

Date and Time: Saturday, May 4, 2024 2:19:00PM EEST

Job Number: 223508023

Documents (100)

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

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers, Newswires & Press
Releases; Timeline: Jan 01, 2003 to Dec 31, 2007

2. [Sri Lanka seeks foreign help in suicide bomber probe](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers, Newswires & Press
Releases; Timeline: Jan 01, 2003 to Dec 31, 2007

3. [World datelines](#)

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: Jan 01, 2003 to Dec 31, 2007

4. [Sri Lanka : Government Must Respond To Anti- Tamil Violence](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers, Newswires & Press
Releases; Timeline: Jan 01, 2003 to Dec 31, 2007

5. [Inside today](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers, Newswires & Press
Releases; Timeline: Jan 01, 2003 to Dec 31, 2007

6. [SRI LANKA : UN APPALLED' BY DESPICABLE' ATTACKS ON AID ORGANIZATIONS](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers, Newswires & Press
Releases; Timeline: Jan 01, 2003 to Dec 31, 2007

7. [Suspected Tamil rebels detonate mines near Sri Lanka capital; two policemen, civilian killed in north](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers, Newswires & Press
Releases; Timeline: Jan 01, 2003 to Dec 31, 2007

8. [Suspected Tamil rebels detonate mines near Sri Lanka capital; two policemen in north](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers, Newswires & Press
Releases; Timeline: Jan 01, 2003 to Dec 31, 2007

9. [Giving voice to war's young 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: Jan 01, 2003 to Dec 31, 2007

10. [Lady fighters bring home their dead TSUNAMI APOCALYPSE](#)

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: Jan 01, 2003 to Dec 31, 200711. [Failed dreams of a more equitable world and the nightmare of consumerism gone mad](#)**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: Jan 01, 2003 to Dec 31, 200712. [ENGLISH CRICKETERS HEAD OUT TO BAT IN SRI LANKA FOR UN ANTI-HUNGER CAMPAIGN](#)**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: Jan 01, 2003 to Dec 31, 200713. [Devastation overwhelms prime minister](#)**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: Jan 01, 2003 to Dec 31, 200714. [French charity organization urges more focus on probe into aid worker deaths 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: Jan 01, 2003 to Dec 31, 200715. [Sri Lankan women condemn rebels' use of women as suicide bombers](#)**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: Jan 01, 2003 to Dec 31, 2007

16. [Bridging the distance: Stories from Sri Lanka](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers,Newswires & Press
Releases; Timeline: Jan 01, 2003 to Dec 31, 2007

17. [THE WAVE OF DEATH: IN HELL; HOMELESS SURVIVORS FACING DISEASE AND TORRENTIAL RAIN](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers,Newswires & Press
Releases; Timeline: Jan 01, 2003 to Dec 31, 2007

18. [Gandhi joins forces with old foes in vital 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: Jan 01, 2003 to Dec 31, 2007

19. [GANDHI PRIZE WINNER SPEAKS ABOUT PEACE](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers,Newswires & Press
Releases; Timeline: Jan 01, 2003 to Dec 31, 2007

20. [THE TOP TEN...SAUCY CHEFS](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers,Newswires & Press
Releases; Timeline: Jan 01, 2003 to Dec 31, 2007

21. [WORLD DIGEST](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers, Newswires & Press
Releases; Timeline: Jan 01, 2003 to Dec 31, 2007

22. [Deadly clash at sea dominates first day of peace talks between Tamil Tiger rebels, Sri Lankan government](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers, Newswires & Press
Releases; Timeline: Jan 01, 2003 to Dec 31, 2007

23. [EU provides 5 million euros to Sri Lanka conflict 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: Jan 01, 2003 to Dec 31, 2007

24. [RIGHTS: ANNAN TALKS TOUGH ON RECRUITERS OF CHILD SOLDIERS](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers, Newswires & Press
Releases; Timeline: Jan 01, 2003 to Dec 31, 2007

25. [Analysis: Buddha vs. Shiva minus 8](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers, Newswires & Press
Releases; Timeline: Jan 01, 2003 to Dec 31, 2007

26. [As Sri Lankan Port City Erupts, A Nation's Bloody Past Echoes](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by

Publication Type: Newspapers, Newswires & Press
Releases; Timeline: Jan 01, 2003 to Dec 31, 2007

27. [Bus blast in Sri Lanka leaves 64 dead](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by

Publication Type: Newspapers, Newswires & Press
Releases; Timeline: Jan 01, 2003 to Dec 31, 2007

28. [Sri Lanka police find phone card used by suicide bomber](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by

Publication Type: Newspapers, Newswires & Press
Releases; Timeline: Jan 01, 2003 to Dec 31, 2007

29. [Lankan president invites Tiger rebels to join talks](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by

Publication Type: Newspapers, Newswires & Press
Releases; Timeline: Jan 01, 2003 to Dec 31, 2007

30. [POLITICAL CRISES IN SOUTH ASIA: RECENT DEVELOPMENTS IN NEPAL AND SRI LANKA](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by

Publication Type: Newspapers, Newswires & Press
Releases; Timeline: Jan 01, 2003 to Dec 31, 2007

31. [Distortions seen in Sri Lanka 's tsunami recovery](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers,Newswires & Press
Releases; Timeline: Jan 01, 2003 to Dec 31, 2007

32. [The ultimate crime](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers,Newswires & Press
Releases; Timeline: Jan 01, 2003 to Dec 31, 2007

33. [Xinhua world news summary at 0820 GMT, March 5](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers,Newswires & Press
Releases; Timeline: Jan 01, 2003 to Dec 31, 2007

34. [Sri Lankan cease-fire monitors demand rebels release policemen](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers,Newswires & Press
Releases; Timeline: Jan 01, 2003 to Dec 31, 2007

35. [The AFP Asia news agenda](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers,Newswires & Press
Releases; Timeline: Jan 01, 2003 to Dec 31, 2007

36. [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: Jan 01, 2003 to Dec 31, 2007

37. [*TV talent show may have helped Sri Lanka rebels: officials*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers,Newswires & Press
Releases; Timeline: Jan 01, 2003 to Dec 31, 2007

38. [*Latest Israeli raid ends*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers,Newswires & Press
Releases; Timeline: Jan 01, 2003 to Dec 31, 2007

39. [*INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers,Newswires & Press
Releases; Timeline: Jan 01, 2003 to Dec 31, 2007

40. [*Soldier shot dead by rebels in N. Sri Lanka during cease-fire*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers,Newswires & Press
Releases; Timeline: Jan 01, 2003 to Dec 31, 2007

41. [*Sri Lanka navy and Tamil rebels in fierce clash off northern 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,Newswires & Press
Releases; Timeline: Jan 01, 2003 to Dec 31, 2007

42. [*Restoration of Sri Lankan peace process hinges on talks at local level, says activist*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers, Newswires & Press
Releases; Timeline: Jan 01, 2003 to Dec 31, 2007

43. [Bolton Launches Talks on Replacing Annan](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers, Newswires & Press
Releases; Timeline: Jan 01, 2003 to Dec 31, 2007

44. [U.S. launches Security Council discussion of next secretary-general to replace Annan](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers, Newswires & Press
Releases; Timeline: Jan 01, 2003 to Dec 31, 2007

45. [In Focus](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers, Newswires & Press
Releases; Timeline: Jan 01, 2003 to Dec 31, 2007

46. [Tsunami village highlights Sri Lanka tensions n poll brings old tensions to surface A year on from the disaster. Peter Foster in Peraliya finds a nation divided](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers, Newswires & Press
Releases; Timeline: Jan 01, 2003 to Dec 31, 2007

47. [Thursday, January 6](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers, Newswires & Press
Releases; Timeline: Jan 01, 2003 to Dec 31, 2007

48. [Ending wars against children ; The United Nations](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers, Newswires & Press
Releases; Timeline: Jan 01, 2003 to Dec 31, 2007

49. [Friday, January 6](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers, Newswires & Press
Releases; Timeline: Jan 01, 2003 to Dec 31, 2007

50. [Sri Lanka devastation leaves Martin awestruck](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers, Newswires & Press
Releases; Timeline: Jan 01, 2003 to Dec 31, 2007

51. [Islamist group launches Internet magazine encouraging women to take up arms](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers, Newswires & Press
Releases; Timeline: Jan 01, 2003 to Dec 31, 2007

52. [Tuesday, January 6](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by

Publication Type: Newspapers, Newswires & Press
Releases; Timeline: Jan 01, 2003 to Dec 31, 2007

53. [FBI wary al-Qaida may begin using women in attacks](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by

Publication Type: Newspapers, Newswires & Press
Releases; Timeline: Jan 01, 2003 to Dec 31, 2007

54. [New Delhi must help Sri Lankan Tamils: Vijayakanth](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by

Publication Type: Newspapers, Newswires & Press
Releases; Timeline: Jan 01, 2003 to Dec 31, 2007

55. [Sri Lanka blast kills top military officer](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by

Publication Type: Newspapers, Newswires & Press
Releases; Timeline: Jan 01, 2003 to Dec 31, 2007

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

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by

Publication Type: Newspapers, Newswires & Press
Releases; Timeline: Jan 01, 2003 to Dec 31, 2007

57. [SPECIAL RAPPORTEUR ON TORTURE NOWAK FINDS ABUSES WIDESPREAD IN PARAGUAY, NIGERIA, TOGO, 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,Newsires & Press
Releases; Timeline: Jan 01, 2003 to Dec 31, 200758. [Onam will be declared public holiday if DMK comes to power: Karunanidhi](#)**Client/Matter:** -None-**Search Terms:** "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE**Search Type:** Terms and Connectors**Narrowed by:****Content Type**

News

Narrowed byPublication Type: Newspapers,Newsires & Press
Releases; Timeline: Jan 01, 2003 to Dec 31, 200759. [PRESS CONFERENCE BY SPECIAL RAPPORTEUR ON TORTURE](#)**Client/Matter:** -None-**Search Terms:** "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE**Search Type:** Terms and Connectors**Narrowed by:****Content Type**

News

Narrowed byPublication Type: Newspapers,Newsires & Press
Releases; Timeline: Jan 01, 2003 to Dec 31, 200760. [The voice of a migrant speaking hip-hop](#)**Client/Matter:** -None-**Search Terms:** "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE**Search Type:** Terms and Connectors**Narrowed by:****Content Type**

News

Narrowed byPublication Type: Newspapers,Newsires & Press
Releases; Timeline: Jan 01, 2003 to Dec 31, 200761. [Education: Hope rises in the east: Out of the rubble of their school, washed away by the Asian tsunami, comes a new beginning.](#)**Client/Matter:** -None-**Search Terms:** "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE**Search Type:** Terms and Connectors**Narrowed by:****Content Type**

News

Narrowed byPublication Type: Newspapers,Newsires & Press
Releases; Timeline: Jan 01, 2003 to Dec 31, 200762. [PRINCIPAL DEPUTY ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF STATE FOR SOUTH AND CENTRAL ASIAN AFFAIRS MANN ISSUES STATEMENT ON POLITICAL CRISES IN SOUTH ASIA](#)**Client/Matter:** -None-**Search Terms:** "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE**Search Type:** Terms and Connectors**Narrowed by:**

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers,Newswires & Press
Releases; Timeline: Jan 01, 2003 to Dec 31, 2007

63. [The AFP Asia news agenda](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers,Newswires & Press
Releases; Timeline: Jan 01, 2003 to Dec 31, 2007

64. [33 killed in clashes in northern Sri Lanka](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers,Newswires & Press
Releases; Timeline: Jan 01, 2003 to Dec 31, 2007

65. [Saturday Review: Essay: Stories of the tsunami: Thirty thousand Sri Lankans were killed in the Boxing Day disaster. Three months on, novelist Louise Doughty asks the island's writers whether they can play a part in the process of recovery](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers,Newswires & Press
Releases; Timeline: Jan 01, 2003 to Dec 31, 2007

66. [INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers,Newswires & Press
Releases; Timeline: Jan 01, 2003 to Dec 31, 2007

67. [INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers,Newswires & Press
Releases; Timeline: Jan 01, 2003 to Dec 31, 2007

68. [STREWTH](#)

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: Jan 01, 2003 to Dec 31, 2007

69. [U.S. launches Security Council discussion of next secretary-general to replace Annan](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers,Newswires & Press
Releases; Timeline: Jan 01, 2003 to Dec 31, 2007

70. [Guardian Weekly: The Week: The roundup](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers,Newswires & Press
Releases; Timeline: Jan 01, 2003 to Dec 31, 2007

71. [Toll in Sri Lanka clashes rises to 33](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers,Newswires & Press
Releases; Timeline: Jan 01, 2003 to Dec 31, 2007

72. [Battered by tsunami and war, Sri Lanka vote is a referendum on a faltering peace process](#)

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: Jan 01, 2003 to Dec 31, 2007

73. [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,Newswires & Press
Releases; Timeline: Jan 01, 2003 to Dec 31, 2007

74. [Maybe women could do better](#)

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: Jan 01, 2003 to Dec 31, 2007

75. [Battered by tsunami and war, Sri Lanka vote is referendum on faltering peace process](#)

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: Jan 01, 2003 to Dec 31, 2007

76. [Battered by tsunami and war, Sri Lanka vote is a referendum on a faltering peace process](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers,Newswires & Press
Releases; Timeline: Jan 01, 2003 to Dec 31, 2007

77. [9 killed as heavy fighting erupts between Tamil Tiger rebel factions](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers,Newswires & Press
Releases; Timeline: Jan 01, 2003 to Dec 31, 2007

78. [No one benefits from a Rs2,600 cr channel](#)

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: Jan 01, 2003 to Dec 31, 2007

79. [Sri Lanka magistrate orders probe on military killing of students](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

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News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers, Newswires & Press
Releases; Timeline: Jan 01, 2003 to Dec 31, 2007

80. [Female 'Jihadis' Get Online Magazine](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers, Newswires & Press
Releases; Timeline: Jan 01, 2003 to Dec 31, 2007

81. [Nine Killed in Sri Lanka Rebel Fighting](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers, Newswires & Press
Releases; Timeline: Jan 01, 2003 to Dec 31, 2007

82. [Militants launch Internet magazine encouraging women to take up arms](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers, Newswires & Press
Releases; Timeline: Jan 01, 2003 to Dec 31, 2007

83. [Nine killed as heavy fighting erupts between two Tamil Tiger rebel factions; army moving to block sea assault](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers,Newsires & Press
Releases; Timeline: Jan 01, 2003 to Dec 31, 2007

84. [Al-Qaeda may recruit women](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers,Newsires & Press
Releases; Timeline: Jan 01, 2003 to Dec 31, 2007

85. [India 's shy spymaster and his `silent' Kaoboy](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers,Newsires & Press
Releases; Timeline: Jan 01, 2003 to Dec 31, 2007

86. [FBI wary al-Qaida may switch tactics and begin using women in attacks](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers,Newsires & Press
Releases; Timeline: Jan 01, 2003 to Dec 31, 2007

87. [Bodies of 15 aid workers found in Sri Lanka](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers,Newsires & Press
Releases; Timeline: Jan 01, 2003 to Dec 31, 2007

88. [Terror conference opens in Sri Lanka as fighting in north claims 13 more Tamil rebel lives](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by

Publication Type: Newspapers, Newswires & Press
Releases; Timeline: Jan 01, 2003 to Dec 31, 2007

89. [FLETCHER SCHOOL'S PAULA BROADWELL DISCUSSES GROWING ROLE OF WOMEN IN TERRORISM](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by

Publication Type: Newspapers, Newswires & Press
Releases; Timeline: Jan 01, 2003 to Dec 31, 2007

90. [Separatists kill 64 in Sri Lanka bus bombing Government hits rebel areas with retaliatory airstrikes as cease-fire unravels](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by

Publication Type: Newspapers, Newswires & Press
Releases; Timeline: Jan 01, 2003 to Dec 31, 2007

91. [SRI LANKA : UN EMERGENCY RELIEF COORDINATOR CALLS ON BOTH SIDES TO GRANT AID ACCESS](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by

Publication Type: Newspapers, Newswires & Press
Releases; Timeline: Jan 01, 2003 to Dec 31, 2007

92. [French NGO probing killing of 15 aid workers in Sri Lanka](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by

Publication Type: Newspapers, Newswires & Press
Releases; Timeline: Jan 01, 2003 to Dec 31, 2007

93. [On death row for Rajiv murder, but studying](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers, Newswires & Press
Releases; Timeline: Jan 01, 2003 to Dec 31, 2007

94. ['Going to take a long time': The tsunami one year later: Sri Lanka](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers, Newswires & Press
Releases; Timeline: Jan 01, 2003 to Dec 31, 2007

95. [Sri Lanka - a land in ruin](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers, Newswires & Press
Releases; Timeline: Jan 01, 2003 to Dec 31, 2007

96. [M.I.A. ready to shake up hip-hop scene with second LP](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers, Newswires & Press
Releases; Timeline: Jan 01, 2003 to Dec 31, 2007

97. [UN EXPERT EMPHASIZES SUSTAINABLE AND DURABLE SOLUTIONS FOR SRI LANKA 'S INTERNALLY DISPLACED PERSONS](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers, Newswires & Press
Releases; Timeline: Jan 01, 2003 to Dec 31, 2007

98. [M.I.A. sparks chaos with a wild show; Singer's building rhythms drive Commodore fans to a frenzy at one of year's most memorable performances](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers, Newswires & Press
Releases; Timeline: Jan 01, 2003 to Dec 31, 2007

99. [VOA NEWS: WOMEN LEADERS REDISCOVER MOTHER'S DAY](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers, Newswires & Press
Releases; Timeline: Jan 01, 2003 to Dec 31, 2007

100. [26 Sri Lankan sailors dead, four captured alive in northern sea battle, Tamil rebels say](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers, Newswires & Press
Releases; Timeline: Jan 01, 2003 to Dec 31, 2007

News items from Asia-Pacific Desk of Xinhua

Xinhua General News Service

October 11, 2006 Wednesday 6:00 AM EST

Copyright 2006 Xinhua News Agency

Section: WORLD NEWS

Length: 681 words

Dateline: HONG KONG

Body

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

Major news items in leading Australian newspapers

Major news items in leading Japanese newspapers

M6.0 quake rocks eastern Japan

Tokyo stocks open higher

Major news items in leading Philippine newspapers

Sihanouk declines to comment on Cambodian situation anymore

Foreign exchange rates in Thailand

Hong Kong stocks open higher -- Oct. 11

Urgent: Moderate earthquake rocks Taiwan's southern coast

(Sports) Malaysia has yet to announce medal targets for Doha Asian Games

1st Ld Writethru: Moderate earthquake rocks Taiwan's southern coast

Nepal marks Int'l Day for Natural Disaster Reduction

Foreign Exchange Rates in Nepal

Major news items in leading Thai newspapers

Major news items in leading Indian newspapers

Malaysian bowlers to acclimatize on different surfaces for Doha games

Major news items in leading Vietnamese newspapers

Urgent: Hong Kong chief delivers 2006-07 policy address

News items from Asia-Pacific Desk of Xinhua

Foreign exchange rates in Philippines

Philippine police raise alert level in Metro Manila, Mindanao

Tokyo stocks mixed in morning

Around 67 pct of Cambodian infants immunized for traditional diseases: UN official

1st Ld: Hong Kong chief delivers 2006-07 policy address

Philippine Bulusan volcano ejects ash anew

Major news items in leading Pakistani newspapers

Cambodia sets aside land to protect endangered Bengal Florican

Hong Kong restores fiscal balance last year: Chief

Individual visit scheme to Hong Kong expands: chief executive

Nepal to launch anti-dengue fever programs

Vietnam cracks down on sex selection activities

Nepal-India to renew trade treaty

Flood kills 13 in Myanmar northern division

Hong Kong ready to launch two new types of RMB business: chief executive

WB to continue to provide help for Pakistan's oil sector reforms

Thai constitution drafters selected

Hong Kong mulls establishing new communications authority

2nd Ld: Hong Kong chief delivers 2006-07 policy address

New bomb found in southern Philippines

Vietnam's 3 biggest mobile operators to go public next year

Hong Kong stocks finish lower at midday -- Oct. 11

Indonesia motorcycle sales fall 27 pct in first 9 months

Pakistan tribal feud death toll reaches 33

Rising suicides worry psychiatrists in Indonesia

Major news items in leading Afghan newspapers

Success of Hong Kong lies in pragmatism: chief executive

Sri Lankan gov't, **Tamil Tigers** to hold talks

3rd Ld-Writethru: Hong Kong chief delivers 2006-07 policy address

800 die in TB related deaths in Nepal in 2005-06

News items from Asia-Pacific Desk of Xinhua

Hong Kong to spend 3.2 bln HKD to replace highly polluting vehicles: chief executive

Roundup: Economy, families and environment top HK policy agenda

Philippine stocks close flat

(Sports) Results from Lusofonia Games

Men's 400m hurdles Results from Lusofonia Games

(Recast)(Sports) Men's 400m hurdles Results from Lusofonia Games

Indonesian woman tested positive on bird flu

Foreign exchange rates in Indonesia

Another blast rocks southern Philippines

Australia not planning to sell uranium to India: FM

Tokyo shares end lower

Chinese students welcomed in Japan for exchange tour

Seoul stock market closes down

Indonesian police deny helicopter crash reports

Australian stock market closes higher

Moderate earthquakes hit southern coast off Taiwan

Australian dollar closes lower

Hong Kong stocks end higher -- Oct. 11

Two Philippine soldiers killed in clash with Abu Sayyaf

Taiwan share prices end 9.43 points higher -- Oct. 11

ASEAN countries to find out solution to control haze

UN experts discuss peace talks progress with Nepali PM

International climate change meeting held in NZ

Foreign exchange rates in Hong Kong -- Oct. 11

Women in Fiji highly marginalized: ADB report

Dollar rises to mid-119 yen in Tokyo

Trading on Hong Kong Stock Exchange -- Oct. 11

Only 3 percent PNG population registered at birth

End of Document

Sri Lanka seeks foreign help in suicide bomber probe

Agence France Presse -- English

May 6, 2006 Saturday 11:30 AM GMT

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Length: 319 words

Dateline: COLOMBO, May 6 2006

Body

Sri Lanka is seeking foreign forensic help to establish whether a ***female*** suicide bomber who tried to kill the country's army chief was indeed pregnant as she claimed, investigators said Saturday.

Tests by local laboratories proved negative and the investigators are now trying to secure the help of forensic experts abroad, a doctor close to the investigation said.

"We have no medical records to prove that she was in fact pregnant although she gained entry to the army hospital saying she was pregnant," the doctor said. The hospital is located within the military headquarters compound.

Logs at the army headquarters showed the bomber entered the military compound posing as a soldier's pregnant wife to take advantage of "maternity day" at the army hospital, police have said.

She had visited the hospital on several occasions.

Investigators believe the 21-year-old woman who carried out the April 25 attack inside the tightly guarded army headquarters had an accomplice who guided her by mobile telephone, police said.

The woman was blown to pieces and only her left leg below the knee was left intact. Investigators found her badly bruised head hanging by her hair in a tree.

Police said her mobile phone was also destroyed but they managed to recover the SIM card, which has been sent abroad for analysis to track down the list of calls she made and received just before the attack.

Army chief Lieutenant General Sarath Fonseka and 30 others were wounded in the attack while a total of 11 people, including the bomber, died.

Fonseka has been discharged from intensive care but remains in hospital and would resume work "in the near future," an army statement said.

Authorities suspect the bombing was the work of the rebel Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (***LTTE***), whose trademark is suicide bombings.

Sri Lanka seeks foreign help in suicide bomber probe

The attack was the most serious incident blamed on the rebels since they entered into a truce with the government in 2002.

Load-Date: May 7, 2006

End of Document

World datelines

Deseret Morning News (Salt Lake City)

January 4, 2007 Thursday

Copyright 2007 The Deseret News Publishing Co.

Length: 638 words

Byline: Compiled from Deseret Morning News wire services

Body

Antigua

ST JOHN'S -- A British teenager, Mike Perham, 14, became the youngest person to sail solo across the Atlantic Ocean on Wednesday, reaching the Caribbean island of Antigua after a six-week voyage.

Belarus

MINSK -- The government said Wednesday it would slap a customs duty on Russian oil pumped across Belarus to Europe, and President Alexander Lukashenko lashed out at what he called the Kremlin's "shameless" conduct over energy price increases.

Brazil

RIO DE JANEIRO -- Rio de Janeiro's new governor said Wednesday federal troops will be used to fight growing gang violence plaguing the state and will be deployed to protect public safety during the upcoming Pan American Games.

Britain

LONDON -- Two more people have shown signs of low-level exposure to polonium-210, the rare radioactive isotope that killed former Russian spy Alexander Litvinenko, British health authorities said Wednesday. The two were identified as a hotel worker at the Best Western Hotel in Piccadilly, London, and a guest who visited The Pine Bar at London's Millennium Hotel.

Chile

SANTIAGO -- A Chilean court on Wednesday dropped charges against Gen. Augusto Pinochet's wife and two of his grown children, who had been indicted as accomplices of the late dictator in a tax evasion case.

China

BEIJING -- China has defended new adoption regulations for foreigners that favor middle-aged married couples without physical handicaps, saying the rules were designed to help children and expedite adoptions.

India

World datelines

ALLAHABAD -- Ash-smeared and naked Hindu saints led millions of devotees Wednesday in a pre-dawn holy dip at the meeting of three major rivers in northern India, starting a weeks-long pilgrimage to wash away their sins.

Indonesia

POLEWALI -- Indonesian air force planes took to the skies and navy ships scoured the sea Wednesday, searching for a missing jetliner and its passengers, including an Oregon man and his two daughters.

Japan

TOKYO -- Japan will drop plans to allow women to inherit the Chrysanthemum Throne following the birth last year of a long-awaited male heir, a news report said Wednesday.

Mexico

TIJUANA -- Mexico is sending some 3,300 soldiers and federal police officers to fight drug gangs in the crime-plagued border city of Tijuana, which has become a major smuggling route for cocaine and methamphetamine entering the United States.

Myanmar

YANGON -- Myanmar's military government on Wednesday freed nearly 3,000 prison inmates, including about 20 political prisoners, according to media reports and a human rights group.

North Korea

Paek Nam Sun, North Korea's foreign minister and the country's top diplomat for nearly 10 years, has died at the age of 78, official media reported Wednesday.

Pakistan

MULTAN -- Outraged in-laws slashed the nose and ears of a college student who married a woman without the consent of her higher caste family, and then fractured his legs with blows from an ax, police and the victim said Wednesday.

Spain

MADRID -- Rescue workers discovered a body Wednesday in the rubble of a parking garage destroyed by a weekend car bombing at Madrid's airport, confirming the first fatality blamed on the Basque separatist group ETA in more than three years.

Sri Lanka

COLOMBO -- The Tamil Tigers warned the government Wednesday that it could face "serious repercussions" after the rebels said an air force raid killed 16 people, including eight children.

DHAKA -- A key political alliance announced Wednesday it would boycott this month's general elections in Bangladesh, deepening a political crisis that has crippled the South Asian country for months.

Thailand

BANGKOK -- Thailand's powerful military council on Wednesday declared that New Year's Eve bomb attacks in the capital were staged by politicians and renegade army officers loyal to exiled Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra who want to topple the government.

World datelines

End of Document

Sri Lanka: Government Must Respond To Anti-Tamil Violence

Targeted News Service

April 25, 2006 Tuesday 4:29 PM EST

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Length: 660 words

Byline: Targeted News Service

Dateline: NEW YORK

Body

Human Rights Watch issued the following news release:

The Sri Lankan government has failed to respond adequately to recent attacks by armed groups on ethnic Tamils and their homes and businesses in Sri Lanka's eastern Trincomalee district, Human Rights Watch said today.

Police and other security forces reportedly stood by as Tamils were attacked on April 12 after an alleged Tamil Tiger bomb at a Trincomalee market killed five persons. Witnesses said that within 15 minutes approximately 100-150 ethnic Sinhalese men armed with clubs and long knives attacked Tamil businesses and homes in Trincomalee town and district. Sri Lankan human rights organizations reported that attacks from April 12 to 16 left at least 20 civilians dead (including seven women), among them Tamils, Muslims and Sinhalese. Some 75 persons needed hospital attention for injuries.

"The failure of the security forces in Trincomalee to protect the Tamil population should raise alarm bells at the highest levels of government," said Brad Adams, Asia director at Human Rights Watch. "The government has a responsibility to protect all Sri Lankans, no matter whether they are Tamil, Muslim or Sinhalese."

Human Rights Watch called on the government to ensure a prompt, independent and impartial commission of inquiry into the violence and the security forces' response, with powers to recommend prosecution and compensation.

The attacks destroyed some 100 homes and left more than 3,000 people homeless. According to the Trincomalee chamber of commerce, 32 businesses and shops were damaged, destroyed or looted.

Police and armed forces stood by while the burning and killing occurred, waiting from 45 to 90 minutes before taking action. The alarm bell at the Hatton National Bank reportedly rang for two hours without response, while a policeman reportedly told a security guard at the Bank of Ceylon not to resist intruders.

President Mahinda Rajapakse's response to the violence has been grossly inadequate. According to media reports, President Rajapakse sent high-ranking security officials and other senior officials to Trincomalee in the days following the reprisal attacks. However, Human Rights Watch is unaware of any strong public statements by the president or direct steps to increase security in the district. Some persons displaced by the violence reportedly did not receive emergency government assistance for four days.

Sri Lanka : Government Must Respond To Anti- Tamil Violence

"Given continuing ceasefire violations and rising ethnic tensions, communal violence could spiral out of control unless there is a swift and strong government response," said Adams. "Yet in the days since mobs began targeting Tamils in Trincomalee for arson and murder, President Rajapakse has taken no decisive action."

Human Rights Watch said that to bring the perpetrators to justice and to demonstrate to Tamils and others that it is committed to equality under the law, the government should ensure a prompt, independent and impartial commission of inquiry into the violence and the response and behavior of the police and armed forces before, during, and after the incident. The commission, which should have at least one international member to reassure the public of its impartiality, should have powers to recommend prosecution and compensation.

Human Rights Watch also called for the prompt re-establishment of a fully functional Human Rights Commission to provide the necessary monitoring and leadership expected from this body since the outbreak of violence in Trincomalee.

The organization also called on Sri Lankan authorities to improve security in Trincomalee district, particularly for vulnerable populations, and to facilitate greater communication and cooperation among the government and civil society groups, including Tamil, Sinhalese and Muslim organizations. Human Rights Watch repeated its call to the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (the **Tamil Tigers**) to end all attacks on civilians.

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Load-Date: May 7, 2006

End of Document

Inside today

The Gazette (Montreal)

August 31, 2006 Thursday

Final Edition

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Section: NEWS; Pg. A2

Length: 606 words

Byline: The Gazette

Body

Acute water shortage has B.C. town reeling

Businesses in and around Tofino, B.C., scrambled yesterday to find tankers to truck in water, in a desperate bid to keep the tourist-reliant community operating. On Tuesday, authorities ordered all businesses to shut down after the town's reservoir hit an all-time low. Details, Page A12

Supporters flying Tigers' flag

Raising the flag of the ***Tamil Tigers*** - now banned as a terrorist group - and praising the "fallen heroes" of the struggle for a Tamil homeland are a part of Tamil student club activities at several Canadian universities. Details, Page A11

Man killed in drive-by shooting

Police are searching for the killers of a car passenger who was slain in a drive-by shooting yesterday in Riviere des Prairies. Two men on a motorcycle targeted a Cadillac. It's the 28th homicide this year in Montreal. Details, Page A7

Actor Glenn Ford dies at 90

Quebec-born actor Glenn Ford, who played strong, thoughtful protagonists in films such as The Blackboard Jungle, Gilda and The Big Heat, died yesterday at the age of 90. Details, Page E7

Feds: Afghan mission on track

The security in volatile southern Afghan-istan will improve over the next year and Canada will pour "resources" into reconstruction efforts, Defence Minister Gordon O'Connor predicts. Details, Page A16

Olmert firm on Lebanon siege

Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Olmert signals that he will not lift the air and sea blockade of Lebanon or withdraw more troops until two Israeli soldiers seized by Hezbollah are freed.

Details, Page A16

Inside today

Business

Van Houtte mulls income trust

Van Houtte's board of directors says it might consider merging or converting the coffee giant into an income trust private company to boost sagging share value. Details, Page B1

Canada's trade surplus drops

Canada's global trade surplus has shrunk dramatically, in part reflecting the strength of the Canadian dollar, and will likely shrink even more as the U.S. economy slows and if energy prices continue to retreat. Details, Page B5

Sports

Federer and Nadal advance

Roger Federer, the No. 1 seed and defending champion advanced easily at the U.S. Open, while the second seed, Rafael Nadal, also reached the second round, ousting Mark Philippoussis. Details, Page C1

Als' Bell loses starting job

Ricky Bell, the veteran defensive back, hasn't been benched, but appears to have lost his starting spot in the Alouettes' secondary for tomorrow's game against British Columbia. Details, Page C5

Arts & Life

Film tells story of Abenakis

Waban-Aki: People From Where the Sun Rises is documentary filmmaker Alanis Obomsawin's fascinating personal look at Odanak, the Abenaki village near Sorel where she spent most of the first nine years of her life. Details, Page D3

Canadian's photo honoured

His photo of a mother and child in an emergency feeding centre in Niger, chosen from among more than 80,000 pictures, is the World Press Photo of the Year 2005, but Canadian Finbarr O'Reilly still considers himself a beginner. Details, Page D4

- Today's columnists

"It's quite likely markets will give some investors a stomach-churning ride."

BRYAN, BUSINESS, B1

MIKE BOONE on pedestrian crosswalks:

The perilous discourtesy of city drivers. MONTREAL, A6

DON MACPHERSON on CEGEP brochures:

PQ can count on traditional labour allies. OPINION, A19

RANDY PHILLIPS on Lisa Meldrum:

Golfer takes aim at CN Women's Tour title. SPORTS, C5 BILL BROWNSTEIN on the F--- movie:

It can be used as a noun, adjective, verb or adverb. ARTS, D1

JUAN RODRIGUEZ on Marc Ribot:

Inside today

Guitar wizard's take on the global music scene. ARTS, D4

DOUG CAMILLI on Spider-Man 3:

Director's call for reshoots is rarely a good sign. ARTS, D5

Graphic

Photo: (Acute water shortage has B.C. town reeling)

Load-Date: August 31, 2006

End of Document

SRI LANKA: UN APPALLED' BY DESPICABLE' ATTACKS ON AID ORGANIZATIONS

States News Service

May 22, 2006 Monday

Copyright 2006 States News Service

Length: 325 words

Byline: States News Service

Dateline: New York

Body

The following information was released by the United Nations:

A senior United Nations officer in Sri Lanka today < ahref="<http://www.unhcr.org/cgi-bin/texis/vtx/news/opendoc.htm?tbl=NEWS&id=446d98ff4>">called on the Government and rebels fighting in the north and east of the country to ensure the safety of all humanitarian aid organizations there following yesterday's grenade attacks on three non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and the earlier shooting death of a Norwegian aid worker.

"The United Nations Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator in Sri Lanka is appalled by the continuing despicable attacks on humanitarian workers in the north and east," interim coordinator Amin Awad said in a statement.

"We strongly condemn these attacks which undermine the ability of the humanitarian community to freely conduct operations, and which instil fear into the thousands of men, women and children to whom we provide relief and assistance. These attacks must be investigated and the perpetrators brought to justice," he added.

All parties must urgently halt the current escalation of violence which is affecting innocent civilians, and work urgently towards a peaceful solution to the current impasse, he declared.

Mr. Awad's statement was but the latest in a string of recent UN expressions of alarm. Last week the UN Children's Fund (< ahref="http://www.unicef.org/media/media_33966.html">UNICEF) warned that Sri Lankan children were falling victim to the renewed clashes between the Government and the rebel Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE). It noted that thousands of children had been displaced.

On Friday the UN refugee agency (UNHCR) reported that more than 1,000 Sri Lankans have fled to southern India since the beginning of the year, over and above the thousands displaced within the country. And 10 days weeks ago Secretary-General Kofi Annan today called on both sides to "change course and bring the country back on a path to peace."

Load-Date: May 25, 2006

Suspected Tamil rebels detonate mines near Sri Lanka capital; two policemen, civilian killed in north

Associated Press International

June 6, 2006 Tuesday 5:26 PM GMT

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Section: INTERNATIONAL NEWS

Length: 594 words

Byline: By BHARATHA MALLAWARACHI, Associated Press Writer

Dateline: COLOMBO Sri Lanka

Body

Suspected Tamil rebels triggered two anti-personnel mines outside Sri Lanka's capital early Tuesday, wounding two people, the military said, in the first such attacks near Colombo since the country's 2002 cease-fire.

The twin blasts near Colombo wounded a bus driver and a conductor, but missed a navy convoy that was their apparent target, the military said.

Later Tuesday, suspected Tamil Tiger rebels triggered another mine in northern Sri Lanka, killing two policemen, one civilian and wounding two policemen and a 12-year-old boy, a military official said on condition of anonymity because he is not authorized to talk to reporters.

He blamed the rebel Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam for the blast near Vavuniya, 210 kilometers (130 miles) north of Colombo and the northernmost government-held garrison town before rebel-held territory.

Separately, police said the bodies of four Tamil civilians with gunshot wounds were found in the northeast overnight.

Also Tuesday, three soldiers and a policeman were injured in a bomb attack on a check point in northwestern Mannar district, the military official said.

The violence came as government and rebel officials prepared to meet in the Norwegian capital Thursday and Friday to review the cease-fire, which appears increasingly tenuous due to violence that has killed at least 375 people since the beginning of April.

The mine blasts near Colombo took place near a navy camp on a side road of a highway connecting Colombo with the country's only international airport. It damaged a state-run bus and wounded the driver and conductor, navy spokesman D.K.P Dassanayake said. The bus had just come out of its depot and had no passengers.

"Their main target was our buses that take navy personnel to duty, but apparently they triggered the mines prematurely," Dassanayake said.

Dassanayake blamed the attack on Tamil Tiger rebels.

Suspected Tamil rebels detonate mines near Sri Lanka capital; two policemen, civilian killed in north

Anti-personnel mines, which fire hundreds of steel balls propelled by plastic explosives and can be detonated by remote control, are a preferred weapon of the insurgents. Until now, they have been used only in the country's northeast, where the Tigers control parts of the countryside.

The only attacks in or around Colombo attributed to the rebels since the 2002 cease-fire have been suicide bombings.

In April, a **female** rebel bomber targeted the country's army commander who escaped the attack with injuries, but at least 12 others died in the blast.

In July of 2004, a suicide bomber targeted Douglas Devananda, a government minister and a moderate Tamil leader who opposes the rebels. The bomber detonated explosives killing four while being frisked at a police station.

Separately, authorities had no immediate motive for the deaths or the four Tamil civilians whose bodies were found in the northeast, said police officer P. Tennakoon.

Two of the bodies were found in Kayts islet, northern Jaffna, 300 kilometers (186 miles) north of the capital, Colombo, while the other two were found in Trincomalee district, 215 kilometers (133 miles), northeast of Colombo, he said.

The Oslo talks are aimed at reviewing the Norway-brokered cease-fire and ensure safety of European monitors who oversee the agreement. The monitors suspended sea patrols last month after the rebels attacked a government navy convoy that had a truce monitor on board.

Sixty members from Norway, Sweden, Denmark, Finland and Iceland have monitored Sri Lanka's cease-fire.

Tamil Tigers began fighting the government in 1983 to create a separate state for ethnic minority Tamils, accusing the majority Sinhalese of discrimination.

Load-Date: June 7, 2006

Suspected Tamil rebels detonate mines near Sri Lanka capital; two policemen in north

Associated Press International

June 6, 2006 Tuesday 11:43 AM GMT

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Section: INTERNATIONAL NEWS

Length: 611 words

Byline: By DILIP GANGULY, Associated Press Writer

Dateline: COLOMBO Sri Lanka

Body

Suspected Tamil rebels triggered two anti-personnel mines outside Sri Lanka's capital early Tuesday, wounding two people, the military said, in the first such attacks near Colombo since the country's 2002 cease-fire.

The twin blasts wounded a bus driver and a conductor, but missed a navy convoy that was their apparent target, the military said.

Later Tuesday, suspected Tamil Tiger rebels triggered another mine in northern Sri Lanka, killing two policemen and wounding two others, military said.

"A police vehicle got caught to an explosion near Vavuniya," military spokesman Brig. Prasad Samarasinghe said.

He blamed the rebel Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam for the blast.

Vavuniya is located 210 kilometers (130 miles) north of the capital, Colombo and is the northernmost government-held garrison town before rebel-held territory.

Separately, police said the bodies of four Tamil civilians with gunshot wounds were found in the northeast overnight.

The violence come as government and rebel officials prepared to meet in the Norwegian capital Thursday and Friday to review the cease-fire, which appears increasingly tenuous due to violence that has killed at least 375 people since the beginning of April.

The mine blasts took place near a navy camp on a side road of a highway connecting Colombo with the country's only international airport. It damaged a state-run bus and wounded the driver and conductor, navy spokesman D.K.P Dassanayake said. The bus had just come out of its depot and had no passengers.

"Their main target was our buses that take navy personnel to duty, but apparently they triggered the mines prematurely," Dassanayake said.

Dassanayake blamed the attack on Tamil Tiger rebels.

Suspected Tamil rebels detonate mines near Sri Lanka capital; two policemen in north

Anti-personnel mines, which fire hundreds of steel balls propelled by plastic explosives and can be detonated by remote control, are a preferred weapon of the insurgents. Until now, they have been used only in the country's northeast, where the Tigers control parts of the countryside.

The only attacks in or around Colombo attributed to the rebels since the 2002 cease-fire have been suicide bombings.

In April, a **female** rebel bomber targeted the country's top general at a military base in Colombo. Lt. Gen. Sarath Fonseka escaped the attack with abdominal and chest wounds, but at least 12 others died in the blast, prompting the government to retaliate against Tamil rebel bases and pushing Sri Lanka closer to a resumption of full-scale civil war.

In July of 2004, a suicide bomber targeted Douglas Devananda, a government minister and a moderate Tamil leader who opposes the rebels. The bomber could not reach Devananda and detonated explosives that killed four people.

Separately, authorities had no immediate motive for the deaths or the four Tamil civilians whose bodies were found in the northeast, said police officer P. Tennakoon.

Two of the bodies were found in Kayts islet, northern Jaffna, 300 kilometers (186 miles) north of the capital, Colombo, while the other two were found in Trincomalee district, 215 kilometers (133 miles), northeast of Colombo, he said.

The Oslo talks are aimed at reviewing the Norway-brokered cease-fire and ensure safety of European monitors who oversee the agreement. The monitors suspended sea patrols last month after the rebels attacked a government navy convoy that had a truce monitor on board.

Sixty members from Norway, Sweden, Denmark, Finland and Iceland have monitored Sri Lanka's cease-fire.

Tamil Tigers began fighting the government in 1983 to create a separate state for ethnic minority Tamils, accusing the majority Sinhalese of discrimination.

Associated Press Writer, Bharatha Mallawarachi contributed to this report.

Load-Date: June 7, 2006

Giving voice to war's young victims

Sydney Morning Herald (Australia)

November 7, 2005 Monday

First Edition

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Section: NEWS AND FEATURES; Opinion; Pg. 15

Length: 581 words

Byline: Olara Otunnu Olara A. Otunnu was, until recently, UN Under-Secretary-General and Special Representative for Children and Armed Conflict. He is the recipient of the Sydney Peace Prize for 2005.

Body

They are the future for our societies but they are made to suffer the most now, writes Olara Otunnu.

When adults wage war, children pay the highest price. They are the primary victims of armed conflict, its targets for killing, maiming, rape, abduction and displacement and, increasingly, its instruments as child soldiers. Moreover, children exposed to violence, radical indoctrination and hate provide the best recruiting pool for criminal and terrorist entrepreneurs.

Yet, until recently, when decision-makers discussed issues of war, the fate of children did not figure in their agenda. This has changed.

Over several years, I have led a United Nations-based campaign seeking international action for the protection of children exposed to war.

Our efforts have yielded advances and innovations: such protection has been placed on the international peace-and-security agenda; protective instruments and standards have been put in place;; children's concerns are being included in peace talks and accords; child protection advisers have been integrated in peacekeeping operations.

The UN Security Council last July passed Resolution 1612 endorsing a series of measures to institute a compliance regime for the protection of children exposed to war. This is a turning point of immense consequence.

It breaks new ground in several respects. First, it establishes a monitoring and reporting system, to gather specific information - the who, where and what - on violations committed against children in armed conflict.

UN-led taskforces in conflict-affected countries will focus on six violations against children: killing or maiming; recruitment or abduction of children for use as soldiers; rape and other sexual violence against children; attacks against schools or hospitals; and the denial of humanitarian access to children.

Second, all offending parties will continue to be identified publicly, in what has been called the naming and shaming list, submitted annually to the Security Council since 2003. The latest report lists 54 offenders in 11 countries. These include the ***Tamil Tigers*** in Sri Lanka; the Colombian Revolutionary Armed Forces (FARC); the Janjaweed from Sudan; the Communist Party of Nepal; the Lord's Resistance Army in Uganda; the Karen National Liberation Army in Myanmar; and government forces in the Democratic Republic of Congo, Myanmar and Uganda.

Giving voice to war's young victims

Clearly, the compilation of information on violations and the listing of offenders have little value unless they serve as triggers for action. However, it is crucial that this issue be taken up beyond the corridors of the UN. That is why we need a major international public campaign for compliance.

When the tsunami tragedy struck in Asia, Hurricane Katrina caused devastation in the US, and the recent earthquake ravaged the countries of South Asia, we felt almost entirely helpless in the face of a mighty fury unleashed by the force of nature. Alas, what is happening to children in many conflict areas is a wholly human-made catastrophe. This is nothing short of a process of self-destruction, consuming the very children who assure the renewal and future of all our societies.

Unlike the onslaught of the tsunami, we can do something today to bring an end to this human-made horror - the horror of war being waged against children and women.

Olara A. Otunnu was, until recently, UN Under-Secretary-General and Special Representative for Children and Armed Conflict. He is the recipient of the Sydney Peace Prize for 2005.

Load-Date: July 17, 2007

End of Document

Lady fighters bring home their dead; TSUNAMI APOCALYPSE

Sydney Morning Herald (Australia)

January 1, 2005 Saturday

First Edition

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Section: NEWS AND FEATURES; Pg. 7

Length: 577 words

Byline: Farah Farouque

Body

The ***Tamil Tigers'*** women's platoon faces its harshest mission yet, writes Herald Correspondent Farah Farouque in Thalayady, Jaffna.

They are the "lady fighters", among the fiercest rebels in Sri Lanka's civil conflict.

But on this day, Mala, 20, Kitha, 23, and Mathy, 19, are prosecuting a humanitarian campaign: their mission is to locate the dead washed up on the shoreline of this Tamil Tiger stronghold.

After a briefing from the local Sea Tiger chief, the platoon climbs onto several tractor-trailers. Some women clutch rifles, others are armed only with packets of Gold Marie butter biscuits and bottles of water.

Passing through several checkpoints, I have been permitted to accompany the Tigers as they travel across waterlogged pathways to the ravaged beachfront which stretches for several kilometres.

Until Sunday morning, this place was home to a busy community of more than 4000 people. Now, it's a mess of mangled bicycles, fragments of clothing wrapped around trees and rubble from rows of crumpled houses.

The stench from decomposed corpses lingers in some corners.

A few people, including an old man whose red eyes testify to the loss of his daughter and three grandchildren, have returned to pick over their possessions.

"I am lost," he says.

The soldiers show little emotion at the scene before them. With their buttoned up man-style shirts - many have shorn the customary long hair - these lady fighters are a contradictory mix of girlish enthusiasm and hard military discipline.

Several share a joke as they disperse from the tractors to begin their grim excavations.

Tiger ranks in the north-east, where rebel Tigers have wrested control of large tracts of territory from the Sri Lankan Government, have sustained heavy losses, according to the local intelligence.

Lady fighters bring home their dead TSUNAMI APOCALYPSE

But The Sea Tiger leader who administers the Thalayady area, Mangales, refuses to publicly canvass what price the rebels have paid.

While the truce has been in place for three years, in this volatile region this sort of strategic information is at a premium.

"We are OK," says Mangales. But he wants to press the point that the Government has been slow to respond to the overall crisis in Tiger territory.

"Just now, I heard some truckloads of aid from Tamil people in the hill country was confiscated," he said.

Overall, Sri Lanka's official death toll from the tsunami is close to 30,000. This includes more than 10,000 in the north- east, which covers substantial Tamil populations in coastal fishing villages, a traditional support base for the rebels who have waged a long battle for statehood.

In one of the hardest-hit Tiger-controlled areas, Mullaitivu, most of the children in the main orphanage on the beachfront were wiped out within five minutes of the wave.

The victims were mostly younger than 10. "They had buried most of the children by the time we got there, but it was really depressing," said Sampavi Pari, a medical student from Sydney, who visited the orphanage in the immediate aftermath.

Dr V. Karunakaran, a volunteer doctor at a regional hospital in Killinochichi, said most of the bodies that had arrived had been those of women and children.

"They were battered," he said. "But many of those who escaped got entangled on serrated edges of palm tree leaves. That's what seemed to save them. The men on the fishing vessels also seemed to have largely survived. The wave somehow missed them.

"But the parents who come in are inconsolable, dazed, at the loss of their children."

