms Zone 2, where the former Defence Secretary, Des Browne, and four other British MPs were taken on Tuesday to view the humanitarian relief effort.

The British High Commission said that the MPs were not informed about the deaths and did not raise them in meetings with President Rajapaksa and other senior officials.

Gordon Weiss, the UN spokesman in Colombo, said that the UN refugee agency had asked the Government to investigate the deaths and provide female security officers to guard the women's bathing areas in the camps.

Sri Lankan officials declined to comment on the deaths, but the Government said that it had invited Ban Ki Moon, the UN Secretary-General, to visit the camps.

Unwanted envoy

February 13, 2009 Sri Lanka brands the appointment of Des Browne, below, as special envoy as tantamount to an intrusion into its internal affairs

April 30 A Sri Lankan website reports a row between David Miliband, the Foreign Secretary, and Gotabaya Rajapaksa, the Sri Lankan Defence Secretary, over civilians in the conflict zone

May 4 Mr Browne arrives in Sri Lanka but only as part of a cross-party British parliamentary delegation

Graphic

Kadirgamh camp in Sri Lanka. Up to 190,000 Tamils are held in the country

PEDRO UGARTE / AFP / GETTY IMAGES

Load-Date: May 7, 2009

PRESS CONFERENCE BY REPRESENTATIVE OF UNITED NATIONS HIGH COMMISSIONER FOR REFUGEES IN SRI LANKA

States News Service

April 24, 2009 Friday

Copyright 2009 States News Service

Length: 1066 words

Byline: States News Service

Dateline: NEW YORK

Body

The following information was released by the United Nations:

With fresh displacement now topping 100,000 as civilians continued to flee Sri Lanka's war-torn north-eastern coast, a senior United Nations official in the country warned today that ill-prepared camps in the region were in danger of being overwhelmed by the influx, and urged the Government to move quickly to make new sites available while raising the level of care in the existing facilities.

Speaking at a Headquarters press conference, Amin Awad, Representative of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) in Sri Lanka, said that in the past 72 hours, 100,000 desperate civilians were on the move, fleeing heavy fighting between Government forces and the rebel Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (**LTTE**) in the north-eastern coastal belt of the Mullaitivu district.

Some 25,000 internally displaced persons had been screened at the Killinocchi processing centre and then dispersed among 32 Government-administered camps, mostly in Vavuniya, Jaffna and Mannar, he said. Some 180,000 people were now in the camps, straining the capacity of humanitarian agencies on the ground, which were already handicapped by limited access to some facilities. The refugee agency, the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) and other organizations were still asking the Government to provide land for new camp sites, to make public buildings available and to reconsider the option of moving some of the displaced persons in with host families to help relieve the pressure on the camps. That would ease overcrowding and improve sanitation conditions in the camps.

"And above all, there are 75,000 people still in Killinocchi, and I want to see my staff go in there, hand in hand with the civil administration to provide assistance as people are waiting to be processed," he said, stressing that the internally displaced persons there were weak, exhausted and in very poor shape. Killinocchi was under military control and UNHCR was concerned that civilians there were being housed in processing centres or public buildings rather than being screened and released. The agency was also concerned about the estimated 50,000 people still trapped by fighting in the conflict zone in and around Vanni.

"We have asked the Government to restrain itself; we don't want a catastrophe [] we just want these people to reach safety," he said, adding that the agency was also asking the **LTTE** to ensure a calm and orderly evacuation, especially given the ever present danger of landmines along the most common escape routes. "Orderly movement out of this zone will make it much safer for the displaced population."

PRESS CONFERENCE BY REPRESENTATIVE OF UNITED NATIONS HIGH COMMISSIONER FOR
REFUGEES IN SRI LANKA

Answering a series of questions about conditions in the camps, which some non-governmental organization had described as cramped and running low on supplies, Mr. Awad said the UNHCR was engaged with the Government on a host of issues regarding those facilities. It had provided the authorities with an aide-memoire late last year, laying out the minimum standards with respect to international humanitarian law and the treatment of internally displaced persons.

He said UNHCR had provided the guidance note "as a contingency" to outline specific sets of principles that should be followed on such issues as freedom of movement; right of family visitation; delivery of services; humanitarian access; registration; and civilian characteristics of camps managed by military officials. But right now the Government "is far away" from the minimums standard of treatment agreed by the international community and outlined in the aide-memoire.

While hoping the Government would reconsider its position and apply those minimum standards, he said, the agency had been encouraged by some of the steps taken thus far, such as releasing "special needs" persons, including elderly people, pregnant women, young children, people suffering from severe trauma and those with disabilities.

"[But] this is not enough," he said, stressing that, while a few thousand people might have been allowed to leave the camps, that number was "negligible" considering the total figure was 80,000 or more. "This should not be collective punishment. The Government has the opportunity to register people, provide them with IDs and allow them to leave with immediate effect."

He noted that, while non-governmental organizations and United Nations agencies had access to Vavuniya, such was not the case in Mannar and some camps in Jaffna. UNHCR was advocating particularly hard to have access granted to civil society groups that could help relieve some of the "tremendous pressure" on the United Nations, as well as the Government, in light of the new influx of displaced persons.

As for administration of the camps, he said the Government had set up police and civil administration inside the camps in Jaffna, where the military was operating on the periphery. However, that was not the case in Vavuniya, where UNHCR was urging the Government to institute the "good practices" employed in Jaffna.

He went on to reiterate the agency's call on the Government to do more to relieve the pressure in the camps, especially those in Vavuniya, "which is overwhelmed", and Trincomalee, by making public buildings available. As for United Nations remaining in the camps, the Organization was asking for their release so they could return to their respective agencies and continue providing assistance on the ground.

Also during the press conference, Security Council President Claude Heller of Mexico made remarks "underlining the immediate and pressing priority in addressing the grave humanitarian situation [] in particular the plight of tens of thousands of civilians still trapped in the conflict area and those displaced by the conflict".

He said members of the Council welcomed the Secretary-General's decision to dispatch a United Nations humanitarian team to the combat zone, as well as reports of the escape from that area of tens of thousands of civilians. Council members also called on the Sri Lankan Government to extend "all necessary support" to the United Nations team, and to allow the Organization and the ICRC access to all sites where displaced persons were being registered and provided with shelter.

* * * * *

For information media not an official record

Load-Date: April 24, 2009

PRESS CONFERENCE BY REPRESENTATIVE OF UNITED NATIONS HIGH COMMISSIONER FOR
REFUGEES IN SRI LANKA

End of Document

Monster meets his waterloo

Sunday Observer (Sri Lanka)

May 25, 2009 Monday

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Length: 2111 words

Dateline: Colombo

Body

Colombo, May 25 -- Blood keeps trickling from the gaping wound in the man's head. A bullet piercing the skull has blown off the brains of the fugitive who made peaceful Sri Lanka a killing field playing with human lives by his savage butchery that did not spare even a little child in a 30-year long horror world of sheer terrorism that he carved for himself. Here lies on the ground the world's most ruthless terrorist in his uniform. Still cannot believe our own eyes that the man, who made this part of the world a hell-hole was lying dead.

But then, time has at last caught up with the man; the world's most dreaded terrorist who died by the very fire that he breathed; stark dead on the muddy waters. Apart from his head, the whole body is pale as he had been hiding neck deep in the lagoon for hours and hours. Indeed, it was a day for rejoicing for the valiant soldiers in their numbers as they kept flocking to the historical vicinity to catch a glimpse of the man who caged their young lives into thick jungles. These soldiers around the dead body jubilantly vowed in the name of their beloved motherland not to ever leave a space for another Prabhakaran to be born. Everyone breathe huge sighs of relief. For it is a historical moment that has seen the end of the man who through his bloodbaths created Asia's longest terrorist battle. Here, in the murky waters Prabhakaran, the terrorist has at long last met his fate; his dreams, his ruthlessness and his megalomaniac attempts ended in just a few minutes ago where I stand. Around 10.05 this morning (Tuesday 19) the monster, who created thousands and thousands of grave yards has dug his own grave. Vellupillai Prabhakaran, the terrorist leader whom the whole world thought invincible, is found dead in a small island surrounded by the muddy waters of the Nandikadal lagoon at Vellamullivaikkal in Puthumatalan. The man, who had the control of over 15,000 square kilometres of land, but lost the domination inch by inch, breathed his last by fire in a tiny patch of land. Prabhakaran, who loved his life more than anything else, but motivated thousands of boys and girls to blow themselves up and bite a vial of cyanide, did not after all bite the deadly powder. He tried to realize his childhood dream which made the country a blood bath, by desperately trying to flee. Prabhakaran, who was neck deep in the lagoon water when his loyal escorts were fighting with the elite commandos and the soldiers of the 4th Vijayaba Infantry Regiment, at last met death from a bullet fired by the soldier who joined the last clearing of the island where there had been an indication of yet another terrorist movement. Sergeant H.P Wijesinghe from Allawwa is the happiest soldier among thousands. He is the first to identify Prabhakaran's body lying near the dirty waters of the small islet. Body discovered "We were ordered to go forward as some terrorists were firing from 8.30 a.m. today. We were able to kill the remaining terrorists and started clearing the area. The fat body found dead was lying on the banks and I informed the Commanding Officer of the 4VIR Lt. Col. Rohitha Aluvihare about the body and under his command we brought the body here," he said, adding with pride and glee that, 'I am happy that I was the first to identify Prabhakaran's body. For this is the man most wanted and who made our lives a misery. This is the man whom we fought to capture for decades.' Sgt. Wijesinghe says that he does not have words to express his happiness. With no cyanide hanging around him, his dog tag TT 3 bearing the number 001 and dated 16.09.95 hung around the monster killer's neck. His Eelam identity card with his picture bearing number 01543301002 issued

Monster meets his waterloo

on 01.01.2007 and with his personal details like date of birth - 26.11.1954, place of birth - Velvatiturai and occupation - Leader of the LTTE. The soldiers have recovered his belongings wrapped in a polythene bag. It contains a gas mask, diabetic drugs, dressings, insulin, hand cuff, two T56 rifles used by Prabhakaran, glucose, creams for wounds, and most interestingly a bottle of berry scent moisturizing and vitamin E cream made in Singapore. Prabhakaran, who was wanted by Sri Lanka, India and the Interpol for the atrocities he committed against humanity, had launched a well planned psychological operation in which he tried to mislead the military through the civilians and the cadres who had surrendered who told the troops that he had escaped in a submarine before the 53 and 58 Divisions shut the beach front of No Fire Zone with a one square km stretch. The military assaults with the support of artillery and amourey continued in whatever spot that was suspected to be Prabhakarans' hideout. In the last few hours of his life, he tried to mislead the troops by spreading the rumour that he was dead while he was in a desperate attempt to disappear into the jungles and to hide in the small island until his plan worked out. But the soldiers, who surrounded from four corners, did not stop hunting the man until they dragged his body from the murky waters of the Nandikadal lagoon. The military assault continued by the elite commandos and 4 VIR troops from the wee hours of Tuesday morning, ended the dark era that had haunted our sacred country at 10.05 a.m. after they captured the body of the most wanted man in the entire Asia. Lt. Col. Rohitha Aluwihare, the CO of the 4VIR under 681 Brigade says that a large number of terrorists came from the lagoon to attack the soldiers and continued the offensives from 3 a.m. on Tuesday 19. "Our soldiers had killed over 126 terrorists and there was only an indication that Prabhakaran was there. We continued our search operations and at 10.30 the officers in the defence lines informed me about a body looking like Prabhakaran. His escorts armed with sophisticated weapons and wearing uniforms gave us a tight fight where they threw a grenades at us to prevent us reaching the dead body of their leader. But his close protection ring with ten strong terrorists were killed by the soldiers who conducted the search operation. We found the body and it was confirmed that it was Prabhakaran's as his dog tag was hung around his body", says Lt. Col. Aluwihare. The widely open eyes of Prabhakaran appear to be still burning with his greedy daydream. The eyes that burnt the lives of thousands of innocent men, women and children and even Buddhist priests and other clergy and his own people and all those who tried to block his path, are still fully open. The man has been without a shave for days, the grey hair has propped up and his thick moustache around the chin. The ever chubby face still bears the anger that he breathed when he was alive. The fleshy stomach has disappeared and it shows that he had missed his favourite dishes for days. His entire body is pale having soaked in muddy waters of the Nandikadal lagoon for hours. Last gasp foiled The Brigade Commander of the 681 and a Commando Lt. Col. Lalantha Gamage says that under Task Force 8 Commander Col. G.V. Ravipriya the 4 VIR troops cleared the Western part of the island while the Commandos cleared it from the East. "With the Commandos, the artillery, armour and engineering units supported us to hunt down Prabhakaran. This is a collective effort of all the units involved in the hunt", he reveals. The 53, 58 and 59 troops, who have sweated from dawn to dusk and made sacrifices to record their 'biggest' ever 'catch' in the history of the war, have reaped their harvest. The Commandos, who first launched assaults in the island to repulse the attacks by the terrorists, have collected the weapons from the fallen bodies. Unknowingly, the Commandos, in their clearing operation, had taken a significant pistol. The number carved on it reveals the identity. It is the pistol with the number 001 that was used by the monster responsible for mass destruction of lives, limbs and property. "In this dirty war thousands of fathers lost their parents, thousands of parents lost their children and thousands of wives lost their husbands and all these happened due to this dirty, ruthless man - Prabhakaran. Today, he is gone and this means that all Sri Lankans, irrespective of their communities, can be happy and live peacefully", the GOC of the 53 Division Maj. Gen. Kamal Gunaratne says. Explaining the last mission to hunt down Prabhakaran, Maj. Gen. Gunaratne says that the terrorists, who were hiding inside the small mangrove island of lagoon, first attacked the defence of the 53 division and tried to get a breakthrough. "But within 10 to 15 minutes the troops managed to close the gap. The troops went inside and surrounded and were able to eliminate them on Monday with the support of the troops of 58 division, Special Forces and Commandos. But later, another group of terrorists started attacking us early morning and our troops with the Commandos attacked them too successfully. There was heavy confrontation, but from yesterday night we managed to kill over 77 terrorists. Again we continued search operations and the 4VIR team found this man's body", he says confirming that the world's most notorious terrorist has met his Waterloo. Coward Maj. Gen. Gunaratne says that the interesting story of this most ruthless terrorist was that he had 'preserved' the cyanide vial. "This shows how much he valued his life. Interestingly, throughout three decades he was showing the cyanide capsule to the world. But he did not swallow it. It is sad that the man, who gave cyanide to thousands of youth and motivated thousands of children to die biting the cyanide, did not do that himself. Basically,

Monster meets his Waterloo

he wanted to live", the Major adds. While every soldier keeps flocking, creeping through hundreds of colleagues flocking around the body to catch a glimpse of the man who made them fight for over 30 years, Karuna Amman, Prabhakaran's trustworthy bodyguard for years and now the Minister of National Integration and Reconciliation Vinayagamurithi Muralitharan visited the scene together with Daya Master, the **LTTE**'s former media spokesman who is now in military captivity, to identify the body of the **LTTE** leader. While the man, who masterminded the three decades long battle and motivated them to take to arms to achieve his daydream, lies dead with a caved in head from which fresh blood flows, the luckiest among all his cadres and welcomed by the soldiers who fought in fierce battles in the Eastern region, Minister Muralitharan escorted to the lagoon front under tight security, has identified that he is Vellupillai Prabhakaran. "I have identified him and according to history this is the fate of the terrorist leaders. Many of them had died in this manner. During the second world war Mussolini too had a similar fate. What had happened to Saddam Hussein and the Cambodian leader. No wonder that Prabhakaran too had died in a similar way. He encouraged lots of innocent youth to bite cyanide and motivated them to blow themselves up to serve his ends. But he did not do what he had ordered others to do, and he deserves this death", Minister Muralitharan says. Though the atrocities committed by him are still fresh in the minds of thousands who lived outside his domination and also thousands who were held as hostages, the man who brought the Tamil community to zero is no more. Simply, the so-called **LTTE** supremo and the sole representative of the Tamils has breathed his last. The man who believed that last minute international sympathy would save him has died helplessly. The jubilant soldiers singing, 'Mawbimata Jaya wewa' (Victory for the motherland) waving the national flags and walking freely with still guns directed towards the thick jungles and carrying out search operations to hunt down Pottu Amman who is believed to be dead. But they have yet to discover the body. Back in Colombo amidst understandable overflowing relief and rejoicing in trumpets and cheers and lion flags dotting every inch of the towns and cities, we heard of lots of unpatriotic rumours. Some say that it was Prabhakaran's dummy. Interested parties still do not want to believe that the terrorist with mythical fighting powers is dead. But truth is truth and there is no substitute for it. We saw to our very eyes the terrorist Prabhakaran lying dead. Now, the sun is rising in the far end of the horizon of the Vellamullivaikkal while the 'sun God' who made this fertile land a blood bath, has kissed the earth six feet under, an earth that he meaninglessly slaughtered innocents to achieve his megalomaniac dream - Eelam that was never to be. 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

Load-Date: May 25, 2009

Christian Leader Says India Election Results are a Vote Against Extremism

Christian Newswire

May 19, 2009 Tuesday 12:50 PM GMT

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Length: 717 words

Byline: By Gospel for Asia

Body

[Gospel for Asia](http://www.gospelforasia.org), 972-300-3379

CARROLLTON, Texas, May 19 / [Christian Newswire](http://www.christiannewswire.com) -- "The Indian election has sent a significant message that extremism, especially against minorities, is not going to be accepted in the country," said Gospel for Asia President K.P. Yohannan after poll results were posted in the world's largest democracy.

"The Dalits ('Untouchables'), the 'other backward classes,' Christians and other minorities have spoken with a loud voice that abusing minorities is not the way to go."

At the same time that the India election results were announced, the government in neighboring Sri Lanka declared victory in the decades-long civil war in that country. Both developments impacted GFA work in the region.

In Sri Lanka, where GFA-supported native missionaries work with more than 100 churches, GFA workers are in the early stages of ministering to the thousands of men, women and children who have been driven from their homes and suffered both physical and emotional devastation in the fighting. GFA-supported missionaries have served on both sides, bringing hope and meeting needs during crisis times. They are thus in a unique position to help bring reconciliation to the former enemies.

"While this 30-year-long civil war has come to an end by the news of the Tamil Tigers' surrender, in reality this is the beginning of pain and crisis for hundreds of thousands of people who are displaced," Dr. Yohannan said. "There are 25,000 now in refugee camps, and the suffering is especially acute among the children and elderly."

"This is one of the greatest challenges and opportunities we have to minister to people in the name of Christ."

Dr. Yohannan asks for prayer for Sri Lanka in the wake of this conflict that took an estimated 70,000 lives. Further details about GFA response will be released as developments unfold.

In India, the moderate Congress Party and its allies won 260 seats in the 543-seat parliament with two races undecided--only 12 seats short of a majority. Dr. Yohannan said there were a number of smaller parties eager to join the coalition. The vote was a serious blow to those who would lead India down the road of religious intolerance and continued persecution of Christians.

Christian Leader Says India Election Results are a Vote Against Extremism

The incumbent prime minister, Manmohan Singh, has vowed to lead a "stable, strong government which is committed to secular values," a refutation of extreme, religious-based nationalism.

The size of the vote against those advocating violence against Christians amazed the political pundits, who had predicted a close election with perhaps years of unstable and weak coalition governments in India's future.

"No one expected this," Dr. Yohannan noted. "The Congress party itself is surprised."
But Dr. Yohannan said there was a clear explanation.

"Many political pundits are talking about the 'X' factor in this election, something unexpected that can turn the results. There was an X factor, and I believe it was God.

"There are 1.2 billion people in India," he explained. "They are very important to God, and He worked.

"So much prayer went up," he added. "Christians have been praying, and God answered their prayers. That's what happened."

As a result, K.P. said, "I believe that the prime minister will lead the country to greater freedom for minorities, their rights will be protected and the country will have greater economic good.

"But we need to continue to pray according to Romans 13--to pray for the government officials, that God will bless them and that Christians in India will have increased freedom to exercise their faith.

"Christians around the world should be concerned and in prayer for India, first of all because it is the key nation in the region," Dr. Yohannan noted. "What happens in India affects all of the surrounding countries--and ultimately the world.

"But beyond that, we need to pray for both India and Sri Lanka because of the Kingdom's work. India and South Asia are in the heart of the 10/40 window--the region of the world with the most people who have never heard the name of Jesus. Christians need to be in prayer that the doors will remain open to share the message of God's love with Asia's lost billions."

Gospel for Asia is an evangelical mission organization based in Carrollton involved in sharing the love of Jesus across South Asia.

CONTACT: Taun Cortado,

Load-Date: May 19, 2009

Profile of rebel leader Velupillai Prabhakaran

Associated Press International

May 18, 2009 Monday 4:40 PM GMT

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Section: INTERNATIONAL NEWS

Length: 727 words

Byline: By RAVI NESSMAN, Associated Press Writer

Dateline: COLOMBO Sri Lanka

Body

Velupillai Prabhakaran transformed a small band of poorly armed rebels into one of the world's most sophisticated and ruthless insurgencies and then made a string of miscalculations that led his **Tamil Tigers** to total defeat at the hands of the Sri Lankan military.

Sri Lanka announced Monday that it had finished off the last of the rebels in the northern war zone and killed Prabhakaran, 54, and his top deputies.

To his followers, Prabhakaran was the steadfast heart of the battle to establish a breakaway state for Sri Lanka's ethnic Tamil minority. But his many detractors saw him as the brutal ruler of a suicide cult who repeatedly sabotaged peace deals in his pursuit of power.

Over more than a quarter century of civil war, Prabhakaran's Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam perfected the art of suicide bombings, assassinated top politicians including former Indian Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi, and fought the Sri Lankan government to a near-standstill.

At the height of his power, Velupillai Prabhakaran (Ve-LU'-pi-lay PRAH'-bah-ka-ran) a portly leader with a bushy mustache and trusty Browning pistol ruled as a virtual dictator over a shadow state of hundreds of thousands of people across a swath of northern Sri Lanka that had its own flag, police force and court system.

His guerrilla force was armed with heavy artillery, a rudimentary air wing that once bombed Colombo's international airport and a squad of suicide attackers. Its navy consisted of small attack craft, suicide boats laden with explosives, crude submarines and huge smuggling ships that plied the deep seas of the Indian Ocean.

The rebels reportedly earned as much as \$300 million a year from their arms and drug smuggling, a network of fake charities and donations from Tamil expatriates.

But Prabhakaran was also a shadowy figure who rarely appeared in public, preferring to communicate in a sort of state of the nation radio address he delivered every November.

Tamil Tiger troops, some of them forcibly recruited by the group when they were children, saw Prabhakaran as their unquestioned leader. He ordered them to abstain from sex, cut personal ties and carry glass vials of cyanide on necklaces, so they could kill themselves upon capture.

Profile of rebel leader Velupillai Prabhakaran

"He is their brain. He is their heart. He is their god. He is their soul. And the whole organization runs around him," said Indian journalist M.R. Narayan Swamy, who wrote a biography of the rebel leader.

The rebel leader orchestrated surprise attacks on Sri Lankan bases that killed hundreds of Sri Lankan troops and retaliated against government offensives with devastating counterattacks.

The group's penchant for suicide attacks including the 1998 bombing of the Temple of the Tooth, Sri Lanka's holiest Buddhist shrine led the United States, European Union and India to outlaw it as a terror organization. The group also assassinated several Sri Lankan politicians, including former President Ranasinghe Premadasa.

Though Prabhakaran was sometimes hailed as a master strategist, he also made a series of misjudgments over the years that eventually led to his downfall.

He alienated his strongest allies in India by sending a ***female*** suicide bomber to kill Gandhi in 1991, apparent retaliation for sending an Indian peacekeeping mission here that turned sour.

During negotiations that followed a 2002 cease-fire, he rejected a deal that would have given the rebels broad autonomy over the north and east but not full independence, according to a diplomat with knowledge of the offer. It was widely seen as the best deal he could ever get.

Prabhakaran said he could not accept anything less than a separate Tamil state, dubbed Eelam. "Thousands of my boys have laid down their lives for Eelam," he told Indian journalist Anita Pratap in 1990. "Their death cannot be in vain."

In 2004, a top commander known as Col. Karuna ran afoul of the Tiger leadership and split from the group with thousands of his fighters.

Prabhakaran then called a Tamil boycott of the 2005 presidential election, which helped propel the hard-line Mahinda Rajapaksa to victory. After new peace talks failed, the rebels cut off the water supply to more than 60,000 people in eastern Sri Lanka, provoking an unrelenting government offensive that drove the group out of the east, captured their administrative capital of Kilinochchi and eventually destroyed them on the battlefield.

Load-Date: May 19, 2009

WESTMINSTER TAMIL DEMO BRINGS RUSH-HOUR CHAOS

The Evening Standard (London)

April 7, 2009 Tuesday

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London Evening Standard

Length: 717 words

Body

ROB SINGH AND JUSTIN DAVENPORT

SCUFFLES AND FIVE ARRESTS AS THOUSANDS ATTEND RALLY FIXED UP BY TEXT AND FACEBOOK

PROTESTERS calling for an end to the civil war in Sri Lanka caused major rush-hour disruption to central London today as they besieged Westminster.

At one stage 3,500 Tamils blocked Westminster Bridge. Some threatened to jump en masse into the Thames unless they could speak to Gordon Brown.

Four RNLI lifeboats and police and fire rescue boats stood by ready to pull people from the water. Two men had to be rescued after jumping in.

Police in riot gear began moving protesters from the bridge and penning them into Parliament Square. At least five people were arrested when police and protesters clashed as they were moved off the bridge. One man was arrested for flying the flag of the Tamil Tigers who are banned as a terrorist group in Britain.

A total of 10 protesters were slightly injured, five needing hospital treatment. Several complained of police violence as they were dragged away.

Jaynani Paramsothy, 18, a student from East Ham, said: "We wanted to continue our protest in the road but they started kicking and hitting and pushing us to move. They gave us no warning that they wanted to move us. I saw an old woman get kicked by a policeman."

The rally was organised by a network of British Tamil organisations and student groups in two days using texts, emails and the social networking site Facebook. The demonstration started yesterday afternoon and continued through the night as Tamils in London called for the Sri Lankan government to stop its offensive against the Tiger rebels who want a separate homeland. The protest was sparked by allegations of a poison gas attack by the Sri Lankan government in north-east Sri Lanka.

WESTMINSTER TAMIL DEMO BRINGS RUSH-HOUR CHAOS

Last night the roads around Parliament were closed and police also shut Westminster Tube station. Trains on the Circle, District and Jubilee lines ran through it without stopping.

The "spontaneous" demonstration appeared to take the police by surprise. At dawn Scotland Yard estimated that 900 protesters, including women and children, remained blocking the bridge before they were moved on. Roads around Parliament and Westminster Tube station were re-opened at 9am.

Commander Jerry Savill said: "We will take whatever action necessary to enforce the law. We did not receive any notification of this event. It is their responsibility to abide by the law and they did not do that.

"We are trying to deal with the situation sensitively. Last night there were women and children including babies on the bridge and the decision was taken that it was inappropriate to use force."

He warned that people would face arrest if they did not disperse from the square today. By mid-morning the protest dwindled to about 200 people but suddenly escalated again to more than 1,000 by midday.

As the demonstration moved to Parliament Square, officers confiscated red flags being waved by protesters. Protesters said the demonstration would continue until a senior government figure or Cabinet member addressed them and promised to call for an immediate ceasefire. At lunchtime, Foreign Secretary David Miliband issued a statement urging Sri Lankan government forces to show the "utmost restraint" and Tamil Tiger rebels to allow civilians to flee conflict zones.

Earlier, protesters were joined by Liberal Democrat MP Simon Hughes. He said: "I support the Tamil cause and have done for 25 years.

"Now is the time to stand with them and the message is clear -- the Government needs to act.

"I am telling people here that you are right to protest. I hope it will be allowed to continue and we members of the allparty group for Tamils are working behind the scenes to get someone senior from the Foreign Office down here."

The protesters were joined by Siobhan McDonagh, MP for Morden and Mitcham, and Joan Ryan, MP for Enfield North, both of whom are on the all party group for Tamils.

Later Inthu Rubarajah, a 28-year-old medical student from Tooting, said: "The police have treated us like animals. We are not violent people and we're demonstrating peacefully but it's like they wanted to provoke us into violence. "

Vijay Jeyanphan, a 29-year-old Tamil campaigner from Harrow, said: "People are here out of desperation and many have lost family members due to the conflict."

Load-Date: April 7, 2009

AFPTV Advisory

Agence France Presse -- English

April 24, 2009 Friday 9:34 AM GMT

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Length: 806 words

Dateline: PARIS, April 24 2009

Body

We will file the following videos:

Worries as Taliban control Pakistani district near capital

BUNER, Pakistan

International powers watched with concern as the Taliban advanced this week on a district close to the capital Islamabad. The Islamic militants moved into the northwest district of Buner from their stronghold in the neighbouring Swat valley this week, and were patrolling the streets of main town, but on Friday said they would withdraw by the evening. Images of armed Taliban hardliners on the streets of Buner and interviews from locals.

NEWS

1. Images and soundbites - Already transmitted

RAW - VID79728

WEB - MMV79729

2. Further image and soundbites transmitted by 1500 GMT

RAW - VID79737

WEB - MMV79738

UN: 50,000 civilians trapped in Sri Lanka conflict

UNDISCLOSED LOCATION, Sri Lanka

As Sri Lanka's army pursues a final offensive to crush the **Tamil Tigers**' decades-long insurgency, the United Nations has warned that 50,000 civilians are still trapped in the crossfire, stranded in the narrow strip of jungle still held by the rebels. Images of wounded civilians in the rebel-held area, released by the Tamil Rehabilitation Organisation, an NGO considered linked to the Tigers.

NEWS

Images transmitted by 1000 GMT

RAW - VID79735

WEB - MMV79736

South Africa's Zuma 'smells victory'

JOHANNESBURG

South Africa's ruling party leader Jacob Zuma says he can smell victory in general elections, addressing 2,000 cheering supporters at the African National Congress party headquarters in Johannesburg. The ANC was hovering around the two-thirds mark in initial poll returns in a vote expected to launch Mr. Zuma into the presidency.

NEWS

Images and soundbites - Already transmitted

RAW - VID79703

WEB - MMV79704

We have also recently filed the following related report:

Zuma, controversial leader, in spotlight

JOHANNESBURG

As the results from South Africa's elections keep pouring in, the ruling party the African National Congress is expected to keep its sweeping majority -- led by its charismatic but controversial figure of Jacob Zuma.

NEWS

Voiced report

NSV - VID79606

BROADCAST-READY - VID79633

WEB - MMV76607

Friday, May 1, marks the fifth anniversary of the enlargement of the European Union, when 10 mostly Eastern European nation joined the bloc. We begin a series of related reports with the following:

For Poles, EU membership still a plus

WARSAW

Nearly five years after their arrival in the European Union, Poles are still finding much to celebrate. On the whole, subsidies from Brussels have helped drive their economic growth, while the 27-nation bloc has provided fertile ground for employment.

SPECIAL REPORT/ECONOMY

Voiced report transmitted by 1200 GMT

NSV - VID79693

BROADCAST-READY - VID79694

WEB - MMV79695

Hong Kong architect makes shoebox apartment a 'palace'

HONG KONG

In the densely populated city of Hong Kong, space is at a premium and one architect has found an ingenious way to expand his cramped apartment into a multi-roomed "palace." For many other residents, however, life in the metropolis is far less cosy.

CULTURE & LIFESTYLE

Voiced report

NSV - VID79454

BROADCAST-READY - VID79455

WEB - MMV79456

India's missing children, a growing problem

NEW DELHI

Parents in India's sprawling capital, New Delhi, are becoming increasingly alarmed by the disappearance of thousands of children over the past year. While authorities have dismissed allegations that organised trafficking rings are responsible, parents fear their children are being sold into prostitution and forced labour.

SPECIAL REPORT

Voiced report transmitted by 1000 GMT

NSV - VID79742

BROADCAST-READY - VID79743

WEB - MMV79744

Iraq's illiterate hit the books

BAGHDAD

First repression, then war, have kept some Iraqi women from learning how to read. A new programme financed by the United States is changing that, based on the belief that education will empower poor women and keep them from joining radical groups.

SPECIAL REPORT

Voiced report transmitted by 1300 GMT

NSV - VID79739

BROADCAST-READY - VID79740

WEB - MMV79741

Cloudy debate over Jacques Tati's missing pipe

PARIS

The agency overseeing advertising in the Paris Metro created a stir last week when it doctored a poster of cult film director Jacques Tati to take out his signature tobacco pipe. The agency says it was merely respecting France's anti-smoking laws but fans of the comic and exuberant Tati say it amounts to no less than censorship.

CULTURE & LIFESTYLE

Voiced report transmitted by 1000 GMT

NSV - VID79412

BROADCAST READY - VID79415

WEB - MMV79416

Russians ring in 'Bell Week'

MOSCOW

It's 'Bell Week' in Russia which means that churches throughout the land will put on bell-ringing concerts. A look inside Moscow's campanology school.

CULTURE & LIFESTYLE

Voiced report transmitted by 1400 GMT

NSV - VID79676

BROADCAST-READY - VID797677

WEB - MMV79746

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Load-Date: April 25, 2009

The 0530 GMT News Advisory

Agence France Presse -- English

May 15, 2009 Friday 5:41 AM GMT

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Length: 767 words

Dateline: HONG KONG, May 15 2009

Body

Duty Editor: John Weaver

News Desk: +852 2829 6211

-- WORLD HEADLINES --

COLOMBO: Sri Lanka vows to crush Tigers in 48 hours

PESHAWAR: Tens of thousands flee clashes in NW Pakistan

YANGON: Myanmar under intense pressure to release Suu Kyi

-- ASIA --

SriLanka-unrest,lead-WRAP

COLOMBO

The Sri Lankan government vows to finish off the **Tamil Tigers** within 48 hours, defying international calls for a truce and accounts of a "humanitarian catastrophe" among civilians trapped inside the rebel-held zone.

650 words 0700 GMT by Amal Jayasinghe. Picture

Pakistan-unrest,WRAP

PESHAWAR, Pakistan

Pakistan's military suspends a curfew in a northwest area where it is fighting Taliban guerrillas, officials say, sending tens of thousands of civilians fleeing ahead of what they fear will be a major battle.

600 words 0600 GMT

We have also moved: Pakistan-unrest-US-diplomacy-missiles,5thlead

Myanmar-politics-SuuKyi-US,lead-WRAP

YANGON

Myanmar faces intense international pressure to release pro-democracy icon Aung San Suu Kyi after she was imprisoned ahead of a new trial next week for breaching the terms of her house arrest.

650 words 0700 GMT. Picture. Video. Graphic. Animated Graphic

Asia-environment-oceans-climate-Indonesia,lead

MANADO, Indonesia

Leaders from six nations agree to work jointly to save Southeast Asia's massive Coral Triangle, considered the world's richest underwater wilderness.

600 words 0730 GMT by Aubrey Belford. Picture. Graphic.

NKorea-nuclear-talks-US,3rdlead

WASHINGTON

The United States says it plans no concessions to lure North Korea back to nuclear disarmament talks but welcomes a trial date for two detained US journalists as a sign their ordeal could end.

650 words moved by Lachlan Carmichael

Environment-shipping-IMO,lead

HONG KONG

Dozens of nations are to sign a new treaty to make ship recycling safer, but activists call it a step backwards for the environment and the labourers who carry out the dangerous work.

600 words 0730 GMT by Huw Griffith

HongKong-Netherlands-Vietnam-media,lead-OBIT

HONG KONG

Hugh Van Es, the Dutch photographer whose photo of the 1975 fall of Saigon became one of the most enduring images of the Vietnam war, dies. He was 67.

600 words 0800 GMT. File picture

Afghanistan-vote-women,FOCUS

KABUL

In a stuffy Kabul wedding hall about 400 men and a dozen enthusiastic women listen to Afghan presidential candidate Frozan Fana outline her manifesto as the first woman to run the violent, tribal nation.

900 words moved by Bronwen Roberts. Picture

Taiwan-politics-demo-China,ADVANCER

TAIPEI

The 0530 GMT News Advisory

Taiwan's pro-independence opposition will take to the streets this weekend in what they say will be the biggest anti-China rally since the island's Beijing-friendly administration came to power.

600 words moved by Benjamin Yeh

-- ASIAN BUSINESS --

Japan-economy,lead-WRAP

TOKYO

Japan faces signs of mounting deflationary pressures and sluggish business investment as the world's number two economy reels from its worst recession since World War II.

550 words 0730 GMT

Singapore-airline-SIA-company-Airbus,3rdlead

SINGAPORE

Singapore Airlines (SIA) says it will take delivery of five Airbus A380 super jumbos as planned this year despite a 92 percent fall in fourth quarter net profit blamed on the global downturn.

500 words 0600 GMT. Picture

We have also moved: Singapore-economy-finance-property,FOCUS

-- AMERICAS --

US-justice-military-rights-Guantanamo,newseries

WASHINGTON

President Barack Obama's administration is set to announce it will retain Bush-era military commissions to try top terror suspects, but with improved legal safeguards for detainees.

650 words 0600 GMT by Stephen Collinson. Picture

-- EUROPE--

Health-flu-world,newseries-WRAP

GENEVA

Scientists need more time to decide whether to mass produce a vaccine against swine flu, the World Health Organisation says, as the number of cases topped 6,000 around the globe.

700 words moved. Picture. Graphic

Entertainment-film-festival-Cannes-Japan-SKorea,INTERVIEW

CANNES, France

The loneliness of big city life, what it means to be human, and how movies can teach you all you need to know are just some of the themes in a Japanese film about a sex doll that comes to life, says its director.

500 words moved by Rory Mulholland. Picture.

We have also moved: Entertainment-film-festival-Cannes,2ndlead

The 0530 GMT News Advisory

Entertainment-film-festival-Cannes-China,INTERVIEW

-- MIDDLE EAST --

Mideast-pope,2ndlead-WRAP

JERUSALEM

Pope Benedict XVI wraps up a Holy Land pilgrimage in which he pleaded with passion for Palestinians, lamenting Israeli policies, and stirred criticism he lacked remorse over the Holocaust.

750 words 0800 GMT by Patrick Moser. Picture. Graphic. Video.

afp

Load-Date: May 16, 2009

End of Document

The 1530 GMT News Advisory

Agence France Presse -- English

April 24, 2009 Friday 3:45 PM GMT

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Length: 752 words

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Body

Duty Editor: Huw Griffith

News Desk: +852 2829 6211

-- WORLD HEADLINES --

KILINOCHCHI, Sri Lanka: Army says rebel leader trapped

PESHAWAR: Taliban withdraw from Pakistan district

SEOUL: Russian FM says no progress in Pyongyang

BAGHDAD: Dozens killed in shrine blast

-- ASIA --

SriLanka-unrest,4thlead-WRAP

KILINOCHCHI, Sri Lanka

The leader of Sri Lanka's **Tamil Tigers** is trapped in a small strip of jungle in the northeast and intends to make a final stand with his surviving forces, an army commander says.

650 words moved by Nicolas Revise. Graphic. Picture

We have already moved: SriLanka-unrest-rebels,SCENE

Pakistan-unrest-northwest,3rdlead-WRAP

PESHAWAR, Pakistan

Taliban fighters are retreating from a Pakistan district where the government deployed extra forces under US pressure to stop hardliners advancing closer to the capital, officials say.

750 words moved by S.H. Khan. Graphic. Picture

The 1530 GMT News Advisory

We have already moved: Pakistan-unrest-northwest-peace,ANALYSIS

NKorea-Russia-SKorea-nuclear,4thlead

SEOUL

Russia's foreign minister leaves Pyongyang after apparently struggling in his mission to persuade North Korea to return to international nuclear disarmament talks.

600 words moved. Picture

We have also moved: NKorea-US-military-media,4thlead

NKorea-US-military-media,4thlead

SEOUL

North Korea says two detained **female** US journalists will stand trial for unspecified crimes, a move seen by analysts as pressuring Washington to open direct dialogue.

650 words moved by Park Chan-Kyong

Thailand-politics-protest,3rdlead-WRAP

BANGKOK

Thai Premier Abhisit Vejjajiva lifts a state of emergency imposed in Bangkok after violent protests but says troops will remain deployed amid opposition plans to take to the streets again.

650 words moved by Boonradom Chitradon. Graphic, Picture

India-attacks-trial,lead

MUMBAI

A Pakistani national on trial in India over the Mumbai attacks is to undergo dental and X-ray tests to determine whether he is a minor who should be tried in a juvenile court, a judge rules.

450 words moved by Salil Panchal

Britain-military-Nepal-politics-immigration,5thlead

LONDON

The British government refuses to offer full settlement rights to all former Gurkhas despite a High Court ruling last year, in a move slammed by the Nepalese ex-soldiers and their supporters.

700 words moved by Katherine Haddon. Picture.

-- MIDDLE EAST --

Iraq-unrest,4thlead-WRAP

BAGHDAD,

Two suicide bombers strike near a major Shiite shrine in Baghdad, killing at least 58 people amid a brutal spike of attacks nine weeks before US troops are to withdraw from Iraqi cities.

750 words moved by Salam Faraj. Picture. Graphic.

-- AFRICA --

SAfrica-vote,4thlead-WRAP

PRETORIA

South Africa's ruling ANC cements its lead in general polls, setting the stage for a Jacob Zuma presidency where he will face pressing demands from the poor in a sagging economy.

600 words 1600 GMT by Justine Gerardy. Picture. Graphic. Video

-- EUROPE --

Russia-military-politics,3rdlead

MOSCOW

Russian President Dmitry Medvedev dismisses the head of the powerful military intelligence agency after he opposed sweeping reforms of the country's lumbering military.

600 words moved by Alexander Osipovich. File picture

Finance-economy-world,lead-WRAP

LONDON

Europe's recession deepens and corporate results take a dive as world finance chiefs gather in Washington to hash out plans for rescuing the global economy.

600 words moved

G8-climate-warming,2ndlead

SYRACUSE, Italy

The world's top polluters create new momentum towards an overall deal to fight global warming at talks led by the Group of Eight wealthy nations, but serious "gaps" remain on emissions targets and financing.

650 words moved by Gina Doggett

-- AMERICAS --

WHO-health-flu-US-Mexico,WRAP

MEXICO CITY

Mexican and US officials voice concern about an unprecedented multi-strain swine flu outbreak blamed for dozens of deaths in Mexico, which has spread across the border to infect seven people in the United States.

600 words moved

Finance-economy-G7-G20,3rdlead

WASHINGTON

The finance chiefs of the Group of 20 industrialized and developing countries meet in Washington to assess progress on their London summit pledges to boost growth and improve financial regulation to combat the global economic crisis.

The 1530 GMT News Advisory

600 words 1600 GMT by Veronica Smith

US-company-auto-Ford-earnings,4thlead

NEW YORK

Ford Motor Co. says it remains on a road to recovery by 2011 without help from the government as it posts a quarterly loss of 1.4 billion dollars that is not as bad as feared.

650 words moved

afp

Load-Date: April 25, 2009

End of Document

DIGEST - WORLD

St. Louis Post-Dispatch (Missouri)

May 28, 2009 Thursday

THIRD EDITION

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Section: NEWS; Pg. A17

Length: 734 words

Byline: From news services

Dateline: 0

Body

5-year-old Russian girl found in filthy conditions

A 5-year-old Russian girl found in a filthy apartment imitating the cats and dogs she was shut up with has been placed in state custody as authorities consider neglect charges against her father and other relatives.

Officials said the girl barks like a dog, laps food directly off the plate and seems to have been "raised" by the animals.

Police said Wednesday that the girl was kept shut up with the animals. She lived in the apartment with relatives, including her father and grandparents.

Roadside bomb kills U.S. soldier in Iraq - A roadside bomb killed a U.S. soldier Wednesday in Baghdad, making May the deadliest month for the American military since September. Also Wednesday, the government's watchdog agency announced that nearly 1,000 arrest warrants have been issued this year as part of a crackdown on corruption. They include warrants for nearly 50 senior civil servants, the agency said.

Myanmar disqualifies Suu Kyi witnesses - The court trying Myanmar opposition leader Aung San Suu Kyi for violating the terms of her house arrest disqualified all but one witness in her defense, making it likely that the proceedings will finish this week, one of her lawyers said.

Italy issues 61 warrants in mob case - Italian police issued 61 arrest warrants against purported members of the Naples-based Camorra mob for allegedly running drug and extortion rings in the southern Italian city. The suspects arrested in and around Naples include nine **women** and several bosses of the Sarno clan, a top local crime family. Investigators believe the Sarno clan was vying for a leading position in the Camorra, which is the Neapolitan version of the Sicilian Mafia.

Russian space capsule takes off - A Russian space capsule blasted off on a landmark mission to expand the permanent human presence in space. The Soyuz craft began a two-day journey to the international space station - the largest man-made object in the Earth's orbit.

DIGEST - WORLD

Afghanistan dumps textbooks - The Afghan government quietly dumped more than 1,000 Shiite texts and other books from Iran into a river after a local governor complained that their content insulted the country's Sunni majority.

Sri Lanka pursues final **Tamil Tigers** - Sri Lankan troops on a mission to flush out the remnants of the Tamil Tiger rebels killed 11 suspected guerrillas in eastern jungles, the military said, in the largest clash since declaring it had won its 25-year war against the insurgents.

U.S. puts conditions on Cuba's admission to OAS - Cuba's decades-old suspension from the Organization of American States appears to be coming to an end. As more countries clamor to lift the communist country's 1962 suspension from the hemispheric group, the U.S. State Department threw a curve ball at the debate late Tuesday by submitting a new proposal that eventually would allow Cuba back to the OAS - as long as Havana abides by the organization's democratic principles.

D-Day event omits Queen - Indignant British veterans and outraged commentators complained over the omission of Queen Elizabeth II from the guest list for next week's ceremonies to mark the 65th anniversary of the D-Day landings in France.

French drinking less wine - As wallets grew thinner around the world, fans of Bordeaux, Burgundy and Champagne cut back heavily on their purchases of French wine in 2008, according to statistics released by the French government. French households drank almost 10 percent less wine last year than in 2007, and exports by French vintners sank 15 percent by volume and almost 30 percent by value in the first quarter of 2009, the agriculture ministry reported.

China targets aggressive lawyers - China's judiciary is warning law firms to rein in lawyers who take up human rights and other politically sensitive cases, lawyers said, increasing the pressure in a government campaign that has so far failed to curb growing legal activism. Lawyers said authorities had met or talked on the phone with senior members of at least nine law firms in recent weeks, urging them to not seek the renewal of licenses for certain lawyers.

White tiger kills keeper - An animal keeper was mauled to death by a rare white tiger at a wildlife park in New Zealand while visitors watched in horror, police said. The animal, one of only 120 white tigers in the world, was killed because it wouldn't release the keeper's body, police said.

Load-Date: June 1, 2009

Karuna calls for bandh, Jaya calls it a drama

Hindustan Times

April 23, 2009 Thursday

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Length: 390 words

Dateline: New Delhi

Body

New Delhi, Apr. 23 -- Even as Chief Minister M. Karunanidhi called for a bandh on Thursday to express solidarity with the Sri Lankan Tamils, an enormous humanitarian crisis loomed large as thousands fled the war-zone and many sought refuge in India.

Inflation' is soaring close to the 'no-fire zone (NFZ)' in Mullaitivu in North-east Sri Lanka. "A kg of sugar costs Rs.3000 (Sri Lankan rupees) and that too is very hard to come by," says an exhausted 28-year-old Vijayakumar, among the 19 Tamil refugees who managed to escape from Mullaitivu and reach Tamil Nadu's shores on Wednesday. Although this group of refugees, including six women and two infants, were initially bound for Rameshwaram (over 600 km south of Chennai), to the largest camp for Sri Lankan Tamil Refugees, their boats went adrift and hit the Nagapattinam coast instead. Meanwhile, as concerns over the fate of the LTTE Chief Prabhakaran mount, Karunanidhi has called for a bandh (general strike) throughout Tamil Nadu. "Already 'bandh-calls' by the ruling DMK on other issues have been heavily criticised by the Supreme Court. How will another bandh help stop the war in Sri Lanka?" asked AIADMK general secretary J. Jayalalithaa during an election rally in Paramakudi, about 75 km from Madurai, on Wednesday afternoon. "This (bandh call) is just yet another drama by Karunanidhi when the Centre should ask Sri Lanka to declare a ceasefire," 'Amma' thundered and added that the AIADMK's poll campaign will go on as scheduled. Jayalalithaa herself will address a rally in Madurai town on Thursday in support of CPI(M) candidate P. Mohan. Already under fire from the opposition, the DMK-Congress combine is beginning to feel the heat as the siege in Northern Sri Lanka threatens to cast a shadow over the elections. Party managers are already in a tizzy over whether candidates should file their nominations tomorrow after the 'bandh' call. April 24 is the last date to file nominations for the last phase of polling in Tamil Nadu and Puducherry scheduled for May 13. Congress and DMK nominees are yet to file their papers. While some ruling party MPs' and their allies would not like to cut it too fine by filing their papers on the last day, the DMK leader's diktat would certainly affect campaign schedules. Published by HT Syndication with permission from Hindustan Times.

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

Load-Date: April 24, 2009

**ACTING DEPARTMENT SPOKESMAN DAILY PRESS BRIEFING APRIL 24,
2009**

States News Service

April 24, 2009 Friday

Copyright 2009 States News Service

Length: 3688 words

Byline: States News Service

Dateline: WASHINGTON

Body

The following information was released by the U.S. Department of State:

INDEX:

PAKISTAN

Discussion of reports regarding the Taliban forces in Buner District

President Obama's meeting yesterday with Secretary Clinton and Special Rep. Holbrooke concerning situation in Pakistan

International community must take a strong stance against violent extremists and Pakistan needs to demonstrate decisive actions to meet the threat within its nation

Both the Government and Military need to take appropriate steps to rid the country of such extremist factions

NORTH KOREA

The State Dept. has seen the reports indicating that DPRK intends to place the two American journalists on trial and calls on North Korean to immediately release them

The U.S. is working through diplomatic channels to gain their release, and is receiving assistance from the Swedish Embassy in North Korea

The DPRK is urged to return to the Six-Party Talks/The best hope in gaining the denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula lies in the Six-Party Framework

IRAN

Iran must deal with the outstanding issues, its uranium enrichment program being one of them

There are two separate and distinct issues to be dealt with the call for a Two-State Solution (Israel and the Palestinians) and Iran's nuclear program

SYRIA/ISRAEL

ACTING DEPARTMENT SPOKESMAN DAILY PRESS BRIEFING APRIL 24, 2009

The U.S. supports talks between Syria and Israel for the resolution of differences

RUSSIA

Plans are going well in preparation for the new START Treaty meeting/Negotiation sessions are planned for May and June

THAILAND

The Secretary and Thailand's Foreign Minister Kasit Piromya discussed Burma during their meeting this past week/Among the issues discussed were a desired improvement in human rights and the strengthening of our relationship

SRI LANKA

The U.S. remains deeply concerned for the thousands of civilians still trapped in the No-Fire Zone and calls once again on the LTTE to lay down its arms

The U.S. supports efforts by both the Government of India and the United Nations to end the fighting/The Co-Chairs in Tokyo fully support the UN Secretary-General's call for UN staff to be allowed into the conflict zone

CANADA

Question regarding the banning the export of certain types of firearms to Canada referred to DHS (BATF)

TRANSCRIPT:

12:44 a.m. EDT

MR. WOOD: Good afternoon, all. Happy Friday. I don't have anything, so we can go right to your questions.

