

Date and Time: Saturday, May 4, 2024 2:25:00PM EEST

Job Number: 223508118

Documents (100)

1. [*Sri Lankan celebrates 60th anniversary as bus attack kills 12 civilians*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

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

2. [*Sri Lanka Celebrates 60th Anniversary*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

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

3. [*ASSEMBLY LANKA CONGRESS THREE LAST CHENNAI*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

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

4. [*UNICEF fears worst for children trapped in Sri Lanka 's conflict*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

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

5. [*UN REFUGEE AGENCY WARNS RETURNING SRI LANKANS AFTER EIGHT DROWN IN ACCIDENT*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

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

6. [*Sri Lankan Army Is Pushing for End to 25-Year War Against the Tamil Rebels*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

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

7. [*Female Tiger bomber kills 28*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

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

8. [*Shroud over conspiracy behind Rajiv Gandhi assassination*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

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

9. [*U.S. donates US\\$ 6.9 ml. worth of food aid*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

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

10. [*Govt targets 7 to 8 pc economic growth*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

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

11. [Striking advocates face wrath of HC](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

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

12. [Xinhua Asia-Pacific news summary at 1600 GMT, Feb. 9](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

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

13. [NALINI TO CONCENTRATE ON SOCIAL WORK AFER RELEASE](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

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

14. [Xinhua Asia-Pacific news summary at 1600 GMT, Feb. 9](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

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

15. [Female bomber kills 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, 2008 to Mar 30, 2009

16. [Minister Sirisena escapes suicide blast](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

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

17. [Jetliner - Swiftest link between North and South](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

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

18. [Tigers fire at bus killing four](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

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

19. [RAW trying to separate Balochistan Province and destabilize regional countries](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

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

20. [UN inaction and the China factor Child soldiers in Burma](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

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

21. [UN inaction and the China factor Child soldiers in Burma](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

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

22. [*UN inaction and the China factor Child soldiers in Burma*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

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

23. [*Letters*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

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

24. [*In brief*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

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

25. [*People hail Pillayan's entry into democratic stream*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

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

26. [*Female Tiger bomber kills 28*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

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

27. [*Tamil Tigers blamed for deadly bus bombing*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

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

28. [*Liberating the Wanni: At whose expense?*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

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

29. [*World - Nine killed in Sri Lanka shell attack*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

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

30. [*Brief*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

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

31. [*World - Nine killed in Sri Lanka shell attack*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

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

32. [CHRISTOPHER NEWPORT UNIVERSITY 'S WOMEN'S FILM FESTIVAL HIGHLIGHTS RENOWNED
POLITICAL ACTIVIST THIRANAGAMA](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

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

33. [Sri Lankan Cabinet minister escapes suicide blast](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

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

34. [World - Nine killed in Sri Lanka shell attack](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

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

35. [World - Nine killed in Sri Lanka shell attack](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

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

36. [World - Nine killed in Sri Lanka shell attack](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers,Newswires & Press

37. [CNU 's Women's Film Festival Highlights Renowned Political Activist Dr. Rajani Thiranagama](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

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

38. [Sri Lankan Cabinet minister escapes suicide blast](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

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

39. [Roadside bomb kills 24 on bus; Attack follows end of truce in Sri Lanka](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

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

40. [What price the innocents in the Wanni?](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

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

41. [5 rebel bases bombed by Sri Lankan air force](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

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

42. [*What's rebel leader's next move? Fate of Tamil chief at center as Sri Lanka seeks final victory*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

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

43. [*Asia-Pacific news calendar*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

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

44. [*Leading terrorist agents arrested in Cyprus*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

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

45. [*As peace eludes Lanka, refugees pour*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

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

46. [*Woman bomber targets packed train station*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

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

47. [*Rural Empowerment*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

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

48. [Central theme of development](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

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

49. [Bid to evacuate bombed hospital](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

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

50. [19 civilians killed in Lanka](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

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

51. [Keheliya regrets Ranil's remarks](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

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

52. [EU Parliamentarians' flight of fancy](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by

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

53. [PEOPLE ON A ROAD TO NOWHERE](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by

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

54. [Arrested for extorting money](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by

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

55. [Bid to evacuate bombed hospital](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by

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

56. [Guardian Weekly: Weekly review: Quiet war gets louder: Euan Ferguson returns to Sri Lanka to find conflict between Tamil rebels and government forces intensifying and the island in a state of fear](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by