Graphic

PHOTO: Rebel hell ... Cadres, a female Tamil Tiger, searches a devastated beach for bodies. Photo: Jason South

Load-Date: July 17, 2007

**Failed dreams of a more equitable world and the nightmare of consumerism
gone mad**

Sydney Morning Herald (Australia)

July 12, 2005 Tuesday

First Edition

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Section: NEWS AND FEATURES; Entertainment; Pg. 17

Length: 602 words

Byline: Doug Anderson

Body

The Power of Nightmares

7.30pm, SBS: Should we feel anxious about the threat of organised terrorism or is it just a phantom menace being used to stop society falling apart? That's the teaser for this two-part doco, *Baby It's Cold Outside*, which explores the heart of darkness in an urban context, looking at both American neo-conservatives and their radical Islamic counterparts. After Thursday's gutless attack on soft targets in London, the program assumes added immediacy, assessing how both groups of idealists - if that's the term - emerged in response to the failure of liberal dreams promising a better, more equitable world. Is society falling or being blown apart? And, in a searing irony - again, if that's the term - the combined contributions to terror networks by Christian and Islamic extremists have reinforced the waning authority and credibility of politicians whose rhetoric and lopsided outlook add foment to disillusionment. Of course, the bombers and assassins can never win. The trouble is they're too stupid to realise it. And, equally, the leaders of the free world are too stupid to realise the titanic expenditure necessitated by countering the terrorist menace and buying weapons could almost certainly be made unnecessary if it was deployed benevolently in the first place. Imagine.

Foreign Correspondent

9.20pm, ABC: Someone with a refined sense of vitriol once described Sri Lanka's President, Chandrika Kumaratunga, as "Mrs Thatcher in a sari". How unkind! But there's no doubting Mrs K's toughness. Her father, a former prime minister, was assassinated in 1959 and her husband - a film star-turned-politician - was gunned down in 1988. A ***female*** suicide bomber, deployed by the ***Tamil Tigers***, tried to top Kumaratunga in 1999. She lost an eye in the blast that killed 26 people around her. Then came December's tsunami. Michael Maher has a yarn with Madam President as she struggles to govern a fractured and divided society. Elsewhere, Eric Campbell - who is walking a lot more comfortably now - examines the use of novelty coffins in Ghana's funeral industry. Way to go!

Oprah Winfrey

2pm, Ten: Remember the tsunami of pants-wetting and orchestrated ecstasy that ensued when Oprah gave away 200 Chryslers? Unprecedented scenes of consumer fervour and charismatic healing not witnessed since Moses turned back the Red Sea. Hallelujah! Right on! Sock it to me! Innocent civilians! Axis of Stupidity! Thank ya Jesus! In today's fairly unsavoury circus, six couples vie for a million-dollar wedding giveaway. The winning couple takes

Failed dreams of a more equitable world and the nightmare of consumerism gone mad

all of the fairytale, the other 10 participants make do with a gift pack of Palmolive toiletries and dishwashing liquid. If you ever suspected Americans are, in large part, conditioned to remain suspended in adolescence for their entire lives - so that advertisers, Rupert and Republican loons can sucker them into consuming life rather than experiencing it - the proof is here.

The Cutting Edge

8.30pm, SBS: Leslie Woodhead, who in 1999 made *A Cry From The Grave* - an award-winning program which exposed the world's indifference to events that allowed the massacre at Srebrenica in July 1995 - returns to the scene of that crime to see what has transpired in the decade since. Some of the 8000 victims are still being exhumed from mass graves, the instigators and perpetrators are still at large, and genocide is afoot in Darfur. This is a program about genocide: how it is conducted, what kinds of apathy expedite it and how it can be prevented. In Bosnia-Herzegovina, Woodhead finds time hasn't healed all wounds and reconciliation is not abundantly evident.

Graphic

DRAWING: By Rocco Fazzari

Load-Date: July 17, 2007

End of Document

ENGLISH CRICKETERS HEAD OUT TO BAT IN SRI LANKA FOR UN ANTI-HUNGER CAMPAIGN

States News Service

December 14, 2007 Friday

Copyright 2007 States News Service

Length: 322 words

Byline: States News Service

Dateline: NEW YORK

Body

The following information was released by the United Nations:

Sri Lankan schoolchildren will have the opportunity tomorrow to learn some tips from some of England's best cricketers during a special training clinic being held as part of efforts by the United Nations World Food Programme (WFP) to raise awareness about global hunger.

England's captain Michael Vaughan, batsmen Alastair Cook and Kevin Pietersen and coach Peter Moores will conduct a clinic at a cricket ground in Galle in the far south of Sri Lanka. The participating children are recipients of WFP meals at 11 schools in the surrounding area.

The clinic has been arranged under the "Cricket Against Hunger" partnership between the WFP and the England and Wales Cricket Board, one of several partnerships the UN agency has formed with sporting organizations or well-known sportsmen and women.

Mohamed Saleheen, WFP Representative in Sri Lanka, said the partnership is designed to raise awareness about the hundreds of millions of children worldwide who go hungry on many days.

"These players, who are known all over the world, have an important role to play in drawing attention to WFP's vital work in addressing malnutrition among children," Mr. Saleheen said.

Mr. Cook said it was important to spotlight the hardships faced by so many children around the world.

"As international sportsmen, we are in the public eye, and we have an opportunity to tell our fans and followers about the scale of this problem, and the work that WFP is doing to address it," he said.

WFP started its school feeding programmes in Sri Lanka in 2003 in response to high levels of child malnutrition in areas affected by the civil conflict between Government forces and the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE). After the Indian Ocean tsunami struck Sri Lanka in December 2004, the programmes were expanded. Today an estimated 350,000 children receive assistance in 15 of the nation's 25 districts.

Load-Date: December 15, 2007

ENGLISH CRICKETERS HEAD OUT TO BAT IN SRI LANKA FOR UN ANTI-HUNGER CAMPAIGN

End of Document

Devastation overwhelms prime minister

The Record (Kitchener-Waterloo, Ontario)

January 18, 2005 Tuesday Final Edition

Copyright 2005 Metroland Media Group Ltd

Section: FRONT; Pg. A5; NEWS

Length: 573 words

Dateline: KALMUNAI, SRI LANKA

Body

Just two minutes spent visiting Sri Lanka's tsunami-shattered east coast would convince any Canadian of the value of sending in Canada's military, an awe-struck Prime Minister Paul Martin said yesterday after wandering a devastated community in the country for close to an hour.

Martin travelled by helicopter 300 kilometres east of Colombo to inspect the Disaster Assistance Response Team, or DART, at its camp in Ampara district -- a region about half the size of Prince Edward Island that is estimated to have had more than 10,000 die as a result of the Dec. 26 tsunami.

The prime minister later conceded that nothing had prepared him for the experience.
Canadian Press

"The fact is that (Canadian tax) money is going directly to where it's needed," Martin told reporters in the jungle heat outside a DART medical clinic in a girls' school that has become a refugee camp.

"I don't think you can spend more than about two minutes here without realizing just how desperately that help is needed."

Hundreds of local Sri Lankans -- Muslim, Sinhalese and Tamils -- crowded Kalmunai's rubble-strewn streets to wave at the visiting Canadian leader.

Martin's first stop was a mass grave just a stone's throw from the beach.

Houses and businesses that looked like they had been bombed surrounded the dusty patch of ground.

"In that grave site alone there's over 1,000 people that died," Padre Jim Hardwick of the DART team said in an interview.

It was the first place local **women** led him when he arrived in Kalmunai, and Hardwick called it the "heart" of what the local community wanted Martin to see.

"I've been told upwards from 5,000 to 10,000 (died in Ampara) and the last count somebody had was definitely 10,736," Hardwick said. "That number won't leave my head."

Martin had already toured tsunami-affected beaches in Thailand on the weekend as he opened a nine-day Asian tour. But those scoured communities were pictures of industry, cleanliness and recovery compared with Kalmunai.

Devastation overwhelms prime minister

As Martin and his wife Sheila stepped gingerly through cratered streets to reach the beach, they literally stepped over burnt indentations in the sand that indicated where badly decomposed corpses had been torched as they lay.

Children scampered barefoot through the tangled angle iron and slabs of concrete jutting at odd angles from the ground. The prime minister stopped again and again to greet the delighted kids.

Martin appeared overwhelmed, repeatedly commenting on the children to no one in particular.

"You'd have to be stone not to be emotionally affected by all this," he told reporters after catching his breath.

"When you see these young kids, what they've been through . . . it is impossible not to be deeply, deeply affected."

Capt. Steve Pirie, a doctor leading the DART clinic in the overrun Mahmud Ladies College -- now home to some 450 refugee families, about 1,900 people -- told the prime minister they treat 50 to 100 patients a day.

"We turn away people every day," said Pirie when Martin asked if that was the patient load. "There's no shortage of medicine (care) to be done here."

The prime minister also took several long drinks from a bottle of water purified by the DART team -- water drawn from a nearby slough.

"It's good stuff . . . maybe pour in a little scotch," he joked with the soldiers, whose camp is alcohol free.

When Martin returned to Colombo yesterday afternoon, he met with political representatives allied to the insurgent **Tamil Tigers**.

Graphic

Photo: CANADIAN PRESS; Prime Minister Paul Martin holds a young boy yesterday at a displaced persons camp set up at a school in Kalumnai, Sri Lanka. The prime minister toured the devastated area and had a look at Canada's relief effort.

Load-Date: January 18, 2005

French charity organization urges more focus on probe into aid worker deaths in Sri Lanka

Xinhua General News Service

August 11, 2006 Friday 4:00 AM EST

Copyright 2006 Xinhua News Agency

Section: WORLD NEWS; Political

Length: 316 words

Dateline: COLOMBO

Body

Action Contre la Faim (ACF) Friday called for more international attention on investigations into the deaths of 17 local aid workers attached to the French charity organization in Sri Lanka's troubled eastern town of Muttur.

The ACF Director General and Executive Director Benoit Miribel told reporters "the international community wants to follow the investigation, they want to get to the bottom of this".

Some 17 local workers of ACF, 16 of them from the minority Tamil community, were found murdered in Muttur, the scene of heavy fighting between the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (**LTTE**) rebels and the government troops on Aug. 1-4.

"After several attempts to reach Muttur on 4 August despite the ongoing fighting our team reached Muttur on 7 August. 17 of our colleagues were coldly executed by a shot in the head, they were found lined up face to the ground", Miribel said, adding that four of them were **women**.

He said the Sri Lankan government has taken the investigation very seriously and asked for foreign forensic expertise on the probe.

The ACF would follow the investigation closely and would be issuing reports on its progress, Miribel said.

"For the moment the ACF has suspended all its activities in Sri Lanka and is currently reassessing its presence," he said.

The ACF said they had over 5,000 local staff members all over the world and this is the first time that its staff has been attacked.

In the Muttur area, they had been helping 1,000 families to improve hygiene conditions and access to drinking water - those who had been displaced by continuous violence in the eastern region.

The Sri Lankan government has assured ACF of an independent inquiry into the incident, and has already called for Australian forensic expertise to help the local Crime Investigation Department of the Police to carry out the investigation.

French charity organization urges more focus on probe into aid worker deaths in Sri Lanka

Load-Date: August 12, 2006

End of Document

Sri Lankan women condemn rebels' use of women as suicide bombers

Associated Press International

May 22, 2006 Monday 8:12 AM GMT

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Section: INTERNATIONAL NEWS

Length: 304 words

Dateline: COLOMBO Sri Lanka

Body

About 100 women protested in Sri Lanka's capital on Monday against the use of female suicide bombers by separatist Tamil Tiger rebels.

"We condemn the use of women, especially pregnant women," said Dulcy de Silva, a spokeswoman for Sri Lanka's All Party Women's Congress.

In April, a female suicide bomber attempted to assassinate the country's top military general by using the fact that she appeared pregnant to avoid security checks at the capital's military headquarters.

Investigators have not yet determined whether the woman was actually pregnant, but reports that she deliberately became pregnant to infiltrate the compound have circulated widely in Sri Lanka.

At least 13 people, including the bomber, were killed in the attack, but the target, Maj. Gen. Sarath Fonseka, escaped with serious injuries.

The rebels, formally named the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam, began fighting the government in 1983 for a separate homeland for ethnic Tamils. The Tiger suicide unit, known as the Black Tigers, has carried out some 75 suicide attacks, with an estimated one third by women.

"It is pathetic that the LTTE has been using women as suicide bombers and they are now using pregnant women as suicide bombers," Silva said.

"We don't want anybody to be killed ... whether they are Sinhalese, Tamils or Muslims," she told a crowd of about 100 people gathered at Colombo's main park for the protest.

A fragile 2002 cease-fire between the government and the rebels has been rocked by surging violence that has killed nearly 300 people since April, according to international truce monitors, and has halted peace talks.

Dozens of civilians have also been killed under shadowy circumstances. Each side blames the other for the bloodshed.

More than 65,000 people were killed before the cease-fire accord halted 19 years of open warfare.

Load-Date: May 23, 2006

Sri Lankan women condemn rebels' use of women as suicide bombers

End of Document

Bridging the distance: Stories from Sri Lanka

Indo-Asian News Service

January 25, 2005 Tuesday 9:57 AM EST

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Length: 557 words

Byline: Indo-Asian News Service

Dateline: New Delhi

Body

New Delhi, Jan. 25 -- When you are close to events you tend to overlook them, and so it was with Gnana Moonesinghe who could take a closer look at the endemic violence that had racked her country - Sri Lanka - only at a distance.

The outcome - "Build a Bridge" - is a compilation of five short stories woven around the social problems that over three decades of violence have thrown up in the island nation.

"I wrote the first story on our way back from London. It was a nine-hour flight and I finished it before we landed," the author told IANS ahead of the book's formal release.

That was in 2002. She was returning to India with her husband, Mangala Moonesinghe, on his second posting as Sri Lanka's high commissioner in New Delhi, which is perhaps the island's most important diplomatic posting.

"I didn't know that she was writing a story. She was looking at me sometimes and then going back to her writing," said the admiring envoy.

"The inspiration for the book came from a fellow Sri Lankan writer, Bandula Chandraratne, whose 'Mirage' narrowly missed the Booker Prize a few years ago," said Gnana.

After reading her two earlier books, "Nation Building" and "Thus Have I Heard", a guide for Buddhist pilgrims that connects religious sites to the Buddha's discourses, Chandraratne encouraged her to try her hand at fiction.

"That was the inspiration," said the author.

But writing is only one of Gnana's passions. A mother of two, she is also involved in charity activities. As an active former president of the Delhi Commonwealth Women's Association, she continues to raise funds for various charities.

She believes that "majority" politics and the political classes' insatiable greed for power are at the root of Sri Lanka's troubles.

She referred particularly to the then government's decision - soon after Sri Lanka's independence in 1948 - to cancel the citizenship of those Tamils of Indian origin brought to the island by the British as indentured labour.

Bridging the distance: Stories from Sri Lanka

"This perhaps is the point at which we began the shift from positions of fairness to arbitrary action in pursuit of narrow advantage. This was the entry of discriminatory politics where solutions were sought by manipulation of accepted legal systems.

"We are victims of majority politics, which has destroyed the whole system for the sake of vote banks. The flip side is that the aggrieved party takes to violence and the nation suffers," Gnana said.

Though the island has been caught in a cycle of violence since the late 1950s, there has not been much literary introspection on the subject.

"There has been too much of violence. You see it every day and you carry on. Sometimes you are too close to the events to take notice," said the author.

Life in New Delhi, despite the hectic social obligation that a diplomatic life entails, allowed Gnana the opportunity to take a closer look at events back home.

Her stories are not judgemental and they are written with great sensitivity to the psychological trauma of victims of the violence - soldiers, civilians and rebels.

Gnana's stories reflect the human cost suffered by both sides - the **Tamil Tigers** and the Sinhala extremists of the Janatha Vimukthi Peramuna (JVP).

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Load-Date: January 25, 2005

**THE WAVE OF DEATH: IN HELL;
HOMELESS SURVIVORS FACING DISEASE AND TORRENTIAL RAIN**

The Mirror

January 4, 2005, Tuesday

Copyright 2005 MGN Ltd.



Section: 2 Star Edition; NEWS; Pg. 7

Length: 524 words

Byline: VANESSA ALLEN WITH OXFAM IN KINNIYA, SRI LANKA

Highlight: ORDEAL: Homeless child in Kinniya; CHAOS: Dr Parameswary at Kinniya Hospital yesterday

Body

FATHIMMA tends her sick baby on the concrete floor of a camp for destitute survivors.

She swats away the flies that swarm over the one-year-old's face and wipes away the tears from her own, pulling her saree across her eyes to hide her grief.

Fathimma, 35, was a mother of three but her older daughter Nazeema, seven, and four-year-old son Hassan were swept out to sea by the tsunami as they played on the beach near their home in Kinniya, north-east Sri Lanka.

Her house was destroyed, her fisherman husband is missing and she is in a makeshift camp for survivors.

Now her surviving child, Naleera, is sick. Fathimma had no baby formula to give her and Kinniya was cut off from aid supplies so she fed her the only milk available - full-cream - which has given the child diarrhoea, a potentially deadly condition.

Relief supplies have now begun to arrive at the camp in the town's schoolhouse but Naleera lies motionless. Fathimma said: "I think she will get better now I have baby milk to give her."

Her optimism is incredible but not unusual in the camp in which more than 4,500 people are crammed with only hope to cling to after the waves took virtually everything else.

Kinniya district had a population of more than 55,000 of whom 18,312 are now homeless and more than 500 dead and buried in mass graves.

Oxfam is working round the clock to improve sanitation in the emergency camps, rapidly set up in schools and mosques, by bringing in clean water supplies and building latrines.

THE WAVE OF DEATH: IN HELL; HOMELESS SURVIVORS FACING DISEASE AND TORRENTIAL RAIN

At Kinniya school thousands share just five or six latrines which are little more than ditches. Programme co-ordinator Rod Slip, from Reading, fears the survivors will refuse to use them if the stench grows too bad.

Surgeon Yasotharan Parameswary told how she and her colleagues at the district hospital tried to carry their patients to safety but could not outrun the tsunami. The sheer instinct for survival became too much and the medical staff were forced to flee for their own lives.

Dr Parameswary said: "I ran for my life, screaming and calling for help. I was terrified. We had to leave or die. We had no choice."

More than 100 people were being treated in the hospital - many of them pregnant women and new mothers and their babies in the maternity ward. Just four survived.

Drips and syringes hang from trees in the hospital grounds, pulled out from the arms of patients.

Two nurses and a labourer refused to leave and all three died.

Aid work has been hampered by the worst monsoon rains in 35 years, which have lashed the region.

Some homes which survived the waves collapsed as the rains hit and in Kinniya the water pipe which supplied the town with drinking water was destroyed. Now aid workers fear epidemics will decimate camps.

Kinniya lies near the port of Trincomalee, where Oxfam has an office after two decades of a bloody civil war. The government and the rebel Tamil Tigers signed a ceasefire in 2002 but there were signs it was breaking down before the disaster.

Margareta Krook, of the International Sri Lanka Monitoring Mission, said: "The last thing this country needs is for conflict to begin again. Their only hope is peace."

Load-Date: January 4, 2005

Gandhi joins forces with old foes in vital state

Financial Times (London, England)

May 10, 2004 Monday

Asia Edition 1

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Section: ASIA & EUROPE; Pg. 2

Length: 604 words

Byline: By EDWARD LUCE

Dateline: CHENNAI

Body

The voters of Tamil Nadu, one of India's richest states, could play a critical role in deciding the country's next government when it goes to the polls today in the fourth and final phase of India's marathon general election.

India's southernmost state contributes just 39 of the country's 543 parliamentary constituencies. But since exit polls from the first three rounds suggest that the country's ruling BJP-led coalition will fall short of a majority by anything between 10 and 40 seats, it is India's smaller regional and caste parties that will hold the balance of power.

Sonia Gandhi, the Italian-born leader of the opposition Congress party, has swallowed her pride in wooing the state's leading Dravidian party - the DMK. In 1991 her husband, Rajiv Gandhi, was assassinated in Tamil Nadu by a **female** suicide bomber who detonated explosives strapped to her body while she was touching his feet in apparent submission.

Mrs Gandhi's family has long accused the DMK, which stands for Dravidian pride and used to espouse something close to anti-India separatism for the state, of conniving with the Sri Lankan **Tamil Tigers** in her husband's murder. Nowadays, however, Mrs Gandhi seems quite comfortable sharing a podium with M Karunanidhi, its octogenarian leader.

The Congress-DMK alliance is expected to sweep the state today, in part because of the growing unpopularity of Jayalalithaa, the state's chief minister, who is in alliance with the Hindu nationalist BJP. Jayalalithaa, whose autocratic governing style has earned her the title "Queen of Hearts", viscerally opposes a foreign-born person becoming prime minister of India.

"I stand here on the soil that is mingled with the blood of my husband," Mrs Gandhi told a rally of 50,000 cheering supporters in Chennai, capital of the state. "And I can assert that there would be no greater honour for me than to share his fate for the sake of our country."

But politics in Tamil Nadu is usually impervious to what happens in the rest of the country. The DMK, which began life as an anti-Brahmin party and openly sponsored atheism as its core ideology, was part of the ruling BJP coalition in New Delhi until last year. It could easily switch sides again if the price was right.

Gandhi joins forces with old foes in vital state

The DMK's main aim is to wrest power from Jayalalithaa when the state holds assembly polls in 2006. In the last two years Jayalalithaa has sponsored Hindu temple politics and passed a controversial law banning "forced conversion" to other religions.

"Jayalalithaa has alienated a lot of people with her 'off with their heads' style of politics," says T Jayaraman at the Madras Institute of Mathematical Sciences. "And she has reintroduced the irrational and the obscurantist into public life."

Tamil Nadu's vicious political rivalries do not appear to have undermined the state's growing economic prosperity which is built on a booming information technology sector and growing foreign investment in car components plants.

But its parties do have a tendency to upset stability in New Delhi. In 1999 Jayalalithaa pulled the plug from the first BJP-led coalition government in New Delhi. Congress withdrew support from the previous "third front" government led by IK Gujral since the coalition included the DMK which had allegedly colluded in Rajiv's assassination.

Both the BJP and Congress appear to have forgiven their unruly Tamil allies since their support will be critical after Thursday when India's votes are tallied and published.

"Both parties will do what they can to strengthen their position in Tamil Nadu," says Maalan, a political commentator in Delhi. "There will be no other objective."

Load-Date: May 9, 2004

End of Document

GANDHI PRIZE WINNER SPEAKS ABOUT PEACE

Wisconsin State Journal (Madison, WI)

May 22, 2004 Saturday, ALL Editions

Copyright 2004 Madison Newspapers, Inc.

Section: OPINION; GUEST COLUMN; Pg. A10; Column

Length: 611 words

Byline: Rick Brooks

Body

Gandhi Peace Prize winner A.T. Ariyaratne will present a free public lecture at 7 p.m. Monday at the First Congregational United Church of Christ, 1609 University Ave. Readers may wonder what this man from tiny Sri Lanka has to do with life in Dane County.

For Ariyaratne, Madison is one stop between a conference in California and a meeting with world religious leaders in Rome. But two words associated with Mahatma Gandhi tell the bigger story. The first is "ahimsa," the focus of the California conference. Ahimsa means nonviolence rooted in courage, compassion and forgiveness. It's about civility and lasting peace.

Brooks is an outreach program manager in the Department of Professional Development and Applied Studies, UW-Madison. He leads study-service tours to Japan and Sri Lanka and teaches a course titled "Facilitating Health and Social Change."

The second word is "sarvodaya," which means "the awakening of all." Through the Sarvodaya Movement that he founded 45 years ago, Ariyaratne has inspired thousands of villages to attain one of the most enduring visions and realities in the developing world.

Sarvodaya has convened "peace tables" of victims, perpetrators and witnesses of violence. Ariyaratne has led peace meditations with millions of people; taught prisoners and guards to forgive each other and themselves. Sarvodaya has convinced families of great wealth that the riches of community life can outweigh the accumulation of material goods. Powerless villagers have learned to govern themselves.

Maybe Sri Lanka is not as far away from Bishop's Bay or Allied Drive as we think.

For example, think about violence. Sri Lanka's **Tamil Tigers** were among the first suicide bombers. Although the Tigers and the Sri Lankan government have been killing each other for more than 20 years, Sarvodaya villages were known as "zones of peace."

In the Sri Lankan fighting, the killers on both sides asked "Don't we have the obligation to protect our way of life? Why doesn't the rest of the world see our point of view?" The vast majority of Americans had been exempt from such thinking until Al-Qaida brought the terror to us in person and we openly responded.

We had been busy with our own realities, especially the popular culture that we export around the globe. Contrast football, binge drinking, "Survivor" and "Fear Factor" with the horrible reality in countries where climate and culture beat people up just for living.

GANDHI PRIZE WINNER SPEAKS ABOUT PEACE

We sympathize with people who get kicked off a TV show because they refuse to eat worms for money. In Sudan and the Congo, thousands of women and children are desperate for such food. In Haiti, mothers are making bread from flour and salt ... and dirt.

Ariyaratne's life and achievements can remind us of what we often forget: that as long as we all breathe, our thoughts and actions, dreams and realities are intertwined. Instead of believing that the world is made up of good, patriotic Americans and others who want to do us harm, we might entertain the notion that the enemy may well be violence itself; that not killing, not imposing our will by brute force could make a better life for everyone.

In America, we like things to be simple -- good guys vs. bad guys, winners and losers... especially when we are on top of our game. But someone like Ariyaratne offers us a larger reality worth considering. Written as bumper stickers, his message might read "God bless the entire world. No exceptions." Or "Change the way you see the world. Change the way the world sees you."

That world is bigger than us. To find meaning and peace, we have to look outside the boundaries to which we have become accustomed. If we do, we will find ourselves.

Load-Date: May 23, 2004

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THE TOP TEN...SAUCY CHEFS

The Evening Standard (London)

October 3, 2003

Copyright 2003 Associated Newspapers Ltd.

Section: ES MAG; Pg. 17

Length: 577 words

Body

Why are our favourite chefs so fiery? Is it the heat of the kitchen that brings them to boiling point or is being bad their recipe for success?

It would take too long to catalogue Marco Pierre White's kitchen naughtinesses but recently it has been alleged that MPW had strayed into the boardroom. The Leeds-born chef, 41, is in hot water after his fiery wife, Mati, decided he had become too friendly with top banker Robin Saunders. Who is a woman, we hasten to add.

What is it with chefs and sex? Jean-Christophe Novelli, 42, has come up with a novel way to meet women: he's set aside two (packed-out) ladies' lunch days at his restaurant, Auberge du Lac. As his menus tell us, his favourite pastimes are cooking and making love 'because they are the only human activities which use all five senses'.

The Oliver Reed of the kitchen, Keith Floyd, 59, once said about his life: 'Today, 18 books, 16 TV series, three marriages, one receivership not to mention several million pounds earned, spent, lost, stolen, misinvested and squandered. I wonder if I knew what I know now whether I might have never made my first TV series.' Bit late now.

Tom Aikens, 33, youngest chef in the country to be awarded two Michelin stars for his cooking, was fired from Pied Terre for tapping a fellow cook with a hot knife as if to imply 'you don't have enough burns to work in this restaurant'. Well, if you can't stand the heat Aikens now runs his own successful eponymous restaurant in Chelsea.

Rick Stein, 56, was a cold fish when he revealed that he been cheating on his wife of almost 30 years, Jill. Later he said of his affair with 36-yearold Australian publicist Sarah Burn: 'I have been cast as the typical ageing male who packs in his wife to run off with a younger woman.' Let's hope she's his sole mate.

Gordon Ramsay, 36, specialises in French cuisine and insulting his fellow restaurateurs. The Glaswegian former footballer accuses Raymond Blanc of having a temper 'like a Rottweiler', and says he would rather eat his four-year-old daughter Meg's nursery snacks than in a Conran restaurant. And that's just for starters.

Nigella Lawson, 43, clearly relishes her role as the thinking man's crumpet.

In a bid to conquer America, Nigella, who makes husband Saatchi brush her teeth at night, seduced Jay Leno on live television. Wearing a low-cut gown, she found Leno slipping his arms around her waist. His drooling comment? 'My wife is going to kill me.'

Giorgio Locatelli, 39, can be so rude that most of his TV programme ends up on the cutting-room floor. 'I see so much tape on the floor, I nearly cry!'

THE TOP TEN...SAUCY CHEFS

he bemoans as the editors slice up another tirade on supermarkets. NB: never quibble about the bill at Locanda Locatelli. The staff will lock you in until you pay up.

Fifty-two-year-old Antony Worrall Thompson's campfire stories of infidelity and brushes with the law kept the rest of the I'm a Celebrity, Get Me Out of Here contestants entertained in the depths of the jungle. But let's face it, Wozza may have strained credulity when he claimed he has sex three times a day.

TV's Mr Nice has shown his dark side. Jamie Oliver, 28, was forced to apologise after wearing a T-shirt with the logo of Sri Lankan guerrillas the **Tamil Tigers**. He said: 'I was unaware of their activities and it was horrible to hear about destruction and violence that they have done as well as recruiting young children to carry out their tactics.' Sounds a bit like Fifteen, though.

END

Load-Date: October 4, 2003

End of Document

WORLD DIGEST

St. Louis Post-Dispatch (Missouri)

March 9, 2004 Tuesday Five Star Late Lift Edition

Copyright 2004 St. Louis Post-Dispatch, Inc.

Section: NEWS; World Digest Column; Pg. A6

Length: 625 words

Byline: From News Services

Body

ZIMBABWE

Nation says seized plane carried "mercenaries"

Zimbabwean authorities have seized a U.S.-registered cargo plane carrying 64 "suspected mercenaries" and military equipment, the Home Affairs minister said Monday.

The Boeing 727-100 was detained at Harare's main airport late Sunday after its owners allegedly made "a false declaration of its cargo and crew," Home Affairs Minister Kembo Mohadi said at a news briefing. "The plane was actually carrying 64 suspected mercenaries of various nationalities," Mohadi said.

The plane is registered to Dodson Aviation Inc. of Ottawa, Kan. However, company director Robert Dodson said it had sold the aircraft about a week ago to a "reputable" South African company, Logo Ltd. "I think they were going to use it for charter flights," he said by telephone.

President Robert Mugabe has repeatedly accused the United States and Britain of plotting to overthrow his autocratic regime.

SWITZERLAND

Peace Prize winner lectures Islamic world

The failure by governments across the Islamic world to respect women's rights has hampered even hesitant steps toward political change, Nobel Peace Prize laureate Shirin Ebadi said Monday as the United Nations observed International Women's Day.

"The rights of women and democracy are one and the same thing," the Iranian lawyer and rights campaigner said during a visit to the International Labor Organization in Geneva.

Speaking alongside Ebadi, Carla Del Ponte - chief prosecutor of the U.N. war crimes tribunal - said "in most democratic societies over the past generation women have been given the opportunity to realize their professional aspirations. It's not the same in the rest of the world."

CHINA

WORLD DIGEST

Lawmakers may grant protection for property

Lawmakers began considering amendments Monday to bring China's constitution up to date with its increasingly capitalist reality by granting the first protection for private property since the 1949 communist revolution.

The changes - already endorsed by the Communist Party as a key element of future prosperity - also would declare support for entrepreneurs who are creating millions of jobs and driving the country's economic boom.

A vote is due Sunday, and the largely ceremonial National People's Congress appears sure to pass them.

FRANCE

Trains are delayed after bomb threat

Trains to central France, Spain and Belgium were delayed Monday night after French authorities received a bomb threat from a woman claiming to be part of a group that had made similar threats last week.

Searches of rail tracks around the central city of Poitiers, which the caller said would be targeted, turned up no trace of a bomb and traffic resumed by 11:20 p.m. after a two-hour halt, said Francoise Le Goareguer, a spokeswoman for France's rail authority, SNCF.

Trains between Paris and Bordeaux were delayed, as well as a train from Paris to Barcelona and another from Brussels to Bordeaux. The caller identified herself as a member of AZF, a previously unknown terror group that claims to have planted nine bombs along the country's rail network.

SRI LANKA

Rebel leaders say they won't harm renegade

Sri Lanka's **Tamil Tigers** said Monday they would not harm a renegade commander who has accused rebel leaders of sending "killer squads" to attack him.

Rebel leaders announced Saturday they were expelling Tiger commander Vinayagamoorthi Muralitharan, also known as Karuna, from their ranks after he withdrew 6,000 fighters in a dispute with the Tigers' top leader over troop deployment. The rebels have 15,000 fighters nationwide.

Muralitharan has refused to relinquish power and claimed rebel leaders had targeted him for assassination. The unprecedented rebel rift has threatened to derail peace efforts aimed at ending the country's 20-year civil war.

Load-Date: March 9, 2004

Deadly clash at sea dominates first day of peace talks between Tamil Tiger rebels, Sri Lankan government

Associated Press International

March 18, 2003 Tuesday

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Section: INTERNATIONAL NEWS

Length: 559 words

Byline: BETH DUFF-BROWN; Associated Press Writer

Dateline: HAKONE, Japan

Body

A deadly clash at sea between ***Tamil Tigers*** and the Sri Lankan navy dominated talks Tuesday to end one of Asia's longest civil wars, though both sides agreed to move on to other measures to end the 19-year ethnic conflict.

The sixth round of peace talks between the government and Liberation Tigers of Tamileelam opened with a traditional Japanese lunch in Hakone, a town in the snow-laced foothills of Mount Fuji.

Chief negotiators for both sides spent nearly four hours discussing the sinking of a rebel ship by the Sri Lankan navy, other claims of truce violations and improved security for minority Tamils in the northern part of the small island-nation in the Indian Ocean.

"It's been resolved," Gamini Peiris, negotiator for the Colombo government, said of the sea clash incident.

He told reporters that within three weeks, both sides would meet with the navy and Norwegian-led Sri Lanka Monitoring Mission to reaffirm the mission's authority and review ways to avoid another clash that could derail the peace talks.

On March 10, Sri Lanka's navy killed 11 rebel sailors and sank their boat, which was suspected of smuggling arms. The rebels insist the ship was only carrying oil and that it was attacked while in international waters. It was the worst conflict since a Norwegian-brokered truce in the 19-year ethnic war went into effect more than a year ago.

On Wednesday, the talks will take up economic recovery, the resettlement of displaced Tamils and human rights. The two sides also intend to discuss how the two sides will share tax revenue and power under a federal government.

Peace talks began in September, after the Norwegians brokered a cease-fire in February 2002. The monitoring mission said in a statement Monday that it had "no proof" of whether the rebel vessel's cargo was "warlike material," as stated by the government, or oil as the rebels insist.

"This was a deliberate act to implicate us and defame us by saying that we were carrying weapons," rebel negotiator Anton Balasingham told reporters. "The situation on the ground is still unstable because the armed forces are not cooperating and there is still mutual mistrust and hostility."

Deadly clash at sea dominates first day of peace talks between Tamil Tiger rebels, Sri Lankan government

The rebels began fighting for a homeland for the ethnic Tamil minority on the Indian Ocean island in 1983, but now say they would settle for autonomy in a federal state. The war has killed nearly 65,000 people, displaced another 1.6 million and destroyed the economy.

The Tigers accuse the majority Sinhalese, who are predominantly Buddhist, of discrimination in education and jobs against the country's 3.2 million minority Tamils, most of whom are Hindu and live in the north.

The government accuses the rebels of human rights abuses, such as recruiting children into their ranks and using women as suicide bombers, who have carried out some of the worst attacks of the civil war.

The European cease-fire monitors said Tuesday they were concerned that cease-fire violations were possibly being timed to coincide with talks.

"If these are planned or mere coincidence no one knows. But this is an emerging trend we do not like at all," said Hargrup Haukland, deputy head of Norwegian-led cease-fire monitoring team. "It's very very strange that the most serious incidents occur when peace talks are taking place."

On the Net:

Tamil Web site: www.TamilNet.com.

Government site: www.peaceinsrilanka.com

Load-Date: March 19, 2003

EU provides 5 million euros to Sri Lanka conflict victims

Agence France Presse -- English

October 25, 2006 Wednesday 3:58 PM GMT

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Length: 304 words

Dateline: BRUSSELS, Oct 25 2006

Body

The European Commission on Wednesday announced it would give five million euros (6.3 million dollars) in humanitarian aid to conflict-affected people in Sri Lanka and refugees in neighbouring India.

The money is in addition to seven million euros agreed in July.

"This new allocation will cover basic needs such as shelter, water, sanitation and healthcare with a particular focus on vulnerable groups such as women and children," the commission said in a statement.

The funds will be channelled through the European Commission Humanitarian Aid department (ECHO) under the responsibility of Humanitarian Aid Commissioner Louis Michel.

"The Commission is extremely worried about the upsurge in violence in Sri Lanka since the end of 2005 that has a direct impact on the lives of thousands of civilians," Michel said.

"We are committed to easing the suffering of the victims, but it is becoming ever more difficult to get help to the most vulnerable," Michel added.

Since 1983, the conflict between the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) and the Sri Lanka government in the North and East of the country has claimed more than 65,000 lives.

Up to 800,000 people have been internally displaced during this time and currently there are around 80,000 Sri Lankan refugees in neighbouring India's southern Tamil Nadu state, with a significant increase recorded since January.

The new funding allocation is a response to the appeal for aid by the UN and the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) and will benefit over 250,000 displaced and vulnerable persons.

Since 2004, the EU's executive arm has given a total of 64 million euros in aid for victims of humanitarian crises in Sri Lanka.

A total of 42 million euros was provided following the tsunami in December 2004 and 22 million has been directed towards conflict victims.

EU provides 5 million euros to Sri Lanka conflict victims

Load-Date: October 26, 2006

End of Document

RIGHTS: ANNAN TALKS TOUGH ON RECRUITERS OF CHILD SOLDIERS

IPS-Inter Press Service

February 14, 2005, Monday

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Length: 838 words

Byline: By Thalif Deen

Dateline: UNITED NATIONS, February 14 2005

Body

Alarmed at the continued widespread abuse of children in war zones, U.N. Secretary-General Kofi Annan is calling for tough new measures to penalise those guilty of atrocities.

The proposed measures, detailed in a report to the U.N. Security Council, include the imposition of travel restrictions on leaders and their exclusion from any governance structures and amnesty provisions, the imposition of arms embargoes, a ban on military assistance, and restriction on the flow of financial resources to warring parties.

"This report represents the launch of a comprehensive compliance regime to ensure the protection of millions of children who are being brutalised in situations of conflict," Annan says.

The study, which will be presented to the Security Council on Feb. 23, identifies six "grave violations" described as "egregious abuses against children".

These include killing or maiming of children; recruiting or using child soldiers; attacks against schools or hospitals; rape and other grave sexual violence against children; abduction of children; and denial of humanitarian access for children.

Annan says there is a need to "transform words into deeds, protective instruments and standards into enforcement on the ground, and condemnation into accountability."

The secretary-general expects key U.N. and international bodies such as the Security Council, the General Assembly, the Commission on Human Rights, the International Criminal Court, and regional organizations and governments to take action against child abuse.

The study also expresses "grave concern" about recent reports of sexual exploitation and abuse of children by U.N. peacekeeping personnel -- specifically in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC).

"This is one of the most disturbing and grave incidents of abuse and exploitation of women and children," U.N. Under-Secretary-General Olara Otunnu, head of the Office of the Special Representative for Children and Armed Conflict, told reporters last week..

That such activities could be occurring "in our own house" was most alarming and required an end to impunity. Otunnu said the idea that U.N. personnel, including peacekeepers, would abuse their position to take advantage of local women and children was particularly troubling.

RIGHTS: ANNAN TALKS TOUGH ON RECRUITERS OF CHILD SOLDIERS

Conscious of the political sensitivities of member states, the report says the names of countries are only referred to in order to indicate the locations or situations where offending parties are committing violations.

The first list consists of national armies and/or armed groups that recruit or use children in situations of armed conflict (and are on the agenda of the Security Council). These include Burundi, Cote d'Ivoire, DRC, Somalia and Sudan.

A second list includes national armies and/or armed groups that recruit or use children (and are not on the agenda of the Security Council). These include Colombia, Myanmar, Nepal, the Philippines, Sri Lanka and Uganda.

Otunnu said that while efforts over the past several years had yielded "significant advances" and had greatly increased global awareness of and advocacy for child protection, the situation "remained grave and unacceptable."

Perhaps the only silver lining, he said, was that within the last two years, the numbers had slightly decreased: from some 350,000 child soldiers worldwide to about 300,000.

That, he explained, was primarily due to either political transition or lessening of tensions in several countries, including Angola, Sierra Leone and southern Sudan.

Otunnu singled out two countries -- Sri Lanka and Nepal -- as causes for concern. In Sri Lanka, where there was currently no fighting but also no peace, the separatist Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) continue to recruit children.

The report says the LTTE "has often carried out recruitment by force, abducting children while on their way to school or during religious festivities, and beating families and teachers who resisted the seizure of the children."

During 2004 alone, more than 1,000 cases of recruitment and re-recruitment were reported by the U.N. children's agency UNICEF. A high percentage of them were young girls.

Last year, a coalition of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) urged Annan to prepare an annual list of governments and armed groups that recruit or use child soldiers in violation of international obligations.

Such a regular list, the coalition said, would keep violators constantly "named and shamed" for not protecting children during military conflicts.

The coalition included International Save the Children Alliance, Norwegian Refugee Council, Care International, Women's Commission for Refugee Women and Children, World Vision International and Coalition to Stop the Use of Child Soldiers.

The 1990 U.N. Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) sets the legal minimum age for recruitment at 15.

But an Optional Protocol to the CRC, which came into force in February 2003, outlawed the involvement of children under 18 in any hostilities and sets strict standards for the recruitment of those under 18.

Load-Date: February 15, 2005

Analysis: Buddha vs. Shiva minus 8

United Press International
November 11, 2003 Tuesday

Copyright 2003 U.P.I.

Length: 782 words

Byline: By UWE SIEMON-NETTO

Body

Imagine a team of Buddhists mediating in a conflict between one particularly hardnosed bunch of Christians on the one hand and an equally tough-minded Jewish sect on the other. Imagine further that the leader of the latter group indulged in a curious form of superstition thus violating the First Commandment.

Something like that is currently happening in Colombo. Norwegians, who almost by definition are Protestants, act as arbiters in the peace talks between two ethnically and religiously altogether different sets of Sri Lankans, who have shared their island, formerly called Ceylon, for thousands of years.

There is the Sinhalese majority, which dominates the island nation's government. The Sinhalese speak a Sanskrit-based tongue that is related to the Indo-Aryan group of languages. They adhere to the Theravada branch of Buddhism known in other parts of Asia, such as Thailand, for its great gentleness. It emphasizes renunciation and the effort to attain enlightenment.

However, Theravada Buddhist from different regions in Asia often wonder about their Sri Lankan brethren's militancy, which occasionally manifests itself in violent demonstrations, attacks on Christian and Muslim sanctuaries, and a bigoted attitude against the other party in this conflict, the Tamils living in the island's North and East.

The black-skinned Tamils speak a Dravidian idiom unrelated to Sanskrit. It also has a different script. More importantly still, most Tamils are Hindus. Buddhism is an offspring of their religion. But Hinduism, like all other faiths, has many branches. Sri Lanka's Tamils are by and large Shiva worshipers. And Shiva is the destroyer in the Hindu trinity that also includes Brahma, the creator, and Vishnu, the sustainer.

It so happens that a growing movement among Hindus believes that the universe has moved from the eon of the sustainer Vishnu to the eon of the destroyer Shiva, who is to be assisted in his work by humans so as to enable Brahma to recommence the cycle of creation.

This movement is by no means representative of the Hindu majority, which generally respects all faiths. However, Shiva worshipers range from the radical VHP organization backing the most powerful party in India's governing coalition to the lethal Aum Shinrikyo sect in Japan that defines itself as neo-Buddhist but nonetheless serve Shiva believing that he has called upon its members to help him in the universe's destruction. At least that's what two of the sect's top leaders told this correspondent in a series of interviews several years ago.

One of the world's most dreaded servants of Shiva is Vellupillai Prabhakaran, 49, leader of the Tamil Tiger guerillas who have been fighting the Sri Lankan government for 18 years, committing acts of terrorism every bit as atrocious as those perpetrated by al-Qaida and radical Palestinian groups.

Former women guerillas, who were trained to be suicide bombers, told this correspondent that Prabhakaran always has a picture of the goddess Kali carried before him wherever he moves in the jungle. This beautiful black deity, whom Hindus revere as Shiva's wife, plays a dual role in their pantheon: She brings blood, violence and destruction to humans. Yet she is also the giver of new life, which makes her a potent idol for guerillas and terrorists fighting for what they think is a just cause.

To cope with this exotic spiritual scenario must be daunting enough for the Nordic mediators currently going back and forth between the factions in Sri Lanka. But now figure in this complicating factor: According to Thomas Savandaranayagam, the Catholic bishop of Jaffna, who knows Prabhakaran well, the Tami Tiger leader is also a numerologist, who goes to great lengths to avoid the unlucky number eight in the conduct of war -- and presumably peace.

This is why his entire army, the LTTE, is structured along multiples of 15, Tamil Tiger defectors and captives report. For no matter how often you multiply this figure, you never come up with an eight.

Hence the smallest LTTE unit consists of 15 men or women. The equivalent of a platoon is 30 strong. There are also units of 45, 90 and 135. Tamil Tiger bases are made up of bunkers each of which is located precisely 15 meters from each of its neighbors and 135 meters from the command post; 135 is a multiple of 15.

Wednesday, the Norwegians are expected to meet with the Tamil Tiger leadership. It may sound silly, but Wednesday is the 12th day of the 11th month. Add up the two or deduct one from the other, and while the result is not a multiple of 15, there is also no eight in sight.

Not that one wants to be superstitious, but after 18 years of warfare who wouldn't be grateful for good auspices?

Load-Date: November 12, 2003

As Sri Lankan Port City Erupts, A Nation's Bloody Past Echoes

The New York Times

May 15, 2006 Monday

Late Edition - Final

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Section: Section A; Column 1; Foreign Desk; Pg. 1

Length: 1394 words

Byline: By SOMINI SENGUPTA

Dateline: TRINCOMALEE, Sri Lanka

Body

The bad blood, you could say, began with the Buddha.

Last May, in the dead of night, someone erected a giant white Buddha statue on a five-foot-high concrete platform behind the town's main market. What followed in this multiethnic, multifaith, perennially self-destructive eastern city on the edge of the sea was a chain of anger and savagery, foreshadowing the return of a grave past.

The ethnic Tamils of Trincomalee, who are mostly Hindu and Christian, saw the clandestine raising of the Buddha statue as an act of provocation by Sinhalese Buddhists. The man who led the protests against the Buddha statue, Vanniasingam Vigneswaran, was shot to death as he went to the bank one morning.

Another morning, the bodies of five Tamil youths were found on the beach. The largely Sinhalese security forces came under steady attack by people suspected of being ethnic Tamil guerrillas.

The tit-for-tat went into overdrive on a Wednesday afternoon in mid-April, when an explosion at the mouth of the market killed 16 people, prompting a Sinhalese mob to instantly torch Tamil-owned shops and hunt down Tamil civilians.

In the reprisals that followed, Sinhalese villagers were slaughtered, Tamil homes were burned, schools and churches turned into squalid camps of frightened, wounded villagers. At the end of April, a suicide bombing in the capital, Colombo, said to have been carried out by the Tamil rebels, prompted government airstrikes on the rebel-held countryside south of here. More than a dozen died, and hundreds more fled.

After four years of livable peace since the 2002 cease-fire between the government and the separatist Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam, Trincomalee has once again sunk into the muck of fear, uncertainty, and distrust that marked the worst years of Sri Lanka's hateful ethnic conflict of the past two decades.

Nearly 200 people died nationwide in April, compared with just 9 two months earlier when the parties decided to have talks in Switzerland to strengthen the cease-fire.

With the cease-fire having all but unraveled, the latest violence raises the specter of the 1983 anti-Tamil pogrom that plunged the country into all-out war. Bad memories compound the ill will. Nowhere is that more apparent than in this port city on the northeast coast about 160 miles from Colombo. Trincomalee is a demographic microcosm of

As Sri Lankan Port City Erupts, A Nation's Bloody Past Echoes

the country, with Tamils, Sinhalese and Muslims living in roughly equal numbers. It is here that the repercussions of the conflict, rooted in the grievances of the ethnic Tamil minority against the Sinhalese who dominate the government, are felt most intensely.

"There is right now a lot of suspicion by the communities of each other," said the Rev. George Dissanayake, a Roman Catholic priest and the secretary of the Inter-Religious Peace Foundation here. "We have gone back 20 years. It is very difficult to repair the damage."

Today, Sinhalese villagers living around Trincomalee say they have been offered shotguns to protect themselves. In their territory, the **Tamil Tigers**, too, are raising village defense committees.

The city and the surrounding countryside are increasingly divided along ethnic lines. The market has turned into a Sinhalese enclave, and the traders, bereft of Tamil and Muslim customers, while away the day playing cards. Nearby, a Tamil laundry, blessedly spared by the mob, waits for its Sinhalese customers to bring in their wash. Across the street, a Sinhalese grocer waits for Tamil shoppers who no longer come. Offices close by early afternoon. By nightfall, the streets are bare, except the edgy soldiers who man checkpoints at every street corner.

The latest sequence of events prompted R. Rajarammohan, one of the town's most successful businessmen, to do what he had strenuously resisted for years: cloister himself with his fellow Tamils.

Within minutes of the April 12 market blast, a gang of young men came up Central Road with kerosene cans and fishing knives and set upon Mr. Rajarammohan's household products wholesale company. They broke into his office, but seemed not to know who he was, nor his ethnicity. It signaled to him that they were not from the area.

The mob set his shop on fire. In an hour, Mr. Rajarammohan lost \$400,000 in goods, computers, four trucks, a new Honda, even the insurance papers. Today, he is setting up shop in a Tamil enclave, far from the buzz of Central Road. "We'd love to go back, we'd love to work with them," he said of his Sinhalese neighbors on Central Road. "But they can't protect us, can they? We've learned the bitter way." It was the fourth time since 1983 that his business had been hit in anti-Tamil riots.

One measure of the distrust between the communities in Trincomalee is the swirl of conspiracy theories about what happened that afternoon. Among Sinhalese, one widespread theory is that the bomb killed mainly Sinhalese, and that the riots erupted spontaneously. Among Tamils, a common theory is that the bomb was the handiwork of security forces or their allies and that the majority of the dead were Tamils in what they call organized reprisal attacks.