QUESTION: Robert, have you confirmed or can you elaborate any details on reports of the Taliban pulling back from the Buner area --

MR. WOOD: To be honest --

QUESTION: The circumstances --

MR. WOOD: Yeah, to be honest, Bob, we've seen the media reports. We're trying to confirm, you know, the status of events in Buner. But let me just say yesterday President Obama had a meeting with Secretary Clinton and Special Representative Holbrooke. We are in close touch with the Government of Pakistan. We're going to work with the Government of Pakistan to halt the advances of the Taliban. And, you know, as I said, we're trying to get more details about what actually is going on there.

QUESTION: Can you say more broadly how concerned you are about their advances at this point?

MR. WOOD: Well, you know, I think the Secretary spoke to it very clearly the other day. We're very concerned about what's going on in Pakistan, and we call on the government and the military to take strong and aggressive and decisive action to deal with the extremists that threaten the country and, frankly, the region.

QUESTION: And would you say today whether you are still concerned that they are ready to take those steps, or is this a sign that they've gone back around the other way or

MR. WOOD: Well, you know, Kirit, it's a very difficult situation on the ground. We have we, the international community, have to help Pakistan meet these threats. But what's important is that Pakistan take the measures necessary to deal with the threat it faces. And as I said yesterday, they need to take very decisive action to deal

ACTING DEPARTMENT SPOKESMAN DAILY PRESS BRIEFING APRIL 24, 2009

with these elements. These elements are a threat to not only Pakistans internal security, but to its neighbors. And Im focusing specifically on Afghanistan.

And so, you know, were going to continue to push and were going to continue to work with the government. But I think that the government realizes the threat that its under, the challenges that it faces, and, as I said, needs to take very strong, decisive action right now to deal with that threat.

QUESTION: And this is it the Administrations judgment that theyre prepared to take any steps? You said that they recognize the threat.

MR. WOOD: As I said, they recognize the threat. What we now need to see are steps from the government and the military to deal with that threat, and well just have to see as the days go by.

QUESTION: Robert, do you think that actions means military action against them? Or what do you mean by --

MR. WOOD: What Im saying is the government and the military need to take the steps necessary to deal with that threat. You know, Pakistans a sovereign government. Its dealing with, as I said, a very strong, internal threat. It needs to take the measures that it feels is necessary to deal with that threat. And --

QUESTION: So it means even another peace agreement with the Taliban?

MR. WOOD: Im sorry?

QUESTION: It means, another peace agreement could be or the military action? What do you --

MR. WOOD: Look, the way I respond to that question is what weve said all along, and thats violent extremists need to be confronted. And thats not just in Pakistan, but thats in other places around the world. So that will be a decision on the part of the Pakistani Government to make. But we are strongly encouraging Pakistan to take these to take steps necessary to deal with the threat. So yes.

QUESTION: Same one. Do you have any confidence in their ability in their willingness to take those steps?

MR. WOOD: Look, the government realizes what its up against. And weve had very good conversations with the Government of Pakistan over the last several weeks. But obviously, in recent days, there has been an increased threat. Weve seen what the Taliban has been doing. The government needs to take action. And well have to see in the coming days what the government actually does to deal with the problem.

QUESTION: So thats a no on the confidence matter, then?

MR. WOOD: Its not a question of our confidence or anybody elses confidence. Its a question of the Pakistani Government dealing with the threat that it faces, a very strong internal threat. And this threat, as the Secretary said, is also one that impacts our security interests. So whats important is what the government does, not about whether one country or another has trust or not. Thats really not the issue here.

QUESTION: Well, one point. Youre about to give them youre requesting half a billion dollars to give them in your supplemental. Wouldn't you want to be confident in their ability to fight back?

MR. WOOD: Yeah, absolutely. And Congress is going to weigh in on this issue as well. What the government has said is that it understands the threat, its committed to dealing with it. Whats important are actions. We want to see actions, as I said. The Congress will as well. And again, whats really important here, Kirit, is that this is a huge threat to the Government of Pakistan and its society, and it needs to be dealt with. And I think the Pakistanis realize that. And, you know, we are going to work with them. Weve said that. Other countries have said theyre willing to work hard with the government. And well do the you know, everything we can to help stem the advances of the Taliban. But those advances are very concerning to all of us.

ACTING DEPARTMENT SPOKESMAN DAILY PRESS BRIEFING APRIL 24, 2009

QUESTION: There is one media report coming from Pakistan that Islamabad has given 48 hours ultimatum to the Taliban to clear the Swat Valley. Are you aware about that?

MR. WOOD: I am not aware of that. Thats the first Ive heard of it.

Yes, maam. Oh, Im sorry. Let me go to Charlie. He had his hand up for a while.

QUESTION: Robert, can you be any more specific about the what happened in the wake of the meeting between the President and the Secretary and Holbrooke? Who made what calls? Did anybody make any calls? You know, rather than the proverbial the Embassy is in touch.

MR. WOOD: Well, I really dont want to go beyond that, but I can assure you that Special Representative Holbrooke has been in touch with the government. Our Embassy has been in close touch. Others have been. I just dont want to get more specific than that at this point, Charlie, if you dont mind.

QUESTION: (Inaudible) closed meeting yesterday?

MR. WOOD: I dont have a tick-tock, but certainly within the last couple of days there have been contacts.

QUESTION: Is the President sending Holbrooke back?

MR. WOOD: Im not aware of any plan to do that at this point. Im sorry.

QUESTION: There are reports that one of the reasons why the Taliban are pulling out is because the Pakistani Government threatened that if they dont, then they might withdraw from the agreement to impose Sharia law in Swat Valley. Is that an example of dealing with the problem?

MR. WOOD: I dont have the details on that. I dont know if that indeed is the case. You know, as I said, whats really important here is that, you know, not just the Government of Pakistan but other governments not that they deal with these extremists and deal with them appropriately. The Taliban are you know, they have no interest in democracy, womens rights, freedom of expression. Theyre interested in totalitarian rule. Countries around the world need to act in order to help support Pakistan in this, you know, time of crisis. We will be there to help Pakistan, but Pakistan also needs to take steps necessary to deal with these violent extremists. They need to be confronted, as I said.

Dave.

QUESTION: Different subject?

MR. WOOD: Are we still on this? Different subject? Dave.

QUESTION: It appears that the North Korean authorities are going to put the two young American women journalists on trial. Any response to that? Have you been told that by the say, the interlocutors there?

MR. WOOD: Yeah, Dave, the best I can tell you is weve seen these reports. And, again, we continue to call on the North Koreans to release the two Americans so they can be returned to their families. Well continue to work this issue through diplomatic channels. As Ive said, we are trying to work this quietly, but and were going to continue to work it. But I dont have much to say beyond that right now.

QUESTION: And also, the Russian foreign minister was in North Korea, and he says that the North Koreans are disinclined to go back to the Six-Party negotiations anytime soon. Any response?

MR. WOOD: I havent seen the comments from the Russian foreign minister. But, look, its the objective of the five other parties in the Six-Party framework to get the North back to the negotiating table so that we can move toward that goal eventually of eventually denuclearizing the Korean Peninsula. And, you know, that may be. The North says lots of things. But its in our interest. We think its a viable framework. And we continue to call on them to live up to their obligations. They committed to the Six-Party framework, and they need to adhere to it.

ACTING DEPARTMENT SPOKESMAN DAILY PRESS BRIEFING APRIL 24, 2009

QUESTION: Can you just say whether you've heard anything similar from your interlocutors, the Swedes, on whether about the trial, whether they confirmed that to you?

MR. WOOD: We're still trying to get confirmation about this issue. I know that the Swedish ambassador last he had a brief visit with the two journalists on March 30th. You know, it's obviously very difficult trying to get information out of the North. The Swedes are trying to get as much information as we can.

The central point here is that the North release these two Americans and release them now. And, you know, we've made this call to the North Koreans. We continue to do that. And we will try to get more information about this case. But we're working it quietly through diplomatic channels to do as much as we can. And we'll keep you apprised.

Sir.

QUESTION: On a different topic.

MR. WOOD: Oh, same subject?

QUESTION: Just to follow up, did you say that the Swedish ambassador met with the two on the 30th?

MR. WOOD: Yeah, I believe it was March 30, yes.

Please.

QUESTION: New subject.

MR. WOOD: Oh, a different subject?

QUESTION: Different subject.

MR. WOOD: Same subject?

QUESTION: Yes. I mean North Korea. So what are you going to do to get the North Koreans back to the Six-Party process? Do you have any plans for a meeting, you know, bilateral or (inaudible) meeting, or do you have any plans for a trip, Ambassador Bosworth or anyone else?

MR. WOOD: Well, look, I'm certainly not going to rule out future travel. Ambassador Bosworth is very engaged in this issue. We're talking to our allies to try to see what leverage we can bring to getting the North back to the table. But, again, this is something that the North committed to, as you know, back in the joint statement of 2005. We made a lot of progress up until, you know, the fall, as you know, when we the North agreed gave us some assurances with regard to verification. They were unwilling to put them in writing, and that put a hold on the process.

The Six-Party framework is our best hope for getting the North to denuclearize. And we are going to work hard to get them back to the table. But it's a challenge; there's no question about it. And we're going to continue to work it because it's in everyone's interest that we denuclearize the Korean Peninsula. But I don't have any further steps for you at this point with regard to travel or anything else.

I'm sorry, on the same subject?

QUESTION: North Korea and the UN, the Sanctions Committee do you have any update on what they're doing?

MR. WOOD: I don't have an update. We'll hopefully have an update later. I think there may have been some news breaking right before I came, but I don't have anything at this point.

Yes, sir.

ACTING DEPARTMENT SPOKESMAN DAILY PRESS BRIEFING APRIL 24, 2009

QUESTION: Yesterday, Iranian foreign minister said that Tehran welcomes new negotiation, new talks with the world power. But he emphasized again that Iran's not going to halt its uranium enrichment program. Any comment on that?

MR. WOOD: I don't have anything more to say beyond what we've said about Iran. Iran has obligations to the international community. There remain a lot of suspicions about its nuclear program, and we want to see them fulfill those obligations. Same time, we've said we're willing to engage Iran directly in diplomacy, but Iran needs to deal with these outstanding issues that not only the United States but other members of the international community have about its nuclear program. But nothing more to add than what we've said.

QUESTION: Any specific dates set for P-5+1?

MR. WOOD: Not that I'm aware of, not at this point.

QUESTION: And Israeli foreign minister actually again said that there's no way to resolve the situation sorry, crisis in the Middle East, but first resolve this Iranian problem. So since there's a disagreement between Washington and Tel Aviv in this regard, has Secretary Clinton talked to her Israeli counterpart or addressed this disagreement?

MR. WOOD: Look, we've been very clear about this. What we need to these are two separate issues, and we believe they can be dealt with simultaneously. You know, bringing about a peace in the Middle East, a two-state solution, is paramount for us. It's in our national security interest. So is dealing with Iran's nuclear program. And we can and must deal with these issues, these separate issues, very seriously.

And I don't have anything more to offer to you other than our commitment, which we have reiterated to, you know, Israel and to others, is to this two-state solution. And we're going to continue to work on this. The Secretary and Senator Mitchell are spending a lot of effort, trying to see what we can do to get this process going. And we're also working with our Arab partners to try to reach this goal that we all have. But they're two separate issues as far as we're concerned.

Please.

QUESTION: In that same interview, Avigdor Lieberman said that the talks between indirect talks between Syria and Israel should not go on. What is the U.S. position on talks between --

MR. WOOD: Well, I mean, at some point, there needs to be there needs to be peace between Israel and Syria. The question on when talks go forward, that's going to really be up to the parties. We have an interest in seeing peace in the region, and we think it's important that all the parties work toward that goal. But I don't have anything further.

QUESTION: You don't do you support talks between Syria --

MR. WOOD: Well, of course we I think that's the point I made. We want to obviously, at some point, the two parties need to sit down and resolve their differences. That's in the interest of the international community. We want to see that happen. In terms of when they sit down actually, that's something that's going to have to be worked out. But certainly, we would support a peace between Israel and Syria. That goes without question.

Yeah, please.

QUESTION: On a different subject, do you have any sort of readout about the talks in Rome on the new START treaty?

MR. WOOD: Yeah. The talks between Assistant Secretary Gottemoeller and the Russian Ambassador Antonov went very well. It was an initial meeting of the negotiators. It was a very productive discussion. They've gotten off to a very fast start. And there are going to be further negotiating sessions that'll take place in May and June. But I don't have anything further on that.

Yes.

ACTING DEPARTMENT SPOKESMAN DAILY PRESS BRIEFING APRIL 24, 2009

QUESTION: Do you have a readout on the meeting yesterday with Thailand's foreign minister? And was Burma discussed during that meeting?

MR. WOOD: Yes. Burma did come up in the discussion. It's an interest that both the Secretary and the Thai foreign minister expressed. They also the Secretary got a readout from the Thai foreign minister on his efforts to foster political reconciliation in the country. And the Secretary reaffirmed our commitment to strengthening the relationship with Thailand. But they did indeed, Burma did come up and they had a good discussion of it, and both countries are interested in trying to bring about an improvement of the human rights situation in Burma and are committed to working toward that end.

QUESTION: And I had a question on Sri Lanka if you would.

MR. WOOD: Yeah. Let me give you the latest details that I have on Sri Lanka.

You know, again, we remain extremely concerned for the safety of the remaining civilians in the no-fire zone. Although tens of thousands of people have fled the area, numerous people have been killed, and tens of thousands of additional civilians remain in the conflict area. We call on the Government of Sri Lanka and the Tamil Tigers to end hostilities. We understand that two Indian Government special emissaries arrived in Sri Lanka today. They are there to convey their governments concerns about the conflict to the Government of Sri Lanka. We support Indian efforts to stop the fighting.

The co-chair countries in the G-8 are working together closely to find a way to end the fighting. The Tamil Tigers must stop holding civilians and stop putting them in harms way. We call on the Tamil Tigers to lay down their arms and surrender to a third party. The international community needs to provide assistance to a large number of displaced persons. The international community should be prepared to play a role to end the fighting.

I just want to add a couple of points. We fully support the UN Secretary General's decision to send a UN humanitarian team to the no-fire zone, as the Secretary General's envoy Vijay Nambiar and President Rajapaksa discussed and agreed to last week.

We urge the Government of Sri Lanka to allow the team into the no-fire zone as soon as possible. We also urge the Government of Sri Lanka to allow critical supplies to pass more rapidly through military checkpoints, share its registration information of internally displaced persons with the UN, identify additional shelter sites, and authorize continued medical evacuations from the no-fire zone.

Assistant Secretary Boucher and Ambassador Blake participated in a conference with the Tokyo co-chair yesterday. And the co-chairs are the U.S., EU, Japan, and Norway.

So that's the latest readout I have.

QUESTION: And is the State Department in touch with officials with the Sri Lankan Government?

MR. WOOD: Yes, we are routinely in discussions with the Government of Sri Lanka.

QUESTION: And the Indian Government, too? And with the Indian Government, too?

MR. WOOD: Well, I'd have to refer you to the Indian Government for their specific conversation. I gave you just -

QUESTION: No, you are in touch with the Government of India?

MR. WOOD: Yes, yes.

QUESTION: And are you sending any team, any officials to Colombo as

MR. WOOD: At this point, no.

ACTING DEPARTMENT SPOKESMAN DAILY PRESS BRIEFING APRIL 24, 2009

David, did you have --

QUESTION: Robert, there's a concern in certain political circles in the United States that the State Department might be intending to ban commercial imports of certain ammunition, sizes of ammunition these are imports into the United States and also, possibly banning the export of certain types of firearms to Canada. I just wonder if you have anything on either of those points.

MR. WOOD: Yeah. You know, one thing, Dave, the State Department doesn't regulate the import of defense items, as you know. The Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives in Homeland the Department of Homeland Security, you know, has the primary responsibility for controlling imports of firearms. So I'd have to refer you to DHS for further info on that.

Anything else? Kirit.

QUESTION: Just wondering if you had any sort of comment on these detainee photos that are expected to be released in the next couple weeks. I was wondering whether you could say if you're concerned about a backlash in the region, in the Muslim world, and whether you're beginning to put any of your facilities on defensive notice.

MR. WOOD: Well, look, Kirit, I certainly wouldn't talk about any types of security precautions we may or may not take. But I really don't have any comment on, you know, possible release of photos at this point.

Okay?

QUESTION: Thank you.

MR. WOOD: Thank you all.

(The briefing was concluded at 1:04 p.m.)

Load-Date: April 24, 2009

Xinhua Asia-Pacific news summary at 1600 GMT, June 18

Xinhua General News Service

June 18, 2009 Thursday 1:16 AM EST

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Section: WORLD NEWS; Political

Length: 446 words

Body

HANOI -- The Vietnamese Preventive Health Center of the southern province of Vung Tau on Thursday said one person living there was found positive to the influenza A/H1N1 virus, raising number of flu patients in Vietnam to 29, Vietnam News Agency reported Thursday.

The patient is a 65-year-old Buddhist nun at the Buu Tich Ni Tu pagoda in Vung Tau. She was tested positive for the influenza virus after having contact with one recently confirmed A/H1N1 flu patient coming back from Canada, according to the report.(Vietnam- Flu)

ISLAMABAD -- As many as 34 militants were killed and seven others were arrested in the military operation in northwestern Pakistan during last 24 hours, the army said in a statement on Thursday.

Five soldiers were also injured in the operation in Malakand Division of North West Frontier Province (NWFP), said the statement. (Pakistan-Militants)

COLOMBO -- The intelligence department of Sri Lanka's defeated Tamil Tiger rebels said Thursday that the leader of the organization Vellupillai Prabhakaran has been confirmed dead.

In a statement issued to the media, the Department of Intelligence of the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (**LTTE**) also apologized for releasing an unconfirmed report on May 22 saying Prabhakaran was alive and well.(Sri Lanka-Rebel)

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According to data of Bangladesh Telecommunication Regulatory Commission (BTRC), the total number of the country's mobile phone users reached 46.41 million at the end of May, about 31.6 percent of the population.(Bangladesh-Mobile Phone)

Xinhua Asia-Pacific news summary at 1600 GMT, June 18

SINGAPORE -- Singapore has confirmed 11 new Influenza A/ H1N1 cases, bringing the number of total cases to 77, the country's Health Ministry said on Thursday.

According to the ministry, the newly confirmed cases include one who appeared to have acquired his infection in Singapore. (Singapore-Flu)

SRINAGAR, India-controlled Kashmir -- The Shopian township in India-controlled Kashmir Thursday observed complete shutdown for the 20th straight day seeking identification of the culprits involved into the rape and murder of two local women, officials and residents said.

"We have been protesting peacefully to impress upon the authorities to identify the culprits. The government failure in achieving any break through into the incident means that our womenfolk is not safe," said Ajaz Ahmad Bhat, a Shopian resident. (India-Protest)

Load-Date: June 20, 2009

End of Document

Xinhua Asia-Pacific news summary at 1600 GMT, June 18

Xinhua General News Service

June 18, 2009 Thursday 5:55 PM EST

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Section: WORLD NEWS; Political

Length: 446 words

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Load-Date: June 19, 2009

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Be vigilant against conspirators - PM

Daily News (Sri Lanka)

October 31, 2009 Saturday

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Length: 449 words

Dateline: Sri Lanka

Body

Sri Lanka, Oct. 31 -- Prime Minister Ratnasiri Wickramanayake said a conspiracy to destroy the image of our country, President Mahinda Rajapaksa, the Cabinet, the Armed Forces and the Government is being carried out by national and foreign elements. Their sole aim is to make the people prisoners. Therefore, the public and the Maha sangha must be vigilant to defeat this conspiracy.

He was addressing a ceremony held at Kalyanatho Thetharamaya at Pinwatta, Panadura on Tuesday, October 27 to present the Act of Appointment to Ven. Galwehere Dhammakiththi Nayaka Thera as the Chief Sanghanayaka Thera of the Kalutara District.

Ven. Heenatiyane Nanda tissa Nayake Thera of the Amarapura Ambagahapitiya Sect, presented the Act of Appointment to the new Chief Sanghanayaka, Ven. Galwehere Dhammakiththi Thera, the Chief Incumbent of Kalyanatho-Thetharamaya at Pinwatta, Panadura.

The Prime Minister presented the Vijinipatha to the newly appointed Adikarana Sanghanayaka Thera.

Tourism Minister Nandana Gunatilake and Western Province Health and **Women** Affairs Minister Jagath Angage offered Atapirikara. Prime Minister Wickramanayaka said the newly appointed Sanghanayaka Thera had rendered a yeoman religious and social service to the residents in the Pinwatta area for a long time.

As a mark of gratitude to him the Amarapura sector had appointed him as Sanghanayaka Thera of the Kalutara District.

The Prime Minister said the Armed Forces under the guidance of President Mahinda Rajapaksa established peace in the country destroying the **LTTE** leader and his terrorist outfit.

He stated the Government had equally treated all religions giving priority to Buddhist rights.

The Buddhasasan Commission has suggested to uplift the image of Buddhism in the country and the Government will implement certain suggestions. A Cabinet Paper will be submitted in due course regarding Sunday schools and certain other suggestions of the Buddhasasana Commission, he said.

The Prime Minister requested all parents to provide a religious education to their children through Sunday schools, if they wanted to become good citizens and spend a peaceful life in a peaceful society. Ven. Heenatiyane Nandatissa Maha Nayake of the Amarapura Ambagaha Pitiya Chapter in a anusasana paid tribute to the newly appointed Ven. Galwehere Dhammakiththi Thera for performing religious and social activities in the area to mould the character of the younger generation to live in harmony and peace.

Be vigilant against conspirators - PM

Ven. Tallale Medananda Thera of Pinwatta Pirivena were also present. Published by HT Syndication with permission from Daily News Sri Lanka. For more information on news feed please contact Sarabjit Jagirdar at htsyndication@hindustantimes.com

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Load-Date: October 31, 2009

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Indian MPs head to Sri Lanka to study Tamil relief camps

Indo-Asian News Service

October 10, 2009 Saturday

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Length: 379 words

Dateline: Chennai

Body

Chennai, Oct. 10 -- Ten MPs belonging to India's ruling alliance are headed to Sri Lanka Saturday and they said their main aim is to see the conditions in the camps where thousands of Tamils displaced by the war are housed.

"Our primary focus is to see how the internally displaced people are being maintained in the special camps in Sri Lanka and how the aid is being distributed to them," E.M. Sudarsana Natchiappan, Congress MP and a member of the delegation, told IANS.

Nearly 300,000 men, **women** and children are housed in fortified camps set up in the island's north after the military crushed the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (**LTTE**) in May.

"The delegation is one of (promoting) confidence building measures amongst the Sri Lankan Tamils, and the Indian and Sri Lankan governments," Natchiappan added.

Asked about the absence of MPs from opposition parties, he said: "The MPs' delegation is in response to the invitation extended by Sri Lankan President Mahinda Rajapaksa to Tamil Nadu Chief Minister M. Karunanidhi to visit his country and see the relief operations."

Said T.R. Baalu, DMK MP and the leader of the delegation: "The chief minister instead decided to depute a team of MPs of the ruling alliance on his behalf to have first hand information on the conditions prevailing there."

He said the delegation would study the relief operations and submit a report to Karunanidhi.

"On Oct 14 we will meet Sri Lankan President Rajapaksa. Our other programmes will be charted out by the Indian embassy there," Baalu said.

The Indian delegation will also stress on the importance of relocating the Tamils living in camps to their respective original places.

During their five-day visit, the Indian MPs will also interact with district authorities in Sri Lanka and Tamil leaders.

The other DMK members in the MPs' delegation are Kanimozhi, Karunanidhi's daughter, T.K.S. Elangovan, Helen Davidson and A.K.S. Vijayan.

Apart from Natchiappan, senior leader N.S.V. Chittan, J.M. Haroon and K.S. Azhagiri will represent the Congress while Thol Thirumavalavan of the smaller VCK party will be another member. Published by HT Syndication with permission from Indo-Asian News Service. For more information on news feed please contact Sarabjit Jagirdar at htsyndication@hindustantimes.com

Indian MPs head to Sri Lanka to study Tamil relief camps

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Load-Date: October 10, 2009

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Red Cross: Sri Lankans in 'catastrophic' situation

Associated Press Online

April 22, 2009 Wednesday 4:22 AM GMT

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Section: INTERNATIONAL NEWS

Length: 991 words

Byline: By KRISHAN FRANCIS, Associated Press Writer

Dateline: COLOMBO Sri Lanka

Body

Tens of thousands of civilians trapped in Sri Lanka's northern war zone face a "catastrophic" situation, the Red Cross said Tuesday, amid fears a final assault against the Tamil Tiger rebels would lead to a dramatic rise in casualties.

The United Nations and others have called for a negotiated truce to allow civilians to leave the rebel-held coastal strip and the government says more than 52,000 had escaped since Monday.

But it has refused to heed the international pleas to halt the fighting, saying it is on the verge of crushing the separatists and putting an end to the 25-year-old war.

The U.N. estimated more than 4,500 civilians have been killed in the past three months.

The rebels said more than 1,000 civilians died Monday in a government raid, while the government said it rescued thousands after they broke through a barrier built by the insurgents that protects their last stronghold.

Human rights groups say the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam are holding many people in the enclave against their will and using them as human shields. Those groups have also accused the government of indiscriminate shelling in the region. Both sides deny the allegations.

Thousands of civilians also fled in packed small boats, and they were picked up by navy patrols and transported to camps where Tamils who have escaped the war are being held. More than 2,000 people in about 100 boats were picked up Monday.

The Red Cross said about 50,000 civilians were still stranded, while Human Rights Watch put the number between 50,000 and 100,000.

The U.S. government released satellite images Tuesday showing about 25,000 tents housing civilians squeezed into the last small strip controlled by the rebels, a coastal strip of about only 8 square miles (21 square kilometers). The State Department estimated about 125,000 people were in the conflict zone before the exodus over the past two days.

A worker for Doctors Without Borders said hundreds of wounded were arriving at her hospital in Vavuniya, south of the war zone, in government-arranged buses, and some had died en route. The hospital is overcrowded with 1,200

Red Cross : Sri Lankans in 'catastrophic' situation

people being accommodated in a facility with only 400 beds, said mental health officer Karen Stewart, according to a statement from the aid group.

U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees Antonio Guterres was concerned about the "dramatic situation" for civilians still in the war zone, said commission spokesman Ron Redmond.

"There are innocent civilians women and children caught in the middle of the conflict ... so the high commissioner is saying there should be a pause in the hostilities and the LTTE should allow civilians to leave," Redmond said.

Military spokesman Brig. Udaya Nanayakkara denied that 1,000 civilians died, saying 17 civilians were killed Monday by rebel shelling and by three suicide bombers.

"Our troops are rescuing the trapped civilians. It's the LTTE which is preventing civilians from fleeing," Nanayakkara said.

It was impossible to get independent accounts of casualties because journalists are restricted from the war zone.

The number of fleeing civilians made it clear that the government had vastly underestimated how many people were caught in the fighting.

"Both sides need to show far greater concern for civilians, or many more civilians will die," said Brad Adams, Asia director for the New York-based group Human Rights Watch.

A final government offensive "could lead to a dramatic increase in the number of civilian casualties," the International Committee of the Red Cross said.

"The situation is nothing short of catastrophic. Ongoing fighting has killed or wounded hundreds of civilians who have only minimal access to medical care," said Red Cross operations director Pierre Kraehenbuehl. "I cannot remember ... as much concentrated pain and exposure to violence with very, very minimal possibilities to reach anywhere that could be called safe."

The U.N. Children's Fund South Asia director Daniel Toole said he was worried about the safety of children still in the war zone because "our greatest fear is that the worst is yet to come."

The military spokesman said there was no fighting Tuesday evening, adding that it avoids using heavy, long-range weapons.

Nanayakkara said 39,081 civilians fled the war zone Monday, the most in a single day, and at least 13,000 people crossed over Tuesday, with the stream continuing.

State Department spokesman Robert Wood said the U.S. was pleased so many civilians had fled, but he remained concerned about what he called credible reports of increasing casualties and indiscriminate firing on civilians by rebel forces.

Encouraged by the exodus, the government Monday asked the rebels to surrender within 24 hours, warning of a final assault if they failed. The ultimatum expired at noon (2:30 a.m. EDT) Tuesday without a response from the rebels.

President Mahinda Rajapaksa rejected a call by British Prime Minister Gordon Brown for a pause in the fighting, his office said Tuesday.

The president's office said in a statement that Rajapaksa deemed a pause "unnecessary" considering the "unexpected exodus of civilians" when the two leaders had spoken by phone Monday.

Red Cross spokeswoman Sarasi Wijeratne said the organization could not confirm or deny the figures quoted by the military. According to figures received by the Red Cross, 11,000 people crossed the front lines Monday and another 5,000 came Tuesday, she said.

Red Cross : Sri Lankans in 'catastrophic' situation

The U.N. refugee agency said it is ready to provide shelter and aid to tens of thousands of displaced civilians.

Redmond said the UNHCR was working with the government to make more land available for displacement camps because existing sites were overcrowded, he said.

The rebels have fought since 1983 for an independent state for Sri Lanka's ethnic minority Tamils. More than 70,000 people have been killed in the years of violence.

Associated Press writers Bharatha Mallawarachi in Colombo and Eliane Engeler in Geneva contributed to this report.

Load-Date: April 23, 2009

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Red Cross: Sri Lankans in 'catastrophic' situation

The Associated Press

April 21, 2009 Tuesday

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Section: INTERNATIONAL NEWS

Length: 991 words

Byline: By KRISHAN FRANCIS, Associated Press Writer

Dateline: COLOMBO, Sri Lanka

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Redmond said the UNHCR was working with the government to make more land available for displacement camps because existing sites were overcrowded, he said.

The rebels have fought since 1983 for an independent state for Sri Lanka's ethnic minority Tamils. More than 70,000 people have been killed in the years of violence.

Associated Press writers Bharatha Mallawarachi in Colombo and Eliane Engeler in Geneva contributed to this report.

Load-Date: April 22, 2009

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Change we must believe in

Daily News (Sri Lanka)

May 21, 2009 Thursday

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Length: 941 words

Dateline: Colombo

Body

Colombo, May 21 -- This week there is change everywhere. Most of it even defied conventional wisdom, international media hype, pollster results and wilful expectation. The ruthless **LTTE** terrorists are defeated and there is a sea-change in the mindsets of all Sri Lankans in wanting to rebuild and re-ignite a new national consciousness that will not allow reason for such turmoil and suffering ever again. The President's gesture of worshipping the soil of our Motherland upon his arrival at the airport from the G-11 Summit in Jordan, Sunday last was indeed symbolic and worthy of deep reflection. It was symbolic in conveying a message to all Sri Lankans that we must love and care for our country before all else and be an essential precursor to taking on a solid process of rebuilding and/or change management.

In neighbouring India, General Elections have brought about a change defeating regionalism with a strong focus on social and economic reform through a centrist thrust. Defying analysts' predictions, 62 percent of India's 712 million eligible voters brought back incumbent Prime Minister Dr. Manmohan Singh to power. This was a fete repeated after nearly four decades of India's electoral history. India's youth also heeded the call of young Rahul Gandhi, that they must be determining their own future by actively joining the political process. Nearly 80 percent of the youth who sought office through the Congress party have been returned as law makers. In the state of Tamil Nadu, extremist and overt supporters of the **LTTE** and those calling for a separate state in Sri Lanka, stood defeated at the polls. In Kuwait, male domination of its politics of over half a century has ended with four **women** being elected to its Parliament in a historic first. Earlier, we saw US President Obama, taking a definitive stand on the need for recognition of the Palestinian State by Israel, as a prerequisite for attaining lasting peace in the Middle-east. There is now definite hope that the US will be an active participant in the climate change mitigating agenda, which it resisted for far too long, when the new protocols are determined in Copenhagen in December this year. We also saw the US Secretary of State and the British Foreign Minister commenting on the IMF loan to Sri Lanka, linking it to the events on the Northern front, which indeed will not be applicable now. In the context of ending terrorism in Sri Lanka, the change that comes about poses many challenges. Already, the President, his special advisor and the one tasked with the rebuilding efforts of both East and North, Basil Rajapaksa and the Secretary of Foreign Affairs Dr. Palitha Kohona have called on all citizens of Sri Lanka and Tamil citizens in particular in Sri Lanka or abroad to be active and mainstream participants in the process of rebuilding and redevelopment of these areas. He also extended a call to the international donor community, who can play a vital role in this effort. They have all recognized the enormity of the task ahead and focussed on the need for ensuring the preservation of the dignity and rights of Tamil citizens. Emphasised is the empathy and understanding that must be at the very core of all efforts, whereby alleviating any fears of reprisal and building of trust will be facilitated. It is also heartening to note the call from Wimal Weerawansa of the National Freedom Front, seeking stakeholdership of the Tamil Diaspora in rebuilding a unified Sri Lanka. Like in everything else, all was not perfect in the initiatives undertaken. But the objectives were clearly defined and a strong focus was maintained at all times. The management of the tasks were

Change we must believe in

done superbly allowing each assigned responsibility to carry out the job without interference and hindrance. The resources needed were found and disruptions were minimised. The local media played a huge role in building and maintaining the morale of the forces in the front and some even took it to surrealistic heights. While the farmers and other rural folk of Sri Lanka, the man on the street and a better part of the middle class are elated and are ready to take heed of these initiatives, there are still those sceptics among us that question the bona-fides of the intentions and cast webs of doubt about the future efforts at rebuilding of trust, the economy and the nation. While we 'Waited for Godot' for too long, when Godot has arrived, we question if he indeed came. What is absolutely necessary at this time is to put aside these doubts and scepticism and contribute proactively in whatever and however, way we can to ensure that they work and work well. There is no need today to stay divided on political party or other ideological divides. A task that was thought to be impossible has been taken care of by a strong leadership working tirelessly at it. We all know that the odds were against these leaders most of the time. There were active attempts at sabotage with powerful international lobbies and vested interests roosting the day. The fact remains that what was defeated was a terrorist outfit and not a representative group of the Tamil people. What has been achieved this far is more than commendable. What is left to be achieved in terms of national reconciliation and development is without doubt an even greater challenge. We as citizens of Sri Lanka must focus on taking on this challenge placing inquiring trust and confidence in our leadership. What we must do is to lend our shoulder to the process of change, to the best of our ability; for Our nation, for my Sri Lanka. Published by HT Syndication with permission from Daily News Sri Lanka.

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Red Cross: Sri Lankans in 'catastrophic' situation

Associated Press Online

April 22, 2009 Wednesday 1:09 AM GMT

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Section: INTERNATIONAL NEWS

Length: 991 words

Byline: By KRISHAN FRANCIS, Associated Press Writer

Dateline: COLOMBO Sri Lanka

Body

Tens of thousands of civilians trapped in Sri Lanka's northern war zone face a "catastrophic" situation, the Red Cross said Tuesday, amid fears a final assault against the Tamil Tiger rebels would lead to a dramatic rise in casualties.

The United Nations and others have called for a negotiated truce to allow civilians to leave the rebel-held coastal strip and the government says more than 52,000 had escaped since Monday.

But it has refused to heed the international pleas to halt the fighting, saying it is on the verge of crushing the separatists and putting an end to the 25-year-old war.

The U.N. estimated more than 4,500 civilians have been killed in the past three months.

The rebels said more than 1,000 civilians died Monday in a government raid, while the government said it rescued thousands after they broke through a barrier built by the insurgents that protects their last stronghold.

Human rights groups say the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam are holding many people in the enclave against their will and using them as human shields. Those groups have also accused the government of indiscriminate shelling in the region. Both sides deny the allegations.

Thousands of civilians also fled in packed small boats, and they were picked up by navy patrols and transported to camps where Tamils who have escaped the war are being held. More than 2,000 people in about 100 boats were picked up Monday.

The Red Cross said about 50,000 civilians were still stranded, while Human Rights Watch put the number between 50,000 and 100,000.

The U.S. government released satellite images Tuesday showing about 25,000 tents housing civilians squeezed into the last small strip controlled by the rebels, a coastal strip of about only 8 square miles (21 square kilometers). The State Department estimated about 125,000 people were in the conflict zone before the exodus over the past two days.

A worker for Doctors Without Borders said hundreds of wounded were arriving at her hospital in Vavuniya, south of the war zone, in government-arranged buses, and some had died en route. The hospital is overcrowded with 1,200

Red Cross : Sri Lankans in 'catastrophic' situation

people being accommodated in a facility with only 400 beds, said mental health officer Karen Stewart, according to a statement from the aid group.

U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees Antonio Guterres was concerned about the "dramatic situation" for civilians still in the war zone, said commission spokesman Ron Redmond.

"There are innocent civilians women and children caught in the middle of the conflict ... so the high commissioner is saying there should be a pause in the hostilities and the LTTE should allow civilians to leave," Redmond said.

Military spokesman Brig. Udaya Nanayakkara denied that 1,000 civilians died, saying 17 civilians were killed Monday by rebel shelling and by three suicide bombers.

"Our troops are rescuing the trapped civilians. It's the LTTE which is preventing civilians from fleeing," Nanayakkara said.

It was impossible to get independent accounts of casualties because journalists are restricted from the war zone.

The number of fleeing civilians made it clear that the government had vastly underestimated how many people were caught in the fighting.

"Both sides need to show far greater concern for civilians, or many more civilians will die," said Brad Adams, Asia director for the New York-based group Human Rights Watch.

A final government offensive "could lead to a dramatic increase in the number of civilian casualties," the International Committee of the Red Cross said.

"The situation is nothing short of catastrophic. Ongoing fighting has killed or wounded hundreds of civilians who have only minimal access to medical care," said Red Cross operations director Pierre Kraehenbuehl. "I cannot remember ... as much concentrated pain and exposure to violence with very, very minimal possibilities to reach anywhere that could be called safe."

The U.N. Children's Fund South Asia director Daniel Toole said he was worried about the safety of children still in the war zone because "our greatest fear is that the worst is yet to come."

The military spokesman said there was no fighting Tuesday evening, adding that it avoids using heavy, long-range weapons.

Nanayakkara said 39,081 civilians fled the war zone Monday, the most in a single day, and at least 13,000 people crossed over Tuesday, with the stream continuing.

State Department spokesman Robert Wood said the U.S. was pleased so many civilians had fled, but he remained concerned about what he called credible reports of increasing casualties and indiscriminate firing on civilians by rebel forces.

Encouraged by the exodus, the government Monday asked the rebels to surrender within 24 hours, warning of a final assault if they failed. The ultimatum expired at noon (2:30 a.m. EDT) Tuesday without a response from the rebels.

President Mahinda Rajapaksa rejected a call by British Prime Minister Gordon Brown for a pause in the fighting, his office said Tuesday.

The president's office said in a statement that Rajapaksa deemed a pause "unnecessary" considering the "unexpected exodus of civilians" when the two leaders had spoken by phone Monday.

Red Cross spokeswoman Sarasi Wijeratne said the organization could not confirm or deny the figures quoted by the military. According to figures received by the Red Cross, 11,000 people crossed the front lines Monday and another 5,000 came Tuesday, she said.

Red Cross : Sri Lankans in 'catastrophic' situation

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The rebels have fought since 1983 for an independent state for Sri Lanka's ethnic minority Tamils. More than 70,000 people have been killed in the years of violence.

Associated Press writers Bharatha Mallawarachi in Colombo and Eliane Engeler in Geneva contributed to this report.

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Sri Lankan prez: War to be finished in 48 hours

Associated Press Online

May 15, 2009 Friday 5:39 PM GMT

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Section: INTERNATIONAL NEWS

Length: 953 words

Byline: By BHARATHA MALLAWARACHI, Associated Press Writer

Dateline: COLOMBO Sri Lanka

Body

Sri Lanka's president vowed to end the decades-old war against the Tamil Tiger rebels within 48 hours as the military battled Friday to take complete control of the country's coastline.

President Mahinda Rajapaksa said thousands of civilians still in the war zone will be quickly freed from a tiny slice of land still controlled by the guerrillas, formally known as the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam.

"The freedom of the Tamil civilians held hostage by the LTTE is near at hand and the rescue of all civilians in the small patch of land held by the LTTE will be done in 48 hours," Rajapaksa told migrant workers in Jordan on Thursday.

As the fighting raged, hundreds of desperate war refugees escaped the conflict zone and a top U.N. official headed here on an urgent mission to safeguard the tens of thousands of civilians still trapped amid the heavy shelling.

The government has forced the rebels out of the de facto state they once controlled in the north and cornered them in a 1.5-square mile (four-square kilometer) strip of northeastern coastline.

On Friday, two army units were fighting their way down the coast from the north and up from the south in an effort to link up, severing the rebels' last remaining sea outlet and completely encircling them, military spokesman Brig. Udaya Nanayakkara said.

The two units were only 1.1 miles (1.8 kilometers) apart, he said.

Foreign Minister Rohitha Bogollagama told The Associated Press in Jordan that Sri Lankan soldiers were probably fighting their final battle against the remaining rebel fighters. He said reports have indicated that relatives of top rebel leaders are starting to flee the war zone.

The navy stopped a suspicious boat off the northeastern coast Friday and arrested the wife, son and daughter of the rebels' sea wing leader, who were among 11 people on board, Nanayakkara said.

At least 1,800 more civilians managed to flee rebel-held territory Friday, joining more than 3,700 who waded across a lagoon to escape the day before, Nanayakkara said. The rebels fired on those leaving Thursday, killing four and wounding 14 others, he said.

Sri Lankan prez: War to be finished in 48 hours

Families packed onto inner tubes floated across the water, past rows of coiled razor wire, according to photos released by the army.

Mothers climbed out of the water clutching children, and elderly women carried their belongings in handbags. In one photo, dozens of people climbed out of a small speed boat.

About 200,000 civilians have escaped the war zone in recent months and are being held in overwhelmed displacement camps.

The rebels have denied accusations they were holding the civilians as human shields and were shooting at those trying to flee. Reports of the fighting are difficult to verify because the government has barred most journalists and aid workers from the conflict zone.

International concern has grown for tens of thousands of civilians under threat from the heavy artillery bombardments shaking the war zone, and the Red Cross warned of "an unimaginable humanitarian catastrophe" for the hundreds of wounded trapped without treatment.

Hoping to end the bloodshed, U.N. Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon sent his chief of staff, Vijay Nambiar, to Sri Lanka for a second time to try to bring the conflict to a peaceful conclusion.

Nambiar is expected to meet with top government officials after he arrives Saturday and push for ways "to secure the safety of the 50,000 to 100,000 civilians remaining inside the combat zone," U.N. spokesman Gordon Weiss said.

Meanwhile, U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton said in light of the ongoing war, the United States had raised questions about Sri Lanka's application for a \$1.9 billion loan from the International Monetary Fund that the government desperately needs.

"We think that it is not an appropriate time to consider that until there is a resolution," she said in Washington.

Bogollagama said however, countries should be rewarded for fighting terrorism rather than be penalized.

"I think these are times where countries that are countering terrorism successfully should be rewarded. When one has to be rewarded one is denied that opportunity," he said.

"I think a greater degree of understanding will prevail in Sec. Clinton and also in the IMF to look at the unfolding scenario in Sri Lanka and recognize the need for us to go forward."

The U.N. says 7,000 civilians were killed and 16,700 wounded in the fighting from Jan. 20 until May 7, according to a U.N. document given to The Associated Press by a senior diplomat. Since then, doctors in the war zone say more than 1,000 civilians were killed in a week of heavy shelling that rights groups and foreign governments have blamed on Sri Lankan forces. Sri Lanka denies firing heavy weapons into the war zone.

Health workers in the conflict zone remained in their bunkers for a second day Friday because of heavy shelling and gunfire in the area, leaving hundreds of wounded patients untreated in the area's only medical facility, according to a health official who spoke on condition of anonymity because he was not authorized to talk to the media.

A Red Cross ferry attempting to deliver desperately needed food aid and evacuate the wounded had to turn back for a third day Thursday because of the violence.

The Red Cross said the trapped civilians inside the war zone were taking cover in bunkers they had dug in the ground and were finding it even more difficult to get scarce drinking water and food.

"We need security and unimpeded access now in order to save hundreds of lives," Pierre Krahenbuhl, the International Committee of the Red Cross' director of operations, said in a statement from Geneva.

Sri Lankan prez: War to be finished in 48 hours

Associated Press writer Jamal Halaby contributed to this report from Southern Shuneh, Jordan.

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Lanka slams Hillary for accusing SL of using rape as war weapon

Hindustan Times

October 8, 2009 Thursday

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Length: 403 words

Dateline: Colombo

Body

Colombo, Oct. 7 -- Sri Lanka on Wednesday continued its diplomatic tirade against the US over secretary of state Hillary Clinton's remark that rape was used as a weapon of war in during the war with the LTTE.

Speaking on live radio programme, Prime Minister Ratnasiri Wickramanayaka said Clinton seemed to have forgotten the Monica (Lewinsky) episode and should focus on her own backyard instead of making allegations of women being abused in other countries.

The Lankan PM was referring to Hillary Clinton's husband, former President Bill Clinton, who in the late '90s was under some uncomfortable spotlight after being accused of sexually abusing his staff member Monica Lewinsky.

Wickramanayaka said the issue of Clinton's statement might have been settled with the US State Department issuing a clarification, but her allegations were serious in nature and could not be taken lightly.

Wickramanayaka added that former US Ambassador to Sri Lanka and current US Under secretary of State Robert Blake was attempting to present a war crimes report on Sri Lanka and bring charges against some Sri Lankan government officials.

Meanwhile, Britain has expressed disappointment with Sri Lanka's handling of war-displaced civilians and demanded that they be given the freedom to leave state-run camps.

"Freedom of movement is critical if a humanitarian crisis is to be averted," visiting British Development Minister Mike Foster said after touring the camps, where over 250,000 civilians are being detained. Foster, who began a two-day visit Tuesday, also voiced concern over the conditions in the camps.

Foster said a package of \$4.8 million was in the pipeline to assist Sri Lanka in resettlement work, but added that it could not use the money to transfer people from one camp to another.

"Mike Foster made clear that Britain's funding could not support people simply being transferred from existing 'closed' camps - which detain civilians for long periods of time - to new 'closed' camps," the British High Commission said. "Freedom of movement has to be allowed now."

He said Britain will also talk to other foreign donors to see if they would agree to withhold aid after the rains cease in a bid to force Colombo to dismantle the camps and free people. Published by HT Syndication with permission from Hindustan Times. For more information on news feed please contact Sarabjit Jagirdar at htsyndication@hindustantimes.com

Lanka slams Hillary for accusing SL of using rape as war weapon

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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Weekend Australian

October 31, 2009 Saturday

1 - All-round Country Edition

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Section: FEATURES; Pg. 15

Length: 2574 words

Body

Sri Lankan government has a role to play in this

MOST TALKED ABOUT

INDONESIAN STANDOFF

WHILE the media has got itself a great story ("Asylum deadline ticking", 29/10), the real dilemmas inherent in refugee policy have to be faced with something more humane and intelligent than another Pacific Solution.

The Sri Lankan government has declined to accommodate the demands of its Tamil minority who came to the country from India, and has crushed the Tamils' armed resistance. The close and logical safe haven for refugees would seem to be the Tamil-speaking Indian state of Tamil Nadu. However, Tamils who have money and overseas connections will want to make it to countries such as Britain and other European Union nations, Canada or Australia to get a better life and where there are Tamil Associations to help them settle.

The task of separating the **Tamil Tigers** from civilian Tamils will not be an easy one, but the Sri Lankan government, as a signatory of the UN Charter and Human Rights Conventions, should be required to re-absorb and rehabilitate all but the most militant of the Tamil fighters with generosity and compassion.

John Piper

Waverton, NSW

ROWAN Callick's article ("Paradise awaits onshore", 29/10) must have been written in jest. He cannot be serious in asserting that "If the Sri Lankans (aboard the Oceanic Viking) venture on shore (to Bintan Island, Indonesia), they may find almost as many economic opportunities await as in Australia ..." Surely he knows that these asylum-seekers will be locked up in the Australian-built detention centre for at least 10 years before their cases will be decided on.

The Indonesians (and the Malaysians) are not signatories to the UN Convention on Refugees and have a squalid track record in their treatment of refugees -- just ask any Australian Vietnamese who had to endure many years of "hospitality" at these camps before arriving in Australia. Anyone who has witnessed the conditions in these refugee camps will confirm that they're not fit to keep animals in, much less humans.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Callick's description of Bintan's bright economic future compared to the rest of Indonesia, Sri Lanka and Australia is an insidious attempt to paint the asylum-seekers as opportunistic economic migrants.

Jay Esslingen

Corinda, Qld

THE Tamil boatpeople now in Indonesia act as if Australia has an unquestionable obligation to accept them. Perhaps they are right.

The Howard government did not proscribe the **Tamil Tigers** in Australia, although some 30 countries including Britain, the US, the EU and Canada did. As a result, the Tigers freely channelled huge sums of money for the terrorist war in Sri Lanka from Australian soil. Sri Lanka was virtually destroyed and when the Tigers were finally defeated, they left some 300,000 people displaced from their homes. It's known that there are Tamil Tiger terrorists among the boatpeople and they too will enter Australia with the rest. It's therefore incumbent upon the Rudd government to proscribe the **Tamil Tigers**, before they re-group and make Australia their launching pad for terror.

Rohan Bandarage

Cottesloe, WA

IF these uncooperative asylum-seekers are refusing to have health checks and assist with identity requests, then they have no place in Australian society. The Oceanic Viking is well positioned to immediately return them to Sri Lanka with a very clear message to a rather large audience.

Malcolm Moore

Turramurra, NSW

KEVIN Rudd, having got us into this unholy asylum-seeker mess, has one simple solution to it: get the message out that Australia does not respond to blackmail. Not one single person in any boatload of people should retain the perception that they only have to make enough trouble and they will immediately attain their objective. Rudd has brought this problem on himself, it's simple to fix if he has sufficient courage and leadership, which, sadly, I doubt.

Patricia Smith

Mt Martha, Vic

THAT 78 Sri Lankans were rescued, evidently by HMAS Armidale and then transferred to the Oceanic Viking, from a leaking boat whilst trying to make an unauthorised entry into Australia is most laudible and in the tradition of saving life at sea.

However, since then, the situation has degenerated into a position where nobody seems willing or capable of making the tough decisions. The Oceanic Viking is a ship operated and designed to assist in border protection, but at the moment it is at anchor off an island in the Indonesian archipelago. The operation of this vessel must cost the Australian taxpayer in the order of thousands of dollars a day, yet she is not doing that for which she is employed. Is not being on board an Australian vessel tantamount to being on Australian soil? If so, these 78 people should immediately be taken to Christmas Island or perhaps even brought to Australia.

N. Bailey

Murrumbateman, NSW

THERE is a simple way to get the asylum-seekers off the Oceanic Viking. Set up a feeding station on the dock and tell them that as of now that is where they will be fed.

Clive Bond

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Cleveland, Qld

GIVE in to boatpeople threatening suicide if they're not brought here and the flow will never end.

Judith McPherson

Toowoomba, Qld

Why raise rates when economy is still recovering?

GIVE us a break. How in all common sense can the Reserve Bank even contemplate raising interest rates at present ("Bet on 25-point rise on Cup Day", 29/10)?

Do they want to send Australia into a downward spiral before the economy has had a chance to regain lost ground. People have suffered greatly, and still are, at the hands of the global financial crisis over which they have no control. Now as they claw their way back, the Reserve Bank has apparently decided the economy is gaining ground too quickly and must be quashed. This is barbaric. I have seen good people looking day in and day out for work, and then slowly lose their ability to function in the community because they are unable to provide for their families.

Don't try to justify raising interest rates to ordinary Australians because it won't work. The Reserve Bank board should come to Cairns, where the unemployment rate is now 16 per cent and rising, and tell these people that interest rate rises are necessary.

All the hard work done to keep the economy moving will be in vain if interest rates keep going up when people are tentatively trying to find their feet.

Anne-Marie Whelan

Kewarra Beach, Qld

INFLATION has risen 1 per cent during the September quarter, driven by increases of 14.1 per cent for water and sewerage services, 11.4 per cent for electricity and 5.7 per cent for property rates and charges. So the decisions of state and local governments to raise utility and property charges is going to result in the Reserve Bank increasing interest rates. I can't wait until Kevin Rudd's emissions trading scheme starts.

Richard Shankland

Pymble, NSW

IT looks like the bragging from Kevin and Wayne about their economic credentials might have been a tad premature. It is becoming increasingly evident, reinforced by Wayne's discomfort and Kevin's distancing himself from anything to do with the economy, that they know they have created a situation that is out of control.

With government spending continuing unabated, the Reserve Bank cranking up interest rates to stifle the inflationary effects of that spending, and the geniuses in the Treasury all at sea, where to now? It's all very well to be the first country to raise interest rates -- a dubious honour that some of the media reported as another great Rudd achievement -- but if they hadn't overstimulated us in the first place, things would be clearer ("Henry and RBA at odds over the scale of inflation threat", 29/10).

Love him or hate him, Peter Costello's experience would have been invaluable, but Kevin and Wayne laughed at him when he told them they were going too far.

Don Stallman

Brisbane, Qld

Role-model pool shrinks

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

HOW very counter-productive of Andre Agassi to admit to all the young people who look up to him that he cheated the system with drugs ("Champs double fault", Features, 29/10). The role-model pool gets smaller and smaller. Pity.

B. Worrall

Mosman, NSW

A smart tennis player he was, but a smart author he isn't.

Kevin King

Glenelg South, SA

Vote with their backsides

IT'S rare to get such a clear demonstration of the thinking and attitudes that have led to the decline of the public school system and the flow of students to the private sector as that contained in the letter from Shane Budden (Letters, 29/10).

Your correspondent argues that parents have no idea about what is best for their children and that they cannot be relied upon to be anything other than extreme in their conduct and irrational in their thinking. He portrays parents as a rabble hell-bent on rampaging through the education system with no concern about the long-term educational outcomes for their children. He presents principals as bumbling and incompetent people who are only motivated by a desire to get out of the classroom and to make more money.

As a teacher for 14 years who left the system more than 20 years ago to pursue a career in management, I must say that these were the very attitudes that I encountered in the public system all those years ago, namely: disdain, verging on contempt, for parents and their aspirations for their children; a staunch refusal to look at actual educational outcomes; a refusal to be accountable for individual teacher performance; and a commitment to dogma over reason.

Decentralisation of decision-making, including funding and the right to hire and fire at the school level, is essential to the reform of the state school system. Without it, the tail will continue to wag the dog and the state system will continue to decline as parents vote with the backsides of their children. Welcome to the real world, Shane.

Peter Perry

Lockleys, SA

The warnings were ignored

FURTHER to the article by Hal G.P. Colebatch ("The Saigon media slaughter they don't talk about", Commentary, 30/10), the following background to the killings of the journalists in Saigon might be of interest.

The Viet Cong had repeatedly broadcast warnings to stay out of areas they had occupied in the fighting, but the Australian journalists deliberately went there; other media people had been captured and released by the Viet Cong elsewhere. Further, and fatally for this group of journalists, the Viet Cong became aware that at least two photographers had been using weapons in fighting near Saigon's Tan Son Nhut airfield. One, ex-US navy, was killed. The other, ex-Australian army, survived. When the media community learned of the killings in Cholon, and that the killer had sarcastically said "bao chi" as he fired, a contract was put on the life of the Australian photographer by others in the media, who blamed him for the deaths. Taking due care, he survived.

I was on the staff of the military attache's office in the Australian embassy and was assigned to investigate the killings. I found a US military unit that had been in that part of the city and spoke to the soldiers. They had warned

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

the journalists that the enemy were ``just around that corner" but were ignored. The war went on; 135 photographers of many nations were killed in the Indochina wars.

Lex McAulay

Maryborough, Qld

I WAS interested to read Hal Colebatch's article on the unequal perception of the killing of a group of journalists in Saigon in 1968 and the one in Balibo in 1975. Michael Birch was my cousin, and the description of his death from survivor Frank Palmos was harrowing. I'm pleased to know it has not been forgotten, and thank you for the article.

Lynne Leighton

Tweed Heads South, NSW

Not much to worry about

TO describe the views expressed by British barrister Paul Diamond (``Rights threat to religious tolerance", 28/10) as misleading would be generous. The British Airways case he cites as an example of the pernicious effect of the UK's Human Rights Act was in fact decided under the Equality (Religion or Belief) Regulations 2003.

The judgment includes just one passing reference to the Human Rights Act. This is hardly surprising: in reality, a human rights claim cannot be brought in an Employment Tribunal and also can't be brought against private companies such as British Airways. The case was dismissed on the basis that the claimant had not suffered discrimination. Diamond also fails to disclose that before the claim was decided, British Airways voluntarily adopted a new uniform policy which allowed employees to wear a visible crucifix.

My search of the legal databases for Diamond's frightening case concerning David Booker returned no results. If it's anything like the BA case, I don't think Australians have too much to worry about.

The UK's Human Rights Act in fact strengthens protection for religious freedom. The Act recognises the right to freedom of religion, which includes the right to manifest religion or belief, in worship, teaching, practice and observance. This right can only be interfered with in the interests of public safety, for the protection of public order, health or morals, or for the protection of the rights and freedoms of others.

Michelle Pratley

(Barrister-at-law)

London, UK

FIRST BYTE

letters@theaustralian.com.au

Can I get odds yet on whether our boys on the Oceanic Viking will be home for Xmas?

John Sumner

Deviot, Tas

We've had the Pacific Solution and now we are on to the Indonesian solution, both of which are controversial. I propose the New Zealand solution: I reckon they would be grateful for some extra people because most of theirs are here.

Dave Knight

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Viveash, WA

Indonesia will determine who

disembarks from an Australian customs boat and the circumstances under which they disembark.

Thom Puckett

Ashgrove, Qld

I call them Kliches, and if you run them all together you get: ``I make no apology for taking a hardline against working families who are not yet out of the woods."

Trevor Hay

Nannup, WA

When read collectively, your political, economic and national affairs articles this week should be pointing towards a one-term government. Sadly, we seemed to be saddled with a multi-term opposition.

Robin Flannery

Parrearra, Qld

Queenland's budget is back in surplus partly thanks to a revaluation of the land beneath the state's roads (``Bligh not blithe on surprising surplus", 30/10). It's a pity such a simple solution is not available to the owners of Cubbie Station.

David Crommelin

Strathfield, NSW

Name a designer who can create fashion which looks good on bigger women. There is nobody because it requires a lot more skill than decorating broomsticks.

Karin Francis

Cooran, Qld

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

GPO Box 4162, Sydney, NSW, 2001 Fax: 02 9288 3077

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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

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For information on buying prints of any Bill Leak cartoon go to leakcartoons@theaustralian.com.au

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To buy a print of a Nicholson cartoon go to <http://www.nicholsoncartoons.com.au/print>

Load-Date: October 30, 2009

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Asylum-seekers threaten to torch boat in Indonesia: navy

Agence France Presse -- English

October 14, 2009 Wednesday 10:48 AM GMT

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Length: 428 words

Dateline: BANTEN, Indonesia, Oct 14 2009

Body

More than 250 Sri Lankans seeking asylum in Australia have threatened to set fire to their boat if they are forced to disembark in Indonesia, an official said Wednesday.

The Indonesian navy intercepted the boat with 255 men, women and children on board in the Sunda Strait and towed it to the West Java port of Banten on Tuesday, Banten provincial navy chief S. Irawan said.

"While their boat was being towed to the port, they protested. Some of them jumped into the sea and some of them threatened to set the boat on fire," Irawan said.

"They thought they would be deported once they reached the shore."

One of the migrants, who gave his name as Alex, told AFP the group wanted political asylum in Australia.

"We don't want to be deported to Sri Lanka. Our government suspects that we're separatists from LTTE (Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam) but we're not," he said.

They had strung a sign on the wooden boat saying: "We are Sri Lankan civilians. Please save our lives."

Navy spokesman Iskandar Sitompul said the migrants had flown from Sri Lanka to Malaysia in small groups starting in July, and had sheltered in the jungle for over two months before attempting the boat journey to Australia.

They are believed to have set sail from the Indonesian province of West Kalimantan on October 6.

"They're traumatised. They said there were violence and beatings in Malaysia but didn't know who the perpetrators were. They don't want to get off the boat now because they're worried something similar will happen here," he said.

He added that a people-smuggling syndicate consisting of players from "several countries" was suspected of arranging the trip to Australia, which has repeatedly urged Indonesia to do more to curb the flow of illegal immigrants.

The fire threat comes after five asylum-seekers were killed and dozens injured in a blast on a people-smuggling boat off Australia in April. Police have claimed a fire on board was deliberately lit.

Asylum-seekers threaten to torch boat in Indonesia : navy

Indonesia is a popular staging-point for people-smugglers ferrying migrants to Australia by sea.

Australian Prime Minister Kevin Rudd on Tuesday said he had spoken to Indonesian President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono about illegal immigration but did not confirm a report that he had tipped off the Indonesians about the boat.

The Indonesian navy is coordinating with the immigration department and the International Organisation for Migration on how best to handle the issue, navy spokesman Sitompul said.

"In the meantime, we have sent food and water to them and have taken several who were unwell to hospital," he said.

str-aa-aub/smc/bsk

Load-Date: October 15, 2009

End of Document

SRI LANKA: HOPES HIGH FOR CHANGE WITH UPCOMING ELECTIONS

IPS - Inter Press Service

November 14, 2009 Saturday

Copyright 2009 IPS - Inter Press Service/Global Information Network

Length: 1159 words

Byline: Feizal Samath

Dateline: COLOMBO, Nov 14 2009

Body

Political developments are rapidly unfolding as the public eagerly awaits the President's announcement on Sunday of the date for the next presidential or parliamentary polls-an event widely expected to bring about a new leadership that could bring to fruition the people's collective yearnings for a return to law and order as well as discipline.

"Discipline has crumbled in the country. There is no order," said a sports journalist working for a local newspaper, who declined to be named.

Rajapaksa's popularity soared during heightened battles between government forces and Tamil separatist guerrillas in the past 36 months. Yet in recent months it has been slipping, with the resignation on Thursday of a popular and powerful army general further lifting a rejuvenated opposition.

General Sarath Fonseka, Chief of Defence Staff and widely credited with leading the army to a crushing victory over Tamil rebels in May this year, has resigned from his position over disagreements with the President. Once a key member of the 'war cabinet' with Rajapaksa and his brother, Defence Secretary Gotabhaya Rajapaksa, Fonseka fell out with the brothers in a spat over who should take credit for the victory.

The General is widely tipped to enter the presidential race as a common candidate for an opposition alliance, which includes the main opposition United National Party (UNP)-a development that has been played out daily in newspapers, radio and television, and endorsed by a large segment of the population.

The spat with the ruling party hierarchy, which has been publicly aired, has lifted the opposition from its subordinate position. Daily press conferences and small public meetings among opposition leaders headed by UNP chief Ranil Wickremasinghe have denounced the government and praised Fonseka, turning the entire process into an election campaign.

It was only a few months back, just before the war ended in May and soon after, that the government won overwhelmingly at a series of provincial elections.

Jehan Perera, director of the National Peace Council and a popular political commentator, says the Fonseka factor has completely revived the opposition. "Optimism is growing in the opposition camp as there is a sense that they have (finally) found a candidate that can win against Rajapaksa," he said. Rajapaksa has been in power since November 2005. His political fate will be decided in the polls due to be held between January and April next year, the exact date of which will be known by Sunday.

SRI LANKA : HOPES HIGH FOR CHANGE WITH UPCOMING ELECTIONS

Fonseka has studiously avoided the media since his disagreement became public with the current administration. His reported political plans have drawn criticisms from government ministers - which in turn have become fodder for the local press.

Soon after his resignation on Thursday, Sri Lanka's most decorated soldier visited a Buddhist temple with his wife to take part in religious observances. Swarmed by the media, Fonseka deftly parried questions on his political future.

"I am a soldier, still in uniform (until the end of the month when the resignation takes effect). After that I will resume civilian life and have the same rights as a civilian," the 59-year old official said with a mischievous twinkle in his eyes.

The jubilation and fervour that greeted his anticipated foray into politics has been seen as a welcome respite from the people's desperation over the breakdown in law and discipline since the war against the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) began.

Abductions of political opponents and harassment of the media in which scores of journalists have been killed, assaulted or abducted, among other human rights issues, have prompted the West to accuse the government of turning a blind eye to several international conventions on human rights and governance that Sri Lanka has ratified.

Citing allegations of rampant corruption in the present government, UNP leader Wickremasinghe has pointed fingers at some members of the Rajapaksa clan, including Basil Rajapaksa, a powerful advisor to the president, and Minister Chamal Rajapaksa, both brothers of the president.

Although public support was high and tolerant of other misdeeds during the recent, bloody military campaign against the rebels, sympathy towards the president and the government is now waning.

While the war against the Tamil rebels, who have been involved in a near 30- year armed struggle to push for more power in the northern and eastern regions where most of the Tamil minority community lives, has effectively ended, thousands of civilians displaced during the fierce fighting between the government troops and the LTTE, still remain in government camps.

"I feel the General can restore law and order. We have lost our 'Vinnaya' (discipline)," Nishantha Amila, a 22-year-old shopkeeper, who said he supported the war campaign.

Wariyapola Silva, a taxi driver, is confident that the General can restore discipline in the country, and with that the cost of living burden will also be taken care of. "He can get rid of corruption and use that money to cut huge expenditure costs of government and reduce the cost of goods," he said.

This week, trade unions attached to the petroleum, water, electricity and ports sectors launched a work-to-rule campaign that ended on Friday, backing demands for a wage hike that they said had been delayed for three years due to high war spending.

The campaign, in which workers refused overtime and shift work or fill for an absent colleague, failed to disrupt services. But unions are still flexing their muscles for a general strike in the coming weeks-in all sectors, including the private sector-backed by political parties.

Kadirgama Thangeswary, a female parliamentarian from the Tamil National Alliance in the eastern town of Batticaloa, says the Chief Minister Sivanesanathurai Chandrakanthan, a former militant backed by the Rajapaksa administration, is harassing his opponents.

"There is no law and order in Batticaloa. Last month, officials who invited me to open some libraries in the region were threatened and warned," she said, adding that abductions were taking place daily.

Wijedasa Rajapakse, a former minister and government parliamentarian who recently crossed over to the opposition, says the problem (over Fonseka) began when the war ended and there was a scramble for "credits".

SRI LANKA : HOPES HIGH FOR CHANGE WITH UPCOMING ELECTIONS

"The government wanted to take credit for the war. The Rajapaksas wanted credit and so did Fonseka. Then there was a rift and the General was sidelined," he said. Gen Fonseka has in recent speeches said credit for winning the war should go to the soldiers and not the politicians, a remark that has repeatedly irked the government.

"During this clash for credits, the people saw who the real heroes were. They also saw Fonseka as someone who would bring the rule of law and discipline back to society. The people have been waiting for someone to provide strong and disciplined leadership and that's how Fonseka has emerged," he said.

Load-Date: November 16, 2009

End of Document

Housing projects for war heroes

Daily News (Sri Lanka)

July 28, 2009 Tuesday

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Length: 417 words

Dateline: Colombo

Body

Colombo, July 28 -- Homes will be provided for the police officers who had become victims of terrorism in the past. This will be done as a gratitude for the sacrifices the war heroes made in the battlefield. Beliatta has been selected as the location of the first set of houses of this project as a tribute to President Mahinda Rajapaksa who led three armed forces towards the victory, President of the Police Seva Vavintha Unit, Attorney-At-Law Anoma Goonetilleke told the Daily News'.

She said 15 houses to be built under this project and the first three houses will be built at Beliatta and the foundation stones were laid for those houses on the same day the LTTE leader V.Prabhakaran was killed. The construction work of those three houses have already been completed and they will be handed over to the war heroes before the end of August by President Mahinda Rajapaksa. Another three houses to be built at Meerigama and three more houses will be constructed at Trincomalee under the same housing project. The houses to be built at Trincomalee will be distributed among three war heroes belong to the three ethnicities. Each house to be built under this project costs around Rs.600,000/-. All 34 branches of the Police Seva Vanitha Unit will do the coordination and assist this program. A land of one acre will be distributed among the police officers who do not have even a small land for themselves, she said. The Police Seva Vanitha Unit has organized a cultural show on August 1 at 6.30 pm at Elphinston Theatre, Maradana under the patronage of First Lady Shiranthi Rajapaksa to raise funds for this housing project. Young male and female police officers in the Police Department who have come from all parts of the country will present this show. Many reputed commercial establishments including the National Lotteries Board, Sri Lanka Telecom Mobitel, Bank of Ceylon, Commercial Bank, Pan Asia Bank have come forward to sponsor this show. The show gives an opportunity for the youth in the Police Department to show their talents in the field of performing arts. The Police Seva Vanitha Unit welcomes assistance from the private sector for its hospital upgrading project. Under this project Kundasale hospital is to be upgraded. Assistance is required immediately to provide mobile x-ray machine which costs around Rs.4 million. Published by HT Syndication with permission from Daily News Sri Lanka. For more information on news feed please contact Surit Das at htsyndication@hindustantimes.com

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Load-Date: July 28, 2009

Truth Must Prevail , Peninsula says

Qatar News Agency

May 30, 2009 Saturday 7:52 AM EST

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ARABIA 2000

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Length: 451 words

Body

Doha, May 30 (QNA) - The English language newspaper 'The Peninsula' has editorially said, "A Times expose on alleged war crimes committed by Sri Lankan troops in the final days of the civil war must be treated with the seriousness and impartiality it deserves ? seriousness, because any crimes committed by a state in a civil war are reprehensible because its firepower is far more ferocious than its enemy and can unleash great misery if not exercised with restraint, and impartiality because the report should not be used as a ploy to whip up global anger against the Sri Lankan government which has won the war against heavy odds.

The London-based newspaper said in an investigative report that more than 20,000 Tamil civilians were killed in the final throes of the war, most as a result of government shelling. This number is three times the official figure, and contradicts the official version that the army stopped using heavy weapons on April 27 and observed the no-fire zone where 100,000 Tamil men, women and children were sheltering.

The government has blamed all civilian casualties on Tiger rebels concealed among the civilians, but the Times has backed up the story with aerial photographs, official documents, witness accounts and expert testimony, the paper added.

Coming as it does from a newspaper which enjoys a global readership and reputation, the government of Sri Lanka is finding itself in a bind after the revelation. Repeating the official version and trading charges of anti-government bias will not help to deflect the global public anger, and all the more so because official versions are often taken with a pinch of salt in such cases. What will lend credence to the Times report is the fact that the entire battle zone was a no-entry area both for the media and aid organisations and the government had stubbornly refused access despite repeated pleas.

The onus is now on the government to come clean on the report, by launching an independent inquiry that is acceptable to all. The government has nothing to fear if its hands are clean; on the other hand, any dithering in launching a probe will trigger charges of government's complicity and result in renewed calls for a war crimes inquiry.

Truth Must Prevail , Peninsula says

Colombo has been lucky enough to garner global support for its anti-**LTTE** operation which has come in the face of intense pressure from native Tamil groups. The government had also won the diplomatic war on Wednesday, when it was cleared of any wrongdoing by the UN Human Rights Council after winning the backing of countries including China, Egypt, India and Cuba. Despite all these, the truth must prevail, at any cost, the Peninsula concluded. (QNA)

NK,MD

QNA 0609 GMT 2009/05/30

Load-Date: May 31, 2009

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Houses for police terrorist victims

Sunday Observer (Sri Lanka)

September 20, 2009 Sunday

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Length: 421 words

Dateline: Sri Lanka

Body

Sri Lanka, Sept. 20 -- Houses will be provided for the police officers who were victims of terrorism during the past. This will be done in gratitude for various sacrifices they made during the war.

Beliatta has been selected as the location of the first set of houses of this project as a tribute to President Mahinda Rajapaksa who led the three Armed Forces towards victory, President of the Police Seva Vanitha Unit, Attorney-at-Law Anoma Goonetilleke said.

She said that 15 houses will be built under this project and the first three houses are located at Beliatta and the foundation stones were laid for those houses on the same day **LTTE** leader V. Prabhakaran was killed. The construction work of those three houses have been completed.

Another three houses will be built at Meerigama and three more houses will be constructed at Trincomalee. The houses to be built at Trincomalee will be distributed among those belonging to the three ethnicities. Each house built under this project will cost around Rs. 600,000. All 34 branches of the Police Seva Vanitha Unit will coordinate and assist in this program.

A land of one acre will be distributed among the police officers who do not have any land for themselves, she said. The Police Seva Vanitha Unit held a cultural show on August 1 at 6.30 pm at Elphinston Theatre, Maradana under the patronage of First Lady Shiranthi Rajapaksa in order to raise funds for this housing project.

Mrs. Kusum Wickremanayake, Mrs. Ayoma Rajapaksa, Presidents of Seva Vanitha Units of the Armed Forces and several other invitees were present. Young **female** police officers in the Police Department who have come from all parts of Sri Lanka presented a cultural show. All the male characters were played by the WPCs. They were awarded special certificates by IGP Jayantha Wickramaratne. Wives of senior DIGs, SSPs and SPs also participated. Several songs, were short dramas, dances and other cultural items were included in the show.

Many reputed commercial establishments including the National Lotteries Board, Sri Lanka Telecom, Mobitel, Bank of Ceylon, Commercial Bank and Pan Asia Bank sponsored this show. The show provided an opportunity for the youth in the Police Department to display their talents in the field of performing arts. The total profit of the show was around Rs. 700,000 for the housing project. Published by HT Syndication with permission from Sunday Observer (Sri Lanka). For more information on news feed please contact Sarabjit Jagirdar at htsyndication@hindustantimes.com

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Houses for police terrorist victims

Load-Date: September 21, 2009

End of Document

I hope Pak shows courage: PM

Hindustan Times

June 10, 2009 Wednesday

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Length: 435 words

Dateline: India

Body

India, June 10 -- It's in India's "vital interest" to try to revive the peace dialogue with Pakistan, which was stalled after the 26/11 Mumbai attacks, Prime Minister Manmohan Singh has said. But, Singh made it clear that Islamabad would have to take "strong, effective and sustained action" to prevent its territory from being used by terrorists.

With the recent release of Pakistan-based terror mastermind Hafeez Saeed raising questions over Islamabad's sincerity to probe the Mumbai attacks, the Prime Minister said Pakistan should do all it can to bring to justice those who have committed crimes against India, including the Mumbai attack. "If the leaders of Pakistan have the courage, determination and statesmanship to take this road to peace, I assure them we will meet them more than half the way," Singh said in Lok Sabha and later in Rajya Sabha, while replying to the debate on the Motion of Thanks on the President's address. He said he had "a vision of a transformed South Asia where, with the cooperation of all our neighbours, we move from poverty to prosperity." But he stressed, "I recognise it takes two hands to clap. There are some disturbing trends, but I do hope that? Pakistan will create an atmosphere in which we can realise this vision." Singh said even the United States had come to terms with the reality of the situation and opened a dialogue with Iran. Singh's speech marked "a new beginning" in Opposition-government relations, with his bipartisan approach being expected to help resolve national problems, including the challenges of development and security. The Prime Minister spoke on a wide range of issues, including the attack on Indian students in Australia, the economic slowdown, poverty, terror, Naxalite violence and the promise of fuelling inclusive growth. He, however, made no reference to the Women's Reservation Bill, although he made a cursory reference to the empowerment of women in the Upper House. Singh resolved to deal firmly with terrorism and outlined a two-pronged approach to tackle Naxalism by ensuring the development of regions breeding Left wing extremism. He also listed the steps taken, after the Mumbai terror strike, on toning up security, including maritime security. Singh expected the Sri Lankan government to show courage in meeting the legitimate concerns and aspirations of the Tamil people to live their lives as equal citizens. The Tamil problem is larger than the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE), he said. He also advocated strong and stable relations with China. Published by HT Syndication with permission from Hindustan Times.

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Load-Date: June 10, 2009

LETS DEFEAT DRUGS AND TOBACCO MENACE: PRESIDENT

Daily Mirror (Sri Lanka)

May 30, 2009 Saturday

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Length: 417 words

Dateline: Colombo

Body

Colombo, May 30 -- President Mahinda Rajapaksa yesterday vowed that his government will take every step possible to make Sri Lanka a drug and tobacco free country by 2015.

Delivering the keynote address at the inauguration of the propaganda campaign launched by the National Anti Tobacco Authority (NATA) at the Presidential Secretariat yesterday, President Rajapaksa said the war against drugs, alcohol and tobacco would be won in the same manner the menace of terrorism was eradicated from the shores of Sri Lanka. "In 2005 we pledged to create a country free of drugs, alcohol and tobacco under the 'Mathata Thitha' programme. We gave prominence to that objective even more than we did our target to achieve durable peace with dignity. The country is still in a jubilant mood after the great victory against the **LTTE's** terrorism that plagued the country for 30 years. We have achieved this victory after 21/2 years. The daunting task we have before us now is to win the fight against drugs, alcohol and tobacco," he emphasized. **Women** and children are the ones that have suffered most from the long fight against terrorism and it is they who will continue to suffer from the menace of drugs and alcohol in the future. The creation of a nation free of tobacco, drugs and alcohol means we are rescuing millions of **women** and children from a bleak future, he stressed. The government will not hesitate to bring in legislation to rid the country of drugs and alcohol. The laws that have already been introduced to control tobacco use have paid dividends. Despite the loss of income to the Treasury, the government will bring more legal provisions to see an end to this menace, President Rajapaksa said. It is the responsibility of the law enforcement authorities to remove the root causes that lead to the spread of drugs and alcoholism. They must apprehend not those who go to jail on behalf of the king pins producing illicit liquor, but the big man himself, he added. The responsibility to save the country from the menace of drugs and alcoholism lies on not only the government but other social and religious agencies as well, President Rajapaksa noted. Healthcare and Nutrition Minister Nimal Siripala De Silva said Sri Lanka was in the forefront of the fight against drugs and alcohol in the region. We were the first country in South Asia and fourth in the world that ratified the WHO covenant to control drugs and drug trafficking. Published by HT Syndication with permission from Daily Mirror Sri Lanka.

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Load-Date: May 30, 2009

Regime change: there's a right way and a wrong way

Daily News (Sri Lanka)

November 4, 2009 Wednesday

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Length: 1002 words

Dateline: Sri Lanka

Body

Sri Lanka, Nov. 4 -- Mahinda Rajapaksa, overcame all odds to win the Presidency in November 2005. Few gave him a chance, given that he didn't have the support of his party, didn't have big-name financiers chipping in the millions necessary for an election campaign and didn't have the personnel on the ground to do the daily house-to-house grind.

Perhaps he was helped by the fact that his opponent, Ranil Wickremesinghe had a difficult brief to defend and perhaps also by the fact that the LTTE prevented Tamils in the North and East from expressing their franchise.

One thing is certain though: The man had a clear message and succeeded in bringing into his fold men, women and organizations from all parts of the island to campaign on his behalf.

Mahinda Rajapaksa won by a whisker. Today, as he approaches the completion of four years in office, his stock has risen considerably. The 'popularity' gap between him and his opponent is no longer 'a whisker'. It is probably in the region of 25-35 percentage point or even more. If he were to seek re-election today, few would bet against the President.

On the other hand, it must be remembered that in a democracy, no one gets 100 percent approval from the public.

Differences in aspiration, political ideology, party affiliation, caste, class, religious faith, vocation, ethnic identity, gender, age and so on necessarily produce a multifaceted population.

There will always be those who support and those who oppose this or that candidate. In a democracy, the 'opposition' has a right to exist, right to express opposition and a right to aspire to power, meaning that it can want and seek 'regime change'. All this is legitimate.

The problem we have in Sri Lanka today is that while there is wide support for the regime in Sri Lanka (and no one can really argue that the voters are dumb without sounding dumb him/herself), there are discernable moves from many fronts outside Sri Lanka to obtain regime change.

The second problem is that the 'opposition' seems to have put all his 'aspirational' eggs in the foreign-intervention basket.

This is dangerous because when one is so dependent on some outsider's power it brings into that person's right to represent the people, leave alone rule the country.

Regime change: there's a right way and a wrong way

We do not live in isolation, this is true. It is also true that in the global political economy we are not exactly a sovereign country because we rely on foreign aid to tide things over, concessionary trade agreements ('charity' on the face of it, but essentially a waiving of sovereignty and submitting to terms that often lead to further impoverishment and further compromising dependency) and have required military and logistical support from foreign powers to deal with a 30-year long terrorist problem.

Still, this does not mean we are a slave nation, utterly impotent and resigned to begging for crumbs tossed from the dining tables of the rich and powerful.

There are things we can do and things we cannot. One thing we should understand is that if we cannot effect regime change from within this country, we are not deserving of regime change or the right to rule.

This is something that the opposition should keep in mind. The people will understand someone's need to be in power. They will not forgive a deliberate attempt to seek support from external forces who are not necessarily interested in what the priority concerns are for Sri Lanka and Sri Lankans.

There is one thing that was crucial in defeating the **LTTE**: the people loved the map of Sri Lanka; they made the sacrifices that the leadership and the situation demanded of them.

They honoured those who deserved honour, they voted out those who they believed were traitors or had other interests that were secondary to the key issue that had plagued the country for several decades, that of the real and violent threat to our territorial integrity, sovereignty and independence. Today we see lots of 'diplomatic activity' regarding Sri Lanka. That's the 'decent' way of putting it. If I were to be 'impolite' I would say, 'poking dirty fingers' in our business. Some people clearly don't like Mahinda Rajapaksa's face. That's ok.

People can like some faces and dislike others. However, disliking one face, getting it out of one's face, and finding another face to look at is up to the people of this country; it is not the business of any other country.

Interests can coincide of course. But Ranil Wickremesinghe or anyone else for that matter must rely on him/herself and not some outsider with interests that are not Sri Lanka-friendly.

There's a choice for the opposition here.

They can be someone's pawn or they can strive to do a better job than they've been doing all this time. One of the tragedies of our political system is that few actually win elections.

What happens is that others lose elections and so they secure power by default. This is not what we have here though. This is a situation where some meddler wants to influence the outcome of elections, play with the political equation.

It is and will always be anti-Sri Lankan in method, execution and outcome. Subscribe to that methodology (as Ranil Wickremesinghe and the JVP seem to have) and the former will take many more years to shed the 'traitor' tag he has earned during his brief tenure as Prime Minister (2001-2004) and the latter will prove that it can do nothing better than play 'spoiler'.

We get the Governments we deserve, it is said. Do we get the oppositions we deserve as well? What we have is a 'Yes sir/ma'am I'll be your pawn' kind of regime-change seekers. That's the pits ladies and gentlemen. Such people, even if they were to secure power, can only guarantee subjugation, slavery and a nation and people that will remain fettered and doing the bidding of outsiders until who knows when! We are far more deserving, I believe.

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Regime change: there's a right way and a wrong way

Load-Date: November 4, 2009

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Cries of US and its allies

Daily News (Sri Lanka)

May 12, 2009 Tuesday

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Length: 1058 words

Dateline: Colombo

Body

Colombo, May 12 -- While killing hundreds of civilians in Afghanistan and in Iraq, cries of the United States and its allies on Sri Lanka (who has "Zero Civilian Death Policy" when fighting terrorism) remind us the story of a tricking thief who cried "thief, thief catch a thief", just to avert the attention and as a part of a ploy set to escape from the crowd around him.

As per the media reports, US is planning to rush hundreds of millions of dollars to Pakistan help fight the Taliban and al-Qaida. Last week, US-led air strikes killed hundreds of Afghans, including women and children and destroyed houses. All we hear is that the Pentagon launched a joint investigation into what appeared to be one of the heaviest civilian death tolls at the hands of coalition forces. That is the end of the story. Contraries In Pakistan's Swat clashes, according to the information Minister for the North West Frontier Province Mian Iftikhar Hussain, up to 500,000 people were expected to flee the valley. Swat is already struggling to house half a million people driven there by fighting from other northwestern regions over the last year. According to an AFP news item appeared in The Age, Australian News paper, the United States and other Western nations, in contrary to what they preach to us, have opposed the peace deal with the Swat Taliban, 'warning that other deals had broken down and given the militants time to regroup'. A US bombing raid in August last year at Azizabad resulted in 90 civilian deaths. The US originally said no civilians died. It later issued a directive intended to reduce the chances of similar mass civilian deaths. That is the end of another story. It is interesting to note that none of the so-called human rights organizations (who are vociferous when the Sri Lankan Government initiates retaliatory or rescue operations) has asked the US and its allies to 'Stop Killing Civilians', 'Arrange Cease Fire' and 'Start Peace Talks' immediately or to fulfil the 'Legitimate Aspirations' of the Afghanistan people and so on so forth. Champions of justifying Apart from their ability to dismiss of any crime committed by themselves outrightly, these super powers are champions of justifying and regretting after committing such crimes. The US military said, little over two weeks ago, it was "deeply saddened" by a deadly raid it launched in Iraq that Baghdad said violated a landmark security pact with Washington. Typical such justifications and regrets in the past are; "The pilot attacked what he believed to be military vehicles, but he dropped his bomb in good faith, as you would expect of a trained pilot from a democratic country. ... The bomb destroyed the lead vehicle, which we now believe to have been a civilian vehicle." "NATO deeply regrets" the deaths of 80 people which occurred when NATO attacked two refugee columns in Western Kosovo on April 14." "NATO deeply regrets" the deaths of thirty nine civilians killed when a NATO missile hit a bus crossing a bridge at Luzane on May 1." Western governments pretend to be the great supporters of humanitarian issues- provided that the issues involved are not those of their own citizens. These 'owners of the human rights, champions of interpretations of anything to their own benefit', are adopting a different policy towards smaller developing nations such as ours, Sri Lanka. Taste for carnage The people of West appear to be peaceful but the leaders of Governments of the U.S. and of Britain have a proven taste for carnage, as we see from their actions over the most recent years towards Serbia, Afghanistan, Iraq and Sudan (the list goes on), even if we exclude the

Cries of US and its allies

indiscriminate killing of innocent civilians throughout the history by these perpetrators. Let us take one out of several recent examples of disrespect for human lives by these two economic and military powers, just to see if there is any significant change in their taste for carnage with time. The US-Britain led war against Iraq did not begin in 2003, as many people believe. In fact the US and Britain had been waging an undeclared war against Iraq more than a decade. The aim has been the destruction of Iraqi society enabling the US and Britain to gain control of Iraq's huge oil reserves. As a result of economic sanctions against Iraq, the prevention of the delivery of much-needed medical and other supplies because of US vetoes in the U.N. Security Council, and the carcinogenic effects of depleted uranium left over from the 1991 Gulf Slaughter, over a million people have died including an estimated 600,000 children. As the entire world is aware now, the alleged "weapons of mass destruction" is just a lame excuse to bomb Iraq several times a week and to maintain sanctions which are slowly killing many of the people of Iraq. This policy by the US and Britain has truly been inhuman, slow genocide certainly, and no amount of hypocritical moral posturing on the part of their leaders can disguise this. In the military process, it is reported that U.S. and British pilots slaughtered at least 200,000 Iraqi men, women and children. And of course all these murdered human beings were dismissed by the Pentagon as "collateral damage." BBC does not give publicity to these figures, although the broadcaster is all-out to mislead the world basing its policy on Tiger propaganda. Aiding and abetting The LTTE, who is responsible for the killing and wounding tens of thousand of innocent civilians, President of Sri Lanka, PM of India, Government Ministers, politicians including Tamils who have opposing views, is shooting their own people who are trying to escape from their grip. The British Government, who once justified their killing of an innocent 'tourist' under the prevention of 'terrorism' act in their soil, is apparently aiding and abetting the LTTE terrorists in Britain who are on a rampage, blocking bridges, attacking foreign embassies, assaulting people etc. Thus, judging by the above records, the obvious question we have in Sri Lanka is, what moral rights do the leaders of these countries have to advice Sri Lanka on how to improve the so-called 'serious humanitarian situation' and to 'arrange a cease fire' and 'start negotiating' with the most ruthless terrorist organization in the world. Published by HT Syndication with permission from Daily News Sri Lanka.

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Load-Date: May 12, 2009

RAW - A Craving Crow

The Financial Daily

August 31, 2009 Monday

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Section: Vol. 3; No. 30

Length: 1167 words

Byline: Ali Sukhanver

Body

The role of an intelligence agency should be different from that of a terrorist organisation. The CIA, the Mossad, the ISI and the RAW must not be mixed up with LTTE, the Black Water Force and particularly the detracted groups of Taliban & al Qaida which are defaming not only Islam but also the Muslims all over the world.

If an intelligence agency is trying to forget its prescribed aims and objects by surpassing its limits, it should not be ranked as an intelligence agency but a terrorist organisation.

A few days back the Federation of American Scientists (FAS) issued a report which confirmed that the Research and Analysis Wing (RAW), was directly involved in the secession of East Pakistan into Bangladesh, and is currently engaged in similar activities in Balochistan.

The FAS is a group which is engaged in analysis and advocacy on science, technology and public policy concerning global security, especially about the countries having nuclear capability. It is a privately funded non-profit policy organisation whose Board of Sponsors includes 55 American Nobel laureates.

The report says "The assistance provided to RAW by the Russian KGB enabled RAW to arrange terrorist attacks in Pakistani cities throughout the Afghan War. The defeat of the Soviet Union in Afghanistan did not end the role of RAW in Pakistan, as it established training camps in East Punjab, Indian Held Kashmir, Uttar Pradesh and Rajasthan where agents are trained for terrorist activities." Pointing towards the role of RAW in the formerly East Pakistan the report says, 'The involvement of RAW in East Pakistan started in 1960s when it began with promoting dissatisfaction against Pakistan. Later on RAW funded at a large scale Mujeeb-ur-Rehman's general election of 1970. This organisation not only funded Mukti Bahini but also trained and armed the workers of Mukti Bahini.' There is another shocking revelation in the report that RAW staged the drama of hijacking a plane of Indian Airlines proceeding to Lahore in 1971.

The hidden aim behind this hijacking was to put all blame on the Kashmiri Freedom Fighters and to introduce them throughout the world as terrorists. In the light of the above disclosure it won't be wise to rank RAW as an intelligence agency. Hijacking of airplanes, massacre of innocent citizens and patronising training camps of terrorist are certainly never the job of an intelligence agency. These are the actions of a terrorist organisation.

It is not only Pakistan which has been suffering from the childish misdeeds of RAW since long; the list of the afflicting countries is endless. A few months back, in one of its editorials the leading newspaper of Sri Lanka, Daily Mirror criticised RAW by saying that this agency is playing a heinous role in the regional countries to destabilise them. Commenting on the RAW's role in Sri Lanka, the editorial said: "The RAW in Sri Lanka has a pretty colorful

RAW - A Craving Crow

record. Having raised, nursed and fortified the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam, it later went through phases where it adopted 'rock the baby, pinch the baby' approach towards the LTTE." The paper is of the opinion that RAW never works on serious grounds because this organisation is nothing more than a vase weeded with bitter thorny and discolored wild flowers. Its workers and employers are morally bankrupt and spiritually barren. The newspaper wrote: "In 2007, ripples were created in the spy agency when one of its Colombo-based officers, Ravi Nair of 1975 batch, was found allegedly carrying on an affair with a woman working for another country's spy agency. The 'crime' was considered only second to what was committed by the RAW Joint Secretary, Rabindar Singh, in 2004 when he escaped with copies of several highly-confidential documents and is believed to have passed them on to the CIA.

This was after Singh's superiors confronted him with evidence that he had spent time with a Delhi-based female US embassy officer at a resort down the New Delhi-Jaipur highway."

According to the sources RAW and the Indian Ministry of External Affairs are provided Rs250 million annually as "discretionary grants" for foreign influence operations. These funds are meant for supporting the organisations fighting Sikh and Kashmiri separatists in the UK, Canada and the US. An extensive network of Indian operatives of RAW is controlled by the Indian Embassy in Washington DC whose covert activities include the infiltration of US long distance telephone carriers by Indian operatives, with access to all kinds of information, to blackmail relatives of US residents living in India.

In 1996, an Indian diplomat was implicated in a scandal over illegal funding of political candidates in the US. Under US law foreign nationals are prohibited from contributing to federal elections. The US District Court in Baltimore sentenced Lalit Gadhia, a naturalised US citizen of Indian origin, to three months imprisonment. Gadhia had confessed that he worked as a conduit between the Indian Embassy and various Indian-American organisations for funneling campaign contributions to influence US lawmakers. Over US \$46,000 from the Indian Embassy were distributed among 20 Congressional candidates. The source of the cash used by Gadhia was Devendra Singh, a RAW official assigned to the Indian Embassy in Washington. Now RAW is adopting the same philosophy and mode of action in Balochistan by patronising the so called 'separatist elements' which originally do not belong to the 'soil'.

Talking to the media men, Balochistan Chief Minister said that involvement of external elements; including the Indian intelligence agency in the current acts of terrorism in Balochistan could not be ruled out. As long as Kashmir issue is not settled these elements will continue to create difficulties for Pakistan. CM referred to various training camps in which, according to him, terrorists were being harbored and paid huge sums to create trouble. He said that none of the Baloch 'waderas' had the capacity to finance such an operation. RAW had been running terrorist camps in Iran and Afghanistan since long and now it has set up 30 to 40 such camps in Balochistan, each with training facility for 30 people who are paid Rs10,000 monthly.

If we compare the East Pakistan episode and the present situation of Balochistan with reference to the report issued by the FAS, we can very easily analyse the scenario. RAW is repeating the same story of 'divide and disperse' in Balochistan which was once employed in the formerly East Pakistan. The situation calls for a very serious attitude on the part of Pakistani politicians.

They must not waste their time and efforts in digging old graves. International forces are trying their best to divert the attention of the Pakistani politicians to some very trivial and valueless issues so that they may not be able to concentrate upon the worsening situation in Balochistan.

The writer is a Pakistan based bilingual analyst on national and international strategic defence affairs.

Load-Date: September 19, 2011

THE Week; THAT Was

The Sunday Telegraph (London)

May 31, 2009

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The Sunday Telegraph

Section: FEATURES; Pg. 19

Length: 779 words

Byline: Compiled by CERI RADFORD and ALEX SINGLETON

Body

CARRY ON POLITICS

The outrage over MPs' expense claims for Kit Kats and moat-clearing escalated into a debate on the nature of politics in this country. In a speech at the Open University on Tuesday, David Cameron proposed introducing fixed-term parliaments, along with a "massive, sweeping, radical redistribution of power".

Irate constituents seemed more interested in revenge than reform, however. In Bromsgrove, Julie Kirkbride, the Tory MP, said she would stand down at the next election after locals formed a "Julie Must Go" campaign group. She was followed shortly afterwards by Margaret Moran, the Labour MP for Luton South, and Christopher Fraser, a Conservative MP, who had claimed expenses for 140 cherry trees and 75 red cedars, bringing the total number of MP resignations to 11.

Filling the void left by the departure of Douglas Hogg, another aptly named politician emerged: Bill Cash, a senior Conservative MP, claimed more than pounds 15,000 to pay his daughter rent for her London flat, even though he owned a home closer to Westminster.

POETIC JUSTICE

An elected figure also stood down in the wake of a scandal at Oxford university. Ruth Padel, Oxford's first female professor of poetry, resigned after just nine days in the job because of a smear campaign against her former rival, Derek Walcott.

Speaking at the Hay Festival of Literature, Padel said that she had been "naive and silly" to email journalists with details of allegations of sexual harassment against Walcott, but she denied taking part in the subsequent campaign of anonymous letters which led to his withdrawal from the contest.

ROGUE STATES

Kim Jong-il continued his transformation into Dr Strangelove by testing North Korea's second nuclear device, firing a volley of ballistic missiles and tearing up a 56-year truce with his southern neighbour.

THE Week THAT Was

Also defying international opinion was Burma, where the ruling junta put Aung San Suu Kyi, the opposition leader, on trial for breaching the terms of her house arrest. As she faces a further five-year prison sentence, she may or may not be reassured that a new website dedicated to her cause features support from George Clooney and David Beckham.

TROUBLED STATES

Pakistan was lashed by a series of bomb, gun and suicide attacks, which were carried out in retaliation for the army's campaign against the Taliban in the Swat valley. Meanwhile, Barack Obama visited Mahmoud Abbas, the Palestinian president, and declared Washington's support for a two-state solution to the Middle East peace process. The United Nations drew attention to another troubled area as it claimed that more than 20,000 civilians were killed in the Sri Lankan government's final onslaught against the Tamil Tigers.

HEALTH BATTLES

Malaria has shown signs of developing resistance to the most effective type of drug used to treat the disease, which kills a million people a year. Tests showed that treatments based on artemisinin could be becoming less effective, raising fears of a world health crisis.

In Britain, Eton was closed down after a pupil tested positive for swine flu, bringing the total number of confirmed H1N1 cases in this country to 203. The student was described as "mildly unwell".

FAMILY AFFAIRS

A mother who claimed her son was kidnapped by his Hungarian father 27 years ago was reunited with him when her sister found his profile on Facebook.

There was a less heart-warming form of family reunion for the Abu Hamzas. The firebrand preacher, who is in prison for his violence-inciting tirades against the decadent, amoral West, will be joined behind bars by his two sons. They have been convicted of stealing luxury cars.

IT WAS A GOOD WEEK FOR...

Alice Munro The Canadian writer, below, who is best known for her short stories, was awarded the Man Booker International Prize.

The beaver European beavers were reintroduced to the British countryside for the first time in 400 years. One Scottish landowner was less than impressed, calling them "destructive nocturnal rats".

Stinking Bishop This odorous comestible, said to evoke a rugby club's changing room, walked off with first prize at Britain's inaugural Smelliest Cheese Championships.

AND A BAD

ONE FOR...

Manchester United The Reds bungled the Champions League final in Rome, losing 2-0 to Barcelona after a lacklustre performance.

Fascist underpants The fashion chain Next has recalled a range of men's underwear after receiving a complaint that one of the images on a garish pair of pants featured Adolf Hitler. Next claimed that the image had in fact been based on Lenin.

The cuckoo The traditional harbinger of spring has been added to the "red list" of Britain's most endangered birds.

THE Week THAT Was

End of Document

My job: Kiwi with a passion for fashion

The New Zealand Herald

April 22, 2009 Wednesday

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Section: EMPLOYMENT; General

Length: 776 words

Body

Name: Gabi Fredericks

Age: 40

Occupation: Fashion Buyer, Farmers Trading Company

Working hours: Workloads are driven by seasonal launches so hours vary.

Salary: Competitive in NZ buying terms.

Qualification: Bachelor of Commerce, majoring in marketing.

Describe your job.

I travel to fashion destinations around the world to bring the latest and greatest overseas fashion to New Zealand. Sounds like a tough job, huh? I then interpret what will work for our climate and what Farmers' customers like.

Do you work on your own or as part of a team?

I work as part of a team. There are five womenswear buyers, and I look after our youth market - the Switch and Living Doll brands. We also have a bunch of people helping us behind the scenes - such as our quality assurance department, stock planners and buyers' assistants. The womenswear team works to ensure the looks we have found for the season are translated throughout the business.

What is your background?

Almost my entire career has been in retailing, bar a brief and boring stint in banking. I started as a sales assistant when I was going through university.

What skills and qualities are needed in this role?

An eye for fashion and what translates well for Farmers, financial nous to assist in meeting sales budgets, good communication skills to ensure the requirements can be met by our suppliers and our stores across the country.

How far do you travel?

From Shanghai to Paris, New York to Mumbai; anywhere that offers world-class fashion.

My job: Kiwi with a passion for fashion

Is your job as glamorous as it sounds?

Yes and no. There is pressure to meet sales and profit budgets and that can be harder than it sounds, especially in difficult economic times.

Although being paid to shop is difficult to beat, and I love bringing world-class fashion to everyday New Zealanders.

Do you have a favourite "fashion destination"?

I love shopping in New York. The stores are so eclectic, from upmarket designer down to Soho and the hand-crafted individual pieces. And the food is great, too.

How do you describe your own fashion style?

That depends on my mood. It can be dressy or casual, girly to rock chick.

How do Kiwi tastes and dress styles differ from other countries you visit?