According to the main hospital, the blast killed 16 people, representing the town's demographic mix: 8 Tamils, 5 Sinhalese, 2 Muslims and a person who could not be identified. The reprisal attacks five more: 4 Tamils and a Sinhalese, who were burned, stabbed and shot to death.

Whether the riots were spontaneous or planned is impossible to know, although one thing seems certain: the police and the army, in full force around the market, did not manage to stop them. Rohan Abeywardana, the deputy inspector general of police in charge of Trincomalee, said his forces were overpowered.

Eleven days later, terror came to Gomarankadawela, an isolated Sinhalese village on the fringes of the forest. M. B. Kalyanaratti, 45, was bending low in a rice field, when she heard gunfire and looked up. Six gunmen, in uniform, motioned to the **women** to stay back. Then they shot dead six men in the rice field, including her younger brother, M. B. Chaminda Prasanna Bhandara, 28.

There had been no warning of trouble, the villagers said, nor any acrimony with the Tamils who live nearby. In fact, the farmers of the village relied on Tamil labor for help at cultivation time. Mr. Bhandara's family blamed the **Tamil Tigers**.

Mr. Bhandara might have made a choice target because he was a member of a village defense force known here as home guards. All through the war, home guards had been recruited from among Sinhalese villages to man checkpoints and help the largely Sinhalese security forces in their military operations.

As Sri Lankan Port City Erupts, A Nation's Bloody Past Echoes

Mr. Bhandara's family insists he joined the service to survive and not to kill. His wife and son survived on his \$100 monthly income. More than half the village fled after his killing.

Three days later, terror circled around to Thanganagar, a largely Tamil hamlet surrounded by Sinhalese ones. Two gunmen, their faces shielded, marched into the home of Joseph Baby, 38, as she ate with her family. They pulled everyone out of the house, and shot to death her husband, her uncle and her brother. A bullet pierced her left thigh. "Your people are hurting our people," she recalls the gunmen saying.

Her family was no stranger to hurt. Her two sisters lost their husbands many years ago, during the height of the war. The men had gone to collect honey in the woods; they never returned. On the morning of his death, Ms. Baby's husband, a day laborer, had unloaded cement bags and brought home \$1.30.

Thanganagar, along with several other Tamil villages, has since emptied out.

Not far from the school where Ms. Baby has taken refuge, in a deadly quiet Sinhalese hamlet, came reports of a new perilous turn in the conflict: villagers said the police were offering guns to any Sinhalese who wanted them for protection. Reluctantly, it appears, a few villagers have taken up the offer. "This is purely out of fear," confessed W. K. Dharmapala, a farmer. "We are not really sure how to use it."

Behind the market, the Buddha, encircled by concertina wire, gazes silently on the grim crossroads at Trincomalee's once-busy market. The dozens of soldiers barricaded around the statue light oil lamps before him every day. They are the only ones who can worship at its feet today, along with the crows still free to roam.

<http://www.nytimes.com>

Graphic

Photo: Stores owned by Tamils were burned by Sinhalese in Trincomalee after a bomb killed 16 people. (Photo by Scott Eells for The New York Times)(pg. A8)Map of Sri Lanka highlighting Trincomalee: The violence in Trincomalee recalls Sri Lanka's civil war. (pg. A8)

Load-Date: May 15, 2006

Bus blast in Sri Lanka leaves 64 dead

St. Louis Post-Dispatch (Missouri)

June 16, 2006 Friday

THIRD EDITION

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Section: NEWS; Pg. A7

Length: 264 words

Byline: THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Dateline: KABITHIGOLLEWA, SRI LANKA

Body

Suspected Tamil separatists attacked a crowded bus Thursday, triggering a pair of hidden bombs that killed at least 64 people. The attack is the worst violence since a 2002 cease-fire began unraveling in recent months.

The conflict killed 65,000 people before the truce.

With peace talks largely abandoned, the attack edged Sri Lanka, off India's southern tip, further toward all-out war. The government quickly launched retaliatory airstrikes on rebel areas.

The dead included at least 15 children. At least 78 people were wounded in the attack.

The rebels denied responsibility for the attack. They suggested it was done by shadowy forces they accused of trying to create unrest.

But Sri Lanka's government, which is dominated by the majority Sinhalese, insisted rebels of the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam movement were responsible. The group is a well-armed movement that began fighting in 1983 to establish an independent homeland for the ethnic Tamil minority.

"This is a barbaric act of the LTTE," said government spokesman Keheliya Rambukwella. "Their aim is to provoke a backlash."

The bus was blown up using a pair of mines hung from a tree and detonated by remote control, said a military spokesman, Brig. Prasad Samarasinghe. Rigging bombs to trees or bicycles is a common rebel tactic, so the ground does not absorb much of the blast, officials say.

Police said most of the victims were Sinhalese, the group the rebels accuse of discriminating against Tamils.

Officials said many passengers were headed to the funeral of a policeman killed Monday in another attack blamed on rebels.

Notes

World

Graphic

PHOTO

PHOTO - Soldiers guard a bus that was hit by a mine Thursday in north-central Sri Lanka. Dozens of people were fleeing villages near the attack site, fearing more violence. They took shelter in a school guarded by soldiers. AFP / Getty Images PHOTO - **Women** mourn the death of attack victims as they were identified Thursday at a hospital northeast of Colombo, Sri Lanka. At least 78 were wounded in the bombing. The Associated Press

Load-Date: June 16, 2006

End of Document

Sri Lanka police find phone card used by suicide bomber

Agence France Presse -- English

April 28, 2006 Friday 10:12 AM GMT

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Length: 315 words

Dateline: COLOMBO, April 28 2006

Body

Sri Lankan police have found the mobile phone card used by a female suicide bomber who tried to assassinate the country's army chief and hope it will lead them to other suspects, they said Friday.

Investigators believe the 21-year-old woman who carried out Tuesday's attack inside the tightly guarded army headquarters in Colombo had an accomplice who guided her by mobile telephone, a police officer said.

"We have found the SIM card of her mobile phone," a police officer involved in the probe said. "Witnesses have said that she was on the phone as she jumped at the commander's car."

He said the phone card, containing data about a user's calls, "is extremely useful to track down her contacts and the people who had been in touch with her."

Army chief Lieutenant General Sarath Fonseka and 30 others were wounded in the attack while seven guards and two civilians were killed.

The suicide bomber was blown to pieces and only her left leg below the knee was left intact. Investigators found her head hanging by her hair in a tree.

Police said her mobile phone was also destroyed but they managed to recover the SIM card.

The military said Tuesday's bombing was the work of the rebel Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE), whose trademark is suicide bombings.

Records at the entrance to army headquarters showed the bomber entered the military compound posing as a soldier's pregnant wife to take advantage of "maternity day" at the hospital.

Investigators found she had visited the hospital on several occasions.

On Tuesday, she managed to detonate her bomb despite Fonseka's Peugeot 406 car being escorted by four motorcycle outriders and two vehicles packed with armed guards.

The attack was the most serious incident blamed on the rebels since they entered into a truce with the government in 2002.

Sri Lanka police find phone card used by suicide bomber

Officials said Friday that Foneska, who was critically injured, was out of danger and improving.

Load-Date: April 29, 2006

End of Document

Lankan president invites Tiger rebels to join talks

IRNA

February 5, 2007 Monday 2:04 AM EST

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Length: 352 words

Body

Lankan president invites Tiger rebels to join talks New Delhi, Feb 5, IRNA Sri Lanka-**LTTE**-Talks Sri Lankan President Mahinda Rajapakse has invited Tamil Tiger rebel proxies in parliament to join an ongoing all-party effort to end violence in the island nation.

In his Independence Day address, Rajapakse asked the Tigers' proxy Tamil National Alliance (TNA) to join the "All Party Conference" to find a political solution to the conflict.

"I wish to make this appeal to the Tamil National Alliance represented in Parliament, who have so far not entered into dialogue or understanding with us," Rajapakse said in a televised speech, a PTI report said here.

"It is only by joining with us that the innocent Tamil people of the north can be liberated from terrorist intimidation and the misdeeds of violence; and the North could be emancipated," he said.

"If you are anguished in fear and anxiety and lack human freedom, however much democratic the political ideology you claim to follow, I must state in all honesty that none of you are free men," the president said.

His offer came a day after a similar invitation was extended directly to the Tiger rebels to resume direct peace negotiations which have been stalled since October.

Rajapakse had also asked the Tigers to start laying down their weapons during a visit to the eastern town of Vakarai, which was captured from the rebels after weeks of fighting.

To mark the country's 59th Independence Day, the military displayed its weapons and other equipment during a parade at the Galle Face public grounds. .

Security was stepped up following the discovery of a bomb in Colombo yesterday.

Meanwhile, Sri Lanka on Sunday freed nearly 2, ,000 prisoners to mark the island nation's 59th Independence Day.

Lankan president invites Tiger rebels to join talks

Some 1,989 inmates, mostly serving for minor offences, were released from prisons throughout the country, Commissioner General of Prisons Major General Vajira Wijeyagoonawardena said.

He said 69 women prisoners were among those who were released under a presidential pardon.

Sri Lanka has 28 prisons scattered throughout the country which house 26,000 inmates.

Load-Date: February 6, 2007

End of Document

POLITICAL CRISES IN SOUTH ASIA: RECENT DEVELOPMENTS IN NEPAL AND SRI LANKA

States News Service

August 1, 2007 Wednesday

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Length: 3462 words

Byline: States News Service

Dateline: WASHINGTON

Body

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

STEVEN MANN: Mr. Chairman and members of the Committee, thank you for inviting me here today to discuss recent developments in Nepal and Sri Lanka. These two South Asian nations are both struggling with domestic insurgencies that in Nepal' case, will require a period of recovery and national reconciliation, and in Sri Lanka' case, still threaten the country' institutions and people. Let me first turn to Nepal.

Nepal' recent history is nothing short of remarkable. Its citizens have endured much, but have hope for a brighter future. Nepal has seen a decade-long insurgency end as the Maoists agreed in November 2006 to enter into the political process. It has experienced political upheaval as a palace massacre claimed the lives of the king and several members of the royal family. In April 2006, the country witnessed a popular movement that ended the direct rule of King Gyanendra and replaced him with Prime Minister Koirala, who is serving in that capacity for the fifth time.

Today, Nepal is entering a decisive phase in its history as it prepares for Constituent Assembly elections on November 22. While there is progress, serious concerns remain. We are optimistic that the November 22 elections will be conducted in a free and fair manner. At the same time, we are fully cognizant that Nepal faces difficult challenges in the run-up to the election.

If I may start on a positive note, we are impressed by the work of the members of Nepal' Election Commission to date. They are aware of the importance of conducting a free and fair election on schedule and they are working diligently with the international community. The Election Commission has registered over 17.6 million voters, representing 58 political parties.

The Commission has welcomed and encouraged volunteers and representatives of non-government organizations, including the Carter Center, to monitor the election. The Election Commission is preparing to issue a Code of Conduct, outlining election rules and behavior. The Code will clarify the right of parties to campaign and have access to the media and places a ceiling on campaign expenditures and restrictions on polling of voters, all of which could unfairly influence the outcome of the elections.

Serious law and order issues could affect the election and need to be addressed by the government of Prime Minister Girija Prasad Koirala. We remain concerned that the Maoists and their Young Communist League will continue their campaign of intimidation, abduction, and extortion and seek to disrupt the election or unfairly

POLITICAL CRISES IN SOUTH ASIA: RECENT DEVELOPMENTS IN NEPAL AND SRI LANKA

influence its outcome. The local press reports Maoist atrocities virtually every day. The Maoists commit crimes with impunity, devalue justice in Nepal, and threaten the integrity of the election process. As such, they clearly continue to warrant designation as a Specially-Designated Global Terrorist organization.

Due to improvement in the human rights situation since the April 27th declaration of a cease-fire between the government and the Maoists, there has been a substantial decrease in abuses by the Government. We continue to urge the Government to address past abuses and to appoint new members to the National Human Rights Commission. We welcome recent progress in this regard.

Regional tensions, increasing demands by traditionally-marginalized groups for representation, and the emergence of ethnically-based political factions and splinter groups -- particularly in the Terai -- have complicated the political landscape.

We are concerned by recent violence in the Terai, the low lying area of Nepal bordering India, where approximately half of the Nepali people reside, because it has the potential to derail the election process and it undermines law and order and stability. Aside from the criminal activity of the Maoists, which continues nationwide, the greatest obstacle to a peaceful and successful election is ethnic tension in the Terai.

The situation is complex because the Maoists are politically active in the Terai, but their interests often conflict with those of Terai inhabitants, most of whom are Madhesi, a distinct ethnic group with its own language whose culture is, in many ways, closer to that of India. It is in the Maoists' interest to blame the violence in the Terai on Madhesi groups despite Maoist involvement. The Maoists and Young Communist League have assumed great influence in the western Terai through threats and intimidation. In the eastern Terai, the Maoists are in open conflict with Madhesi groups, who are using this transition period to assert their rights and, in some cases, to call for regional autonomy.

During the past year, a number of political groups with radical agendas, some of them armed, have emerged in the Terai. These groups' agendas vary. Some groups seek to continue the armed struggle that the Maoists claim to have given up, others are promoting an ethnic-based agenda. Other established groups have split into factions dominated by politically ambitious individuals. In some areas, groups have splintered from the Maoists and become their military or political rivals.

As the UN Secretary General Ban Ki-Moon reported on July 18:

The security situation in the Terai has remained extremely disturbed and efforts to improve law and order in the region have been halting at best. Frequent clashes continue to occur between Maoists and Madhesi activists in the Terai as they compete for political space.

The Nepal Government's Ministry of Peace and Reconstruction is reaching out to these emerging groups to start a dialogue and to draw them into the election process. This is an essential process that the government needs to expand.

A successful, free and fair Constituent Assembly election would represent a significant step forward toward establishing a peaceful, prosperous, and democratic Nepal. Reaching out to the Terai groups and bringing them into the democratic fold will greatly improve prospects for success. It is clear that the Government of Nepal will have to make new and sustained efforts to fulfill the promise of the peace process.

We believe that seven of the political parties in the Parliamentary Alliance are committed to peaceful, multi-party pluralism. The Maoists are the exception. The seven parties may disagree at times, have competing agendas, and fail to consult with each other, but they are committed to working within the Parliamentary system.

Like ambitious political parties worldwide, they want to succeed and to expand their political base. Representatives of Terai districts and areas where the Maoists are active have been not been able to visit their constituencies regularly. In some cases, they fear for their safety if they return.

As described by the UN Office of the High Commissioner of Human Rights in a report in June, 2007:

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The Young Communist League' violent disruption of activities of opposing groups, at times with other parties of the Seven Party Alliance (SPA), must not be tolerated. Such actions close the political space for dialogue and risk contributing to a spiral of violence. They are contrary to the principles of freedom of opinion, assembly and association and run contrary to conditions conducive for free and fair elections.

Under the current Eight Party Alliance, the Maoists have more power than they are likely to achieve through the ballot box. Although their leaders have promised to curb violence, to date we have not seen any lasting drop in criminal activity by the Maoists or their Young Communist League affiliates. Their commitments to abide by the law and to respect their agreements have proven hollow. Maoist leader Mr. Pushpa Dahal has stated publicly that the Maoists have no intention of joining the political mainstream and their actions, to date, have consistently proved that statement accurate.

Mr. Chairman, the key elements of United States policy in Nepal are to use every means at our disposal to promote free and fair elections, to work with the Government of Nepal and other interested governments to push the Maoists away from armed struggle and peaceful participants in the political process, and to promote the increased participation of the Madhesis into Nepali political life.

In addition, we have a keen interest in providing humanitarian assistance to Nepal. In 2006 the United States spent roughly \$32.6 million dollars on assistance to Nepal, most of it going to health-related programs, focusing primarily on women and children. Other assistance programs included law enforcement training, programs that bolster civil society, rule of law and respect for human rights in the government and military, and stabilization operations. In doing so, we continue to work with a variety of partners, both within Nepal and in the international community.

Turning to Sri Lanka:

Sri Lanka' long-standing ethnic conflict, fragile peace process, and deteriorating human rights conditions continue to cause concern for the United States and the international community. The conflict between the Sri Lankan Government and Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam entered a phase of intensified fighting during President Rajapaksa' administration. In recent months, fighting has been steady in the Tamil Tiger-controlled East as Government forces attempted to re-take areas held by the Tigers under the terms of the 2002 Ceasefire Agreement. On July 11, 2007, the Sri Lankan military announced it had taken Thoppigala, the last remaining Tamil Tiger stronghold in the East, bringing the entire Eastern Province under government control. The costs of war have taken a heavy toll on the economy: inflation currently stands at 20% and tourism a" one of Sri Lanka' main industries - has plummeted by 40-60% since last year.

Fighting continues in the North and there is a continued Tiger presence in the East. Just five days after the government announced it was in control of the East, suspected Tiger gunmen shot and killed a senior provincial administrator. The Tigers remain a considerable fighting force and are capable of launching attacks across the island. On July 25, the Tigers detonated a claymore mine in the North, killing 11 soldiers and wounding eight others.

Furthermore, the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam are regarded as one of the world' best funded guerrilla groups, with an estimate reported \$200 to \$300 million in annual revenues. Ample funding allows them to purchase weapons, to operate a maritime force- the Sea Tigers, and to maintain a small air capability. Tiger aircraft attacked military facilities co-located with Colombo' international airport, as well as fuel installations outside Colombo in April 2007. The Tigers have publicly expressed their intention to continue attacking military, government and economic targets. The Tigers do not target U.S. citizens or assets. Rather, they limit their attacks to Sri Lankan security forces, political figures, civilians, and businesses. Their innovations such as explosive vests and waterborne suicide attacks have been copied by other terrorist groups.

The Tamil Tigers have demonstrated little interest in a peaceful settlement. They have not renounced their stated goal of an independent homeland. Claymore mine attacks and political assassinations attributed to the Tigers in the past months further signal their intention to continue the conflict. The Tigers are insisting the Government of Sri Lanka abide by the terms of the 2002 Ceasefire Agreement as a condition for talks. The Sri Lankan Government is unlikely to agree to these terms, however, as it would require ceding the East back to Tiger control.

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Prospects for peace are currently focused on an effort by the President' party, the major opposition parties, and other parties to finalize a proposal which would reform the constitution to create a system devolving certain powers to Tamil and other minority areas. The peace process in Sri Lanka has collapsed repeatedly in part due to a lack of political consensus over how to satisfy the rights and aspirations of the majority Sinhala and minority Tamil populations. It is critical that the country' political leadership engage fully and in good faith in the current debate over devolution of power and place the best interests of the country ahead of partisan politics. I must flag the fact that the Tamil Tigers share the responsibility for the negotiation impasse. It is important to note as well that although the Tigers are a party to the negotiations, they cannot be considered to be the representatives of all Sri Lankan Tamils.

Our top policy priorities for Sri Lanka remain restoration of good governance and respect for human rights leading to an eventual negotiated settlement. We believe that finalizing a credible devolution of power proposal, together with ending human rights violations and improving government accountability, are essential steps towards a lasting peace. The Government of Sri Lanka must do more to provide security and equitable treatment for its citizens, including taking seriously the plight of internally displaced persons, creating the conditions to allow economic opportunities to return across the island, and ensuring fair treatment at the hands of the police and security forces. These issues cannot be stably resolved through military means alone.

We are supporting the pursuit of a political settlement in Sri Lanka in several ways.

As a member of the Co-Chairs of the Tokyo Donors Conference, the United States participates along with the European Union, Japan, and Norway in the only international mechanism solely dedicated to peace in Sri Lanka. Assistant Secretary of State for South and Central Asian Affairs Richard A. Boucher led the U.S. delegation at the Co-Chairs most recent meeting in June in Oslo. The Co-Chairs discussed ways forward for the peace process as well as current challenges on the ground in Sri Lanka, including deteriorating human rights conditions and difficulties with humanitarian access. The Co-Chairs continue to pursue openings to return both sides to negotiations. After the Oslo meeting, the Norwegian Ambassador in Colombo was permitted to travel north to meet with Tiger leadership for the first time in six months.

We are also working towards peace in Sri Lanka through consistent senior-level bilateral engagement and high-level visits, in which we deliver to the Government of Sri Lanka a consistent message that the only lasting solution to this conflict is through negotiation. Assistant Secretary Boucher visited Colombo and Jaffna in May 2007 and delivered a tough message to all parties on the need for dialogue, a serious devolution of power proposal, equality among all Sri Lankans, and respect for human rights. Assistant Secretary Boucher stressed that a credible power-sharing proposal that addresses legitimate Tamil grievances and preserves a political, social, and economic role for the Tamil and other communities in a post-conflict Sri Lanka could help re-energize the peace process and begin the process of national reconciliation.

In addition, we support peace efforts in Sri Lanka through U.S. Agency for International Development projects promoting dialogue between ethnic communities, developing citizenship skills, and improving governance. Our programs are focused on laying a foundation for peace in many ways, including providing technical assistance to develop a political framework to resolve the ethnic conflict, targeting corruption, training local government officials in management and budgeting, building the capacity of human rights institutions, and stimulating economic development. We are also interested in supporting programs that work with judges and bar associations and provide training for human rights groups to help provide legal aid to citizens in the North and East.

The United States is committed to help foster a lasting peace in Sri Lanka and to improve human rights conditions for all Sri Lankans. Ultimately, however, it is the Sri Lankan Government' responsibility to the Sri Lankan people to provide the conditions of safety and security that will lead to a more peaceful and prosperous future. Reaching consensus on a devolution proposal is a critical first step towards peace, but it is a domestic political issue in which the United States should not take sides. The United States' interest is in keeping the political process on devolution moving forward, rather than prescribing particular solutions to the Sri Lankans. We therefore continue to see no role for a Special Envoy to Sri Lanka at this time. We have, moreover, a highly capable envoy already on the job a" his name is Robert Blake and he is our U.S. Ambassador to Sri Lanka.

POLITICAL CRISES IN SOUTH ASIA: RECENT DEVELOPMENTS IN NEPAL AND SRI LANKA

The only lasting and stable solution to this conflict will be one that is reached through negotiations. Our military assistance does not support efforts to expand the conflict. Our modest assistance focuses on improving maritime capabilities such as weapons interdiction and surveillance. We support Sri Lanka's efforts to defend itself against terrorism and have demonstrated our commitment over the last year by arresting 15 individuals in the United States and Guam on material support charges, including an alleged leader of the **Tamil Tigers** in the United States who was arrested in April 2007. We refuse to allow the **Tamil Tigers** and their supporters to use the United States as a source of supply for weapons, technology, and financial resources.

Another key U.S. policy concern in Sri Lanka is the deterioration in human rights conditions. As the State Department's most recent Country Report on Human Rights practices indicated, human rights conditions across Sri Lanka have deteriorated significantly in the past year. We are deeply concerned by continuing reports of disappearances, abductions, torture, and the rise in extrajudicial killings, with eight extra-judicial killings reported over a three day period in July on the Jaffna peninsula. Human rights conditions are worst in Tiger-controlled areas, where there is no rule of law to protect Sri Lankans' civil liberties. The Tigers' recruitment of child soldiers is singularly deplorable.

The intimidation of civil society through such incidents as the April 29 killing of Tamil journalist Selvarajah Rajivarman and the July 23 murder of Mariyanayagam Aloysius, a Tamil employee of the Danish Refugee Council, is an additional area of concern. We are encouraging the Government of Sri Lanka to improve its accountability and rein in the paramilitaries that reportedly operate openly in government-controlled Tamil areas and have been accused of serious human rights abuses, including the recruitment of child soldiers. We are also working with the government to improve human rights conditions through the human rights Commission of Inquiry and the International Independent Group of Eminent Persons. Our representative to the Group, former Department of State Assistant Secretary Arthur E. Gene Dewey was in Sri Lanka in July 2007, and will return in mid-August for the Group's next plenary meeting. While it is important that the Government investigate abuses, our message has consistently stressed the need for the Government to improve accountability writ large and this means not limiting its response to investigations that could take years, but taking immediate measures to hold the security forces accountable for order and discipline.

We are also engaged fully in humanitarian relief efforts to address the critical needs of Sri Lanka's more than 500,000 internally displaced persons. To date, in Fiscal Year 2007 alone, the United States has given \$10.6 million in humanitarian assistance to Sri Lanka. This includes funding for Save the Children and UN Children's Fund programs providing protection, emergency relief supplies, nutrition, water, and sanitation and hygiene services. It also includes World Food Program funding for emergency food assistance, as well as International Committee of the Red Cross funding for emergency relief such as health services and shelter. In addition, the U.S. also supports the efforts of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees through regional funding.

Mr. Chairman, we are deeply committed to achieving lasting peace and stability in Nepal, Sri Lanka, and the South Asia region. We will continue to work on the ground in that region with our friends and allies, through international fora such as the Co-Chairs group in Sri Lanka, and through the extensive outreach programs of our Embassies in Kathmandu and Colombo, to help the Nepalese and Sri Lankan people overcome the considerable obstacles before them on their path to peace and prosperity.

Thank you again for the opportunity to appear before you. I would be pleased to answer your questions.

Load-Date: April 15, 2008

Distortions seen in Sri Lanka's tsunami recovery

Indo-Asian News Service

December 25, 2007 Tuesday 1:03 PM EST

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

Dateline: Colombo

Body

Colombo, Dec. 25 -- Sri Lanka's recovery from the devastating tsunami of December 2004 has been uneven. Rehabilitation work has notched up significant successes in the Sinhalese-dominated and more peaceful south, but it has suffered greatly in the war-torn northeast, which has a preponderance of the minority Tamils and Muslims.

And it was the northeast, which took the brunt of the killer waves on Boxing Day, which destroyed about 121,000 houses and killed over 30,000 in the island.

Cabinet spokesperson Anura Priyadharshana Yapa said that 99,497 permanent houses had been built and that work on 19,791 units was in progress. Rebuilding has been 100 percent in the south, especially Hambantota district, which is the home of President Mahinda Rajapaksa. But the score in the north and east is 80 percent.

In fact, in Hambantota, nearly 3,200 excess houses were built, and these are now occupied by those not affected by the tsunami.

"The northern province still requires completion of more than 9 ,000 houses and the eastern province more than 12,000 houses," Jeevan Thiagarajah of the Confederation of Humanitarian Agencies told IANS.

"Not even 12 percent of fully damaged houses in the north have been rebuilt, and only 26 percent in the east," says NGO Action Aid in its report titled 'Voice from the Field'. This is so even though 60 percent of the damage wrought by the tsunami was in the east, especially Amparai district in the southeast.

Rehabilitation work in the north and east was hampered by the outbreak of hostilities between the Tamil Tiger rebels and government forces in December 2005.

The war has so far claimed 4,500 lives and displaced about 300,000 people. It had added another category of displaced, who also had to be housed, looked after and rehabilitated. Scarce government resources had to be diverted from tsunami-related rehabilitation to the rehabilitation of the war-affected.

Military operations had meant restrictions on physical movement of men and material.

"Access to some construction sites is restricted and transportation of material difficult or impossible," said a two-year assessment report of the International Federation of the Red Cross. World Vision had to abandon a plan to build 200 houses in Ichchilampattu in Trincomalee district because of military operations.

Distortions seen in Sri Lanka 's tsunami recovery

Government had also put restrictions on the movement of strategic goods like fuel and building material to the areas controlled by the **Tamil Tigers**, thinking that these would be misappropriated by the rebels. This affected rebuilding greatly.

The ILO reported that in the south 90 percent of the affected people had returned to work, but in Jaffna district, isolated from the rest of the island, only 55 percent had. The rest were relying on income from other sources.

As regards the restoration of livelihood, the all-island figures are impressive. About 200,000 persons had lost their jobs due to the tsunami. But according to Thiagarajah, 95 percent of the men, and 84 percent of the **women**, have started earning again. The Federation of Chambers of Commerce and Industry had given 196,913 grants, and assisted 8,447 micro, small and medium enterprises between 2005 and 2006.

Again, while this is impressive, the schemes have been operative only or mainly in the south, and to some extent in the southeast. The north has been more or less ignored, thanks to the war, which threatens to continue through 2008.

Money has never been a problem. Sri Lanka has received \$1.7 billion of the \$3.1 billion pledged by the international community for post-tsunami work. More money can be got if the Sri Lankan government is serious about the development of the tsunami-affected areas. But, as in other cases of foreign assistance, the government has tended to drag its feet on submitting suitable proposals. In fact, indications are that post-tsunami work is winding up.

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Load-Date: December 25, 2007

End of Document

The ultimate crime

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

November 29, 2007 Thursday

National Edition

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Section: ISSUES & IDEAS; Pg. A25

Length: 627 words

Byline: Reuben Bromstein And Salim Mansur, National Post

Body

On May 21, 1991, Rajiv Gandhi, leader of India's Congress Party and the country's former prime minister, was campaigning outside of Chennai (Madras) when a *female* suicide bomber dispatched by Sri Lanka's *Tamil Tigers* terrorist group approached him and detonated her explosive belt. Gandhi and a number of people around him were killed.

Some 16 years later, on Oct. 18, 2007, Pakistani politician Benazir Bhutto was also the target of a suicide bomber in Karachi. Bhutto escaped unhurt, but the attack left a tally of dead and wounded numbering close to 600.

In the years bookended by these two episodes, the world bore witness to a plague of similarly horrific suicide attacks -- including the Sept. 11, 2001, attacks on the World Trade Center, the destruction of the UN mission in Baghdad on Aug. 19, 2003, the Bali nightclub bombing of Oct. 12, 2002, the Madrid train attacks of March 11, 2004, and the London transit bombings of July 7, 2005. The victims were mostly civilians caught in their mundane routines by humans programmed and dispatched by terrorist organizations to kill and sow fear.

Intelligence-gathering and police work constitute the first line of defence against suicide bombings. Preventive military targeting of known terrorist organizations can also be effective. But there is more that can be done to combat this plague.

One step that could be taken is to provide legal grounds for prosecuting those who engage in the provision of organizational, ideological and logistic support to individuals sent forth as suicide bombers. Such a law has been proposed in a bill introduced by Liberal Senator Jerry Grafstein in the Upper Chamber of Canada's Parliament.

Senate Bill S-210 proposes to amend Section 83.01 of the Criminal Code by explicitly including suicide bombing in the definition of terrorist activity. As Senator Graftstein has explained, it will provide greater clarity by establishing this singularly horrific act as a criminal offence in and of itself. Obviously, suicide bombers are immune from legal prosecution thanks to the self-annihilating nature of their crime. But the same is not true for those who facilitate the deed.

Senator Grafstein has spoken eloquently in introducing his proposed amendment to the Criminal Code. As he reminds us, "reverence for life is a lynchpin of all religions and the keystone of the rule of law. All our laws are wrapped around this central idea."

The ultimate crime

There is no disagreement among the world's religions, nor can there be, on the injunction provided in the sixth of the Ten Commandments of Moses rendered from Hebrew into English in the King James Version of the Bible as, "Thou shalt not murder." Islam's sacred text, the Koran, confirms Moses' laws and then echoes the teaching of the Talmud with these words: "Whoever kills a human being ... then it is as though he has killed all mankind."

By amending the Criminal Code, as proposed in Bill S-210, Canadians would be sending forth a message both domestically and internationally about how a democracy arms itself against those who deliberately engage in mass murder. It would also stand as a model for other democracies to adopt, and would once again demonstrate Canada's leadership in the fight against terrorism.

We urge the senators, irrespective of their party affiliation, to support Bill S-210 and dispatch it through the committee hearings to the House of Commons for approval and passage into law. This bill has been twice proposed in the Senate but died on the order papers as the parliament was once dissolved and then later prorogued. It would be a matter of much regret if again Bill S-210 dies on the order paper. - Reuben Bromstein is president, and Salim Mansur is a vice-president, of Canadians Against Suicide Bombing (www.canasb.ca).

Graphic

Black & White Photo: Asif Hassan, AFP, Getty Images; The aftermath of a suicide bombing in Hub, Pakistan, in July, 2007. ;

Load-Date: November 29, 2007

Xinhua world news summary at 0820 GMT, March 5

Xinhua General News Service

March 5, 2005 Saturday 4:00 AM EST

Copyright 2005 Xinhua News Agency

Section: WORLD NEWS

Length: 356 words

Body

BEIRUT -- Syrian President Bashar al-Assad is expected to announce partial troops pullout from neighboring Lebanon in a speech to parliament on Saturday afternoon, al-Jazeera reported on Friday.

The move is expected to include withdrawal of part of the 14, 000 troops from Lebanon and redeployment of some to areas closer to the Syrian border, a Lebanese official source said. (Lebanon- Syria-Troops)

- - - -

KIEV -- Ukraine's ex-president Leonid Kuchma defended on Friday his "innocence" of the killing of a well-known journalist over four years ago, after his former interior minister Yury Kravchenko was found dead earlier in the day, Ukrainian TV reported.

"I am not responsible for this tragedy," he told reporters in the Czech resort city of Karlovy Vary. "Before God, before the people and my conscience, I am innocent." (Ukraine-Former Minister-Death)

- - - -

UNITED NATIONS -- UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan will replace William Lacy Swing, head of the troubled UN peacekeeping mission in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), a UN spokesman said on Friday.

Annan met his special representative in the DRC, Swing, at the UN headquarters in New York on Friday and they reviewed the difficult situation facing the UN mission as well as Swing's own future, UN spokesman Fred Eckhard said in a statement.

The UN mission in the DRC, also known by its French acronym MONUC, has been dogged by deadly clashes with local tribal militias in the eastern DRC and by scandals over sexual exploitation of Congolese women and minors. (UN-Congo-Peacekeeping)

- - - -

COLOMBO -- The Norwegian ambassador to Sri Lanka flew to Tamil Tiger rebel held north Saturday amid rising tension in the north and east regions.

Ambassador Hans Brattskar was flown to the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) headquarters in the northern Kilinochchi district, diplomatic sources said.

Xinhua world news summary at 0820 GMT, March 5

Colombo expects the rebels to convey through the Norwegian envoy their consent to a joint mechanism to provide relief to the Tsunami tidal wave victims in the north and east. (Sri Lanka- Rebels-Violence)

Load-Date: March 6, 2005

End of Document

Sri Lankan cease-fire monitors demand rebels release policemen

AP Worldstream

October 7, 2005 Friday

Copyright 2005 Associated Press

Section: INTERNATIONAL NEWS

Length: 359 words

Dateline: COLOMBO, Sri Lanka

Body

European cease-fire monitors on Friday demanded that Tamil Tiger rebels release three Sri Lankan policemen who entered the insurgents' territory while pursuing a suspected British pedophile nearly a month ago.

"They should be released immediately," said Helen Olafsdottir, a spokeswoman for the team monitoring the three-year cease-fire agreement between government forces and the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam.

"The **LTTE** insists on putting the case through their own court but we have been quite clear on this issue from the start, they should have never been apprehended," she said.

The Sri Lankan government has also lodged a protest over the detention of the policemen, who were seized Sept. 9.

The government asked Norwegian Ambassador Hans Brattskar to raise the issue at a meeting with the rebels on Thursday, but the guerrillas remained intransigent, a government official said on condition of anonymity as he was not authorized to speak publicly.

Brattskar informed the government on Friday about the rebels' position during talks with Jayantha Dhanapala, the top official handling the peace process.

Colombo has accused the rebels of blocking the government's efforts to protect children.

Two **female** and three male police officers, two Catholic priests and a child-rights investigator were detained by the rebels when they entered an area near Mannar, about 220 kilometers (135 miles) north of Colombo in pursuit of a suspected British pedophile.

All except for the three male police officers were released.

Although the government controls Mannar, the rebels control nearby areas, where they run their own administration, including a justice system.

The policemen's case is scheduled to be taken up in a Tiger court on Oct. 11.

The 51-year-old suspected pedophile later surrendered to police in the capital, Colombo.

Sri Lankan cease-fire monitors demand rebels release policemen

"Criminals cannot be allowed to slip out of areas and get away from law and order so it calls inevitably for cooperation between the parties on criminal issues," Olafsdottir said, "Both sides have to be practical regarding such issues."

The monitors have accused the rebels of violating an already fragile truce by detaining the policemen.

Load-Date: October 8, 2005

End of Document

The AFP Asia news agenda

Agence France Presse -- English

November 4, 2007 Sunday 3:03 AM GMT

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Length: 745 words

Dateline: HONG KONG, Nov 4 2007

Body

Duty Editor: Arthur MacMillan

News Desk: + 852 2829 6211

ASIA NEWS HIGHLIGHTS ON SUNDAY:

- + Pakistan enters emergency rule
- + UN envoy in Myanmar junta talks
- + US Defense Secretary China bound

ISLAMABAD: Full coverage after President Pervez Musharraf of Pakistan declares a state of emergency, sacking the nation's top judge, suspending the constitution and placing some opponents under house arrest (PAKISTAN-POLITICS)

YANGON: Reporting as UN special envoy Ibrahim Gambari begins his second round of reform talks with Myanmar's rulers, which risk being overshadowed by the junta's threat to expel another key diplomat (MYANMAR-POLITICS)

BEIJING: US Defense Secretary Robert Gates expected on a three-day stay scheduled to include talks with Chinese President Hu Jintao and other top military leaders. He will later visit South Korea and Japan (CHINA-US-MILITARY)

OTHER NEWS ITEMS:

BANGKOK: Moving a piece as manifestos are prepared and rhetoric polished as Thailand prepares for campaigning for an election on Dec 23 aimed at returning democracy after last year's coup (THAILAND-POLITICS-VOTE,ADVANCER)

COLOMBO: Reporting on violence in northern Sri Lanka after Friday's air strike killed of the head of the *Tamil Tigers*' political wing (SRILANKA-UNREST)

The AFP Asia news agenda

-- Moving an analysis on how the killing is likely to herald more violence (SRILANKA-UNREST-TIGERS,ANALYSIS)

HANOI: US Commerce Secretary Carlos Gutierrez arrives for a 4-day visit (VIETNAM-US-DIPLOMACY)

HONG KONG: Moving a story on the recent pressure to delink the Hong Kong dollar from the greenback, with analysts and government officials insisting it should stay in place (HONGKONG-CHINA-US-ECONOMY-FOREX)

-- Moving a story on the much-hyped listing of business-to-business online marketplace Alibaba.com, which is due to begin trading in Hong Kong on Tuesday (HONGKONG-CHINA-COMPANY-IPO-TECHNOLOGY-INTERNET-ALIBABA)

JAKARTA: Reporting on activity at Mount Kelut, a volcano on the main island of Java, where activity has caused villagers to flee and led authorities to evacuate thousands (INDONESIA-VOLCANO)

KATHMANDU: Monitoring as Nepal's Supreme Court is expected to issue its verdict over the appeal of Charles Sobhraj, a French national imprisoned for the 1975 killing of a young American woman (NEPAL-FRANCE-US-CRIME-TRIAL)

KUALA LUMPUR: Moving an analysis piece on Malaysia's four decades of positive discrimination policies which were supposed to lift Muslim Malays out of poverty (MALAYSIA-POLITICS-ECONOMY-DEVELOPMENT) Pictures

MANILA: Covering leading property developer Ayala Land Inc. press conference in reaction to police report ruling out terrorism or a blast that tore through one of its malls last month, killing 11 people. 0400 GMT (PHILIPPINES-BLAST)

NEW DELHI: Moving a story on a World Toilet Summit in New Delhi that ended with a call to make suitable toilets available to the developing world (HEALTH-ENVIRONMENT-INDIA-TOILETS)

PHNOM PENH: Monitoring North Korean Prime Minister Kim Yong-Il who will leave Cambodia Sunday after a visit aimed at boosting trade (CAMBODIA-NKOREA-DIPLOMACY)

SEOUL: Following US inspectors' work to oversee the promised disablement of nuclear facilities in North Korea (NKOREA-NUCLEAR-WEAPONS)

North Korea has agreed to allow South Koreans to tour a scenic mountain bordering China from next year in an expanded tourism business, organisers say (NKOREA-TOURISM-SKOREA)

SHANGHAI: Moving a piece on how many Chinese investors believe that investing in an initial public offering of a large company is a sure bet (CHINA-STOCKS-IPO-INVEST-COMPANY)

SINGAPORE: Golf. Final day of Barclays Singapore Open with US Open champion Angel Cabrera of Argentina holding a four-shot lead over his closest challengers including Vijay Singh and Lee Westwood (GOLF-APGA-EPGA-SIN)

SYDNEY: Moving a piece on Australia bracing for an interest rate hike in the middle of an election campaign, an event economists say risks souring the central bank's relations with government (AUSTRALIA-POLITICS-BANK-RATE-FOREX)

-- Moving a feature from Wycliffe Well in Australia's remote centre where, the locals reckon, extraterrestrials regularly drop in -- though skeptics say UFO sightings could have more to do with the area's beer drinking habits (LIFESTYLE-AUSTRALIA-UFO)

TOKYO: World Cup volleyball (VOLLEY-WORLD-**WOMEN**)

SHIMA, Japan: US LPGA Tour Mizuno Classic golf (GOLF-USLPGA-JPN)

The AFP Asia news agenda

SAITAMA, Japan: WBA flyweight title bout between Takefumi Sakata of Japan and Denkaosan Kaowichit of Thailand (BOX-WBA-JPN-THA-FLY)

afp

Load-Date: November 4, 2007

End of Document

The 0530 GMT News Advisory

Agence France Presse -- English

April 24, 2007 Tuesday 5:35 AM GMT

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Length: 720 words

Dateline: HONG KONG, April 24 2007

Body

Duty Editor: Kevin McElderry

News Desk: + 852 2829 6211

-- WORLD HEADLINES --

MANADO: US mining giant cleared of pollution

TOKYO: Man accused in Briton's case gets life

MOSCOW: Russia, world pay tribute to Yeltsin

COLOMBO: **Tamil Tigers** launch second air raid

-- ASIA --

Indonesia-US-mining-environment,2ndlead

MANADO, Indonesia

An Indonesian court clears US mining giant Newmont of pollution, ending for now a legal battle that has put the country's efforts to improve its standing among foreign investors at risk.

600 words 0600 GMT by Nabiha Shahab. Picture

Japan-Britain-crime,3rdlead

TOKYO

A Japanese businessman is jailed for life for a wave of brutal assaults on **women** but cleared over the abduction and killing of British bar hostess Lucie Blackman.

600 words 0700 GMT by Harumi Ozawa. Picture

The 0530 GMT News Advisory

We will also move: Japan-Britain-crime,ANALYSIS

SriLanka-unrest-attack,5thlead

COLOMBO

Tamil Tiger rebels flying light aircraft bomb Sri Lanka's northern Jaffna peninsula, killing at least six soldiers, in their second air attack in two months, officials and the rebels say.

550 words 0545 GMT by Amal Jayasinghe

Bangladesh-politics,lead

DHAKA

Bangladesh's main opposition Awami League calls nationwide protests after its leader Sheikh Hasina Wajed is barred from returning to the country by military-backed authorities.

500 words 0730 GMT by Shafiq Alam

China-government-media-transparency,lead

BEIJING

China unveils new regulations aimed at improving the transparency of its notoriously opaque and unresponsive government but says the new openness will still have its limits.

500 words 0600 GMT by Dan Martin

Nepal-politics-royals-anniversary,lead

KATHMANDU

Nepal's new government celebrates the first anniversary of the end of King Gyanendra's absolute rule with what officials and analysts says has been huge progress, but tough challenges lie ahead on the road to democracy.

650 words 0800 GMT by Deepesh Shrestha. Picture

We have already moved: Nepal-politics,CHRONO

India-Kashmir-unrest-talks

NEW DELHI

India's prime minister starts talks with Indian Kashmiri politicians aimed at easing tensions in the revolt-hit state, a meeting boycotted and dismissed by the disputed region's separatists as a waste of time.

550 words 0900 GMT. Pictures

-- ASIA BUSINESS --

India-economy-bank-money-forex

MUMBAI

India's central bank, under pressure not to halt rapid growth but wary of stubborn inflation levels well above its target zone, releases its quarterly monetary policy review.

600 words 0800 GMT by Salil Panchal

The 0530 GMT News Advisory

Australia-airline-Qantas-takeover,lead

SYDNEY

The private equity consortium bidding to take over Australian national airline Qantas launches a fresh appeal for shareholders to accept an offer analysts say is looking increasingly shaky.

600 words 0630 GMT by Neil Sands

Australia-economy-inflation-rate,2ndlead

SYDNEY

A surprise easing of Australia's inflationary pressures shown in official figures suggests the central bank is unlikely to raise interest rates at its meeting next week, analysts say.

550 words 0700 GMT

Japan-US-finance-company-takeover KKR

TOKYO

After more than three decades of mega deals, buyout kings Henry Kravis and George Roberts have now set their sights on Japan, hoping to shed the image here of private equity firms as vulture funds.

500 words 0730 GMT by Daniel Rook

-- EUROPE --

Russia-politics-Yeltsin,lead

MOSCOW

Russia prepares to bury its first post-Soviet leader, Boris Yeltsin, and looks back at the painful birth of a new Russia that he oversaw.

700 words 0630 GMT

We will also move: Russia-politics-Yeltsin,ANALYSIS

-- MIDDLE EAST --

Iraq

BAGHDAD

A suicide car bomber attacks a US military patrol base north of Baghdad, killing nine soldiers and wounding 20 others, in one of the biggest attacks on US troops in Iraq.

600 words 0630 GMT

-- AMERICAS --

Lifestyle-literature-people-Halberstam,2ndlead-OBIT

SAN FRANCISCO

Pulitzer prize-winning author and Vietnam war journalist David Halberstam, famous for his epic account of the origins of the Vietnam war, dies in a car accident in northern California at the age of 73.

The 0530 GMT News Advisory

650 words moved

NATO-Russia-US,ADVANCER

WASHINGTON

US Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice will defend a controversial US plan to station missile defense bases on Russia's doorstep in Eastern Europe during an informal meeting of NATO and Russian foreign ministers this week in Oslo.

700 words 0600 GMT by David Millikin.

afp

Load-Date: April 25, 2007

End of Document

TV talent show may have helped Sri Lanka rebels: officials

Agence France Presse -- English

October 23, 2007 Tuesday 5:55 AM GMT

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Length: 332 words

Dateline: COLOMBO, Oct 23 2007

Body

Sri Lankan defence officials said Tuesday that a major Tamil Tiger suicide attack against a key military base may have been helped by security lapses during the screening of a popular TV talent contest.

A rebel suicide squad of 21 elite fighters on Monday managed to infiltrate the Anuradhapura army and air force base north of Colombo, kill 13 servicemen and destroy several aircraft including a multi-million-dollar spy plane.

Military officials said the commando-style attack began in the early hours of Monday, meaning the rebels would have had to be at the perimeter fence at least three to four hours earlier to get into position.

"That takes us to the time when Sirasa Super Star was shown on TV," a military official said, referring to a hugely popular talent show inspired by "American Idol."

"There are no TVs at sentry points, but the alertness of sentries and whether all positions were properly manned is being probed," said the official, who asked not to be named.

Military officials said the "Black Tiger" fighters, three of whom were women, were all wearing camouflage uniforms similar to those worn by government soldiers and cut through barbed wire before sneaking into the base.

The base is situated 210 kilometres (130 miles) north of the capital and 60 kilometres from the frontline separating government-held territory and the northern mini-state controlled by the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE).

Hours before the attack, the military had also been hosting a cross-country motor sporting event followed by a spirited party.

"Defence top brass have already visited Anuradhapura and are taking stock of the situation and looking at possible lapses," another senior defence official said.

"The question is how the Tigers managed to get in unnoticed by sentries."

Just over an hour after the ground attack, the Tigers brought in their light aircraft to bomb the base and cause more damage -- the rebels' first coordinated land and air strike against Sri Lankan security forces.

TV talent show may have helped Sri Lanka rebels: officials

Load-Date: October 24, 2007

End of Document

Latest Israeli raid ends

The Star (South Africa)

February 27, 2007 Tuesday

e4 Edition

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Section: NEWS; Pg. 4

Length: 669 words

Body

Nablus - The Israeli army has withdrawn most of its forces from the northern West Bank city of Nablus, Palestinians said today, three days after a raid it launched to arrest suspected militants. The military incursion was the biggest Israel had mounted in the occupied West Bank in months. Soldiers had confined some 30 000 residents were under curfew as they searched for gunmen.

Colombo - The ***Tamil Tigers*** fired at a helicopter carrying two ambassadors today. American Robert Blake and Italian Pio Mariani had just landed in Batticaloa when several mortars landed close to the aircraft, slightly injuring them. A Tamil spokesperson apologised, saying the Sri Lankan army used the area to attack Tamil targets and that rebels had attacked the craft fearing a military assault.

Geneva - Workmen put together a Broken Chair sculpture by Swiss artist Daniel Berset, a symbol for victims of the anti-personal mines, on the Place des Nations at the European headquarters of the UN in Geneva yesterday.

Seoul - A South Korean court today ruled in favour of a former man who applied to be listed as a woman in official records after undergoing a sex change operation.

The court said the person identified only as "A" had developed a strong ***female*** identity after the operation; that her sex change had caused society no harm and could not be seen as an attempt to avoid military service.

Islamabad - Police in central Pakistan have registered a criminal case against a farmer who allegedly sold his wife's kidney to purchase a tractor. The woman told officials in the central Bahawalpur district that doctors discovered the removal of the organ while treating her for a urinary tract infection she contracted after the unlawful surgery.

Los Angeles - A British bank wants a Los Angeles court to enforce more than \$1,3-million (about R9-million) in civil judgments against a Swede who wrecked a rare Ferrari Enzo driving at 257km/h in Malibu. Capital Bank says Bo Eriksson (44) failed to pay back a loan for the Ferrari and another car. Eriksson was sentenced in November to three years in prison for embezzlement .