New Zealand women have traditionally been more conservative than many countries we visit, although this is changing and women are more likely to try new shapes and styles. It's exciting being part of that change. We are continually bringing on new brands or different garments for more fashion-forward New Zealanders.

How do you ensure you cater for all ages, shapes, sizes and colourings?

Farmers has been the major fashion retailer in New Zealand for 100 years, so we have a thorough grasp on what fashion New Zealanders like to buy. We have 57 stores nationwide which showcase a range of clothes.

We also do quality assurance testing, and a lot of that is ensuring our garments are well-fitted to the average New Zealand size and shape.

Why is your job important?

Well, compared with brain surgery, protecting the community and finding a cure for cancer, it isn't.

However, for some women, dressing does not come easily, so the challenge for me and the rest of the buying team is to provide tasteful, affordable fashion.

It gives me a big thrill to see an everyday Kiwi walking down the street in something I put into store.

What are the challenges of your work?

Balancing my personal tastes with worldwide fashion trends, juggling prices and exchange rates and ensuring we deliver value for money.

Best part of your job?

I get to play with new colours, trends and styles on a daily basis. Carrie Bradshaw, eat your heart out.

And the worst part?

Sticking to my budgets. I want to buy all the fabulous things I see.

What are your strengths?

A thick skin.

Any fashion flops that just didn't take off in this country?

My job: Kiwi with a passion for fashion

My biggest disaster has to be a terry-towelling boob-tube jumpsuit. It might be okay for this summer, but it was a little progressive for five years ago!

You must have some interesting stories?

I've been detained in Paris because of bomb scares, held up in LA for a week during 9/11, lost my luggage in Hong Kong and been forced to change destinations because of rioting **Tamil Tigers** in Chennai.

What do you want to be doing in five years?

Still playing with frocks. Farmers offers great career paths and opportunities, so there will be plenty of challenges coming my way.

Advice to those interested in doing something similar?

The fashion industry provides many employment opportunities, whether you're buying, working for a supplier, wholesaling fabric, designing your own ranges or writing about others.

If you're passionate about fashion, there are many ways to get into the industry.

Load-Date: April 21, 2009

'Everything is lost': victims tell of misery as UN barred from Tamil refugee camps; Sri Lanka

The Times (London)

May 20, 2009 Wednesday

Edition 1

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THE TIMES

Section: NEWS; Pg. 31

Length: 759 words

Byline: Robert Bosleigh

Body

Sri Lanka is on the brink of a humanitarian catastrophe as the Government blocks access by the United Nations and other aid agencies to nearly 300,000 civilians displaced by the army's victory over the **Tamil Tigers**.

In the capital, Colombo, President Rajapakse announced the "complete defeat" of the rebels yesterday as state television showed pictures of what was said to be the corpse of Velupillai Prabhakaran, the Tigers' leader. Addressing the nation, Mr Rajapakse vowed to press ahead with a "homegrown political solution" to end ethnic divisions between the majority Sinhalese population and minority Tamils.

In the north, an estimated 80,000 people - mostly Tamil, many of them sick, malnourished or suffering from battlefield wounds - were making their way on foot from the war zone to government-run camps that are already swamped. The UN is not being allowed any access to them, The Times has learnt.

Accounts of conditions inside the camps - gained from testimony recorded covertly by aid workers - and the journey to them are horrifying.

Preema, a Tamil woman, arrived at the 400-hectare (990-acre) Menic farm camp on Sunday. She had left Mullaivaikal, the centre of the fighting, where the Tigers had made their final stand before being defeated, days before, after being shelled heavily.

She set out with her husband, mother and two children, to wade through the Nandikadal lagoon - a waterway strewn with mines - in a desperate attempt to reach safety.

Where the lagoon had been bombed there were deep craters and people often drowned, she said. A man offered to carry her 10-year-old daughter. Preema never saw them again.

Her husband was taken away later by government troops at a checkpoint in Oomanthai, where refugees are being forced to strip before being allowed to pass, after admitting that he had worked for the Tigers. Her mother died in the lagoon.

'Everything is lost': victims tell of misery as UN barred from Tamil refugee camps Sri Lanka

"Everything is lost," said Preema, holding her son, 7. "Please help me find my daughter. Not knowing anything is making me crazy."

Inside one camp, Nandani, 76, described being forced to stand for up to five hours a day queueing for food.

Kala, a middle-aged woman, spoke about the constant indignities of her new life. "I do not have underwear. I am unable to use the Kotex that the Red Cross handed out," she said, holding a packet of sanitary towels she had been given before the organisation's access to the camp was restricted.

Kothai, another woman, said: "There is a bad distribution system within the camp. Every time it is the same people that get [food and water]. Men crowd around and push the women and children aside."

Government officials did not answer requests for comment. Access for aid agencies to another 200,000 refugees already in the internment camps - which the Government call "welfare villages" - has been severely restricted since Sunday, preventing the administration of basic care.

Ban Ki Moon, the UN SecretaryGeneral, is due to travel in Sri Lanka on Friday to offer help to rebuild the ravaged northeast of the country and urge the Government to reach out to the Tamil population.

"These people have endured one of the cruellest military sieges of modern times - daily shelling over several months," an international aid worker said. "They need urgent help." There are fears that the camp populations - especially children - will be hit by contagious diseases. Chickenpox, hepatitis A and dysentery outbreaks have been reported. Medical facilities are said to be woefully inadequate.

There are also concerns that the suffering will radicalise previously moderate Tamils, especially amongst the community's international diaspora, which had been a key source of funding for the Tigers.

Most Sri Lankans are delighted by the defeat of the Tigers, a terrorist force that fought for 26 years for an independent Tamil homeland, propagating a war that left at least 70,000 dead. Many Tamils were against the rebels after they recruited child soldiers and terrorised their own people.

Tamils in the camps describe being fired on by both sides in the conflict.

Vavathan, 59, said that Tiger troops had forcibly recruited children as young as 15 in the conflict zone, even in the final stages when it was clear that they had lost the conflict. "The war was over, why were they still taking the children?" she asked.

There were doubts over the sincerity of Mr Rajapakse's pledge to build bridges between the Sinhalese and Tamil minority. He has seldom brooked dissent, his opponents say.

Online

Pictures: Sri Lankan Government claims victory in civil war timesonline.co.uk/asia

Graphic

A Sri Lankan Ministry of Defence picture is said to show a government soldier helping to evacuate civilians from the war zone near Mullaitivu on Sunday

SRI LANKAN GOVERNMENT / REUTERS

Load-Date: May 20, 2009

'Everything is lost': victims tell of misery as UN barred from Tamil refugee camps Sri Lanka

End of Document

AFP 0700 GMT News Advisory

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Body

Duty Editor: Sarah Shard

Tel: + 33 1 4041 4636

-- TOP STORIES --

+ Sri Lanka says all freed in victory over Tigers

+ India's ruling party basks in polls triumph

+ Kuwaiti women win first seats in parliament

SriLanka-unrest,lead-WRAP

COLOMBO

Sri Lanka says it has rescued all remaining civilians held by the Tamil Tigers, after the island's president claimed final victory over the separatist rebels following decades of deadly conflict.

650 words 0730 GMT by Amal Jayasinghe. Picture

India-vote,lead-WRAP

NEW DELHI

India's Congress Party basks in its best electoral showing for decades, after steering its ruling alliance to a second term in office with a resounding win over its Hindu nationalist rivals.

650 words 0700 GMT

We will also move: India-vote-Gandhi,lead-FOCUS

Kuwait-vote

KUWAIT CITY

Four women win seats in the Kuwaiti parliament in an historic first as Islamist parties face a setback in the oil-rich Gulf state's second general election in a year.

650 word 0800 GMT by Omar Hasan. Picture

REGIONAL FILING PLANS

-- EUROPE --

Lithuania-vote,lead

VILNIUS

Lithuanians vote in a presidential election widely expected to be won by EU budget commissioner Dalia Grybauskaite, who hails from the recession-hit Baltic state and has been a fierce critic of its government's handling of the economy.

600 words 0900 GMT by Marielle Vitureau. Picture.

Croatia-vote,lead

ZAGREB

Croatians cast ballots in regional and local elections that will test the strength of ruling conservatives who are implementing unpopular measures to fight the global economic crisis.

400 words 0800 GMT

-- MIDDLE EAST --

Lebanon-vote-candidates,FOCUS

BEIRUT

A rock star, a fisherman and an unemployed bachelor have thrown their hats in the ring for Lebanon's legislative election hoping to make a change in a country run by political dynasties.

600 words 0730 GMT by Natacha Yazbeck. Picture. Video.

-- AMERICAS --

US-space-astronomy-Hubble,newseries

HOUSTON, Texas

US astronauts undertake a fourth in a series of five daily spacewalks intended to equip the 19-year-old Hubble Space Telescope for at least another five years of valuable scientific work.

650 words 0700 GMT by Mark Carreau

Canada-society-gay

MONTREAL

The International Day Against Homophobia, initiated by a Quebec organization, will be celebrated in more than 50 countries Sunday, decrying discrimination against gays and lesbians.

500 words 0700 GMT by Philippe Sauvagnargues

US-Mideast-Israel-Obama,ADVANCER

WASHINGTON

Barack Obama will brave the labyrinth of Middle East peacemaking that has confounded successive US presidents in crucial White House talks on Monday with Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu.

750 words 0730 GMT by Stephen Collinson

US-politics-Obama-abortion-protest

CHICAGO

US President Barack Obama will wade into a longstanding political thicket Sunday when he speaks at a prestigious Catholic university where right-to-life protesters are gathering to oppose his support of abortion rights.

600 words 0730 GMT.

Health-flu-US-lifestyle,FOCUS

WASHINGTON

The US traditions of handshakes at graduation and slapping a high five during a sports competition were banned when fears of a swine flu pandemic were at their peak, but are gingerly making a comeback.

650 words 0730 GMT by Karin Zeitvogel.

-- ASIA --

Health-flu-world,WRAP

KOBE, Japan

Nine more high school students test positive for swine flu in Japan, officials say, as top health officials gather in Geneva for talks on how to contain the spread of the virus.

600 words 0715 GMT by Shingo Ito

Myanmar-politics-SuuKyi,WRAP

YANGON

Myanmar's military rulers release the detained doctor of Aung San Suu Kyi, a day before the pro-democracy leader faces an internationally condemned trial on charges of breaching her house arrest.

500 words 0730 GMT

Pakistan-unrest,WRAP

PESHAWAR, Pakistan

Pakistan's northwest reels from a wave of violence as the death toll from a blast in a key city rises to 12 and the army continues their fierce campaign to drive out Taliban rebels that has sent more than a million civilians fleeing.

550 words 0800 GMT by Lehaaz Ali

-- ENTERTAINMENT --

Entertainment-music-Russia-Eurovision-Norway,2ndlead

MOSCOW

Norway's Alexander Rybak sweeps the Eurovision Song Contest in Moscow with a brash performance of a folk-inspired ballad that he penned himself, sparking celebrations in his Scandinavian home country.

700 words 0800 GMT by Nick Coleman. Pictures

Entertainment-film-festival-Cannes-US-Daniels,INTERVIEW

CANNES, France

African-American director Lee Daniels, whose tale of the struggles of a black Harlem girl got a triumphant welcome at Cannes, says he is thrilled to see his films could "touch the world".

560 words 0730 GMT by Emma Charlton. Picture.

Entertainment-film-festival-Cannes-Britain-Fbl-Cantona

MANCHESTER, England

Temperamental but lavishly talented French footballer Eric Cantona -- about to play film-star at Cannes -- is still worshipped in this part of northwest England 12 years after leaving Manchester United to retire abruptly at 31.

600 words 0730 GMT by Nicolas Gaudichet. File picture.

afp

Load-Date: May 18, 2009

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Body

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-- TOP STORIES --

+ Pakistan military battles Taliban in key town

+ Pressure on NASA to land Atlantis crew

+ Sri Lanka makes commitment on aid

+ French prison drama tipped for Cannes glory

Pakistan-unrest,WRAP

PESHAWAR, Pakistan

Pakistan's military says it has secured several key areas in the Swat valley's main town of Mingora, as the battle to wrest control of the scenic northwest valley from Taliban insurgents reaches a crucial stage.

600 words 0730 GMT by Lehaq Ali

US-space-astronomy-Hubble,newseries

CAPE CANAVERAL, Florida

Rain or shine, the crew of the US space shuttle Atlantis will have to attempt to land on Sunday after bad weather forces delays in their return to Earth for two consecutive days.

600 words 0730 GMT by Patrick Baert

SriLanka-unrest,lead-WRAP

COLOMBO

Sri Lanka says it will allow UN aid workers access to civilians detained in camps after the defeat of the Tamil Tigers, but only after it has weeded out rebels hiding among the refugees.

550 words 0730 GMT by Amal Jayasinghe. Picture

Entertainment-film-festival-Cannes,WRAP

CANNES

The Cannes showdown between the world's greatest film directors comes to a close with a bleak prison drama tipped to give France the top prize for the second year in a row.

750 words 0730 GMT by Rory Mulholland. Picture. Video

We will also move: Entertainment-film-festival-Cannes-list,FACTS

Entertainment-film-festival-Cannes-jury,FACTS

Entertainment-film-festival-Cannes-Palme,FACTS

FILING PLANS BY REGION

-- EUROPE --

Entertainment-film-festival-Cannes-China,INTERVIEW

CANNES, France

At a festival chock-full of cinematic violence, a documentary by a young Chinese film-maker brought more darkness to Cannes with a harrowing portrayal of life in Beijing's underbelly.

500 words 0730 GMT by Claire Rosemberg. Video

Entertainment-film-festival-Cannes-Chanel

CANNES, France

"Coco" Chanel's serial affairs with illustrious lovers have long been set in print, and Cannes curtains its film festival with a fact-or-fiction tale on her affair with Igor Stravinsky.

550 words 0730 GMT by Claire Rosemberg. Picture. Video

-- MIDDLE EAST --

US-Mideast-diplomacy,FOCUS

WASHINGTON

AFP 0700 News Advisory

US President Barack Obama continues to break new ground in his quest for Arab-Israeli peace as he finishes up his meetings with key players before a landmark speech in Cairo, analysts say.

800 words 0730 GMT by Lachlan Carmichael.

Iran-vote-women-Rahnavard,PROFILE

TEHRAN

Zahra Rahnavard, the wife of moderate presidential candidate Mir Hossein Mousavi, is breaking the mould in Iranian politics by campaigning openly alongside her husband for next month's election in the Islamic republic.

600 words 0930 GMT by Hiedeh Farmani. File picture

-- AFRICA --

Malawi-vote-politics,ANALYSIS

BLANTYRE

Malawi's presidential poll which gave Bingu wa Mutharika a second term marked a departure from the southern African nation's old politics of voting according to regional and tribal lines, analysts say.

625 words 0730 GMT by Felix Mponda.

-- ASIA --

Pakistan-unrest-Taliban-military,FOCUS

BINAI BABA ZIARAT, Pakistan

From the dizzying heights of a Taliban rebel command centre, Pakistani generals sense victory in Swat as they tour an elaborate warren of tunnels and caves built into a mountain ridge.

700 words moved by Jennie Matthew. Picture

Myanmar-politics-SuuKyi

YANGON

Lawyers prepare the defence case for Myanmar opposition icon Aung San Suu Kyi, ahead of a crucial week in her trial during which the ruling junta must also decide whether to formally extend her house arrest.

500 words 0730 GMT

-- AMERICAS --

US-politics-Obama-security-Guantanamo,FOCUS

WASHINGTON

US President Barack Obama's plans to draw up a legal framework for the indefinite detention of terror suspects who would neither be tried nor freed is "disturbing" and "dangerous," experts warn.

600 words 0730 GMT by Lucile Malandain. Graphic. Picture.

US-politics-attacks-Cheney,PROFILE

WASHINGTON

Dick Cheney, the most publicity-averse US vice president in decades, is now the most outspoken former White House power broker of modern times after a stunning political transformation.

750 words 0730 GMT by Stephen Collinson. File Picture

US-justice

WASHINGTON

Being chosen by President Barack Obama to be a Supreme Court justice is not enough: the nominee for this highly influential post must successfully navigate the minefield of a US Senate confirmation.

650 words 0730 GMT by Lucile Malandain

US-company-auto-bankruptcy-GM-Chrysler,FOCUS

WASHINGTON

The US auto industry faces a tumultuous week that could see sector leader General Motors forced into bankruptcy and number three maker Chrysler move toward a quick exit from court protection.

750 words 0730 GMT by Rob Lever

We will also move: US-auto-sector-justice-company-GM-Chrysler,ANALYSIS

US-economy-California-budget,FOCUS

LOS ANGELES

As a Hollywood action hero, Arnold Schwarzenegger forged a career playing tough guys used to prevailing against impossible odds. But as California governor he has failed to impose his will on the state's seemingly eternal budget problems.

800 words 0730 GMT by Rob Woollard. Picture

afp

Load-Date: May 25, 2009

50 die in attack on Sri Lanka war zone hospital

The Associated Press

May 14, 2009 Thursday

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Section: INTERNATIONAL NEWS

Length: 773 words

Byline: By RAVI NESSMAN, Associated Press Writer

Dateline: COLOMBO, Sri Lanka

Body

Artillery shells tore through a hospital packed with wounded civilians in Sri Lanka's war zone for a second day Wednesday, killing at least 50 people, setting an ambulance ablaze and forcing the medical staff to huddle in bunkers for safety, doctors said.

Health workers at the makeshift medical facility said they were so overwhelmed by the crush of the wounded and the unrelenting shelling of the area they could do little but give gauze and bandages to the roughly 1,000 patients waiting for treatment.

The strike on the hospital came as the government marched on with its offensive to destroy the reeling Tamil Tiger rebels and end their quarter-century quest for a separate homeland.

There has been a wave of artillery bombardments across the war zone that began over the weekend and has barely let up in five days, health workers said. The weekend attacks alone may have killed as many as 1,000 people, doctors said.

The government says its troops are not responsible for the shelling and that the military has not fired heavy weapons in the area in weeks.

But Human Rights Watch says satellite images and witness testimony contradict that claim and has accused both sides of using the estimated 50,000 civilians packed into the tiny coastal strip controlled by the rebels as "cannon fodder."

The shelling was so intense Wednesday that a Red Cross ferry waiting off the coast to deliver food aid and evacuate the wounded had to turn back for a second day, the agency said.

Two artillery shells hit the medical facility about 1 p.m., slamming into an administrative office and a ward filled with patients already wounded by previous shell attacks, Dr. V. Shanmugarajah told The Associated Press by telephone.

Dr. Thurairaja Varatharajah, the top health official in the war zone, said the attack killed at least 50 people, including patients, relatives and a health aide, and wounded about 60 others.

Heavy shelling of the war zone continued throughout the day, he said.

50 die in attack on Sri Lanka war zone hospital

"We are unable to treat the people properly because a lot of aides have fled the hospital. We go into bunkers when there is shelling and try to treat them as much as we can when there is a lull," he said by telephone.

One shell that struck the compound set an ambulance on fire, according to video footage of the aftermath of the attack. Scores of people crowded beneath tarps outside the hospital building waited for care as someone wailed in the background.

More than 1,000 civilians many with amputations or chest wounds had been waiting for treatment at the hospital when it was struck, and every 10 minutes or so another one or two died from lack of care, said a third hospital official, who spoke only on condition of anonymity because the government had not authorized him to speak to the media.

Overwhelmed doctors have been reduced to handing out bandages to the seriously wounded, the official said. More than 100 dead bodies have been left inside the compound because no one will risk burying them amid the constant shelling, he said. The strike was the third to hit the hospital this month.

A Red Cross worker and his mother were also killed in shelling, the third Red Cross staff member killed by shrapnel in the war zone in the past two months, the International Committee of the Red Cross said.

"This latest tragic incident shows how dangerous it is for everyone in the area," said Paul Castella, the head of the Red Cross delegation in Colombo.

Rebel spokesman Seevaratnam Puleedevan said shells also hit a home for mentally handicapped women, killing 38 and wounding more than 40.

Reports of the fighting are difficult to verify because the government has barred journalists and aid workers from the war zone.

The government has come under heavy international criticism for the large civilian toll of its offensive against the rebels, who are cornered in a two square-mile (five square-kilometer) strip of land.

The military said it pressed ahead with its offensive into that strip Wednesday, capturing one of the rebels' heavy guns and fending off a suicide attack by four rebel boats laden with explosives.

The U.N. Security Council demanded Wednesday that the Tamil Tigers stop fighting and allow tens of thousands of civilians being used as human shields to leave the war zone. It also called on the government to stop firing heavy weapons, help trapped civilians evacuate and allow for the urgent delivery of humanitarian aid.

The council press statement which is not legally binding expressed grave concern at the worsening humanitarian crisis.

Associated Press writer Krishan Francis contributed to this report from Colombo and Frank Jordans contributed from Geneva.

Load-Date: May 14, 2009

Truce hope as Tigers defeated

Canberra Times (Australia)

April 16, 2009 Thursday

Final Edition

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Section: A; Pg. 18

Length: 802 words

Byline: The Canberra Times

Body

After 25 years, Sri Lanka's civil conflict looks likely to end soon with the total defeat of the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam, or Tamil Tigers. At present the remnants of what was once a formidable military force are trapped in a tiny strip of land in the north-east of the country (along with about 100,000 Tamils) and surrounded by vastly superior government forces.

Sri Lankan President Mahinda Rajapaksa has called on the rebels to lay down their weapons and surrender, but the offer is unlikely to be accepted. This, after all, is a group which pioneered the practice of using women as suicide bombers, employed child soldiers, and assassinated its political opponents without compunction. Not that Rajapaksa's Government was keen on offering quarter either. It says the Tigers have been using Tamil civilians as hostages and human shields, and that it has prevented them from leaving the war zone, a claim that has been verified by some eyewitness reports. A two-day ceasefire to allow the Tigers to free civilians has ended, without, the military says, any significant exodus. Credible information about the extent of the fighting, and of civilian casualties, is hard to obtain, but Human Rights Watch estimates about 3000 civilians have been killed since January. Anecdotal evidence is that the fighting has been both savage and bloody which, combined with the rejection of a rebel demand for a truce, suggests the government is aiming for total military victory.

But hunting the Tigers to extinction, while ignoring the issues that led the Tigers to take up arms in the first place, is unlikely to achieve a lasting peace in Sri Lanka. Indeed, by its disregard for the safety of these civilians, the government is almost certainly ensuring that the Hindu-speaking Tamil minority and the majority Sinhalese population will continue to hate and distrust each other.

It was not always the case. Though they have only ever made up about 12 per cent of the population, Tamils lived peacefully enough with the Sinhalese for centuries.

However, the arrival of the English in the 19th century altered the social dynamic. The colonists' preferred treatment of the Tamils in the civil service inevitably led to Sinhalese resentment (and to ethnic riots in 1939).

The enmity was given practical effect at Sri Lanka's independence in 1948 when the Sinhalese majority made certain that employment and education laws favoured them rather than the Tamils. More bloody riots followed in the 1960s and '70s, stoked by strident ethnic nationalist rhetoric from both sides. Tamil demands for the creation of a separate state in the north of the country were ignored by the government in Colombo, and by 1983, the dispute had descended into open warfare. The Tigers, who were only one of a number of separatist groups when they were

Truce hope as Tigers defeated

founded in 1976, soon came to embody the struggle, having eliminated their rivals, and co-opted the support of the Tamil population with a mixture of virulent propaganda and crude stand-over tactics.

Few will mourn their demise. Nevertheless, President Rajapaksa should exercise restraint in dealing with the remnants of the Tigers, as it is likely that many of the civilians who remain trapped with them will be caught in the crossfire. Indeed, it is fears for their safety that have prompted protests by the Tamil diaspora in Sydney, Canberra and elsewhere in the world.

If the Sinhalese hope to live peacefully alongside their Tamil neighbours again, then Rajapaksa must give quarter.

He must then embark on reconciliation, beginning with a commitment to ensuring that Tamils enjoy the same political, economic and social rights as the Sinhalese.

Failure to do this will condemn Sri Lanka to yet more decades of division and hatred.

Fast train needed Canberra attracts students, office workers and shoppers from around the region, and most travel here by car.

This cannot last. With fuel prices almost certain to rise, efficient public transport services into and out of Canberra will become increasingly important. With that in mind, the Queanbeyan-Monaro Greens have asked the NSW Government to conduct a feasibility study into establishing a peak-hour rail service between Goulburn and Canberra.

The idea has merit, but given that a one-way trip to Goulburn, with stops at Queanbeyan, Bungendore and Tarago takes 90 minutes versus about an hour by car it is unlikely that a commuter train service will attract enough patrons. To achieve quicker travel times the line needs to be upgraded, and neither the NSW nor the ACT government wants to pay for such improvements. This is unfortunate, because delay will only add to the eventual bill. The provision of efficient and sustainable public transport should be tackled now rather than waiting until inadequate services are overrun by commuters.

Load-Date: April 15, 2009

50 die in attack on Sri Lanka war zone hospital

Associated Press Online

May 14, 2009 Thursday 1:43 AM GMT

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Section: INTERNATIONAL NEWS

Length: 773 words

Byline: By RAVI NESSMAN, Associated Press Writer

Dateline: COLOMBO Sri Lanka

Body

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Health workers at the makeshift medical facility said they were so overwhelmed by the crush of the wounded and the unrelenting shelling of the area they could do little but give gauze and bandages to the roughly 1,000 patients waiting for treatment.

The strike on the hospital came as the government marched on with its offensive to destroy the reeling Tamil Tiger rebels and end their quarter-century quest for a separate homeland.

There has been a wave of artillery bombardments across the war zone that began over the weekend and has barely let up in five days, health workers said. The weekend attacks alone may have killed as many as 1,000 people, doctors said.

The government says its troops are not responsible for the shelling and that the military has not fired heavy weapons in the area in weeks.

But Human Rights Watch says satellite images and witness testimony contradict that claim and has accused both sides of using the estimated 50,000 civilians packed into the tiny coastal strip controlled by the rebels as "cannon fodder."

The shelling was so intense Wednesday that a Red Cross ferry waiting off the coast to deliver food aid and evacuate the wounded had to turn back for a second day, the agency said.

Two artillery shells hit the medical facility about 1 p.m., slamming into an administrative office and a ward filled with patients already wounded by previous shell attacks, Dr. V. Shanmugarajah told The Associated Press by telephone.

Dr. Thurairaja Varatharajah, the top health official in the war zone, said the attack killed at least 50 people, including patients, relatives and a health aide, and wounded about 60 others.

Heavy shelling of the war zone continued throughout the day, he said.

50 die in attack on Sri Lanka war zone hospital

"We are unable to treat the people properly because a lot of aides have fled the hospital. We go into bunkers when there is shelling and try to treat them as much as we can when there is a lull," he said by telephone.

One shell that struck the compound set an ambulance on fire, according to video footage of the aftermath of the attack. Scores of people crowded beneath tarps outside the hospital building waited for care as someone wailed in the background.

More than 1,000 civilians many with amputations or chest wounds had been waiting for treatment at the hospital when it was struck, and every 10 minutes or so another one or two died from lack of care, said a third hospital official, who spoke only on condition of anonymity because the government had not authorized him to speak to the media.

Overwhelmed doctors have been reduced to handing out bandages to the seriously wounded, the official said. More than 100 dead bodies have been left inside the compound because no one will risk burying them amid the constant shelling, he said. The strike was the third to hit the hospital this month.

A Red Cross worker and his mother were also killed in shelling, the third Red Cross staff member killed by shrapnel in the war zone in the past two months, the International Committee of the Red Cross said.

"This latest tragic incident shows how dangerous it is for everyone in the area," said Paul Castella, the head of the Red Cross delegation in Colombo.

Rebel spokesman Seevaratnam Puleedevan said shells also hit a home for mentally handicapped women, killing 38 and wounding more than 40.

Reports of the fighting are difficult to verify because the government has barred journalists and aid workers from the war zone.

The government has come under heavy international criticism for the large civilian toll of its offensive against the rebels, who are cornered in a two square-mile (five square-kilometer) strip of land.

The military said it pressed ahead with its offensive into that strip Wednesday, capturing one of the rebels' heavy guns and fending off a suicide attack by four rebel boats laden with explosives.

The U.N. Security Council demanded Wednesday that the Tamil Tigers stop fighting and allow tens of thousands of civilians being used as human shields to leave the war zone. It also called on the government to stop firing heavy weapons, help trapped civilians evacuate and allow for the urgent delivery of humanitarian aid.

The council press statement which is not legally binding expressed grave concern at the worsening humanitarian crisis.

Associated Press writer Krishan Francis contributed to this report from Colombo and Frank Jordans contributed from Geneva.

Load-Date: May 14, 2009

'Everything is lost': victims tell of misery as UN barred from Tamil refugee camps; Sri Lanka

The Times (London)

May 20, 2009 Wednesday

Edition 2

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THE TIMES

Section: NEWS; Pg. 31

Length: 761 words

Byline: Robert Bosleigh

Body

The Sri Lankan Government has blocked access to aid workers trying to help the nearly 300,000 civilians displaced by the army's victory over the **Tamil Tigers**, raising the prospect of a humanitarian catastrophe.

In the capital, Colombo, President Rajapakse announced the "complete defeat" of the rebels yesterday as state television showed pictures of what was said to be the corpse of Velupillai Prabhakaran, the Tigers' leader. Mr Rajapakse vowed in an address to the nation to press ahead with a "homegrown political solution" to end ethnic divisions between the majority Sinhalese population and minority Tamils.

As he spoke, an estimated 80,000 people - mostly Tamil, many of them sick, malnourished or suffering from battlefield wounds - were making their way on foot from the war zone in the north to government-run camps that are already swamped. The UN is not being allowed any access to them, The Times has learnt.

Accounts of conditions inside the camps - gained from testimony recorded covertly by aid workers - and the journey to them are horrifying.

Preema, a Tamil woman, arrived at the 400-hectare (990-acre) Menic farm camp on Sunday. She had left Mullaivaikal, the centre of the fighting, where the Tigers had made their final stand before being defeated, days before, after being shelled heavily.

She set out with her husband, mother and two children, to wade through the Nandikadal lagoon - a waterway strewn with mines - in a desperate attempt to reach safety.

There were deep craters where the lagoon had been bombed and people often drowned, she said. A man offered to carry her ten-year-old daughter. Preema never saw them again. Her husband was taken away later by government troops at a checkpoint in Oomanthai, where refugees are being forced to strip before being allowed to pass, after admitting that he had worked for the Tigers. Her mother died in the lagoon.

'Everything is lost': victims tell of misery as UN barred from Tamil refugee camps Sri Lanka

"Everything is lost," said Preema, holding her son, 7. "Please help me find my daughter. Not knowing anything is making me crazy."

Inside one camp, Nandani, 76, described being forced to stand for up to five hours a day queueing for food.

Kala, a middle-aged woman, spoke about the constant indignities of her new life. "I do not have underwear. I am unable to use the Kotex that the Red Cross handed out," she said, holding a packet of sanitary towels she had been given before the organisation's access to the camp was restricted.

Kothai, another woman, said: "There is a bad distribution system within the camp. Every time it is the same people that get [food and water]. Men crowd around and push the women and children aside."

Government officials did not answer requests for comment. Access for aid agencies to another 200,000 refugees already in the internment camps - which the Government call "welfare villages" - has been severely restricted since Sunday, preventing the administration of basic care.

Ban Ki Moon, the UN SecretaryGeneral, is due to travel in Sri Lanka on Friday to offer help to rebuild the ravaged northeast of the country and urge the Government to reach out to the Tamil population.

"These people have endured one of the cruellest military sieges of modern times - daily shelling over several months," an international aid worker said. "They need urgent help." There are fears that the camp populations - especially children - will be hit by contagious diseases. Chickenpox, hepatitis A and dysentery outbreaks have been reported. Medical facilities are said to be woefully inadequate.

There are also concerns that the suffering will radicalise previously moderate Tamils, especially amongst the community's international diaspora, which had been a key source of funding for the Tigers.

Most Sri Lankans are delighted by the defeat of the Tigers, a terrorist force that fought for 26 years for an independent Tamil homeland, propagating a war that left at least 70,000 dead. Many Tamils were against the rebels after they recruited child soldiers and terrorised their own people.

Tamils in the camps describe being fired on by both sides in the conflict.

Vavathan, 59, said that Tiger troops had forcibly recruited children as young as 15 in the conflict zone, even in the final stages when it was clear that they had lost the conflict. "The war was over, why were they still taking the children?" she asked.

There were doubts over the sincerity of Mr Rajapakse's pledge to build bridges between the Sinhalese and Tamil minority. He has seldom brooked dissent, his opponents say.

Online

Pictures: Sri Lankan Government claims victory in civil war timesonline.co.uk/asia

Graphic

A Sri Lankan Ministry of Defence picture is said to show a government soldier helping to evacuate civilians from the war zone near Mullaitivu on Sunday

SRI LANKAN GOVERNMENT / REUTERS

Load-Date: May 20, 2009

'Everything is lost': victims tell of misery as UN barred from Tamil refugee camps Sri Lanka

End of Document

Tamil Tiger rebels confirm leader's death

Associated Press International

May 25, 2009 Monday 12:13 AM GMT

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Section: INTERNATIONAL NEWS

Length: 766 words

Byline: By ARTHUR MAX, Associated Press Writer

Dateline: COLOMBO Sri Lanka

Body

The defeated Tamil Tiger rebels have confirmed that their supreme leader was killed in the group's final battle against Sri Lankan troops.

The almost mythic commander, Velupillai Prabhakaran, led a terror-driven Tamil insurrection in Sri Lanka for more than a quarter century. Last week the government declared it finally killed Prabhakaran and proclaimed victory against his **Tamil Tigers**, crushing the rebellion that the U.N. estimates cost between 80,000 to 100,000 lives.

But many Tamils didn't believe it.

For some die-hard followers, especially those living abroad, it hardly matters whether the legendary guerrilla is alive or dead, as long as there is a continuing story line of an independent Tamil state in part of this Sinhalese-dominated island.

Meanwhile, the government said it believes Prabhakaran's deputy and feared intelligence chief was also among the dead but his body has not been identified.

Sri Lanka's Defense Secretary Gotabhaya Rajapaksa said in an interview with privately owned Derana TV on Sunday that soldiers have still not been able to identify the body of Pottu Amman, who along with Prabhakaran were wanted by India for the assassination of former Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi.

"There is no doubt that he's been killed," he said.

The military earlier claimed to have identified the body of the spy chief. Rajapaksa did not explain the contradiction.

Gandhi was assassinated in 1991 by a **female** suicide bomber at an election rally.

Prabhakaran, who was 54, was a larger-than-life character who championed the dreams of the Sri Lanka's minority Tamils. He was seldom seen in public, yet his word was unquestioned. He governed by fiat over a de facto state in one-third of this Indian Ocean island.

Even many Tamils who abhorred the Tigers' suicide bombings and assassinations embraced him as their hope for dignity and equal rights in Sri Lanka.

Tamil Tiger rebels confirm leader's death

Bloggers compared Prabhakaran to the Hidden Imam, who was born in the 9th century but who Shi'ite Muslims believe never died. Believers say the Hidden Imam will return one day to bring peace and justice to the world.

The Sri Lankan army says Prabhakaran was among the last to die in the civil war's final battle on Tuesday. His body was found in a thicket of mangroves along a shallow lagoon on the desolate northeastern coast.

Photographs of the familiar mustachioed face, a handkerchief covering the fatal head wound, were splashed on the front pages of Sri Lanka's national papers on Wednesday. Unpublished pictures show a sickle-shaped gash through the bone of his forehead. His dog tags number 001 and ID card were put on display for the cameras.

Selvarasa Pathmanathan, the rebels' international spokesman, confirmed in a statement Sunday that Prabhakaran "attained martyrdom fighting the military oppression of the Sri Lankan government." He died on May 17 in a bloody battle on the island's northeast coast.

Pathmanathan said the group had declared a week of mourning starting Monday for Prabhakaran and urged the Tamil people to "restrain from harmful acts to themselves or anyone else in this hour of extreme grief."

Army commander Gen. Sarath Fonseka said in an interview published Sunday that Prabhakaran's remains were quickly cremated. "His body was burnt in that area and the ashes were sent to the sea," he told the Sinhalese-language Rivira newspaper.

Before Sunday's announcement by the Tigers, many questioned the veracity of the military's claims about his death.

Kanagalingam Sivajilingam, an ethnic Tamil lawmaker, said the government's behavior was suspicious, and he doubted the corpse shown in the photographs and in television footage was indeed that of the founder and leader of the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam.

"I can't prove if he is among the living or dead ... But I have my doubts about this body," he told The Associated Press.

Why, he wondered, were independent journalists not allowed to see the body before it was burned and the ashes scattered. "Only a DNA test will be an effective proof," he said.

Feeding the disbelief were the previous erroneous reports of Prabhakaran's end. He was thought to have been killed in fighting in 1987 by Indian troops summoned to help stop the civil war. He was believed to have drowned in the 2004 tsunami, along with some 35,000 Sri Lankans. Then he was reported to have been hit during bombing last year.

News of Prabhakaran's death this time brought thousands of cheering people onto the streets of Colombo, and set off a frenzy of self-congratulatory festivities by the government.

Associated Press writer Krishan Francis contributed to this report from Colombo.

Load-Date: May 25, 2009

Highlights of the AAP world wire at 08:00 May 25

AAP Newsfeed

May 25, 2009 Monday 8:21 AM AEST

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Section: INTERNATIONAL NEWS

Length: 808 words

Body

HIGHLIGHTS WORLD (ATTN EDITORS)

Highlights of the AAP world file since 20:00

AFR: Suicide attack on Somali military camp kills seven

MOGADISHU, May 24 AFP - A suicide car bomber has killed seven people in an attack on a Somali military camp, as more residents flee embattled Mogadishu, where foreign fighters have reportedly joined the insurgency. (SOMALIA sent at 02:08, 495 words.)

ASIA: 'Bloody intersection' secured by Pakistani troops

ISLAMABAD, May 24 AP - The Taliban left so many mutilated bodies at the crossing - some hanging from trees with threatening notes - that Pakistanis in the Swat Valley's main town took to calling it "bloody intersection". (PAKISTAN Update sent at 07:45, 782 words.)

US: Atlantis lands in California after successful Hubble fix

EDWARDS AIR FORCE BASE, California, May 24 AFP - The space shuttle Atlantis made a picture perfect landing in California on Sunday, nearly two days behind schedule at the end of a successful mission to repair and upgrade the Hubble telescope. (US SHUTTLE sent at 07:59, 681 words.)

AFR: Darfur rebels seize town from Sudan troops: UN

KHARTOUM, May 24 AFP - Darfur rebels have seized the town of Umm Baru near the border with neighbouring Chad from Sudanese soldiers, the hybrid UN-African Union Mission in Darfur (UNAMID) says. (SUDAN DARFUR sent at 06:04, 542 words.)

MID: US soldiers infected with swine flu quit base in Kuwait

KUWAIT CITY, May 24 AFP - Eighteen US soldiers who tested positive for swine flu were removed from a military base in Kuwait, as Australia Sunday shut down a school after identifying two more cases of the disease. (FLU WORLD sent at 21:31, 668 words.)

MID: Iran summit vows to fight drugs, extremism

TEHRAN, May 24 AFP - Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad and his counterparts from Afghanistan and Pakistan have declared their joint commitment to battling Islamist extremism and drug smuggling in the region. (IRAN SUMMIT sent at 01:00, 589 words.)

ASIA: NKorea's Kim offers condolences over SKorean leader's death

SEOUL, May 25 AFP - North Korean leader Kim Jong-il offered condolences on Monday to the family of former South Korean president Roh Moo-Hyun, who died at the weekend in an apparent suicide, state media reported. (KOREA ROH sent at 08:10, 220 words.)

EUR: Man dies exploring wreckage of Britannic off Greece

ATHENS, Greece May 24 AP - A member of a National Geographic team exploring the wreckage of Britannic, the Titanic's sister ship, in the Aegean Sea died of decompression sickness on Sunday, the Merchant Marine Ministry said. (GREECE BRITANNIC sent at 07:50, 284 words.)

EUR: Haneke's 'The White Ribbon' wins top prize at Cannes

Highlights of the AAP world wire at 08:00 May 25

CANNES, France, May 24 AP - Austrian director Michael Haneke's sombre drama 'The White Ribbon' claimed the top prize on Sunday at the Cannes Film Festival, where Quentin Tarantino and Lars von Trier entries earned the acting honours. (CANNES AWARDS Update sent at 05:02, 439 words.)

MID: Eight killed in suicide attack on US troops in Iraq

BAGHDAD, May 24 DPA - Eight people have been killed by a suicide bomber who drove a car packed with explosives at a US patrol in the northern Iraqi city of Mosul, but Iraq's Minister of National Security insists the country is "90-per-cent secure". (IRAQ sent at 04:50, 414 words.)

ASIA: Tigers admit leader dead; UN presses Sri Lanka over access

COLOMBO, May 24 AFP - Sri Lanka's Tamil Tigers have admitted for the first time their leader was killed by government forces a week ago as the UN demanded better access for civilians displaced in recent fighting. (SRILANKA sent at 04:32, 537 words.)

MID: Israel to keep expanding settlements: Netanyahu

JERUSALEM, May 24 AFP - Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu says Israel will continue to expand settlements in the occupied West Bank despite calls by main ally the United States to stop. (MIDEAST sent at 03:24, 666 words.)

UK: Scores of UK lawmakers face purge over expenses

LONDON, May 24 AP - David Cameron, Britain's main opposition leader, says a major purge of veteran legislators is likely at the next national election amid mounting public anger over the scandal regarding lawmakers' expenses. (UK EXPENSES sent at 02:14, 606 words.)

AFR: 11 killed in stampede at world music festival in Morocco

RABAT, May 24 AFP - A stampede at a world music festival in the Moroccan capital, which featured top names such as Kylie Minogue and Alicia Keys, left at least 11 people dead, most of them women and children, police said Sunday. (MOROCCO STAMPEDE Wrap sent at 23:03, 417 words.)

UK: British royal chauffeur suspended over security gaffe

LONDON, May 24 AFP - A royal chauffeur was suspended on Sunday after reportedly giving two undercover journalists a tour of Queen Elizabeth II's official cars in the grounds of Buckingham Palace, a spokeswoman said. (UK ROYALS Wrap sent at 21:45, 552 words.)

Load-Date: May 25, 2009

End of Document

Lack of will

Indian Express

May 26, 2009 Tuesday

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Length: 482 words

Body

and#149;The barbaric killing of 16 cops, including five women, by Naxalites in Gadchiroli district of Maharashtra should be condemned in the strictest terms ('Another alert', IE, May 23). Despite the fact that Naxalites have been killing civilians and security personnel for years, there appears to be a total lack of political will to end their menace. The only genuine initiatives against Maoists so far seem to have come from the state governments of Chhattisgarh and Andhra Pradesh. But other state governments have done precious little. Sadly, at the head of this political failure stands the Centre. Perhaps there's a lesson or two to pick up from Sri Lanka's single-minded war against the LTTE.

- Fayyaz S. Pathan

Mumbai

and#149;Naxalites gunning down or blowing up security personnel is indeed such regular news in this country that we don't care to notice anymore. Can we be faulted for thinking that both state and Union governments consider security personnel - whether from the police or the army - expendable commodities? Even though the Naxalite movement has lost its intellectual attraction, it has again gained strength and spread to so many districts in India. The government must tackle the violence as a law and order problem first, and immediately. But thereafter, no effort should be spared in the uplift of living and working conditions in these districts.

- Mathew Oommen Pune

Before it's too late

and#149;The increase in aid to Pakistan sanctioned by the US must cause concern to the MEA and PMO. The US has its own interests and quite naturally it works on that basis, but our foreign ministry must take do more to influence the decisions of the US administration.

The UPA should use its leverage with Washington to change the way Pakistan behaves. Already, Pakistan is allegedly diverting the funds, and may be back at India's door once the war with the Taliban is over.

- Jai Prakash Gupta

Ambala

Shedding deadwood

and#149;In the editorial '19 signals' (IE, May 23) you have rightly hailed Manmohan Singh's decision to exclude "non-performers" like Arjun Singh, H.R. Bhardwaj, T.R. Baalu from the new cabinet. As the new cabinet gets down

Lack of will

to business, Singh's colleagues should know that the PM will not take kindly to corruption and poor performance. Singh and the Congress should remember that any "breach" in the standards will have "high political costs".

- M. Ratan New Delhi

Find a better reason

and#149;Surely Jeremy Carl knows that the Indian electorate votes in or out political parties, but not according to what pleases the US administration ('The election's...', IE, May 23). One cannot take seriously Carl's suggestion that Indo-US relations will hit a new high

because Rahul Gandhi is "US-educated". One would like to believe that our mutual

ties run deeper than that! Besides, "India-educated" politicians dominate the political scene here.

- R. Venkatanarayanan

Noida

Load-Date: July 21, 2010

End of Document

Displaced increasingly returning home from camps - UN

Daily Mirror (Sri Lanka)

November 7, 2009 Saturday

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Length: 459 words

Dateline: Sri Lanka

Body

Sri Lanka, Nov. 7 -- About 90,000 Sri Lankans displaced by the conflict in Sri Lanka have returned to their homes in the past three months, and the pace of returns has begun to accelerate, the United Nations refugee agency reported.

UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) spokesperson Andrej Mahecic told journalists that in the past two weeks alone, an estimated 39,000 people have returned to their former villages - mostly in the north and east of Sri Lanka - as part of the Government's return plan.

Another 16,500 people have been released from the camps where they have been sheltering since the conflict ended in May and are being accommodated with host families, Mr. Mahecic said. This group includes many pregnant women and elderly persons. A number of persons with disabilities have also been released to specialized care institutions.

More than 270,000 Sri Lankans were staying in closed camps after hostilities between the military and the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) ended, and in recent months senior UN humanitarian and human rights officials have voiced concern over their safety.

About 163,000 people now remain, and Mr. Mahecic said conditions inside those camps are deteriorating.

"UNHCR and other UN continue to advocate strongly with the Government of Sri Lanka to expedite the return of all remaining IDPs [internally displaced persons] to their areas of origin in safety and dignity and in line with international standards," he told a press briefing in Geneva, where the agency is headquartered.

"We also continue to advocate for the full freedom of movement for those who are not able to immediately return to their homes or stay with friends and relatives once the ongoing phase of the return is complete."

UNHCR, with the assistance of other UN aid, has been distributing relief items such as sleeping mats, bed sheets and hurricane lamps to people returning to their former communities.

Returning families also receive a shelter grant equivalent to about \$250 so they can start rebuilding their homes.

In Kilinochchi and Mullaitivu districts, the agency has held talks with Government officials to ensure that minimum standards for safe returns, such as the completion of mine clearance activities and access to services, are met.

UNHCR has provided five demining flail machines to speed up mine-clearing operations in former conflict areas, and those machines are expected to arrive tomorrow.

Displaced increasingly returning home from camps - UN

The mine clearance operations will be carried out by the Sri Lankan Government with the help of the UN Development Programme (UNDP) and other organizations. Published by HT Syndication with permission from Daily Mirror Sri Lanka. For more information on news feed please contact Sarabjit Jagirdar at htsyndication@hindustantimes.com

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Load-Date: November 7, 2009

End of Document

Wanted; speech writers for State Department

Daily Mirror (Sri Lanka)

October 6, 2009 Tuesday

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Length: 417 words

Dateline: Sri Lanka

Body

Sri Lanka, Oct. 6 -- The US State Department speech writers have really run short of ideas. Here is a classic example. Delivering her testimony before the U.S. Senate Subcommittees on May 13, 2009, Melanne Verveer, the State Department's Ambassador at large for global women's issues said "Let me preface my remarks by saying that violence against women as a tool of armed groups is in no way limited to the Democratic Republic of Congo and Sudan, or just to Africa. We've seen this in Bosnia, Burma, Sri Lanka and elsewhere".

Sounds familiar? Five months later the line was picked up by her outspoken department head, Hillary Clinton, this time adding the word 'rape' to that "We've seen rape used as a tactic of war before in Bosnia, Burma and Sri Lanka and elsewhere."

The irony of the story is, it was Verveer in her capacity as Ambassador at large for Global Women's issues that came forward to make a clarification after Sri Lanka lodged a protest against Clinton's remarks. In the letter addressed to Sri Lanka's Foreign Affairs Minister, Verveer wrote.."in the most recent phase of the conflict, from 2006 to 2009 ... we have not received reports that rape and sexual abuse were used as tools of war, as they clearly have in other conflict area around the world". After all she herself never mentioned the word 'rape' in her testimony speech which was made just five days before the end of Sri Lanka's war against the LTTE. It was Hillary who borrowed the catchy phrase '.Bosnia, Burma and Sri Lanka and elsewhere'.

Now who has played the copycat and bungled it? The speech writer, unless of course the former first lady plays Lincoln and prepares her own speeches. Verveer it is learnt had also been the Chief of Staff of Hillary Clinton during the Clinton days. It could also be that the two ladies have been memorizing these alliterative lines 'Boznia, Burma.' since those good old days.

While Sri Lanka is unlikely to play Donald Tusk, the Polish Prime Minister who snubbed Hillary Clinton last month by refusing to answer a call from her on the grounds that it was wrong protocol, the Clinton episode has gone to teach at least two lessons to everyone.

First, a country has to really fight for its right to get justice from the US.

Second, one will never get an apology from Hillary Clinton. You get only clarifications. Published by HT Syndication with permission from Daily Mirror Sri Lanka. For more information on news feed please contact Sarabjit Jagirdar at htsyndication@hindustantimes.com

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Wanted; speech writers for State Department

Load-Date: October 6, 2009

End of Document

UN Secy. Gen. endorses President's stance

Sunday Observer (Sri Lanka)

May 25, 2009 Monday

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Length: 444 words

Dateline: Colombo

Body

Colombo, May 25 -- United Nations Secretary General Ban Ki-Moon endorsed the stance taken by President Mahinda Rajapaksa in bringing the country together and ensuring the equal rights of all citizens irrespective of their racial and religious differences.

The UN Chief was speaking to the press at the Queens Hotel, Kandy after his meeting with President Mahinda Rajapaksa at the President's House in the Hill Capital. Ban Ki-Moon said that he was happy with the discussion he had with President Mahinda Rajapaksa and he also shared the views expressed by the President in finding an early settlement to the crisis in the country by uniting all people with equal rights. Commenting on the end of the **LTTE** terrorism he said that the outfit was very unfair by keeping the innocent civilians as human shields in the war-torn areas. The UN Chief also said that extra care should be taken for the welfare of the internally displaced children, pregnant **women** and the elderly persons. He also added that the Government has assured him that before the end of this year 80% of IDPs would be settled in their original places. Elaborating further on the settlement of the IDPs in their original places the UN Chief underlined that de-mining should be given priority before any kind of resettlement of the IDPs. Foreign Minister Rohitha Bogollagama also accompanied Ban Ki-Moon at the press briefing and categorically said that the Sri Lankan Security Forces carried out the war against terrorism without leaving room for any human rights violations. He also said that the Government would now focus on finding a political solution for the ethnic strife and it was happy to see that almost all the political parties have rallied around the Government on reaching a political settlement. Earlier, UN Secretary General Bank Ki-Moon toured the Menik Farm Internally Displaced Persons Camp in Vavuniya and spoke to several displaced civilians, verifying their welfare. He spent 20 minutes walking through the camp. He also walked into a makeshift clinic where he saw around 100 elderly patients, some with gaping wounds who had been caught up in the conflict. Commenting on the IDP camp, he said that there were huge challenges that can only be overcome by strong support from the international community. Ban Ki-Moon added that the security put up in the IDP Camp was not meant to hold back the IDPs, and efforts were being made to resettle and reintegrate them. The UN Chief assured that he would mobilise UN agencies and international, non-governmental organisations to help with the resettlement process. Published by HT Syndication with permission from Sunday Observer (Sri Lanka).

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Load-Date: May 25, 2009

No Headline In Original

The Evening Standard (London)

June 1, 2009 Monday

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London Evening Standard

Length: 523 words

Body

Amar Singh

A Tamil terror chief who allegedly handed cyanide pills to child soldiers is living in a London suburb, the Standard can reveal.

Sri Lankan intelligence officials believe Adele Balasingham, 59, is one of the most senior figures in the remains of the terror group which fought a 26-year war for independence on the island and was defeated last month.

They claim she has played a key role in organising protests by Tamils outside Parliament and want Britain to take action against her. Sri Lanka's government believes Tamil Tiger leaders abroad are raising funds and procuring equipment which could be used in fresh attacks. Mrs Balasingham lives in a £500,000 house in New Malden, Surrey. She is the widow of Anton Balasingham, a Sri Lankan with British citizenship who was the chief political strategist of the **Tamil Tigers** until he died in 2006. Mrs Balasingham, an Australian-born nurse, met and married him while he was living in London in the Seventies. She became deeply involved in the Tigers' cause ending up as the leader of its **women** soldiers and nicknamed 'Aunty' on the island. An undated video of Mrs Balasingham, showing her in camouflage fatigues and presiding over a parade of **female** child soldiers, has been circulated to confirm her status as one of the movement's most influential figures.

The **female** Tamil Tiger fighters, some thought to be as young as 14, have completed three months of training.

She is seen presenting them with cyanide capsules to be worn on a necklace and swallowed if they are about to be captured by troops. Her presence in Britain has increased tensions between Britain and Sri Lanka, which believes the Government has been 'too soft' on Tiger associates since banning the group in 2001. A senior Sri Lankan High Commission source told the Standard: 'Given the association of Mrs Balasingham with the senior ranks of the **LTTE** (Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam) she could be seen as a sole survivor. 'She was involved in taking major decisions in the hierarchy of the **LTTE** and there is a possibility that supporters will rally around her in Britain. 'We believe the Parliament Square protests were organised directly from the **Tamil Tigers** leadership... and Mrs Balasingham has been a main point of contact in the UK for this.' Representatives of the Sri Lankan government are to meet Scotland Yard and the Home Office this week for talks on the Tigers' presence in Britain. There are fears a new faction of the **Tamil Tigers** could emerge, fuelled by anger over the number of

No Headline In Original

innocent people killed by the Sri Lankan army in its offensive against the militants. Mrs Balasingham, who rarely leaves her four-bedroom home, declined to speak to the Standard. In her 2001 book *The Will To Freedom: An Inside View Of Tamil Resistance*, she wrote about staying as a "guest of honour" with Tigers'™ founder Velupillai Prabhakaran.

Scotland Yard said they were unable to comment on ongoing inquiries.

Terror leader: Adele Balasingham, left, in a YouTube video allegedly showing her handing cyanide pills to **female** child Tamil soldiers and outside her home in New Malden, Surrey

Load-Date: June 1, 2009

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Nalini goes on hunger strike after jail staff ' maltreat' her

Mail Today

July 28, 2009 Tuesday

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Length: 465 words

Byline: By M. C. Rajan in Chennai

Body

ALLEGED ill- treatment at the hands of prison staff has forced Nalini Sriharan, serving a life term in the Rajiv Gandhi assassination case, to go on an indefinite hunger strike in the high- security Vellore Central Prison near Chennai.

" She has been on a fast for the past five days to protest against the way jail authorities were treating her," her advocate Pughazhenthai said after he visited her on Monday. " She began her fast early last Friday," he added.

The " maltreatment" began after the Madras High Court directed the Tamil Nadu government to pay Rs 50,000 to 55- year- old Sharada, Nalini's fellow prisoner.

She was attacked by three warders and stripped over a monetary row. The court also ordered that disciplinary action should be taken against the three.

Nalini, who had witnessed the attack inside the prison, was instrumental in filing the case and securing justice for her hapless fellow prisoner.

Nalini narrated the incident to her advocate when he visited her on January 5.

Pughazhenthai, who also runs an NGO for prisoners' rights, promptly filed a habeas corpus petition in the court.

Ever since the court pronounced the judgement in the case, Nalini has been allegedly subjected to humiliation and torture.

" She is being abused in filthy language," he said. " The jail employees are venting their anger for being hauled up by the court." Nalini's good- Samaritan act has come to light a year after Priyanka Vadra met her in the prison in April 2008. Priyanka's Mission Vellore had raised the hopes of Nalini's early release.

She has been in jail since 1991, shortly after the May 21 assassination of the former Prime Minister, and is one of the women convicts to have served the longest life terms in the country.

Nalini's daughter, Haridra aka Meghara - who is now 16 years old and lives in the United Kingdom - was born during the incarceration. While eulogising Rajiv as a great leader, Nalini recently claimed the " real killers" of the former prime minister were still at large.

Along with others convicted in the assassination case, Nalini's hopes of a premature release suffered a setback with the Tamil Nadu government opposing their pleas in the Madras High Court. Nalini had moved the court twice for release, but could not succeed.

Nalini goes on hunger strike after jail staff ' maltreat' her

Vellore Central Prison authorities denied Nalini was on a protest fast.

Nalini was sentenced to death by a special court for her involvement in Rajiv's assassination at Sriperumbudur near Chennai on May 21, 1991. The sentence was commuted to life imprisonment after Sonia Gandhi petitioned for clemency for the sake of Nalini's daughter.

Nalini, an Indian, had accompanied the Sri Lankan woman suicide bomber who blew up Rajiv with hidden explosives.

Nalini was a close friend of an LTTE operative, Murugan, who is also an accused in the case.

Load-Date: July 22, 2010

End of Document

Complete politician

Indian Express

September 11, 2009 Friday

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Length: 508 words

Byline: The Indian Express

Body

and#149;Credit for YSR's success should be given to his 2003 padayatra. That effort of personal labour gained him insight into Andhra's rural hinterland and popularity. While in power he gave dignity to the poor and to marginalised women. These two sections made up most of his mourners, grateful for foodgrains at an affordable price and employment in projects. YSR believed "power is what power does", and accordingly settled scores with enemies and helped friends. He wasn't above controversy. But, with numbers on his side, YSR could brush aside the opposition's allegations. Indeed, he was a complete politician.

- M.K.D. Prasada Rao

Ghaziabad

Unsettling still

and#149;The article 'Lanka's barbed wire' is timely (IE, September 10). The reasonable and achievable conditions mentioned, if accepted and implemented by the Rajapaksa government, will certainly help ethnic reconciliation and pave the way for durable peace and progress. Unfortunately, all these months after the LTTE's end, Rajapaksa hasn't shown any visible intent to embrace the war-ravaged Tamil civilians. In fact, Sri Lanka seems bent on vengeance. This attitude is certainly wrong. After all, "No question is ever settled until it is settled right."

- C.G. Sivakumaran

New Delhi

Suite spell

and#149;The strongly-worded editorial 'Bitter suite' (IE, September 9) made some telling points. Krishna and Tharoor showed disregard for the Congress's "austerity" drive. What people really expect from politicians is sincerity and transparency, more than modest bills. It's true that extravagance must be avoided, especially in hard times. So, either the "VIP culture" has to be abolished to stem this hypocrisy, or those meaningless exhortations on austerity should be stopped.

- M. Ratan New Delhi

Separate truths

and#149;This refers to the editorial 'Batla and Ishrat' (IE, September 11). It's unfortunate that the UPA is trying to play politics on the back of an alleged fake encounter, for which the Gujarat government might be accountable. That

Complete politician

those killed were likely LeT operatives doesn't take away from the illegality of a fake encounter. On the other hand, being killed in a fake encounter doesn't absolve a terrorist of his/her crime. These are two separate issues at hand. There's a lot amiss apparently in the affair, with the roles of neither the Union nor the Gujarat government quite clear. The public deserves to know the truth of the matter.

- Gautam Navlakha

New Delhi

Evidence upgrade

and#149;The fuss over the evidence against Hafiz Saeed is an opportunity for India to examine its whole idea and policy of "evidence". The kind of evidence that our politicians and media flaunt is, more often than not, thrown out even by our own courts. It's time Indian sleuths and intelligence agencies comprehensively moved beyond the notion that evidence can be just about anything. None of this is to question the evidence India has offered against Saeed, but a technological and technical overhaul in this area would go a long way in India being taken more seriously.

- Charu Sodhani

Lucknow

Load-Date: July 22, 2010

End of Document

RAW - a terrorist organization

Pakistan Observer

September 3, 2009 Thursday

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Section: Vol. XV; No. 247

Length: 1202 words

Byline: Ali Sukhanver - Email: , alisukhanver@hotmail.com

Body

The role of an intelligence agency should be different from that of a terrorist organization. The CIA, the Mussad, the ISI and the Raw must not be mixed up with LTTE, the Black Water Force and particularly the detracted groups of Taliban & Al- Qaida which are defaming not only Islam but also the Muslims all over the world. If an intelligence agency is trying to forget its prescribed aims and objects by surpassing its limits, it should not be ranked as an intelligence agency but a terrorist organization.

A few days back the Federation of American Scientists FAS issued a report which confirmed that the Research and Analysis Wing RAW, was directly involved in the secession of East Pakistan into Bangladesh, and is currently engaged in similar activities in Balochistan. The FAS is a group which is engaged in analysis and advocacy on science, technology and public policy concerning global security, especially about the countries having nuclear capability.

It is a privately funded non-profit policy organization whose Board of Sponsors includes 55 American Nobel laureates. The report says "The assistance provided to RAW by the Russian KGB enabled RAW to arrange terrorist attacks in Pakistani cities throughout the Afghan War.

The defeat of the Soviet Union in Afghanistan did not end the role of RAW in Pakistan, as it established training camps in East Punjab, Indian Held Kashmir, Uttar Pradesh and Rajasthan where agents are trained for terrorist activities." Pointing towards the role of Raw in the formerly East Pakistan the report says,

'The involvement of Raw in East Pakistan started in 1960s when it began with promoting dissatisfaction against Pakistan . Later on Raw funded at a large scale Mujeebur Rehman's general election of 1970. This organization not only funded Mukti Bahini but also trained and armed the workers of Mukti Bahini.' There is another shocking revelation in the report that Raw staged the drama of hijacking a plane of Indian Airlines proceeding to Lahore in 1971. The hidden aim behind this hijacking was to put all blame on the Kashmiri Freedom Fighters and to introduce them throughout the world as terrorists.

In the light of the above disclosure it won't be wise to rank Raw as an intelligence agency. Hijacking of airplanes, massacre of innocent citizens and patronizing training camps of terrorist are certainly never the job of an intelligence agency. These are the actions of a terrorist organization. It is not only Pakistan which has been suffering from the childish misdeeds of Raw since long; the list of the afflicting countries is endless.

A few months back, in one of its editorials the leading newspaper of Sri Lanka, Daily Mirror criticized RAW by saying that this agency is playing a heinous role in the regional countries to destabilize them.. Commenting on the

RAW - a terrorist organization

RAW's role in Sri Lanka, the editorial said: "The RAW in Sri Lanka has a pretty colorful record. Having raised, nursed and fortified the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam, it later went through phases where it adopted 'rock the baby, pinch the baby' approach towards the LTTE."

"The paper is of the opinion that Raw never works on serious grounds because this organization is nothing more than a vase weeded with bitter thorny and discolored wild flowers. Its workers and employers are morally bankrupt and spiritually barren. The newspaper wrote: "In 2007, ripples were created in the spy agency when one of its Colombo-based officers, Ravi Nair of 1975 batch, was found allegedly carrying on an affair with a woman working for another country's spy agency."

The 'crime' was considered only second to what was committed by the RAW Joint Secretary, Rabinder Singh, in 2004 when he escaped with copies of several highly-confidential documents and is believed to have passed them on to the CIA. This was after Singh's superiors confronted him with evidence that he had spent time with a Delhi-based female US embassy officer at a resort down the New Delhi-Jaipur highway."

According to the sources RAW and the Indian Ministry of External Affairs are provided Rs. 250 million annually as "discretionary grants" for foreign influence operations. These funds are meant for supporting the organizations fighting Sikh and Kashmiri separatists in the UK, Canada and the US. An Extensive network of Indian operatives of Raw is controlled by the Indian Embassy in Washington DC whose covert activities include the infiltration of US long distance telephone carriers by Indian operatives, with access to all kinds of information, to blackmail relatives of US residents living in India. In 1996, an Indian diplomat was implicated in a scandal over illegal funding of political candidates in the US. Under US law foreign nationals are prohibited from contributing to federal elections.

The US District Court in Baltimore sentenced Lalit H. Gadhia, a naturalized US citizen of Indian origin, to three months imprisonment. Gadhia had confessed that he worked as a conduit between the Indian Embassy and various Indian-American organizations for funneling campaign contributions to influence US lawmakers. Over US \$46,000 from the Indian Embassy were distributed among 20 Congressional candidates. The source of the cash used by Gadhia was Devendra Singh, a RAW official assigned to the Indian Embassy in Washington. Now Raw is adopting the same philosophy and mode of action in Balochistan by patronizing the so called 'separatist elements' which originally do not belong to the 'soil'.

Talking to the media men, on the second last day of August, Balochistan Chief Minister Jam Mohammad Yusuf said that involvement of external elements; including the Indian intelligence agency Research and Analysis Wing in the current acts of terrorism in Balochistan could not be ruled out. As long as Kashmir issue is not settled these elements will continue to create difficulties for Pakistan. Jam Yusuf referred to various training camps in which, according to him, terrorists were being harboured and paid huge sums to create trouble. He said that none of the Baloch 'waderas' had the capacity to finance such an operation. RAW had been running terrorist camps in Iran and Afghanistan since long and now it has set up 30 to 40 such camps in Balochistan, each with training facility for 30 people who are paid Rs10,000 monthly.

If we compare the East Pakistan episode and the present situation of Balochistan with reference to the report issued by the FAS, we can very easily analyze the scenario. Raw is repeating the same story of 'divide and disperse' in Balochistan which was once employed in the formerly East Pakistan. The situation calls for a very serious attitude on the part of Pakistani politicians. They must not waste their time and efforts in digging old graves. International forces are trying their best to divert the attention of the Pakistani politicians to some very trivial and valueless issues so that they may not be able to concentrate upon the worsening situation in Balochistan. Raw is craving for giving birth to another 'East Pakistan' out of its old barren and out worn womb. The Pakistani politicians must keep in mind like sensible fathers that we can no more afford another pregnancy.

Load-Date: November 16, 2011

France to help promote Sri Lanka tourism

Daily Mirror (Sri Lanka)

September 15, 2009 Tuesday

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Length: 465 words

Dateline: Sri Lanka

Body

Sri Lanka, Sept. 15 -- Giving a different twist to promoting Sri Lanka in the global market, the Sri Lanka Tourism Bureau has decided to bring back Raid Amazonas, the single multi sport adventure race reserved exclusively for women to Sri Lanka to compete and to enjoy the beauty of Sri Lanka in October.

Held for the second time, some 450 female participants from France, Belgium, Sweden, and Czech Republic will arrive on Sri Lanka on October 4 to take part in the adventure race to be held the following day. The participants will be in teams of three, and 5 teams from Sri Lanka will also take part in the race.

"This would help position Sri Lanka tourism in the global market by indicating and sending out positive vibes that Sri Lanka tourism is on the right path," said Minister of Tourism Promotion, Faizer Mustapha.

"The significance of the event, apart from being able to attract a large number of foreigners in one go is that, under the instructions of Namal Rajapakse, two rehabilitated female LTTE Cadres will also participate in the event, along with two other army personnel."

Alexandra Debanne of ZBO, organisers of the event, stated that even though the number of participants has dropped by 80-90 this year in comparison to the race in 2005, the crowd in Paris and other countries opened to the event has been very keen on joining the project. "We are also focusing on Spain and Germany, and we are optimistic about their response," said Mr. Debanne.

Furthermore, he stated that large scale promotion is being done in France about the event and the country via the print and electronic media. "2000 massive billboards are already up all over Paris and we will be putting up 5000 more before the end of the month."

Commencing October 5, the event will start off in Dambulla where the participants will have a number of challenges such as mountain biking 45km, 18 km of orientation and 20km of canoeing combined with other disciplines such as trekking, hiking and aqua sports.

When asked why the event was confined to women only, Mr. Debanne stated that the core idea of the event is to admire the beauty of the surroundings whilst taking part in the race, which the ladies are more geared for, while men would only want to win and not concentrate on the surroundings.

"With blue skies, golden sands, elephants, whales and mountain sites, Sri Lanka has the best sites ever. While we were on the backburner for the past few years, this is an opportunity to establish ourselves on the international platform for what we are and do our best at this opportune time," Chairman of SLTB, Bernard Goonetilleke said.

France to help promote Sri Lanka tourism

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Load-Date: September 15, 2009

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SCOPP functions to be delegated

Daily Mirror (Sri Lanka)

July 25, 2009 Saturday

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Length: 488 words

Dateline: Colombo

Body

Colombo, July 25 -- The Secretariat for Coordinating the Peace Process (SCOPP) which is in the process of winding up its operations shortly said yesterday its functions would be handed over to several relevant ministries and other organizations.

SCOPP Secretary General Prof. Rajiva Wijesinghe told a news conference that it would continue for one more month to complete the work and to handover the functions to the relevant bodies. He said some of the functions would be handed over to the Disaster Management and Human Rights Ministry, Social Welfare Ministry and Women's Affairs and Childcare Ministry and several other organizations. He said the Secretariat would come up with its final bulletin on the IDPs this month. SCOPP meanwhile put out its second quarterly bulletin where there is extensive information on the situation in the IDP camps. Prof. Wijesinghe who visited the camps recently explained that the conditions in the IDP camps were getting better as issues that were prevailing were being resolved. He said the food condition in the camps were not satisfactory initially as the food supply was given to contractors. However the situation has improved after the concept of community cooking was introduced in the camps recently. "This concept of allowing the individuals and groups of IDPs to cook themselves has got off the ground and this would improve the situation He said there were grave issues concerning the toilets as some were not built according to government standards. He said there were some instances where toilets collapsed as they were built with wood and fiber glass. Asked whether there was a scarcity of water he said this was caused by the situation where the numbers increased instantly during the initial stages. But the IDPs have been able to have frequent baths during the latter stages and supply of water through browsers in addition to water tanks provided have led to an improvement in these conditions. According to SCOPP further improvements in the situation of the IDPs in zones 1 to 4 would be possible once the government completed its plan to reduce overcrowding by shifting people to new sites. Some 15 to 20 locations in the countryside between Menik Farm and Vavuniya have been identified and are being cleared by the security forces. Regarding the rehabilitation centres where the LTTE cadres are held, the Secretary General said books were in short supply. He said English and Sinhala were available in few locations though the planned vocational training has not been started yet. He said many of the inmates were keen to learn the languages. Some of them are reported to be with remarkable talents such as singing. It was reported that there was one singer who had been attached to SLBC some years back. Published by HT Syndication with permission from Daily Mirror Sri Lanka. For more information on news feed please contact Surit Das at htsyndication@hindustantimes.com

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

Load-Date: July 25, 2009

SCOPP functions to be delegated

End of Document

50 die in attack on Sri Lanka war zone hospital

Associated Press International

May 14, 2009 Thursday 1:49 AM GMT

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Section: INTERNATIONAL NEWS

Length: 841 words

Byline: By RAVI NESSMAN, Associated Press Writer

Dateline: COLOMBO Sri Lanka

Body

Artillery shells tore through a hospital packed with wounded civilians in Sri Lanka's war zone for a second day, killing at least 50 people, setting an ambulance ablaze and forcing the medical staff to huddle in bunkers for safety, doctors said.

Health workers at the makeshift medical facility said they were so overwhelmed by the crush of the wounded and the unrelenting shelling of the area they could do little but give gauze and bandages to the roughly 1,000 patients waiting for treatment.

The strike Wednesday on the hospital came as the government marched on with its offensive to destroy the reeling Tamil Tiger rebels and end their quarter-century quest for a separate homeland.

There has been a wave of artillery bombardments across the war zone that began over the weekend and has barely let up in five days, health workers said. The weekend attacks alone may have killed as many as 1,000 people, doctors said.

The government says its troops are not responsible for the shelling and that the military has not fired heavy weapons in the area in weeks.

But Human Rights Watch says satellite images and witness testimony contradict that claim and has accused both sides of using the estimated 50,000 civilians packed into the tiny coastal strip controlled by the rebels as "cannon fodder."

The shelling was so intense Wednesday that a Red Cross ferry waiting off the coast to deliver food aid and evacuate the wounded had to turn back for a second day, the agency said.

U.S. President Barack Obama on Wednesday called for an end to the violence and steps to alleviate civilian suffering.

Obama called on Sri Lanka's government Wednesday to "stop the indiscriminate shelling" that has killed hundreds of civilians and allow U.N. humanitarian teams access to war-wounded.

He also called on the Tamil rebels to lay down their weapons and release civilian captives. He said the situation was a humanitarian crisis that could turn into a catastrophe.

50 die in attack on Sri Lanka war zone hospital

Two artillery shells hit the medical facility about 1 p.m., slamming into an administrative office and a ward filled with patients already wounded by previous shell attacks, Dr. V. Shanmugarajah told The Associated Press by telephone.

Dr. Thurairaja Varatharajah, the top health official in the war zone, said the attack killed at least 50 people, including patients, relatives and a health aide, and wounded about 60 others.

Heavy shelling of the war zone continued throughout the day, he said.

"We are unable to treat the people properly because a lot of aides have fled the hospital. We go into bunkers when there is shelling and try to treat them as much as we can when there is a lull," he said by telephone.

One shell set an ambulance on fire, according to video footage of the aftermath of the attack. Scores of people crowded beneath tarps outside the hospital building waited for care as someone waited in the background.

More than 1,000 civilians many with amputations or chest wounds had been waiting for treatment at the hospital when it was struck, and every 10 minutes or so another one or two died from lack of care, said a third hospital official, who spoke only on condition of anonymity because the government had not authorized him to speak to the media.

Overwhelmed doctors have been reduced to handing out bandages to the seriously wounded, the official said. More than 100 dead bodies have been left inside the compound because no one will risk burying them amid the constant shelling, he said. The strike was the third to hit the hospital this month.

A Red Cross worker and his mother were also killed in shelling, the third Red Cross staff member killed by shrapnel in the war zone in the past two months, the International Committee of the Red Cross said.

"This latest tragic incident shows how dangerous it is for everyone in the area," said Paul Castella, the head of the Red Cross delegation in Colombo.

Rebel spokesman Seevaratnam Puleedevan said shells also hit a home for mentally handicapped women, killing 38 and wounding more than 40.

Reports of the fighting are difficult to verify because the government has barred journalists and aid workers from the war zone.

The government has come under heavy international criticism for the large civilian toll of its offensive against the rebels, who are cornered in a two square-mile (five square-kilometer) strip of land.

The military said it pressed ahead with its offensive into that strip Wednesday, capturing one of the rebels' heavy guns and fending off a suicide attack by four rebel boats laden with explosives.

The U.N. Security Council demanded Wednesday that the Tamil Tigers stop fighting and allow tens of thousands of civilians being used as human shields to leave the war zone. It also called on the government to stop firing heavy weapons, help trapped civilians evacuate and allow for the urgent delivery of humanitarian aid.

The council press statement which is not legally binding expressed grave concern at the worsening humanitarian crisis.

Associated Press writer Krishan Francis contributed to this report from Colombo.

Load-Date: May 14, 2009

AFP 1400 GMT News Advisory

Agence France Presse -- English

May 17, 2009 Sunday 2:21 PM GMT

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Length: 882 words

Dateline: PARIS, May 17 2009

Body

Duty Editor: Denis Barnett

Tel: + 33 1 4041 4636

-- TOP STORIES --

+ Sri Lanka's **Tamil Tigers** admit defeat

+ Israeli PM in US for first talks with Obama

+ Somali insurgents take key town

SriLanka-unrest,5thlead-WRAP

COLOMBO

Sri Lanka's Tamil Tiger rebels say they will put down their weapons after a 37-year battle for an independent ethnic homeland, with their last remaining fighters encircled in a tiny patch of jungle.

700 words 1445 GMT by Amal Jayasinghe. Graphic. Picture. Video

Mideast-diplomacy-Israel-US,lead

WASHINGTON

Israel's Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu arrives in the US ahead of his first talks with President Barack Obama amid divisions over Middle East peacemaking and Iran's nuclear ambitions.

750 words 1500 GMT by Ron Bousso

Somali-unrest,WRAP-lead

MOGADISHU

Somali extremists capture a strategic stronghold of beleaguered President Sharif Sheikh Ahmed in a major blow to his fledgling administration as government troops scramble to contain an insurgent onslaught.

600 words 1500 GMT by Mustapha Haji Abdinur

REGIONAL FILING PLANS

-- EUROPE --

World-society-gay

BRUSSELS

Gays and lesbians raise a global rallying cry to end discrimination in a world where some countries punish homosexual acts with death, as they mark an international day against homophobia.

650 words 1500 GMT

Sudan-conflict-Darfur-warcrimes-ICC

THE HAGUE

The leader of a Darfur rebel faction will face war crimes charges at the International Criminal Court here on Monday, stemming from an alleged attack on African Union peacekeepers in 2007.

550 words 1530 GMT by Marie-Laure Michel.

Lithuania-vote,3rdlead

VILNIUS

Lithuania's presidential election favorite, EU budget commissioner Dalia Grybauskaite, looks set to plunge back into domestic politics in her recession-hit Baltic homeland and become its first **female** head of state.

600 words 1800 GMT by Marielle Vitureau. Picture.

Croatia-vote,3ndlead

ZAGREB

Croatians cast ballots in regional and local elections that will test the strength of ruling conservatives who are implementing unpopular measures to fight the global economic crisis.

550 words 1530 GMT by Lajla Veselica. Picture

-- AMERICAS --

US-politics-Obama-abortion-protest,newseries

SOUTH BEND, Indiana

AFP 1400 GMT News Advisory

President Barack Obama wades into a storm of protest from anti-abortion campaigners as he prepares to speak at one of America's most prestigious Catholic universities.

650 words 1430 GMT by Mira Oberman

US-space-astronomy-Hubble,3rdlead

HOUSTON, Texas

NASA astronauts embark on a fourth space walk to overhaul the aging Hubble Space Telescope, with plans to repair a long inactive component once used to study super massive black holes.

700 words 1530 GMT by Mark Carreau. Graphic. Picture.

US-attacks-security-transport,lead

NEW YORK

Hundreds of firefighters and police are to swarm over Ground Zero, the site where the World Trade Center once stood, in the largest security exercise here since the September 11, 2001 attacks.

550 words 1730 GMT by Paola Messina. Picture

-- MIDDLE EAST --

Kuwait-vote,2ndlead

KUWAIT CITY

Four women win seats in the Kuwaiti parliament in an historic first as Islamist parties face a setback in the oil-rich Gulf state's second general election in a year.

700 words 1430 GMT by Omar Hasan. Picture

UN-climate-disaster,2ndlead

MANAMA

UN chief Ban Ki-moon calls for decisive action to reduce the impact of climate change as he launches a global assessment of ways to minimise the risks of natural disasters.

600 words 1530 GMT by Mohammad Fadhel. Picture

Health-flu-Egypt-pigs-FOCUS

CAIRO

A video clip showing pigs being culling in Egypt as part of swine flu controls is causing outrage at the apparent barbarity of the method of killing the animals.

650 words 1500 GMT by Alain Navarro. Picture. Video.

-- AFRICA --

Nigeria-oil-unrest-Philippines,lead-WRAP

LAGOS

Nine Filipinos and four Nigerian hostages have been freed while two others were killed in clashes as the army stepped up attacks on militant strongholds in the Niger Delta.

600 words by Aderogba Obisesan at 1500 GMT.

Zimbabwe-politics-MDC

HARARE

Zimbabwe Prime Minister Morgan Tsvangirai's party calls on regional leaders and the African Union to help resolve outstanding issues hampering a power-sharing government formed three months ago with veteran President Robert Mugabe.

600 words by 1900 Fanuel Jongwe

-- ASIA --

SriLanka-unrest-Prabhakaran,lead-FOCUS

COLOMBO

Sri Lanka is gripped by rumours about the fate of Tamil Tiger chief Velupillai Prabhakaran, who is said to either have been killed, smuggled abroad, or even be living under the sea in a survival capsule.

600 words moved. File picture

We have also moved: SriLanka-unrest-peace,ANALYSIS

SriLanka-unrest,CHRONO

SriLanka-unrest-country,FACTS

India-vote,3rdlead-WRAP

NEW DELHI

India's Congress Party begins the task of forming a government after steering its ruling alliance to a second term in office with a resounding win over its Hindu nationalist rivals.

650 words moved by Elizabeth Roche. Picture.

-- ENTERTAINMENT --

Entertainment-film-festival-Cannes-Spain-Amenabar

CANNES

Spain's Alejandro Amenabar takes Cannes back to Alexandria 400 AD for a toga-clad parable on religious extremism starring Rachel Weiss as a martyred philosopher.

500 words 1630 GMT. Picture

afp

Load-Date: May 18, 2009

End of Document

UNHCR: Victim of the agenda of private individuals?

Daily Mirror (Sri Lanka)

June 9, 2009 Tuesday

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Length: 1242 words

Dateline: Colombo

Body

Colombo, June 9 -- Ms. Pillai seems to be back at her favourite past time once again. Days after the government of Sri Lanka won a resolution preventing any international body from interfering with the sovereignty of the country, on grounds of 'human rights', with an overwhelming majority in her own turf, the Human Rights Chief claimed that the United Nations 'stands ready to support an inquiry into abuses in Sri Lanka's civil war'.

On grounds that 'reconciliation would be impossible without a full reckoning of transgressions', she 'believes that accountability is a prerequisite for the attainment of justice and reconciliation for all Sri Lankans and thus a foundation for lasting peace'. What a coincidence, so do we Sri Lankans as a people. Which would explain why we as a people supported the present regime in to adopting every possible measure to remove the innocent Tamil civilians caught in the clutch of a thirty-year rule of terror under the LTTE? It is for this very humanitarian reason that the country sacrificed thousands of its troops to release innocent Tamil men, women and children held hostage by the terrorists, in what was biggest crisis of such proportions ever seen by the world. It is because the people believe in 'justice' that it backed the security forces to remove the Tamil children armed for combat, or pregnant women strapped in to suicide jackets and blown in to pieces and the genocide of ethnic Sinhalese and Muslim villages overnight. We agree with Ms. Pillai on her need for accountability. We believe the now deceased leader of the LTTE, Prabhakaran must be held account for all these atrocities against humanity. He must be held accountable for forcibly recruiting children barely in their teens, arming them and sending them to the war front. He must be held accountable for strapping suicide jackets on innocent people, some pregnant women; to carry out political killings. Prabhakaran is certainly accountable for massacring entire ethnic Sinhala and Muslim villages and evicting them from their lands of habitation. He is certainly accountable for many acts of genocide against these people. Has Ms. Pillai's office drawn up a resolution to this effect? Given that most of the dealings of the Office of the Human Rights Council is under secrecy, especially when it comes to Sri Lanka, it is possible that this is the reason why we are not privy to this yet! The Office certainly exercised a strange sense of secrecy when it was drawing up a resolution against Sri Lanka for the Special Session last week. It went out of its way to lobby the support of some countries like Pakistan which had decided to extend support towards Sri Lanka behind the curtains. Her office lobbied heavily with the western capitals to obtain support. Her Office went to the extent of pushing for a special session days before normal sessions were happening simply to create a sense of urgency in the minds of the world. Strangely for a world body standing for democracy and transparency and for a resolution claiming to be supported by a West that also believes in these virtues, at no point was either the government of Sri Lanka or its Ambassador to the UN informed of the move. The fact that this Organization did not respect the country's right to prepare itself for such a sinister move does not bode well for the UN. How does Ms. Pillai account for the statement by the Spokesman of her Office Rupert Colvill that although they had lost in their efforts in the Human Rights session they could find other means to get what they want, immediately following the defeat. He had clearly gone beyond his area of responsibility in making such claims. This is certainly not an isolated instance.

UNHCR: Victim of the agenda of private individuals?

Weeks earlier, as the war was continuing the Spokesman for the UN in Colombo, Gordon Weiss made a statement to the international media that the army was using cluster bombs. Although the statement was withdrawn when confronted by facts, the damage was clearly done. At another instance, satellite images of craters supposedly caused by Ariel bombardments were 'mistakenly' released to their website, from where the news agencies picked up the information. The manager of the site went to the extent of giving a statement to the media, even though they had no ground investigation to support such claims. Again, serious damage was done to the security forces' military efforts. Yet, to date there is no evidence of any action being taken against the arbitrary and irresponsible actions of these individuals. Neither was any action taken against the officer who 'leaked out' information of some 6000 civilian deaths at one point of the war with a 12,000 casualty figure. Aside of the fact that these numbers were not substantiated the international media happily picked up on the numbers. The incident gave credence to moves by some members of the so-called international community that an international inquiry be carried out and a strong push for a ceasefire made. Again, while the organization stood accused of what was clearly its agenda, the efforts failed? Interesting it is not only Sri Lanka that is feeling the brunt of this duplicitous action of UN organizations like the UNHCR. Last week the Indian Ambassador to Geneva made serious allegations against the actions of the outfit, on Sri Lanka. Gopinathan Achamkulangare in a reply to Pillay's remarks on Sri Lanka said it would be prudent to adhere to the outcome of the special session and be sensitive to the concerns expressed already, rather than take a position on contested proposals or controversial issues and ideas, which did not find eventual acceptance in the outcome of the special session. "It would be extremely unfortunate, if the inter-governmental decisions adopted by the human rights council, were to be ignored or set aside, and the High Commissioner and/or her office were to misinterpret them or willfully neglect them, or supersede them according to their convenience or in accordance with the agenda of some states, or unrepresentative or unaccountable organizations, or to pursue their own agenda,' he stressed. Member states are questioning the right of the UNHCR to carry out such witch-hunts and demanding greater transparency in the workings of the UNHCR. Serious questions about where the funding for the Office is coming from and charges that the Office in turn maybe returning favors towards such 'donors' demand immediate inquiry. Given that the Office has made no effort to hide its biases towards a particular grouping, the Office's agenda lays bare before the world. For an organization that seeks transparency and democracy from member states, the allegation before it on these accounts need necessarily to be met on an immediate basis, if it is to retain the credibility that is crucial to its functions. Certainly, Ms. Pillai's sense of personal loss at crucifying Sri Lanka is understandable. But, the level of unprofessionalism adopted by her and her Office in dealing with this defeat is even beneath her. It is imperative that both the UN as an impartial adjudicator for the world and she personally understand that despite Sri Lanka remaining among the developing world, and much in need of economic aid for development from the first world, she cannot be stripped of her sovereignty to meet the petty political agendas of individuals and their dubious outfits. Published by HT Syndication with permission from Daily Mirror Sri Lanka.

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Load-Date: June 9, 2009

UPI NewsTrack TopNews

UPI

April 5, 2009 Sunday 8:06 AM EST

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Length: 885 words

Body

Report: N. Korea rocket launch failed

SEOUL, April 5 (UPI) -- North Korea failed to put a rocket into orbit Sunday, contrary to its earlier claim of a successful launch, U.S. and South Korean officials said.

The North Korean payload fell into the Pacific Ocean, along with the second-stage rocket, the Yonhap news agency quoted an anonymous South Korean government official as saying.

The U.S. Northern Command Web site described the launched rocket as &"not a threat&" to its territory.

The last two stages of the rocket fell into the Pacific Ocean along with the payload and the first stage fell into the East Sea, the Northern Command site claimed.

&"No object entered orbit and no debris fell on Japan,&" the Web site said.

The rocket was launched despite warnings from North Korea's neighbors and the United States, a South Korean official said.

The U.N. Security Council called an emergency meeting Sunday to consider possible action against North Korea.

World leaders warn N. Korea to disarm

PRAGUE, Czech Republic, April 5 (UPI) -- U.S. President Barack Obama says North Korea's missile launch Sunday threatens countries near and far and demands action from the U.N. Security Council.

North Korea's development of missile capability is aimed at threatening countries with weapons of mass destruction, Obama said in Prague as he continued his tour of European countries.

&"I call on North Korea to honor its commitment to abandon all nuclear weapons programs, to abide by recognized norms of international relations, and to work to promote peace and stability in Northeast Asia,&" Obama said.

UPI NewsTrack TopNews

U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton and U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations Susan Rice were in contact with U.S. allies regarding an emergency meeting Sunday of the U.N. Security Council, Obama said.

White House Press Secretary Robert Gibbs told reporters he woke Obama Sunday with word of the launch and the president had been in conference with diplomatic and defense officials since then.

Obama joined leaders of China, Japan and South Korea in calling for North Korea to abandon all nuclear weapons and to promote peace and stability in Northeast Asia.

Just hours before the launch, South Korea's national security council called an emergency meeting amid concerns the launch was imminent, CNN reported.

At least 20 killed in Pakistan blast

ISLAMABAD, Pakistan, April 5 (UPI) -- Authorities in Pakistan say at least 20 people died Sunday in a suicide bombing at a mosque in Punjab province.

The bomber detonated his explosives at the front gate of the mosque as worshipers were attending a service inside, CNN reported.

In recent months, the province has seen an increase in violence, including attacks on Shiite funerals and at checkpoints along NATO supply lines.

Last month, Sri Lankan cricket players were attacked en route to a match against Pakistan in Lahore, where a police training academy was attacked last week.

FBI looks for trucker serial killers

WASHINGTON, April 5 (UPI) -- The FBI has been looking for patterns in killings along U.S. highways, suspecting that some long-haul truck drivers are responsible for many of them.

The victims include prostitutes, hitchhikers and women whose cars have broken down, the Los Angeles Times reported Sunday. Agents working out of an office in Virginia study killings, looking for patterns.

&"You've got a mobile crime scene,&" one investigator said. &"You can pick a girl up on the East Coast, kill her two states away and then dump her three states after that.&"

The Highway Serial Killings Initiative began five years ago after an analyst with the Oklahoma Bureau of Investigation asked the FBI for help with a string of seven killings of prostitutes along I-40. An FBI analyst going through the bureau's data base found killings that matched the Oklahoma crimes.

A truck driver, John Robert Williams, 28, confessed to some of the Oklahoma killings and others. While he later recanted, agents say he gave details only the killer would have known.

He described killing one woman who solicited him for sex at a truck stop in Indiana.

&"The second she tapped on my window, she was a dead woman,&" he allegedly said.

Sri Lanka says 100 Tigers killed

COLOMBO, Sri Lanka, April 5 (UPI) -- About 100 Tamil Tigers were killed Saturday in a series of battles with the Sri Lankan military, the government said.

Soldiers found 35 bodies after one clash, Colombo Page reported. Another 58 members of the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam were found dead after another battle and 18 were killed in a sea fight between naval vessels and Tigers in boats.

The Tigers have been engaged in a deadly civil war for a quarter century aimed at creating an independent Tamil state. Recently, the government began a major offensive, and the military says it is close to victory.

About 100,000 Tamil civilians are between the contending armies, The Observer reported. The British newspaper said it has been able to get testimony from women who said their husbands or sons have been taken and not seen again.

&"We are extremely concerned about the situation faced by minorities in Sri Lanka's conflict area,&" said Chris Chapman of Minority Rights International. &"Apart from the humanitarian catastrophe in the battle zone, there is also evidence of rising incidents of human rights violations.&"

Load-Date: April 6, 2009

End of Document

Inside Sri Lanka's devastated battleground

Sydney Morning Herald (Australia)

May 4, 2009 Monday

First Edition

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Section: NEWS AND FEATURES; International News; Pg. 11

Length: 778 words

Byline: Matt Wade

Body

Matt Wade, the first Australian journalist into previously Tamil Tiger-controlled territory, reports from Pudumathalan Lagoon, near the front line.

THE legacy of Sri Lanka's bloody civil war was on show as the military helicopter flew fast and low over Kilinochchi, once the headquarters of the Tamil Tiger rebels.

Almost every building in the town was without a roof and many had been reduced to rubble. This part of northern Sri Lanka has long been off limits to foreign journalists, but on Saturday I was part of a small group of reporters given a rare glimpse of the battlefields.

From Kilinochchi we travelled at high speed in armoured personnel carriers towards the front line of fighting. Villages along the way were deserted.

About 300,000 people once lived in this area, known as the Vanni, but they are all gone. Most are in overcrowded refugee camps near the town of Vavuniya, to the south, although tens of thousands are still trapped on the tiny strip of coast where the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam are making their last stand.

We were taken to Pudumathalan Lagoon, three kilometres from the fighting, where heavily armed troops guarded a narrow dirt track that led towards the front line.

We had a large military escort and instructed to walk only on the road because of landmines.

"You never know where those things are," said Major-General Jagath Dias, who commands the 57th Division.

One soldier, Vishra Tuksharan, a shy 20-year old, said he had lost many friends during the army's final push to defeat the Tigers. "I'm happy to be alive," he said.

While we were waiting at a military helipad not far from the lagoon, a battered green army ambulance arrived carrying soldiers wounded in battle. Two lay on uncomfortable-looking benches in the back.

One soldier who had lost the lower part of his left leg and had sustained injuries to both eyes was taken from the ambulance on a stretcher and put on the ground.

Inside Sri Lanka 's devastated battleground

A sheet attached to his arm said he had experienced a "traumatic amputation" and blood seeped through the gauze that covered his face. He was quickly bundled back into the ambulance and taken away when cameras were trained on him.

A fortnight ago the army destroyed a Tiger defensive wall at Pudumathalan, allowing tens of thousands of civilians to flee rebel-held territory. But now the flow of refugees has stopped. The corrugated-iron shelter used to receive refugees at Pudumathalan was empty on Saturday, although buses were on hand to evacuate civilians when the exodus resumes.

Last week the Government announced that it would no longer use heavy weapons and that its operations would focus on rescuing civilians held by the rebels.

But the pro-Tiger website Tamilnet said artillery had been used a few hours before we arrived at Pudumathalan, and a makeshift hospital inside Tiger-held territory had been hit. The army denied the charge.

Such charges and counter-charges have accompanied the 26-year conflict. Both sides have been accused of endangering and killing civilians in battle.

Occasional explosions could be heard in the distance while we were near the battle zone but it was unclear if the noises were coming from the front line.

During our tightly controlled tour, journalists were briefed on the army's carefully planned campaign to destroy the rebels as a military force.

The campaign, which has left the Tigers on the brink of defeat, started nearly two years ago, when the rebels still held more than 6000 square kilometres of the country.

Brigadier Shavendra Silva, the commander of the 58th division, said the army did not concentrate on winning territory at first but tried to engage the rebels in significant battles. The strategy was to get "maximum kills" of Tiger cadres. The army claims to have killed more than 6000 cadres since September 2007.

General Dias said an average of 11 rebels had been killed for every army fatality.

The commanders showed pictures of elaborate Tiger bunkers that had been captured and gruesome pictures of rebels' bodies. They also showed off an array of captured weaponry and other military equipment, including a battle tank, artillery guns and suicide jackets.

As the ranks of experienced fighters shrank, the Tigers were forced into a rapid retreat. Fewer than 1000 cadres are now trapped between Pudumathalan and the Indian Ocean.

General Dias said the rebels were also sending an increasing number of young women and children to the front line.

"We could now get rid of them in 24 hours if not for all the civilians with them," he said.

General Dias and Brigadier Silva were adamant that their forces were no longer using heavy weapons.

Even so, victory was only a matter of days away, they said.

Graphic

Inside Sri Lanka 's devastated battleground

TWO PHOTOS: A strategy of "maximum kills" . . . Brigadier Shavendra Silva, commander of the army's 58th division (left) and Major-General Jagath Dias, commander of the 57th Division. Photos: Matt Wade Amputation . . . a wounded soldier lies on a stretcher at Pudumathalan. MAP: Kilinochchi Former **Tamil Tigers** headquarters

Load-Date: May 3, 2009

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Column: Heavy concessions needed for permanent peace in Sri Lanka

University Wire

May 5, 2009 Tuesday

Copyright 2009 Harvard Crimson via U-Wire

Length: 828 words

Byline: By Raúl A. Carrillo, Harvard Crimson; **SOURCE:** Harvard

Dateline: CAMBRIDGE, Mass.

Body

As one of Asia's oldest conflicts in one of Asia's oldest democracies seemingly comes to a dark, bloody conclusion, a number of questions about the war in Sri Lanka and the ideological banners under which it marched come to the forefront: What is the value of a democracy if the price is self-determination? What is the value of territorial control if the price is social cohesion? What is the value of a national political unity if the price is a national political identity? What is the value of power if the price is human life?

These questions are complex and echo in many places around the globe where non-state actors control territory: with the Zapatistas in Mexico, the FARC in Colombia and the Maoists in Nepal. Although the groups may be condemned terrorists, there comes a point when one wonders whether adopting absolutist "us vs. them" rhetoric is worth it.

I certainly do not pretend to know the answers to the moral quandaries. But I do know that, now that the Sri Lankan state has defeated the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam, more commonly referred to as the ***Tamil Tigers***, the government's value rigidity-all of its black-and-white moralizing of the conflict-must cease if there is to be any chance at a permanent peace and a brighter future. More specifically, as the state finishes off the rebels, it must promise to address the political grievances of the minority groups whom the rebels claim to defend. Tamils, in particular, must be granted equal political rights and be given the ability to direct affairs where they constitute a majority.

Now, as military conflict-but certainly not everyday social conflict or even paramilitary conflict-descends into stasis, it is worth meditating upon what the war has been worth. Amidst all the rhetoric of doubts and redoubts, one practical concern should worry President Rajapaksa in particular: What are the chances of a legitimized nation-state if an entire ethnic group feels that it has, for the last 25 years, been a target for elimination or, as the more impassioned critics claim, genocide?

There is no doubt that the Tigers are a dangerous terrorist group. Even now, on the eve of the last battle, they defend their position with human shields: Tamil ***women*** and children. But the Tigers are not the Tamil population, and it does not follow that the legitimate claims of those who see them as freedom fighters should be unduly ignored. It's been total war thus far, and both the state and the tigers have committed severe human-rights violations (the state itself has refused to allow the United Nations Human Rights Council to conduct an investigation). It is in Sri Lanka's best interest not to pretend that ethnic violence on both sides did not occur. A sustainable peace cannot include any demonization of the Tamils, whether it is direct or indirect through the continued framing of the Tigers-who are heroes to many Tamil youth-as the source of all evil on the island.

Column: Heavy concessions needed for permanent peace in Sri Lanka

Since the 1980s, at least, the center of Sri Lankan politics has been dominated by Sinhalese Buddhists. Tamil Hindus and Muslims have often gotten the short end of the stick with regard to education, discriminatory language policies, and pogroms and political gerrymandering in their traditional homeland.

The Tamils are clearly not going to be given autonomy over their homeland. But they must be given equal political rights and at least the majority of the say in what goes on where they live. Dr. Amartya Sen has stated that the Sri Lankan government long ago forsook the "richness of plurality" and pushed Tamils to the peripheries of power. They must rediscover that richness and bring them back into the fold. Tamils must be granted the immediate ability to not only non-violently control affairs where they live, but also to have a voice in the national government, so that they may one day consider themselves just as Sri Lankan as the Sinhalese.

Sri Lankans, whether Tamil Hindus, Sinhalese Buddhist or Muslims, should not have to choose between multiculturalism and political rights on the one hand and national security and the safety of their children on the other. Before the official end of the war, a promise must be made to address many of the Tamil grievances-short of independence-that fueled the fire in the first place. There cannot simply be a victor's peace, for that is no peace.

Once upon a time, the island of Sri Lanka was predicted to become the fifth Asian Tiger. That dream of prosperity can still be realized. But the state must adopt a more mature perspective on the possibilities of peace and prosperity. Nothing good will come through an asymmetric imposition of power based on ethnic lines. As Martin Luther King once said, "In the final analysis, the end is pre-existent in the means." If sustainable peace is to be an end for Sri Lanka, the government must embody a new set of values as it mops up the conflict and begins to lay the foundations for a new society.

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Load-Date: May 6, 2009

Sri Lankan refugees traumatised after nine-day ordeal at sea

Hindustan Times

May 1, 2009 Friday

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Length: 477 words

Dateline: Hyderabad

Body

Hyderabad, May. 1 -- Sitting in the lap of his father Sivadas Jagadeeswaran, one-year-old Kubel is crying for milk, not aware of the tragedy in the high seas that forever snatched away his mother and nine others while escaping from war-torn Sri Lanka.

Jagadeeswaran and Kubel were part of three families of Sri Lankan Tamils who underwent a nine-day ordeal after escaping from Mullaithivu, the last battlefield between the Sri Lankan Army and the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE).

With guns booming all around, a group of 21 people set out on a boat for Rameswaram in Tamil Nadu. They hoped to reach the refugee camp within a few hours but it turned out to be a nightmare as they lost their way.

Ten people died of starvation and the survivors dumped their bodies in the sea so that they could survive a bit longer.

The dead included five men and four kids. Kubel lost his mother early Wednesday, a few hours before they were rescued by fishermen off the Andhra coast.

"Four children older to Kubel died of starvation. Kubel survived because his mother was feeding him but she too succumbed to starvation Wednesday morning. The kid was lucky as they were rescued a few hours later," Kakinada Revenue Divisional Officer Kishore Babu told IANS over phone from Kakinada in East Godavari district.

The members of three families, mostly fishermen, escaped the guns in their native place but could not escape death at sea.

The heart-rending stories of the survivors came to light when they spoke to local authorities through an interpreter.