Sydney - Prime Minister John Howard was accused today of pandering to far-right groups who want a "white Australia" after the senate passed the biggest overhaul of immigration laws in nearly 60 years. "It's part of the prime minister's package of demonising those who come from other countries," said Australian Democrats leader Senator Lyn Allison.

Baghdad - Three brothers were among five people killed by a roadside bomb early today in the town of Al-Wahda, southeast of Baghdad, police said. The five were in a car heading to the Iraqi capital when their vehicle was hit. The

Latest Israeli raid ends

US military, meanwhile, said 13 civilians and two policemen were killed when a suicide bomber blew up a vehicle against a police post in the western city of Ramadi yesterday.

Phnom Penh - Cambodia's royal palace has condemned four websites that use the name of King Norodom Sihamoni to promote Las Vegas casinos, discount airfares and dating services. The palace called for those behind the sites to be prosecuted for slander. It was not immediately clear where the sites, which have the king's name but then link to advertisers, were based.

Tokyo - A senior Japanese lawmaker says Japan could become just another Chinese province in the future given Beijing's increasing military capabilities. The comments by Shoichi Nakagawa, policy chief of Prime Minister Shinzo Abe's ruling Liberal Democratic Party (LDP), could hurt the recently improving ties between the Asian neighbours after Abe's fence-mending trip to Beijing last October.

London - Motorists who use a cellphone behind the wheel face stiffer penalties from today. For a first offence they will get three penalty points on their licences while fines double to £60 (about R830) . The new rules will also hit drivers who use a hands-free kit but fail to have proper control of their vehicle, and driving instructors, who are not allowed to use a cellphone while giving lessons.

Load-Date: May 23, 2007

End of Document

INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS

PAP News Wire

October 22, 2007 Monday

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Section: GENERAL

Length: 714 words

Body

Sirnak, Turkey: Turkey said on Monday eight of its soldiers were missing a day after clashes with Kurdish rebels near the Iraqi border in which at least 12 soldiers were killed. The General Staff said 34 rebels from the Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK) were killed in the clashes.

Ankara: Turkey will exhaust all diplomatic channels to resolve the crisis over Kurdish rebels in northern Iraq before launching any military operation, CNN Turk quoted Foreign Minister Ali Babacan as saying on Monday on a visit to Kuwait.

Ankara: Kurdish rebels fighting Turkish troops near the Iraqi border will cease all their actions on Monday evening, Turkey's NTV private broadcaster quoted Iraqi President Jalal Talabani as saying.

Washington: The White House on Monday urged the Iraqi government to act swiftly to stop Kurdish rebels in northern Iraq from mounting further cross-border attacks into Turkey. "We do not want to see wider military action on the northern border," White House spokesman Tony Fratto said.

Beijing: China's ruling Communist Party unveiled a new leadership line-up on Monday, including two men positioned to succeed President Hu Jintao and government head Premier Wen Jiabao. Xi Jinping, who has been chief of Shanghai, and Li Keqiang, who has headed the northeast province of Liaoning, were lifted into the new nine-member Politburo Standing Committee - the innermost ring of power in this top-down state.

Teheran: Iran will not abandon its right to nuclear technology despite the threat of more sanctions, Iran told France in a letter published on Monday, a day before talks to try to defuse the atomic row with the West. Western nations accuse Iran of trying to build atomic bombs under cover of a civilian programme, which Tehran denies.

Beirut: Lebanon delayed its presidential election by nearly three weeks to Nov. 12 on Monday to allow more time for rival pro- and anti-Syrian groups to agree on a compromise candidate. The Lebanese parliament had been scheduled to meet on Tuesday to choose a successor to pro-Syrian President Emile Lahoud, whose term expires on Nov. 23.

Karachi: Pakistani authorities are considering banning political processions in the run-up to a general election after a bomb attack on former Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto killed 139 people. The attack on Bhutto by suspected Islamist militants has raised fresh fears about stability in nuclear-armed Pakistan, where military president Pervez Musharraf is waiting for the Supreme Court to ratify his Oct. 6 election victory.

Bishkek: Kyrgyz leader Kurmanbek Bakiyev dissolved parliament on Monday to tighten his grip on the chamber after a constitutional referendum extended his authority in the impoverished Central Asian state. Kyrgyz voters

INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS

approved a set of amendments on Sunday giving Bakiyev leeway in picking key cabinet officials and paving the way for his political party to gain a footing in parliament.

Colombo: The **Tamil Tigers**' air wing bombed a north Sri Lanka air force base before dawn on Monday, the military said, while the Tigers said suicide fighters mounted their biggest ground assault since the two-decade civil war began. The rebel air strike in the north-central district of Anuradhapura comes months after the Tigers' first ever air attacks using light aircraft smuggled into the country in pieces, and as near daily land, air and sea clashes occur.

Nairobi: Kenyan President Mwai Kibaki dissolved parliament on Monday, starting the countdown to what could be the closest election in east Africa's biggest economy. "I hereby dissolve the ninth parliament of the Republic of Kenya," Kibaki said in a televised speech.

Khartoum: Three Sudanese soldiers were killed when government forces attacked a refugee camp in Darfur, the second assault reported on a shelter for displaced people in less than a week, the United Nations said on Monday. The fighting, at Hamidiya camp near the western town of Zalengei, was the latest in a series of clashes just days before planned peace talks between Sudan's government and rebel groups.

Manama: Two **female** American sailors were shot dead and a male sailor was critically wounded at the U.S. navy base in Bahrain on Monday in events the navy said were not linked to terrorism. The shootings took place at about 5 a.m., the navy said in a statement.

Load-Date: October 23, 2007

End of Document

Soldier shot dead by rebels in N. Sri Lanka during cease-fire

Deutsche Presse-Agentur

February 16, 2003, Sunday 02:15 Central European Time

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Section: Politics

Length: 337 words

Dateline: Colombo

Body

A nearly one-year-old cease-fire between Sri Lanka's government and Tamil rebels suffered a blow when rebels shot dead a soldier in the northern part of the country, a local newspaper said Sunday.

The soldier was killed on Saturday in the Muhamalai area, 350 kilometres north of the capital, while the army and the rebels are giving different versions of the incident, The Sunday Times newspaper reported.

Military officials said that the soldier had gone missing on the previous day and on Saturday they were informed by Scandinavians monitoring the cease-fire that the soldier had been found dead in an area ahead of the forward defence lines of the security forces.

In a statement, rebels claimed that three soldiers were confronted on entering rebel-occupied territory, and one of the soldiers attempted to lob a hand grenade.

"Our cadres were forced to react," the statement said, an implicit admission that the soldier was shot by rebel forces.

The rebels said that the dead soldiers companions had fled.

Scandinavian monitors had been informed about the incident and were making arrangements on Sunday to hand over the body to the army through the International Committee for the Red Cross (ICRC).

The incident was another setback to the cease-fire agreement between the government and the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (**LTTE**), which took effect on February 23, 2002, under a Norwegian- backed peace process to end the country's two-decade-old ethnic conflict.

Tension between rebels troops and soldiers in northern Sri Lanka have been high during the last week, since a clash between the two sides in a dispute about **female** rebel cadres entering government controlled areas wearing leather waist belts, which are part of their military uniform.

Under the cease-fire agreement, rebels cannot enter government- controlled areas wearing their military uniforms.

The cease-fire agreement has held for nearly a year despite a series of violations of the truce. dpa ad ff

Load-Date: February 16, 2003

Soldier shot dead by rebels in N. Sri Lanka during cease-fire

End of Document

Sri Lanka navy and Tamil rebels in fierce clash off northern sea

Associated Press International

September 1, 2006 Friday 8:02 PM GMT

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Section: INTERNATIONAL NEWS

Length: 709 words

Byline: By KRISHAN FRANCIS, Associated Press Writer

Dateline: COLOMBO Sri Lanka

Body

A fierce naval clash erupted Friday between government patrol boats and ***Tamil Tigers*** in Sri Lanka's northern sea, the military said, as the rebels vowed to retain a key northeastern enclave in the face of air and artillery attacks.

The fighting broke out late Friday when nearly 15 boats belonging to the Tigers' sea wing attacked the navy boats near Point Pedro off the island's northern Jaffna peninsula, an official from the Media Center for National Security said.

He said the battle was ongoing and six rebel boats were destroyed and 35-40 Sea Tigers may have been killed. However, no independent confirmation to this account was possible.

Military spokesman Brig. Prasad Samarasinghe said earlier that air force jets had destroyed rebel artillery positions overnight in Sampur, where insurgents have been firing artillery and mortars at a port the military uses to send supplies to its 43,000 troops in the northern Jaffna Peninsula.

The push to retake Sampur opened a new front in the country's more than two-decade civil conflict with the ethnic Tamil rebels, who want to establish a homeland for the country's Tamil minority, claiming discrimination by majority Sinhalese.

While rebel-controlled areas in the north were clearly demarcated by a 2002 cease-fire, the northeastern coastal stretch is less clear-cut.

Both sides hold pockets of territory, but control over some is in dispute, including Sampur a 50-square kilometer (19-square mile) area across the lagoon from the Trincomalee naval base.

Sri Lanka's top-ranking military official, Lt. Gen. Sarath Fonseka, told The Associated Press on Thursday that government troops would take the area within a few days.

But, S. Elilan, the Tigers' regional leader in Trincomalee, said that would never happen.

"This is an area under our control and Tamil people live here. We will not allow the military to invade."

The military claims to have killed 101 Tigers and wounded 100 more since Sunday. Only 14 soldiers have been killed, it says.

Sri Lanka navy and Tamil rebels in fierce clash off northern sea

The rebels reported 82 deaths 50 government soldiers, 12 rebel fighters and 20 civilians.

In northern Jaffna, suspected Tigers triggered a roadside bomb, killing a soldier and injuring five others Friday morning, Samarasinghe said.

In a nearby village, unidentified gunmen killed two Tamil civilians on a motorbike, the military said.

Roadside bombs and shootings are frequent in Tamil-majority Jaffna, under government control since 1995 but still considered the heart of Tamil culture.

The rebels made a major push to reclaim the peninsula on Aug. 11. A resulting 11-day battle killed at least 1,000 combatants and civilians.

Airlines said Friday they were preparing to resume commercial flights from the capital to the peninsula for the first time in nearly a month, but were still waiting for security clearance from the military.

One of the more controversial incidents of the battle for Jaffna was a military airstrike deep inside rebel territory that the Tigers and UNICEF said killed dozens of teenagers attending a first aid training course. The government insists it was a rebel training center, and that those killed, regardless of their ages, were Tiger fighters.

Police on Friday said they had arrested three young women allegedly injured in that bombing, who had been brought south to a government hospital for treatment.

The women allegedly backed the government's stance that the center was being used by the Tigers, but said they were not willing recruits.

It was not possible to independently confirm the women's statements, although the International Committee of the Red Cross confirmed that they were injured in the bombing, had been brought from northern Mullaitivu and were now under arrest.

In recent months, Sri Lanka has returned to the brink of full-scale civil war with hundreds of fighters and civilians killed in major offensives. However, neither side has officially withdrawn from the 2002 Norway-brokered cease-fire.

About 220,000 people have been made homeless by near-daily shelling, airstrikes and artillery fire since April, according to the United Nations.

The Tigers have fought the government since 1983. The conflict killed more than 65,000 people before the cease-fire.

Associated Press writer Bharatha Mallawarachi contributed to this report.

Load-Date: September 2, 2006

Restoration of Sri Lankan peace process hinges on talks at local level, says activist

The Irish Times

September 4, 2006 Monday

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Section: WORLD; Other World Stories; Pg. 10

Length: 601 words

Byline: Deaglán de Bréadún, Foreign Affairs Correspondent

Body

SRI LANKA: Inter-communal talks at local level are needed to help restore the peace process in Sri Lanka, an Irish-born priest closely involved with the situation said during a visit to Dublin at the weekend.

Fr Séamus Finn, a senior member of the Oblate order which has a long history of involvement with the island, said the renewal of hostilities between the **Tamil Tigers** and the government had created a new wave of refugees.

"Since April, the UN says there are 200,000 new refugees, mostly Tamils, including more than 50,000 **women** and children wandering around. And for a lot of these families this is probably the third or fourth time they have been displaced like this," he told The Irish Times.

The civil war between the minority Tamil and majority Sinhalese communities on the island has left 65,000 people dead since it began in 1983.

"It has a lot of similarities to the Northern Ireland situation. There are lots of people in the south that want to ignore it and hope it will go away," says Fr Finn.

"It really needs some honest brokers from the outside who can do some of the local-community convening and talking that happened in Northern Ireland."

This, he adds, would be in addition to the formal dialogue that has been taking place in Switzerland between senior representatives of the two sides.

"Can you bring people into a room from both communities and actually get them to talk about the pain that they're carrying, the hurt, the loss; in a zone where they feel there can be trust and they can begin at least some kind of confidence-building measures."

This, he argues, could happen either on the island or abroad.

"I think it happened both ways in Northern Ireland. I'm saying that at the local village or neighbourhood or regional level, there has to be some mechanisms put in place to let people talk about family members and property that they've lost, and injuries they have sustained. It's not a question of what's going on in their head, it's what's going on in their guts and in their heart."

Restoration of Sri Lankan peace process hinges on talks at local level, says activist

Born in Kanturk, Co Cork, in 1949, Fr Finn is a leading religious activist on social issues in the US and internationally, in his role as director of justice, peace and integrity of creation with the Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate. In addition to lobbying governments and international institutions, the Oblates also campaign for socially responsible behaviour by multinationals.

The order has "a lot of schools" and its modest investments in employee pension funds in different corporations allows it to have a voice in how these companies are run. The Oblates have monitored the activities of Coca-Cola, Disney, Ford Motor Company, McDonald's and Nike as well as "major pharmaceutical companies on Aids issues".

"We have gone to China with a number of companies to look at the factories where their products are made - shirts, shoes, coats, ties, cameras - and meet with the workers. We're interested in making sure that the products which the companies are selling in the developed world are not produced in sweatshops, there's no forced overtime, there's fair wages," he says.

Commenting on the response from the multinationals, Fr Finn said that "when we started this 30 years ago it was more adversarial". But this had changed and "the good companies" now understood how bad publicity could damage their brand or image.

These companies now realised that "it really is in their best interest to pay attention to some basic core principles of human rights and the environment" and that "it would cost them less to actually do the thing right to begin with or to find a way to do it right".

Load-Date: September 4, 2006

End of Document

Bolton Launches Talks on Replacing Annan

Associated Press Online

February 17, 2006 Friday 8:41 AM GMT

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Section: DOMESTIC NEWS

Length: 658 words

Byline: By EDITH M. LEDERER, Associated Press Writer

Dateline: UNITED NATIONS

Body

The U.S. ambassador opened Security Council discussions on the next U.N. secretary-general, calling the choice of a replacement for Kofi Annan probably the most important decision the world body will make this year.

U.S. Ambassador John Bolton, the council's president this month, called a meeting of the five veto-wielding permanent members Thursday "to get a sense of where the council is, so that we can begin to move forward on the issue."

Annan's second five-year term ends on Dec. 31 and his successor must be approved by the General Assembly based on a recommendation from the council.

At the moment, the permanent members the United States, Russia, China, France and Britain are divided on when to choose the next U.N. chief and where he or she should come from.

By tradition, the job of secretary-general rotates by region and Asian and African nations, who represent the majority of the 191 U.N. member states, believe it is Asia's turn to lead the United Nations.

"We believe, with more than two billion people, definitely Asia can provide the best qualified candidates," China's U.N. Ambassador Wang Guangya told reporters after Thursday's meeting.

Russian Ambassador Andrey Denisov said choosing an Asian would follow tradition, "and it is better to follow traditions if we do have them, but it doesn't mean that it is strict adherence."

French Ambassador Jean-Marc de La Sabliere said his government believes the Asians "have a priority but not exclusivity."

But Bolton reiterated Washington's strong opposition to the principle of geographic rotation, a view backed by Britain.

"It's our view that we should pick the best qualified person, whatever region of the world the person comes from," he said. "Obviously, the secretary-general has to have political skills, but our view is the management question is far and away the most important qualification."

Bolton argued that in practice there really is no geographical rotation because three secretary-generals have come from Western Europe, two from Africa, one from Latin America, one from Asia, and none from Eastern Europe.

Bolton Launches Talks on Replacing Annan

He also noted that there has never been a woman secretary-general and asked: "If you believe in geographic rotation, do you believe in gender rotation?"

So far, the announced candidates are all Asian men. They include South Korean Foreign Minister Ban Ki-moon, Thai Deputy Prime Minister Surakiart Sathirathai, who is backed by the 10-member Association of Southeast Asian Nations, and former U.N. disarmament chief Jayantha Dhanapala of Sri Lanka who recently represented the government in peace talks with the Tamil Tigers.

Equality Now, an advocacy organization which campaigns for women's rights, came up with a sampling of 18 qualified women from all over the world. Its list of candidates includes the presidents of Latvia, Finland and Chile, several current and former senior U.N. officials, and Myanmar's pro-democracy leader Aung San Suu Kyi, the Nobel Peace Prize winner who remains under house arrest by the country's military rulers.

Council members expect more candidates to enter the race in the coming months.

Bolton wants the council to decide on a candidate by June, but other members think that's too early.

China's Wang said the council is "informally looking at dates like September, October" to give the next secretary-general time for a transition.

De La Sabliere said there is growing support for a transition of two or three months.

Not only have the five permanent council members started talking about the next secretary-general, so have the 10 elected council members who serve two-year terms. But all 15 members agree that discussions are very preliminary and there won't be any discussion of candidates for several months.

"I think we get together not to surprise each other," Wang said of the meetings of the five permanent members, known as the P-5. "We believe the P-5 will have a major role to play. Whether they finally agree I'm not sure."

Load-Date: February 18, 2006

U.S. launches Security Council discussion of next secretary-general to replace Annan

The Associated Press

February 17, 2006 Friday 8:19 AM GMT

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Section: INTERNATIONAL NEWS

Length: 658 words

Byline: By EDITH M. LEDERER, Associated Press Writer

Dateline: UNITED NATIONS

Body

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Load-Date: February 18, 2006

In Focus

The Gazette (Montreal)
August 15, 2005 Monday
Final Edition

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Section: NEWS; Pg. A2

Length: 685 words

Byline: The Gazette

Body

12 Tamils arrested in Sri Lanka

Background: The assassination of Sri Lanka's foreign minister, shot Friday by someone suspected of being a Tamil Tiger sniper, is being described as "a grave setback" to the island's peace process.

New: The hunt for the killer intensifies yesterday with the arrest of a dozen ethnic Tamils.

Next: The shooting of Lakshman Kadirgamar, 73, marks an escalation of the low-level "proxy war" that the Tamil Tigers have been waging in recent months.

Details, Page A16

Iraqi constitution down to the wire

Background: With only one day left to finish Iraq's new constitution, Sunni Arabs have asked that a decision on federalism be deferred so the draft can be completed on time.

New: The Iraqi parliament held a meeting yesterday evening to attempt to resolve differences between the Sunni minority and Shiite and Kurdish groups.

Next: Politicians say the draft could be presented to the Shiite- and Kurdish-dominated parliament today over Sunni objections. Details, Page A13

Young people worried about planet's future

New: When it comes to the environment, a new poll shows young Canadians are trying to effect some type of change in the environment but are deeply pessimistic that the polluted planet's condition can be improved.

Next: "It should make us - as a culture, as politicians, as manufacturers - take notice of what (young Canadians) are saying," says the director of research for the Toronto marketing firm that conducted the poll. Details, Page A10

Dirty beaches make for bad blood

In Focus

Background: More than 10 years ago, the provincial government banned the use of chlorine in the east-end Montreal sewage treatment plant.

New: The mayor of Sorel says his city's beaches are unusable because polluted water from Montreal is fouling its shore.

Next: While Sorel's complaints are dismissed by a federal official who blames farmers for the contaminated water, a spokesperson for Montreal says the city is studying two alternative methods to disinfect its effluence. Details, Page A6

Electoral battle of the sexes

The municipality of Wentworth North, about 100 kilometres northwest of Montreal, is making history. The Transparency Party, made up of seven professional women, is the first all-woman slate to run for office in a Quebec municipal election. They're running against men.

Details, Page A8

Bottom Line

Grapes anything but sour

The mysteries of wine are waiting to be revealed and sommelier Sandi Marques is ready to reveal them. Her firm, Cork and Karma, teaches people how to appreciate the vintners' pride. Details, Page B1

Comfort in numbers

Lonely and isolated is how middle managers at the Jean Talon Hospital felt before they formed a peer-support coaching group to help each other deal with the challenges of managing staff and mediating conflict. Details, Page B3

Sports

Mudge back on the line

Slightly more than one month ago, many thought Winnipeg's 6-foot-7, 305-pound Canadian offensive lineman Dave Mudge was washed up. But after being traded to the Alouettes, Mudge is preparing to start at right tackle Thursday against Calgary. Details, Page C3

NASCAR leader Stewart pads Nextel Cup lead

Tony Stewart cruised to his fifth victory in seven races yesterday at Watkins Glen International, padding his lead in the NASCAR Nextel Cup standings. Stewart started on the pole and led for 83 of 92 laps, relinquishing the lead only during pit stops. He held off Robby Gordon on a restart with two laps to go to claim his 24th career victory. Details, Page C7

Arts&life

Going back to the land

Roupen Ohanian, 23, had enough of pushing carts at Trudeau airport and weekend clubbing with friends, so he signed up for WWOOF. "The city lifestyle was getting to me," said Ohanian, standing on a pile of freshly turned dirt at an organic farm near Victoria, B.C. "I wanted to try something new, that I could feel good about."

Details, Page D3

Little action on film front

In Focus

Film production in Montreal has been ominously quiet, which is bad news not only for fans hoping to catch a peek of,

or an autograph from, Hollywood stars, but more importantly for the thousands who work in the industry.

Details, Page D1

Graphic

Photo: 12 Tamils arrested in Sri Lanka;

Photo: Going back to the land

Load-Date: August 15, 2005

End of Document

Tsunami village highlights Sri Lanka tensions n poll brings old tensions to surface A year on from the disaster, Peter Foster in Peraliya finds a nation divided

The Daily Telegraph (LONDON)

November 17, 2005 Thursday

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Section: NEWS; International; Pg. 19

Length: 679 words

Byline: Peter Foster

Body

ON ONE level it is a petty village squabble. But almost a year after the Boxing Day tsunami struck, killing 40,000 people, tiny Peraliya's problems could represent those of the whole country.

It was in Peraliya, on Sri Lanka's southern coast, that the tsunami swamped a passenger train killing 1,500 and destroying every house in its path. Some called the place "Sri Lanka's ground zero".

After the tsunami, however, came aid and sympathy which, while rebuilding houses, schools and clinics, left many villagers bickering among themselves.

Visitors to the site, where three carriages stand as a reminder of the disaster, are greeted by a group of women. Each has a story to tell and all are after one thing: money.

One, Sujatha, 51, is ready with a packet of documents and photographs showing the property and family members she lost, including a son.

Soon others are joining in the chorus of misery, all with desperate stories of financial loss and bereavement.

But as tourists put their hands in their pockets - and most do - another voice warns that such generosity may be misplaced.

Alappu Darunadasa, Peraliya's self-styled village chief, accuses the women of behaving "like beggars". Some, he adds, even exaggerate their losses in the hope of receiving a more generous donation. The women call Alappu a cheat and liar, pointing at the only two-storey house in the village - his - and accusing him of embezzling part of a million-rupee (pounds 5,650) Peraliya trust fund to build it.

Alappu vigorously denies the charge, saying the fund's accounts can be inspected and the money is to be spent on a maternity clinic to benefit "all the people of Peraliya, not just these women".

At the national level, Sri Lanka's politics and the post-tsunami aid effort are just as short of harmony. Today, the country votes in a presidential election billed as a choice between "peace" and "war", and divisions over aid and ethnic tensions between Sinhalese and Tamils return to the surface.

Tsunami village highlights Sri Lanka tensions n poll brings old tensions to surface A year on from the disaster,
Peter Foster in Peraliya finds a nation divided

The ceasefire signed in 2002 to end the 20-year civil war that claimed 65,000 lives looks increasingly fragile. Tamil factions are pursuing a campaign of violence and assassinations that culminated in the killing of the foreign minister, Lakshman Kadirgamar, in August.

For all the world's generosity - the pounds 1.8 billion pledged in aid was enough to rebuild the damage to Sri Lanka twice over - the money appears to have heightened, not healed, political divisions.

Attempts to share aid with areas controlled by the separatist **Tamil Tigers** caused Sinhalese hardliners to quit the coalition government.

The two main candidates for president reflect a split down the middle, with polls suggesting that the winner could be decided by as few as 200,000 votes from an electorate of 13 million.

On one side is the moderate, Ranil Wickremesinghe, a former prime minister who brokered the 2002 ceasefire and is described as the "Peace Candidate" for pledging a deal to give Tamils autonomy in a federal Sri Lanka.

His overtures have met with a cool response from an increasingly bellicose Tigers' leadership which has ordered a boycott of the election.

However, Mr Wickremesinghe still argues that resolving the Tamil question is essential to economic revival.

To his rival, the sitting prime minister, Mahinda Rajapakse, such concessions amount to a selling out of the majority Sinhalese people.

Called the "war candidate" by some, Mr Rajapakse has stoked up nationalist sentiments, allying himself in an ultra-nationalist coalition with Sri Lanka's monks and the extremist Sinhalese party, the JVP.

In his final speech before polling day, Mr Rajapakse, who also faces claims of misappropriating tsunami funds, summed up a choice facing Sri Lanka in the kind of language appealing to Sinhalese hardliners for whom Tamils are Hindu "aliens" in an historically Buddhist land.

He said: "On one side there is the force of patriotic citizens who stand for national identity, on the other is the force hostile to national culture ... kicking aside everything indigenous in order to serve the alien interests."

Load-Date: November 17, 2005

Thursday, January 6

Associated Press International

December 29, 2004 Wednesday

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Section: INTERNATIONAL NEWS

Length: 708 words

Byline: The Associated Press

Body

Today is Thursday, Jan. 6, the 6th day of 2005. There are 359 days left in the year.

Highlights in history on this date:

1492 - King Ferdinand and Queen Isabella ride victoriously into Granada after their armies defeat Boabdil, the last Muslim ruler of Spain, completing the Christian reconquest of Spain.

1540 - England's King Henry VIII weds fourth wife, Anne of Cleves. The marriage lasts six months.

1810 - Turkey agrees to Russia's annexation of the Crimea and Kuban with the enactment of the Treaty of Constantinople.

1818 - Dominions of Holkar in India are annexed with Rajput states and come under British protection.

1838 - Samuel Morse first publicly demonstrates his telegraph, in Morristown, New Jersey.

1839 - British forces capture Aden, Yemen.

1912 - New Mexico becomes 47th U.S. state.

1925 - Top South Korean opposition leader Kim Dae-jung, a three-time presidential candidate, is born.

1941 - U.S. President Franklin D. Roosevelt defines American goal of "Four Freedoms" - freedom of speech, freedom of worship, freedom from want and freedom from fear.

1942 - The Pan American Airways Pacific Clipper arrives in New York after making the first round-the-world trip by a commercial airplane.

1950 - Britain recognizes the Communist government of China.

1963 - Iran's Shah Mohammad Reza Pahlavi launches his "white revolution," including redistributing land to peasants and giving women the vote.

1972 - Washington indicates that a U.S. naval task force dispatched during recent war between India and Pakistan marks start of regular American naval operations in Indian Ocean.

Thursday, January 6

1989 - Soviet Union calls downing of two Libyan aircraft by United States "absolutely unfounded."

1990 - Polish Communist leaders vote to disband their party and form a new leftist party under a different name.

1992 - Georgian President Zviad Gamsakhurdia and his supporters shoot their way out of their stronghold and speed away.

1994 - The Mexican government flies tons of food to San Cristobal De Las Casas in Chiapas state, where Indian rebels are staging an uprising; figure skater Nancy Kerrigan is clubbed on the leg by an assailant in Detroit. Four men, including the ex-husband of Kerrigan's rival, Tonya Harding, are sentenced to prison.

1995 - Iran's air force commander and 11 other officers are killed in a plane crash in central Iran.

1996 - Rebels raiding a village in northern India shoot and kill 15 Hindu men after pulling them from their beds and separating them from Muslims.

1997 - After a week of torrential rain in southeastern Brazil, at least 67 people are killed and more than 32,000 are homeless.

1998 - Fifty-one people die in a train crash in Karna, India.

1999 - Rebels fight their way into the capital of Sierra Leone, past a Nigerian-led intervention force, and burn government buildings.

2000 - Former Russian President Boris Yeltsin meets Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat in the Holy Land.

2001 - The Palestinians oppose drafting a "declaration of principles" that would be based on U.S. President Bill Clinton's peace proposals, saying they "will not accept any kind of pressure" that would short-circuit their legitimate rights.

2002 - U.S. Special Forces and allied Afghan fighters return empty-handed from a four-day manhunt aimed at extracting Taliban supreme leader Mullah Mohammed Omar from his alleged mountain hideout in southern Afghanistan.

2003 - The **Tamil Tigers** rebel group and the Sri Lankan hold a round of peace talks, making modest progress toward reconciliation after a 19-year-old civil war, but reaching no significant breakthroughs.

2004 - Ugandan church leaders tell American supporters of gay bishop Gene Robinson they are not welcome at the consecration of the new leader of Uganda's Anglicans, Bishop Henry Orombi.

Today's Birthdays:

Joan of Arc, French leader and saint (1412-1431); Max Bruch, German composer (1838-1920); Kahlil Gibran, Lebanese-American philosopher (1883-1931); Carl Sandburg, U.S. poet (1878-1967); Kim Dae-jung, South Korean president (1925--); E. L. Doctorow, U.S. author (1931--); Rowan Atkinson, English actor/comedian (1955--).

Thought for Today:

There may be Peace without Joy, and Joy without Peace, but the two combined make Happiness - John Buchan, 1st Baron Tweedsmuir, Scottish author (1875-1940).

Load-Date: December 30, 2004

Ending wars against children ;
The United Nations

The International Herald Tribune

August 6, 2005 Saturday

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Section: OPINION; Pg. 4

Length: 742 words

Byline: Olara A. Otunnu

Dateline: UNITED NATIONS, New York

Body

On July 26, the UN Security Council passed a major resolution containing the first concrete steps to identify, condemn and isolate 54 groups around the world that systemically abduct children to use them as soldiers, sex slaves, spies and porters for war. The resolution has gone further than any previous effort to institute an effective and structured way to protect children violated by war.

The Security Council resolution 1612 is groundbreaking in several respects. First, it establishes a comprehensive monitoring and reporting system that will enable the UN to gather objective, specific and reliable information on grave violations against children in armed conflict. Under this resolution, UN task forces will be charged with documenting the most horrendous violations and crimes against children, including purposely killing and maiming them, recruiting and abducting them to use as soldiers, committing rape and other sexual violence against them and attacking schools and hospitals.

International Herald Tribune

The Security Council also agreed to identify publicly 54 parties, both governments and insurgents, operating in 11 different conflict situations, covering nearly every continent, that are using, harming and exploiting children as soldiers and sex slaves. The list includes the **Tamil Tigers** in Sri Lanka; the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia, or FARC; Janjaweed militias in Sudan; the Communist Party of Nepal; the Lord's Resistance Army in Uganda; the Karen National Liberation Army in Myanmar; and government forces in Congo, Myanmar and Uganda. What has been called the "naming and shaming" list is now available to governments and concerned individuals around the world.

The Security Council ordered these offenders to immediately prepare and implement concrete, time-bound action plans for the complete cessation of all violations against children in conflict situations. If they fail to stop their abuse, the UN will consider measures against them, including travel restrictions on leaders, the imposition of arms embargoes and restrictions on the flow of financial resources.

To assess and monitor progress, the Security Council will establish its own working group to oversee compliance. The resolution launches a strong course of action to save children, cruelly brutalized and exploited in armed conflict. But we can also do more to change the fate of more than 250,000 children now being schooled in the lessons of violence, rape, destruction and hatred. Tens of thousands of children immersed in a culture of fear and revenge serve as the recruits for continuing violence and instability. Children exposed to violence, radical

Ending wars against children ; The United Nations

indoctrination and hate provide the best recruiting pool for criminal and terrorist entrepreneurs. Two of the suspects in the failed terrorist attacks in London on July 21 are children of war from Somalia and Eritrea. One of the main strategies in the battle against terrorism should be a commitment to end the use of children as fodder for conflict.

Compiling information on violations against children is of little value unless it serves as a trigger for action, beginning with the Security Council and other decision-making bodies. That is also why the issue must be a priority beyond the corridors of the United Nations. With this resolution there is now a springboard for a widespread public campaign that can turn words into results.

It is our goal that every group on the "naming and shaming" list receive messages from people and organizations around the world, including national legislators, opinion makers, women's organizations, religious leaders and children themselves, demanding that these leaders stop their abhorrent practices. At the same time we need to inform our own national governments, and now is the time for sanctions and the isolation against recalcitrant parties.

Sustained public pressure can hasten compliance with the resolution. When the Asian tsunami struck, we felt helpless in the face of a fury unleashed by the forces of nature. What is happening to children caught up in conflict and war is a human-made catastrophe, a most unnatural disaster. How can we allow this to continue?

*

Olara A. Otunnu is UN under secretary general and special representative for children and armed conflict. The list of armed groups that exploit children is available at www.un.org/special-rep/children-armed-conflict/.

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Load-Date: August 7, 2005

Friday, January 6

AP Worldstream

December 29, 2005 Thursday

Copyright 2005 Associated Press

Section: INTERNATIONAL NEWS

Length: 733 words

Byline: The Associated Press

Body

Today is Friday, Jan. 6, the 6th day of 2006. There are 359 days left in the year.

Highlights in history on this date:

1492 - King Ferdinand and Queen Isabella ride victoriously into Granada after their armies defeat Boabdil, the last Muslim ruler of Spain, completing the Christian reconquest of Spain.

1540 - England's King Henry VIII weds fourth wife, Anne of Cleves. The marriage lasts six months.

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1818 - Dominions of Holkar in India are annexed with Rajput states and come under British protection.

1838 - Samuel Morse first publicly demonstrates his telegraph, in Morristown, New Jersey.

1839 - British forces capture Aden, Yemen.

1912 - New Mexico becomes 47th U.S. state.

1925 - Top South Korean opposition leader Kim Dae-jung, a three-time presidential candidate, is born.

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1972 - Washington indicates that a U.S. naval task force dispatched during recent war between India and Pakistan marks start of regular American naval operations in Indian Ocean.

Friday, January 6

1989 - Soviet Union calls downing of two Libyan aircraft by United States "absolutely unfounded."

1990 - Polish Communist leaders vote to disband their party and form a new leftist party under a different name.

1992 - Georgian President Zviad Gamsakhurdia and his supporters shoot their way out of their stronghold and speed away.

1994 - The Mexican government flies tons of food to San Cristobal De Las Casas in Chiapas state, where Indian rebels are staging an uprising; figure skater Nancy Kerrigan is clubbed on the leg by an assailant in Detroit. Four men, including the ex-husband of Kerrigan's rival, Tonya Harding, are sentenced to prison.

1995 - Iran's air force commander and 11 other officers are killed in a plane crash in central Iran.

1996 - Rebels raiding a village in northern India shoot and kill 15 Hindu men after pulling them from their beds and separating them from Muslims.

1997 - After a week of torrential rain in southeastern Brazil, at least 67 people are killed and more than 32,000 are homeless.

1998 - Fifty-one people die in a train crash in Karna, India.

1999 - Rebels fight their way into the capital of Sierra Leone, past a Nigerian-led intervention force, and burn government buildings.

2000 - Former Russian President Boris Yeltsin meets Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat in the Holy Land.

2001 - The Palestinians oppose drafting a "declaration of principles" that would be based on U.S. President Bill Clinton's peace proposals, saying they "will not accept any kind of pressure" that would short-circuit their legitimate rights.

2002 - U.S. Special Forces and allied Afghan fighters return empty-handed from a four-day manhunt aimed at extracting Taliban supreme leader Mullah Mohammed Omar from his alleged mountain hideout in southern Afghanistan.

2003 - The **Tamil Tigers** rebel group and the Sri Lankan hold a round of peace talks, making modest progress toward reconciliation after a 19-year-old civil war, but reaching no significant breakthroughs.

2004 - Ugandan church leaders tell American supporters of gay bishop Gene Robinson they are not welcome at the consecration of the new leader of Uganda's Anglicans, Bishop Henry Orombi.

2005 - A baby boy is declared China's 1.3 billionth citizen in a blaze of publicity to promote the government's controversial "one child" birth limits.

Today's Birthdays: Joan of Arc, French leader and saint (1412-1431); Max Bruch, German composer (1838-1920); Kahlil Gibran, Lebanese-American philosopher (1883-1931); Carl Sandburg, U.S. poet (1878-1967); Kim Dae-jung, South Korean president (1925--); E. L. Doctorow, U.S. author (1931--); Rowan Atkinson, English actor/comedian (1955--).

Thought for Today:

There may be Peace without Joy, and Joy without Peace, but the two combined make Happiness - John Buchan, 1st Baron Tweedsmuir, Scottish author (1875-1940).

Load-Date: December 29, 2005

Friday, January 6

End of Document

Sri Lanka devastation leaves Martin awestruck

The Vancouver Sun (British Columbia)

January 18, 2005 Tuesday

Final Edition

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Section: NEWS; Pg. A9

Length: 644 words

Byline: Bruce Cheadle, Canadian Press

Dateline: KALMUNAI, Sri Lanka

Body

KALMUNAI, Sri Lanka -- Just two minutes spent visiting Sri Lanka's tsunami-shattered east coast would convince any Canadian of the value of sending in Canada's military, an awestruck Prime Minister Paul Martin said Monday after wandering a devastated community here for close to an hour.

Martin travelled by helicopter 300 kilometres east of Colombo to inspect the Disaster Assistance Response Team, or DART, at its camp in Ampara district -- a region about half the size of Prince Edward Island that is estimated to have suffered more than 10,000 deaths as a result of the Dec. 26 tsunami.

The prime minister later conceded that nothing had prepared him for the experience.

"The fact is that (Canadian tax) money is going directly to where it's needed," Martin told reporters in the jungle heat outside a DART medical clinic in a girls' school that has become a refugee camp. "I don't think you can spend more than about two minutes here without realizing just how desperately that help is needed."

Hundreds of local Sri Lankans -- Muslim, Sinhalese and Tamils -- crowded Kalmunai's rubble-strewn streets to wave at the visiting Canadian leader.

Martin's first stop was a mass grave just a stone's throw from the beach.

Houses and businesses that looked like they had been bombed surrounded the dusty patch of ground.

"In that grave site alone there's over 1,000 people that died," Padre Jim Hardwick of the DART team said in an interview.

It was the first place local women led him when he arrived in Kalmunai, and Hardwick called it the "heart" of what the local community wanted Martin to see.

"I've been told upwards from 5,000 to 10,000 (died in Ampara) and the last count somebody had was definitely 10,736," said the Petawawa, Ont.-based chaplain. "That number won't leave my head."

As Martin and his wife Sheila walked gingerly through cratered streets to reach to beach, they stepped over burned indentations in the sand that indicated where badly decomposed corpses had been torched as they lay.

Sri Lanka devastation leaves Martin awestruck

Children scampered barefoot through the tangled metal and slabs of concrete jutting at odd angles from the ground. The prime minister stopped again and again to greet the delighted kids.

Martin appeared overwhelmed, repeatedly commenting on the children to no one in particular.

"You'd have to be stone not to be emotionally affected by all this," he told reporters after catching his breath.

"When you see these young kids, what they've been through

. . . it is impossible not to be deeply, deeply affected."

Capt. Steve Pirie, a doctor leading the DART clinic in the overrun Mahmud Ladies College -- now home to about 450 refugee families representing about 1,900 people-- told the prime minister they treat 50 to 100 patients a day.

"We turn away people every day," said Pirie when Martin asked if that was the patient load. "There's no shortage of medicine to be done here."

The prime minister also took several long drinks from a bottle of water purified by the DART team -- water drawn from a nearby slough.

"It's good stuff . . . maybe pour in a little scotch," he joked to the long-suffering soldiers, whose camp is alcohol-free.

When Martin returned to Colombo on Monday afternoon, he met with political representatives allied to the insurgent **Tamil Tigers**, who control parts of northeastern Sri Lanka not far from Ampara district.

The prime minister has promised to ensure that foreign aid to Sri Lanka is distributed equitably throughout the country, and his political meetings in Colombo were to that end.

But Martin appeared to have little patience for political infighting after visiting Kalmunai.

"There comes a time when human beings are facing trauma," the prime minister told a news conference in Colombo.

"You should set the politics aside and take a look at what other people are facing. There should be one focus and that should be what we can do to help them."

Load-Date: January 18, 2005

Islamist group launches Internet magazine encouraging women to take up arms

The Canadian Press (CP)

August 27, 2004 Friday

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Section: FOREIGN GENERAL NEWS

Length: 694 words

Byline: BY RAWYA RAGEH

Body

DUBAI, United Arab Emirates (AP) _ An Islamist women's group has launched an Internet magazine aimed at recruiting Arab women to fight holy wars against non-Muslims.

The Al-Khansaa magazine, launched about a week ago and expected to appear monthly, also provides fitness tips for female jihadis, or holy warriors, information on treating injuries and advice on raising children to fight non-believers.

The magazine, appearing on several Islamic websites, claims to have been started "at the initiative" of two slain al-Qaida militants in Saudi Arabia, Abdulaziz al-Moqrin and Issa Saad Mohammed bin Oushan.

In June, security forces killed al-Moqrin, who was believed to be al-Qaida's chief in the Arab peninsula. Oushan, who was killed in July, and al-Moqrin were among Saudi Arabia's 26 most-wanted militants.

AP

The magazine said it was produced by the "women's media centre" in Saudi Arabia, an Islamic country where al-Qaida leader Osama bin Laden was born and Islam's two holiest shrines are located.

Cairo-based Islamic expert Mohamed Salah poured scorn on the 22-page magazine, describing it as a "media stunt (by militants) to show their enemies that they can mobilize everyone, including women, against them."

Al-Khansaa, the periodical's title, is the name of a revered Arab poet who converted to Islam during the time of the 7th century Prophet Muhammad.

She later became associated with Muhammad's close acquaintances and was known for eulogies written for her brother, a sturdy fighter in pre-Islamic days. Al-Khansaa also encouraged her four sons to take part in jihad to spread Islam. Her sons died in battle.

An unsigned magazine editorial says female Islamists "have set our lines next to our men to support them ... raise their children and be prepared. May God elevate us to martyrs."

"We will stand covered in our veils and abayas (ankle-length cloaks), with our weapons in our hands and our children in our arms," it added. "The blood of our husbands and the limbs of our children are an offering to God."

Women raising children, it says, must understand their "main mission is to present lions to the battlefield."

Islamist group launches Internet magazine encouraging women to take up arms

Saudi journalist Saeed al-Sereihy condemned the magazine in an article published in the newspaper Okaz, saying its "rhetoric takes a very dangerous turn when it addresses women in light of their educational role and capacity to influence children's upbringing."

Evan Kohlmann, a Washington-based counterterrorism expert, said the magazine appeared linked to Islamic extremists who "know about religion and fighting, but (they are) not necessarily people who have an effect over al-Qaida."

Its first issue includes tales of famous women fighters and criticism of calls for improved women's rights in Saudi Arabia, a conservative kingdom where women enjoy far fewer freedoms and rights than men.

The magazine says even though jihad, in terms of actual fighting, is primarily a man's duty, "women can fight without the permission of their husband or guardian since it would be a duty, and duties do not require consent."

The notion is shocking in hardline Saudi Arabia, where women are obliged to be accompanied by a male guardian at most times, particularly in public.

"Theoretically this sounds so interesting, but on the ground it is unrealistic" for female militants to be able to endure the same rigors as males, said Salah, the Egyptian expert.

Women did take part in the Egyptian Islamic Group's 1990s anti-government insurgency, Salah noted, and at least four were tried for involvement in violence. Palestinian, Uzbek and Chechen women also have joined men in the fighting, including carrying out suicide bombings.

The Tamil Tigers group fighting for independence in Sri Lanka used a woman, who detonated explosives strapped to her body to assassinate former Indian prime minister Rajiv Gandhi during a 1991 campaign rally.

Kohlmann, the U.S. expert, did not rule out the effectiveness of female fighters, who he believes can benefit from an element of surprise, as many people don't expect women to carry out terror attacks.

"Using women does not really fit the model ... which makes carrying out operations easier for them," he said.

Load-Date: August 28, 2004

Tuesday, January 6

Associated Press International

December 29, 2003 Monday

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Section: INTERNATIONAL NEWS

Length: 698 words

Byline: The Associated Press

Body

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1972 - Washington indicates that a U.S. naval task force dispatched during recent war between India and Pakistan marks start of regular American naval operations in Indian Ocean.

Tuesday, January 6

1982 - Truck driver William G. Bonin is convicted in Los Angeles of being the "freeway killer," murdering 14 young men and boys.

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Load-Date: December 30, 2003

FBI wary al-Qaida may begin using women in attacks

Associated Press International

April 1, 2003 Tuesday

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Section: INTERNATIONAL NEWS

Length: 652 words

Byline: JOHN SOLOMON; Associated Press Writer

Dateline: WASHINGTON

Body

FBI officials are concerned that al-Qaida, with its ranks thinned and tactics exposed by a series of arrests, may turn to women to carry out surprise attacks, officials say.

For the first time in the war on terror, the FBI has issued an alert for a woman, a Pakistani neurological expert, wanted for questioning in connection with al-Qaida. Analysts are also examining claims made by another woman in an Arabic newspaper that she was tasked by Osama bin Laden to open training camps for female terrorists.

Female attackers, successfully used by other terror organizations like the Palestinian Al Aqsa Martyrs Brigade, would represent a major tactical shift for al-Qaida after years of being aligned with the Afghan Taliban regime that oppressed women and treated them as second class citizens unworthy of participating in the Islamic jihad, officials said.

Several U.S. intelligence officials said they have no credible information suggesting there is an imminent attack plan to be carried out by women but that analysts are wary of the possibility.

"We're aware it is an option and one that was used recently against the Israelis and could easily be adapted by al-Qaida," one official said, speaking on condition of anonymity.

FBI spokesman Mike Kortan said the bureau was constantly looking for trends to help prevent attacks.

Several factors in the last month have led the FBI to prepare for the possibility that al-Qaida might turn to women.

U.S. officials learned of an interview in the Asharq al Awsat newspaper based in London in mid-March in which a woman claimed al-Qaida was setting up training camps for female "martyrs." The woman identified herself only as Umm Usama, which translates "mother of Osama."

"We are building a women's structure that will carry out operations that will make the U.S. forget its own name," the woman claimed.

She cited the success of Palestinian female suicide bombers used against Israel in recent months as an impetus for al-Qaida's planning. "The organization thought about this before, but interest increased after the female martyr attacks in Palestine and Chechnya," the woman said.

FBI wary al-Qaida may begin using women in attacks

U.S. officials said while they had some suspicions about the interview because it was carried out across the Internet using chat rooms and e-mail, it illustrated that women are considered an option for future al-Qaida attacks.

The FBI recently put out a global alert for 31-year-old Aafia Siddiqui and her estranged husband, Dr. Mohammed Khan, 33. It was the first time an FBI bulletin sought a woman since the war on terrorism began, officials said.

The FBI said Siddiqui, who has a doctorate in neurological science from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, may be in Pakistan, but lived in Boston while attending MIT.

FBI officials said they were not alleging she "is connected to specific terrorist activities" but that they wanted to question her about possible contacts with people under suspicion of terrorist activities.

A third reason to suspect a tactical shift, FBI officials said, is that bin Laden's network has suffered several losses in its senior ranks and is aware documents and interrogations have yielded substantial information about its planning and tactics.

In testimony last week, FBI Director Robert Mueller said more than 212 suspected terrorists have been charged with crimes since Sept. 11, 2001 - 108 who already have been convicted. Several were on U.S. soil and in a position to launch attacks, officials said.

The use of women in terrorist attacks is rare but not new.

Young Palestinian women carried out four dramatic suicide bombings in Israel last year, completely foiling the military's security profiling and shaking both the Palestinian and Israeli populations.

In 1991, Tamil Tigers fighting for independence in Sri Lanka used a woman, who detonated explosives strapped to her body, to assassinate Indian Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi during a political rally.

Load-Date: April 2, 2003

New Delhi must help Sri Lankan Tamils: Vijayakanth

Indo-Asian News Service

June 19, 2006 Monday 1:54 PM EST

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Length: 337 words

Byline: Indo-Asian News Service

Dateline: Chennai

Body

Chennai, June 19 -- Tamil actor and first-time legislator Vijayakanth has urged New Delhi to move Sri Lankan Tamils to safety in India on humanitarian grounds.

"The Sri Lankan Tamils are orphans," Vijayakanth said in a statement, adding that his Desiya Murpokku Dravida Kazhagam would resort to an agitation if the government did not come to their aid.

He said India was duty-bound to tell Sri Lanka to stop killing its own people.

Vijayakanth's plea comes soon after several Tamil Nadu leaders like Vaiko of the MDMK and Thirumavalavan of the Dalit Panthers of India asked the central government to help the Tamils in northern Lanka, under attack from Sri Lankan forces as the conflict between the government and the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (***LTTE***) escalates.

Vijayakanth recalled in his statement that it was Jawaharlal Nehru who in 1958 sent Indian ships to Sri Lanka to help move Tamils from Colombo to the Jaffna area, when the language policy created the first rifts between the two ethnic groups in the island nation.

Again, in 1983, "during the genocide of Tamils" India had sent ships to help move Tamil refugees to safety, Vijayakanth said.

"The aerial bombings of Tamil areas without any concern for people living there is an act no civilised state resorts to," the actor-turned-politician said, urging India to again send rescue ships to Sri Lanka "for safe passage of Tamils".

He compared the incessant flow of Lankan Tamil refugees to Tamil Nadu's coast to those who came to India from Bangladesh. The Bangladesh refugees walked in, but "the Tamil refugees have to undertake hazardous sea crossings, and facing possible death if they are caught between the navies of the two countries", the statement said.

"If India has strengthened coastal security, it should be able to filter out the terrorists," he said, adding that the "state should not support an inhuman policy that allows ***women*** and children to die at sea."

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New Delhi must help Sri Lankan Tamils: Vijayakanth

Load-Date: June 20, 2006

End of Document

Sri Lanka blast kills top military officer

Indo-Asian News Service

June 26, 2006 Monday 2:58 PM EST

Copyright 2006 HT Media Ltd. All Rights Reserved

Length: 354 words

Byline: Indo-Asian News Service

Dateline: Colombo

Body

Colombo, June 26 -- A senior military officer, two soldiers and a civilian were killed in a suicide bomb attack near the Sri Lankan capital Monday, said a military spokesman.

Major General Parami Kulatunga, deputy chief of staff of the Sri Lanka army, was killed when a suspected Tamil rebel rammed his motorcycle into the army officer's vehicle at Pannipitya, 20 km south of Colombo, as he was being driven to work, said military spokesman Brigadier Prasad Samarasinghe.

The bomb also killed two of his military escorts and a bystander. Six civilians and two soldiers were injured in the blast.

The army officer is the third most senior officer in the Sri Lankan army and has been involved in a series of military operations against guerrillas of the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (**LTTE**) in the north and eastern parts of the country, before taking up the position in the army headquarters.

On April 25, rebels carried out a suicide bomb attack inside the army headquarters and seriously injured the army commander, Lt. Gen. Sarath Fonseka. He has been flown to Singapore for further treatment.

In the absence of the commander, Kulatunga was playing a key role in carrying out the operations of the 120,000-strong army and was viewed as a potential commander.

Eyewitnesses said the vehicle was engulfed in flames and was completely destroyed after the blast.

A **female** passer-by driving to work took the officer to hospital, but he was pronounced dead on admission.

"I thought the vehicle was caught in an accident and was in flames. When I checked out, it was a bomb blast and I volunteered to take an officer who was fallen by the roadside to hospital. I did not know that he was a senior officer," said Uthpala Ranasinghe.

Kulatunga's death is a serious setback to the military, which has been preparing for more attacks from the rebels.

The escalation of violence since December 2005 has left more than 800 - civilians, soldiers and rebels dead during this period while an estimated 100,000 have been displaced due to fresh attacks.

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Sri Lanka blast kills top military officer

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

Load-Date: June 27, 2006

End of Document

News items from Asia-Pacific Desk of Xinhua

Xinhua General News Service

March 27, 2005 Sunday 12:00 PM EST

Copyright 2005 Xinhua News Agency

Section: WORLD NEWS; Political

Length: 412 words

Dateline: HONG KONG

Body

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

Major news items in leading Japanese newspapers

Roundup: New Zealand economy sees unexpected slowdown

Chirac arrives in Japan for three-day visit

Thai Govt. policies to be put into action, says PM

Major news headlines in leading Indian newspapers

Indian military aid to Nepal under review: official

17,000 Nepal women in India as prostitutes

Over 1 million people depart HK on Easter holidays

Major news items in leading Pakistani newspapers

Sri Lankan govt. not giving "de facto" recognition of LTTE

Anti-smoking law comes into effect in Bangladesh

Major foreign exchange rates in Pakistan

Myanmar, India to step up bilateral cooperation

New EPZs in Bangladesh see success in luring investment

Tax holiday incentives cost Bangladesh govt. much in 30 years

Indonesian mission in Guangzhou to process visa services in April

Japan's loans to improve infrastructure in Indonesia

Pakistan PM appreciates US decision on F-16s

News items from Asia-Pacific Desk of Xinhua

Filipino journalist shot dead

Indonesian government well-prepared to rebuild tsunami-hit Aceh

Indonesia awaits Shell's response over Ambalat

Mine blast kills four US soldiers in southeast Afghanistan

Cambodia's young man cleared of bird flu

Malaysian stock market likely to be rangebound next week

Weather information for Asia-Pacific cities -- March 26

Promotion for China tours held in Nepal

Underground lake discovered in mid-western Nepal

Indian leaders celebrate Holi festival on low scale

Terrorist attack threats in Manila subside: Philippine police

Philippine president promises to investigate spate of murders of left-wing activists

News Analysis: Aichi Expo in dilemma of nature-friendly theme and economy-thruster image

by Mu Dong

Forex reserves in India rise by 1.7 billion dollars

Cambodia, China friendship bridge built in Cambodia

Philippine police arrest terror suspect in Mindanao

Philippine police detonate bomb in financial district in Metro Manila

12 killed in traffic accident in Philippines

Sri Lankan president considers joint tsunami relief mechanism

95 percent pregnant women opt in to HIV screening in Singapore

1 S.Korean soldier dead, 3 missing in boat accident

Five-person family in northern Vietnam suspected to contract bird flu

Asia's first four-dimensional CT scanner functions in Singapore

Load-Date: March 27, 2005

SPECIAL RAPPORTEUR ON TORTURE NOWAK FINDS ABUSES WIDESPREAD IN PARAGUAY, NIGERIA, TOGO, SRI LANKA

US Fed News

October 29, 2007 Monday 12:06 AM EST

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Length: 960 words

Byline: US Fed News

Dateline: UNITED NATIONS

Body

The United Nations issued the following press release:

The Special Rapporteur to the Human Rights Council on torture or other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment, Manfred Nowak, said today he found such abuses widespread in all four countries he visited in the past year - Paraguay, Nigeria, Togo and Sri Lanka.

Briefing correspondents at a Headquarters press conference this morning, he said that "In all the countries, I had the full cooperation of the Government, nevertheless". He presented his final report to the General Assembly's Third Committee (Social, Humanitarian and Cultural). (See Press Release GA/SHC/3896.)

In Nigeria, in particular, torture was systemic even in the criminal investigation departments, he said. In Togo the situation had improved since 2005, but the conditions in police lock-ups were inhuman and children as young as seven or eight years old were subject to corporal punishment in detention. He stressed that the Government promised it would investigate the situation, however, and to take measures to improve it.

Mr. Nowak said he also found overwhelming evidence that torture was routine in Sri Lanka, which he visited from 1 to 8 October, despite the existence of a Torture Act that criminalized the practice and other legal protections. Many alleged perpetrators had, in fact, been indicted since the Act came into force in 1994; however, only three had been convicted and sentenced. Part of the problem, he said, was the severe seven-year minimum sentence.

His report on Sri Lanka, he said, did not include any information on war-related torture because he could not visit the camps of the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (**LTTE**), and particularly those of the Koruna group, about which serious abuses had been alleged.

In addition, the national army denied the existence of detention facilities, though serious allegations had also been received about the treatment of **LTTE** suspects in its camps. Reported practices included suspending a victim by his bound thumbs, an allegation that he had never heard of before, but which was deemed credible - and excruciatingly painful - by his forensic expert after claimants were interviewed.

Other problems in Sri Lanka included inhuman conditions of detention, partly resulting from 28,000 prisoners being crowded into a system meant for approximately 8,200. That situation was exacerbated by emergency regulations that allowed pretrial suspects to be held for a year in facilities that would not be tolerable for one day.

SPECIAL RAPPORTEUR ON TORTURE NOWAK FINDS ABUSES WIDESPREAD IN PARAGUAY , NIGERIA , TOGO , SRI LANKA

There were some positive developments, he said. The female prison system in Colombo had acceptable conditions, for example, and corporal punishment had been abolished, though there were still allegations of the latter. The Government promised to investigate such allegations and to dismiss those responsible.

In his general report, Mr. Nowak said, avoiding pretrial detention and deprivation of liberty for minor crimes were among his main recommendations, along with improving prison conditions and reducing overcrowding in other ways. Governments had been receptive to such recommendations; Nigeria had actually released thousands of prisoners as a result.

His other major observation in the report was on the importance of forensic expertise in combating torture, which was always difficult to prove since it took place behind closed doors. He brought a forensic expert on each of his country visits, so that bruises or other evidence could be properly interpreted.

Relaying his schedule for the near future, Mr. Nowak said he had been invited to Indonesia in November, and Equatorial Guinea, Iraq, South Africa and, possibly, Iran, were on his schedule for next year. He was waiting to reschedule a meeting with the Russian Federation and was pursuing talks with the United States on closing down irregular detention facilities.

Asked about the criteria he used to decide which countries to pay attention to, he said that he was constantly receiving allegations of torture from individuals and non-governmental organizations, along with requests to investigate. As those amassed in relationship to a country, he would get increasingly interested in it.

The countries he visited, he added, were not necessarily the worst offenders. Some countries would not invite him and others had their own rapporteurs assigned to them. In addition, he often paid the most attention to countries in which he could have the most impact. For example, Georgia had a new Government and wanted to improve its human rights policy, and he could consult with them. He did not only assess and criticize, he stressed; he also provided recommendations.

In addition, there was also a need to pay attention to countries with a prominent function in the United Nations system, he said. For example, South Africa was a member of the Security Council and had agreed to his visit in that context. Libya, which had just been named to the Council and in which he was interested, had not invited him, however. Still, other countries drew his attention because of the war on terror and accompanying rendition programmes.

Asked about his published comments on banning countries that tortured from peacekeeping missions, he said that it was a difficult problem and that his past comments were not part of any official report. The topic must be discussed further with the Department of Peacekeeping Operations.

In any case, he said, the difficulties came from the fact that many countries were not accountable in the area of taking action against human rights abusers. In addition, if a country had systematic torture, there was a good chance that commanders who allowed the practice could be in charge of peacekeeping contingents. "Then you really have problems," he said.

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

Load-Date: October 30, 2007

Onam will be declared public holiday if DMK comes to power: Karunanidhi

Hindustan Times

May 2, 2006 Tuesday 1:22 PM EST

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Length: 377 words

Byline: Hindustan Times

Dateline: Coimbatore

Body

Coimbatore, May 2 -- In an effort to woo voters to vote for the Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (DMK), party president M Karunanidhi has said that the harvest festival of "Onam" would be declared a public holiday provided his party comes to power.

Addressing a public meeting ahead of the Assembly polls, Karunanidhi said: "If DMK-led Democratic Progressive Alliance (DPA) comes to power in the State, the government will declare Onam as public holiday in Coimbatore and district wise, where five lakhs Malayalees are residing in Coimbatore alone".

"If we come to power, the children's of the workers in unorganised sector that had dropped out of educational institution due to poverty, would receive assistance for higher education. If DMK-led alliance comes to power in the State, the government will declare Onam as public holiday in Coimbatore and district wise, where five lakhs Malayalees are residing in Coimbatore alone," Karunanidhi added.

Karunanidhi criticised All India Anna Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (AIADMK) supremo J Jayalalitha for her latest election promise of distributing free gold mangalsutras to the women living below poverty line, and scrapping the scheme of providing 10,000 rupees assistance for girl children which was introduced by him.

Electioneering for the polls has picked up momentum with less than a week to go for it.

The ruling AIADMK has pitched itself directly against opposition DMK in 106 constituencies out of the 182 seats the party will be contesting in the 234-member Tamil Nadu assembly elections.

With, old DMK supporters like V Gopalaswamy better known as Vaiko, of the MDMK party, supporting Jayaram Jayalalitha, the Chief Minister and the leader of the ruling AIADMK, the odds seem in favour of the MDMK-AIADMK alliance, according to political analysts.

Ironically, Jayalalitha had in 2002 sent Viko behind bars for almost 18 months under the controversial anti-terrorist act POTA (Prevention of Terrorism Act) for his speeches supporting the Tamil rebels, LTTE, of northern Srilanka. Vaiko is a known supporter of the Tamil rebels.

The State will go to polls in single phase on May 8 and the counting of votes will be held on May 11.

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Onam will be declared public holiday if DMK comes to power: Karunanidhi

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Load-Date: May 3, 2006

End of Document

PRESS CONFERENCE BY SPECIAL RAPPORTEUR ON TORTURE

States News Service

October 29, 2007 Monday

Copyright 2007 States News Service

Length: 956 words

Byline: States News Service

Dateline: NEW YORK

Body

The following information was released by the United Nations:

The Special Rapporteur to the Human Rights Council on torture or other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment, Manfred Nowak, said today he found such abuses widespread in all four countries he visited in the past year -- Paraguay, Nigeria, Togo and Sri Lanka.

Briefing correspondents at a Headquarters press conference this morning, he said that In all the countries, I had the full cooperation of the Government, nevertheless. He presented his final report to the General Assemblys Third Committee (Social, Humanitarian and Cultural). (See Press Release GA/SHC/3896.)

In Nigeria, in particular, torture was systemic even in the criminal investigation departments, he said. In Togo the situation had improved since 2005, but the conditions in police lock-ups were inhuman and children as young as seven or eight years old were subject to corporal punishment in detention. He stressed that the Government promised it would investigate the situation, however, and to take measures to improve it.

Mr. Nowak said he also found overwhelming evidence that torture was routine in Sri Lanka, which he visited from 1 to 8 October, despite the existence of a Torture Act that criminalized the practice and other legal protections. Many alleged perpetrators had, in fact, been indicted since the Act came into force in 1994; however, only three had been convicted and sentenced. Part of the problem, he said, was the severe seven-year minimum sentence.

His report on Sri Lanka, he said, did not include any information on war-related torture because he could not visit the camps of the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE), and particularly those of the Koruna group, about which serious abuses had been alleged.

In addition, the national army denied the existence of detention facilities, though serious allegations had also been received about the treatment of LTTE suspects in its camps. Reported practices included suspending a victim by his bound thumbs, an allegation that he had never heard of before, but which was deemed credible "- and excruciatingly painful -- by his forensic expert after claimants were interviewed.

Other problems in Sri Lanka included inhuman conditions of detention, partly resulting from 28,000 prisoners being crowded into a system meant for approximately 8,200. That situation was exacerbated by emergency regulations that allowed pretrial suspects to be held for a year in facilities that would not be tolerable for one day.

PRESS CONFERENCE BY SPECIAL RAPPORTEUR ON TORTURE

There were some positive developments, he said. The female prison system in Colombo had acceptable conditions, for example, and corporal punishment had been abolished, though there were still allegations of the latter. The Government promised to investigate such allegations and to dismiss those responsible.

In his general report, Mr. Nowak said, avoiding pretrial detention and deprivation of liberty for minor crimes were among his main recommendations, along with improving prison conditions and reducing overcrowding in other ways. Governments had been receptive to such recommendations; Nigeria had actually released thousands of prisoners as a result.

His other major observation in the report was on the importance of forensic expertise in combating torture, which was always difficult to prove since it took place behind closed doors. He brought a forensic expert on each of his country visits, so that bruises or other evidence could be properly interpreted.

Relaying his schedule for the near future, Mr. Nowak said he had been invited to Indonesia in November, and Equatorial Guinea, Iraq, South Africa and, possibly, Iran, were on his schedule for next year. He was waiting to reschedule a meeting with the Russian Federation and was pursuing talks with the United States on closing down irregular detention facilities.

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Load-Date: October 30, 2007

The voice of a migrant speaking hip-hop

The International Herald Tribune

August 22, 2007 Wednesday

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Section: FEATURE; Pg. 18

Length: 1524 words

Byline: Ben Sisario - The New York Times Media Group

Dateline: NEW YORK

Body

Maya Arulpragasam's Brooklyn apartment was a neglected mess when she finally returned to it last month after six months abroad. But it took only a day to straighten it up and turn it into her version of a pied-à-terre, a makeshift multimedia headquarters. An audio mixing board, film canisters and shiny dancing outfits stood on one side of the apartment, and half of an uneaten papaya waited on a table in the back.

Arulpragasam - better known as the rapper M.I.A. - was in town for only about a week before going on tour, and when asked when she would return to the apartment, a spacious studio in Bedford-Stuyvesant, a Caribbean and African immigrant neighborhood, she shrugged. "I spent time finding that couch," she said, pointing to one of the few items of furniture, "and I haven't even sat in it."

Displacement is nothing new for M.I.A.; in fact she seems to thrive on it. A description of her life and music is inevitably like one of those old movie montages in which an airplane zigzags across a map from continent to distant continent: She left Sri Lanka at the age of 9, a refugee from an ethnic civil war that's still roiling, and discovered hip-hop in a London housing project. After art school in Britain she began making music that was simple and handmade but had a staggering, far-reaching ambition, with flirty yet brutally evocative lyrics set against whip-crack electro beats, dancehall reggae and Brazilian baile funk.

Her debut album, "Arular" (2005), sold a modest 129,000 copies but was a critical jackpot, both in the mainstream press and the blogosphere. For her follow-up, "Kala," released this week by Interscope Records, the original strategy was the conventional one: to pair up with brand-name producers and shoot for pop hits. But things did not go according to plan. Instead the album became, by necessity and by choice, another restless, far-flung journey.

Blocked from returning to the United States for most of the last year because of delays in renewing her working visa, she wound up traveling to India, Jamaica, Trinidad and Australia, recording along the way with portable gear. The resulting songs feel airborne and deliberately rootless. The enormous drums of "Boyz," for example, were recorded in India, but the rest of the song - a Bollywood-tinged club banger about the rowdy, war-starting sex - was made in Trinidad. "World Town" rewrites a Baltimore hip-hop anthem for a violent third-world ghetto; the dizzyingly abstract percussion loop of "BirdFlu" is spiked with Indian dhol drums and chicken squawks.

"I'm just trying to build some sort of bridge," she said of her work, picking at a slice of cake. "I'm trying to create a third place, somewhere in between the developed world and the developing world."

The voice of a migrant speaking hip-hop

"Arular" was named after her father, who has been associated with the **Tamil Tigers**, the rebel group fighting for a separate state for the Tamil minority in Sri Lanka. On that album she played freely with the imagery of militancy and propaganda; the cover and interior artwork, which M.I.A. designed herself, was covered with spray-painted guns, tigers, tanks and soldiers. "Kala" is named for her mother, a seamstress who raised her three children alone, and the album is ostensibly about the survival hustle of displaced people. "We do it cheap, hide our money in a heap/Send it home and make 'em study," she whispers in "Hussel," which begins with the chants of Indian boatmen.

Disarmingly tiny and polite in person, M.I.A. speaks with articulate vigor in a British accent peppered with street slang. But not everything about her is as up-front as her lyrics, and even her record label equivocates when it comes to pinning down biographical information. When asked to confirm M.I.A.'s age, a spokeswoman at Interscope waffled between 30 and 31; her manager, Tiffany Steffens, said that M.I.A.'s passport gives her age at 32. Like many details of her past, it can't be verified very easily.

M.I.A. has called "Kala" her "feminine" album and her tribute to the everyday sacrifices of her mother, and as she spent part of an afternoon shopping for fabric and medallions to sew onto the outfit she would perform in that night, it wasn't hard to imagine a little of her mother in her. One of her new songs, "Jimmy," is based on an early-'80s Bollywood disco hit, which she said evoked comforting childhood memories of dancing at parties and weddings. "This album is also about the other stories," she said, "the good things you remember."

But politics are still front and center in "Kala." While "Arular" was partly rooted in her own experience of escaping a war zone, in "Kala" she moves beyond her own story, embracing the role of globe-trotting, chest-beating ambassador for all the world's downtrodden. In her new videos she commands armies of male dancers, and the album is full of Bono-esque declarations. "M.I.A., third world democracy/I got more records than the K.G.B.," she asserts in the Clash-sampling "Paper Planes," and on "20 Dollar," about the cheap availability of guns in Africa, she boasts, "I put people on the map that never seen a map."

Travel exigencies may have prevented her from doing much recording in America, but as M.I.A. frames the story now, she also became disillusioned early on with the prospect of making a pop album, dismissing the privilege of working with big-name producers: "By the time I got to America," she said, "every amazing producer I could have possibly gone to work with, Paris Hilton had already been there. So I carried on doing my thing elsewhere. Because you know what? Me and Paris would deliver the same song, right? Because technically they always want me to sing about sex. And guess what? She has more time on her hands to sing about that than me."

While "Arular" had a limited sonic scope - it's basically an upbeat party record, until you notice the narratives of violence and frantic escape - "Kala" globalizes the M.I.A. sound even further. The trade-off is that in spite of exhilarating moments the album is less unified than its predecessor, and in some spots commits the grave sin of being undanceable.

The issues she raises are far more complex and discomfiting than pop's usual calls for peace and recycling. And given the dearth of outspoken young **female** stars, she's a rarity. Still, her objectives have not been spelled out very clearly, leading to robust debate online and in the music press about her perceived sympathies with the Palestine Liberation Organization ("Like P.L.O. I don't surrender," she sings in "Sunshowers" from "Arular") and the **Tamil Tigers**, known for their strategic use of suicide bombing.

M.I.A. denies any political advocacy and said that despite her use of jingoistic imagery her songs come from the point of view of the powerless noncombatant. "I wanted it to be about how confusing it is to talk about things as a civilian when you are caught up in something like that," she said of "Arular."

Even in conversation M.I.A. leapfrogs the planet. Over a couple of hours she discussed an uncle who works for Amnesty International in Sri Lanka; described shooting a gun into the Baltimore sky on New Year's Eve with Blaqstarr, one of the producers on "Kala"; wondered whether Nelson Mandela deserves her respect as a good family man; and recounted a trip to Liberia to help reintroduce former child soldiers into society.

The voice of a migrant speaking hip-hop

These have not traditionally been blockbuster topics in pop music, and along with M.I.A.'s unorthodox recording choices, the bad track record of British rappers in the American market and her intense if ambiguous political messages, they raise the question of how much impact she can have on the mainstream.

Jimmy Iovine, Interscope's chairman, did not seem overly concerned and compared her to Patti Smith and Lou Reed. "The really left-of-center artists," he said, "you really wonder about them. Can the world catch up? Can the culture meet them in the middle? That's what the adventure is. It doesn't always happen, but it should and it could."

M.I.A. said she had already reached an important goal. "The fact that I'm even in the music game," she said, "the fact that I even get questioned on who I am and what I'm doing here - it's enough." Her biggest priority, she added, is "staying by my creativity, because that is actually the only thing I have."

Late that night at Studio B, a club in the heart of hipster Brooklyn, M.I.A. took the stage in lace-up gold tights and immaculate white high-top sneakers. That sight alone drew a lusty cheer.

The biggest response from the far-beyond-sold-out crowd, though, was for "Pull Up the People," a favorite from "Arular," in which she calls herself a soldier and "a nice, nice fighter." With a sharp beat and quirky hooks, it's the kind of song that works perfectly on a dance floor regardless of whether the dancers know or care anything about the lyrics. But this crowd knew them well. As M.I.A. held out the microphone to her fans, they chanted her signature line.

"I've got the bombs to make you blow," they hollered. "I got the beats to make it bang."

Load-Date: August 22, 2007

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Education: Hope rises in the east: Out of the rubble of their school, washed away by the Asian tsunami, comes a new beginning.

The Guardian - Final Edition

May 15, 2007 Tuesday

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Section: GUARDIAN EDUCATION PAGES; Pg. 5

Length: 1441 words

Byline: Sandra Laville

Body

The derelict shell of Al Hussain school stands like a monument overlooking the clear blue sea, its waters lapping gently on the white sandy beach. On Boxing Day 2004, primary school children sitting at their desks for holiday tuition were washed away by the force of a very different sea, when the Asian tsunami swept Sri Lanka. Fifty-eight girls and boys from Al Hussain were killed.

Today, many of those pupils are buried a few steps away from their old school, under mounds of sand in a makeshift graveyard on the beach. Each grave is marked with a small wooden stake, flying a piece of white cotton, the colour for sorrow in the Muslim faith.

Two and a half years on, no one in the town of Sainthamarathu needs a memorial to remember the devastation of that day; more than 3,500 men, **women** and children were killed in this area on the east coast. When international aid agencies rushed to Sri Lanka in the hours and days after the tsunami, few chose to tackle the worst-affected eastern Ampara region, where more than 10,000 of the mixed Tamil and Muslim population died.

It is a tortuous 10-hour drive from the capital Colombo to Ampara, which has long been a battleground between the **Tamil Tigers** to the north and the Sri Lankan army to the south. In 2005, when aid agencies were choosing where to base themselves, the breakdown of the peace agreement and the resurgence of the fighting meant the security of staff, supply routes and workers could not be guaranteed.

Civil war

Yet some did come here and, after battling bureaucracy, corruption and the fallout of the civil war, there are now signs of regeneration amid the rubble. In a country that prides itself on offering free education for all, the emergence of a brand new Al Hussain school this month warranted the pomp of a three-hour opening ceremony for local dignitaries, teachers, parents and children.

The four-storey building, with its large classrooms, bright corridors, computer room, science lab and library, stands 400m back from the sea to accommodate those children who are still too terrified to contemplate classes anywhere near the water.

In the hours before the opening ceremony, the principal, Ahamed Lebbe Mohamed Abdul Nateer, is overseeing the final touches. "This is a momentous day for us," he says. "The building is such high calibre. We have classrooms

Education: Hope rises in the east: Out of the rubble of their school, washed away by the Asian tsunami, comes a new beginning.

here that we never had before. These children are the future for Sri Lanka and now we have a school which will help them find jobs, make the best of themselves and achieve things."

Al Hussain is one of 62 schools serving 31,000 pupils in the war-ravaged east of Sri Lanka that have been rebuilt by the aid agency Goal Ireland in what, by any reckoning, is a remarkably short time - 24 months. Each building was destroyed by the freak wave or severely damaged after being used to house some of the 1 million people who were displaced in the disaster. The agency is clear about why it chose to take on the schools programme in the troubled east. But no one could have predicted the problems that lay ahead when Goal staff signed up with the ministry for education to take on the project.

Contractors who signed fixed-payment contracts demanded higher and higher fees before walking off site; workers downed their tools during a sand strike; inflation soared by 20%; suppliers refused to drive to the unstable east; and corruption resulted in cement being watered down, so that Goal staff had to demolish work and start again. Finally, Goal withdrew 12 of the 62 schools from the contractors, recruited its own labour force from the local population and completed the buildings itself.

Over the past two months, problems have increased as fighting has intensified. The Sri Lankan government jammed all mobile phones for eight weeks to stop the Tamil Tigers communicating, causing huge problems for contractors. Military roadblocks have sprung up everywhere and attacks by both sides are continuing, with a resulting displacement of around 300,000 people, many of whom are taking shelter in the schools that once housed tsunami refugees.

"It's been a bit of a nightmare," says Mark Ford, a former Royal Navy chief petty officer who is coordinator of the Goal schools project in Ampara. "I don't think any of us realised how hard it was going to be. We had to push, push, push to get the work done.

"You would go on site to see 20 people doing a job that we had a machine to do. Then there were the 36 public holidays a year, which involved workmen taking the day before and after off as well. In the end, it was a matter of going on site every day to make sure everything was going ahead." Watching the ribbons being cut at Al Hussain makes the frustration and hard graft worthwhile, however. "You do feel a huge sense of achievement," says Ford. For the pupils, the opening represents a new beginning, after two years in which they have struggled to learn in tin huts and hastily built shacks.

Many are still coping with the trauma of losing family members and seeing friends die. "They have terrible dreams, wet their beds and are unable to concentrate in class," says one teacher. "If they see a symbol on a blackboard which even looks like a wave, some of them become upset. We take them to the seashore for lessons sometimes, we sit them on the beach and tell them stories, and we keep saying the tsunami will not come again."

Al Hussein is number 58 on the list of 62 schools that will be opened by the end of this month, before Goal staff leave the country, their job finished. Each was designed by a Sri Lankan architect and built to modern specifications. For the first time in Sri Lanka, every school was equipped with computers, thanks to the \$10m (£5m) budget for the project.

At neighbouring Al Jalal school, the girls of class 6a have been using their new classroom for a matter of weeks. Adambawa Meera Mohideen, 13, finds it difficult to talk about the disaster without crying. "I just remember people screaming and crying," she says. "As the water came, my mother grabbed me and we ran upstairs to stand on our roof. There were bodies being washed up the streets, rocks and rubble floating in the water. We ran away for 15 days. When I came back I saw my school, it was totally destroyed. Now it feels like I am in heaven in this new school."

Frustrating delays

But even when the buildings are ready, issues of bureaucracy, security and petty corruption have combined to keep the gates closed. At a vocational training centre, John Wain, country director for Goal, can scarcely disguise his

Education: Hope rises in the east: Out of the rubble of their school, washed away by the Asian tsunami, comes a new beginning.

anguish at the sight of classrooms that are fully equipped but empty of students. The problem, he is informed by a local bureaucrat, is that only half the instructors have been hired.

At another school, Wain winces when he sees cattle calmly chewing their way through the sports field.

But against a backdrop of allegations that the billions pledged following the tsunami have been embezzled, pocketed by corrupt officials or have simply not materialised into aid, the achievement of the school-building programme in Sri Lanka cannot be overestimated. "When we came here it was just utter chaos," says Wain. "The devastation was massive; just here, half a million people took refuge in the schools still standing. So after the initial relief phase, which took four to five months, the schools were in a very bad state - those that were still standing.

"The initial pressure was on to get the work done quickly. All the money had been pledged and donors wanted to see it spent. But you have to consult with the ministry, design the schools, carry out surveys, get architects, engineers and surveyors on board, produce tender documents, advertise for interest and tender out the schools. We had to make the packages attractive to make sure contractors would be drawn to the east, where many of them didn't want to travel because of the security situation. It was only after doing all that that we could start the building work."

But it has, he insists, been worth it. "To see the kids in their classrooms is the icing on the cake. They have sports and other modern facilities like any child in the west would have. We can leave with a smile on our faces."

At the lavish opening of Al Hussain school, Abdul Jabbar, who runs a charity for social change, reflects on the past two and a half years. "The tsunami was terrible for our country, but some good things - this school and the others that have been built - have come out of it," he says. "And that is really wonderful to see."

Recruitment evenings for those interested in working as volunteers for Goal are being held on May 18 and June 20 in London. Contact lbyrne@goal-uk.org

Load-Date: May 15, 2007

**PRINCIPAL DEPUTY ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF STATE FOR SOUTH AND
CENTRAL ASIAN AFFAIRS MANN ISSUES STATEMENT ON POLITICAL
CRISES IN SOUTH ASIA**

US Fed News

August 1, 2007 Wednesday 2:41 AM EST

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Length: 3527 words

Byline: US Fed News

Dateline: WASHINGTON

Body

The House Foreign Affairs Committee issued the following statement from a subcommittee hearing:

Political Crises in South Asia: Recent Developments in Nepal and Sri Lanka

Steven R. Mann

Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary of State

For South and Central Asian Affairs

Statement before the

House Foreign Affairs Committee

Subcommittee on the Middle East and South Asia

Mr. Chairman and members of the Committee, thank you for inviting me here today to discuss recent developments in Nepal and Sri Lanka. These two South Asian nations are both struggling with domestic insurgencies that in Nepal's case, will require a period of recovery and national reconciliation, and in Sri Lanka's case, still threaten the country's institutions and people. Let me first turn to Nepal.

Nepal's recent history is nothing short of remarkable. Its citizens have endured much, but have hope for a brighter future. Nepal has seen a decade-long insurgency end as the Maoists agreed in November 2006 to enter into the political process. It has experienced political upheaval as a palace massacre claimed the lives of the king and several members of the royal family. In April 2006, the country witnessed a popular movement that ended the direct rule of King Gyanendra and replaced him with Prime Minister Koirala, who is serving in that capacity for the fifth time.

Today, Nepal is entering a decisive phase in its history as it prepares for Constituent Assembly elections on November 22. While there is progress, serious concerns remain. We are optimistic that the November 22 elections will be conducted in a free and fair manner. At the same time, we are fully cognizant that Nepal faces difficult challenges in the run-up to the election.

PRINCIPAL DEPUTY ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF STATE FOR SOUTH AND CENTRAL ASIAN AFFAIRS
MANN ISSUES STATEMENT ON POLITICAL CRISES IN SOUTH ASIA

If I may start on a positive note, we are impressed by the work of the members of Nepal's Election Commission to date. They are aware of the importance of conducting a free and fair election on schedule and they are working diligently with the international community. The Election Commission has registered over 17.6 million voters, representing 58 political parties.

The Commission has welcomed and encouraged volunteers and representatives of non-government organizations, including the Carter Center, to monitor the election. The Election Commission is preparing to issue a Code of Conduct, outlining election rules and behavior. The Code will clarify the right of parties to campaign and have access to the media and places a ceiling on campaign expenditures and restrictions on polling of voters, all of which could unfairly influence the outcome of the elections.

Serious law and order issues could affect the election and need to be addressed by the government of Prime Minister Girija Prasad Koirala. We remain concerned that the Maoists and their Young Communist League will continue their campaign of intimidation, abduction, and extortion and seek to disrupt the election or unfairly influence its outcome. The local press reports Maoist atrocities virtually every day. The Maoists commit crimes with impunity, devalue justice in Nepal, and threaten the integrity of the election process. As such, they clearly continue to warrant designation as a Specially-Designated Global Terrorist organization.

Due to improvement in the human rights situation since the April 27th declaration of a cease-fire between the government and the Maoists, there has been a substantial decrease in abuses by the Government. We continue to urge the Government to address past abuses and to appoint new members to the National Human Rights Commission. We welcome recent progress in this regard.

Regional tensions, increasing demands by traditionally-marginalized groups for representation, and the emergence of ethnically-based political factions and splinter groups - particularly in the Terai - have complicated the political landscape.

We are concerned by recent violence in the Terai, the low lying area of Nepal bordering India, where approximately half of the Nepali people reside, because it has the potential to derail the election process and it undermines law and order and stability. Aside from the criminal activity of the Maoists, which continues nationwide, the greatest obstacle to a peaceful and successful election is ethnic tension in the Terai.

The situation is complex because the Maoists are politically active in the Terai, but their interests often conflict with those of Terai inhabitants, most of whom are Madhesi, a distinct ethnic group with its own language whose culture is, in many ways, closer to that of India. It is in the Maoists' interest to blame the violence in the Terai on Madhesi groups despite Maoist involvement. The Maoists and Young Communist League have assumed great influence in the western Terai through threats and intimidation. In the eastern Terai, the Maoists are in open conflict with Madhesi groups, who are using this transition period to assert their rights and, in some cases, to call for regional autonomy.

During the past year, a number of political groups with radical agendas, some of them armed, have emerged in the Terai. These groups' agendas vary. Some groups seek to continue the armed struggle that the Maoists claim to have given up, others are promoting an ethnic-based agenda. Other established groups have split into factions dominated by politically ambitious individuals. In some areas, groups have splintered from the Maoists and become their military or political rivals.

As the UN Secretary General Ban Ki-Moon reported on July 18:

"The security situation in the Terai has remained extremely disturbed and efforts to improve law and order in the region have been halting at best. Frequent clashes continue to occur between Maoists and Madhesi activists in the Terai as they compete for political space."

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MANN ISSUES STATEMENT ON POLITICAL CRISES IN SOUTH ASIA

The Nepal Government's Ministry of Peace and Reconstruction is reaching out to these emerging groups to start a dialogue and to draw them into the election process. This is an essential process that the government needs to expand.

A successful, free and fair Constituent Assembly election would represent a significant step forward toward establishing a peaceful, prosperous, and democratic Nepal. Reaching out to the Terai groups and bringing them into the democratic fold will greatly improve prospects for success. It is clear that the Government of Nepal will have to make new and sustained efforts to fulfill the promise of the peace process.

We believe that seven of the political parties in the Parliamentary Alliance are committed to peaceful, multi-party pluralism. The Maoists are the exception. The seven parties may disagree at times, have competing agendas, and fail to consult with each other, but they are committed to working within the Parliamentary system.

Like ambitious political parties worldwide, they want to succeed and to expand their political base. Representatives of Terai districts and areas where the Maoists are active have been not been able to visit their constituencies regularly. In some cases, they fear for their safety if they return.

As described by the UN Office of the High Commissioner of Human Rights in a report in June, 2007:

"The Young Communist League's violent disruption of activities of opposing groups, at times with other parties of the Seven Party Alliance (SPA), must not be tolerated. Such actions close the political space for dialogue and risk contributing to a spiral of violence. They are contrary to the principles of freedom of opinion, assembly and association and run contrary to conditions conducive for free and fair elections."

Under the current Eight Party Alliance, the Maoists have more power than they are likely to achieve through the ballot box. Although their leaders have promised to curb violence, to date we have not seen any lasting drop in criminal activity by the Maoists or their Young Communist League affiliates. Their commitments to abide by the law and to respect their agreements have proven hollow. Maoist leader Mr. Pushpa Dahal has stated publicly that the Maoists have no intention of joining the political mainstream and their actions, to date, have consistently proved that statement accurate.

Mr. Chairman, the key elements of United States policy in Nepal are to use every means at our disposal to promote free and fair elections, to work with the Government of Nepal and other interested governments to push the Maoists away from armed struggle and peaceful participants in the political process, and to promote the increased participation of the Madhesis into Nepali political life.

In addition, we have a keen interest in providing humanitarian assistance to Nepal. In 2006 the United States spent roughly \$32.6 million dollars on assistance to Nepal, most of it going to health-related programs, focusing primarily on women and children. Other assistance programs included law enforcement training, programs that bolster civil society, rule of law and respect for human rights in the government and military, and stabilization operations. In doing so, we continue to work with a variety of partners, both within Nepal and in the international community.

Turning to Sri Lanka:

Sri Lanka's long-standing ethnic conflict, fragile peace process, and deteriorating human rights conditions continue to cause concern for the United States and the international community. The conflict between the Sri Lankan Government and Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam entered a phase of intensified fighting during President Rajapaksa's administration. In recent months, fighting has been steady in the Tamil Tiger-controlled East as Government forces attempted to re-take areas held by the Tigers under the terms of the 2002 Ceasefire Agreement. On July 11, 2007, the Sri Lankan military announced it had taken Thoppigala, the last remaining Tamil Tiger stronghold in the East, bringing the entire Eastern Province under government control. The costs of war have taken a heavy toll on the economy: inflation currently stands at 20% and tourism - one of Sri Lanka's main industries - has plummeted by 40-60% since last year.

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Fighting continues in the North and there is a continued Tiger presence in the East. Just five days after the government announced it was in control of the East, suspected Tiger gunmen shot and killed a senior provincial administrator. The Tigers remain a considerable fighting force and are capable of launching attacks across the island. On July 25, the Tigers detonated a claymore mine in the North, killing 11 soldiers and wounding eight others.

Furthermore, the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam are regarded as one of the world's best funded guerrilla groups, with an estimate reported \$200 to \$300 million in annual revenues. Ample funding allows them to purchase weapons, to operate a maritime force- the Sea Tigers, and to maintain a small air capability. Tiger aircraft attacked military facilities co-located with Colombo's international airport, as well as fuel installations outside Colombo in April 2007. The Tigers have publicly expressed their intention to continue attacking military, government and economic targets. The Tigers do not target U.S. citizens or assets. Rather, they limit their attacks to Sri Lankan security forces, political figures, civilians, and businesses. Their innovations such as explosive vests and waterborne suicide attacks have been copied by other terrorist groups.

The Tamil Tigers have demonstrated little interest in a peaceful settlement. They have not renounced their stated goal of an independent homeland. Claymore mine attacks and political assassinations attributed to the Tigers in the past months further signal their intention to continue the conflict. The Tigers are insisting the Government of Sri Lanka abide by the terms of the 2002 Ceasefire Agreement as a condition for talks. The Sri Lankan Government is unlikely to agree to these terms, however, as it would require ceding the East back to Tiger control.

Prospects for peace are currently focused on an effort by the President's party, the major opposition parties, and other parties to finalize a proposal which would reform the constitution to create a system devolving certain powers to Tamil and other minority areas. The peace process in Sri Lanka has collapsed repeatedly in part due to a lack of political consensus over how to satisfy the rights and aspirations of the majority Sinhala and minority Tamil populations. It is critical that the country's political leadership engage fully and in good faith in the current debate over devolution of power and place the best interests of the country ahead of partisan politics. I must flag the fact that the Tamil Tigers share the responsibility for the negotiation impasse. It is important to note as well that although the Tigers are a party to the negotiations, they cannot be considered to be the representatives of all Sri Lankan Tamils.

Our top policy priorities for Sri Lanka remain restoration of good governance and respect for human rights leading to an eventual negotiated settlement. We believe that finalizing a credible devolution of power proposal, together with ending human rights violations and improving government accountability, are essential steps towards a lasting peace. The Government of Sri Lanka must do more to provide security and equitable treatment for its citizens, including taking seriously the plight of internally displaced persons, creating the conditions to allow economic opportunities to return across the island, and ensuring fair treatment at the hands of the police and security forces. These issues cannot be stably resolved through military means alone.

We are supporting the pursuit of a political settlement in Sri Lanka in several ways.

As a member of the Co-Chairs of the Tokyo Donors Conference, the United States participates along with the European Union, Japan, and Norway in the only international mechanism solely dedicated to peace in Sri Lanka. Assistant Secretary of State for South and Central Asian Affairs Richard A. Boucher led the U.S. delegation at the Co-Chairs most recent meeting in June in Oslo. The Co-Chairs discussed ways forward for the peace process as well as current challenges on the ground in Sri Lanka, including deteriorating human rights conditions and difficulties with humanitarian access. The Co-Chairs continue to pursue openings to return both sides to negotiations. After the Oslo meeting, the Norwegian Ambassador in Colombo was permitted to travel north to meet with Tiger leadership for the first time in six months.

We are also working towards peace in Sri Lanka through consistent senior-level bilateral engagement and high-level visits, in which we deliver to the Government of Sri Lanka a consistent message that the only lasting solution to this conflict is through negotiation. Assistant Secretary Boucher visited Colombo and Jaffna in May 2007 and delivered a tough message to all parties on the need for dialogue, a serious devolution of power proposal, equality

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among all Sri Lankans, and respect for human rights. Assistant Secretary Boucher stressed that a credible power-sharing proposal that addresses legitimate Tamil grievances and preserves a political, social, and economic role for the Tamil and other communities in a post-conflict Sri Lanka could help re-energize the peace process and begin the process of national reconciliation.

In addition, we support peace efforts in Sri Lanka through U.S. Agency for International Development projects promoting dialogue between ethnic communities, developing citizenship skills, and improving governance. Our programs are focused on laying a foundation for peace in many ways, including providing technical assistance to develop a political framework to resolve the ethnic conflict, targeting corruption, training local government officials in management and budgeting, building the capacity of human rights institutions, and stimulating economic development. We are also interested in supporting programs that work with judges and bar associations and provide training for human rights groups to help provide legal aid to citizens in the North and East.

The United States is committed to help foster a lasting peace in Sri Lanka and to improve human rights conditions for all Sri Lankans. Ultimately, however, it is the Sri Lankan Government's responsibility to the Sri Lankan people to provide the conditions of safety and security that will lead to a more peaceful and prosperous future. Reaching consensus on a devolution proposal is a critical first step towards peace, but it is a domestic political issue in which the United States should not take sides. The United States' interest is in keeping the political process on devolution moving forward, rather than prescribing particular solutions to the Sri Lankans. We therefore continue to see no role for a Special Envoy to Sri Lanka at this time. We have, moreover, a highly capable envoy already on the job - his name is Robert Blake and he is our U.S. Ambassador to Sri Lanka.

The only lasting and stable solution to this conflict will be one that is reached through negotiations. Our military assistance does not support efforts to expand the conflict. Our modest assistance focuses on improving maritime capabilities such as weapons interdiction and surveillance. We support Sri Lanka's efforts to defend itself against terrorism and have demonstrated our commitment over the last year by arresting 15 individuals in the United States and Guam on material support charges, including an alleged leader of the Tamil Tigers in the United States who was arrested in April 2007. We refuse to allow the Tamil Tigers and their supporters to use the United States as a source of supply for weapons, technology, and financial resources.

Another key U.S. policy concern in Sri Lanka is the deterioration in human rights conditions. As the State Department's most recent Country Report on Human Rights practices indicated, human rights conditions across Sri Lanka have deteriorated significantly in the past year. We are deeply concerned by continuing reports of disappearances, abductions, torture, and the rise in extrajudicial killings, with eight extra-judicial killings reported over a three day period in July on the Jaffna peninsula. Human rights conditions are worst in Tiger-controlled areas, where there is no rule of law to protect Sri Lankans' civil liberties. The Tigers' recruitment of child soldiers is singularly deplorable.

The intimidation of civil society through such incidents as the April 29 killing of Tamil journalist Selvarajah Rajivarman and the July 23 murder of Mariyanayagam Aloysius, a Tamil employee of the Danish Refugee Council, is an additional area of concern. We are encouraging the Government of Sri Lanka to improve its accountability and rein in the paramilitaries that reportedly operate openly in government-controlled Tamil areas and have been accused of serious human rights abuses, including the recruitment of child soldiers. We are also working with the government to improve human rights conditions through the human rights Commission of Inquiry and the International Independent Group of Eminent Persons. Our representative to the Group, former Department of State Assistant Secretary Arthur E. "Gene" Dewey was in Sri Lanka in July 2007, and will return in mid-August for the Group's next plenary meeting. While it is important that the Government investigate abuses, our message has consistently stressed the need for the Government to improve accountability writ large - this means not limiting its response to investigations that could take years, but taking immediate measures to hold the security forces accountable for order and discipline.

We are also engaged fully in humanitarian relief efforts to address the critical needs of Sri Lanka's more than 500,000 internally displaced persons. To date, in Fiscal Year 2007 alone, the United States has given \$10.6 million

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in humanitarian assistance to Sri Lanka. This includes funding for Save the Children and UN Children's Fund programs providing protection, emergency relief supplies, nutrition, water, and sanitation and hygiene services. It also includes World Food Program funding for emergency food assistance, as well as International Committee of the Red Cross funding for emergency relief such as health services and shelter. In addition, the U.S. also supports the efforts of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees through regional funding.

Mr. Chairman, we are deeply committed to achieving lasting peace and stability in Nepal, Sri Lanka, and the South Asia region. We will continue to work on the ground in that region with our friends and allies, through international fora such as the Co-Chairs group in Sri Lanka, and through the extensive outreach programs of our Embassies in Kathmandu and Colombo, to help the Nepalese and Sri Lankan people overcome the considerable obstacles before them on their path to peace and prosperity.

Thank you again for the opportunity to appear before you. I would be pleased to answer your questions.

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

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The AFP Asia news agenda

Agence France Presse -- English

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Dateline: HONG KONG, Nov 6 2007

Body

Duty Editor: Danny McCord

News Desk: + 852 2829 6211

ASIA NEWS HIGHLIGHTS ON TUESDAY:

- + Musharraf urged to hold elections
- + US defence chief to meet China's Hu
- + UN envoy in Myanmar for reform talks

ISLAMABAD: Full coverage of political crisis in Pakistan as international pressure mounts on President Pervez Musharraf after his imposition of emergency rule, with US President George W. Bush and other leaders demanding elections and a swift return to democracy (PAKISTAN-POLITICS)

BEIJING/SEOUL: US Defence Secretary Robert Gates ends China visit with planned meeting with President Hu Jintao (CHINA-US-MILITARY)

-- Gates later visits Seoul for security talks 0510 GMT (SKOREA-US-MILITARY)

YANGON: UN special envoy Ibrahim Gambari in talks to push Myanmar's junta toward democratic reform, due to meet information minister (MYANMAR-POLITICS)

OTHER NEWS ITEMS:

BEIJING: Foreign ministry press conference at 0645 GMT (CHINA-DIPLOMACY)

-- European parliament's climate change committee in China for assessment ahead of UN climate change conference in Bali (CHINA-EU-ENVIRONMENT-WARMING)

COLOMBO: Moving a story on Sri Lanka's war budget as the cost of military action against the **Tamil Tigers** grows (SRILANKA-UNREST-ECONOMY-BUDGET)

The AFP Asia news agenda

DHAKA: Moving a story on how the IMF says Bangladesh faces a slowing economy and tough times ahead (BANGLADESH-POLITICS-ECONOMY-IMF)

HANOI: Covering visit of US Commerce Secretary Carlos Gutierrez (VIETNAM-US)

HONG KONG: Debut trading of Alibaba.com, set to be the largest Internet IPO since Google, rising more than 100 percent in early trading. Press conference 0830 GMT (HONGKONG-CHINA-STOCKS-INTERNET-COMPANY-IPO)

-- First day of filming of the latest Batman movie, "The Dark Knight" (ENTERTAINMENT-HONGKONG-US-FILM-BATMAN)

-- Second day of Macau's biggest corruption trial, with a former secretary for transport and public works in the dock (MACAU-CRIME-CORRUPTION-COURT)

JAKARTA: Reporting on predicted imminent eruption at Mount Kelut, a volcano on the main island of Java (INDONESIA-VOLCANO)

KUALA LUMPUR: Monitoring annual congress of Malaysia's ruling party, the United Malays National Organisation (MALAYSIA-POLITICS-UMNO)

-- FIFA president Sepp Blatter holds press conference at Asian Football Confederation headquarters. 0530 GMT (FBL-FIFA--MAS)

MANILA: October inflation data released (PHILIPPINES-ECONOMY-INFLATION)

-- Philippine Long Distance Telephone results for the three months to September at 0500 GMT (PHILIPPINES-TELECOM-COMPANY-PLDT)

NEW DELHI: Moving a story on how small Indian towns are joining the race to become the next global IT destination (INDIA-ECONOMY-IT-INFRASTRUCTURE)

SEOUL: Reporting developments after United States says North Korea has started disabling its nuclear facilities for the first time as part of an international disarmament accord (NKOREA-NUCLEAR-WEAPONS)

SHANGHAI: Watching stock markets a day after PetroChina soared on its mainland China debut (CHINA-STOCKS-ENERGY-IPO-COMPANY-PETROCHINA)

SINGAPORE: Reporting on world oil prices easing from record highs (COMMODITIES-ENERGY-OIL-ASIA-PRICE)

-- Oversea-Chinese Banking Corp to release third quarter earnings at 0915 GMT (SINGAPORE-BANKING-OCBC-COMPANY-EARNINGS)

SUVA: Following developments with three men due in court over alleged plot to assassinate Fiji's coup leader (FIJI-COUP-ARRESTS)

SYDNEY: Covering election campaign ahead of November 24 election with new poll showing Prime Minister John Howard narrowing the gap on opposition Labor leader Kevin Rudd (AUSTRALIA-VOTE)

-- Reserve Bank of Australia board meets to consider possible interest rate rise, with any rise to be announced on Wednesday (AUSTRALIA-BANK-RATES)

-- Racing. The Melbourne Cup, Australia's richest horse race at 0400 GMT (RACING-AUS)

TAIPEI: The 37th Baseball World Cup opens in Taipei (BASEBALL-WORLD)

TOKYO: Following political turmoil in Japan as the main opposition party tries to dissuade its leader from stepping down (JAPAN-POLITICS-OPPOSITION)

The AFP Asia news agenda

- Asia's largest air carrier Japan Airlines announces first-half earnings report (JAPAN-AIRLINE-COMPANY-EARNINGS-JAL)
- Japanese Internet and telecom conglomerate Softbank Corp. releases first-half earnings report (JAPAN-IT-MEDIA-TELECOM-COMPANY-EARNINGS-SOFTBANK)
- Reporting on foreign exchange trading in Asia as the dollar remains on the backfoot against other major currencies (FOREX-ASIA)
- Monitoring Japanese share prices, which rose 0.52 per cent by lunch, rebounding from a seven-week low as bargain hunters emerged despite overnight falls on Wall Street (STOCKS-JAPAN)
- Volleyball. Women's World Cup (VOLLEY-WORLD-WOMEN)

WELLINGTON: Moving a feature on New Zealand's fight to hold onto its export markets amid accusations that its vital food and tourism industries damage the environment (NZEALAND-CLIMATE-WARMING)

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33 killed in clashes in northern Sri Lanka

Deutsche Presse-Agentur
October 16, 2007 Tuesday 4:35 AM EST

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Body

DPA POLITICS SriLanka Conflicts 33 killed in clashes in northern Sri Lanka Colombo
Sri Lankan troops launched a series of pre-emptive strikes ahead of their forward defence lines in the northern part of the country, killing at least 32 rebels and losing one government soldier, a military spokesman said Tuesday.