"Life has turned hell for me. I don't know how I survived," said Mary Joseph, 45, who lost two sons and a daughter in the high sea.

The official said Mary was unconscious when she was rescued. Even after regaining consciousness, she could hardly speak.

"The sight of their near and dear ones dying before their eyes and their haplessness in giving them a watery burial has sent them into a trauma. Some have lost their husbands and others have lost their children," said Babu.

"They fled to save themselves and in the panic lost their way. They had no food and survived on sea water for nine days," he added.

Sri Lankan refugees traumatised after nine-day ordeal at sea

The local authorities were moved by their pathetic condition. Nine of the survivors were admitted to a government-run hospital in Kakinada with severe dehydration, shock and mental trauma. Five of them were later discharged.

"Four women are still in hospital suffering acute dehydration. Five men, one woman and one kid are in police custody," said Babu, who is in-charge of the rescue operations.

Police have registered a case against the refugees under the Fishermen Act for trespassing into Indian waters.

"We will send them to the refugee camp at Rameswaram after the condition of the women undergoing treatment in hospital improves," the official said. Published by HT Syndication with permission from Indo-Asian News Service.

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Load-Date: August 4, 2009

Last gasp for Tiger rebels in Sri Lanka; 190,000 civilians in crossfire

The Vancouver Province (British Columbia)

April 6, 2009 Monday

Final Edition

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Section: NEWS; Pg. A27

Length: 512 words

Byline: Daily Telegraph

Dateline: COLOMBO

Body

Sri Lanka reported the deaths of 420 Tamil Tiger rebels yesterday after three days of heavy fighting forced the group to seek refuge in a "no-fire zone" packed with up to 190,000 civilians.

A spokesman for the military said operations against the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam had begun within the 11-square-kilometre zone, fuelling concerns over the safety of civilians trapped between the warring parties.

The rebels have set up artillery and dug bunkers among encampments of refugees in the enclave on the island's northeast coast. Thousands of civilians have already been killed or maimed by shells falling in the area. The Tigers stopped refugees from leaving, shooting at those trying to escape and effectively holding thousands as human shields.

The military said the group was now facing total annihilation.

Security forces said they found the bodies of 250 fighters when they overran the town of Puthukkudiruppu, a former Tiger stronghold.

"The only uncleared area left is the no-fire zone," said Brig. Udaya Nanayakkara, a military spokesman. "We have recovered over 420 bodies over the last three days."

Troops confirmed that they had killed Gaddhafi, the head security officer for Velupillai Prabhakaran, the ***LTTE***s founder and leader, plus Vidusha, the leader of its ***female*** fighters, and Theepan, a commander. There were also reports that troops got close to the elusive Prabhakaran after finding a bullet-proof car he was believed to have used. The state-owned Sunday Observer newspaper said troops found his birth certificate and photo albums.

United Nations Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon urged rebel leaders to allow civilians to move freely out of the conflict area and reminded the Sri Lankan government of its responsibility to protect civilians.

The army rejected calls for a ceasefire but did not explain how it could fight the surviving Tigers without causing massive civilian casualties.

Last gasp for Tiger rebels in Sri Lanka ; 190,000 civilians in crossfire

Since February, the Sri Lankan army has besieged the Tigers in a shrinking area of jungle and coconut plantations. Conditions have steadily worsened for those trapped in the area. Supplies of food and medicine have run low, medical facilities are primitive, and most families have only plastic sheeting as shelter.

Annemarie Loof, of Doctors Without Borders, said its surgeons had been carrying out 200 operations a week, mainly for bullet and shrapnel wounds.

"A few weeks ago people were scared to leave because of their fear of the Sri Lanka army, but now they are terrified of staying," she said.

"For the last few weeks there has been daily shelling and people have spent much of their time huddled in ditches and home-made bunkers."

Families live in fear of their children being forcibly recruited.

"One woman I know was stopped five times when she tried to escape with her husband and two daughters," said Loof. "She was terrified that they would be forcibly recruited and sent to fight. On the sixth attempt they managed to get away."

The 50,000 refugees who have fled south since January have been kept behind barbed wire in government-run camps, guarded by armed men.

Graphic

Photo: Reuters; **Women** with children walk near barbed wire at a refugee camp set up for Tamils who escaped the war zone in Sri Lanka. ;

Load-Date: April 6, 2009

INTERVIEW - SKY TV - NEWS HOUR

States News Service

October 29, 2009 Thursday

Copyright 2009 States News Service

Length: 1886 words

Byline: States News Service

Dateline: CANBERRA, Australia

Body

The following information was released by the office of the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Australia:

Subjects: Pakistan; Afghanistan; asylum seekers.

REPORTER: Stephen Smith, welcome. If I can start with Pakistan first. The latest bombing in Peshawar, what's the latest information you have there and were there any Australians caught up in this?

STEPHEN SMITH: Firstly, I've literally just got off the phone to Pakistan's High Commissioner to Australia to relay Australia's condolences. It's a terrible and outrageous attack. Ninety confirmed dead at this stage, but every expectation it'll go beyond 100.

And a terrible attack on women and children in a marketplace aimed at women and children. So I've relayed our condolences and our condemnation. We stand shoulder to shoulder with them. But no indication or expectation that any Australians have been caught up in this terrible attack.

REPORTER: Well meanwhile nearby in Kabul, there's been an attack on a UN guest house there. What does this mean about the vulnerability of the United Nations?

STEPHEN SMITH: It is again a savage attack on a United Nations' guest house. It's a residential site. Any attack upon the United Nations, or its people, is absolutely contemptible. And we join with the Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon and his condemnation of the attack.

It underlines, I think, two things. Firstly, that Afghanistan of course is a United Nations mandated mission. It has the support of the United Nations and United Nations presence. Secondly, it continues to show just how difficult and dangerous circumstances are in Afghanistan and continues to be a very difficult security situation.

REPORTER: Let's turn to the asylum seeker stand-off. When do you expect the 78 asylum seekers on board the Oceanic Viking to be offloaded?

STEPHEN SMITH: Well, just like my Indonesian counterpart, I'm not proposing to put a timetable or a deadline on that. I think it's very important that we just calmly, methodically, and patiently work our way through this issue, in consultation and cooperation with Indonesian officials. Which of course we're getting, but also in cooperation with the asylum seekers themselves.

INTERVIEW - SKY TV - NEWS HOUR

I've made it clear all along, we want this to be cooperative, we want this to be civilised, we want it to be dignified, and we're using every effort to try and make that the outcome.

REPORTER: Just to be clear, there's no problem now with the local Indonesian officials?

STEPHEN SMITH: A point I've made earlier and a point again that the Indonesian Foreign Minister made last night, in the end this is a decision made by the President that is now being implemented by Indonesian officials. Sometimes it takes a bit of time for the word to trickle down.

But also, we shouldn't be under any illusions. These issues are difficult and complex and complicated. They always take time. They always take more time than one would expect or want, but we think it's very important to be calm and patient about it.

Indonesia has made it very clear that of course they want to continue to cooperate on this and more general matters, but we've just got to be calm and sensible about it.

REPORTER: Well, what about the Sri Lankans? That seems to be where the problem, really, is now. They're refusing to leave the boat. Is there a ringleader amongst the 78 who is making decisions on behalf of the group? Is that who's being consulted?

STEPHEN SMITH: I wouldn't propose to go into that sort of detail, other than to say this is, in very many respects, if not indeed in most respects, an operational matter. We have our professional officers on board from Customs and Border Protection. We have the master of the vessel. They're working very closely with the people on board.

My advice is that they're all calm, they are all eating and drinking. They're...

REPORTER: No hunger strikes?

STEPHEN SMITH: No, there was a short hunger strike by adult males. That's now over. So their physical needs are being attended to, their welfare is being looked after...

REPORTER: But how do you encourage them to get off the boat? Are there incentives, financial or otherwise, that Australia can offer?

STEPHEN SMITH: Well, the essential encouragement is that the sooner they get off the boat, the sooner they can be processed by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees.

REPORTER: But you can understand their reluctance to end up in an Indonesian detention centre?

STEPHEN SMITH: The point, again, that my Indonesian counterpart made last night, when an asylum seeker claims asylum in Indonesia, they are assessed in accordance with the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees' procedures. That's been the case since 2002.

And just as Australia would want, so Indonesia wants, people who are kept in detention to be kept in appropriate conditions. He also made it very clear, a point we've made previously, that they want to ensure that women and children, children in particular, are kept in appropriate circumstances.

REPORTER: That's separate housing is it?

STEPHEN SMITH: That's right.

REPORTER: Well, surely this patience, this waiting game has a limit. At some point will force have to be used if they don't voluntarily leave?

STEPHEN SMITH: Firstly, we're not proposing to put a timetable or a deadline on it. It's very important in these matters to take it step by step. And our first step is to calmly seek to persuade the Sri Lankans on board that the best approach for them is in a civilised and dignified and peaceful way to go off the Oceanic Viking.

INTERVIEW - SKY TV - NEWS HOUR

REPORTER: And if that doesn't work?

STEPHEN SMITH: Well, as I say, we'll take it step by step. You know, it's very important not to get ahead of oneself.

Our starting point and our preference all along has been to complete a rescue at sea operation in a civilised and dignified way, and that's where our every effort is going to.

REPORTER: Back in 2001, Australian Defence Force personnel had to use force to get some of the asylum seekers off the Tampa. They were Australia Defence personnel.

Here we're talking about Customs and Border Protection personnel, but also, almost half the crew are private contractors. Do they have the training and the preparation to deal with a forcible removal of asylum seekers from a vessel like this?

STEPHEN SMITH: I'm not talking in terms of a forcible removal.

REPORTER: But do you know if they have that training and preparation to undertake that task?

STEPHEN SMITH: As I say, we're taking this step by step.

Our starting point, our very strong preference, is to resolve this matter in a cooperative and sensible and sensitive way, and that's what the officers on board, the people on board are doing.

REPORTER: Wilson Tuckey says Defence could be sent in to deal with this.

STEPHEN SMITH: I haven't seen those remarks, but that is not a suggestion that I would take up for all of the obvious reasons. Can I make a point which my colleague, the Immigration Minister Senator Evans makes on a regular basis.

The regrettable history in these matters, always difficult, always complicated, always complex, shows that the extent to which avenues like that are resorted to, they invariably lead to bad outcomes.

What we're trying to do is to be sensible and cooperative, to avoid incidences that we've seen in the past - self harm and the like.

REPORTER: Would it be a bad outcome to simply cut your losses and bring them to Christmas Island. Is that a possibility at all?

STEPHEN SMITH: Well we're not contemplating that. We just want to be very calm and careful and sensible about the ultimate outcome. What we want the ultimate outcome to be is a successful end to what started as a search and rescue mission at sea.

We received the request from Indonesia to render assistance in their search and rescue area. We were very happy to do that. Of course we would do that.

REPORTER: But union leader Paul Howes says they should have been brought to Australia, and I'm just wondering why it is not being considered at all?

STEPHEN SMITH: When we had our discussions with Indonesia as to where the people should go after they were rescued, the discussion was essentially, there was no compulsion for Indonesia to take it, there was no compulsion for Australia to take it.

Australia and Indonesia agreed, initially through the relevant agencies, but subsequently, through Prime Minister Rudd and President Yudhoyono, that the appropriate course of action was to take the asylum seekers to Indonesia for them to be processed there by the UNHCR.

INTERVIEW - SKY TV - NEWS HOUR

REPORTER: But you described this yourself as a unique case, so why not give some consideration at least to bringing them to Christmas Island? That would end the situation.

STEPHEN SMITH: Because in the uniqueness of the situation, the agreement between Australia and Indonesia was that the most appropriate course of action was to take them to Indonesia, to have them processed there by the UNHCR and for their detention to be subject, in the usual way, to involvement of the UNHCR but also the International Organization for Migration.

REPORTER: Do you worry though that this would be politically damaging for the Government to bring them to Australia?

STEPHEN SMITH: I think when it comes to things that are politically damaging, what is always politically damaging for a government is not doing the right thing. It was the right thing for us to rescue those people in distress. It was always going to be the case that refugee immigration implications would follow.

We didn't know when we effected the rescue what those implications would or might be, but if we had our time again, would we have rescued those people? Of course we would.

This has not been an easy situation for the Government, for the Oceanic Viking, or for the officers dealing with it. But it was the right thing to rescue them and we calmly and methodically and sensibly follow the consequences of that.

And what we want to see is a successful outcome whereby the Sri Lankans on board peacefully get off the boat and their claims for asylum are then assessed by the UNHCR in Indonesia.

REPORTER: A final question Minister. There have been some suggestions that Tamil Tigers could be amongst the Sri Lankans. Not just on this boat, but generally - that are trying to come to Australia, fleeing Sri Lanka. The general view has been that they don't pose any threat outside Sri Lanka because their fight is in Sri Lanka.

But is that your view as well? Do members or former members of the Tamil Tigers pose any sort of security threat in Australia?

STEPHEN SMITH: My very strong view is that the current procedure which we have ought to continue and will. Which is anyone who makes an application for entry to Australia as an asylum seeker, as a refugee, is exhaustively and thoroughly assessed for health and security matters.

That's been the practice in the past. It's the practice now.

It will be ongoing. Every individual is assessed in that way. And again, my Indonesian counterpart made the point last night that the same process occurs in Indonesia, that when refugee applications are considered, security matters are taken into account.

So this is always taken into account in each and every individual case and it's not appropriate for me to be drawing attention to particular categories or to particular countries in that way.

REPORTER: All right, Stephen Smith thank you.

STEPHEN SMITH: Thanks very much.

Load-Date: October 29, 2009

Terrorists attack two villages in Trinco

Daily News (Sri Lanka)

June 11, 2009 Thursday

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Length: 504 words

Dateline: Colombo

Body

Colombo, June 11 -- June 4, 1986, a few days after the terrorist massacre of villagers at Maha Divulvewa and the bomb blast at Elephant House, Colombo killing more civilians the terrorists were at it again in the Trincomalee District.

They attacked two small villages Anandakulama and Mahindapura both farming villages West of Trincomalee town. As we had seen always the separatist terrorists would come to attack helpless people if there was no Police or the Armed Forces present and in the case of this attack Police learned that the band of terrorists who had come to attack the two villages had seen a Police patrol in the area and had gone back to hide in the jungle till the Police had left the area. When they were sure there was no one to prevent them the terrorists came to the villages and first shot dead two farmers in the Andankulama village and burnt down 8 houses but the people had escaped when they saw the terrorists coming to set fire to the houses. They next set fire to two trucks parked in the village and moved on. Their next target was Mahindapura where they killed 16 more unarmed villagers among them some women and children. The terrorists left leaving a trail of blood behind and later the Police reported that a Buddhist monk in the adjoining village had gone missing after the attack. It was not clear at the time whether the Buddhist monk had fled seeing the terrorists but it was well-known that the terrorist bands including the most ruthless among them the LTTE all out to attack Buddhist monks. Two days later the terrorists attempted another attack on civilians and if it had succeeded a large number perhaps about a hundred people would have been killed. It was June 6, two days after the massacre of civilians in the two villages near Trincomalee that a powerful explosion rocked the railway yard at Dematagoda. A powerful bomb had gone off at the guard wagon of the express train bound for Badulla at 5.30 p.m. The sound of the explosion was heard about two miles away too. Fortunately the explosion did not kill anyone as the train to Badulla was to reach Colombo Fort railway station only around 7.30 p.m. Explosive experts and the Government analyst called in to investigate the explosion said it was a time bomb but it was not clear why it went off at a time when the train was stationary. Possibly the terrorists who had fixed the time bomb made a mistake about the departure time of the train or the information they got would have been faulty. However only two railway workers were injured and no one had died in the explosion. Therefore it was one of the attempts of the terrorists that was botched. Still more acts of terrorism were to take place in the same month and the terrorist attacks on civilians continued while the Sri Lanka Army was also on the offensive against the terrorist who were not so bold when they faced the Armed Forces preferring to take to their heels when the Army was approaching them. Published by HT Syndication with permission from Daily News Sri Lanka.

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Terrorists attack two villages in Trinco

Load-Date: June 11, 2009

End of Document

Human deluge

Daily News (Sri Lanka)

May 23, 2009 Saturday

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Length: 556 words

Dateline: Colombo

Body

Colombo, May 23 -- They came in their tens, dozens, scores and hundreds totaling over two hundred thousand people from all walks of life, with the Lion flags aflutter, a riot of colour and joy in the very air while they marched from the Campbell Park Colombo to the Parliament grounds, Kotte but among them, the heartrending sight of the war heroes who had lost limbs joining the marching crowd with their crutches reminiscent of the sacrifices of thousands of their valiant comrades in arms had made to free this country held to ransom by a group of bloodthirsty terrorists for nearly three decades.

Yesterday's mass rally to felicitate and express the gratitude of the nation to the heroes of the hour, President Mahinda Rajapaksa, Defence Secretary Gotabhaya Rajapaksa, Commanders of the three Armed Forces Army Commander General Sarath Fonseka, Navy Commander Admiral Wasantha Karannagoda and Air Force Commander Air Chief Marshall Roshan Gunatillake and all the members of the Armed Forces and Police who had made it possible for the nation once again to enjoy the freedom won by those among the living and dead members of the Armed Forces. The day too stood solemn with heavy cloud in the skies with a rain that was experienced earlier in the day the people and the valiant soldiers braved the rain, men, women and children, the young and old, but the intermittent rain cleared up by afternoon providing a shade to the marching thousands as if the weather gods had had been kind to the Sri Lankan nation that had suffered immeasurably under the threat of the terrorists who had built their killer machine on lies, falsehoods and subterfuge. The sight was heartrending when the crowds from all parts of the country of all ages and sizes their faces lit up with the joy of freedom going in one direction to the Parliament ground and songs, slogans and chanting of religious prayers and invocations from the religious dignitaries of the national religions that had come to give their blessings to the nation. After two minutes silence in memory of the fallen war heroes and civilians who had sacrificed their lives the Chancellor of the University of Kelaniya the Most Ven Welamitiyawwe Kusaladhamma Nayake Thera performed the Buddhist religious rites followed by Hindu rites by Kurukkal, Swami K.L.Mohan, Islamic rites by Moulavi Mohammed Niyaz and Christian rites by Rev Fr.G.Hettiarachchi. After the religious rites, a number of well known artistes came on stage and once again the song 'Ran malak lesa dev bambun dothing pidu ea pin bime' was sung by Sunil Edirisinghe, the lyrics symbolic of the occasion written by our journalist colleague Karunaratne Saputantri of our sister newspaper Silumina who was killed with his colleagues when the LTTE terrorists attacked the aircraft they were travelling in. When President Mahinda Rajapaksa arrived at the meeting the spontaneous applause was deafening and among the shouts heard was 'our saviour' and the more enthusiastic and able bodied people were seen jumping for joy to welcome the leader who followed in the footsteps of the heroic leaders and kings of the past in liberating the country from the ruthless terrorist group that had killed infants, pregnant women and the old and the feeble without exception. Published by HT Syndication with permission from Daily News Sri Lanka.

Human deluge

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Load-Date: May 23, 2009

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RELIGIOUS LEADERS APPEAL TO PRESIDENT RAJAPAKSA

Daily Mirror (Sri Lanka)

August 1, 2009 Saturday

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Length: 567 words

Dateline: Colombo

Body

Colombo, Aug. 1 -- A campaign to collect 100,000 signatures on a petition calling for the banning of tuition classes on Sundays mornings is presently underway, while plans are also afoot for the leaders of four major religions to take the matter to the courts.

This was revealed at a press conference called by the leaders of four major religions yesterday.

The Chancellor of the Sabaragamuwa University and Advisor Ministry of Religious Affairs Ven. Prof. Kamuburugamuwe Vajira Thera, who chaired the conference, said that the petition is to urge the President to enact laws to ban tuition classes on Sundays at least till 2pm as 'Daham Paasal' or 'Sunday school' is usually held only in the morning.

The Venerable thera explained that values among the children have declined drastically with the number of children attending 'Daham Paasal (Sunday school) on the decline. "This has been the case with all the religions," he pointed out. He said this is the reason why the children are getting addicted to viewing pornographic images on mobiles phones and engage in other immoral activities as well.

He charged that an organized effort is going on in the country to prevent the children from attending Daham Paasal' on Sundays. He said children are made to attend tuition classes for the grade five scholarships from the tender age of seven and eight while they are made to attend classes for GCE OL exam from grade seven onwards. He said some private institutions are conducting tuition classes even on 'Vesak Poya', which is a sacred day for all Buddhists.

Vice President of Baptist Church of Sri Lanka, Rev. E. K. Yasaratne, said the government which eradicated **LTTE** terrorism is now facing the task of eradicating cultural terrorism that is prevailing in the country, destroying the lives of children.

He said young children do not have the confidence to face crisis situations because they do not have maturity gained from their respective religions. He explained that this was the root cause for the schoolgirl, who was found to have a cell phone on her person, to commit suicide at a Colombo school recently.

Maulavi Lafeer, who represented the Islamic clergy at the discussion, said the issue had started after the introduction of the open economy in 1977. He said professionals such as doctors today have converted their profession into a business and this affected the education sector as well and many education institutions have become business entities instead of sticking to providing a proper education to students.

RELIGIOUS LEADERS APPEAL TO PRESIDENT RAJAPAKSA

Chief Jailor of the women's section of the Welikada Prison Kumari Ratnaweera said 50 percent of the 650 women in Welikada have not attended 'Daham Paasal' during their childhood. She said mothers should take the initiative to uplift their children's spirituality to avoid their children engaging in various immoral activities.

Member of the Western Provincial Council and JHU Frontliner, Udaya Gammanpilla, who also attended the conference, stressed the need for registration of private education institutions. He said the Ministry of Education should be given that right by introducing necessary laws. He said laws which call for the closure of all private education institutions on Sundays should also be introduced. Published by HT Syndication with permission from Daily Mirror Sri Lanka. For more information on news feed please contact Surit Das at htsyndication@hindustantimes.com

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Load-Date: August 1, 2009

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Challenges in building a Sri Lankan brand

Daily News (Sri Lanka)

November 3, 2009 Tuesday

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Length: 1998 words

Dateline: Sri Lanka

Body

Sri Lanka, Nov. 3 -- Address by Disaster Management and Human Rights Minister Mahinda Samarasinghe at the Sri Lanka Institute of Marketing (SLIM) Brand Excellence Awards 2009 in Battaramulla last week.

We face a number of important challenges in the present era. Having overcome the threat of terrorism and achieving military mastery over a ruthless organization which has blighted our national life for nearly three decades, we have a unique opportunity to forge a new Sri Lanka in which all citizens' human dignity is fully safeguarded, where all are treated equally and share a common cohesive identity.

This new Sri Lanka will celebrate our rich diversity and multi-faceted social make-up. Our multi-ethnic, multi-cultural, multi-religious and multi-lingual society is the source of strength and we must come to view it as such.

These precepts must not remain confined to words but must be made a reality. This is perhaps our biggest challenge in the post-conflict phase.

Just as marketers live by the four "P"s that comprise the marketing mix, our Government has a comprehensive program to ensure recovery from the conflict and set us on the road to renewal, development and a brighter future for all Sri Lankans. I characterize this program as encompassing the five "R"s. They are relief, reconstruction, resettlement, reconciliation and reintegration.

There are several underlying issues that must be addressed if we are to ensure that the five "R"s are successfully accomplished. The primary requirement to ensure that this program continues smoothly, is the guaranteeing of security of people in the conflict affected areas as well as in other parts of the country.

To further buttress and support this process and also to sustain the program through the inevitable difficulties that we will encounter going forward, we need to build the Sri Lankan brand to achieve several key objectives. Image building is as important to support national renewal as any component of the Government's program.

Building Sri Lanka's image will help us in many ways. It will make Sri Lanka an attractive destination for tourists, investors and will also help draw in the vast pool of human and capital resources that is available among the Sri Lankan expatriate community. Raising our national profile will also help us immensely in our interactions with the global community of nations.

Marketers will play a key role in this initiative and it is incumbent on the Government to bring together all Sri Lanka's key stakeholders including the public sector, private sector, professionals and civil society with a view to build synergies and maximize their contribution to this effort.

Challenges in building a Sri Lankan brand

All of this should not be a purely cosmetic exercise. We need to work hard to remedy several problems that have afflicted our nation for several years. Poverty, under-development and building mutual trust amongst the constituent parts of Sri Lankan society, are key issues that must be addressed under the program.

This is why poverty alleviation and development is high on the agenda of the Government. We are acutely conscious that services and facilities must be provided to all areas without any area being left under-served. Unfortunately the presence of the **LTTE** in some areas of the North and East meant that the Government of the day was unable to develop those areas in the same manner as it did in the rest of the country.

This situation is now being addressed through the Government's programs called Negenahira Navodaya and Uthuru Wasanthaya. Equally important is reconciliation which will require an effort in social marketing on a grand scale.

Years of alienation of communities, exacerbated by the conflict, must be resolved and reversed and this is what President Mahinda Rajapaksa is giving leadership through his initiative to begin a political process bringing in key political parties to evolve consensual solutions acceptable to the entirety of Sri Lanka.

This process will deal with issues of political empowerment and will enable the genuine and legitimate grievances of people in the conflict affected areas to be addressed through home-grown solutions. Your profession can play an important catalytic role in fostering, promoting and supporting reconciliation.

It will also contribute to the internal marketing component necessary in brand building. The Sri Lankan Brand that we build must signify that our country and its products and services will be the outcome of a stable democratic polity based on sound economic fundamentals supported by social equity. The speedy restoration of democratic institutions to represent and serve the people of the North is a key aspect of the process of democratization and we have already taken a first step in re-establishing these institutions in that region.

In working towards this new Sri Lanka, therefore, we must also pay due attention to key governance issues and ensure that law and order is maintained, the rule of law is upheld and universal human rights are protected.

This is why my Ministry has assumed the responsibility of drafting a National Action Plan for the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights. The National Action Plan will be a nationally driven, nationally formulated and nationally owned and implemented strategy.

The plan will be comprehensive in scope dealing with civil and political rights as well as economic, social and cultural rights. It will also focus on specific areas such as torture, **women**, children, migrant workers' rights, labour rights and the rights of internally displaced persons (IDPs).

This last category is perhaps the area that has captured the imagination of many both at home and abroad in the recent past. The end of the humanitarian operation saw the liberation of nearly 280,000 persons - the vast majority of whom were brought to the Menik Farm area in Chettikulam near Vavuniya.

These persons are the main focus of the Government's five 'R' program. The provision of relief has been undertaken by the Government, complemented by international , international and local NGOs and also our bilateral friends.

We have worked to decongest the welfare centres and to improve the facilities provided including health, water and sanitation and ancillary services. To offset the risk of flooding during the oncoming monsoonal rains, we constructed a network of drains with the support of UN . One issue that has been repeatedly canvassed was IDPs freedom of movement.

The Government has consistently maintained that IDPs will be screened and released in a structured and well-managed manner. We are hopeful of achieving our target of resettling a majority of IDPs by January 31 next year.

Challenges in building a Sri Lankan brand

This is just the beginning of the resettlement process which goes hand in hand with the reconstruction process. Security is a key factor and this means ensuring that no one is allowed to destabilize the efforts to restore normality and ensure rapid economic development.

The Armed Forces and police are ever vigilant to prevent any such occurrence and deserve our wholehearted gratitude. Personal security and physical safety of the returnees is also very important.

This is why a massive de-mining effort is under way. The Mannar ricebowl was the focus of great attention and has been almost completely demined and we are confident that returnees can commence paddy cultivation during the upcoming Maha season.

The transition from conflict to peace cannot be complete without initiating development as an integral part of the reconstruction process. Enabling persons to recommence their livelihoods and not rely on humanitarian relief is critical.

The infrastructure is being constructed to facilitate this under the ambit of the reconstruction effort. Progress from humanitarian relief to self-reliance and development has not received the attention of policymakers for a long time and is just becoming a focal issue on the global agenda. Sri Lanka has the opportunity to become a positive case study and our attention must be paid to a seamless transition to development which will, in turn, pave the way for the restoration of normality.

I have already touched on the relief, reconstruction, reconciliation and resettlement components of the Government's program and will now briefly allude to the last critical main component which is reintegration. This is perhaps one of the most important initiatives to ensure sustainable recovery in the post conflict era, are the efforts of the Government for the reintegration of excombatants.

Our responsibility is to rehabilitate and reintegrate around 10,000 persons - male and **female** including child combatants - who are being accommodated in rehabilitation centres. These ex-combatants, once they have undergone rehabilitation, must receive our continued attention.

The reintegration of ex-combatants into civilian life to complement the attempts at normalization and reconciliation launched by the President, is the final part of an integrated strategy that our Government has put into action.

In support of this initiative we have, after wide-ranging consultation, recently completed a national framework proposal and action plan on the reintegration of ex-combatants into civilian life.

The framework takes a holistic view of reintegration which includes not only disarmament and demobilization followed by rehabilitation but also transitional justice, reinsertion and socio-economic integration. The integration process will enable those who took part in the conflict to rebuild their lives and become productive members of society.

I must point out one more aspect that has to be addressed which is the deliberate attempts to tarnish Sri Lanka's image abroad.

This is an external challenge to building Sri Lanka's brand. These efforts reached a crescendo towards the end of the humanitarian operations and sporadically emanate from time to time.

The elements who fabricate and spread their misinformation have a long reach. They are able to reach policymakers, politicians, international media outlets and international institutions who, sometimes, uncritically and indiscriminately, accept their stories as true. It is the disaffected few, mainly some expatriate Sri Lankans who are largely responsible for the spread of these untruths. Some of them have links with and financial support from the **LTTE**'s vast international network which is slowly being identified and neutralized.

We have taken these elements on and defended ourselves on the international plane with some success.

Challenges in building a Sri Lankan brand

The decisive win in May at the Human Rights Council, thus preventing a possible war crimes probe, the Channel 4 incident where we were able to prove scientifically that the video was fabricated and false, the four doctors from the Vanni who admitted that they were forced by the **LTTE** to lie to the world about human rights violations and the attempt by some to use the US State Department report to Congress to revitalize an international probe on the conduct of humanitarian operations were all thwarted by proactive steps taken by the Government of President Rajapaksa.

We will continue in this proactive manner to meet similar challenges ahead, so that Sri Lanka's good name and its international image will never be compromised ever.

I have been privileged and proud to defend my country before international forums when called upon to do so.

This is something I have been doing as far back as 1983, as a young diplomat. In marketing Sri Lanka we have to be conscious of the need to counter and win over these persons and urge them to reinvest their energies in rebuilding conflict affected areas and benefiting their fellow Sri Lankans.

As I mentioned before, these are resources that we should seek to exploit and we need to reach out to them and convince them that they can be productive partners in the new Sri Lanka we are building. Published by HT Syndication with permission from Daily News Sri Lanka. For more information on news feed please contact Sarabjit Jagirdar at htsyndication@hindustantimes.com

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Load-Date: November 3, 2009

End of Document

MAN CLEARED OF TAMIL TIGER TERROR CHARGE

PA Regional Newswire of English Regions: LONDON

April 6, 2009 Monday 2:33 PM BST

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Section: PA Regional Newswire for English Regions

Length: 164 words

Body

A south London man accused of supporting a Sri Lankan terrorist organisation has been cleared.

Murugesu Jegatheeswaran, 34, from Mitcham, had denied receiving electronic items for use in terrorism.

A jury of five men and seven women at Kingston Crown Court found him not guilty after five days of deliberation.

The jury is still considering verdicts on three other defendants charged with offences relating to the Tamil Tigers.

Arunachalam Chrishanthakumar, 52, from Hornchurch in Essex, known as the head of the Tamil Tigers in Britain, is accused of conspiring to supply military equipment to the organisation.

He is also charged with amassing a hoard of military equipment, receiving terrorist documents, receiving money and belonging to a prescribed organisation, namely the Tamil Tigers.

Two other men, Jegatheswaran Muraleetharan, 46, and his brother Jeyatheswaran Vythyatharan, 40, from Newtown in Powys, mid-Wales, are charged with receiving electronic items for use in terrorism. end

Load-Date: April 6, 2009

MAN CLEARED OF TAMIL TIGER TERROR CHARGE

Press Association Mediapoint

April 6, 2009 Monday 12:23 PM BST

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Section: HOME NEWS

Length: 170 words

Byline: Harriet Alexander, Press Association

Body

A man accused of supporting a Sri Lankan terrorist organisation was today cleared.

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The trial was adjourned until Wednesday.

Load-Date: April 7, 2009

Tamil Tiger rebels cornered in 'no-fire' zone; Tens of thousands of civilians trapped as final act in 25-year Sri Lanka war appears ready to play out

The Toronto Star
April 6, 2009 Monday

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Section: NEWS; Pg. A06

Length: 511 words

Dateline: COLOMBO

Body

Sri Lanka's military says its troops have confined the Tamil Tiger rebels to a "no-fire zone" where the last act of the 25-year separatist war will play out with tens of thousands of civilians still trapped.

Three units killed 420 rebels after surrounding them in a single square kilometre during a three-day battle, the military said yesterday.

That means the remaining rebel-held area is less than 20 square kilometres of coconut groves on the Indian Ocean island's northeast coast, where the UN has said the Tigers have more than 100,000 civilians available as human shields.

"The only uncleared area left is the no-fire zone," military spokesperson Brig. Udaya Nanayakkara said. "We have recovered over 420 bodies over the last three days."

The government designated the zone as a place for civilians caught in the fighting to go.

Troops confirmed they had killed Gaddhafi, the head security officer for Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam founder and leader Vellupillai Prabhakaran; the head of the **LTTE's female** fighters, Vidusha; and commander Theepan.

And there were signs the elusive Prabhakaran was near: soldiers found a bulletproof car he was believed to have been using. The state-owned Sunday Observer newspaper said troops found his birth certificate and photo albums.

The military has accused the rebels of building fortifications inside the "no-fire" zone for a final showdown, but Nanayakkara declined yesterday to comment on the military's next move.

The government has rejected rebel calls for a ceasefire but has said it would continue to pause fighting - as it has done in the past - to allow civilians to leave the area.

The Tigers could not be reached for immediate comment and it is difficult to verify casualty figures given by either side since independent observers are generally barred from the war zone and both sides have been known to distort them.

The arrival of troops at the no-fire zone signals the beginning of what diplomats and aid agencies say will be the most difficult and possibly deadly phase of a campaign that in less than three years has put the Tigers close to conventional defeat.

Tamil Tiger rebels cornered in 'no-fire' zone Tens of thousands of civilians trapped as final act in 25-year Sri Lanka war appears ready to play out

The best choice, diplomats say, is a siege of the area, which would offer the most civilian protection.

Sri Lankan Defence Secretary Gotababaya Rajapaksa, the top civilian in charge of the war, told Reuters that soldiers would be in no hurry, especially since intelligence reports show dissension brewing against the rebels in the area.

At least 62,100 people have fled from Tiger-held areas since the start of the year, and about half that number since the army neared the no-fire zone. That is despite the Tigers shooting at them, according to those who have escaped.

The Tigers, Human Rights Watch and UN have all accused the military of shelling civilian areas, which the government denies.

Sri Lanka's military has swiftly done what had, over the course of a war that started in 1983, become to be thought of as an impossible task - recapturing nearly all the 15,000 square kilometres held by the Tigers in their bid to establish an independent state.

Load-Date: April 6, 2009

End of Document

ELECTION FREE FOR ALL TWO LAST NEW DELHI

UNI (United News of India)

April 13, 2009 Monday

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Length: 542 words

Dateline: Kochi

Body

Kochi, April 13 -- Instead of an informed debate on issues of governance, particularly relating to the difficult economic and security situation the country is faced with, leaders across the political spectrum are engaged in slanging match.

Modi's "budia" and "gudia" remarks against the 125-year-old Congress party invited instant reaction from no less a person than Gandhi family's scion Priyanka who said Congress had the maximum number of young parliamentarians. Congress general secretary B Hariprasad retaliated by saying BJP oldies like L K Advani should be dumped into the Arabian sea. Congress spokesperson Abhishek Singhvi said Modi has lost his "mental balance" and sought an apology from the Gujarat chief minister for his anti-women remarks. Earlier, the "mother" of spats between Mayawati and Maneka Gandhi over Varun's detention under NSA had hogged media headlines for over a week with Lalu Prasad later adding fuelling the controversy with his "road-roller over Varun Gandhi" remarks. The Railway Minister has since been booked by Bihar government and EC,too, has sent him notice. Lalu's wife Rabri Devi,too, has been sent a notice for her "saala" remarks against Bihar chief minister Nitish Kumar and his party colleague and JD(U) state president Rajiv Ranjan Singh "Lallan". The latter has also lodged a court complaint against her. Lalu's wordy duel of "Pootna versus Jallad" with Sushma Swaraj of BJP also embittered election debate. Wondering whether the Railway minister would become Home Minister to run roller over Varun, she said he would certainly become the "Jallad(hangman) of Tihar Jail. Reacting to this, Lalu dubbed her "Pootna", the mythological lady demon sent by Kansa to kill Lord Krishna. Election Commission has already indicted Samajwadi Party president Mulayam Singh Yadav and asked him to be "more cautious" and exercise "restraint" in the future, while noting that his reply to its notice was not satisfactory. Political spats bordering on abuse are,however, not confined to the Hindi heartland of UP and Bihar. Andhra Pradesh Congress president D Srinivas has also been sent notice by the Election Commission for his "hate speech" in which he had threatened to sever the hands of those pointing accusing fingers at Muslims. In an apparant challange to Varun's "anti-Muslim" speech, Srinivas allegedly said, "I will cut off any hand that tries to point a finger at minorities". MDMK leader Vaiko has warned of "bloodbath" in Tamil Nadu if any harm was done to LTTE chief Prabhakaran who is holed up in Sri Lanka in the face of army offensive in the Island nation. Anguished at the deluge of complaints regarding violation of the model code of conduct for election, the poll panel, in a communication to office-bearers of all recognised political parties, have urged them, their supporters and candidates to scrupulously observe the code in letter and spirit. The election commission said" Violations of the model code of conduct and, in several instances, the law of the land, seem to be turning into something of a trend, which if unchecked, is bound to seriously damage the election process and set a deplorable precedent for future elections".Published by HT Syndication with permission from United News of India.

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ELECTION FREE FOR ALL TWO LAST NEW DELHI

Load-Date: April 14, 2009

End of Document

News items from Asia-Pacific Desk of Xinhua

Xinhua General News Service

October 6, 2009 Tuesday 5:25 AM EST

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Section: WORLD NEWS

Length: 1093 words

Dateline: HONG KONG Oct. 6

Body

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

Major news items in leading Japanese newspapers

Dollar at upper 89 yen in Tokyo

Nikkei opens 0.67 pct higher

About 320 families in Indonesia's earthquake area face famine

Gold price opens higher in Hong Kong -- Oct.6

Major news items in leading Indian newspapers

WFP calls for more international assistance to Philippines

Major news items in leading Philippine newspapers

Saving survivors should be top priority: Indonesian president

Foreign exchange rates in Nepal

Foreign exchange rates in Thailand

Seoul shares start stronger

Major news items in leading Nepali newspapers

Major news items in leading Singapore's newspapers

Major news items in leading Thai newspapers

Over 5,000 families need immediate help in Cambodia: Oxfam

Hong Kong stocks open 0.39 pct higher -- Oct. 6

Major news items in leading Sri Lankan newspapers

News items from Asia-Pacific Desk of Xinhua

Major news items in leading Bangladeshi newspapers

200 Nepali police ill due to food poisoning

Tokyo stocks flat in morning trading

S. Korea plans to increase budget spending by 30 percent on inter-Korean economic cooperation for 2010

Major news items in leading Pakistani newspapers

Nepali gov't to start fighters' discharge soon

Roundup: Myanmar builds good surroundings of education for youth

Major news items in leading Vietnamese newspapers

Green cars continue rise in Japanese auto market

More Singaporean couples take wedding photos abroad

Nepal launches digital record system to check driving licenses

Foreign exchange rates in Philippines

Freight volumes in Phnom Penh Autonomous Port increase

Dutch airline to start Amsterdam-Kathmandu direct flight

Australia's first **female** Nobel prize winner hailed at home

S. Korea's foreign exchange reserves rise to 15-month high in September

S. Korea likely to post contracted rice production in 2009

Vietnam sees cargo transportation up in first nine months

Indonesia quake toll rises to 625

Vietnam, Britain agree to lift bilateral trade to 3 bln USD

Foreign exchange rates in Cambodia

Sales of imported automobiles in Japan fall

Dollar briefly down to upper 88 yen in Tokyo

Australian gov't rejects claims **Tamil Tigers** among illegal arrivals

9 killed in road accident near Pakistan capital

Philippine stocks close 2.30 pct higher on Tuesday

Nepal slips two notches, ranks 144th on HD index

Vietnam confirms two more deaths of A/H1N1 influenza

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Philippine September inflation rate rises to 0.7 pct

News items from Asia-Pacific Desk of Xinhua

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Indian stocks open higher

Myanmar makes progress in implementing education plan

Damages by Typhoon "Parma" to Philippine agriculture hit 26 mln USD

Damage by "Ketsana" to Philippine agriculture hits 140 mln USD

Australian Reserve Bank lifts interest rates

Major news items in Afghan leading newspapers

U.S. builds emergency hospital in Indonesia's quake-hit-Padang

Urgent: At least 20 killed in road accident near Indian capital

Afghan battle kills, injures over 100 militants: official

Experts warn against rumors on possible money inflation from new currency

Mount Talang's activity increases in Indonesia's quake-hit West Sumatra

Rains cripple Mumbai lifeline

Nikkei closes 0.18 pct higher

Reconstruction work to kick off in Indonesia quake affected areas

Urgent: 12 killed in landslide in far-western Nepal

Xinhua Asia-Pacific news summary at 0600 GMT, Oct. 6

Pakistani minister fears more attacks in the country

1st LD Writethru: 12 killed in landslide in far-western Nepal

20 killed in major road mishap near Indian capital

2nd LD Writethru: 12 killed in landslide in far-western Nepal

(Sports) Australia launches global education campaign for children

Pakistan probes suicide attack on UN office: minister

S. Korea sees M&A move in bank sector: media report

Interview: Road restoration should be prioritized in quake-hit zone: experts

Indonesia outlines steps to survive from crisis, spur economic growth

Seoul shares end down

S.Korea remains cautious on DPRK's intention on nuclear talks

UN official stresses roles, protection of migrants

News items from Asia-Pacific Desk of Xinhua

Free people movement improves Malaysian life: official

Marine killed in clash with militants in S. Philippines

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UN report highlights maximum human development

Thailand to use Internal Security Act at ASEAN Summit's venues

Foreign exchange rates in Vietnam

Vietnam stock market index ends up

Australian troops assist relief operation in Indonesia

Tokyo stocks rebound on bargain-hunting

S. Korean banks to tighten restrictions on home-backed loans in Q4

(Sports) Australian hurdler targets Olympic medal in 2012

Cambodia marks World Teachers' Day

Singapore enhances export credit insurance scheme to help local companies

Pakistan Taliban claim responsibility for UN office attack

3rd LD Writethru: 12 killed in landslide in far-western Nepal

Hong Kong stocks close 1.87 pct higher -- Oct. 6

Singapore, Australia, Germany to co-produce live action series

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S. Korean gov't support for poor in line with market principles: president

Foreign exchange rates in Hong Kong -- Oct. 6

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Taiwan stocks end higher -- Oct. 6

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S. Korean exports may end declining in Q4: state-run bank

Fitch Ratings says Asian firms to lead global corporate recovery

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Load-Date: October 7, 2009

End of Document

News items from Asia-Pacific Desk of Xinhua

Xinhua General News Service

October 6, 2009 Tuesday 1:15 AM EST

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Section: WORLD NEWS

Length: 1093 words

Dateline: HONG KONG Oct. 6

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Load-Date: October 8, 2009

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Outrage reserved for Israel

The Australian

April 22, 2009 Wednesday

1 - All-round Country Edition

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Section: FEATURES; Pg. 14

Length: 884 words

Byline: Brett Stephens

Body

Why do Muslim countries care so much more about Palestine than Chechnya, asks Brett Stephens

FEW places on earth have been as systematically brutalised over the past decade as Chechnya. So you might have thought that the Russian Government's decision last week to declare an end to its ``counter-terrorism" operations in the territory would have been an occasion for sombre reflection in the Western media. Forget it. It's a 600-word news item at best.

Here's a contrast to ponder. Since the beginning of the second intifada in the autumn of 2000, about 6000 Palestinians have been killed by Israeli fire. That figure includes combatants as well as those killed in January's fighting in Gaza.

As for Chechnya, there are no solid figures for the number of civilians killed since the second war began in late 1999; estimates range from 25,000 to 200,000. Chechnya's population, at a little more than one million, is about one third or one fourth that of the Palestinians. That works out to between 25 and 200 Chechen deaths per 1000 as against 1.5 to two Palestinian deaths per 1000.

Now type the words Palestine and genocide into Google. When I did so on Monday, I got 1,630,000 results. Next, substitute Chechnya for Palestine. The number is 245,000.

Taking the Google results as a crude measure of global outrage, that means the outrage over the Palestinian situation was 6.6 times greater than over the Chechen one. Yet Chechen fatalities were between 13 to 133 times greater.

Final calculation: With an outrage ratio of 6.6 to one, but a proportional kill ratio of one to 13 (at the very low end), it turns out that every Palestinian death receives somewhere in the order of 28 times the attention of every Chechen death. Remember that in both cases we're mainly talking about Muslims being killed by non-Muslims.

I'll admit this math exercise is a bit of a gimmick. But it raises a worthwhile question: Why is Palestinian life so dear in the eyes of the world, and Chechen life so cheap?

Maybe the answer is that the Palestinian cause is morally worthier than that of Chechnya. But that can't be right. Yes, Chechen terrorists have committed spectacular atrocities, notably the 2004 Beslan school massacre. Yet modern terrorism is a genre Palestinians practically invented. As it is, Chechnya has been suffering grievously

Outrage reserved for Israel

under Russia's thumb since the 1800s. (Just read Tolstoy's Hadji Murad.) If colonialism is your beef, the case for Chechen independence is inarguable.

Maybe, then, the answer is that there is no shortage of imagery of Palestinian death, and thus it engages more of the world's attention. By contrast, the Russians imposed a virtual media blockade on Chechnya, and journalists who covered the story, such as Anna Politkovskaya, had a way of ending up dead.

But imagery need not be televised to be vivid, nor does the world lack for testimonials of Russian brutality. ``I remember a Chechen female sniper," a Russian soldier told Los Angeles Times reporter Maura Reynolds. ``We just tore her apart with two armoured personnel carriers, having tied her ankles with steel cables. There was a lot of blood, but the boys needed it."

Maybe it's that the Israeli-Palestinian conflict is simply more important strategically than Russia's war against Chechnya, in the same way that the attacks of 9/11 mattered more in the scheme of things than, say, atrocities by the Tamil Tigers in Sri Lanka.

Yet even before 9/11, there was evidence that al-Qa'ida was feeding money and arms to Chechen fighters, putting Chechnya squarely into the context of what became the global war on terror. Evidence of al-Qa'ida involvement in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict is sparser and only came to light in 2007.

Of course, the Israeli-Palestinian conflict inflames the Muslim world in a way the Chechen one does not. But why is that, when so many more Muslims are being victimised by Russia?

Then too, why does the wider world participate in the Muslim world's moral priorities? Why, for instance, do high-profile Western writers such as Portuguese Nobel laureate Jose Saramago make ``solidarity`` pilgrimages to Ramallah but not to the Chechen capital of Grozny? Why do British academics organise boycotts of their Israeli counterparts but not their Russian ones?

Why is Palestinian statehood considered a global moral imperative, but statehood for Chechnya is not?

Why does every Israeli prime minister invariably become a global pariah, when not one person in 1000 knows the name of Chechen President Ramzan Kadyrov, a man who, by many accounts, keeps a dungeon near his house in order to personally torture his political opponents? And why does the fact that Kadyrov is Vladimir Putin's handpicked enforcer in Chechnya not cause a shudder of revulsion as the Obama administration reaches for the reset button with Russia?

I have a hypothesis. Maybe the world attends to Palestinian grievances but not Chechen ones for the sole reason that Palestinians are, uniquely, the perceived victims of the Jewish state. That is when they are not being victimised by other Palestinians. Or being expelled en masse from Kuwait. Or being excluded from the labour force in Lebanon. Things you probably didn't know about, either.

As for the Chechens, too bad for their cause that no Jew is ever likely to become president of Russia.

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50 die in attack on Sri Lanka war zone hospital

The Canadian Press(CP)

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Body

COLOMBO, Sri Lanka _ Artillery shells tore through a hospital packed with wounded civilians in Sri Lanka's war zone for a second day Wednesday, killing at least 50 people, setting an ambulance ablaze and forcing the medical staff to huddle in bunkers for safety, doctors said.

Health workers at the makeshift medical facility said they were so overwhelmed by the crush of the wounded and the unrelenting shelling of the area they could do little but give gauze and bandages to the roughly 1,000 patients waiting for treatment.

The strike on the hospital came as the government marched on with its offensive to destroy the reeling Tamil Tiger rebels and end their quarter-decade quest for a separate homeland.

There has been a wave of artillery bombardments across the war zone that began over the weekend and has barely let up in five days, health workers said. The weekend attacks alone may have killed as many as 1,000 people, doctors said.

The government says its troops are not responsible for the shelling and that the military has not fired heavy weapons in the area in weeks.

But Human Rights Watch says satellite images and witness testimony contradict that claim and has accused both sides of using the estimated 50,000 civilians packed into the tiny coastal strip controlled by the rebels as "cannon fodder."

The shelling was so intense Wednesday that a Red Cross ferry waiting off the coast to deliver food aid and evacuate the wounded had to turn back for a second day, the agency said.

U.S. President Barack Obama on Wednesday called for an end to the violence and steps to alleviate civilian suffering.

Obama called on Sri Lanka's government Wednesday to "stop the indiscriminate shelling" that has killed hundreds of civilians and allow UN humanitarian teams access to war-wounded.

He also called on the Tamil rebels to lay down their weapons and release civilian captives. He said the situation was a humanitarian crisis that could turn into a catastrophe.

50 die in attack on Sri Lanka war zone hospital

Two artillery shells hit the medical facility about 1 p.m., slamming into an administrative office and a ward filled with patients already wounded by previous shell attacks, Dr. V. Shanmugarajah told The Associated Press by telephone.

Dr. Thurairaja Varatharajah, the top health official in the war zone, said the attack killed at least 50 people, including patients, relatives and a health aide, and wounded about 60 others.

Heavy shelling of the war zone continued throughout the day, he said.