The operations were launched in the Wanni and Jaffna areas, 260 kilometres and 370 kilometres north of the capital respectively, on Monday in the wake of a string of rebel attacks on the security forces manning isolated guard positions.

The rebels had also attempted to infiltrate the forward defence lines in the north during the past few weeks.

Government troops launched their first operation in Mullikulam, in Wanni district, killing at least 20 rebels. Seven bodies, including

five **females**, were recovered from the scene while 15 more were injured, the spokesman said.

Around the same area a government soldier was killed and seven more were wounded when rebels engaged troops using artillery and heavy mortar fire. Government troops were unable to retaliate because the rebel gun positions were located around an old Roman Catholic church in the area, he said.

In another confrontation, soldiers attacked a rebel hideout in Vilathikulam in Wanni district on Monday evening, killing eight rebels.

Military authorities said government troops killed four rebels and seized their weapons in Muhamali, 370 kilometres north of the capital, on Monday.

Meanwhile, troops were deployed to carry out a search operation for suspected Tamil rebels who attacked an army detachment in south-eastern Sri Lanka on Monday evening.

Military spokesman Udaya Nanyakkara said that reinforcements were

33 killed in clashes in northern Sri Lanka

sent in from a nearby camp to the detachment located at Thalgasmanakada, 380 kilometres south east of the capital, on the boarder of a wildlife park.

He said no damage had been caused to the security forces, but Tamil rebels claimed they overran the detachments and killed six soldiers.

The area where the detachment was located borders the eastern province where Tamil rebels have been carrying out small attacks after their main bases were overrun in successive military operations.

Fighting in the north and eastern provinces during the past 23 months has escalated, claiming the lives of more than 5,300 people, including rebels, soldiers and civilians.

A Norwegian-backed cease-fire between rebels of the Liberation

Tigers of Tamil Eelam (**LTTE**) and the government signed in February 2002 has been ignored by both sides.

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Saturday Review: Essay: Stories of the tsunami: Thirty thousand Sri Lankans were killed in the Boxing Day disaster. Three months on, novelist Louise Doughty asks the island's writers whether they can play a part in the process of recovery

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March 26, 2005

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Byline: Louise Doughty

Body

Everyone has their tsunami story. This is the first thing I learn on my visit to Sri Lanka. Everyone has a story to tell, often of near-miraculous escape - but what characterises all these stories is the modesty with which they are related. "I got my feet wet, that's all," says one woman, as she tells me how she and her family fled their holiday home in nightwear after local villagers warned them "the sea is coming". In a country where 30,000 men, **women** and children were washed away in a matter of minutes, those who were spared play down their own experiences. "In comparison with what happened to others, it was nothing," is a phrase I hear over and over again.

I have a professional interest in stories - as a novelist, I'm always on the look-out for them - but I have come to Sri Lanka not to find material for my own but to encourage others to tell theirs. The British Council, that venerable institution of cross-cultural exchange, has sent me to teach creative writing workshops to young people in the capital, Colombo, and in Kandy, the second city.

Kandy is up in the hill country, but Colombo sprawls along the island's western seaboard. My hotel is minutes from the sea, and on my first evening I take a walk up to Galle Face Green, where Sri Lankan families come out to promenade at twilight, eating from kiosks, flying kites and standing on the sea wall, while their youngsters romp on the beach below. Waves crash on to the sand, breakers glowing white in the mauve-grey light of dusk - it is impossible not to picture that sea rearing huge, like a monster in a fairy tale.

Colombo itself was spared on Boxing Day. The wave came from the east. Racing across the Indian Ocean from Sumatra at 500 miles per hour, it still took two hours to reach this small island, which hangs like a teardrop from the southern tip of India. This gives an added poignancy to Sri Lanka's tragedy. In Indonesia and Thailand there was little time for escape - but no one should have died here, or in southern India. The 30,000 people Sri Lanka lost are a 10th of the estimated total, but a needless 10th.

The tsunami and its aftermath pervade all aspects of my trip. My hotel in Colombo is full of aid workers en route to affected areas, while UN jeeps cruise past in the streets outside. A typical remark in the breakfast room begins: "What I really need in my district is mechanical grouters . . ." Overhearing such conversation, it is hard not to feel embarrassed at being in Sri Lanka for any purpose other than the provision of relief. What is the point in encouraging creative writing in a country where one million people are living in temporary shelters and refugee camps? Shouldn't I be heading to the coast with a trowel?

Saturday Review: Essay: Stories of the tsunami: Thirty thousand Sri Lankans were killed in the Boxing Day disaster. Three months on, novelist Louise Doughty ask....

Writers often feel impotent in the face of real human suffering. In the wake of 9/11, Martin Amis declared himself rendered wordless by the enormity of what had happened. September 11 is gradually making its appearance in fictions of various sorts - Jonathan Safran Foer's latest novel, *Extremely Loud and Incredibly Close*, due in June, is about a boy whose father dies in the World Trade Center. But there has yet to be what one might call the definitive novel of what many consider a definitive day in human history. It is too large, too recent, to be encapsulated. And even now, 60 years after the end of the second world war, there is still debate about whether novelists who did not themselves experience the Nazi death camps should write about the Holocaust.

Delon Weerasinghe is with Amis. A playwright and film-maker, he has no intention of writing about the tsunami and has doubts about whether other creative artists should either. Weerasinghe also acts as a "fixer" for western film crews and journalists who come to Sri Lanka, and was guide to Sri-Lankan born BBC correspondent George Alagiah in the immediate aftermath of the disaster. Two days on, he visited the Colombo-Matara Express train, which was washed from the tracks as it ran along the coastline. The force of the water floated the train 100 metres. The engine alone weighed 75 tons. Of the 1,700 people on board, only 200 survived.

The sight made a huge impact on Weerasinghe. "No one had moved the bodies," he says quietly. "The stench was overpowering. It was almost impossible to breathe . . ." Something else struck him: "Many of the possessions strewn around seemed still in the process of being used. There was food half-eaten, still in its packets, children's toys ready to be played with, bags unopened. It really brought home that every single one of those 1,500 people had their own story, gone in an instant."

This, he says, is why he believes that, for the time being at least, a novel or a play about the tsunami is an impossibility. "The tsunami wasn't a story. It was tens of thousands of stories. No novel or play could possibly do justice to that. No single fiction could represent the multiplicity of experiences which this country alone went through, never mind elsewhere."

Part of the problem is that any novel or play that has wide-scale, real-life tragedy as its subject matter is always taken to signify much more other novels or a plays. The recent film *Hotel Rwanda* was not just about the heroic true story of hotel manager Paul Rusesabagina - it will also be many people's only exposure to the full, dramatic details of the genocide. It represents more than the tales of the individuals involved. In the same way, a novel set during the tsunami could never be just about the fictional characters within its pages - it would be perceived, and read, as being "about" the tsunami as a whole.

Some writers have chosen other, more indirect ways to comment. On March 3, World Book Day, Bloomsbury published *New Beginnings*, a collection of first chapters from novels-in-progress by world-famous writers such as Margaret Atwood, Ian McEwan and Stephen King. None of these first chapters is about the tsunami - the authors were asked for them on January 10 - but they have been donated free, as has the time of the publishers, distributors and all involved in the book's production. Nearly all of the £5 cover price will go to tsunami-survivor projects. A hundred thousand copies have been sold already and Bloomsbury hopes to raise between pounds .5m and £1m towards long-term regeneration in south Asia.

Not all writers agree that a feeling of impotence is an appropriate or laudable response to human suffering. Romesh Gunsekera is the most well-known Sri Lankan writer based in the UK. "I never really understood why some writers said they couldn't continue writing after 9/11. Was everything so trivial before?" As a Sri Lankan, he is used to the idea that real-life tragedy is happening outside the window while the novelist writes. He was working on his first book when Sri Lanka erupted into civil conflict between the Tamils and Sinhalese in 1983, a conflict which led to 60,000 deaths. "Most writers are dealing with the world they live in . . . a world in which terrible things have happened and are still happening. Writing is not a matter of duty, it is more a kind of negotiation with different realities. We each do it in our own way and perhaps don't have much choice in how or what we end up writing."

I found his thoughts echoed by many writers I met in Sri Lanka itself. A country that has seen two decades of ethnic strife is equipped - psychologically at least - to absorb tragedy. "The war", as it is referred to, saw the country divided between the south, where the Sinhalese majority live, and the north and east regions occupied by the Tamil

Saturday Review: Essay: Stories of the tsunami: Thirty thousand Sri Lankans were killed in the Boxing Day disaster. Three months on, novelist Louise Doughty ask....

minority - approximately a fifth of Sri Lanka's population. By the time peace was brokered in 2002, much of the northern city of Jaffna had been reduced to rubble and almost every region of the country had been affected. Bombs in Colombo had killed 300 - and even peaceful Kandy saw a truck bomb explode outside the Temple of the Tooth, one of Buddhism's holiest shrines. During that period, the very act of writing in a particular language could be interpreted as political. To write in English, for instance, the language of the old colonialists, was considered by some as an affront to Sinhalese nationalism.

The issue of language is less controversial now and English is commonly used as a lingua franca in a professional or business context. Shop and road signs are often in English, and the tourist industry has ensured that many Sri Lankans speak a little. Literacy rates are high for a developing country, 92 percent, but with a total population of 18 million, many of them living in poverty, the market for writing, particularly fiction, is obviously limited. Virtually no writers make a living in Sri Lanka. The system of author advances that we have in this country is unknown and it is common for writers to pay for their own publication or seek sponsorship.

At a reading I give from my own work in Colombo, I meet Ashok Ferrey, who has just published his first collection of short stories, *Colpetty People*. In 2003, it was short-listed for the Gratiaen award, a literary prize endowed by Michael Ondaatje with the money he received from the 1992 Booker prize for *The English Patient*. Getting published at all is so difficult in Sri Lanka that manuscripts are admissible for the Gratiaen - Ferrey's book is being printed, two years after being short-listed, by a new publishing house, Perera Hussein Publishing. Ferrey had to drop one story. "Cost is everything. Paper has to be imported from India, for instance. Including the additional story would have taken the price of the book over 500 rupees, way beyond most people." (Five hundred rupees is about £2.50.) *Colpetty People* retails at 450 rupees. Ferrey receives 32 rupees, about 15p, for each copy sold. The print run is 1,000 copies, which Ferrey and his wife have distributed to bookshops themselves. "I'll be happy if I sell seven or eight hundred."

The income is so tiny that it is irrelevant when it comes to supporting his family. He earns a living as a builder. "My wife and I decided that whatever royalties I get, we're going to put towards building a small house for a tsunami family."

The Gratiaen award has given a huge fillip to English-language publishing in Sri Lanka, but there is also a market for writing in the language most Sri Lankans regard as their mother tongue, Sinhala. A "bestseller" or lifestyle book in Sinhala can sell up to 20,000 copies. But much of the literary end of the market is given over to traditional tales in high-flown Sinhala of interest mainly to academics. Some books in Tamil used to be published in Jaffna, but during the 20-year conflict between government forces and the LTTE, or Tamil Tigers, the industry seized up and the gap has been filled by books from the much larger Indian Tamil market.

The complexity of the Sri Lankan literary scene is exemplified by Jean Arasanayagam, a writer who has published 25 novels, numerous poems and short stories - and written in all three languages. Meeting her is a disconcerting experience: brown-skinned and wearing a sari, she seems like many other dignified ladies of a certain age and Asian descent. She is in fact a Dutch burgher. The small but significant burgher community are the descendents of Dutch colonialists who intermarried with the native Sinhalese. (Ondaatje comes from the same community.) Arasanayagam may look Asian but she was raised and schooled in English. "Whenever I read my work in India they say to me, why don't you write in your mother tongue? English is my mother tongue." To complicate matters, she married a Tamil, and has written about the ethnic conflict in detail from a Tamil perspective. "I know my life would be a lot easier if I stayed off controversial subjects but I feel it's my duty to speak out. We have been through two decades of war. We can't avoid that." And the tsunami? "Of course writers should write about it. Writers should always tackle the big topics."

I meet Arasanayagam in Kandy, the spiritual heartland of Sinhalese Buddhist culture and centuries-old home of the ancient Kandyan kings. Kandy resisted two and a half centuries of attacks by marauding Dutch and Portuguese and eventually fell to the British in 1815, due to internal divisions. It is here that I present my final workshop, to students of English literature at the nearby university.

Saturday Review: Essay: Stories of the tsunami: Thirty thousand Sri Lankans were killed in the Boxing Day disaster. Three months on, novelist Louise Doughty ask....

All of my workshops have been presented in English, so I have been meeting the cultural elite of the country - but what has struck me throughout has been the sheer range of my students and their astonishing enthusiasm for creative writing. The young people I have met have been Buddhist Sinhalese and Hindu Tamil, of Dutch burgher, Japanese, Arab and Spanish origin. (The Sinhalese and Tamil populations mix widely and the war has been deplored by the vast majority of Sri Lankans on either side.) In Colombo, two Muslim girls attend one of my workshops in full burkhas, eyes just visible beneath swathes of black cloth. "Believe me," their teacher says quietly, "underneath all that, those girls are typical teenagers." All perform the exercises I set them with gusto and are full of questions at the end. One young man has come all the way from Jaffna. Until the peace deal, Jaffna was a war zone, and is still controlled by the **Tamil Tigers**. When a student has driven for 14 hours and crossed eight military checkpoints to attend a workshop, you begin to understand the importance of creative writing to a population of young people who are only just beginning to discover it.

Many of the young people I meet are contributors to a new Sri Lankan website, writeclique.net, set up by the British Council to promote Sri Lankan writing in English. Two hundred writers have contributed to the site so far and the variety of work posted is impressive: everything from poems and short stories, through political tracts to comic sketches.

There is a separate section devoted to the tsunami, where I discover a poem entitled "for Orlantha". Written from the point of view of a Sri Lankan contemplating a tourist death, it is a poignant inversion of the western perspective on the tragedy. "I pray that you / savoured your complimentary cocktail / revelled in the hotel beach towels and bath robes / were not facing the wave as it hit". Its author is Marissa Johnpillai, who attends one of my workshops in Colombo. She wrote "for Orlantha", she tells me, out of a sense of personal loss for a friend but thinks the consequences of the tsunami run from top to bottom of the society. "Every living Sri Lankan is a tsunami survivor . . . the tsunami will always be part of our national psyche. I don't see how that won't flow through to the arts . . . in fact, in my opinion, it would be unhealthy if it didn't."

With its distillation of thought and feeling, poetry has an obvious relevance when it comes to a creative response to tragedy, particularly in the highly charged atmosphere of the immediate aftermath. But a novel with a wide range of characters and fully realised narrative could surely introduce many more readers to the reality for individuals of an event such as the tsunami. Ferrey believes such a novel can and should be written. "The only reason I haven't started one is that I am not sure my writing ability is up to it. But I hope someone does. The attention of the world will move on but the consequences of the tsunami will be with us for years. It is still important for the world to realise what we went through on a human level, not so that we receive aid, like victims, but so that we understand each other as human beings."

Ferrey's response is typically modest and shared by many of Sri Lanka's established writers. But the young people in my workshops, unpublished, enthusiastic and brimming with ideas, have no such reservations. "I don't see the point in being a writer unless you're going to write about the big stuff," says one. "I have always written about the war and what is going on in our society." If there is a great novel of the tsunami to be written, it could well come from one of the ambitious young people I was privileged to meet. Sri Lanka faces many challenges in the coming years, both economic and political, but if the teenagers and students I came across are any indication, the future is hopeful.

Louise Doughty's most recent novel is *Fires in the Dark* (Simon & Schuster). To order a copy of *New Beginnings* (Bloomsbury, £5) with free UK p&p call Guardian book service on 0870 836 0875 or go to www.guardian.co.uk/bookshop

Load-Date: March 26, 2005

INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS

PAP News Wire

April 3, 2007 Tuesday

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Section: GENERAL

Length: 746 words

Body

Kiev: President Viktor Yushchenko told Ukraine's prime minister to submit to his decree on dissolving parliament and said he would not allow the use of force.

Yushchenko met premier Viktor Yanukovich in his office after his decree on dissolution and holding an election on May 27 came into force. Yanukovich had challenged the decree in the courts.

London: Britain's Prime Minister Tony Blair said the way was open for diplomatic efforts to secure the release of 15 British sailors and marines seized by Iran, and the next 48 hours would be critical.

The two countries have been at loggerheads since Iran seized the sailors on March 23 in the northern Gulf, but there have been few tangible signs of progress in the 12-day stand off.

London: U.S. oil fell more than 1 USD as Britain and Iran said they were willing to use diplomacy to end a row over 15 British sailors and marines seized in the Gulf.

Baghdad: Iraq's foreign minister confirmed that an Iranian diplomat kidnapped in Baghdad two months ago had been released.

Gunmen in Iraqi army uniforms seized Jalal Sharafi, second secretary at the Iranian embassy in Baghdad, on Feb. 4. Tehran blamed the U.S. military, which denied any involvement.

Miami: The 2007 Atlantic hurricane season will be far more active than usual with an expected 17 tropical storms, of which nine will strengthen into hurricanes, a noted forecasting team founded by Dr. William Gray said.

In an updated outlook for the June 1-Nov. 30 season, the Colorado State University team led by hurricane forecast pioneer Gray and Philip Klotzbach raised the number of expected storms and hurricanes from the 14 and seven, respectively, that it had predicted in December.

Colombo: Sri Lankan troops killed 23 **Tamil Tigers** in clashes in the east overnight and overran four rebel bases, the military said, as the island's president called for a South Asian anti-terrorism drive.

Monday's clashes in the eastern district of Batticaloa, where troops are seeking to evict the rebels from territory they control, came on the same day suspected Tigers bombed a civilian bus in the island's restive east, killing 16 people, mostly **women** and children.

Islamabad: More than 2,000 lawyers and flag-waving opposition supporters rallied outside the Supreme Court in the Pakistani capital in support of the country's suspended top judge who appealed for a public hearing.

INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS

The government's move to sack Chief Justice Iftikhar Chaudhry on March 9 outraged the legal community, which sees it as an attack on the independence of the judiciary, and galvanised political opposition to President Pervez Musharraf.

Honiara: A humanitarian crisis triggered by a huge earthquake and tsunami threatened thousands of homeless people in the Solomon Islands as aid began to trickle in and powerful aftershocks rattled the country.

After the first disaster teams reached hard-hit Western and Choiseul Provinces, Prime Minister Manasseh Sogavare said aerial patrols had reported "massive and widespread" destruction from Monday's magnitude 8.0 quake and tsunami.

Mogadishu: The United States, Europe and African countries pushed for peace in Somalia after heavy fighting in Mogadishu that killed nearly 400 civilians and wounded up to 700.

Diplomats from an International Contact Group on Somalia met in Cairo to discuss how to stop the fighting and staunch a torrent of refugees.

Abuja: The Nigerian Court of Appeal dealt a blow to Vice President Atiku Abubakar's presidential ambitions by ruling the electoral body has the power to remove names from the list of candidates.

The decision clears up uncertainty over the main candidates for landmark elections in Africa's most populous nation on April 21, and will probably favour former army ruler Muhammadu Buhari as the leading challenger to the ruling party, analysts said.

Geneva: Human to human transmission of the H5N1 virus between a brother and sister in Egypt cannot be ruled out yet, although both siblings seem to have been exposed to sick birds, the World Health Organisation said.

A 4-year-old boy, from Qena province around 670 km south of Cairo, was among three human cases announced by the health ministry at the weekend. His six-year-old sister was one of two children diagnosed with the virus late last week.

London: Britain's Queen Elizabeth is trying to trim her carbon footprint. With the fight against global warming high on the political agenda in Britain, the monarch is reviewing royal households to see how they can save more energy.

Load-Date: April 4, 2007

INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS

PAP News Wire

April 2, 2007 Monday

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Section: GENERAL

Length: 764 words

Body

Tehran: Iranian television said it had detected a shift in British policy that could help to resolve a crisis over 15 sailors and marines Iran is holding. The television channel showed new footage of the 14 men and a woman, saying they had all admitted to entering Iran illegally when captured in the northern Gulf on March 23.

Kirkuk: A suicide truck bomb killed 12 people and wounded 137 others in the northern Iraqi city of Kirkuk in the latest attack by insurgents using explosives-laden trucks. Many of the victims were women and children at a nearby school, police said.

Mogadishu: Thousands of Somalis were fleeing violence in Mogadishu on foot or by donkey, car or truck in an exodus that was massive even by the standards of a city that has become a byword for war. But once away from the bullets and missiles of Mogadishu, the Somalis have to contend with thieves, hunger, thirst and lack of shelter, aid agencies and refugees said.

Colombo: Sri Lanka's Tamil Tigers bombed a civilian bus in island's restive east, killing 16 people, mostly women and children during a Buddhist holiday, military officials said, but the rebels denied involvement. The government condemned what it called a "cowardly terror" attack, which took place in the eastern district of Ampara, taking the death toll from a rash of incidents overnight in the north and east to 33.

Baghdad: Prosecutors sought the death penalty for Saddam Hussein's cousin, widely known as Chemical Ali for his use of poison gas against the regime's opponents and once one of the most feared men in Iraq. Ali Hassan al-Majid is on trial with five other former senior Baath party officials for their roles in the 1988 Anfal (Spoils of War) campaign against ethnic Kurds that prosecutors say killed up to 180,000 people.

Johannesburg: Zimbabwe opposition leader Morgan Tsvangirai said a new African push could help solve his country's political crisis and he would participate in elections in 2008 if they were guaranteed to be free and fair. Tsvangirai, who became a symbol of Zimbabwe President Robert Mugabe's harsh rule after he was badly beaten in police custody last month, said African leaders had made progress on Zimbabwe at a regional summit in Tanzania last week.

Jerusalem: Defence Minister Amir Peretz has authorised the Israeli army to carry out limited operations just inside the Gaza border against Palestinian militants, Defence Ministry sources said. Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Olmert has played down the chances for now of launching any major Israeli offensive inside Gaza, though he has not ruled it out.

INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS

Honiara: A powerful earthquake and tsunami struck the tiny Solomon Islands, swallowing entire villages and killing at least 12 people with many more missing. The shallow quake, with a magnitude of at least 8.0, levelled buildings and damaged a hospital on Gizo island northwest of the Solomons capital, Honiara.

Bucharest: Romanian Prime Minister Calin Tariceanu proposed a new cabinet creating a minority government that will rely on ex-communist opposition backing to pass European Union-mandated laws. Respected Justice Minister Monica Macovei, seen as the architect of justice reforms that won Romania EU entry, was replaced by Tudor Chiuariu, 30, a lawyer who now heads the government's anti-fraud office.

SPIN BOLDACK, Afghanistan: Thousands of Taliban suicide bombers have been deployed across Afghanistan to attack Western troops and the government, the group's military chief said. Following last year's violence, the worst since the Taliban's ouster in 2001, this year is regarded as the crunch period both for the Taliban and U.S.-led Western troops.

Washington: A senior U.S. lawmaker threatened to block a major trade deal with South Korea just hours after it was reached on Monday, saying U.S. negotiators failed to ensure sufficient access for U.S. beef exports. "I will not allow it to move through the Senate, unless and until Korea completely lifts its ban on U.S. beef," Sen. Max Baucus, chairman of the influential Senate Finance Committee, said in a statement. "This is an entirely unacceptable outcome."

Washington: The United States is asking Iran to provide information about a U.S. citizen believed to have gone missing several weeks ago in Iran while on private business there, the State Department said on Monday. State Department spokesman Sean McCormack said the family and employer of the man had reported him missing and the State Department was sending an official inquiry to Iran on Monday via Swiss diplomats, who act as a go-between with Iran because the two countries do not have diplomatic relations.

Load-Date: April 3, 2007

STREWTH

The Australian (Australia)

May 14, 2007 Monday

All-round Country Edition

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Section: FEATURES; Strewth; Pg. 10

Length: 748 words

Body

MATP

What a bunch of zeroes

IT'S all the zeroes that confound politicians. Opposition Leader Kevin Rudd has been hounded by the Coalition for neglecting the detail, but yesterday Deputy Prime Minister Mark Vaile apparently understated greenhouse gas emissions from transport industries by a factor of 100 or more. He said 87,000 tonnes of CO2 was being emitted from transport industries each year, but the Australian Greenhouse Office estimates Australian transport was responsible for 80 million tonnes of emissions in 2004. And last Thursday Treasurer Peter Costello boasted to parliament about the 10 surpluses he had handed down in a row, neatly omitting the \$1 billion cash deficit in 2001, which resulted in a fiscal balance \$3.4 billion in the red.

Blacklisted, whitewashed

AFTER batting the issue backwards and forwards for a time, the Prime Minister finally decided at the weekend to block the Australian cricket team's tour of Zimbabwe, much to the amusement of Meredith Burgmann. The president of the NSW Upper House until earlier this year and often described as a "radical leftie", Burgmann was dragged off the Sydney Cricket Ground and arrested for protesting against a Springbok tour in the 1970s. She says John Howard has never been a keen campaigner on human rights issues. Indeed, Howard maintained a regrettable position on South Africa for a long time, Burgmann says, describing Nelson Mandela as a traitor and publicly denouncing sanctions against apartheid. Now, though, it's apparently justified to ban a tour of Zimbabwe. "He's basically taken action against an abhorrent black regime, action that he never supported against an abhorrent white regime," Burgmann says.

How to play it safe

THE Australian cricket chaplain (of 23 years, as he makes clear in his statement), Mark Tronson, declared that the Government, and not Cricket Australia, had to make the final decision on any political boycott. Left to its own devices, Cricket Australia would be forced to make some difficult political decisions, he added, perhaps refusing to tour Pakistan because there were too many preachers in the Pakistan team, or India because of the caste system, or Sri Lanka because of the Tamil Tigers insurrection, or South Africa because it apparently has a selection procedure which discriminates against whites. And "would any self-respecting capitalist Australian actually want to play cricket in England, with its historical philosophy of Robin Hood robbing the rich and giving to the poor? No!"

STREWTH

Lofty ambitions

SYDNEY radio host Mike Carlton gave an amusing speech at a Macquarie Street function last week to mark the retirement of long-time Sun-Herald political editor Alex Mitchell. Some observers noted that Carlton appeared extraordinarily tall, at least in comparison to his previous appearances. Discounting an amazing growth spurt in late middle age, the cynics took care to surreptitiously examine his feet. On closer inspection, it became clear the 2GB breakfast host had invested in a pair of high-heeled boots or shoes, a decision that excited much derision. Apparently the thinking is that it's perfectly OK for women to wear ridiculous spike heels that cantilever their feet on an angle and impair normal walking but men are not permitted to artificially increase their height. Or not without some sniggering at least.

Here's one vote, at least

NSW Deputy Premier John Watkins doesn't usually gush, but perhaps the weekend poll showing Labor star recruit Maxine McKew could actually wrest the seat of Bennelong from Prime Minister John Howard went to his head. Howard, after all, has the highest profile of any politician in the country and has comfortably held his seat since 1974. Watkins, who was with McKew in the Sydney suburb Putney to cheer on his daughter playing soccer, was elated by McKew's progress in his territory. Watkins said she was an "extraordinary national figure", "well respected across the country", with support that is "truly amazing". "On the streets of this electorate, which I've known intimately for 12 years, I've never seen anything like it," he said. "And that augurs well for Kevin Rudd and the election later this year. She's an amazing woman, she's well respected, she's a national figure of course, the people of Bennelong are warming to her." Watkins finally wound up with a big grin, which won a (perhaps slightly embarrassed) smile from McKew. "I'm drowning in the praise, John, thank you."

strewth@theaustralian.com.au

Load-Date: May 13, 2007

U.S. launches Security Council discussion of next secretary-general to replace Annan

Associated Press International

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Section: INTERNATIONAL NEWS

Length: 705 words

Byline: By EDITH M. LEDERER, Associated Press Writer

Dateline: UNITED NATIONS

Body

U.S. Ambassador John Bolton has launched Security Council discussions on the next U.N. secretary-general, saying the choice of a replacement for Kofi Annan is probably the most important decision the 191 U.N. member states will make this year.

Annan's second five-year term ends on Dec. 31 and his successor must be approved by the General Assembly based on a recommendation from the Security Council.

Bolton, who is the council president this month, called a meeting of the five veto-wielding permanent members Thursday "to get a sense of where the council is, so that we can begin to move forward on the issue."

At the moment, the permanent members the United States, Russia, China, France and Britain are divided on when to choose the next secretary-general and where he or she should come from.

By tradition, the job of secretary-general rotates by region and Asian and African nations, who represent the majority of U.N. members, believe it is Asia's turn to lead the United Nations.

"We believe, with more than two billion people, definitely Asia can provide the best qualified candidates for the U.N.," China's U.N. Ambassador Wang Guangya told reporters after Thursday's meeting, adding that Beijing's support for Asian candidates was "firm."

Russia's U.N. Ambassador Andrey Denisov said choosing an Asian would follow tradition, "and it is better to follow traditions if we do have them, but it doesn't mean that it is strict adherence."

France's U.N. Ambassador Jean-Marc de La Sabliere said his government believes the Asians "have a priority but not exclusivity."

But Bolton reiterated the United States' strong opposition to the principle of geographic rotation, a view backed by Britain.

"It's our view that we should pick the best qualified person, whatever region of the world the person comes from," he said. "Obviously, the secretary-general has to have political skills, but our view is the management question is far and away the most important qualification."

U.S. launches Security Council discussion of next secretary-general to replace Annan

Bolton argued that in practice there really is no geographical rotation because three secretary-generals have come from Western Europe, two from Africa, one from Latin America, one from Asia, and none from Eastern Europe.

He also noted that there has never been a woman secretary-general and asked: "If you believe in geographic rotation, do you believe in gender rotation?"

So far, the announced candidates are all Asian men. They include South Korean Foreign Minister Ban Ki-moon, Thai Deputy Prime Minister Surakiart Sathirathai, who is backed by the 10-member Association of Southeast Asian Nations, and former U.N. disarmament chief Jayantha Dhanapala of Sri Lanka who recently represented the government in peace talks with the Tamil Tigers.

Equality Now, an advocacy organization which campaigns for women's rights, came up with a sampling of 18 qualified women from all over the world. Its list of candidates includes the presidents of Latvia, Finland and Chile, several current and former senior U.N. officials, and Myanmar's pro-democracy leader Aung San Suu Kyi, the Nobel Peace Prize winner who remains under house arrest by the country's military rulers.

Council members expect more candidates to enter the race in the coming months.

Bolton wants the council to decide on a candidate by June, but other members think that's too early.

China's Wang said the council is "informally looking at dates like September, October" to give the next secretary-general time for a transition.

De La Sabliere said France thinks June is too early, but he said there is growing support for a transition of two or three months which "makes sense," and which is already being done for the president of the General Assembly, a post which rotates every year.

Not only have the five permanent council members started talking about the next secretary-general, so have the 10 elected council members who serve two-year terms. But all 15 members agree that discussions are very preliminary and there won't be any discussion of candidates for several months.

"I think we get together not to surprise each other," Wang said of the meetings of the five permanent members, known as the P-5. "We believe the P-5 will have a major role to play. Whether they finally agree I'm not sure."

Load-Date: February 18, 2006

Guardian Weekly: The Week: The roundup

Guardian Weekly

May 12, 2006 Friday

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*The***GuardianWeekly**

Section: Pg. 2

Length: 771 words

Body

Americas

Moussaoui avoids death penalty

Zacarias Moussaoui, the only man tried in the US for the September 11 terrorist attacks, was jailed for life after the jury in his trial in Alexandria, Virginia, rejected the prosecutor's call for a death sentence.

Journey's end for fat man walking

Steve Vaught, a morbidly obese man from California, reached New York after hiking 2,843 miles across the US. He began his walk in April 2005 weighing 186kg; he is now 140kg.

California Anglicans avert rift

The Anglican church avoided a new split after the US Episcopal diocese of California elected a heterosexual father of two, the Right Reverend Mark Andrus, rather than a homosexual candidate as its next bishop.

Fox retreats on drugs reform

The Mexican president, Vicente Fox, backed off a decision to decriminalise possession of small amounts of cannabis, cocaine, heroin and other drugs after objections from the US.

Schools ban sales of sugary drinks

Non-diet soft drinks will no longer be on sale at US state schools under an agreement between distributors and anti-obesity campaigners. Coca-Cola, PepsiCo, Cadbury Schweppes and the American Beverage Association have signed up for the deal.

Europe

Mafia boss in court via video link

Mafia boss Bernardo Provenzano made his first public court appearance, in the Sicilian capital Palermo, since his arrest after 43 years on the run, appearing via video link from prison in Italy.

Three jailed for Munch thefts

A Norwegian court jailed three men for up to eight years and ordered two of them to pay \$123m after convicting them of the theft in 2004 of Edvard Munch's masterpieces *The Scream* and *Madonna*.

Beatles lose trademark battle

The Beatles were beaten by the power of the iPod in a British court when a judge ruled that Apple Computer had not violated an agreement restricting the use of its apple logo in the music business. The Apple Corps record label, still owned by Sir Paul McCartney and Ringo Starr, vowed to appeal.

Greek gods make comeback

An Athens court lifted the ban on the worship of Zeus, Hera, Hermes, Athena and the other eight gods of ancient Greece, paving the way for a comeback of pagans on Mount Olympus.

Asia/Pacific

Chinese tourists told to behave

The Chinese authorities are so concerned that vulgarities such as spitting and slurping are ruining China's international image that they ordered those travelling overseas to watch their manners.

Peace moves in Sri Lanka

A Japanese peace envoy to Sri Lanka, Yasushi Akashi, met President Mahinda Rajapakse in Colombo and said he intended to go to Kilinochchi, the ***Tamil Tigers***' de facto capital, to try to prevent a return to civil war amid spiralling acts of violence.

Nepal recalls ambassadors

Nepal recalled its ambassadors to 12 countries, including the US, as political appointments made during King Gyanendra's autocratic rule are invalidated, the interior minister, Krishna Sitaula, said. The decision was made by the new cabinet after the king yielded absolute power last month in the face of mass protests.

North Korea tops censors league

North Korea heads a league table of the 10 most censored countries, according to a survey by the New York-based Committee to Protect Journalists. It is followed by Burma, Turkmenistan, Equatorial Guinea, Libya, Eritrea, Cuba, Uzbekistan, Syria and Belarus in the survey.

Ex-dictator Suharto has surgery

Indonesia's former dictator Suharto, 84, had colon surgery in a Jakarta hospital. Suharto, toppled by a popular uprising in 1998, was charged in 2000 with misusing charitable funds but was ruled unfit to stand trial.

Africa

Militias battle in Somali capital

Somali Islamist militias and fighters for a self-styled "anti-terrorism" alliance of warlords battled in the country's lawless capital, Mogadishu, bringing the death toll in the latest fighting to at least 19.

Middle East

EU to aid Palestinians

Guardian Weekly: The Week: The roundup

The EU is preparing to go it alone and channel emergency funds to the Palestinians if talks with the US, Russia and the UN on setting up an international mechanism for easing their financial plight fail, senior officials indicated.

Germany 'paid ransom in Iraq'

Two German hostages captured in Iraq arrived home as Iraq's ambassador to Berlin, Alaa al-Hashimi, claimed that the German government had paid a "load of money" to secure their release. He said the Iraqi government had played no part in the release.

Iran women 'can't watch football'

Iran's supreme leader has vetoed a decision by President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad to allow women into sports stadiums. It marks the first time Ayatollah Ali Khamenei has openly challenged government policy since Mr Ahmadinejad took office in August.

Load-Date: June 19, 2006

End of Document

Toll in Sri Lanka clashes rises to 33

Indo-Asian News Service

October 16, 2007 Tuesday 11:09 AM EST

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Byline: Indo-Asian News Service

Dateline: Colombo

Body

Colombo, Oct. 16 -- Sri Lankan troops launched a series of pre-emptive strikes ahead of their forward defence lines in the northern part of the country, killing at least 32 Tamil rebels and losing a soldier, a military spokesman said Tuesday.

The operations were launched in the Wanni and Jaffna areas, 260 km and 370 km north of the capital respectively, Monday in the wake of a string of rebel attacks on the security forces manning isolated guard positions.

The rebels had also attempted to infiltrate the forward defence lines in the north during the past few weeks.

Government troops launched their first operation in Mullikulam, in Wanni district, killing at least 20 rebels. Seven bodies, including those of five **women**, were recovered from the scene while 15 rebels were injured, the spokesman said.

Around the same area a government soldier was killed and seven more were wounded when rebels engaged troops using artillery and heavy mortar fire. Government troops were unable to retaliate because the rebel gun positions were located around an old Roman Catholic church in the area, he said.

In another confrontation, soldiers attacked a rebel hideout in Vilathikulam in Wanni district Monday evening, killing eight rebels.

Military authorities said government troops killed four rebels and seized their weapons in Muhamali, 370 km north of the capital Monday.

Meanwhile, troops were deployed to carry out a search operation for suspected Tamil rebels who attacked an army detachment in southeast Sri Lanka Monday evening.

Military spokesman Udaya Nanyakkara said that reinforcements were sent in from a nearby camp to the detachment located at Thalgasmanakada, 380 km south east of the capital, on the border of a wildlife park.

He said no damage had been caused to the security forces, but Tamil rebels claimed they overran the detachments and killed six soldiers.

The area where the detachment was located borders the eastern province where Tamil rebels have been carrying out small attacks after their main bases were overrun in successive military operations.

Toll in Sri Lanka clashes rises to 33

Fighting in the north and eastern provinces during the past 23 months has escalated, claiming the lives of more than 5,300 people, including rebels, soldiers and civilians.

Both sides have ignored a Norwegian-backed ceasefire signed in Feb 2002 between rebels of the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (**LTTE**) and the government.

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End of Document

Battered by tsunami and war, Sri Lanka vote is a referendum on a faltering peace process

AP Worldstream

November 12, 2005 Saturday

Copyright 2005 Associated Press

Section: INTERNATIONAL NEWS

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Byline: SHIMALI SENANAYAKE; Associated Press Writer

Dateline: COLOMBO, Sri Lanka

Body

Sri Lanka's year opened with the devastation of the Indian Ocean tsunami and is closing with a presidential election that highlights its deep divisions over how to end its 22-year civil war.

Thursday's vote comes against a daily backdrop of bombings and drive-by shootings in a land of tea plantations and wide, sunny beaches that is one of South Asia's worst bleeding sores.

The vote for a successor to Chandrika Kumaratunga, Sri Lanka's pioneering peacemaker and president for the past 11 years, has become a referendum on how to deal with the **Tamil Tigers** and their war for autonomy in the northeast of the island.

The ruling party candidate, Prime Minister Mahinda Rajapakse, appeals to the hard-liners, while opposition leader Ranil Wickremesinghe, backed by the business world, is urging a softer line in talks with the Tamil Tiger rebels.

Meanwhile, the economy is floundering and corruption allegations bedevil efforts to rebuild areas destroyed by the Dec. 26 tsunami, which killed at least 31,000 islanders.

But everything is overshadowed by the Tigers' war, which has killed 65,000 people since it broke out in 1983 over discrimination against Tamils by the Sinhalese majority.

A 2002 cease-fire ended major fighting, but peace talks stalled in disagreement over the Tigers' demands for broad autonomy in their northeastern stronghold, and clashes, though sporadic, have intensified. The Aug. 12 assassination of Foreign Minister Lakshman Kadirgamar, allegedly by the Tigers, heightened the fear of a renewed war.

Despite promising peace and seeking centrist support, the leading presidential candidates occupy opposite sides of Sri Lanka's political spectrum.

Rajapakse, who turns 60 the day after the election, has secured the support of hard-line Marxists and Buddhist monks by pledging not to share political power or tsunami aid with the Tigers and to review the peace process.

He tells campaign rallies he is "a leader with a backbone" who is dedicated to ending the war but "will not let down my country to gain peace."

Battered by tsunami and war, Sri Lanka vote is a referendum on a faltering peace process

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Some recent polls give Wickremesinghe a slight edge, and he has strong support among the Tamils, some of whom are descendants of Indian laborers brought here when the island was a British colony. They together with indigenous Tamils now account for 3.2 million of Sri Lanka's 19 million people, but not all may get to vote.

No ballots will be cast in rebel territory, home to some 100,000 voters, because of security concerns. Those wishing to vote will have to be bused to polling stations in government areas.

Politics in Sri Lanka has always been a life-threatening occupation, and the Tigers have kept up the pressure. They assassinated President Ranasinghe Premadasa in 1993, and the present president, Chandrika Kumaratunga, lost her eye in a Tamil bombing in 1999 at her last election rally before she was elected for a second term.

Term limits are ending her presidency and closing an era in South Asian politics in which she became a familiar figure on the world stage - a charismatic speaker usually clad in a blue sari, and a scion of the island's ruling class; both her parents were prime ministers.

Though initially critical of the cease-fire, signed when Wickremesinghe was premier, Kumaratunga now showers praise on it - a tacit break with Rajapakse, her one-time protege, and a boost for Wickremesinghe, who belongs to a rival party.

South Asia has a history of electing women leaders. India, Pakistan and Bangladesh have all had one, and Sri Lanka has had a mother-daughter combo, when Kumaratunga was president and her mother prime minister. In fact, this is the first presidential election since 1982 in which both front-runners and all 13 candidates are male.

Rajapakse and Wickremesinghe are both lawyers and longtime legislators who lack Kumaratunga's stature and voter appeal. Many Sri Lankans believe the 60-year-old mother of two would easily win a third term if the constitution allowed it.

Load-Date: November 12, 2005

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

THE AUSTRALIAN

December 15, 2005 Thursday

All-round Country Edition

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Section: FEATURES; Letters Cartoon; Pg. 11

Length: 2591 words

Body

MATP

Young Muslims denounce 'thugs' on both sides

MOST TALKED ABOUT

SYDNEY'S RIOTS

HOME-GROWN thugs with both white and coloured skin have crossed the line, and they should be identified, charged and prosecuted. There is no racist underbelly in our community. I live in the western suburbs of Sydney, which have been untouched by these riots, indicating they were a sporadic event disconnected to the youth of the wider Muslim community. "Surfie" thugs hiding behind the Australian flag and mumbling racist rhetoric between the lines of Waltzing Matilda have an obvious un-Australian agenda that should be condemned by all sections of the community. By the same token, the Lebanese thugs and perpetrators of the attacks on the lifesavers two weekends ago should be denounced. Drunken Anglo mobs yelling racist chants targeting Middle Eastern women are as un-Australian as those Lebanese mobs that took revenge by attacking private property at Maroubra. Mob behaviour driving race-fuelled violence has no place in our Australia. As Muslim Australians, we stand strong and disown both extremist thugs: those with white skin and those with coloured skin. We also ask Sutherland Shire community leaders to voice the same condemnation against both parties involved in this disgraceful behaviour.

Mustapha Kara-Ali

Muslim youth spokesman and a representative on the federal Government's Muslim Community Reference Group

I'M confused. When cold-blooded terrorists systematically plotted to hijack planes and knock down skyscrapers, earnest left-wingers told us we needed to look to the "root causes" of what made these people unhappy with the world. Now, when a mob of drunken idiots starts a riot, the same earnest left-wingers tell us that we must unequivocally condemn them, and that it's all due to the innate racism that "lurks just beneath the surface in Australia". Could someone please explain?

Dale Peterson

Vermont South, Vic

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

CAN your editorial writers please stop the juvenile labelling of Government critics as Howard-haters ("Racism not endemic", 14/12)? It is insulting and serves no purpose other than to thwart debate. It also indicates a personal sensitivity to criticism of our Prime Minister that is odd to say the least from a supposedly independent newspaper. And it is not logical. I don't see why I can't question the motives and actions of this Government and its impact on our society. It is perfectly reasonable, for example, to suggest that demonising Middle Eastern refugees and taking part in the invasion of a Middle Eastern country may actually have implications on community relations at home. It is perfectly reasonable to call the initiator of these policies to account if there are possible repercussions.

Wayne Furlong

Hong Kong

UNDESIRABLE though it may be, and illegal in a modern society, racism lies at the very heart of every sexually reproducing species. It's an integral part of the most ancient territorial imperatives upon which survival depends; the so-called "amity-enmity" instinct. As such, it can never be eradicated while a species is dependent on its primordial DNA; and the only pragmatic option available to modern civilisation is to suppress the urge by threats of superior violence, usually legislated sanctions or religious dictates "from God". Every time such inhibitions are revoked by alcohol, nationalistic jingoism or perceived external threats, the same thing happens: murder, mayhem and unrestrained competition for status. This may disappoint many but neither testosterone nor John Howard lies at the bottom of the racism in this country. It's simply the nature of the beast, and we'll have to learn to live with it.

Michael Phillips

Paynesville, Vic

THE pundits have gathered to figure out why the Cronulla violence has occurred. At the end of the day it is not about race, religion or nationality. A bogan is a bogan: low IQ and too much time.

Stephen De Lai

Hobart, Tas

JANET Albrechtsen's article ("Racism is repulsive, but so is self-loathing", Opinion, 14/12) closes with the line " ... if we're serious about social cohesion, it's time we all demonstrated social responsibility". I'm sure not too many people disagree with this sentiment, but it is equally true that John Howard has been very irresponsible on the issue of race during his prime ministership. He and his ministers have used it to great effect to help make what is essentially a very safe and calm population a racially paranoid one. That's the leadership climate through which mid-20s-something Australians have lived their adolescence, so are we surprised when violence erupts? Some of us aren't.

Shane Chaplin

Stockholm, Sweden

THANK goodness the Government passed its sedition laws in time: now they have the perfect instrument to lock away those Sydney shock jocks and street rabblers who are fomenting the riots. Or will it be one law for the poor and another for the Alan Joneses of this world?

Doug Pollard

Eltham North, Vic

THE race riots in Sydney should not be seen as a failure of multiculturalism; rather they are a measure of its success. The aim of multiculturalism is to destroy the host society by discouraging alien communities from assimilating or becoming integrated. Multiculturalism is ghettoism by another name; its advocates know full well that the creation of a "state within a state" leads to social disintegration.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Brian Wimborne

Isaacs, ACT

FOR most of us young enough to have grown up with multiculturalism, the hysterical cries of Sydney's racists are baffling and disgusting. Thuggish violence is not an Australian value, whether you are of Anglo-Australian or Lebanese-Australian background. Personally, I refuse to blame my Muslim friends for the actions of some idiots who beat up lifesavers. The violence in Sydney has nothing to do with the Australian values I was brought up on. To paraphrase the Treasurer, if you want to live in a monocultural society, you will not be happy in Australia and you should just clear off.

Romony Rogers

Kenmore Hills, Qld

IT might be worthwhile for NSW Police Commissioner Ken Moroney to spend more time consulting with his Los Angeles counterpart: he might learn something about riot control. It's about time the NSW cops threw off the "Maginot Line" approach to policing and kept the peace. The excuse that heavy-handed policing might turn the mob against the police is a cop-out.

Philip Brookes

Nanchang, Jiangxi Province, China

YES, Janet Albrechtsen, there is more to the Sydney riots than racism. There is crime as well. Racially motivated crime.

Kay Kan

Cheltenham, NSW

THE thuggery and rioting witnessed in Sydney may be labelled racist, religious or political by those wanting to gain some advantage. The real cause of these confrontations is poor policing practices over the past 10 years or more. The removal of street-level offences such as offensive behaviour, indecent language and others, has meant that police patrolling the streets are not able or willing to enforce laws that make our streets safer and enhance our quality of life. Zero tolerance of loutish behavior reduces the chance of minor confrontations that later explode into the violence now being witnessed. The ability to enforce the law in relation to minor infractions is what is required, not longer prison terms for serious offences. Stop the problem at the root cause -- it is an approach that has worked elsewhere.

Hugh Tate

Costa Mesa, California, US

WE recognise that there is a very nasty problem in parts of our cities -- not just Sydney. People are not integrating as we would like. The usual "experts" put forward all sorts of reasons and suggest some cures, many of which are plain silly. Would it not be a good idea to reconsider conscription? The armed forces have a knack of assisting in integration, an objective in which the schools have palpably failed.

Philip Cohen

Morisset, NSW

THE most enlightening feature by Cameron Stewart and Amanda Hodge ("Isolated and angry", 14/12) greatly helped me understand the background of young Lebanese-Australians and their attitudes. Many thanks. Now, please, a helpful article on suggested solutions to the problems identified.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Barry Lamb

Cairns, Qld

Ruling on Hicks restores

faith in British justice

WHILST it is a sad indictment of the attitude of both the US and Australian governments to the universal rule of law that it should have to come to this, at least it restores my faith in British law that a UK High Court judge should have the perspicacity and independence to uphold reason and to condemn the Guantanamo Bay situation so unequivocally in his judgment on David Hicks's right to British citizenship ("UK citizenship for Hicks", 14/12). I now look forward, with a sense of delicious irony, to the discomfort of the British Government in having to maintain a consistent position in relation to its citizens, and the Australian Government's embarrassment when it does. Sadly, John Howard's hubris will protect him from any sense of embarrassment, but that in itself will reflect badly on him.

Graeme Noonan

Phillip Island, Vic

IT'S an utter disgrace that David Hicks, an Australian, has had to resort to getting British citizenship as a way of being granted freedom.

Emma Meconi

Gordon Park, Qld

BY granting David Hicks British citizenship, the British High Court has inadvertently forced the Howard Government into defending its flawed policy regarding the basic rights of our citizens interned overseas. John Howard obviously thinks Hicks does not deserve a fair trial, and despite Foreign Minister Alexander Downer's blatherings, our government has a basic responsibility to look after its own in cases such as this.

Richard Slater

Berowra Heights, NSW

Student fees wasted

I'M a law student at the University of Queensland and hence a compulsory member of the university's student union. In 2005, I was a paid, elected office bearer of the union, an experience that has given me a great insight into the workings of this organisation. Interestingly, the union is a separate legal entity from the university which, as part of a student's enrolment, requires membership of the union. As a result, I'm forced to pay \$272 a year to contribute to the union's budget, which is in the order of \$4 million a year. I have seen first-hand how the majority of this money gets wasted on pointless political exercises instead of student services. It is ridiculous that compulsory student unionism has been allowed to go on for so long. Voluntary unionism will allow those students who perceive real financial benefit from their union to continue to pay fees and, crucially, allow the vast majority of students, who receive no tangible benefit from the union, to opt out.

Joshua Stewart

Toowoomba, Qld

An alternative for schoolies

WHY do we, as a community, seem to presume that all teenagers want to celebrate the end of their school years in the fashion made so public through scenes and reports from the Gold Coast during Schoolies Week? Are these young people offered any alternatives? All credit to a group of students from Mt Maria College, Brisbane, who

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

chose to celebrate their end-of-school life by going to East Timor and doing a period of voluntary work in a school there. If schools and parents could explore the opportunities for students to become involved in worthwhile projects for their Schoolies Week, they would possibly be amazed and heartened by the enthusiastic response. Such ventures would encourage the caring attitudes of these young people, not only for that particular week but also lay an excellent foundation for their future lives and actions. Unfortunately, Schoolies Week tends to do the opposite for many of them.

Mary Lou Uechtritz

Innisfail, Qld

De-clawing the Tigers

THANK you for the report on the illegal activities of the Tamil Tiger -- LTTE -- terrorist cells in Australia and the raids by the Federal Police ("Tamil charities raided", 13/12). As an Australian of Sri Lankan origin, I'm well aware of the tactics of LTTE activists, who collect donations from kind-hearted people in the name of charities and channel them for the purchase of arms and explosives. As external infiltration of these so-called charities is impossible and whistleblowing is almost non-existent, the investigations carried out so far by the AFP must be highly commended. If Australia and other developed countries curb their activities and restrict the flow of funds to the Tamil Tigers, negotiating peace in Sri Lanka will become a reality.

Asoka Subhawickrama

Sydney, NSW

AWB inquiry is 'toothless'

STEPHEN Barton's and Peter van Onselen's attack on Labor's prosecution of the Howard Government's role in the \$300 million wheat board scandal ("Saddam's coffers a blind spot", Opinion, 12/14) shows John Howard is mightily sensitive about the impact of this scandal on his much-vaunted national security credentials. But what their article failed to declare is that both are former Liberal staffers, not simply independent academics. It is obvious why Howard has much to be worried about. First, of the 2300 companies worldwide investigated by the Volcker Inquiry for providing kickbacks to Saddam Hussein, the AWB, with the approval of the Howard Government, was the single largest contributor to the Iraqi dictator. Second, despite formal warnings by the UN, in January 2000, about the AWB's commercial arrangements in Iraq, the Howard Government, in November 2000, gave these arrangements an unqualified green light in writing. Third, the CIA (not the ALP) concluded that these kickbacks enabled Saddam to buy prohibited military equipment. A US Congressional inquiry also concluded that these kickbacks helped Saddam compensate the families of Palestinian suicide bombers. And, despite all this, Howard has established an inquiry that is a toothless tiger with no powers to investigate the actions of his own Government, which at minimum has been culpably negligent.

Kevin Rudd

Opposition foreign affairs spokesman

FIRST BYTE

letters@theaustralian.com.au

If the UK secures freedom for David Hicks, I will tear up my membership of the Australian Republican Movement.

Matt Wilkinson

Lyneham, ACT

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Now that David Hicks has been declared a British citizen, I nominate his American lawyer, Major Michael Mori, as Australian of the Year.

Jim Brooks

Mount Peter, Qld

Martin Luther King said, "A riot is the language of the unheard." Now is the time for us to listen.

Bill Wheatland

Crafers, SA

The terminator has done it again. But this time, to my regret, he wasn't acting.

Colin Abbott

Jarrahdale, WA

Forget Shakespeare and rock'n'roll, I thought the Simpsons were the living culture.

Tony Horan

Strathfield, NSW

Has anyone else noticed that Bob Brown's increasingly contemptible remarks denigrating John Howard on every contentious topic are in direct proportion to his increasing irrelevance on the political scene in Australia?

Peter West

The Vines, WA

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

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Load-Date: December 14, 2005

Maybe women could do better

The Calgary Herald (Alberta)

August 29, 2005 Monday

Final Edition

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Section: THE EDITORIAL PAGE; Pg. A14

Length: 757 words

Byline: Calvin White, For The Calgary Herald

Body

I wonder if things might be different if more of the world's leadership were in the hands of women. Sad to say, the common sense these days is coming from MP Carolyn Parrish more so than Prime Minister Paul Martin, who recently echoed the need for Canada to wage aggressive war on terrorism.

That and American and British reactions to terrorism and the Iraq conflict have been stubbornly caricaturish of testosterone-fuelled impulsivity.

Take for example, the Blair government's angry denunciation of the suggestion that their Iraq policy might be connected to the subway bombings. Or President George W. Bush's televised address in which his linchpin for sustaining American military action in Iraq was that it is better to fight the enemy there than on American soil.

Then, we have our own Chief of Defence Staff, General Rick Hillier, declaring the need to send Canada's elite JTF2 to Afghanistan to fight "the detestable murderers and scumbags" who perpetrate terrorism. "Our job is to be able to kill people," said Hillier, and so Canadian forces will now be actively hunting insurgents rather than supporting a peace.

How is it that such limited, male/macho reasoning dictates the direction for addressing terrorist activity that truly could become epidemic and cataclysmic? It almost makes one yearn for the saner, more balanced thoughtfulness of Cold War John F. Kennedy and Nikita Khrushchev a la Cuban missile crisis.

How is it that the media virtually go along with such clearly anti-rational analysis? That there is no concerted refusal to accept leadership that puts all of us at risk for the foreseeable future?

Let's examine the notion that we are in a "war on terror" and that we must keep fighting "them" and "hunt" them down, throwing all our resources and might into "destroying" those bad men whom Hillier, as Bush and Blair before him, surmises "detest our society, our freedoms, our liberties."

When societies accept that we're in a war, we accept that the war industries are going to get incredibly wealthy. Dwight Eisenhower, who warned of just that, must be turning in his grave. Of course, what did he know?

The term, war, properly used implies a contest to gain or protect territory -- some place is being invaded or coveted. It's no wonder America is having trouble restocking its military. Similarly, it's no surprise that among everyday

Maybe women could do better

Americans, there is little emotional resonance with their forces overseas. On a gut level, few buy into the notion of being at war.

Then, there's the absurdity of refusing to honestly analyse why fellow human beings sacrifice their lives to strike at innocent civilians. Shouldn't we focus our intelligence on understanding the mentality of terrorism?

When so many nations vigorously opposed invading Iraq, it cannot be surprising that still others would react with intensified hatred. It is intellectually treasonous not to support the conclusion that others around the world would be inspired to find meaning in their lives by giving them in the cause of righting great wrongs. So, when Hillier demonizes terrorists as scumbags, the result is an undercutting of the insight needed to defuse terrorism.

After the London attacks, the Pentagon immediately floated speculation that the bomb materials might have come from Iraq. It is interesting that after Madrid was bombed last year, the Spanish people reacted so differently. They changed governments and the new government pulled out of Iraq. Not because they were afraid, but because they had been against the invasion in the first place.

And, what inevitably comes about? Why, rapprochement, right?

The IRA eventually makes peace. The ***Tamil Tigers*** are accommodated by the Sri Lankan government. Factions in Sudan come to agreement. Whites and blacks in South Africa. Mau Mau Jomo Kenyatta becomes president of Kenya. Vietnam and America exchange security ideas. The enemies find peace with each other.

There no longer is an evildoer, a despicable scumbag. "Our way of life" being under siege is forgotten about -- no longer useful. Both sides eventually come to an understanding of each others' motivations and perspectives.

If only we could get leadership that right away sought ways to find commonality, ways to sit down at a table and address each other's needs.

Just remember how reviled Moammar Gadhafi was for so many years. He was Osama before Osama, the baddest man on the planet. And now where are we after Tony Blair went to Tripoli to shake his hand? Did it make us safer?

Calvin White is a freelance social/political commentator.

Load-Date: August 29, 2005

Battered by tsunami and war, Sri Lanka vote is referendum on faltering peace process

The Associated Press

November 12, 2005, Saturday, BC cycle

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Section: International News

Length: 707 words

Byline: By SHIMALI SENANAYAKE, Associated Press Writer

Dateline: COLOMBO, Sri Lanka

Body

Sri Lanka's year opened with the devastation of the Indian Ocean tsunami and is closing with a presidential election that highlights its deep divisions over how to end its 22-year civil war.

Thursday's vote comes against a daily backdrop of bombings and drive-by shootings in a land of tea plantations and wide, sunny beaches that is one of South Asia's worst bleeding sores.

The vote for a successor to Chandrika Kumaratunga, Sri Lanka's pioneering peacemaker and president for the past 11 years, has become a referendum on how to deal with the **Tamil Tigers** and their war for autonomy in the northeast of the island.

The ruling party candidate, Prime Minister Mahinda Rajapakse, appeals to the hard-liners, while opposition leader Ranil Wickremesinghe, backed by the business world, is urging a softer line in talks with the Tamil Tiger rebels.

Meanwhile, the economy is floundering and corruption allegations bedevil efforts to rebuild areas destroyed by the Dec. 26 tsunami, which killed at least 31,000 islanders.

But everything is overshadowed by the Tigers' war, which has killed 65,000 people since it broke out in 1983 over discrimination against Tamils by the Sinhalese majority.

A 2002 cease-fire ended major fighting, but peace talks stalled in disagreement over the Tigers' demands for broad autonomy in their northeastern stronghold, and clashes, though sporadic, have intensified. The Aug. 12 assassination of Foreign Minister Lakshman Kadirgamar, allegedly by the Tigers, heightened the fear of a renewed war.

Despite promising peace and seeking centrist support, the leading presidential candidates occupy opposite sides of Sri Lanka's political spectrum.

Rajapakse, who turns 60 the day after the election, has secured the support of hard-line Marxists and Buddhist monks by pledging not to share political power or tsunami aid with the Tigers and to review the peace process.

He tells campaign rallies he is "a leader with a backbone" who is dedicated to ending the war but "will not let down my country to gain peace."

Battered by tsunami and war, Sri Lanka vote is referendum on faltering peace process

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No ballots will be cast in rebel territory, home to some 100,000 voters, because of security concerns. Those wishing to vote will have to be bused to polling stations in government areas.

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Term limits are ending her presidency and closing an era in South Asian politics in which she became a familiar figure on the world stage - a charismatic speaker usually clad in a blue sari, and a scion of the island's ruling class; both her parents were prime ministers.

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Graphic

AP Photos of Nov. 11: NY413-414

Load-Date: November 13, 2005

Battered by tsunami and war, Sri Lanka vote is a referendum on a faltering peace process

The Associated Press

November 11, 2005, Friday, BC cycle

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Graphic

AP Photos of Nov. 11: NY413-414

Load-Date: November 14, 2005

9 killed as heavy fighting erupts between Tamil Tiger rebel factions

The Canadian Press (CP)

April 9, 2004 Friday

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Section: FOREIGN GENERAL NEWS

Length: 757 words

Byline: BY DILIP GANGULY

Body

PANICHACHANKANI, Sri Lanka (AP) _ Mainstream Tamil Tiger guerrillas advanced on a heavily armed breakaway faction Friday in a vicious gun and mortar battle that killed at least nine people, wounded 20 and imperiled Sri Lanka's fragile two-year-old ceasefire.

It was the worst fighting since the 2002 truce halted the country's 19-year civil war between minority Tamil rebels and government forces, controlled by the ethnic-Sinhalese majority.

The fighting also came a week after voters rejected the government that negotiated the ceasefire in favour of a parliament dominated by legislators who back Sri Lanka's hardline president.

Sri Lankan army troops have been told to stay out of the rebel conflict, but the fighting was taking place within a few kilometres of army camps.

AP

Soldiers listened by radios to news of the factional guerrilla fighting along the Vergul River, 225 kilometres east of the capital, Colombo.

After hours of mortar and machine-gun fire, about 500 fighters from the breakaway group _ including women and teenage boys and girls _ withdrew from the area, claiming they were repositioning not retreating.

"About 1,000 ... people came and attacked us, so this is a tactical withdrawal and we are going to set up our new defence line," S. Kumar, a senior commander of the breakaway group, told The Associated Press.

He said more fighters from the mainstream Liberation Tigers of Tamileelam, were moving to fortify their freshly gained positions on the opposing side, indicating another offensive manoeuvre was likely.

The clash was between members of the main Tamil Tiger rebel group with an estimated 9,000 fighters based in the north and a 6,000-strong eastern faction, led by a charismatic commander Vinayagamoorthy Muralitharan, known as Karuna.

Open warfare between the two sides had been feared since Karuna announced their schism on March 3 in a dispute over regional rivalry and political strategy.

9 killed as heavy fighting erupts between Tamil Tiger rebel factions

The fighters led by Kumar, one of Karuna's commanders, appeared calm as they checked their weapons and ammunition. They boarded tractors taking them and their rocket launchers, grenades and heavy machine-guns to their new defensive line and announced they were closing the road for the night.

"We will fight to the last," said Kumar, carrying a light machine-gun as he hopped on the last of three tractors.

For two decades the **Tamil Tigers** fought government troops in a bloody separatist conflict that claimed an estimated 65,000 lives.

More than 3,500 terrified villagers had fled their homes by Friday evening and more were planning to evacuate, they said.

Among the refugees was Sumitra, 28, carrying her month-old baby boy. "I had thought that we can live like normal people, but it looks like we are refugees again," she said.

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Amid fears that the peace process could be doomed if government troops were drawn into the fighting, President Chandrika Kumaratunga ordered her commanders to help evacuate rebel casualties from both sides, but not to interfere in their conflict, an official in her office said.

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Friday's fight was multi-pronged. Groups of heavily armed northern rebels also landed in boats at Kathiravelli, a coastal village about 15 kilometres from the river, and were trying to advance on Batticaloa _ the breakaway group's stronghold, military officials said.

To enter that area they would have to cross Sri Lankan government-held territory.

"We don't want to get dragged into this," Defence Secretary Ciril Herath said after an emergency meeting with European ceasefire monitors in Colombo. "We are watching the situation very closely."

Police said at least four people travelling in a minibus were wounded by a Claymore mine _ a small device that is remotely detonated.

On Monday, the Tigers warned they'd go back to war with the government if their demands for sweeping autonomy in Tamil-majority northeast Sri Lanka are not met.

The Tamils have long complained of widespread discrimination by the ethnic-Sinhalese majority.

Load-Date: April 10, 2004

No one benefits from a Rs2,600 cr channel

MINT

September 13, 2007 Thursday 5:14 PM EST

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Length: 1546 words

Byline: Priyanka P. Narain

Dateline: Delhi

Body

On Wednesday, road and rail traffic in various parts of the country came to a halt on account of a bridge. The bridge is Adam's Bridge, an underwater coral formation that links India to Sri Lanka. The Sethusamudram project is seeking to make passage of ships around India faster by dredging a way through this bridge and linking the Bay of Bengal to the Gulf of Mannar. Many Hindus believe this bridge was built by Ram to link India and Sri Lanka and consider it a holy relic. On Wednesday, matters came to a head with the Vishwa Hindu Parishad, a Hindu organization, orchestrating protests against the project.

On the same day, the Union government told the Supreme Court, which will eventually decide on the fate of the Sethusamudram project, that there is no evidence to establish the existence of Ram or other characters in Hindu epic Ramayana. In an affidavit filed before the court, the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) said there was no "historical record" of Ram or that the coral formation was actually a bridge built by him. Leaders of the main opposition party, the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), termed the affidavit "blasphemous". "This is an insult to the Hindu faith," added Vijay Kumar Malhotra, a BJP parliament member.

The VHP's protests, planned ahead of the affidavit, will likely intensify after the government's court filing. It isn't just political and religious opposition that is ranged against the project, which could shave a day off the passage of ships circumnavigating India. Environmentalists and scientists are opposed to it, too. According to Tad Satya Murty, the chain of coral islands (Adam's Bridge) "saved coastal Kerala" from the wrath of the December 2004 tsunami by deflecting the tidal wave back into the open sea. Coincidentally, on Wednesday, an earthquake of 7.9 magnitude that struck southern Indonesia triggered tsunami warnings in Singapore and the entire Indian Ocean region.

In a four-part series, Mint has been examining the real issues related to the project. Part 1 that appeared on Tuesday looked at the status of the project as well as the lack of information on all aspects of it, including costs. Part 2, on Wednesday, looked at the scientific opposition ranged against the project.

"Look at the poverty we live in," says V. Vinod, the fisherman, waving at the broken thatch-leaf homes and colourful wooden boats anchored in shallow water that mark this desolate, barren stretch of beach near Rameshwaram. Entangled in the bramble, multi-coloured plastic bags flutter in the breeze. Two women are digging in the sand, hunting for fresh water below. Some others are performing morning ablutions near the shore.

Authorities of the Sethusamudram Corp. Ltd (SCL), the government company responsible for dredging a channel between the Bay of Bengal and the Gulf of Mannar, claim that the channel, which will shave 24 hours off the time it takes for ships to circumnavigate India, will change the lives of fishermen such as Vinod, and transform the entire coastal economy.

No one benefits from a Rs2,600 cr channel

The project's website makes a sales pitch about the economic growth of the region: "Substantial benefits will accrue to the national and regional economy. Actual payback period accumulated earnings due to implementation of the fishermen in the coastal districts."

Mint could not get anyone to explain what that meant or if there was a number assigned to this. The website does not explain how this plan for economic progress will work. The project is supposed to cost Rs2,600 crore.

Vinod says that project authorities had told the fishermen it would help them earn a better living. "But how can it help us? How can ships passing by help us? Now these big, big ships will pass by us. How will we get fish?"

When asked about how this project was supposed to improve economic prosperity in the region, N.K. Raghupathy, former chairman of SCL and its most vocal champion, says: "Take a trip down the south coast and see the backwardness of the region. We have a plan for coming up with fishing harbours along the coast."

Actually, the plan to come up with fishing harbours along the east coast of India is supposed to be an Oil and Natural Gas Corp. (ONGC) project.

Raghupathy corrects himself when this is pointed out: "Yes, that's true. It's not us actually, but ONGC does plan to have fishing harbours which will transform the fishing industry here." He does not explain how this ONGC project is related to the Sethusamudram project.

L. Amalraj, vicar of the Sivaganga district, says he has been working with the local fishermen for the last four years. "Only a fisherman can understand what this project will do to them. The sea is their whole world. It is all they know. This project will benefit only the shipping companies. No one else," he says.

It is unlikely that even shipping companies will benefit, says Capt. H. Balakrishnan, who left the Indian Navy in 1990 to join the merchant navy. He has put together a mariner's report on the project. "I have been a mariner all my life. I have studied this project like a mariner and found that the project helps no one. To begin with, no ship of more than 30,000 tonnage will be able to use this channel because of its depth.

"Since this channel is just 12m deep, and you have to leave at least 2m space between the bottom of the ship and the seabed, only ships that sink 10m below the water can use it. Which means, the maximum weight these ships can carry is 30,000 tonnes," Balakrishnan explains.

Until about 10 years ago, 30,000 tonnes would have been a good-sized ship, says Brian Alexander, an agent for foreign cargo ships, who has worked at various ports across the country for the past 25 years. "Now, I don't know of any foreign ship that tiny. Even coal ships that come from Indonesia and Africa weigh at least 45,000 tonnes. In international shipping, the bigger the ship, the lower the freight. So you see, there is no incentive for small-sized cargo ships. I don't think I know of any one who would even consider using that channel."

It seems unlikely that Indian shippers will benefit either, says Anjani Sinha of the Multi Commodities Exchange, because negligible domestic trade is carried out on ships from coast to coast. Pressed for a ballpark estimate on the commodity trade that does happen by sea, he says, "Really, it is practically nothing."

Indian shipping companies are equally sceptical. The country's shipping firms have 725 ships that are small enough to be able to use this channel, but ship owners say they will not use it. "The whole thing is a waste of money, I think," says Arun Sharma, president of the Kolkata-based India Steamship Co and member of the Indian National Shipowners Association. "Firstly, little domestic trade happens on the sea. Second, I don't have ships that small. Third, even if I did, I would not use the channel. It is a security risk."

The security issue comes from the proximity of the channel to Sri Lanka's Jaffna coast where the insurgent group, the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (**LTTE**), has been fighting for an autonomous Tamil state. **LTTE** members are reportedly active in the southern part of India as well, especially Rameshwaram. The government has issued a warning to all ships to steer at least 50 nautical miles clear of Sri Lanka's Jaffna coast.

No one benefits from a Rs2,600 cr channel

"Now they want us to go within a 15-mile distance, turn our propellers off and become sitting ducks for the LTTE? I don't think so," says Sharma.

"If international ships cannot use it (because they are too big) and domestic ships don't need it, who exactly is going to use this channel?" asks Jacob John, an economist at Just Change India, who has compiled an economic viability report on the project. The SCL website says about 3,500 ships are expected to use this channel in the first year.

Some people at the Indian National Shipowners Association, who do not wish to be identified, disagree. "Who is going to use this channel?," says one person.

"We are not sure how many shipowners will use it. We are not sure it makes economic sense for the ministry to go ahead with this channel. But it is our minister, and when he is facing so much criticism, we have to stand with him."

He admits, however, that the channel will save time.

Some experts are not even sure about that. While the SCL website claims ships will save 24 hours of shipping time, Balakrishnan says this is not true: "If you could travel through the channel at the same speed as on the high seas, maybe you save that much.

"But the truth is that when ships have just 2m of water beneath them, they will be forced to turn off their propellers. If they try to use propellers in that channel, they will run aground. In fact, they will need piloting."

"Getting a pilot for a ship is not easy. It takes a couple of hours to get a pilot on board. Then another few hours to slowly navigate the hulking ship through the 300m-wide channel.

"Add another couple of hours to off-board the pilot. After all this, they would be lucky if they saved a couple of hours," says Balakrishnan.

Shipping minister T.R. Baalu and shipping secretary A.K. Mahapatra continue to maintain their silence on the project.

PTI contributed to this story.

The concluding part will appear in tomorrow's paper. Read Part 1 and 2 on our website at www.livemint.com/sethuproject.htm

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

Load-Date: July 19, 2008

Sri Lanka magistrate orders probe on military killing of students

Deutsche Presse-Agentur

November 19, 2006 Sunday 12:28 PM EST

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Section: POLITICS

Length: 408 words

Dateline: Colombo

Body

DPA POLITICS SriLanka Conflicts Sri Lanka magistrate orders probe on military killing of students Colombo
A magistrate in Sri Lanka ordered a probe into allegations that the army killed five students and injured 10 others in an apparent retaliation for the deaths of five army personnel killed in a claymore mine attack in northern Sri Lanka, court officials said Sunday.

The mine blast took place in Thandikulam, Vavuniya, 240 kilometres north of the capital Saturday morning. Ten minutes later a group of soldiers entered an agricultural training school and fired at the students, according to statements made by the injured students.

Military spokesman Brigadier Prasad Samarasinghe however claimed the students had been killed in the crossfire following the claymore attack.

The injured students were quoted as saying the soldiers entered the school and first fired at a student who approached with his hands raised saying they were students and had no involvement in the attack.

Four students were killed instantly and another succumbed to his injuries at the hospital. Among the injured were six women.

Magistrate S Illancheliyan who visited the scene of the incident has ordered the army to surrender the weapons used by the soldiers for inspection by the government analyst and conduct investigations about the incident.

The Tamil National Alliance (TNA) parliamentarians called the incident a "serious war crime to be added to a long list of war crimes that targeted innocent Tamil civilians in the Northeast."

Tamil rebels also claimed that it was an "execution-style killing" and condemned the attack.

The military spokesman said that they were carrying out a further investigation into the incident.

Sri Lanka magistrate orders probe on military killing of students

On November 8 the army fired artillery at a camp for displaced persons in Vakarai in the country's east killing 65 civilians.

Army claimed that rebels had fired artillery from close to the camp and the military was retaliating in the direction from where the firing took place.

The incident was condemned by the international community and the government said it "regretted" that civilians had been killed attacks

on the rebels of the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (**LTTE**).

The security situation in the north and eastern parts of the country has further deteriorated in the last two months as the death toll in the past 11 months in fighting has risen to over 3,200, including civilians as well as government troops and rebels.

Nov 1906 1228 GMT

Load-Date: November 20, 2006

End of Document

Female 'Jihadis' Get Online Magazine

Associated Press Online

August 27, 2004 Friday

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Section: INTERNATIONAL NEWS

Length: 701 words

Byline: RAWYA RAGEH; Associated Press Writer

Dateline: DUBAI, United Arab Emirates

Body

An Islamist women's group has launched an Internet magazine aimed at recruiting Arab women to fight holy wars against non-Muslims.

The Al-Khansaa magazine, launched about a week ago and expected to appear monthly, also provides fitness tips for female "jihadis," or holy warriors, information on treating injuries and advice on raising children to fight nonbelievers.

The magazine, appearing on several extremist Islamic Web sites, claims to have been started "at the initiative" of two slain al-Qaida militants in Saudi Arabia, Abdulaziz al-Moqrin and Issa Saad Mohammed bin Oushan.

In June, security forces killed al-Moqrin, who was believed to be al-Qaida's chief in the Arab peninsula. Oushan, who was killed in July, and al-Moqrin were among Saudi Arabia's 26 most-wanted militants.

The magazine said it was produced by the "women's media center" in Saudi Arabia, an Islamic nation where al-Qaida leader Osama bin Laden was born and Islam's two holiest shrines are located.

Cairo-based Islamic expert Mohamed Salah poured scorn on the 22-page magazine, describing it as a "media stunt (by militants) to show their enemies that they can mobilize everyone, including women, against them."

"What is new here is the use of the medium of the Internet to recruit women," he added.

Al-Khansaa, the periodical's title, was the name of a revered Arab poet who converted to Islam during the time of the 7th century Prophet Muhammad.

She later became associated with Muhammad's close acquaintances and was known for eulogies written for her brother, a sturdy fighter in pre-Islamic days. Al-Khansaa also encouraged her four sons to take part in jihad to spread Islam. Her sons died in battle.

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The magazine says even though jihad, in terms of actual fighting, is primarily a man's duty, "**women** can fight without the permission of their husband or guardian since it would be a duty, and duties do not require consent."

The notion is shocking in hard-line Saudi Arabia, where **women** are obliged to be accompanied by a male guardian at most times, particularly in public.

"Theoretically this sounds so interesting, but on the ground it is unrealistic" for **female** militants to be able to endure the same rigors as males, said Salah, the Egyptian expert.

Women did take part in the Egyptian Islamic Group's 1990s anti-government insurgency, Salah noted, and at least four were tried for involvement in violence. Palestinian, Uzbek and Chechen **women** also have carried out militant acts, including suicide bombings.

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Load-Date: August 28, 2004

Nine Killed in Sri Lanka Rebel Fighting

Associated Press Online

April 9, 2004 Friday

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Section: INTERNATIONAL NEWS

Length: 724 words

Byline: DILIP GANGULY; Associated Press Writer

Dateline: PANICHACHANKANI, Sri Lanka

Body

Mainstream Tamil Tiger guerrillas advanced on a heavily armed breakaway faction Friday in a vicious gun and mortar battle that killed at least nine people, wounded 20 and imperiled Sri Lanka's fragile two-year-old cease-fire.

It was the worst fighting since the 2002 truce halted the 19-year civil war. It came a week after voters rejected the government that had negotiated the cease-fire. The balloting elected a Parliament that backs the hardline president.

Sri Lankan army troops were told to stay out of the rebel conflict, but the fighting was taking place within a few miles of army camps, where armed soldiers listened by radios to news of the factional guerrilla fighting along the Vergual River, 140 miles east of the capital, Colombo.

After hours of mortar and machine-gun fire, about 500 fighters from the breakaway group - including women and teenage boys and girls - withdrew from the area, claiming they were repositioning not retreating.

"About 1,000 ... people came and attacked us, so this is a tactical withdrawal and we are going to set up our new defense line," S. Kumar, a senior commander of the breakaway group, told The Associated Press.

He said more fighters from the mainstream Liberation Tigers of Tamileelam, were moving to fortify their freshly gained positions on the opposing side, indicating another offensive maneuver was likely.

Members of the main 9,000-strong Tamil Tiger rebel group based in the north seized territory from the breakaway 6,000-strong eastern faction, led by a charismatic commander Vinayagamoorthy Muralitharan, known as Karuna.

The two sides had been squared off since Karuna announced the schism on March 3 in a dispute of regional rivalry and political strategy.

The fighters led by Kumar, one of Karuna's breakaway commanders, appeared calm as they checked their weapons and ammunition. They boarded tractors taking them and their rocket launchers, grenades and heavy machine-guns to their new defensive line and announced they were closing the road for the night.

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Load-Date: April 10, 2004

Militants launch Internet magazine encouraging women to take up arms

The Associated Press

August 27, 2004, Friday, BC cycle

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Section: International News

Length: 701 words

Byline: By RAWYA RAGEH, Associated Press Writer

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The Associated Press

April 9, 2004, Friday, BC cycle

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Graphic

AP Photos JKD101-106

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Al-Qaeda may recruit women

The Philadelphia Inquirer

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Dateline: WASHINGTON

Body

Recent intelligence has the FBI worried that al-Qaeda may be recruiting and training women to carry out terror attacks, trying to regain an element of surprise for a network thinned by arrests, officials say.

For the first time in the war on terror, the FBI has issued a be-on-the-lookout bulletin for a woman, a Pakistani neurological expert, wanted for questioning in connection with Osama bin Laden's terror network. Analysts also are examining another woman's allegations, made in an Arab newspaper, that bin Laden asked her to open training camps for female terrorists.

Female attackers, successfully used by other groups such as the Palestinian Al Aqsa Martyrs' Brigade, would represent a major tactical shift for al-Qaeda after years of being aligned with the Afghan Taliban regime, which oppressed women and considered them unworthy to participate in an Islamic holy war, officials said.

"The FBI and our partners in the intelligence community are analyzing information around the clock for trends or any indicators that would help us prevent the next terrorist attack," FBI spokesman Mike Kortan said.

Several U.S. intelligence officials said they had no credible information suggesting an imminent attack plan to be carried out by women, but analysts are studying the possibility.

"We're aware it is an option and one that was used recently against the Israelis and could easily be adapted by al-Qaeda," one official said, speaking on condition of anonymity.

Several factors have led the FBI to prepare in the last month for the possibility that al-Qaeda might recruit women.

U.S. officials learned of a mid-March interview in an Arabic-language newspaper in which a woman said al-Qaeda was setting up camps to train women to become martyrs. The woman identified herself as Umm Osama, which translates as "mother of Osama."

Al-Qaeda may recruit women

"We are building a women's structure that will carry out operations that will make the U.S. forget its own name," she told the Asharq al-Awsat newspaper, based in London. She said her job was "to oversee the training of the female mujahedeen affiliated with al-Qaeda and the Taliban."

The woman cited the success of Palestinian female suicide bombers against Israel and Chechen women against Russians as an impetus for al-Qaeda's planning. "The organization thought about this before, but interest increased after the female martyr attacks in Palestine and Chechnya," the woman was quoted as saying.

U.S. officials voiced some suspicions about the interview because it was carried out online using chat rooms and e-mail but said it illustrated that women were considered a viable option for al-Qaeda attacks.

The FBI recently put out a global alert for Aafia Siddiqui, 31, and her estranged husband, Dr. Mohammed Khan, 33. It was the first time in the war on terror that an FBI bulletin sought a woman, officials said.

The FBI said Siddiqui has a doctorate in neurological science and might be in Pakistan. She lived in Boston while at Massachusetts Institute of Technology, where she earned a bachelor's degree in biology in 1995, school spokesman Ken Campbell said yesterday. Brandeis University's Web site lists a student named Aafi Siddiqui who wrote a doctoral thesis on neurological sciences in 2001.

FBI officials said they believed Siddiqui also traveled to the Maryland suburbs of Washington.

FBI officials said they were not alleging that she "is connected to specific terrorist activities" but wanted to question her about possible contacts with people suspected in terrorism.

A third reason to suspect a tactical shift, FBI officials said, is that bin Laden's network has suffered several losses in its senior ranks over the last few months and is aware that documents and interrogations have yielded substantial information about its planning and tactics.

In testimony last week, FBI Director Robert S. Mueller divulged that more than 212 suspected terrorists had been charged with crimes since Sept. 11, 2001, and convictions won against 108 of them. Several were on U.S. soil, officials said.

FBI officials said al-Qaeda had prided itself on devising attacks that catch authorities off guard and might be increasing pressure to turn to women.

The use of women in terrorist attacks is rare but not new.

Palestinian women carried out four suicide bombings in Israel last year. In 1991, the Tamil Tigers group fighting for independence in Sri Lanka used a woman, with explosives strapped to her body, to assassinate former Indian Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi.

Load-Date: July 19, 2005

India's shy spymaster and his 'silent' Kaoboys

New Straits Times (Malaysia)

September 17, 2007 Monday

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Section: Pg. 17; LOCAL

Length: 1012 words

Byline: Mahendra Ved

Body

THE thwarted homecoming of Pakistan's Nawaz Sharif was big news last week. But 15 years ago, as the prime minister, he was supposed to be "in love" with the sister of a Bollywood star. And there hangs a tale.

Both Pakistan and India were agog with rumours. Pakistan's all-powerful Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI) agency issued a secret circular to all public servants warning that its Indian counterpart, the Research and Analysis Wing (R&AW) of the Cabinet Secretariat, was using attractive women for honey traps. It asked them to report to it if any Indian woman approached them. About 50 attractive Indian women had been infiltrated into Punjab (in Pakistan).

There was, perhaps, no basis for the love tale and also none about the intended honey traps. But the episode underlines the hyper-sensitive nature of India-Pakistan relations.

When the lady in question slapped defamation charges against the Indian newspaper that published it, the hot potato was quickly dropped.

The ISI circular leaked out. The Frontier Post of Peshawar wrote a humorous editorial pleading with the R&AW: "Why this partiality to the Punjabis? Why send your attractive women only to them? We Pashtuns also like attractive women. Send us at least 10. Many of us are dying to be honey-trapped by attractive Indian women."

This anecdote is but an aside in an otherwise serious book, the first of its kind by an R&AW official. Founded in utmost secrecy in 1968, the silent service has opened up in recent years, dumping the British MI5 norms and gingerly embracing the American CIA's open culture.

Even so, it is most unusual for a dyed-in-the-wool spy to write a book after spending a lifetime working quietly behind the curtains, not for sleaze or sensation, not to cleanse the self of any guilt, but to speak of the glory and gloom, wisdom and warts behind the working of his organisation.

Bahukutumbi Raman dedicates his memoir, The Kaoboys of R&AW, to his boss, whom he obviously reveres. Rameshwar Nath Kao was a legend in his lifetime. Alexandre de Marenches, the legendary French external intelligence chief, is supposed to have said about Kao: "What a fascinating mix of physical and mental elegance! What accomplishments! What friendships! And yet so shy of talking about himself, his accomplishments and his friends!"

Those working under him were nicknamed the "Kaoboys". But they were no cowboys. Their work was silent, no question of showing off, no tall claims, no weekly appearances on television commenting on every topic under the sky. However, under Kao's leadership, the "boys" managed, among other feats, to free Bangladesh from Pakistan.

India 's shy spymaster and his `silent' Kaoboys

It was R&AW's hour of glory, though Kao's name was hardly known. Raman recalls a function in New Delhi to mark the 25th anniversary of the liberation of Bangladesh. While politicians were speaking, a Bangladeshi gentleman "noticed a tall, handsome and elegant man sitting inconspicuously at the back of the audience. He went and told the man (Kao): `Sir, you should have been sitting at the centre of the dais. You are the man who made 1971 possible.'" Kao, embarrassed at being recognised, quietly left.

If Kao was an exceptional spymaster who organised a well-oiled outfit that had many hits and misses to its credit, Raman too has been dedicated to his profession and to the organisation that he served for 26 years.

By his own admission, the never-married man is used to working long hours in anonymity - he loves his anonymity. Only since his retirement has he begun writing and analysing publicly, never hiding his past as a spymaster.

Raman's work is exceptional because for the first time we get an insider's analysis of the successes and failures of the secretive Indian external intelligence agency. He acknowledges the intelligence agencies' culpability in the assassinations of Indira and Rajiv Gandhi. He reveals less-known facts about a seriously circumspect Indira's quiet, desperate efforts to avoid harsh action against the militants in Punjab, deploying son Rajiv as her envoy. But things did not work out.

After she ordered the army to storm the Golden Temple in Amritsar, the most revered shrine of the Sikhs, Kao, then senior adviser, decided that no Sikhs would be deployed for the PM's close proximity security. When she expressed misgivings, the orders were cancelled. Had Kao stood his ground, the tragedy could have been averted.

In 1991, intelligence agencies knew Rajiv was under threat from Sikh extremists and Sri Lanka's LTTE. Yet nothing was done, on grounds that the law covered the prime minister's but not an ex-PM's security. R&AW's monitoring division was able to track down the conspirators by intercepting and decoding LTTE communications. Had its earlier monitoring been as systematic, Rajiv would have been alive today.

He also acknowledges the indiscipline and corruption in R&AW. Trade unionism led to a strike in 1980 when police had to rescue officers held by the strikers. Nepotism was so common that the agency was facetiously called the Relatives & Associates Wing. Its officers posted abroad lived in style and could afford a Mercedes. "How do they manage to find the money?" asked P.V. Narasimha Rao, then foreign minister.

Raman makes a strong case for parliamentary oversight. He says major debacles like Kargil, when the intelligence agencies failed to detect intrusion by Pakistani forces, could have been pre-empted by a suitable monitoring mechanism for R&AW, on the pattern of the CIA and Mossad. He blames successive political establishments for the apathy to intelligence issues.

The book underlines the fact that an emerging power aspiring to take its place by 2020 among the leading powers of the world has to have an external intelligence agency with the ability "to see, hear, smell and feel far and near".

Such an agency has to have the ability to operate imaginatively and daringly, analyse lucidly, anticipate unfailingly and manage unanticipated crises effectively.

Above all the agency should have the courage to tell the truth as it needs to be told without worrying about the consequences.

Load-Date: September 16, 2007

FBI wary al-Qaida may switch tactics and begin using women in attacks

The Canadian Press (CP)

April 1, 2003 Tuesday

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Section: FOREIGN GENERAL NEWS

Length: 749 words

Byline: BY JOHN SOLOMON

Body

WASHINGTON (AP) _ Recent intelligence has the FBI worried that al-Qaida may be recruiting and training women to carry out terror attacks, trying to regain an element of surprise for a network thinned by arrests, officials say.

The FBI has issued a be-on-the-lookout bulletin for a woman, a Pakistani neurological expert, wanted for questioning in connection with Osama bin Laden's terror network. Analysts are also examining claims made by another woman in an Arab newspaper that she was asked by bin Laden to open training camps for female terrorists.

Female attackers, successfully used by other terror organizations such as the Palestinian Al Aqsa Martyrs' Brigade, would represent a major tactical shift for al-Qaida after years of being aligned with the Afghan Taliban regime that oppressed women and considered them unworthy to participate in an Islamic holy war, officials said.

AP

"The FBI and our partners in the intelligence community are analysing information around the clock for trends or any indicators that would help us prevent the next terrorist attack," FBI spokesman Mike Kortan said.

Several U.S. intelligence officials said they have no credible information suggesting an imminent attack plan to be carried out by women, but analysts are wary of the possibility.

"We're aware it is an option and one that was used recently against the Israelis and could easily be adapted by al-Qaida," one official said, speaking on condition of anonymity.

U.S. officials learned of an interview in mid-March in an Arabic-language newspaper in which a woman claimed al-Qaida was setting up training camps to train women to become martyrs. The woman identified herself as Umm Osama, which translates "mother of Osama."

"We are building a women's structure that will carry out operations that will make the U.S. forget its own name," the woman claimed in the interview with the Asharq al-Awsat newspaper, based in London. The woman said her job was "to oversee the training of the female mujahedeen affiliated with al-Qaida and the Taliban," using the Arabic word for "holy warriors."

The woman cited the success of Palestinian female suicide bombers against Israel and Chechen women against Russians as an impetus for al-Qaida's planning. "The organization thought about this before, but interest increased after the female martyr attacks in Palestine and Chechnya," the woman was quoted as saying.

FBI wary al-Qaida may switch tactics and begin using women in attacks

U.S. officials said they had some suspicions about the interview because it was carried out across the Internet using chat rooms and e-mail, but it illustrated that women are considered a viable option for future al-Qaida attacks.

The FBI recently put out a global alert for 31-year-old Aafia Siddiqui, as well as her estranged husband, Dr. Mohammed Khan, 33. It was the first time an FBI bulletin sought a woman since the war against terror began, officials said.

The FBI said Siddiqui, who has a doctorate in neurological science from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, might be in Pakistan. She lived in Boston while attending MIT, however, and recently travelled to the Maryland suburbs of Washington, the agency said.

FBI officials said they were not alleging she "is connected to specific terrorist activities," but they wanted to question her about possible contacts with people suspected of terrorist activities.

A third reason to suspect a tactical shift, FBI officials said, is that bin Laden's network has suffered several losses in its senior ranks over the last few months and its documents and interrogations have yielded substantial information about its planning and tactics.

In testimony last week, FBI director Robert Mueller divulged that more than 212 suspected terrorists have been charged with crimes since Sept. 11, 2001, and convictions have been won against 108 of them. Several were on U.S. soil and in position to launch attacks, officials said.

FBI officials said al-Qaida has prided itself on devising attacks that catch authorities off guard and may be increasing pressure to turn to women.

The use of women in terrorist attacks is rare but not new.

A handful of young Palestinian women carried out four suicide bombings in Israel last year, foiling the military's security profiling and shaking both the Palestinian and Israeli populations.

In 1991, the Tamil Tigers group fighting for independence in Sri Lanka used a woman, who detonated explosives strapped to her body, to assassinate former Indian prime minister Rajiv Gandhi during a 1991 campaign rally.

Load-Date: April 2, 2003

Bodies of 15 aid workers found in Sri Lanka

Agence France Presse -- English

August 6, 2006 Sunday 5:06 PM GMT

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Length: 418 words

Dateline: COLOMBO, Aug 7 2006

Body

Fifteen local employees of a French aid agency have been found dead in a Sri Lankan town that is at the centre of heavy fighting between Tamil rebels and government forces, an aid group said Sunday.

The bodies of 11 men and four women all wearing Action Against Hunger (ACF) T-shirts were found face down in their office in Muttur, Jeevan Thiagarajah, the head of the main umbrella group for aid agencies in the country, said.

"We don't know how they died or even when it happened," Thiagarajah, from the Consortium for Humanitarian Agencies (CHA), told AFP. "Our staff drove to Muttur this morning and they found the bodies."

The rebel Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) had on Saturday accused the security forces of killing the aid workers, who were all members of Sri Lanka's minority ethnic Tamil community.

Heavy fighting broke out in Muttur and the surrounding northeastern district of Trincomalee last month after the government accused rebels of blocking a sluice gate that provided water to civilians.

The fighting had prevented aid agencies from accessing the Muttur area until Sunday and the CHA statement was the first confirmation that the aid workers had been killed.

French diplomats in Colombo ruled out the possibility of any of their nationals being among the dead, saying there were no French aid workers in the Trincomalee area.

ACF is one of the hundreds of aid agencies that set up operations in Sri Lanka after an Indian Ocean tsunami wiped out much the island's coastal infrastructure and killed an estimated 31,000 people in December 2004.

There was no immediate word from the government about what happened to the aid workers in Muttur after fighting intensified there last Wednesday.

However, the military said it had established full control over the Muslim-majority town over the weekend.

Reporters and photographers who tried to enter Muttur Sunday were turned away by security forces although the military took a group of journalists on a conducted tour under tight security on Saturday evening.

Troops said the guerrillas had shelled the town on Sunday morning.

Bodies of 15 aid workers found in Sri Lanka

The fighting erupted on July 26 when war planes bombed suspected Tiger positions in a bid to force the rebels to lift their blockade of an irrigation canal that was denying water to some 15,000 farming families downstream.

Heavy fighting since has claimed the lives of at least 425 people by official count. The military has also accused the Tiger rebels of massacring 100 Muslim residents, a charge denied by the guerrillas.

Load-Date: August 7, 2006

End of Document

Terror conference opens in Sri Lanka as fighting in north claims 13 more Tamil rebel lives

Associated Press International

October 18, 2007 Thursday 5:56 PM GMT

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Section: INTERNATIONAL NEWS

Length: 405 words

Byline: By KRISHAN FRANCIS, Associated Press Writer

Dateline: COLOMBO Sri Lanka

Body

Sri Lanka's government opened an international conference on combatting terrorism Thursday, as the military said it killed at least 13 more Tamil insurgents in fierce fighting in the island's north.

Opening the conference, Foreign Minister Rohitha Bogollagama told delegates that the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam rebels, who have been fighting for an independent homeland since 1983, have connections with armed groups around the world.

"One must be conscious that helping combat the **LTTE**, foreign governments are not only helping Sri Lanka but also acting on their own self interest," Bogollagama said.

Earlier Thursday a clash broke out after rebels attacked soldiers stationed in Periyathampanai in northern Vavuniya district, the Defense Ministry information center said. Thirteen rebels were killed and soldiers recovered seven bodies, while 10 rebels and six soldiers were wounded in the clash.

Rebel spokesman Rasiah Ilanthirayan could not be contacted for comment.

A sea battle also broke out before dawn on Thursday when patrolling naval crafts attempted to check several suspicious boats off the coast of Mannar district, according to a Defense Ministry official.

Five rebel boats then attacked, said the officer on condition of anonymity, as he was not authorized to speak to the media.

Troops later found a damaged boat with four bodies which had yet to be identified, said the officer. The navy did not suffer any casualties.

Pro-rebel Puthinam Web site quoting a **female** survivor identified only as Pushpamalar reported the four dead were civilians killed by naval fire as they attempted to flee fighting.

Scores of ethnic minority Tamils have crossed the narrow Palk Strait and reached the southern Indian state of Tamil Nadu in recent years. Home to 56 million Tamils, many Sri Lankans have familial and cultural ties to the Indian state.

Terror conference opens in Sri Lanka as fighting in north claims 13 more Tamil rebel lives

Tamil rebels maintain a significant naval force that they use for attacks and to smuggle weapons into areas they control in parts of northern Sri Lanka.

A Norwegian-brokered cease-fire in 2002 brought relative calm to the country, but a new wave of violence that began in December 2005 has killed more than 5,000 people and displaced hundreds of thousands.

More than 70,000 people have been killed since the insurgency began in 1983.

Despite the cease-fire's collapse, neither side has officially withdrawn from the pact, fearing international isolation.

On the Web:

<http://www.puthinam.com>

Load-Date: October 19, 2007

End of Document

FLETCHER SCHOOL'S PAULA BROADWELL DISCUSSES GROWING ROLE OF WOMEN IN TERRORISM

US States News

December 14, 2006 Thursday 6:03 AM EST

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Length: 495 words

Byline: US States News

Dateline: SOMERVILLE, Mass.

Body

Tufts University issued the following press release:

Increasingly, women are becoming involved in terrorist activities from suicide bombings to transporting supplies. As female membership in terrorist organizations grows, one expert from Tufts University's Fletcher School wrote in a Boston Globe op-ed that policymakers and counterterrorism officials should be aware of the powerful role women can play - both behind enemy lines and in the fight against terrorism.

"Organizations have several tactical reasons to use women," Paula Broadwell, deputy director of the Jebson Center for Counter-Terrorism Studies at The Fletcher School, wrote in the Globe. "Because women are stereotyped as nonviolent, they might elicit less attention and thus execute a stealthier attack; there are also inherent sensitivities in searching or questioning a woman, especially in many conservative Muslim societies."