"We are unable to treat the people properly because a lot of aides have fled the hospital. We go into bunkers when there is shelling and try to treat them as much as we can when there is a lull," he said by telephone.

One shell that struck the compound set an ambulance on fire, according to video footage of the aftermath of the attack. Scores of people crowded beneath tarps outside the hospital building waited for care as someone wailed in the background.

More than 1,000 civilians _ many with amputations or chest wounds _ had been waiting for treatment at the hospital when it was struck, and every 10 minutes or so another one or two died from lack of care, said a third hospital official, who spoke only on condition of anonymity because the government had not authorized him to speak to the media.

Overwhelmed doctors have been reduced to handing out bandages to the seriously wounded, the official said. More than 100 dead bodies have been left inside the compound because no one will risk burying them amid the constant shelling, he said. The strike was the third to hit the hospital this month.

A Red Cross worker and his mother were also killed in shelling, the third Red Cross staff member killed by shrapnel in the war zone in the past two months, the International Committee of the Red Cross said.

"This latest tragic incident shows how dangerous it is for everyone in the area," said Paul Castella, the head of the Red Cross delegation in Colombo.

Rebel spokesman Seevaratnam Puleedevan said shells also hit a home for mentally handicapped women, killing 38 and wounding more than 40.

Reports of the fighting are difficult to verify because the government has barred journalists and aid workers from the war zone.

The government has come under heavy international criticism for the large civilian toll of its offensive against the rebels, who are cornered in a five square-kilometre strip of land.

The military said it pressed ahead with its offensive into that strip Wednesday, capturing one of the rebels' heavy guns and fending off a suicide attack by four rebel boats laden with explosives.

The UN Security Council demanded Wednesday that the Tamil Tigers stop fighting and allow tens of thousands of civilians being used as human shields to leave the war zone. It also called on the government to stop firing heavy weapons, help trapped civilians evacuate and allow for the urgent delivery of humanitarian aid.

The council press statement _ which is not legally binding _ expressed grave concern at the worsening humanitarian crisis.

Diplomats in Geneva said the United Nations was preparing for an emergency meeting of its Human Rights Council next week to discuss the worsening conflict. Fifteen of the 16 countries needed to back the motion were already on board, European diplomats said, speaking on condition of anonymity because of the sensitivity of the issue.

Amnesty International urged Obama to push for a truce and appealed to the UN Security Council to establish a commission of inquiry into violations of international law.

50 die in attack on Sri Lanka war zone hospital

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End of Document

HUMAN RIGHTS COUNCIL OPENS ELEVENTH SPECIAL SESSION ON SITUATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS IN SRI LANKA

States News Service

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Body

The following information was released by the United Nations Office at Geneva (UNOG):

The Human Rights Council this afternoon opened its eleventh Special Session on the situation of human rights in Sri Lanka. High Commissioner for Human Rights Navi Pillay said that there were strong reasons to believe that both the Government and the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam had grossly disregarded the fundamental principle of the inviolability of civilians.

In a video message, the High Commissioner said an independent and credible international investigation into recent events should be dispatched to ascertain the occurrence, nature and scale of violations of international human rights and international humanitarian law, as well as specific responsibilities. Victims and the survivors had a right to justice and remedies. Ms. Pillay said she remained convinced that an Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights with a promotion and protection mandate in Sri Lanka could play an important role in supporting the Government and in building the confidence of all stakeholders in Sri Lanka's recovery. She urged the Human Rights Council to support the call for the international community's help at such a critical juncture for Sri Lanka.

Sri Lanka's Minister of Disaster Management and Human Rights, Mahinda Samarasinghe, speaking as the concerned country, said that over 250,000 persons who had been held hostages by the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam had been freed by the Sri Lankan forces and were now being looked after by the Sri Lankan Government. Sri Lanka was also giving access to some 50 international organizations and non-governmental organizations. Sri Lanka was committed to continue to ensure access to their international partners. Their objective was to resettle all citizens in their homes but they had to ensure that an environment was created so that an informed choice could be taken by the people themselves. The Government cared for all Sri Lankan citizens and would ensure that demining was carried out, that basic services were provided in the region and this information would be given to the people in order for them to make an informed decision on whether or not to return to their homes.

The President of the Council, Ambassador Martin Ihoeghian Uhomoihi of Nigeria, hoped that in the next days and months, the important tasks of reconciliation, rehabilitation and reconstruction would begin and pave the way for sustainable peace and development in Sri Lanka. The Human Rights Council, convening this Special Session today, joined in sending a message of readiness and willingness to work with the Government and people of Sri Lanka to address the most urgent humanitarian and human rights challenges facing them.

A joint statement by the Special Procedures mandate-holders of the United Nations Human Rights Council said they reiterated their deep concern at the continuing humanitarian crisis and at the serious human rights situation in

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Sri Lanka, and were also concerned about the lack of transparency and accountability that accompanied this crisis. A huge number of civilians had been displaced and many had been killed. The devastating situation of civilians in Sri Lanka trapped in the midst of fighting between the Sri Lankan army and the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam had resulted in over some 300,000 displaced persons interned in Government-run camps. Their situation must be immediately addressed.

The Special Procedures said it was clear that the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam acted in flagrant violation of the applicable norms of international law by using civilians as human shields or in preventing them from leaving the conflict areas. As to the Government of Sri Lanka, citing security concerns, after three months it continued to detain in temporary camps the more than 300,000 men, women and children who escaped the fighting. This gave rise to concerns of arbitrary detention. Today, a critical humanitarian situation existed with regard to essential needs such as food, water and sanitation, shelter, education and healthcare. The Special Procedures called upon the authorities to swiftly extend invitations to those mandate-holders who wished to conduct country visits to Sri Lanka.

Speakers in the general debate were divided on the approach which should be taken by the Council towards Sri Lanka in the aftermath of the conflict. A number of speakers questioned the convening of the Special Session, saying it was not clear what the Special Session aimed to achieve. Now that the armed conflict in Sri Lanka had been concluded, they affirmed the need to mobilize and intensify all efforts to assist civilians affected by the conflict for many decades. They felt that at this juncture, the international community should be focused more on helping Sri Lanka to address its humanitarian challenges. With the regular session of the Council only a few days away, the undue haste for calling this Special Session was not only inexplicable but a waste of time, effort and money.

Others said they were seriously concerned that the human rights situation in Sri Lanka had been backsliding in areas not directly related to the conflict. Media freedoms had deteriorated significantly in 2008 and 2009 with several attacks on journalists and media premises. There had been little progress on bringing to justice the perpetrators of enforced disappearances in Sri Lanka. Further, the country's human rights protection mechanisms were inadequate, lacking both capacity but also independence. During the conflict, the use of force was often indiscriminate and often civilians were used as human shields. It was the primary responsibility for the Government of Sri Lanka to investigate violations of international human rights and international humanitarian law, as well as to oppose impunity. It was now necessary for the Government to establish criminal liability for those who had violated international humanitarian law and international human rights law.

Speaking in the general debate were the Czech Republic on behalf of the European Union, Cuba on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement, Egypt on behalf of the African Group, Pakistan on behalf of the Organization of the Islamic Conference, Germany, Canada, Qatar, China, India, Russian Federation, Egypt, Jordan, Switzerland, Chile, Cuba, Brazil, Malaysia, the United Kingdom, the Philippines, Argentina, Indonesia, Slovenia, Japan, France, Mexico, Ghana, Italy, Nicaragua, Saudi Arabia and South Africa.

The Council will resume its eleventh Special Session on the situation of human rights in Sri Lanka at 10 a.m. on Wednesday, 27 May.

Opening Statements

MARTIN IHOEGHIAN UHOMOIBHI, President of the Human Rights Council, in his opening statement, said that the eleventh Special Session of the Human Rights Council was supported by the following 17 Member States of the Council: Argentina, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Canada, Chile, France, Germany, Italy, Mauritius, Mexico, the Netherlands, the Republic of Korea, Slovakia, Slovenia, Switzerland, Ukraine, the United Kingdom and Uruguay.

As Member States met here today in a Special Session on the human rights situation in Sri Lanka, once again the Human Rights Council signalled its readiness to contribute to promoting and protecting human rights in all parts of the world, underscored Mr. Uhomoihi. This was right and appropriate and was consistent with the mandate of the Council.

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However, he believed no one in this hall was unaware of the long history of the needless conflict that had ravaged the nation of Sri Lanka for the past two and a half decades and more. In the course of this atrocious conflict, thousands of innocent lives had been wasted and millions of people had suffered untold hardships, stressed Mr. Uhomoibhi. Member States commiserated with the civilian population, particularly the most vulnerable segments of the population, who had borne the brunt of the war. Mercifully, so to speak, today as Member States met, the guns had gone silent in Sri Lanka, hopefully forever. The dawn of peace which appeared to be beginning was most welcome. It was hoped that, in the next days and months, the important tasks of reconciliation, rehabilitation and reconstruction would begin and would pave the way for sustainable peace and development in the country. He said he could not agree more with the United Nations Secretary-General who, in his recent visit to Sri Lanka, stated that it was imperative now to find a lasting political solution to the situation in the country, while addressing the aspirations and grievances of all concerned.

The Human Rights Council, convening this session today, joined in sending a message of readiness and willingness to work with the Government and people of Sri Lanka to address the most urgent humanitarian and human rights challenges facing them. As the Human Rights Council, this should be our focus and objective, signalled Mr. Uhomoibhi. He wished, therefore, to call on all delegations present at this meeting to work together in an open and constructive manner in the conduct of the debate, discussions and negotiations. As he had underscored on previous occasions, no useful purpose could be served if they did not invest their efforts and energies in addressing the needs of the victims. And the way by which this was best achieved was through dialogue, conducted in an atmosphere of respect and dignity for all sides and opinions.

NAVI PILLAY, United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, in a video message to the Human Rights Council, said that she regretted that she was not able to attend in person this Special Session on the human rights situation in Sri Lanka. It was appropriate that the Human Rights Council, as the premier body for the protection of human rights, addressed the tragic human rights and humanitarian consequences of the conflict in that country. "The images of terrified and emaciated women, men and children fleeing the battle zone ought to be etched in our collective memory. They must spur us into action." she said.

Since December, during the latest phase of intense fighting, tens of thousands of civilians had been killed, injured or displaced. They had seen their property and livelihoods shattered. Independent human rights monitors and the media should be given unfettered access to verify reports of serious violations of international human rights and international humanitarian law which had consequently surfaced in the course of the fighting, said Ms. Pillay. Furthermore, the fate of thousands of civilians believed to have been in the conflict area, or in transit to displacement camps, was still unknown. The plight of those who had already reached the camps had to be addressed with urgency. These people were in desperate need of food, water, medical help and other forms of basic assistance. Severe overcrowding was creating serious problems. Malnourishment was a pressing concern. There had already been outbreaks of contagious diseases, noted Ms. Pillay.

Unrestricted humanitarian aid would make the difference between life, illness or even death to many, and yet access for the United Nations and non-governmental organizations to the internally displaced persons camps continued to be hampered, said Ms. Pillay. She called on the Government to ensure that unimpeded assistance promptly reached the survivors. She also urged the Government to expedite and correct flaws in the screening process implemented to separate Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) combatants from the civilian population. Full access to independent monitors was crucial to ensure due process and humane treatment for detainees. Freedom of movement for the very large majority of displaced people who did not pose security threats should also be granted as soon as possible.

The Government had claimed military victory over the LTTE and announced the death of senior LTTE commanders, said Ms. Pillay. For many years, the LTTE's campaign of violence had been terrorizing Sri Lankan people of all ethnic communities and had ruthlessly eliminated independent-minded Tamils who dared to dissent. She fully recognized the Government's responsibility to protect its people against acts of this kind, but as in any comparable situation, the rules of international human rights and international humanitarian law had to be upheld at all times. In no circumstances could the end justify the means employed to achieve it.

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"There are strong reasons to believe that both sides have grossly disregarded the fundamental principle of the inviolability of civilians" said Ms. Pillay. An independent and credible international investigation into recent events should be dispatched to ascertain the occurrence, nature and scale of violations of international human rights and international humanitarian law, as well as specific responsibilities.

Victims and the survivors had a right to justice and remedies. The Government had already indicated that it might grant amnesty to lower and mid-level **LTTE** cadres and only prosecute senior **LTTE** leaders. Ms. Pillay underscored that amnesties preventing accountability of individuals who might be responsible for war crimes, genocide, crimes against humanity or gross violations of human rights were impermissible.

At the time she recorded her message, on May 25, the Secretary-General had visited Sri Lanka. She joined him in his appeal to the Government of Sri Lanka to address the root causes, the longstanding human rights conditions, to ensure a comprehensive process of accountability for human rights violations by all concerned. A new future for the country, the prospect of meaningful reconciliation and lasting peace, where respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms could become a reality for all, hinged upon such in-depth and comprehensive approaches.

Ms. Pillay remained convinced that an Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights with a promotion and protection mandate in Sri Lanka could play an important role in supporting the Government and in building the confidence of all stakeholders in Sri Lanka's recovery. She urged the Human Rights Council to support the call for the international community's help at such a critical juncture for Sri Lanka.

MAGDALENA SEPULVEDA CARMONA , Independent Expert on the question of human rights and extreme poverty, said that she was delivering her statement on behalf of the Special Procedures mandate-holders of the United Nations Human Rights Council. The Special Procedures mandate-holders reiterated their deep concern at the continuing humanitarian crisis and at the serious human rights situation in Sri Lanka, and were also concerned about the lack of transparency and accountability that had accompanied this crisis. A huge number of civilians had been displaced and many had been killed. The devastating situation of civilians in Sri Lanka trapped in the midst of fighting between the Sri Lankan army and the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam had resulted in the internment of some 300,000 displaced persons in Government-run camps. Their situation must be immediately addressed.

As they had stated on previous occasions with regard to other situations, the obligation under international law to distinguish between combatants and civilians, to direct attacks only against combatants and military targets, and to ensure protection of civilians must be respected by all parties to the conflict. In this regard, it was clear that the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam had acted in flagrant violation of the applicable norms of international law by using civilians as human shields or in preventing them from leaving the conflict areas. As to the Government of Sri Lanka, citing security concerns, after three months it continued to detain in temporary camps the more than 300,000 men, **women** and children who had escaped the fighting. This gave rise to concerns of arbitrary detention, Ms. Sepulveda noted. With combat operations in the conflict zone coming to an end, it was necessary to speed up the screening process in the camps. Releases must take place without further delay and should prioritize the most vulnerable. The reintegration of these persons into society with due attention to their mental and physical integrity was critical.

Today, a critical humanitarian situation existed with regard to essential needs such as food, water and sanitation, shelter, education and healthcare. It was regrettable that United Nations personnel were until very recently denied access to the conflict zone and initial screening points for persons exiting the conflict zone, including Kilinochchi, which made it very difficult to determine the veracity of the allegations of serious human rights violations, including enforced disappearances and arbitrary executions and detentions. Indeed, it was very worrisome to learn from recent reports received that some of those who risked their lives to help the sick and wounded in the conflict zone were now being detained incommunicado. The Special Procedures called upon the authorities to swiftly extend invitations to those mandate-holders who wished to conduct country visits to Sri Lanka. In addition to concerns about the severe abuses in areas of conflict, emphasis should be put on the wider and endemic problems and failures to protect human rights throughout the country. Weak institutional structures permitted impunity to go unabated. Disturbing reports of torture, extra-judicial killings and enforced disappearances continued to be received. Those defending human rights, journalists, doctors and lawyers, did not have the space they needed to

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do their important work without fear of reprisals. Ms. Seplveda stressed that room needed to be provided for constructive dialogue which also included the possibility to express dissent in a democratic society.

Statement by the Concerned Country

MAHINDA SAMARASINGHE, Minister of Disaster Management and Human Rights of Sri Lanka, speaking as the concerned country, said that the Council was focusing on Sri Lanka at a time when a 30 years old conflict was coming to an end. The issue of giving access to conflict zones when a conflict had ended was not a topic to be discussed; Sri Lanka was giving access to all its partners.

At a time when the biggest hostile situation in present time had been successfully resolved, at a time when new challenges arose for peace, they were meeting in this room to discuss Sri Lanka. He had however not heard the High Commissioner refer to the fact that one of the most ruthless terrorist organizations had been defeated; the fact that a 30-year old conflict had ended; and that the biggest hostage crisis that the world had ever known had been resolved, said Mr. Samarsinghe.

Over 250,000 persons who had been held hostages by the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) had been freed by the Sri Lankan forces and were now being looked after by the Sri Lankan Government, said Mr. Samarsinghe. Sri Lanka was also giving access to some 50 international organizations and non-governmental organizations. Sri Lanka was committed to continue to ensure access to their international partners. Their objective was to resettle all citizens in their homes but they had to ensure that an environment was created so that an informed choice could be taken by the people themselves. Nearly 9,000 persons who had surrendered and other identified recruits of the LTTE would be put in a rehabilitation programme.

Mr. Samarsinghe said that the Government cared for all Sri Lankan citizens and they would ensure that demining was carried out, and that basic services were provided in the region. This information would be given to the people in order for them to make an informed decision on whether to return to their homes or not.

The draft resolution before the Human Rights Council was an implementable resolution, said Mr. Samarsinghe, and they hoped that the resolution would be supported by everyone. Sri Lanka was a State that was coming out of a 30-year old conflict. They were in the process of putting into place the voluntary pledges they had made at the Universal Periodic Review for the better protection of all of their citizens in each and every part of their country. Sri Lanka needed to be supported by the whole international community. Sri Lanka had always cooperated with all the core treaty bodies and Special Procedures. They had also put in place a mechanism to protect children in armed conflicts, among many other initiatives. Sri Lanka was a multicultural, multi lingual, multi ethnic and multi religious society; this was its strength. And it was only through the nurturing of this diversity that they would be able to be successful in their reconstruction efforts.

General Debate

TOMAS HUSAK (Czech Republic), speaking on behalf of the European Union, welcomed this opportunity to address the serious human rights situation in Sri Lanka. Over the years, the European Union has followed with deep concern the protracted conflict in the north of Sri Lanka. The recent climax had seen thousands of civilians trapped in the conflict zone or shelled in the previously assigned 'safe zones', defenceless and with very little humanitarian assistance. This had been appalling. The European Union had condemned the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam's violent and terrorist means and its use of civilians as human shields, and had repeatedly called on the organization to renounce terrorism and violence. At the same time, the European Union had pleaded throughout the conflict with the Sri Lankan Government to take all necessary steps to prevent, in accordance with international humanitarian law, the loss of lives of civilians and protect the human rights of all, and in particular the lives of internally displaced persons.

The recent announcement about the end of the fighting was welcomed. The European Union called on the Government of Sri Lanka to start a comprehensive and fully inclusive political peace process, that would, at the outset, also address issues regarding the full protection of the internally displaced persons and their return,

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protection of children affected by armed conflict, including rehabilitation and reintegration of child soldiers, the upholding of human rights compliance with international human rights and international humanitarian law and full accountability of those responsible for those violations. The European Union understood the importance of discussion and was searching for a consensus on the best way for the Council to assist Sri Lanka in the coming months and years.

RESFEL PINO (Cuba), speaking on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement, said that the presence of the Sri Lankan Minister for Disaster Management in this Special Session was a testimony of the commitment of Sri Lanka towards this Council. The Non-Aligned Movement congratulated Sri Lanka on putting an end to more than 25 years of internal conflict. Sri Lanka's sovereign right to fight terrorism and separatism within its undisputed borders had to be respected. Sri Lanka had now entered a new post-conflict beginning. In that regard, the Non-Aligned Movement wished the Government and people of Sri Lanka success in rapidly overcoming the consequences of the conflict.

The convening of this Special Session had been marked by divisions and lack of understanding among various actors. The Non-Aligned Movement firmly believed that preserving the core principles of avoiding selectivity and double standards, as well as promoting an approach of cooperation for the promotion and protection of human rights, were vital to the success of the Human Rights Council.

HISHAM BADR (Egypt), speaking on behalf of the African Group, said that the African Group had not been in favour of holding a Special Session. The African Group thought that the conflict in Sri Lanka was an internal affair in which a sovereign Government did its best to fulfil its duty towards its citizens and took measures necessary to fight a militia that was universally recognized as a terrorist group. It was not clear what the Special Session was aiming to achieve in this regard. Now that the armed conflict in Sri Lanka had ended, the African Group affirmed the need to mobilize and intensify all efforts to assist civilians affected by the conflict for many decades. Emphasis needed to be placed on ways and means to support the Government of Sri Lanka in its efforts for reconciliation, rehabilitation, reconstruction and the restoration of order and the rule of law all over the country.

The African Group welcomed the clear commitment of the Government of Sri Lanka to political reconciliation in the country. It was noteworthy that all regional neighbours of Sri Lanka indicated their support for the efforts of the Government in this regard. Also welcomed was the particular attention given by the Government of Sri Lanka to address the issue of internally displaced persons. The African Group called upon the international community to increase its assistance to the Government of Sri Lanka in order to increase the accessibility of the internally displaced persons to humanitarian relief efforts.

ZAMIR AKRAM (Pakistan), speaking on behalf of the Organization of the Islamic Conference, congratulated the Government and people of Sri Lanka for their victory against one of the most dangerous and vicious terrorist organizations. They wished every success to the Sri Lankan Government in its efforts to overcome the challenges of relief, rehabilitation, resettlement and reconciliation. The Organization of the Islamic Conference also welcomed the commitment of the Sri Lankan Government to work in close cooperation with the United Nations. There was an urgent need for the United Nations and the international community as a whole to address the problems related to the internally displaced persons, mine clearing operations, humanitarian needs, and the release and rehabilitation of child soldiers recruited by the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam.

The Organization of the Islamic Conference felt that at this juncture, the international community should be focused more on helping Sri Lanka to address its humanitarian challenges. With the regular session of the Council only a few days away, the undue haste for calling this Special Session was not only inexplicable but a waste of time, effort and money. Sri Lanka was a functioning democracy. Under international law, its Government was fully justified to protect and uphold the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the country by all means at its disposal to defeat the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam. Unfortunately, it seemed that for some there were differing standards for judging human rights as well as the criterion for combating terrorism.

KONRAD MAX SCHARINGER (Germany) aligned itself with the statement made by the Czech Republic on behalf of the European Union. A week ago, one of the bloodiest civil wars of recent decades had come to an end in Sri

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Lanka; the human rights problems, however, remained. Both sides had ignored repeated appeals from the international community - including that of neighbouring India, for example - to agree on a ceasefire and seek a negotiated settlement. Both sides had continued fighting, although hundreds of thousands of civilians, women, children and elderly, had been caught between the front lines and could not flee to safety. Many Tamils, who survived the fighting, continued to suffer, from shock and trauma, from injuries and hunger, from the loss of their homes, villages, towns and from harsh treatment in camps.

What the country needed now was a review process to identify what led up to this tragedy, and an investigation process to examine human rights violations and punish those responsible. The focus must not just be on the northern and eastern regions but on the country as a whole, for in the current climate those who held different views were subject to violence and oppression and those who were responsible for such acts went unpunished. This had to stop immediately, all communities must once again be free to say and write what they wanted without risking intimidation, torture or death.

MARIUS GRINIUS (Canada) said that while recognizing some encouraging signs, the human rights situation in Sri Lanka was troubling in areas both related and unrelated to the escalation of the conflict in recent years. Continuous improvement in the human rights situation was a necessary condition for lasting peace in Sri Lanka. Canada also welcomed the end of hostilities in the country and understood that Sri Lanka had fought a brutal enemy. Canada had listed the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) as a terrorist organization in 2006. Canada also had serious concerns about the Government of Sri Lanka's conduct during the conflict and remained concerned about the humanitarian situation in Sri Lanka. They were encouraged by the Government's commitment to the timely, voluntary and safe return of internally displaced persons.

Canada was at the same time seriously concerned that the human rights situation in Sri Lanka had been backsliding in areas not directly related to the conflict. Media freedoms had deteriorated significantly in 2008 and 2009 with several attacks on journalists and media premises. There had been little progress on bringing to justice the perpetrators of enforced disappearances in Sri Lanka. Further, the country's human rights protection mechanisms were inadequate, lacking both capacity but also independence.

KHALID FAHAD AL-HAJRI (Qatar) said Qatar fully supported the statements by the Arab Group and the Organization of the Islamic Conference. Given the circumstances, it was inappropriate to hold a Special Session, especially as the eleventh regular session was fast approaching. It was important to respect the legal principle for the Government of Sri Lanka to govern its own territory. Qatar believed it was essential to support the efforts of Sri Lanka to safeguard security for all citizens and to ensure lasting peace while promoting development and progress. Qatar called upon the international community to support Sri Lanka's efforts in the promotion and protection of human rights and to assist it in its efforts for rehabilitation through United Nations agencies and international aid.

LI BAODONG (China) congratulated the Sri Lankan Government for their victory in their war against terrorism. With this, Sri Lanka was now at a new departure point in human rights. Convening this Special Session was highly regrettable. Since the start of the civil war, the Government had taken several measures for the protection and security of civilians. The recent meeting with the United Nations Secretary-General was a demonstration of Sri Lanka's cooperation. The international community should respect the independence and territorial integrity of Sri Lanka and give it assistance and cooperation.

The civil war had now come to an end in Sri Lanka but the Government and the people still faced the challenge of resolving the humanitarian crisis. China had given \$ 1 million in cash aid in order to resettle displaced civilians in the north of the country.

GOPINATHAN ACHAMKULANGARE (India) said India had serious reservations about the objectives and usefulness of convening a Special Session of the United Nations Human Rights Council on the human rights situation in Sri Lanka at this time. Sri Lanka had just brought to an end a long and tragic conflict waged by an organization wedded to terrorism and separatism. The international community's over-riding goal and priority in Sri Lanka today needed to be focused on promoting a process of reconciliation and healing, overcoming the

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consequences of this tragic conflict. Instead, by forcing a Special Session on the Council, some Members had, regrettably, politicised the Council's work. This was an unfortunate development. It would have been sufficient if this discussion had taken place during the eleventh regular session of the Council that was barely a week away.

The activities of the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam had, in fact, reinforced the need for the Council to focus its attention on human rights violations by non-State actors, especially terrorist groups. The Council must not be reluctant to hold non-State actors accountable for their human rights violations. What Sri Lanka needed now was international assistance for the serious humanitarian situation of civilians who came out of the conflict areas.

VALERY LOSHCININ (Russian Federation) welcomed the end of the very long and bloody armed conflict in Sri Lanka and the fact that the Government had now taken back the control of all parts of the country. Russia congratulated Sri Lanka for their victory over separatism and terrorism. The Government was now facing new challenges, above all the rehabilitation of the victims. They noted with satisfaction the work that had been done by the authorities so far. Russia considered that the international community and the United Nations had to provide the Government with the necessary assistance, especially in the area of rehabilitating the internally displaced persons and improving the socio-economic situation in the country. The wounds would take time to heal. The problem of the child soldiers recruited by the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam also had to be addressed.

Russia further welcomed the assurances given by the President of Sri Lanka to seek a national solution acceptable to all. Russia expressed the hope that the people and the Government would rapidly overcome the effects of the conflict. This was a victory of the international community as a whole. Russia had not been in favour of calling this Special Session and it was important to show support for the country.

HISHAM BADR (Egypt) welcomed the statement made by the Sri Lankan Minister. His presence here illustrated the Sri Lankan Government's commitment to cooperate with the Council and its mechanisms. Egypt did not understand why the Special Session was being convened. Sri Lanka had battled a conflict for many decades and had faced a conflict raised by terrorists. When the Government forces had been on the brink of winning a victory against the rebels, the international community had exercised pressure on the Government. The international community needed to extend its hand to Sri Lanka to ensure national reconciliation, rehabilitation and reconstruction, not to hold a Special Session. The time had come to note that the conflict was over and it was a time for reconstruction. The Government of Sri Lanka had fulfilled its role in this regard, and needed the international community's support.

MUTAZ FALEH S. HYASSAT (Jordan) said that Sri Lanka's openness and cooperation with the United Nations and humanitarian agencies deserved their appreciation. Jordan also commended Sri Lanka for its cooperation with the Human Rights Council. Particular attention should be given to internally displaced persons in order to alleviate their suffering and help them return to their homes in a speedy manner. Jordan was pleased that Sri Lanka had taken steps to that effect. It was also encouraging to note the ongoing cooperation between the Government and the United Nations Children's Fund with respect to child soldiers that had been recruited by the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam. The international community should lend its support to Sri Lanka in the post conflict efforts with respect to reconciliation, recovery, reconstruction and socio-economic development.

DANTE MARTINELLI (Switzerland) said Switzerland had joined in favour for the request to convene this Special Session. From the beginning, Switzerland had done all it could to ensure that a dialogue between all the delegations could take place so that the Special Session was held in an inclusive and cooperative atmosphere. The aim was to enable the Council to contribute to improving the situation of victims, in cooperation with Sri Lanka. Open consultations had been held and the draft text had been discussed with all Members with a clear wish for dialogue and moderation. Switzerland was relieved that the armed conflict had come to an end and hoped that the Government of Sri Lanka would adopt policies that would lead to a lasting peace in the country.

During the conflict, the use of force was often indiscriminate and often civilians were used as human shields. Switzerland recalled that it was the primary responsibility for the Government of Sri Lanka to investigate violations of international human rights and international humanitarian law, as well as to oppose impunity. It was now necessary for the Government to establish criminal liability for those who violated international humanitarian law

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and international human rights law. The issue of internally displaced persons was a complex one. The Government of Sri Lanka needed to collaborate closely with the United Nations and the International Committee of the Red Cross and should raise all restrictions imposed on humanitarian aid agencies. The fundamental rights of internally displaced persons must be protected, such as access to water, health care and food. Child soldiers must also be reintegrated and journalists held in detention centres should be released.

CARLOS PORTALES (Chile) said that Chile had to dissociate itself with the statement made by the Non-Aligned Movement. Chile had joined other countries in calling for this Special Session. This was a very important time for Sri Lanka and all its citizens. Assistance should be given to the displaced. The close relationship between human rights law and international humanitarian law was recognized in the International Covenant on Economic Social and Cultural Rights. One of the responsibilities of the Human Rights Council was to respond promptly to human rights emergency situations. The serious humanitarian crisis that the internally displaced persons faced in Sri Lanka had led the Secretary-General to say that he had been saddened by what he had seen. This had required a prompt response by the Council.

The end of the civil war in Sri Lanka raised hopes. But any transition after a conflict period was not easy. Access to the displaced for humanitarian agencies needed to be met. Progress had to be made in re-housing, and the work of rehabilitation, particularly of child soldiers was important. National reconciliation with the full incorporation of minorities was a fundamental task. The statement by the Government of Sri Lanka was encouraging. The spirit of the Council had to be one of cooperation with Sri Lanka.

JUAN ANTONIO FERNANDEZ PALACIOS (Cuba) said Cuba fully associated itself with the statement made by the Non-Aligned Movement. Cuba thanked the Minister for Human Rights of Sri Lanka for his statement which illustrated the Government of Sri Lanka's commitment to cooperate with the Human Rights Council. Cuba did not agree with the convening of the Special Session. It was an attempt by certain colonial powers to stigmatize a smaller country. It was hoped that in the future, when dealing with a similar problem, the Human Rights Council would not resort to selectivity as was characteristic with the old Commission on Human Rights. It was surprising to hear the statement by the Independent Expert on extreme poverty who made allegations and these would be called into question.

Cuba was a draft cosponsor of resolution L1 as a gesture of cooperation and openness and Cuba's commitment to the work of the Human Rights Council. It addressed inter alia the issue of internally displaced persons, the rehabilitation of child soldiers, and the achievement of national reconciliation, among other things. Cuba called on Members of the Council to give their unreserved support to resolution draft L1.

MARIA NAZARETH FARANI AZEVEDO (Brazil) said that Brazil was concerned about the human rights situation in Sri Lanka. The days of unilateral values were long gone. The Special Session should be used as a constructive instrument to contribute to the improvement of the situation on the ground. For almost three decades, people in Sri Lanka had been living under internal conflicts, ethnic hostilities and acts of terrorism. Militants of the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam had been responsible for some of the most brutal assassinations the world had ever witnessed and had recruited child soldiers. Brazil urged Sri Lanka to investigate and persecute perpetrators. The Government had won the war against terror, but they had yet to conquer peace and Brazil understood that peace depended on the full cooperation of the Sri Lankan Government with the United Nations System and its partners. Firm and unequivocal signs that the Tamil and other minorities would be respected and protected by the State would be a welcome gesture which could certainly contribute to the efforts of national reconstruction.

OTHMAN HASHIM (Malaysia) aligned itself with the statements delivered by Pakistan and Cuba on behalf of the Organization of the Islamic Conference and the Non-Aligned Movement respectively. Malaysia welcomed the end of the long-standing conflict between the Government of Sri Lanka and the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam, and congratulated the people and Government of Sri Lanka for their perseverance and courage. The Government of Sri Lanka now needed to take the necessary measures to start the healing process by working towards finding a fair and comprehensive political solution which would contribute to lasting peace and stability in the country.

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Malaysia viewed the Sri Lankan campaign against terrorism to be an internal, domestic issue and believed that Sri Lanka should be accorded the necessary time and space to deal with its own challenges in the manner which it deemed best. The efforts and resources of the Council should be directed at enhancing and deepening the partnership with Sri Lanka, particularly in the areas of humanitarian relief and assistance. Malaysia had made a modest financial contribution to the humanitarian situation facing the country by dispatching two teams of medical aid workers which were deployed to assist in the internally displaced persons camps in Vavuniya.

PETER GOODERHAM (United Kingdom) said that since January this year, many thousands of civilians had been killed in the intense conflict in northern Sri Lanka. Such loss of life and the ongoing suffering of civilians displaced by the conflict demanded the attention of the Council. The United Kingdom condemned terrorism in all its forms. The Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam was a proscribed organisation in the United Kingdom. Its use of human shields had been abhorrent. At the same time, the Sri Lankan Government had a duty under international humanitarian law to prevent civilian casualties and to protect the human rights of all. The United Kingdom welcomed the recent end of fighting but was deeply concerned that the suffering of many civilians continued. It was vital that violations of human rights and international humanitarian law were investigated.

The United Kingdom expressed deep concern about the fate of the large number of civilians that had been displaced by the conflict. Reports of conditions inside the camps were troubling. Adherence to the rule of law and the promotion and protection of a free press were essential foundations for a fair and just society. Progress on police reform, disarmament of militias, prevention of abductions, enforced disappearances and anti-corruption measures were all urgently needed. The United Kingdom further welcomed the commitment of Sri Lanka's President to address the aspirations and grievances of all communities and to work towards a lasting political solution.

ERLINDA F. BASILIO (Philippines) said in recent days, the world had witnessed the conclusion of a long and taxing conflict which had wrought immeasurable damage and suffering on the people and Government of Sri Lanka for decades. At this crucial time of post-conflict reconstruction, rehabilitation and national reconciliation, Sri Lanka needed the support of the international community to reinforce its efforts aimed at addressing the humanitarian needs. In this context, the Philippines shared the doubts of others over the efficacy and timing of this Special Session. Dialogue and cooperation must imbue all the work of the Council, including the convening of the Special Sessions. This was the only way the Council could remain on solid ground.

The Government of Sri Lanka was continuing its efforts and cooperation with the United Nations Children's Fund to rehabilitate and reintegrate former child soldiers. The National Framework for the Integration of Ex-Combatants into Civilian Life, which the Government was formulating with the assistance of the United Nations and other international organizations, would significantly contribute to post-conflict stability and development.

SEBASTIAN ROSALES (Argentina) said that Argentina had co-sponsored the request for this Special Session. Argentina attached great importance to the idea of the main UN human rights body to be capable of responding to urgent human rights situations. Sri Lanka had now entered a new post-conflict era where it had to face challenges. Many persons had very much suffered from the armed conflict. It was important to seek as quickly as possible a political solution. The Human Rights Council had to promote international collaboration. There were currently two draft resolutions and Argentina hoped that both could be merged into a single consensual document.

DIAN TRIANSYAH DJANI (Indonesia) aligned itself with the statements made by Cuba and Pakistan on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement and the Organization of the Islamic Conference respectively. The Special Session on Sri Lanka left many, including Indonesia's delegation, questioning the timing of such a session, noting that the regular session of the Council was starting in a week, and wondering what message it would bring. Nevertheless, one should not lose focus on what was really needed in this Special Session, which was to assist the people of Sri Lanka in time of need. The international community should ensure that the promotion and protection of human rights was well taken care of in the process of strengthening unity and long-lasting peace.

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As a sovereign country, Sri Lanka was a multi-party democracy with an elected Government and President discharging their legitimate responsibility to govern the country as mandated by the people. The Sri Lankan Government had proven to the international community that it was committed to resolving the country's internal challenges in a peaceful manner. Sri Lanka was committed to a political solution and had engaged the international community, not only in providing updates on recent developments but also by concretely engaging with United Nations bodies and various humanitarian organizations in providing humanitarian assistance to the affected parties in the internal conflict as shown by its cooperation with the United Nations Under-Secretary for Humanitarian Affairs and of the Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General on the human rights of internally displaced persons, and the recent invitation extended to the Secretary-General of the United Nations.

ANDREJ LOGAR (Slovenia) said that although the decades long war between the Sri Lankan Government and the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) was now over, the tremendous result of the conflict and the widespread atrocities against the civilian population of Sri Lanka remained a serious concern. Slovenia, deeply concerned about the grave human rights and humanitarian situation in Sri Lanka, had firmly supported the convening of this Special Session. Slovenia was especially concerned about the situation of the internally displaced persons and individuals the Government might suspect of being members of the LTTE.

Nearly 300,000 civilians, including entire families, were detained in the Government's closed camps in conditions that did not adhere to internationally agreed standards. The monsoon season had arrived and the overcrowding and lack of sufficient sanitation and hygiene facilities could cause serious health problems. For the future of Sri Lanka it was important to assure to the Tamil minority that in the post-conflict Sri Lanka they would enjoy equal rights as other citizens. Further, during the armed conflict, threats against journalists and human rights defenders who had reported critically on the Government's conduct of the war or its treatment of civilians had been a usual practice. The time to stop all forms of harassment, intimidation and threats had come. Slovenia expected the Council to propose the creation of an international commission of inquiry to investigate the violations of international human rights in Sri Lanka and to make recommendations for the improvement of the present situation.

SHINICHI KITAJIMA (Japan) expressed its deepest condolences for the unfortunate loss of many precious lives over the twenty-five years of civil war in Sri Lanka. Japan deplored such loss and sympathized with the great sufferings of the people. In order to realize the national reconciliation essential for post-war rehabilitation, reconstruction and nation building, it was imperative that the Sri Lankan Government took swift and concrete action in keeping with its commitment to the protection of and respect for human rights and to humanitarian principles.

There were many issues that required a quick response to ensure rapid and steady progress in the political process towards national reconciliation, including following proper legal procedures in dealing with the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam personnel who had laid down their arms and surrendered and implementing measures for assistance and resettlement of the large number of internally displaced persons. The assistance and cooperation of the international community would be indispensable to Sri Lanka's rehabilitation and reconstruction process. In the past, Japan had taken part in efforts to benefit the Sri Lankan people, including providing post-tsunami reconstruction assistance and reconstruction assistance to the northern and eastern areas. Japan intended, as a friend of Sri Lanka, to continue to assist with efforts aimed at rapid and steady progress in the political process toward national reconciliation.

JEAN-BAPTISTE MATTEI (France) said that France had supported the calling of this Special Session because thousands of people were in an appalling situation. The end of the conflict had not changed the plight of all the displaced people. The massive population displacement at the end of the conflict had exacerbated the situation. It was vital that the Government gave access to humanitarian organizations. Particular attention needed to be paid to child soldiers and their reintegration into society. France welcomed the will expressed by the Sri Lankan President to fully collaborate with the United Nations Children's Fund on this matter. The defeat of the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) was good news. Since the start of the Government's actions, the LTTE had used civilians as human shields. As mentioned by the United Nations anti-terrorist strategy, the fight against terrorism should be conducted in the full respect of human rights and international humanitarian law. This Special Session was

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particularly important for the civil population and internally displaced persons. It was important that the Government ensured that this military victory became a tangible and lasting political success.

MABEL GOMEZ OLIVER (Mexico) thanked the High Commissioner for her message, the Special Procedures for their statement, and also thanked the Minister of Sri Lanka for his participation. Mexico had joined others in the call for this Special Session because it was convinced of the primary responsibility of the Human Rights Council to act where the human rights of civilian populations were in danger. Mexico welcomed the cessation of hostilities in the northern region of the country, but condemned the serious loss of life, in particular the attacks committed by the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam against the civilian population. The Sri Lankan Government's measures taken to strengthen human rights protections in the field were encouraged.

It was recalled that to be effective in fighting terrorism there needed to be a link between the full respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms. It was hoped that internally displaced persons would be given the necessary guarantees to return to their homes safely and for their reintegration into society, and that respect should be guaranteed for these people in accordance with the United Nations guidelines. Also welcomed were the results of the recent visit by the Secretary-General of the United Nations. Mexico appreciated the positive efforts of openness and cooperation by the Government of Sri Lanka with the Human Rights Council mechanisms. It was hoped that this Special Session would end in consensus to ensure that the promotion and protection of the people of Sri Lanka would be upheld.

MERCY YVONNE AMOAH (Ghana) recalled that the institution-building test of the Council called for a Special Session to be, among others, result-oriented and geared towards achieving practical outcomes. They thus hoped that this session would focus on assistance to the Government and people of that country to rebuild their country and to strengthen their capacity to address their human rights and other challenges with a view to achieving sustainable peace.

Ghana also welcomed the end of the 25-year long war in Sri Lanka. The victory by the Government had to be seen as a victory in combating the use of terrorist acts to achieve one's aims. Ghana also condemned the attacks that had been launched by the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam on the civilian population and its practice of using human shields and urged the Government to work to ensure that those on both sides who had perpetrated violations of human rights and international humanitarian law were brought to justice. Ghana applauded the many measures that had already been initiated by the Sri Lankan Government to alleviate the suffering of the internally displaced persons. They also welcomed the Government's commitment to now focus on issues of relief, rehabilitation, resettlements and reconciliation. The international community was called to assist the Government in its post-war reconstruction efforts.

PASQUALE D'AVINO (Italy) aligned itself with the statement delivered by the Czech Republic on behalf of the European Union, and welcomed the convening of this Special Session to deal with the human rights situation in Sri Lanka. Italy expressed its deep concern at the recent escalation of the military conflict in the north of the country, and was particularly struck by the loss of innocent lives among civilians caught in the conflict, including women and children, and strongly condemned the use of civilians as human shields by the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam. Today, Italy welcomed the end of hostilities; however, the situation on the ground still raised a number of concerns that justified the specific attention devoted to it by the Council.

Italy called on the Government of Sri Lanka to cooperate with the international community, including international and regional organizations, non-governmental organizations and civil society, in order to guarantee and facilitate humanitarian assistance to the victims of the conflict, with particular regard to internally displaced persons. Italy acknowledged the measures taken by the Government of Sri Lanka and the commitment it expressed to this end in the joint statement issued upon the conclusion of the visit of the United Nations Secretary-General to the country. The first step should be to cast light on human rights and humanitarian violations, with special attention to those perpetrated against civilians and vulnerable groups, women and children.

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CARLOS ROBELO (Nicaragua) said that Nicaragua endorsed the statement of the Non-Aligned Movement, which represented the majority of the States of the Council. Nicaragua had joined the call for this Special Session but regretted that the process had not been transparent and had been unbalanced. These were unhealthy attitudes for the Council. It seemed that the Council had not learnt the lessons from the past. Today, they wanted to offer all their support to the Government and people of Sri Lanka, so that they could start the reconciliation and rebuilding process. Nicaragua supported draft resolution L.1. The Council should be an instrument of collaboration and dialogue.

ABDULWAHAB ABDULSALAM ATTAR (Saudi Arabia) said the presence of the Minister from Sri Lanka demonstrated the Government's commitment to cooperate with the Council. Saudi Arabia aligned itself with the statements made by Cuba and Pakistan on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement and the Organization of the Islamic Conference respectively. The end of hostilities and the measures towards lasting peace were welcomed. Saudi Arabia commended the visit of the Secretary-General of the United Nations to Sri Lanka and welcomed the joint statement between the United Nations and the Government with respect to internally displaced persons. Saudi Arabia encouraged Sri Lanka to continue its cooperation with the Council and to seek a solution to the issue of internally displaced persons. Sri Lanka was wished every success in its aim to continue to promote and protect human rights in the country towards national reconciliation and a lasting peace.

GLAUDINE J. MTSHALI (South Africa) said that South Africa wished to thank all delegations that had been constructively engaged in brokering a consensus outcome for this Special Session and remained hopeful that consensus might be achieved. South Africa was encouraged by the commitment and efforts of the Government of Sri Lanka to put in place expeditiously its plan aimed at resettling internally displaced persons. South Africa appealed to the international community to assist and support the Sri Lankan Government in its reconstruction efforts.

Further, the Human Rights Council had been envisioned as a rule-based and fair multilateral organization. This vision however was rapidly being eroded by double-standards and inconsistencies that were damaging the integrity of the Council.

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SRI LANKA: CONFLICT OPENED A SPACE FOR WOMEN TO HAVE RIGHTS

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Body

When Thamalini, leader of the women's wing of Sri Lankan Tamil Tiger guerrillas, entertained guests at the women's political wing office in northern areas once controlled by the rebels, the visitors were served tea and other refreshments by male aides.

"It's a rare sight in [Tamil-dominated] areas and that society to see men working for women," said Visaka Dharmadasa, chairperson of the Association of War-Affected Women, which represents women whose sons or husbands were either disabled or killed during the war against the Tamil rebels, formally called the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE).

The incident she recounted, which took place during her visit to the rebel-held territory during the 2002-2004 peace talks with the LTTE, left a deep impression on her.

"While on one side the conflict created havoc in Sri Lanka, on the other hand it-to some extent-helped to advance the rights of women, particularly in strongly male-dominated societies where the women's place-to use a common phrase-is 'at home'," noted Dharmadasa, whose own son disappeared during the civil war.

Thamilini (who only gave one name) fled heavy fighting in northern Sri Lanka just before Tamil rebels crumbled under the massive firepower and an intense ground offensive in May. She later surrendered to the authorities and is in police detention.

The progress of the feminist movement in the past 25 years - which approximates the length of time it took the government to finally win the war against the Tamil militants - was succinctly captured this month in pictures and words at a well-attended exhibition in this capital.

The exhibition was organised by the non-government Women and Media Collective (WMC), a group advocating change in society "based on feminist principles," to commemorate its silver jubilee year. It chronicled the developments since 1984, showing the progress and advances of women's struggles in the country. Pictures and drawings showed streets protests by women fighting for their rights, and in some cases, being tear-gassed by police.

In 1981, when garment factories had just opened as a result of government's economic reforms, workers were getting agitated over many issues.

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"Women were beaten up and shot at in a protest cum strike in 1981, demanding better wages and work conditions at a garment factory outside Colombo. Women leading the protest were arrested, but within a month the strike was settled and the demands given," recalled Kumudini Samuel, one of two founding directors of the WMC.

Touted as major developments in the women's rights movement are the participation of women in Sri Lanka's economy, particularly in the garment and plantations industries, and their migration to foreign countries for employment. All three are vital sectors bringing in foreign exchange that buoys up the economy and where the majority of workers are women, although they do not have their share of decision making in these sectors.

The most deprived sectors are the tea plantations and migrant workers, most of whom are sweating it out as domestic workers in the Middle East, said Rani Singharaja, a veteran social worker who has worked for plantation workers for the past 35 years. She acknowledged the improvements in their quality of life, but said decision making is still a male prerogative.

"They earn equal pay but work longer hours, and when it comes to education, it's the boys who are getting preference," Singharaja, who runs a welfare group called Society for Welfare, Education Awareness and Training or SWEAT, told IPS in a telephone interview from the central plantation district of Hatton, a small town in Sri Lanka's central region.

The plantations are dominated by Tamil-speaking workers, accounting for eight percent of Sri Lanka's population. Their ancestors were brought to the island from India by the British in the 19th Century to work in the tea, coffee and rubber estates. Their rights on the estates are protected by long-established unions that are, however, dominated by men.

"There is still is no gender balance while the education level is low for girls, though there has been some improvement in recent years," noted Singharaja. She said a 2007 SWEAT study showed that girls perform better in school compared to boys, "but they only study up to secondary school while boys are allowed to go beyond."

Perhaps the most significant developments in the feminist movement were ushered in by the massive changes that swept the economy in 1977 when the then newly formed United National Party government opened the country to free, uninterrupted trade, investment and travel, which was in stark contrast to the closed-market, socialist model that preceded the reforms.

With vast changes in investment trends emerged factories producing garments for exports while employing thousands of girls, mostly for stitching purposes. Thousands of rural women also began to go after the proverbial pot of gold in the Middle East, which in the late 1970s opened the doors to job opportunities due to rising oil revenues. More than a million Sri Lankan workers are in these Gulf states, the majority being women working as house help.

David Soysa, director of the Migrant Workers Centre in Colombo and a veteran in the battle for worker rights in labour-receiving countries, said workers do not enjoy any rights, including the right to vote, in the countries they work in and are subject to all forms of sexual harassment and unfair and discriminatory wage issues.

Women's rights activists said that, to some extent, the market reforms of the late 1970s helped to empower women and secure jobs-with the garment industry and migration as good examples.

Dr Sepali Kottegoda, the other founder director of WMC, said a number of women's organisations came into being in the early 1980s alongside changes in the economy, and particularly due to the ethnic conflict which broke out into full-scale war between government forces and Tamil rebels in 1983.

Among these organisations were the Women's Ministry-set up in 1987 to protect the rights of women and to enable them to enjoy equal opportunities as men-and the Mothers Front, formed in the north and south to represent women whose children or husbands were affected by the conflict. These organisations, however, wound up several years later owing to pressure from the authorities.

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In 2005, a Domestic Violence Act aimed at protecting women against violence at home was promulgated in Parliament. Then last year a National Policy on Migration seeking to protect migrant workers against harassment and non-payment of wages, among other issues, was approved by the government.

Some feminists, however, believe a lot is being done on paper but nothing goes beyond that. They reject the notion that there is a women's movement in Sri Lanka.

"There is no mass movement. All these Colombo-based NGOs working for women's rights are more concerned about policy issues involving money-making projects than mobilising rural women to fight for their rights," said a female researcher who has worked on issues relating to the plight of garment workers. She declined to be named.