In several terrorist groups, Broadwell noted, women already play integral roles. "Female suicide terrorism is not new," she wrote, adding that Al Qaeda, Hamas, the Palestinian Islamic Jihad, the Sri Lankan Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) and the Chechen Black Widows all have female members - many of whom have attempted or succeeded in carrying out suicide bombings.

Aside from suicide bombings, there many other terrorism-related activities in which women take part.

"Other areas of involvement include: opening bank accounts under a maiden name to evade suspicion by counter-terrorism financing experts, raising money for terror groups through charity functions, and transporting supplies and information past airport security officers focused on Arab men," Broadwell wrote in the newspaper. She urged experts and policymakers to take note.

"When counterterrorism experts estimate their opponents' capabilities and techniques, it behooves them to think about what is happening in the women's locker room," she wrote in the Globe. "Equally as important, we should strive to give Muslim women across the globe other outlets for empowerment and the opportunity to contribute to countering terrorism in their societies."

According to Broadwell, "women from Western societies," including the United States, can join in the fight against terrorism, as well.

FLETCHER SCHOOL'S PAULA BROADWELL DISCUSSES GROWING ROLE OF WOMEN IN TERRORISM

"We should incorporate more women in our intelligence fields who might more stealthily get behind enemy lines to gather information," she wrote in the Globe.

Broadwell added that a number of researchers, including her colleagues at the Jebson Center for Counter-Terrorism Studies, "are working hard to understand women's role in terrorism and counter terrorism." She noted that Fletcher students Jennie Dow, Ahmed Humayun, Katherine E. Pattillo are involved in research in this area, as well.

"We hope that the U.S. government is too," Broadwell wrote in the Globe.

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

Load-Date: January 16, 2007

End of Document

Separatists kill 64 in Sri Lanka bus bombing; Government hits rebel areas with retaliatory airstrikes as cease-fire unravels

Telegraph Herald (Dubuque, IA)

June 16, 2006 Friday

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Section: NATIONAL/WORLD; Pg. a8

Length: 419 words

Byline: ASSOCIATED PRESS

Dateline: KABITHIGOLLEWA, Sri Lanka

Body

Suspected Tamil separatists attacked a crowded bus Thursday, triggering a pair of hidden bombs that killed at least 64 people - the worst violence since a 2002 cease-fire began unraveling in recent months.

With peace talks largely abandoned, the attack edged this tropical island nation off India's southern tip further toward all-out war in a conflict that killed 65,000 people before the truce. The government quickly launched retaliatory airstrikes on rebel areas.

The dead included at least 15 children, their blue school uniforms coated with blood and gore as authorities laid out corpses at a hospital in the island's north so relatives could identify them. At least 78 people were wounded in the attack.

The rebels, a well-armed movement that began fighting in 1983 to create an independent homeland for the ethnic Tamil minority, denied responsibility for the attack. They suggested it was done by shadowy forces they accused of trying to create unrest.

But Sri Lanka's government, which is dominated by the majority Sinhalese, insisted rebels of the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam movement were responsible.

"This is a barbaric act of the LTTE," said government spokesman Keheliya Rambukwella. "Their aim is to provoke a backlash."

The bus was blown up with a pair of land mines hung from a tree and detonated by remote control, said a military spokesman, Brig. Prasad Samarasinghe. Rigging bombs to trees or bicycles is a common rebel tactic, so the ground does not absorb much of the blast, officials say.

Police said most of the victims were Sinhalese, the group the rebels accuse of discriminating against Tamils.

Officials said many passengers were headed to the funeral of a policeman killed Monday in another attack blamed on rebels.

Thursday afternoon, the wrecked yellow bus still lay on its side as heavily armed soldiers stood nearby. The roof of the bus was stained with blood. Shoes, a mobile phone and women's purses were scattered around.

Separatists kill 64 in Sri Lanka bus bombing Government hits rebel areas with retaliatory airstrikes as cease-fire unravels

At the hospital, relatives wept.

"They are all gone," screamed Bandula Gamini, who lost his wife, son and mother-in-law in the blast.

Gamini said he was standing three rows behind his family when "there was this blast and I recall being trapped." He was pulled from the bus by two policemen.

In Washington, State Department spokesman Sean McCormack said the United States condemned the attack and called for resumed negotiations. "This vicious attack bears all the hallmarks of the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam," and violates the cease-fire agreement, he said.

Load-Date: June 16, 2006

End of Document

SRI LANKA: UN EMERGENCY RELIEF COORDINATOR CALLS ON BOTH SIDES TO GRANT AID ACCESS

States News Service

March 14, 2007 Wednesday

Copyright 2007 States News Service

Length: 453 words

Byline: States News Service

Dateline: New York

Body

The following information was released by the United Nations:

The United Nations Emergency Relief Coordinator today called on both sides in strife-torn Sri Lanka to allow humanitarian assistance to get through to those civilians trapped on the frontlines, while also highlighting the plight of over 130,000 people in the east of the island forced to flee their homes because of the recent upsurge in fighting.

"I am extremely concerned that tens of thousands of civilians have had to flee their homes once again in eastern Sri Lanka due to the new escalation in violence. I appeal to both parties in the conflict to respect the lives of the civilians in accordance with international humanitarian law," said Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs John Holmes.

"My main worry at the moment is for the civilians who have been unable to leave the conflict zones. The UN agencies are unable to operate in frontline areas and therefore cannot help the civilians living there," he said. "All parties to the Sri Lanka conflict must grant access to humanitarian agencies so that they can help those trapped in the crossfire."

Mr. Holmes met with the Foreign Minister of Sri Lanka in New York on 13 March to discuss the situation.

The eastern district of Batticaloa is now sheltering over 130,000 internally displaced persons (IDPs), the highest number in the country, and large numbers continue to escape the fighting between the Government and the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (***LTTE***), which has been going on for over 20 years despite a ceasefire signed in 2002.

In addition to problems with access for emergency aid, there is also very limited funding, the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) said, adding that the most urgent need at the moment is food. The UN World Food Programme (WFP) reports that it does not have the additional in-country stocks for all the IDPs now in Batticaloa.

Other priority areas include shelter, water and sanitation, and Mr. Holmes stressed the need for more international assistance.

"The needs of persons internally displaced by conflict are especially acute. While I welcome the contributions made thus far - by Italy, Sweden, and the United States, as well as Australia, Canada, ECHO [European Commission

SRI LANKA : UN EMERGENCY RELIEF COORDINATOR CALLS ON BOTH SIDES TO GRANT AID ACCESS

Humanitarian Aid department], and Switzerland and the pledges of others - they represent only a fraction of the funds needed to help people in a timely fashion."

At the moment, the aid community is assisting close to 600,000 displaced persons in Sri Lanka - those displaced by the previous conflict and the 2004 tsunami disaster, including those forced to flee in recent months. **Women** and children are particularly vulnerable in the current environment.

Load-Date: March 15, 2007

End of Document

French NGO probing killing of 15 aid workers in Sri Lanka

Agence France Presse -- English

August 7, 2006 Monday 1:53 AM GMT

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Length: 418 words

Dateline: COLOMBO, Aug 7 2006

Body

A French aid agency said it was trying to find out who shot dead 15 of its employees in northern Sri Lanka but that government troops had sealed off the scene of the massacre.

The bodies of 11 men and four women all wearing Action Against Hunger (ACF) T-shirts were found face-down in their office on Sunday in the town of Muttur, close to heavy fighting between troops and Tamil Tiger rebels.

The rebels have accused the security forces of killing the aid workers, who were all members of Sri Lanka's minority ethnic Tamil community.

Benoit Miribel, the director general of Action Against Hunger (ACF), said his organisation was stunned by the killings which were unprecedented in the organisation's 25-year history.

"We are trying to send a team to find out what is going on in this area," Miribel told AFP in Paris. "But soldiers have prevented us from entering the town which remains completely sealed off."

He said the organisation urgently wanted "to go to our offices there to retrieve the bodies and carry out an investigation to find out who was responsible."

Miribel said ACF, which has nearly 250 staff in Sri Lanka working on tsunami relief programs, had no plans to leave the troubled northeast.

Heavy fighting broke out in Muttur and the surrounding northeastern district of Trincomalee last month after the government accused the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) of blocking a key waterway.

The fighting prevented aid agencies from accessing the Muttur area.

ACF is one of the hundreds of aid agencies that set up operations in Sri Lanka after an Indian Ocean tsunami wiped out much of the island's coastal infrastructure and killed an estimated 31,000 people in December 2004.

There was no immediate word from the government about what happened to the aid workers in Muttur after fighting intensified there last Wednesday.

However, the military said it had established full control over the Muslim-majority town over the weekend.

French NGO probing killing of 15 aid workers in Sri Lanka

Reporters and photographers who tried to enter Muttur Sunday were turned away by security forces. Troops said the guerrillas had shelled the town on Sunday morning.

The fighting erupted on July 26 when war planes bombed suspected Tiger positions in a bid to force the rebels to lift their blockade of an irrigation canal that was denying water to some 15,000 farming families downstream.

Heavy fighting since has claimed the lives of at least 425 people. The military has also accused the Tiger rebels of killing 100 Muslim residents, a charge denied by the guerrillas.

Load-Date: August 7, 2006

End of Document

On death row for Rajiv murder, but studying

Indo-Asian News Service

May 21, 2005 Saturday 1:44 PM EST

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Length: 433 words

Byline: Indo-Asian News Service

Dateline: Chennai

Body

Chennai, May 21 -- Life behind bars has not stopped three men on death row and a woman under life sentence - all over former premier Rajiv Gandhi's killing - from studying, thanks to the Indira Gandhi National Open University (IGNOU).

IGNOU, a pioneer in distance education, has changed the lives of prisoners throughout India by taking higher education to as many as 30 jails across the country.

Santhan, one of the two Sri Lankan Tamils sentenced to death for the Gandhi killing, even started a magazine called 'Sripukal' in jail, IGNOU officials say. He is interested in literature.

The two other men linked to Gandhi's assassination who are studying under IGNOU programmes are Murugan, a Sri Lankan, and Perarivalan, an Indian.

Murugan's wife S. Nalini, who is under life imprisonment at the Vellore jail, has now graduated from to a master's course.

"Most of the prisoners prefer to pursue programmes like a certificate in food and nutrition, which is very popular as they can start a food stall and earn a living," S. Kishore, IGNOU deputy director for the southern region, told IANS.

Nalini is pursuing a post-graduate programme in computer application.

A suicide bomber from the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (**LTTE**) blew up Gandhi at an election rally near Chennai on May 21, 1991.

The certificate courses in computing too are popular as people can get job opportunities in data and call centres once they are free, Kishore says.

Courses in sustainable development, SHG (self-help group) creation and rural development too are offered in prisons.

This year as many as 500 prisoners across Tamil Nadu are pursuing IGNOU courses. The counselling, practicals and examinations are conducted inside the prison by IGNOU.

Prison superintendents are coordinators for the programmes. IGNOU teams teach the courses in special study centres in the prisons.

On death row for Rajiv murder, but studying

In Tamil Nadu, the central prison in Coimbatore was the first to house an IGNOU study centre in 1999.

Soon after, the university set up six special study centres in central prisons in Tamil Nadu, extending distance education to more than 300 inmates.

"With a success story from Coimbatore, the government granted permission to set up our study centres in central prisons at Vellore, Salem, Tiruchi and Madurai. One was set up at the special prison for women at Vellore", IGNOU regional director K. Soundaravalli says.

"Many inmates have achieved distinction," she says. "They do not have anything else to do, the best thing they can do is study."

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Load-Date: May 22, 2005

'Going to take a long time': The tsunami one year later: Sri Lanka

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

December 24, 2005 Saturday

National Edition

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Byline: Peter Goodspeed, National Post

Body

As dusk descends on Sri Lanka on Monday, tens of thousands of people will go to the island's beaches to mourn.

At 7 p.m., they will light more than 40,000 lanterns, creating a halo of light around the entire coastline in commemoration of the 35,322 people who died in last year's tsunami.

The paper lanterns, made by female tsunami survivors, will each carry the words "In Loving Memory" and the name of one of those who died.

An additional stencil on the lanterns declares, "We remember and we care."

In Sri Lanka, an island that has known the sorrow of war for more than a generation, the Dec. 26 tsunami still haunts with a terror all its own.

Where two decades of bloody civil war left nearly 65,000 dead in Sri Lanka, almost half that many died in less than 10 minutes when the Boxing Day tsunami roared ashore.

In a matter of seconds, more than 500,000 people were left homeless and 150,000 lost their livelihoods -- nearly 80% of the island's fishing fleet was destroyed and more than 4,200 hectares of farmland were inundated and damaged by salt water.

The tsunami affected a staggering 80% of the coastline, wrecking village after village and life after life.

A year later, people are still struggling to cope.

Tens of thousands live in temporary refugee camps waiting for government aid or help to rebuild their homes. Only about 5,000 of the 80,000 new permanent homes that are needed have been built.

"There is an odd air of normalcy," says Alison Cohen, a volunteer who travelled to Sri Lanka this summer for Ve'ahavta, the Canadian Jewish Emergency and Relief Committee.

"Hotels and guest houses are running again, stores and offices have reopened and most schools are operating. But off the main roads, you come across countless refugee camps where people have only temporary shelter."

'Going to take a long time': The tsunami one year later: Sri Lanka

"They are wood and metal structures," she adds. "And some of them are pretty pitiful. They don't have windows; some of them don't have enough ablution blocks. They are very, very basic. Some don't even have mattresses on the floor."

These makeshift settlements evoke memories of the displaced-persons camps in Europe after the Second World War, she says.

"[Rebuilding] is going to take a long time," she adds sadly. "The world doesn't understand that. It is going to take a long time."

The construction of permanent shelters has also been hindered in the war-torn northeast by continuing tensions between the government in Colombo and Tamil rebels of the separatist Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE).

Their failure to reach an accord on doling out foreign aid slowed the process in parts of the country for nearly six months.

Relief ultimately reached the survivors through non-governmental organizations, but even now that progress is threatened by a fresh conflict.

Peace talks between the government and the LTTE have been deadlocked since April, 2003. Today, a rising tide of attacks and counterattacks threatens the shaky three-year-old truce.

Elsewhere, bureaucracy and the massive impact of the tsunami's devastation have slowed reconstruction.

"Just sorting out where people are going to live takes time," says Dave Toycen, president of World Vision Canada. "In many cases, the land they lived on is either gone or it's so dangerous they can't live there any more."

In normal times, Sri Lanka builds about 8,000 new homes a year; 10 times that many are needed now, he says.

"But, at the same time, significant numbers of the actual builders and carpenters died in the tsunami. You have reduced skill levels and material shortages. All those things have conspired to make this very complicated."

Still, progress is being made, in part as a result of an unprecedented level of compassion and generosity from around the world, and in part from a silent determination by Sri Lankans to rebuild their lives.

Despite the devastation of the disaster, the island's economy grew by 5.6% in 2005. Tourism has bounced back and 90% of the fishing boats that were lost or destroyed have been replaced or repaired.

More than 95% of school-age children in tsunami-affected areas have returned to their classrooms.

"Mired in figures all year, measuring our success in hundreds and thousands of shelters constructed, houses built, boats and nets distributed and livelihoods restored, it is easy to lose sight of the small achievements being accomplished on an individual basis," says Miguel Bermeo, the resident co-ordinator for UN relief projects in Sri Lanka.

"Communities of ordinary and extraordinary people bore the brunt of this tragedy. They endured immeasurable losses but they are not victims. They are succeeding in turning their lives around and moving forward."

In Sri Lanka, as in the rest of tsunami-ravaged South Asia, international relief efforts have saved lives and offered survivors new hope.

Foreign governments and private donors have promised more than US\$4-billion in reconstruction relief across South Asia, while volunteers continue to travel to the region to help.

Just this month, the Federation of Canadian Municipalities sent municipal experts to four devastated areas of Sri Lanka to rebuild sewage and drainage systems and to help in public health, land use planning and emergency management.

'Going to take a long time': The tsunami one year later: Sri Lanka

Immediately after the disaster, 150 Canadian municipalities volunteered to rebuild tsunami-ruined communities.

"In many ways this was an innocent disaster," Mr. Toycen says. "It was totally an issue of nature rather than, say, fighting or war."

"I believe that with the onset of 9/11 and all the concerns about terrorism and the tightening up of security everywhere in the world, it made us more defensive and encouraged a tendency to retreat into ourselves," he adds. "It created a kind of fear and suspicion."

"It seemed to me this disaster drew something out of the Canadian public, where people wanted to say, 'I want to stand for something that is right. I want to reach out to someone in need. I'm not going to be fearful. I'm going to be generous and I'm going to be part of something that makes a positive statement about us as human beings.' "

Graphic

Black & White

Photo: Paula Bronstein, Getty Images; D. Nagahawath, 70, stands outside his tent where he lives with four members of his family in Galle, Sri Lanka. They are waiting for the government to tell them where to move.

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End of Document

Sri Lanka - a land in ruin

The New Zealand Herald

March 15, 2003 Saturday

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Byline: By TIM ELLIOTT

Body

SRI LANKA - If I had to pick an incident that best sums up Sri Lanka, it would be the day the monks beat up the peaceniks. It was just after midday during the hottest part of the year, and the heat hung in the streets, pungent and dizzying. Colombo's canals, polluted at the best of times, glowed iridescent emerald, and the air danced with clouds of diesel and dust.

The protesters were out in numbers, hundreds of thousands joining hands to form a human chain that snaked through the city in a gesture of peace and reconciliation. The initial stage in an ongoing campaign called Sri Lanka First, the action was aimed at encouraging the Government to re-enter talks with the *Tamil Tigers*.

The march went without incident until the end, when part of the Sri Lanka First crowd came face to face with a mob from Sinhala Urumaya (SU), a militant clique of hardline Buddhists. For the ultra-nationalist SU, any hint of reconciliation with the separatists was a betrayal of everything that a unified Sri Lanka stood for. Egged on by the monks, their heads shaved and brandishing black umbrellas, a group of SU goons charged the protesters, punching and kicking, shrieking abuse as they tore up their placards. In the end, it took a group of riot police to restore order. The peace advocates, however, were cowed, huddled in shopfronts and peering round corners. Nearby, a young monk stood quietly, hands clasped in prayer, his face a picture of repose.

As chairman of the Sri Lanka Tourism Board, it is Renton de Alwis' job to attract visitors to this country, much of which has been comprehensively trashed by almost two decades of war. With his high-wattage smile and laser-beam stare, Alwis is perhaps the most relentlessly positive man I have ever met, which is just as well.

"An awful incident, just awful," he says, shaking his head in an uncharacteristically pensive moment.

"I'm a born optimist," said de Alwis, offering me a salver of sweet tea and cakes. "Out of the war will come opportunity, the chance to restructure. You will see."

Sri Lanka is going to need a lot more people like Renton de Alwis.

The island has been devastated by a war between the Sinhalese Government and the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (aka the *Tamil Tigers*), the stop-at-nothing guerrilla army which has been battling to liberate the mainly Hindu Tamil minority from the domination of the mostly Buddhist Sinhalese. The war killed 64,000 people and displaced more than a million.

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In late 2001, however, the Tigers managed to wrest a ceasefire from the newly elected Government of Ranil Wickremesinghe. The ceasefire led to peace talks, the results of which have proved better than anyone expected, with both sides making significant concessions .

The Tigers finally agreed to give up their long-held demand for a separate state, instead calling for "internal self-determination based on a federal structure within a united Sri Lanka".

The Government, for its part, has agreed to cede a substantial measure of autonomy to the Tamils, the exact nature of which is to be determined at the next round of talks, to be held in Japan starting next week.

Tensions remain. The Sri Lankan Navy sank a Tamil Tiger rebel ship suspected of smuggling weapons this week, killing 11 on board after an exchange of fire off the island's northeast coast that also wounded four sailors.

The incident was the second at sea in the past two months, but hopes for a permanent end to the fighting are still high.

Peace or no peace, Wickremesinghe has inherited a land in ruin. It is no longer possible to cross the country by train (warring parties ripped up the tracks years ago), and many of the main roads are in chronic disrepair. Large swathes of countryside are heavily mined, with locals getting injured almost daily as they move in to reclaim land.

The capital city, Colombo, is a noisy, smog-choked morass of slums, traffic jams and army roadblocks; a city of neglect and corruption where, as one local told me, "you can't even get your rubbish collected unless you bribe the garbage man".

But rebuilding roads and railways will be simple compared to repairing the nation's soul. Medecins Sans Frontieres (MSF) recently released a report which showed that thousands of Sri Lankan refugees living in Government-run camps, known as welfare centres, were suffering severe mental trauma.

Almost everyone in the camps had lost property or a house, and many faced starvation. Eighty-seven per cent of the people said that they still felt threatened. Not surprisingly, the suicide rate in the camps (where one out of every 100 people kill themselves) is three times the national average.

Many of the worst-affected people remain beyond the reach of the Government, or the NGOs.

"Many of the war veterans, from both sides, live in remote villages," says Dr Garnesha, the sole psychiatrist at the hospital in Batticaloa, a predominantly Tamil town on the island's east coast. "Often they can't access treatment, and even when they can, they are reluctant to, because there is a huge stigma attached to being seen as mentally ill."

As the only psychiatrist for 180km, Garnesha can barely cope with the non-conflict-related illnesses, let alone the torture victims, the displaced, and, of course, the child soldiers. He does not encourage war victims to come in for treatment, claiming he would be "overrun".

The problem of child soldiers is huge. The Government has always accused the Tigers of using previous truces to recruit and regroup, often forcibly conscripting children, some as young as 10. This time is no different. The Government has repeatedly called on the Tigers to "desist from recruiting child combatants", many of whom are trained as Black Tigers, or suicide bombers, one of the Tigers' most effective weapons during the war.

In an interview in Tiger-held territory, a commander called Karikalan, the guerrillas' political number three, once explained the use of such tactics.

He scoffed at the suggestion that the Tigers forced their fighters to become suicide bombers. "You cannot force people to blow themselves up," he said.

"To become Black Tigers, our cadre must apply in writing to our leader, Mr Velupillai Prabhakaran. He then goes through the applications, looking at the applicant's particular skills, the kinds of missions he or she has been

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involved in, their motivations and their family situation. Are they an only son or daughter? Do they have dependents? All these things are considered, after which the applicant is told whether he can become a Black Tiger."

The Tigers carried out 217 suicide attacks since 1983, in the process assassinating two heads of state: Indian Prime Minister Rajiv Ghandi, in 1991, and Sri Lankan President Ranasinghe Premadasa, in 1993. Ever inventive, they always adapted their methods to stay ahead of the security forces. When male bombers began to get caught, the Tigers trained females, whom, they reasoned, Sri Lankan police would be more reluctant to frisk.

When women became subject to suspicion, the Tigers simply concocted better methods of concealment, such as the "Bikini Bomb" - a denim pouch, packed with explosives, which folds up and between the legs.

The bombing campaign might be over now, but it has profoundly traumatised both sides of the conflict. "It caused great uncertainty, fear and terror in the Sinhalese population," says Dr Daya Somasundaram, head of psychiatry at the University of Jaffna, and himself a Tamil. "It also brutalised the Tamil community, and made them insensitive."

Because the majority of Tiger conscripts are from low-caste backgrounds (wealthier Tamils tend to emigrate, or send their children abroad), Tamil society has effectively been bankrupted.

Such issues will make rebuilding the country long and complex. Much will depend on the attitude of Sri Lanka's small but powerful elite. "Many people, both in and out of uniform, made lots of money through the war," one military analyst told me. "They have much to lose should the ceasefire hold."

Dr Somasundaram agrees. "Some people feel threatened by peace, particularly those in the military. Their whole lives have been spent in the war."

One of Prime Minister Wickremesinghe's biggest challenges will be to convince such people that they have more to gain out of peace than they do from war. For this he will need the co-operation of President Chandrika Kumaratunga, his long-time political nemesis.

Kumaratunga has promised to work in a spirit of "cohabitation" but is still capable of wrecking any deal if she feels the Tigers are getting away with too much. She was nearly killed by a suicide bomber in 1999. (The attack left her blind in one eye.)

The culture of rumour and distrust still thrives in Sri Lanka. Stay any length of time and you will hear the most outlandish things: that the Tigers used prisoners as living blood banks, holding them in pens hooked up to IV units where they are milked daily like cows; that the President is a drunkard who, at the drop of a hat, absconds on Government helicopters to private islands with her toy boy and crate loads of Scotch.

"If there was a competition to see who could throw the biggest rock at the President," said one guest at a dinner party in Colombo, "I would be the first in line."

Public opinion polls suggest that upwards of 80 per cent of people support the peace process, but building a sense of inclusion and shared destiny is another matter. As my Tamil translator explained, "I don't want to kill Sinhalese. I don't have the stomach for violence. But neither do I feel a part of their country. When the national anthem is played here, I feel nothing. It is meaningless to me."

For some, however, the truce has already proved its worth. "Going by the average death toll of the past couple of years, many thousands of lives have been saved due to the current ceasefire," says political analyst Jehan Perera. "This of itself is an achievement."

In the meantime, people are making the most of the relative calm. On Galle Face Green, a boulevard fronting the Indian Ocean, couples wander arm in arm, boys play cricket, vendors sell drinks and snacks. An evening storm is brewing, and the air is thick with the promise of rain. Yet no one looks ready to leave. They are too busy enjoying the night.

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End of Document

M.I.A. ready to shake up hip-hop scene with second LP

University Wire

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Dateline: AUSTIN, Texas

Body

In an era when hip-hop is fast becoming a vapid art form obsessed with money, fame, violence and women, it's comforting that brilliant artists like Maya "M.I.A." Arulpragasam still find some degree of success. Once a socially conscious and political means of expression, rap has been manipulated into a pale parody of itself by institutions like MTV, BET and a new generation of rappers more concerned with their Bentleys than the current state of world affairs. However, seeing artists like M.I.A. make albums like her brilliant new "Kala" brings hope to what otherwise might swiftly be becoming a stagnant musical genre. M.I.A. doesn't just exist in the misogynist and often racist world of modern hip-hop; she thrives, and her post-modern amalgamation of electro, grime and rap screams of revolution and war against the modern era of hip-hop.

Truly a fascinating character, M.I.A. was born in London but moved to Sri Lanka with her family when she was only six months old. Of Tamil origin (a Sri Lankan ethnic group), her father was involved with the violent militant organization the Tamil Tigers during Sri Lanka's bloody civil war. During this time, young Maya was shuffled among the island, India and the U.K., at times living in a mud hut with little food or water. Eventually her family settled back in London as political refugees.

Living a diasporic life away from her home country and unable to fit in, M.I.A. turned to music, and it was then that her affinity for artists like Public Enemy and Big Daddy Kane began. Eventually M.I.A. attended Central Saint Martins College of Art and Design in London, where she studied art and film. M.I.A.'s subsequent artwork reflects her revolutionary upbringing as well as her south London influences, foreshadowing her music's mixture of sounds by combining bright graffiti art with Tamil Tiger propaganda. Commissioned by Elastica's Justine Frischmann to draw the cover art for the band's second album, M.I.A. followed Elastica on tour, where supporting artist Peaches introduced her to electronic music.

Over the next year, M.I.A. crafted the album "Arular," named for her father's Tamil Tiger code name. Tracks like "Galang" and "Sunshowers" soon struck a chord with music executives, who saw the power of cool beats mixed with M.I.A.'s revolutionary message. "Arular" was released in March 2005 and quickly sent M.I.A. to the top of critics' lists for album of the year. Much like M.I.A. herself, the album features influences from all over the world, from Jamaican slang to Spanish art.

Controversy followed M.I.A. relentlessly during this time, as MTV refused to air the video for "Sunshowers" due to its mention of support for the PLO, and numerous visa problems kept M.I.A. from performing in the U.S. M.I.A. has gone on to say that her visa problems were a blessing in disguise, as they forced her to go elsewhere to produce her follow-up, "Kala," as opposed to collaborating with only top U.S. hip-hop producers.

M.I.A. ready to shake up hip-hop scene with second LP

2006 saw M.I.A. back in the studio recording with help from artists such as Diplo, Switch and Timbaland. Sampling artists from the Clash to New Order to the Pixies, as well as being recorded everywhere from the slums of Jamaica to the deepest regions of Africa, "Kala" (named after M.I.A.'s mother) showcases a definite step forward in M.I.A.'s quest to take over the music world.

Already being hailed as the top record of 2007 by several music blogs, "Kala" is to "Arular" what "The Bends" was to "Pablo Honey" -- such a massive step forward that it would not have seemed possible when listening to the first album. More political, more confrontational and more musical than her last album, "Kala" shows that M.I.A. is clearly just getting started. This begs the question: Can a Sri Lankan woman raised in south London, the daughter of militants, really hope to break into the charts in a male-centric hip-hop world that seems to have no place for politics?

If there's any woman who can do it, it's M.I.A. Having already taken notoriously elitist music blog Pitchfork Media to task by confronting them on their misogynist and inaccurate reporting, M.I.A. is ready to take on the world. And with new tracks like "20 Dollar" and "Paper Planes" challenging everything hip-hop has represented in the past decade, she'll need that strong will. Ultimately, it's incredibly refreshing to see a brilliant artist try something new and revolutionary.

And who better to do it than an actual revolutionary?

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UN EXPERT EMPHASIZES SUSTAINABLE AND DURABLE SOLUTIONS FOR SRI LANKA'S INTERNALLY DISPLACED PERSONS

States News Service

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Body

The following information was released by the United Nations:

The Representative of the Secretary-General on the Human Rights of Internally Displaced Persons, Walter Klin, concluded an eight-day mission to Sri Lanka, which he conducted from 14 to 21 December, at the invitation of the Government.

"Sri Lanka, with the crucial support of the international community, has not only rehabilitated the majority of victims of the 2004 tsunami, but also made considerable efforts to assist those displaced since the escalation of hostilities in 2006. Indeed, the majority of the more than 220,000 persons who had to flee their homes in the Eastern Province between April 2006 and March 2007 have returned, been provided with transitional shelter, and are beginning to regain their former lives. While I appreciate what has been achieved, targeted measures in line with international human rights standards and the United Nations Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement in the areas of security, livelihoods, and humanitarian access are essential if these returns are to be sustainable in both the near and long-term." This is the key conclusion of the Representative of the Secretary-General on the Human Rights of Internally Displaced Persons, Walter Klin, following his mission to the island.

In addition to meeting with ministers, government officials, members of civil society and the international community in Colombo, the Representative visited areas in Puttalam, Vavuniya, Trincomalee and Batticaloa districts. The Representative regretted that he was unable to visit Kilinochchi to discuss humanitarian and protection concerns with the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (**LTTE**). In the regions visited, he met with internally displaced persons (IDPs) and returnees, community and religious leaders, government agents and local security commanders, members of local and international non-governmental organizations and United Nations agencies.

The Representative stressed the primary responsibility of the Government of Sri Lanka for protecting and assisting IDPs, a responsibility that includes facilitating the conditions that enable durable solutions for the displaced. In this regard, he noted the complexity of the problem of internal displacement in Sri Lanka. In addition to recent conflict-induced displacement of the past 24 months, in Puttalam for example, northern Muslims have remained in displacement for 17 years. Situations of protracted displacement also exist in Vavuniya and Jaffna, and smaller numbers of tsunami IDPs remain in the Eastern Province. In addition, fresh displacement is occurring in Mannar and other parts of the North.

Despite the diversity of circumstances, Mr. Klin identified several key issues affecting all of the IDP and returnee communities with whom he met. The predominant concern among IDPs is physical security. The Representative

UN EXPERT EMPHASIZES SUSTAINABLE AND DURABLE SOLUTIONS FOR SRI LANKA 'S INTERNALLY DISPLACED PERSONS

was struck by a pervasive sense of fear and uncertainty among those he spoke. Sources of insecurity are varied, but include the following: continued incursions and attacks by the LTTE; disappearances, abductions and looting; threats and attacks upon individuals by irregular and armed groups such as the Tamil Makkal Viduthalaip Puligal (TMVP), including infiltration of camps at night; incomplete or delayed mine-clearance; approaches used by security forces in response to security incidents, including roundups, methods to identify suspects, and detention of individuals without proper notification of family members of the reasons for and location of the individual's detention; challenges of civilian police to respond adequately and in a timely manner to security incidents and threats against IDPs; and limitations on IDPs' and returnees' freedom of movement based on screening and documentation of their place of origin. While clearly acknowledging legitimate security concerns and the responsibility of the State to address these concerns, the Representative observed that whole communities felt under suspicion and at risk, often due to identification of their place of origin in formerly LTTE-controlled areas. When debriefing the Government, the Representative noted and strongly welcomed important confidence-building measures, such as efforts to recruit local and Tamil-speaking civilian police and the appointment of civil-military liaison officers. Furthermore, he noted the importance of restoring confidence between the different ethnic communities in return areas.

Access to livelihoods is a second major concern of IDPs and returnees. "At times there is a tension between the security imperative and the humanitarian imperative, and the key is in finding the optimal balance which allows people to live in both dignity and safety," the Representative observed. Mr. Klin found that significant restrictions remain, and he encouraged authorities to continue their efforts to restore full access to livelihoods. Some restrictions are imposed by the authorities, such as limitations on access to fields or fishing grounds. Others are related to insecurity, such as risk of attack or abduction from paddy fields and harassment at checkpoints. The Representative also noted that targeted programmes to enhance livelihood opportunities, such as the provision of seeds and tools, were not consistently coordinated at the time of return. Nor did he learn of any livelihood opportunities provided to IDPs remaining in camps in the East. He was particularly concerned about the precarious situation of widows and other female-headed households.

Mr. Klin felt that increased information sharing and consultation by the Government with both the IDPs themselves and the international community and agencies would substantially contribute to reduce the prevailing sense of insecurity and facilitate reintegration in areas of return. For example, complete and timely communication on arrests and detention, as required by international human rights standards, can reduce feelings of fear and helplessness among IDPs and returnees. Clear communication well in advance of returns - about options, entitlements and the process of return - will allow IDPs to make voluntary and informed choices. At present, information about housing and land in high security zones and areas under exclusive control of the security forces, as well as compensation for their loss or limitation, is lacking. Yet relevant information is essential to enable IDPs to exercise control of their futures. Increased transparency - in the form of better communication and coordination in advance of returns between the Government and international agencies and humanitarian NGOs - would significantly improve the timeliness and adequacy of the humanitarian response to displacement.

The Representative further concluded that while many organizations enjoy full humanitarian access to areas of return, others do not. While again serious and legitimate security concerns may occasionally dictate temporary restrictions on access, such restrictions should be the exception and not the rule. Furthermore, when decisions on access are taken at the central level, these decisions are at times not communicated to officers on the ground, such that agencies continue to experience practical obstacles and cumbersome procedures in obtaining required clearance. The Representative noted that non-governmental organizations focusing on protection and human security, rather than providing material assistance, often face additional challenges. "Better access for agencies and NGOs working on protection would improve confidence among IDP populations because these agencies can identify and promptly facilitate the local resolution of individual concerns," the Representative observed. At the same time, he expressed concerns about cases of threats, abductions and killings of humanitarian workers, searches of United Nations' vehicles and staff, looting of humanitarian assets, and slow response by police authorities in some cases.

UN EXPERT EMPHASIZES SUSTAINABLE AND DURABLE SOLUTIONS FOR SRI LANKA 'S INTERNALLY DISPLACED PERSONS

Concerning over 300,000 persons estimated to be living in internal displacement since the 1980s and 1990s, the Representative stressed that allowing the displaced to lead normal lives, with decent housing and full access to livelihoods and services on the one hand, and preservation of their right to opt for eventual return and their property rights on the other, are not mutually exclusive. He was encouraged by the recognition of many government officials that finding durable solutions for those in protracted situations, in particular the northern Muslims, must now become a priority for the Government and the international community.

Reflecting upon recent experience with displacement and returns in the East, the Representative urged all relevant actors to find peaceful solutions to spare the population from new displacement in other parts of the country and, in the absence of such solutions, to consider the following:

- (1) that when displacement is unavoidable for the safety of civilians, safe exit routes be available to them, consistent with international humanitarian law;
- (2) that both military and civil actors be prepared to receive the displaced in conditions of safety and dignity, and that contingency plans be in place; and
- (3) that when conditions allow for return or relocation of the displaced, key international human rights standards as articulated in the Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement must be followed to ensure that the choice among solutions is truly voluntary and informed, is sustainable, and is carried out in safety and dignity.

Mr. Klin expressed his appreciation for the Government's cooperation and support in the conduct of his mission, noting the imperative of full respect of the principle that independent experts be able to consult in confidence with individuals, communities and civil society. The Representative particularly appreciated facilitation of the visit by the Ministry of Disaster Management and Human Rights. He was encouraged by the willingness of government officials to acknowledge existing problems in the response to internal displacement and the protection of IDPs, as well as their readiness to take up his recommendations on key issues. In this regard, he underscored his desire to continue his cooperation with the Government, and particularly offered to assist with efforts to find durable solutions for those in protracted displacement.

"Finding sustainable solutions will not only allow IDPs and returnees to fully enjoy their human rights, but also crucially contribute to restoring stability in the country. Significant efforts in this area will be an important step towards durable peace in Sri Lanka," the Representative suggested at the end of his visit. Consistent with the terms of his mandate, he will prepare a formal and public report, containing recommendations for all relevant actors, for submission to the United Nations Human Rights Council in Geneva.

Mr. Klin was appointed to the post of Representative in 2004 at the recommendation of the United Nations Commission on Human Rights. In carrying out his mandate, he assesses, every year, the implementation of the human rights of internally displaced persons. Since his appointment, he has carried out several visits and country missions, including most recently to Sri Lanka, the Central African Republic, Azerbaijan and Cote d'Ivoire.

For more information on the mandate please go to <http://www2.ohchr.org/english/issues/idp/index.htm>

Load-Date: December 27, 2007

M.I.A. sparks chaos with a wild show; Singer's building rhythms drive Commodore fans to a frenzy at one of year's most memorable performances

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Final Edition

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Byline: Amy O'Brian, Vancouver Sun

Body

They came with teased mullets, camouflaged leggings and gold-sparkle T-shirts to see their culture-mashing club-banging hero in the flesh.

They came wide-eyed and expectant, perhaps hoping for not just a great show, but for political guidance and activist inspiration.

Hundreds of young hipsters, students and music lovers came to the Commodore Tuesday night to see M.I.A. -- the rapper best known for her primitive beats, her political lyrics, her brash sense of style and her family connections to the **Tamil Tigers**.

She kept her adoring fans waiting until nearly 11 p.m., perhaps in an effort to get them riled and frustrated to complement her own angry and forceful style of delivery. But when she finally took the stage and launched into Bamboo Banga -- the opening track off her most recent and much-hyped album Kala -- the crowd seemed to forget its collective frustration as they rushed the stage and pounded their fists in the air.

The 30-year-old Londoner wore dark sunglasses, a hat, a loose nylon jacket and pink leopard print leggings to open the show, but gradually shed her layers -- and apparently, her inhibitions -- as the show moved on.

By the third number, one young male fan was so overcome by the thumping beats that he stormed the stage, pushing the muscular back-up singer/dancer out of the way to briefly show the audience his own dance moves before security tackled him and dragged him off stage.

M.I.A. -- whose real name is Mathangi "Maya" Arulpragasam --impressively continued on without missing a beat and even went ahead later in the show with an invitation to the **women** in the audience to join her on stage for a dance party, which was one of the most compelling segments of the show.

Female fans were selected out of the crowd to climb up on stage and dance alongside M.I.A. to Birdflu, a particularly primitive song off Kala. It was an experiment in controlled chaos as M.I.A. continued to perform among more than two dozen star-struck girls trying to do their duty and dance, but also trying to stick cameras in M.I.A.'s face and occasionally wrap their arms around her.

M.I.A. sparks chaos with a wild show; Singer's building rhythms drive Commodore fans to a frenzy at one of year's most memorable performances

But M.I.A. seemed to be almost more comfortable leading her small army of dancers than when she was on her own.

Her tiny frame bounced around the stage with intense energy, banging and grinding without inhibition, yet she rarely took off her sunglasses to make eye contact with the audience.

She chanted and rapped and sang her way through nearly every song on Kala -- plus a few numbers off 2005's Arular -- with highlights being the Bollywood-inspired Jimmy, and the tantalizing building rhythm and gun shots of Paper Planes.

There were a few moments where she and her male DJ seemed to be out of sync -- most notably on 20 Dollar -- and her voice fell a bit flat and weak on Sunshowers, but the production was running like a well-oiled machine by the end.

When she threatened to do only one more song less than an hour into the show, the audience got livelier. They bounced and shook to the fast dance beats of Boyz, no doubt inspired in part by the male dancers in a video playing on the screen behind the stage.

M.I.A. shouted: "You're not here to see me, you're here to see yourself," which was an apt comment considering the amount of self-aware dancing and self-conscious fashion choices.

She moved on to her best performance of the night, for Galang. It is perhaps her most recognizable song and had her crouched and bouncing over the crowd like a tigress and shaking her wild hair like no one was watching.

She returned for an encore after five full minutes of making the audience work for it with chants and screams. Images of African child soldiers were projected on the video screen for an infectious performance of Hussel and she launched herself on top of the crowd for Bucky Done Gun.

The show was less than 90 minutes long, but was as memorable as any I've seen this year.

M.I.A.'s audience responded to her rallying cry, and even if it wasn't entirely clear what her political message was, people were at least inspired to act by way of dancing, singing along, and staying out late on a Tuesday night.

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- This review ran Wednesday on www.vancouversun.com. Go online to view the full photo gallery from the concert.

Graphic

Photo: Ian Smith, Vancouver Sun; Sri Lankan rapper M.I.A. drove fans wild at the Commodore Ballroom, at one point getting fans to join her on stage for a dance party. ;

Load-Date: November 15, 2007

VOA NEWS: WOMEN LEADERS REDISCOVER MOTHER'S DAY

US Fed News

May 13, 2007 Sunday 3:06 AM EST

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Dateline: WASHINGTON

Body

The Voice of America issued the following story:

By Faiza Elmasry

It was President Woodrow Wilson who declared in 1914 that the second Sunday in May each year would from then on be observed as Mother's Day. But the idea of honoring mothers actually got its start in the mid 1800s, when activists first envisioned Mother's Day as a way to promote peace. With so much conflict in the world today, a group of women peace activists is trying to return to those roots, honoring mothers worldwide with a globe-spanning gift of peace.

Flowers and dinner invitations are the most common gifts mothers usually receive from their sons and daughters on Mother's Day. But a new campaign suggests another way to honor our moms.

This year, instead of giving your mother chocolates or some other gifts, make a donation in her honor to support these modern-day mothers who work to build peace all around the world," Naila Bolus says. Bolus is Executive Director of the Ploughshares Fund, a private foundation that funds peace efforts worldwide. Bolus' group has launched a campaign called Rediscover Mother's Day, to which Her Majesty Queen Noor of Jordan has signed on as Honorary Chair, to educate people about the original spirit behind Mother's Day observances.

"The history of Mother's Day is not very well known," she says. "It was actually conceived of as a day to inspire people to work for peace. It was founded by a woman named Julia Ward Howe. She was very moved by the devastation she saw during both the Civil War in the United States and also the Franco Prussian war. This goes back to the 1870s."

Bolus recalls that Howe wrote a Mother's Day proclamation, and called on women around the world to dedicate themselves to promoting peace in their local communities. "She called for a Mother's Day for Peace," she says. "It was now 1872, and women in a number of cities around the U.S. actually held Mother's Day for Peace gatherings. She called for this day to be the second Sunday of June. Over time it sort of evolved into the Mother's Day that we celebrate today. But over time, I think, that original meaning was lost."

Bolus' foundation created a web site to honor modern mothers who are working for the cause of peace.

One woman, Susan Granada, is working on the ground in Sri Lanka, where there is a 30-year old civil war going on. Bolus says, "Susan is a member of a non-violent peace force. She is working on things like identifying child soldiers and reuniting them back with their families. She's been working on monitoring elections to make sure that

VOA NEWS: WOMEN LEADERS REDISCOVER MOTHER'S DAY

elections are free and fair in Sri Lanka. She has been trying to facilitate talks between the **Tamil Tigers** and the government of Sri Lanka."

Bolus says Granada keeps in touch with her own kids in the Philippines everyday to share her experiences with them.

Bolus cites Suzanne diMaggio as another mother working for peace, with the United Nations Association in New York. "She has focused her career on working to develop and strengthen relations between the United States and Iran."

DiMaggio says she's been focusing her efforts over the past three years on bringing peace to the Middle East, stabilizing the situation in Iraq and stopping the spread of nuclear weapons.

"It was a very ambitious goal, given the fact that the United States and Iran do not have any official diplomatic relation," she says. "What we're doing is bringing together non-governmental players to discuss these issues at the civil society level. So most of our participants include professors at universities, leaders of non-governmental organizations, analysts and scholars. We get together and try to learn from each other, what each society is thinking about the other, what are the concerns, what are the potential areas of cooperation."

Another mother featured on the Rediscover Mother's Day web site is Jacqueline Shire of the Institute for Science and International Security. "We seek to educate the public and policy makers about the dangers of nuclear proliferation, alert them to places where this is happening," she says. "We also seek to promote a non-military alternative to preventing proliferation of, in particular, nuclear technology and expertise."

Organizers of the Rediscover Mother's Day Campaign say these mothers and many others who are working to prevent war are inspired by their dream of creating a different world, a more peaceful world they believe their children and grandchildren deserve to inherit.

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

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26 Sri Lankan sailors dead, four captured alive in northern sea battle, Tamil rebels say

Associated Press International

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Byline: By KRISHAN FRANCIS, Associated Press Writer

Dateline: COLOMBO Sri Lanka

Body

Tamil Tiger rebels said Thursday that they have killed at least 26 Sri Lankan sailors and caught four others alive in a fierce sea battle off the northern Jaffna peninsula.

The fighting came as the United Nations and a rights group denounced the Sri Lankan military's shelling of a school in which at least 23 Tamil civilians were killed and scores injured.

"The U.N. condemns in the strongest possible terms the shelling by the security forces of the government of Sri Lanka on defenseless civilians sheltering in Kathiraveli School in Vaharai yesterday," the U.N. said in a statement.

"The killing and wounding of displaced persons is unjustifiable and a violation of the most basic humanitarian norms," the statement said.

The U.N. added that it is disturbed by reports that the rebels have prevented some 2,000 civilians from fleeing to safety.

The Tigers have "an obligation to protect civilians and allow them freedom of movement to leave an area where they fear for their safety," it said.

Of Thursday's battle, the rebels said they caught four sailors alive and found the dead body of another. "Our fighters have confirmed that they killed at least another 25 sailors," **Tamil Tigers**' military spokesman Rasiah Ilanthirayan told The Associated Press.

He said five Sea Tiger rebel fighters also died in the attack, in which they sunk one of the navy's fast attack craft and severely damaged another.

Military spokesman Brig. Prasad Samarasinghe said Thursday's clash erupted when the rebels tried to attack a ship transporting some 300 civilians from the eastern port town of Trincomalee to Jaffna.

He said the navy, assisted by the air force, destroyed 22 of 26 rebel boats which had come to attack the ship, but he did not give any casualty figures.

Rebel spokesman Ilanthirayan denied that the rebels tried to attack a civilian ship.

26 Sri Lankan sailors dead, four captured alive in northern sea battle, Tamil rebels say

"These are baseless allegations without any logic," he said.

He said navy vessels disturbed the rebels' "routine naval exercises" and the clash was "a result of that provocation."

There was no independent account of the incident.

Separately on Thursday, the military said Tamil rebels detonated a roadside bomb, killing two soldiers in northern Jaffna peninsula.

Meanwhile, the government said it regretted Wednesday's artillery attack on the school.

"While we regret this whole episode, we say that national security is utmost," chief government spokesman Keheliya Rambukwella told a news conference.

Scores of civilians had taken refuge in the school in Kithiraveli a rebel-controlled eastern village from fighting between the army and Tamil guerrillas when it was hit, said senior rebel official Seevaratnam Puleedevan.

He said at least 60 civilians were killed and 150 wounded.

Helen Olafsdottir, a spokeswoman for the European cease-fire monitoring mission, said monitors had counted 23 bodies, mostly of women, children and older people. Another 137 people were admitted to hospitals, she said. But she added the monitors did not find any sign of a rebel military installation in the impact area.

But government spokesman Rambukwella said it was likely that the rebels had forced civilians to stay in the area to become human shields a charge the insurgents denied.

London-based Amnesty International also condemned the attack and called for an inquiry by international and independent human rights experts, saying there was an urgent need to "respond to the dramatic deterioration of the human rights and humanitarian situation."

In Colombo, 22 deputies from the Tamil National Alliance a political party widely believed to be a proxy of the rebels demonstrated in front of the U.N. refugee agency's office, asking it to take action to protect displaced people.

The group said 41,000 Tamil civilians have been displaced in the Batticaloa region, the area of Wednesday's attack.

But Samarasinghe said the military wasn't targeting civilians. He acknowledged, however, that it had fired artillery to silence rebel guns.

Peace broker Norway, meanwhile, called on the government to explain why troops fired grenades that landed just meters (yards) from chief European cease-fire monitor Lars Solvberg on Wednesday as he was visiting the village of Pooneryn in the country's volatile north.

Norwegian Aid Minister Erik Solheim called the incident "very worrying" and asked the government for an explanation. He escaped unhurt. The military denied knowledge of Solvberg's presence in the area when they attacked.

The Tigers have been fighting since 1983 for a separate Tamil homeland in the country's north and east, citing discrimination by the majority Sinhalese.

The conflict killed more than 65,000 people before a Norwegian-brokered truce in 2002, but subsequent peace talks failed. Surging violence this year has killed more than 2,000 civilians, soldiers and rebel fighters and threatens a return to all-out civil war.

Associated Press reporters Bharatha Mallawarachi and Ruwan Weerakoon contributed to this report.

On the Net:

26 Sri Lankan sailors dead, four captured alive in northern sea battle, Tamil rebels say

Military Web site: <http://www.nationalsecurity.lk>

Tamil rebel Web site: <http://www.ltteps.org>

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