In the garment sector, women are struggling to survive, have barely enough to eat and live in poor accommodations near their workplaces or factories. Garment trade union activist Anton Marcus, citing a survey conducted by the Health and Safety Division of the government's Labour Department, said 66 percent of garment factory girls, ages 18-28, have anaemia.

"They cook a scrap meal in the night and then leave the remnants for the morning. They would not even know what a balanced diet is," said Marcus, joint secretary of the Free Trade Zone and General Service Employees' Union, adding that these women are the next generation of mothers.

Elsewhere in Sri Lanka, similar scenes are playing out-of women still struggling to survive. During IPS's visit to southern Sri Lanka earlier this month, a number of poor women had a tale of misery and suffering, with many saying their husbands had left them without economic support.

"It is a struggle to look after my children without any support or means to earn a living," said Ranjani Padmani, a 35-year-old mother at Lunugamvehera.

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The attempted resolution against Sri Lanka

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Body

Colombo, June 5 -- First we must insist that everything we did was transparent and above board.

Unlike Sri Lanka, which requested support from countries that no self-respecting Westerner would talk to, unless we had something to sell to them, we spoke only to countries with a solid track record of concern for human rights, except in Iraq and Afghanistan. Exceptions can also be made for gentlemen (and ladies, if you can call them that) of a faith which is implacably opposed to the Western values and ambitions that constitute Human Rights for the world. We will decide what such faith or faiths are in accordance with our value system for each decade. President Bush It is true we did not consult Sri Lanka's neighbours but, apart from the fact that you cannot trust them anyway, we understood that they had no sympathy for the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam. They excuse this inhuman position on the grounds that Tigers are terrorists, but we know better.

Though some of us have banned the LTTE, this was under pressure from President Bush, who was not a nice man. Obama is much nicer and, if he sometimes seems too soft, we will make sure that he will be hard against real terrorists. With regard to the Tigers, we know that they will never turn their arms against us, so there is no reason to let them be destroyed while they still have purchasing power. Special session Yes, we know we said the same about the Taleban, but they belong to a faith that can never be trusted. In the old days we thought that because they were not Shiites they were really gentlemen, just like us. It shows you can never trust anyone, unless they are White and Christian (though not Orthodox, they are just like Shiites at heart). Obama may be considered an exception for the moment. In any case we will not let the Tigers actually get a country of their own, not until they have signed it over to us. We forgot to do that with the Taleban, but we were a bit careless in those days because of all the other enemies we had. Anyway, to get back to Sri Lanka, obviously we could not trust anyone else, so that is why we only discussed the need for a special session amongst ourselves. We did not think for a moment that we would have trouble getting a few countries outside the inner circle to sign with us. We were particularly upset about Japan, but that shows how wrong we were to think of them as being nearly White. As for the South Americans, they too have begun to get a bit above themselves. It was a jolly good thing we sank the Belgrano and, if anyone thinks we are going to allow any international inquiry into that, they are sadly mistaken. Sri Lankan Army None of those other types would have understood why we wanted the special session on May 14th, and that if we had got our way we could have created such a fuss that the Sri Lankans would not have been able to finish off the Tigers. We had the Times and all the television stations ready to report everything we said, along with some leaks we had arranged from our chaps in influential positions, so that the Sri Lankan Army would have been stopped in its tracks. Also we had made several visits to Tamil political leaders in India, and had promised them our support, and our media outlets had assured us that they would hold the balance after the Indian elections and that would serve the silly Sri Lankans right. Unfortunately everything went wrong. We finally got the High Commissioner we had chosen in on the act, and she made some requests from countries she ought to have been able to influence since she looks like them, but she failed. It may partly be her fault anyway, because she had threatened the Sri Lankan ambassador

The attempted resolution against Sri Lanka

with a special session at the time the monsters made us discuss Gaza, and that may have warned him. We should have known you can't trust such people however carefully you surround them with our sort. Still, we managed to lull that ambassador into a sense of security by giving him the impression that we would abandon the call for a special session if he agreed to a full briefing on Sri Lanka, with the High Commissioner in the Chair and the NGOs unleashed. He was on the verge of agreeing, and now we can see that would have been better in the long run because NGOs are more reliable (after all we fund them) than elected governments. But Teutonic determination dictated that we continued with our main effort, and we made it clear that we saw nothing wrong or dishonest in pursuing that while telling others that we were willing to compromise. Indian voters When the whole plan collapsed, and the silly Indian voters did the wrong thing and produced a stable government contrary to all our predictions and predilections, and the Sri Lankan Forces destroyed the Tigers, we realised that all would be lost if we did not act soon. We applied enormous pressure in the capitals, revived a Pinochet connection in one case, brought Sri Lanka up at a bilateral meeting in another, made clear that membership of the European Union demanded unquestioning loyalty, used some economic muscle and raised so many questions on the basis of the reports our media outlets were putting out, that in the end we got the signatures. Sadly, to get the signatures, we had to convince those who were not part of the inner core that our main concern was the Tamil civilians. Tamil parties The LTTE wanted something on war crimes, because they needed this if they were to survive as a movement, and discredit all the Tamil parties in Sri Lanka which are willing to work with the government, but this could not be expressed openly. We did mention it in passing, even in the world's most important and honourable forum, in Westminster, and our media picked it up and made it clear that this was the main intention of the special session, but officially we had to say we were more concerned with positive developments for the future than a witch hunt. That was our undoing. The Indian Government, not realising that Tamils were the preserve of the international community, not their business at all, got in on the act soon after their election, and got a joint communique which basically addressed all the issues we had sold to the countries whose signatures we needed. Then the Sri Lankan Government invited everybody to come and see, and the silly fools actually went and looked, and said things were not too bad. We should have known you can't rely on a Korean, but even some of the White people who went failed to raise the alarm. Fortunately we had enough journalists on our side who said exactly what we wanted them to say. Some of them even went further, and we got stories of women with cropped hair with their throats slit (always useful to press that button, and show that coloured people are now more Teutonic than most of us), and mass graves (pity we could not say the Sri Lankans had dug them, but that too will come) and enormous figures, increasing everyday since those we had started with were not doing the trick. Sensible man, Goebbels, White to the core. But somehow no one who is not like us seems to believe us any more. Lots of the Tigers turned up to the session, though fewer than had arranged to come for the one we had planned for the 14th. Though they spoke very emotionally, they got carried away and could not take their audience with them. The President of the Council, who is not White, unexpectedly ruled one speech out of order, which ruined everything. It shows you cannot trust anyone, not unless they look like you and think like you and share your values. He made a mistake in March too, after the High Commissioner raised a storm about Sri Lanka, having met the TRO representative whose eloquence seems to have struck a chord. We were counting on a High Commissioner's statement or at least a Presidential statement then, which would have really turned the screws on Sri Lanka, and stopped them freeing any more of the hostages. But nothing came out, except for the hostages, and the last weapon we had ready slipped from our hands. We could not admit this of course, which is another reason we ensured we got the signatures later, but then that coalition, which we had so painstakingly built up but which we should have known was unstable, fell apart. Obviously the whole thing was orchestrated by wicked States, and our media made the point very clearly, but we should perhaps be a bit careful about claiming ourselves that everyone who supported Sri Lanka had something to hide. I mean, Russia and China should always be cut down to size, and now we have to be careful about India too, but we might find people will not believe us if we put Brazil and Uruguay and Angola and South Africa all in the category of the wicked. Cuba and Nicaragua and Bolivia are of course horrid, and those of a particular faith can easily be demonised, such as Egypt and Saudi Arabia and even Pakistan. But there too we have to be careful, because we have tried in the past to suggest that Bahrain and Qatar and Malaysia and Indonesia are not really nasty, and it is worrying that despite all our lobbying they let us down so badly. They do not seem to understand that we now live in a unipolar world, and that God is in his heaven, on a cloud somewhere to the West of Brussels, though not too far West until we can be sure that Obama is not quite what he looks. Anyway, he will soon have to prove himself, which means he and his ilk will learn that you cannot compromise with those who will not accept European values. It is those values which brought us where we are now, especially as practised for the last five

The attempted resolution against Sri Lanka

centuries, with fear of none (for we had the guns and soon enough we got the money) and favour to none except ourselves. That is why we refused to compromise, though we were always prepared to, on our terms as laid out by our media. Unfortunately we lost those countries which had thought the special session was about human rights for the Tamils of Sri Lanka, not about punishment for the government. But those who think positively for the future have no place in the culture of guilt that has served us so well. Our guilt, and the recompense we have made at the expense of others, has helped to keep everything under our own control. If we can pin some guilt on Sri Lanka, and ensure recompense that will benefit us for the future, we know that we can rely on that nice man Pathmanathan, who now controls the Tiger millions, to spend all of it on what we can provide him. We can pretend to believe him when he says he has given up terrorism, and we do not need to remember that he is wanted by Interpol. We introduced his name at the special session, and no one noticed except the silly Sri Lankans and they can be ignored. A suspected drug smuggling money launderer has now been propelled onto the world stage, and we can ignore the many pluralist democratic Tamils who were such a nuisance when we were waltzing with the Tigers. They are not under our control, whereas Pathmanathan is, and will be, if he wants to stay out of jail. So if we can keep up the pressure on the Sri Lankan government, the diaspora will continue to fund Pathmanathan, and he might find people in Sri Lanka to force poor young Tamils again into battle. We will keep quiet about forced conscription, as we did before, and even convince our politicians who know no better that it is the Sri Lankan State that uses child soldiers, not our good terrorists. The next few weeks will be crucial. If, ably assisted by our media, we can keep Sri Lanka in the firing line, soon enough it will be business as before with the **LTTE** - and we do mean business. Published by HT Syndication with permission from Daily News Sri Lanka.

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Load-Date: June 5, 2009

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SRI LANKA: ANTI-MEASLES DRIVE TARGETS 36,000 IDP CHILDREN

States News Service

August 12, 2009 Wednesday

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Length: 636 words

Byline: States News Service

Dateline: NAIROBI, Kenia

Body

The following information was released by the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs:

A young child is immunised against measles earlier this week

COLOMBO, 5 August 2009 (IRIN) - The Sri Lankan government and agencies are spearheading the vaccination of thousands of children living in internally displaced persons (IDP) camps in the north against measles.

The programme, expected to conclude on 6 August, will vaccinate more than 36,000 children under five among the 280,000 IDPs who fled the last phase of fighting between government forces and the defeated Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE).

"The response and attendance by parents and children has been very encouraging," Desiree Jongsma, acting UN Children's Fund (UNICEF) country representative, told IRIN in Colombo. The campaign, which began on 3 August, is being run by the Ministry of Health, UNICEF, World Health Organization (WHO), Sarvodaya (a local NGO) and other partners.

At least 100 public health workers and 1,200 volunteers were expected to participate at 30 centres in Vavuniya District where more than 200,000 of the IDPs remain, UNICEF said.

The children were also given a dose of vitamin A and de-worming tablets to raise resistance against other diseases and stem malnutrition.

The latest Health Cluster Situation update released on 27 July by the WHO said Sri Lanka's Ministry of Health had released new immunization guidelines in July recommending the measles vaccination.

"All the children between the age of six months and one year are given an additional dose of measles vaccine. Children between one to three years of age are given a dose of MR (measles) vaccine. All males and females between the age of 13 and 21 years who have not received the adult Td (Tetanus, Diphtheria) vaccine will be given a single dose of a Td (vaccine)," the WHO report stated. "High-risk groups in the IDP camps (such as food handlers, health workers and workers working closely with patients) are being given Vipolysaccharide typhoid vaccine."

"Child health remains a key priority for the Government of Sri Lanka. We are committed to ensuring that the IDP population is protected," Secretary to the Ministry of Health, Athula Kahandaliyanage, said at the programme's launch.

SRI LANKA : ANTI-MEASLES DRIVE TARGETS 36,000 IDP CHILDREN

Photo: UNICEF Sri Lanka

Mothers responded well in having their children immunised

Curtailing outbreaks

No major disease outbreaks have been reported so far from the IDP centres despite concerns by UN and relief agencies of overcrowding.

The largest outbreak was chickenpox, with more than 12,000 cases registered by end-June, according to the UN.

But the trend reversed over July when disease prevalence rates dropped, WHO said.

"Disease surveillance activities in the camps continue to improve. The incidence of hepatitis, chickenpox, dysentery and watery diarrhoea has shown a declining trend. A few cases of measles and mumps were reported during the last few weeks but no new cases have been reported from IDP sites," the WHO update said.

UNICEF said IDPs were becoming increasingly aware of health concerns and safeguards.

"Health staff and volunteers are working around the clock to raise awareness among the IDP population, with mothers, fathers and children lining up at health and nutrition centres in the camps," Jongsma told IRIN.

Health officials, however, were looking out for malaria, dengue fever, Tuberculosis, as well as H1N1 2009 infections. The WHO said there was still a threat of waterborne diseases due to gaps in proper sanitation conditions at the camps.

"The Ministry of Health has been working on a contingency plan to address the coming monsoon season when there will be an increased risk of waterborne diseases. Community participation has been identified as being key to this plan, along with the need for assistance from the authorities," it said.

Load-Date: August 12, 2009

Police clash with Tamil protestors in London

Agence France Presse -- English

April 7, 2009 Tuesday 5:56 PM GMT

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Length: 624 words

Byline: Katherine Haddon

Dateline: LONDON, April 7 2009

Body

Police arrested six protestors at an illegal demonstration by thousands of angry Tamils in London Tuesday, called to press Britain to intervene as Sri Lankan forces prepare a final offensive on rebels.

Amid repeated scuffles, the Metropolitan Police warned it could be forced to make a "huge number of arrests" if the protestors refuse to disperse from outside the Houses of Parliament, where they began their demo on Monday.

The protestors are calling for an immediate ceasefire in Sri Lanka and want Britain to intervene with the country's government to protect the Tamil people, who they say are being targeted.

Many said they would not disperse until they receive a firm commitment of action from the British government. "We will stay here as long as the killing goes on," protestor Guhan Gukendharan told AFP.

But police have warned that they could be forced to make "a huge number of arrests" unless the demonstration is dispersed.

It is illegal under a law which prohibits demonstrations close to Parliament without prior police permission.

Scuffles flared Tuesday as police confiscated flags at the demonstration as part of an operation which they said targeted the emblem of the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (**LTTE**), a banned organisation in Britain.

However, protestors insisted the red flags they were flying were Tamil national flags, not connected to the Tigers, and accused the police of brutality.

Organisers put the number of protestors at around 3,000, while police said the figure was 1,000.

London Ambulance Service said it had treated 10 people at the scene for minor injuries, of which five were taken to hospital.

"The police have been terrible today," said Yalini Thayaparan, 34, who was there with her 15-year-old daughter and other family members. "It's really, really hard, they push all the ladies, they hit lots of boys."

Police clash with Tamil protestors in London

The noisy demonstration -- filled with drums and chanting -- began Monday afternoon. Police deployed early Tuesday to clear away the protestors blocking Westminster Bridge and surrounding streets.

Passions were running high with many protestors saying they had family members who were killed or wounded in recent violence in Sri Lanka, although the demonstrators insisted their action would remain peaceful.

"It's because of the bombing and killing in Sri Lanka. They have started to use chemical bombs in Sri Lanka," said Nathan Kumar, chairman of the British Tamil Forum.

Four lifeboats were scrambled after two protestors jumped into the nearby River Thames. They were taken to hospital.

Police chief Jerry Savill said his officers were showing restraint. "We've been remarkably tolerant really," he told the BBC, explaining that police had to be careful because women and children were also among the demonstrators.

Many protestors told AFP they expected to stay there for a second night overnight Tuesday, although police said they were currently talking to organisers about how to resolve the situation.

The demo comes as Tamil Tiger rebels face a final assault by government forces in Sri Lanka, who have killed at least 525 rebels in four days of fierce fighting in the northeast of the island.

Sri Lankans also held protests in Norway, where dozens of Tamils blocked the entrance to the premier's office in Oslo, calling on the nation to act in its role as mediator in the conflict.

British Foreign Secretary David Miliband said he was "deeply" worried by reports of civilians being trapped by fighting in Sri Lanka, adding: "The need for a humanitarian ceasefire is now even more urgent."

The United Nations and other foreign aid organisations say as many as 150,000 civilians may still be trapped in the war zone, although the Sri Lankan government insists the figure is less than half that.

kah-mt/rom

Load-Date: April 8, 2009

Xinhua Asia-Pacific news summary at 1600 GMT, April 10

Xinhua General News Service

April 10, 2009 Friday 12:25 PM EST

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Section: WORLD NEWS; Political

Length: 666 words

Body

COLOMBO -- At least 301 Tamil civilians fled from Tamil Tiger rebels' territory to the government controlled area in the north on Thursday, the military in Sri Lanka said on Friday.

Officials from the Media Center for National Security said that the Tamil civilians fled the **LTTE** (Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam) controlled zone in Puthukkudiyiruppu area. (Sri Lanka- Civilians)

COLOMBO -- Sri Lankan President Mahinda Rajapakse has told UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon that the suffering undergone by the Tamil civilians in the island's No Fire Zone (NFZ) in the north is the sole responsibility of Tamil Tiger rebels that were holding them as a human shield, the president office said Friday in a statement.

According to the statement, Rajapakse who was on a state visit in Libya made the remarks to Ban in a telephone conversation on Thursday. (Sri Lanka-Civilians Suffering)

PATTAYA -- Thai Prime Minister Abhisit Vejjajiva on Friday reaffirmed that the anti-government protests by "red-shirt people" will not affect the process of the ASEAN plus summits being held here.

"I reiterate again here that Thailand is ready to host the ASEAN plus summits," said Abhisit at a press conference Friday evening at the Royal Cliff Beach Hotel, after hundreds of red-shirted anti-government protesters broke into and rallied at the hotel compound Friday afternoon. (ASEAN-PM)

KABUL -- Afghan troops and the NATO-led International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) in the latest operation against Taliban insurgents in southern Afghan province of Helmand killed 36 insurgents and wounded 18 more on Friday, officials said.

Daud Ahmadi, the spokesman of provincial administration, told Xinhua that the clash erupted in Nad Ali district at 4 a.m. local time Friday (2330 GMT Thursday) when the joint patrol of Afghan and ISAF troops engaged with Taliban militants. (Afghanistan- Taliban)

Xinhua Asia-Pacific news summary at 1600 GMT, April 10

TOKYO -- Japanese Prime Minister Taro Aso hinted Friday that Japan may accept a nonbinding UN Security Council (UNSC) presidential statement on Pyongyang's rocket launch instead of seeking a UN resolution.

At a press conference, Aso said that the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK), disregarding the repeated requests and warnings from the international community, launched a rocket and the move constitutes a clear violation of UN Security Council resolutions 1695 and 1718.(Japan-DPRK-Rocket)

PATTAYA -- Vietnam would like to cooperate with regional partners in efforts to cope with the current financial crisis and the global downturn, the Vietnamese prime minister said here Friday.

"As an ASEAN member, Vietnam is ready to cooperate with other countries within ASEAN and ASEAN plus three mechanisms in a bid to tackle the international financial crisis and mitigate the impacts of the global downturn," said Vietnamese Prime Minister Nguyen Tan Dung in an exclusive interview with Xinhua, who is at Thailand's central seaside resort of Pattaya for the 14th ASEAN summit and related summits.(ASEAN-Vietnam)

NEW DELHI -- Indian Prime Minister Manmohan Singh Friday said that India has not decided whether to join a U.S.-proposed regional contact group on Afghanistan, according to a report by the private Indo-Asian News Service.

Singh told a media forum with the local women's press corps that while the United States has discussed with India about the latter's participation in such a contact group, India has not "taken a final view" about it, according to the news service.(India- US-Afghanistan)

NEW DELHI -- Indian Prime Minister Manmohan Singh said on Friday that terrorists are making every effort to disrupt the general elections which will start in a week's time.

Speaking at a forum with the country's women journalists here, Singh said there was a "serious threat" from terrorists to disrupt the polls.(India-Terrorists)

Load-Date: April 11, 2009

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Sri Lanka wants UN rights council to praise its efforts =

Deutsche Presse-Agentur
May 22, 2009 Friday 3:45 PM EST

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Section: POLITICS

Length: 594 words

Dateline: Geneva

Body

DPA POLITICS SriLanka Conflicts UN Sri Lanka wants UN rights council to praise its efforts = Geneva
A draft resolution praising the government of Sri Lanka was submitted to the United Nations Friday ahead of next week's special Human Rights Council session on the Asian country and its recently ended armed conflict with the Tamil Tiger rebels.

The draft text was tabled by Sri Lanka itself, with the backing of 12 members of the council, including China, India, Egypt and Saudi Arabia.

It commends the Sri Lankan government's handling of internally displaced people (IDPs) and its cooperation with UN humanitarian agencies. The draft also praises the "liberation" of Sri Lankan citizens, using the government's language.

Earlier Friday, the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) reported aid groups were still being denied unimpeded access to the largest displaced persons camp, housing most of the 272,000 IDPs.

As a result, most services to the people were suspended, OCHA said.

The International Committee of the Red Cross said it has only been given partial access.

An ICRC official in Geneva said the "priority issue" for the organization was to gain "full access" to the camps.

The special session will take place on Tuesday at the UN in Geneva.

It was called for earlier this week by Germany on behalf of 17 members of the rights council, including the European Union members, Canada, Switzerland and Argentina.

Council rules require that a special session have the backing of one-third of the 47 member-states.

Sri Lanka wants UN rights council to praise its efforts =

A draft text being written by Switzerland, which was not finalized or submitted to the UN, deplored "the significant loss of human lives and suffering," and calls on the government to cooperate with aid agencies.

The text, obtained by the German Press Agency dpa, also said the countries were "gravely concerned by violations of Human Rights and International Humanitarian Law committed during the armed conflict in Sri Lanka and their impact on the civilian population especially

women, children and vulnerable groups."

The text did not call for an independent commission of inquiry rather opting for the Sri Lankan government to investigate allegations of abuse.

One European diplomat said the EU wanted to call for an independent commission, but it was unable to gather enough signatures for such language.

Realizing that, the Europeans tried to draft a text that would garner a consensus in the council, the diplomat said, but early reaction to the language indicated it would not pass during a vote.

Several UN rights experts and the High Commissioner for Human Rights Navi Pillay, have called for an independent investigation into possible war crimes committed by both parties to the conflict.

The Sri Lankan army has been accused of using heavy weaponry in a crowded civilian area.

The LTTE, as the Tigers are also known, were accused of holding civilians inside the conflict zone against their will, and firing at them if they tried to escape.

At least 7,000 people, or even 8,000, are estimated to have been killed in the fighting since the end of last year.

The government refused to allow journalists access to the conflict zone and also kept aid agencies out, making independent assessments difficult.

UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon was expected to arrive in Sri Lanka later Friday. He has made pleas to the Sri Lankan government to grant his humanitarian staff full access to civilians.

A Sri Lankan diplomat told delegates at an informal meeting on Friday that he would fight the Western-backed text.

May 2209 1545 GMT

Load-Date: May 23, 2009

'We'd rather die than go ashore here'

The Australian

October 28, 2009 Wednesday

8 - NSW Metro Edition

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Section: LOCAL; Pg. 1

Length: 970 words

Byline: Simon Kearney, Tanjung Pinang

Body

THE 78 Sri Lankan asylum-seekers aboard the Oceanic Viking have threatened to kill themselves rather than walk off the ship and be interned in Indonesia.

The Australian visited the ship, anchored in the South China Sea 10km southeast of the island of Bintan, yesterday morning to find the Sri Lankans in an open area below the top deck at the stern.

They told their story by throwing messages in plastic bags tied to empty plastic water bottles into the water. Three messages were written in Indonesian and a fourth, containing this chilling threat, was written in English.

“If your country don't want find us a good solution better we will close our life in here,” the unsigned letter said.

The asylum-seekers were able to throw three messages in bottles overboard before Customs officials herded them away from the side. Another man managed to break away from the cordon and threw a fourth message in a bottle before the group was moved to an upper deck.

Shortly afterwards, the group, shepherded by Customs officers, was seen walking in single file to a covered area on the upper deck.

The Oceanic Viking has been anchored off Bintan for two days. Yesterday Indonesian immigration officials and an Australian Customs officer boarded the ship.

They were seen holding a meeting on the back deck with other Customs officials already on board. As the afternoon wore on, children were heard crying on board, then a woman appeared on the top deck at the stern with a baby in her arms and three children peered over the railings. The messages thrown overboard by the asylum-seekers detailed how there were 78 of them on board, including five

Continued -- Page 4

From Page 1

children and five women, including an elderly lady.

In the letters, addressed to “the Honourable Chief of Australian Government”, they promised to uphold Australian law should they be resettled.

'We'd rather die than go ashore here'

"Until now we heard that your country is a humanitarian country and also the refugee can restart their new life with freedom in your country," one letter said.

The letters state that the Sri Lankans are seeking asylum in Australia due to the war between the Sri Lankan government and the defeated **Tamil Tigers**.

"That's why we escaped from Sri Lanka and then came to other countries," the English-language letter said.

"Please don't force us to (go) back to Sri Lanka or other countries because we hope and believe that your country will allow us to restart our new life in your country."

One of the letters written in Indonesian says the asylum-seekers do not want to get off the Oceanic Viking.

"We were in the ocean between the two countries, our boat was damaged. We asked for help from Australian Customs. When they rescue us, usually they take us straight to Australia, but this time they brought us to Indonesian territory. We don't want to get off (the boat)," it said.

Later in the afternoon a group of three men threw another letter overboard saying they had been arrested by Australia.

----- THE JOURNEY SO FAR -----

How the saga of the 78 asylum-seekers unfolded

----- Sunday, October 18 -----

* Australian authorities receive distress calls about a vessel 20 nautical miles off Enggano, a large island off South Sumatra.

The distress calls are reported to the Indonesian search and rescue authority, but the Indonesians come back to Australia asking for assistance, saying Indonesia has no boats in the area. Australia sends its closest vessel, the HMAS Armidale.

* When the Armidale arrives at the boat it discovers 78 Sri Lankan asylum-seekers on board, including a 12-year-old girl with severe dehydration.

* A conclusion is reached that the boat, which had been headed for Christmas Island, cannot, under its own steam, get to harbour.

----- Monday, October 19 -----

* The Australian Customs vessel Oceanic Viking takes on board the 78 passengers and crew.

* Prime Minister Kevin Rudd flies to Jakarta for the swearing-in of the Indonesian President and takes up the cause of the 78 asylum-seekers with Indonesian President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono.

----- Tuesday, October 20 -----

* The two leaders strike a deal, with Yudhoyono agreeing to accept the 78 asylum-seekers and giving consent for the Oceanic Viking to go to Merak in West Java. Australian officials originally want it to dock at Pelabuhan Ratu, the closest major Indonesian port to Christmas Island, but are refused for security reasons.

----- Wednesday, October 21 -----

* Inexplicably, Indonesian naval officers at Merak's commercial port say they have been given orders not to allow any foreign ships to dock.

`We'd rather die than go ashore here'

* Sources reveal the boat carrying the 78 asylum-seekers had been deliberately disabled, by punching or drilling holes into the hull, forcing the Australian navy to take the passengers on board.

----- Thursday, October 22 -----

* To prevent growing publicity overshadowing the swearing-in of Yudhoyono's cabinet, Indonesian authorities redirect the vessel to Kijang, where the asylum-seekers are to be loaded on to buses for the 30-minute drive to Tanjung Pinang, an Australia-funded detention centre on the Indonesian island of Bintan.

* Inmates at the detention centre tell of beatings and abuse.

----- Saturday, October 24 -----

* The 78 asylum-seekers are due to be transferred to the Tanjung Pinang detention centre, but instead begin a hunger strike in protest at being kept out of Australia.

----- Monday, October 26 -----

* Kijang Port police chief Rabusallam says that while his men will try to persuade the group to disembark peacefully, force has not been ruled out as an option.

----- Yesterday -----

* The Oceanic Viking remains moored 10nm south of the island of Bintan with the 78 asylum-seekers, including five children, refusing to leave the boat and saying they'd rather die than be taken to Indonesia.

>> To see video go to www.theaustralian.com.au

Load-Date: October 27, 2009

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Thousands die in Tamil 'welfare village'

The Times (London)

July 10, 2009 Friday

Edition 1, National Edition

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THE TIMES

Section: NEWS; Pg. 3

Length: 972 words

Byline: Rhys Blakely

Body

About 1,400 people are dying every week at the giant Manik Farm internment camp set up in Sri Lanka to detain Tamil refugees from the nation's civil war, senior international aid sources have told The Times.

The death toll will add to concerns that the Sri Lankan Government has failed to halt a humanitarian catastrophe after announcing victory over the Tamil Tiger terrorist organisation in May. It may also lend credence to allegations that the Government, which has termed the internment sites "welfare villages", has actually constructed concentration camps to house 300,000 people.

Mangala Samaraweera, the former Foreign Minister and now an opposition MP, said: "There are allegations that the Government is attempting to change the ethnic balance of the area. Influential people close to the Government have argued for such a solution."

News of the death rate came as the International Committee of the Red Cross revealed that it had been asked to scale down its operations by the Sri Lankan authorities, which insist that they have matters under control.

Mahinda Samarasinghe, the Minister of Disaster Management and Human Rights, said: "The challenges now are different. Manning entry and exit points and handling dead bodies, transport of patients, in the postconflict era are no longer needed."

Last night the Red Cross was closing two offices. One of these is in Trincomalee, which had helped to provide medical care to about 30,000 injured civilians evacuated by sea from the conflict zone in the northeast. The other is in Batticaloa, where the Red Cross had been providing "protection services". This involves following up allegations of abductions and killings, practices that human rights organisations say have become recurring motifs of the Sri Lankan Government.

The Manik Farm camp was set up to house the largest number of the 300,000 mainly Tamil civilians forced to flee the northeast as army forces mounted a brutal offensive against the Tigers, who had been fighting for an ethnic Tamil homeland for 26 years.

Thousands die in Tamil 'welfare village'

Aid workers and the British Government have warned that conditions at the site are inadequate. Most of the deaths are the result of water-borne diseases, particularly diarrhoea, a senior relief worker said on condition of anonymity.

Witness testimonies obtained by The Times in May described long queues for food and inadequate water supplies inside Manik Farm. Women, children and the elderly were shoved aside in the scramble for supplies. Aid agencies are being given only intermittent access to the camp. The Red Cross was not being allowed in yesterday.

Experts suggest that President Rajapaksa, the country's leader, is yet to make good his victory pledge to reach out to the minority Tamil community. "The discourse used by the Government is of traitors and patriots," Paikiasothy Saravanamuthu, of the Centre for Policy Alternatives, a Sri Lankan analyst, said. "There is no indication that this mode of thinking is slipping."

Mr Rajapaksa is known for not tolerating dissent; a trait that human rights organisations say was demonstrated this week when five Sri Lankan doctors who witnessed the bloody climax of the country's civil war and made claims of mass civilian deaths recanted much of their testimony.

The doctors said at a press conference on Wednesday that they had deliberately overestimated the civilian casualties. As government officials looked on, they claimed that Tigers had forced them to lie.

The five men added that only up to 750 civilians were killed between January and mid-May in the final battles of the war. They were then taken back to prison, where they have been held for the past two months for allegedly spreading Tiger propaganda.

The number was far below the 7,000 fatalities estimated by the United Nations. An investigation by The Times uncovered evidence that more than 20,000 civilians were killed, mostly by the army.

The doctors denied other former testimony, including the government shelling of a conflict-zone hospital in February for which there are witnesses from the UN and the Red Cross.

The statements met with scepticism from human rights campaigners. Sam Zarifi, the Asia-Pacific director for Amnesty International, said that they were "expected and predicted". He added: "There are very significant grounds to question whether these statements were voluntary, and they raise serious concerns whether the doctors were subjected to ill treatment."

The state's rewriting of history

Analysis Rhys Blakely

The claim by five Sri Lankan doctors that they wildly exaggerated their previous testimony that there were mass civilian deaths among Tamils at the height of the country's civil war has raised new fears that Sri Lanka, known to Western tourists as a holiday paradise, has become a quasi-Stalinist state.

The five say that they were under pressure from the Tamil Tigers - and, indeed, as occupants of the strip of coconut grove and beach in the northeast that became the rebels' final redoubt, the doctors would indeed have come under the Tigers' control. But having been detained by the army for the past two months, the doctors now find themselves under pressure from the Government to provide a story that fits its agenda.

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There is little to surprise those familiar with Sri Lanka. President Rajapaksa does not brook dissent.

Critical journalists have been abducted or killed. Such crimes raise doubts about the sincerity of the President's pledge to forge a lasting peace by reaching out to his country's minority Tamils.

Thousands die in Tamil 'welfare village'

The news that about 1,400 people are dying every week in the internment camps set up to hold the 300,000 displaced Tamil refugees will only stoke those concerns.

Graphic

A Tamil refugee in Vavuniya. The high death rate in the camps lends weight to accusations of ethnic cleansing against the Sri Lankan Government

ISHARA S. KODIKARA / AFP / GETTY IMAGES

Load-Date: July 10, 2009

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Sri Lanka's camp of death; 'Welfare village' toll reaches about 1,400 every week Weekly death toll rises to 1,400 in Tamil 'welfare camp'

The Times (London)

July 10, 2009 Friday

Edition 1, Ireland

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THE TIMES

Section: NEWS; Pg. 1,11

Length: 979 words

Byline: Rhys Blakely

Body

About 1,400 people are dying every week at the giant Manik Farm internment camp set up in Sri Lanka to detain Tamil refugees from the nation's civil war, senior international aid sources have told The Times.

The death toll will add to concerns that the Sri Lankan Government has failed to halt a humanitarian catastrophe after announcing victory over the Tamil Tiger terrorist organisation in May. It may also lend credence to allegations that the Government, which has termed the internment sites "welfare villages", has actually constructed concentration camps to house 300,000 people.

Mangala Samaraweera, the former Foreign Minister and now an opposition MP, said: "There are allegations that the Government is attempting to change the ethnic balance of the area. Influential people close to the Government have argued for such a solution."

News of the death rate came as the International Committee of the Red Cross revealed that it had been asked to scale down its operations by the Sri Lankan authorities, which insist that they have matters under control.

Mahinda Samarasinghe, the Minister of Disaster Management and Human Rights, said: "The challenges now are different. Manning entry and exit points and handling dead bodies, transport of patients, in the postconflict era are no longer needed."

Last night, the Red Cross was closing two offices. One of these is in Trincomalee, which had helped to provide medical care to about 30,000 injured civilians evacuated by sea from the conflict zone in the north east.

The other is in Batticaloa, where the Red Cross had been providing "protection services". This involves following up allegations of abductions and extrajudicial killings, practices that human rights organisations say have become recurring motifs of the Sri Lankan Government.

Sri Lanka 's camp of death ' Welfare village' toll reaches about 1,400 every week Weekly death toll rises to 1,400 in Tamil 'welfare camp'

The Manik Farm camp was set up to house the largest number of the 300,000 mainly Tamil civilians forced to flee the northeast as army forces mounted a brutal offensive against the Tigers, who had been fighting for an ethnic Tamil homeland for 26 years.

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Graphic

The high death rate in the camps lends weight to accusations of ethnic cleansing against the Government

DAVID GRAY/REUTERS

A Tamil refugee in Vavuniya. The high death rate in the camps lends weight to accusations of ethnic cleansing against the Sri Lankan Government

Load-Date: July 10, 2009

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Christian charity surpass all man-made barriers - Archbishop Gomis

Daily News (Sri Lanka)

August 1, 2009 Saturday

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Length: 572 words

Dateline: Colombo

Body

Colombo, Aug. 1 -- The first ever Camillian Convent with a chapel and the Home for the Aged was blessed and declared open by His Lordship Most Rev.Dr. Oswald Gomis, the Archbishop of Colombo on July 14, the feast-day of St. Camillus.

His Lordship said that the Congregation of the Daughters of St. Camillus came to Sri Lanka on his request and the Nayakakanda Parish had shown the gesture of goodwill by accommodating the Sisters and helping them to purchase necessary land and construct a building for them and for the Elderly Women which will be the Home for the Aged Women folk in the diocese.

He also reminded that the Catholics could not sit with arms folded saying that we have done our part but has the duty to continue help, to carry out the good work of the Sisters. "These nuns, the Daughters of St. Camillus operate in Italy and many parts of the globe and the group of Sisters in Sri Lanka are from Kerala.

The Home for the Aged at Puwakwatta Road, Nayakakanda built on an 84 perch of land with the assistance of the donors here and overseas could provide shelter to 27 destitute and aged women at a time.

In His homily during the Eucharistic concelebration His Grace underlined what was it to practise Christian charity. For us Catholics, Christians who profess God as 'Our Father' could not serve those in need on the basis of ethnicity, caste or religion.

"We must, if we are true Catholics practising Christian virtue of loving our neighbour as we Love God Almighty, can not overlook, ignore when people come in search of help on the basis of man made divisions.

His Lordship added: "Because of our love towards our neighbour as he is our brother, our sister we are misunderstood. Take for instance the ethnic issue in our country. If we help a Tamil, we could be branded as supporters of the LTTE. The Tamils could misunderstand us when and if we help a Sinhalese who is in need. Never mind. As Jesus Christ on the Cross embraced all humanity with open arms we must love all without any distinction if we are true Catholics and Christians, for the Commandment of Love God demands that we love our neighbour.

If we fail to love our neighbour but still profess we Love God, then we are liars", His Lordship said quoting the Sacred Scripture. Rev. Fr. Gregory Jayantha Fernando, Parish Priest of St. Mary's Church, Nayakakanda said that he was happy to associate himself with the occasion as it was a dream comes true. With the ready support of the parish community Fr. Jayantha said that he was able to respond positively to a request made by the Colombo Archbishop, who would retire shortly from active service having rendered an unforgettable service to the Sri Lanka Church and the universal church.

Christian charity surpass all man-made barriers - Archbishop Gomis

"It is time for us to pray that God bestow His grace abundantly to this new Congregation, the 'Daughters of St. Camillus' to get more vocations from Sri Lanka and let the indigenous community of Sisters continue the good work begun by the present group of Sisters from overseas.

We have two vocations already from Nayakakanda and they are now receiving training in Rome," he added. Rev. Sister Merlyn conducted the ceremony and expressed her gratitude on behalf of the Mother Superior and the small community of Sisters headed by Rev. Sr. Elisa at the Convent. Published by HT Syndication with permission from Daily News Sri Lanka. For more information on news feed please contact Surit Das at htsyndication@hindustantimes.com

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

Load-Date: August 1, 2009

End of Document

INDEX:Entertainment

Broadcast News (BN)

April 19, 2009 Sunday

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Section: GENERAL AND NATIONAL NEWS

Length: 955 words

Byline: CP

Body

Today is April 10th

Today's highlight in history:

In 1997, Manitoba began bracing for what turned out to be the highest Red River flood levels since 1852. The province formally requested the army's help in sand bagging efforts. What was dubbed the Flood of the Century turned southern Manitoba into a lake and forced 28,000 people from their homes as entire towns were cut off behind ring dikes.

Also on this date:

In 787, the church of St. Corneille at Compiègne installed an organ at the request of Frankish King Pepin, in what is modern-day France. This is the first recorded mention of this musical instrument.

In 1555, Pope Marcellus II was elected the 222nd in the line of Peter, but he didn't last a month, dying on May 1. He was the last pontiff to maintain his baptismal name.

In 1684, an ordinance prohibited emigration from French Canada to English colonies in the south.

In 1812, the United States called out the militia in preparation for the war against Canada that began on June 18th.

In 1841, Halifax obtained its city charter.

In 1865, conservationist Jack Miner was born in Ohio. In 1908, he founded one of North America's first bird sanctuaries at his farm at Kingsville, Ontario. After Miner's death in 1944, the federal government declared the week of his birthday National Wildlife Week.

In 1875, the Northwest Mounted Police received permission to build a post. It became the city of Calgary.

In 1889, the enlarged Welland Canal was opened between Lakes Erie and Ontario.

In 1912, the "Titanic" set sail from Southampton, England on its maiden voyage. On the night of April 14th, the luxury liner struck an iceberg about 150 kilometres south of Newfoundland's Grand Banks and sank within hours. More than 1,500 people perished. The catastrophe prompted measures to improve safety at sea, particularly the establishment of a patrol to make known the location of icebergs.

INDEX:Entertainment

In 1919, Mexican revolutionary leader Emiliano Zapata was ambushed and killed by government troops.

In 1925, "The Great Gatsby" by F. Scott Fitzgerald was first published.

In 1932, actor Omar Sharif was born. He died in 1984.

In 1932, Paul von Hindenburg defeated Adolf Hitler in a run-off election for the German presidency.

In 1937, an act of Parliament created Trans-Canada Airlines, now Air Canada.

In 1945, U-S forces captured Hannover, Germany while U-S bombers hit Berlin and destroyed 397 enemy aircraft, many of them on the ground.

In 1953, the first feature-length 3-D movie in colour -- "House of Wax," starring Vincent Price -- premiered in New York.

In 1957, Egypt reopened the Suez Canal to all shipping traffic. The canal had been closed due to wreckage resulting from the Suez Crisis.

In 1963, the nuclear-powered submarine "U-S-S Thresher" sank during deep-diving tests off Cape Cod, Mass., in a disaster that claimed 129 lives.

In 1967, "A Man for All Seasons" won most of the major awards at the Oscars. Elizabeth Taylor won the best actress award for "Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?"

In 1968, "In the Heat of the Night" was named best picture at the Academy Awards.

In 1972, the U-S and Soviet Union joined dozens of other countries in signing an agreement to ban biological warfare.

In 1972, "The French Connection" won the best picture and best director at the Academy Awards. Gene Hackman was named best actor for his role in that film.

In 1974, Golda Meir announced her resignation as prime minister of Israel.

In 1990, the Mulroney government's G-S-T bill was passed by the Commons on a vote of 144-114. After much stalling by the Liberals, and country-wide protests, the Senate passed the bill in December, and it became law in January.

In 1991, an estimated 200,000 people in Belarus defied Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev by staging a work stoppage in the capital, Minsk.

In 1991, Natalie Schafer, the actress who played Mrs. Howell on "Gilligan's Island," died of cancer. She was 90.

In 1992, comedian Sam Kinison was killed when a pickup truck hit his car on a California highway. The 17-year-old driver was arrested.

In 1998, marathon Northern Ireland peace talks produced a landmark settlement on governing the British-ruled province. The accord was approved by voters in Northern Ireland and the Irish Republic six weeks later.

In 1998, an Ontario judicial inquiry reported that serious mistakes by police, prosecutors and forensic scientists helped wrongfully convict Guy Paul Morin of killing Christine Jessope, his nine-year-old neighbour in the Toronto-area village of Queensville. He had been convicted of the murder in 1984.

In 1999, the Miami Heat humiliated the Chicago Bulls, 82-49, holding the Bulls to the lowest point total since the introduction of the shot clock in 1954.

INDEX:Entertainment

In 2001, Kevin Olmstead of Ann Arbor, Michigan, won \$2,180,000 on "Who Wants to Be a Millionaire." It was the largest prize ever given out on a T-V game show.

In 2003, British Airways and Air France announced they would end their Concorde service because of falling passenger demand.

In 2005, Randy Ferbey's Canadian rink beat Scotland 11-4 in the men's world curling championship final in Victoria, B.C.

In 2005, Tiger Woods won his fourth Masters title at the Augusta National Golf Club.

In 2006, the Conservative government of Stephen Harper outlawed the **Tamil Tigers**, making it illegal for anyone in Canada to support or help the group fighting for an independent Tamil state in Sri Lanka.

In 2007, Canada defeated the U-S 5-1 to win the gold medal at the **women's** world hockey championship in Winnipeg.

In 2007, flawed information led to a futile search for up to 200 stowaways on board a container ship in Halifax.

In 2008, Nepal elected a 601-member assembly to write a new constitution and abolish the 240-year-old Hindu monarchy.

Load-Date: April 19, 2009

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Xinhua Asia-Pacific news summary at 1600 GMT, April 10

Xinhua General News Service
April 10, 2009 Friday 1:17 AM EST

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Section: WORLD NEWS; Political

Length: 666 words

Body

COLOMBO -- At least 301 Tamil civilians fled from Tamil Tiger rebels' territory to the government controlled area in the north on Thursday, the military in Sri Lanka said on Friday.

Officials from the Media Center for National Security said that the Tamil civilians fled the **LTTE** (Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam) controlled zone in Puthukkudiyiruppu area.(Sri Lanka- Civilians)

COLOMBO -- Sri Lankan President Mahinda Rajapakse has told UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon that the suffering undergone by the Tamil civilians in the island's No Fire Zone (NFZ) in the north is the sole responsibility of Tamil Tiger rebels that were holding them as a human shield, the president office said Friday in a statement.

According to the statement, Rajapakse who was on a state visit in Libya made the remarks to Ban in a telephone conversation on Thursday.(Sri Lanka-Civilians Suffering)

PATTAYA -- Thai Prime Minister Abhisit Vejjajiva on Friday reaffirmed that the anti-government protests by "red-shirt people" will not affect the process of the ASEAN plus summits being held here.

"I reiterate again here that Thailand is ready to host the ASEAN plus summits," said Abhisit at a press conference Friday evening at the Royal Cliff Beach Hotel, after hundreds of red-shirted anti-government protesters broke into and rallied at the hotel compound Friday afternoon. (ASEAN-PM)

KABUL -- Afghan troops and the NATO-led International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) in the latest operation against Taliban insurgents in southern Afghan province of Helmand killed 36 insurgents and wounded 18 more on Friday, officials said.

Daud Ahmadi, the spokesman of provincial administration, told Xinhua that the clash erupted in Nad Ali district at 4 a.m. local time Friday (2330 GMT Thursday) when the joint patrol of Afghan and ISAF troops engaged with Taliban militants.(Afghanistan- Taliban)

Xinhua Asia-Pacific news summary at 1600 GMT, April 10

TOKYO -- Japanese Prime Minister Taro Aso hinted Friday that Japan may accept a nonbinding UN Security Council (UNSC) presidential statement on Pyongyang's rocket launch instead of seeking a UN resolution.

At a press conference, Aso said that the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK), disregarding the repeated requests and warnings from the international community, launched a rocket and the move constitutes a clear violation of UN Security Council resolutions 1695 and 1718.(Japan-DPRK-Rocket)

PATTAYA -- Vietnam would like to cooperate with regional partners in efforts to cope with the current financial crisis and the global downturn, the Vietnamese prime minister said here Friday.

"As an ASEAN member, Vietnam is ready to cooperate with other countries within ASEAN and ASEAN plus three mechanisms in a bid to tackle the international financial crisis and mitigate the impacts of the global downturn," said Vietnamese Prime Minister Nguyen Tan Dung in an exclusive interview with Xinhua, who is at Thailand's central seaside resort of Pattaya for the 14th ASEAN summit and related summits.(ASEAN-Vietnam)

NEW DELHI -- Indian Prime Minister Manmohan Singh Friday said that India has not decided whether to join a U.S.-proposed regional contact group on Afghanistan, according to a report by the private Indo-Asian News Service.

Singh told a media forum with the local women's press corps that while the United States has discussed with India about the latter's participation in such a contact group, India has not "taken a final view" about it, according to the news service.(India- US-Afghanistan)

NEW DELHI -- Indian Prime Minister Manmohan Singh said on Friday that terrorists are making every effort to disrupt the general elections which will start in a week's time.

Speaking at a forum with the country's women journalists here, Singh said there was a "serious threat" from terrorists to disrupt the polls.(India-Terrorists)

Load-Date: April 12, 2009

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400 Lankan asylum seekers reached Australia in 12 months

Daily Mirror (Sri Lanka)

October 14, 2009 Wednesday

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Length: 625 words

Dateline: Sri Lanka

Body

Sri Lanka, Oct. 14 -- Over 400 Sri Lankan asylum seekers reached Australia over the past 12 months and were shifted to the Christmas Island detention Centre, the Australian Department of Immigration and Citizenship said today even as some 260 Sri Lankans who were attempting to reach Australia over the weekend continued their standoff with Indonesian authorities.

Speaking to Daily Mirror online, Sandi Logan, the spokesman for the Australian Department of Immigration and Citizenship also reiterated that there were no former **LTTE** militants or any other terrorist group among the refugees, who Australia terms as Irregular Maritime arrivals.

"There have been over 400 Sri Lankan irregular maritime arrivals over the past 12 months. Some have returned to Sri Lanka voluntarily," he said.

Mr. Logan said that all the asylum seekers are interviewed to see if they fall within Australia's obligations towards refugees and if they don't then they are either voluntarily or forcefully repatriated.

"Most of the asylum seekers are sent back voluntarily under protection. But there are those who refuse to go back and those people are forced to return," the spokesman said.

Asked to comment on a specific case where it was reported that one Sri Lankan who was sent back was reportedly arrested on the charges of being involved in people smuggling, Mr. Logan said that his department had heard about it through the Australian High Commission in Sri Lanka and added that he was now in the hands of the Sri Lankan legal system as there were serious charges against him.

The spokesman of the Australian Department of Immigration and Citizenship said that the key message Australia wants to give is that it will continue to operate its broader protection policy and dismissed the suggestion that the border protection was weak.

"We have a multi layered border protection service in place and we have deployed extra resources," he said when asked what sort of system was in place to prevent illegal asylum seekers from reaching Australia.

Meanwhile Australian media quoted the Indonesian navy as saying 260 Sri Lankans on board a boat in West Java are no longer able to blow themselves up as they had earlier threatened.

A man from the group named Alex had earlier said they had threatened to blow themselves up if they were forced ashore, but Indonesian navy Colonel Irawan said the group was no longer threatening suicide.

400 Lankan asylum seekers reached Australia in 12 months

He said the group now had no explosives aboard after their gas stoves and diesel fuels were confiscated.

The navy says it is carefully negotiating with the Sri Lankans, saying human rights are the first priority and talks would progress one day at a time.

The boat was intercepted by the Indonesian navy on Sunday after a tip-off from Australian authorities and a call from Australian Prime Minister Kevin Rudd to Indonesia's President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono.

An Indonesian navy spokesman, First Marshal Iskander Sitompul, told the ABC that many of the 260 men, women and children aboard the boat moored at a West Java port feel traumatic about going ashore because they have been "disturbed and tortured" during their journey from Sri Lanka, which began in late July.

He says they lived in the jungle in Malaysia for several months before a people-smuggling syndicate took their passports and promised to deliver them to Australia.

The head of the Immigration Division of the Law and Human Rights office, Harry Purwanto, has told the ABC he is in Sumatra surveying a new immigration detention centre - built with Australian aid - as a possible location for the asylum seekers. Published by HT Syndication with permission from Daily Mirror Sri Lanka. For more information on news feed please contact Sarabjit Jagirdar at htsyndication@hindustantimes.com

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Load-Date: October 15, 2009

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