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

57. [?\(EURO\)~Govt. must apply rule of law?\(EURO\)\(TM\)](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

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

58. [*FIR registered against 2 advocates for assault on Swamy*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

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

59. [*Over 7 Killed by Shelling at a Sri Lanka Hospital*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

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

60. [*International briefs*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

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

61. [*Air strikes after suicide bomber kills 12 police in Sri Lanka*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

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

62. [*Military: Fighting in northern Sri Lanka kills 29 rebels, 3 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, 2008 to Mar 30, 2009

63. [*Polls watchers and prophets of 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, 2008 to Mar 30, 2009

64. [*In short*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

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

65. [*This Tiger's claws hidden, but bloody Shroud surrounds Tamil rebels' leader*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

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

66. [*India remembers Rajiv Gandhi on death anniversary*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

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

67. [*Extremists push Pakistan to breaking point CRICKET TERROR ATTACK - ANALYSIS*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

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

68. [*The 1530 GMT News Advisory*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

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

69. [*Headlines you might have missed this week*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

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

70. [*The true horror of suicide bombings*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

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

71. [*Troops kill 29 Tigers in Sri Lanka*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

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

72. [*Saturday: If you write you'll be killed: In the aftermath of the assassination of Sri Lankan newspaper editor Lasantha Wickrematunge, his family and friends remember a man who died challenging his government's account of the civil war*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

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

73. [*39 civilians flee LTTE*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

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

74. [UNICEF says Sri Lankan rebels step up recruitment 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,Newsires & Press
Releases; Timeline: Jan 01, 2008 to Mar 30, 2009

75. [Tiger suicide attack kills 27 in Sri Lanka : 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,Newsires & Press
Releases; Timeline: Jan 01, 2008 to Mar 30, 2009

76. [Bomb blast outside Sri Lanka capital injures 18: military](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

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

77. [67 leave LTTE](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

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

78. [Civilian killed by LTTE](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

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

79. [Sri Lanka says rebel group on brink of defeat](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

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

80. [Sri Lanka says rebel group is on brink of defeat](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

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

81. [Sri Lanka has rejected its basic responsibilities](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

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

82. [Sri Lanka says rebel group on brink of defeat](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

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

83. [Sri Lankan jets attack suicide bombers' camp](#)

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, 2008 to Mar 30, 200984. [*DMK forms state-wide human chain, demands ceasefire in 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, 2008 to Mar 30, 200985. [*Sport again a terrorist target*](#)**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, 2008 to Mar 30, 200986. [*17 killed, 45 injured in suicide explosion in Sri Lanka 17 killed, 45 injured in suicide explosion 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, 2008 to Mar 30, 200987. [*Restoring justice in post conflict areas*](#)**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, 2008 to Mar 30, 200988. [*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 byPublication Type: Newspapers,Newswires & Press
Releases; Timeline: Jan 01, 2008 to Mar 30, 2009

89. [*Sri Lanka says rebel group on brink of defeat*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

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

90. [*LTTE kills civilians*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

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

91. [*The 1500 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, 2008 to Mar 30, 2009

92. [*MORAN PENS RICE AND CLINTON ON HUMAN RIGHTS IN SRI LANKA*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

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

93. [*The 2000 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, 2008 to Mar 30, 2009

94. [*Forces handover LTTE bodies*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

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

95. [REP. MORAN PENS AMBASSADOR TO U. N. RICE, SECRETARY OF STATE CLINTON ON HUMAN RIGHTS IN SRI LANKA](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

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

96. [Sri Lanka conflict returning to cities Is the military, buoyed by recent successes in the country's north, becoming complacent?](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

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

97. [Sri Lanka fears more civilian attacks as fresh fighting erupts](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

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

98. [Family taking food to LTTE arrested](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

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

99. [Sri Lanka fears more civilian attacks, as bus toll hits 26](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

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

100. [Swiss Tamils attack LTTE front office](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

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

Sri Lanka celebrates 60th anniversary as bus attack kills 12 civilians

The Associated Press

February 4, 2008 Monday 1:11 PM GMT

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Section: INTERNATIONAL NEWS

Length: 846 words

Byline: By RAVI NESSMAN, Associated Press Writer

Dateline: COLOMBO Sri Lanka

Body

Sri Lanka celebrated its 60th independence anniversary Monday with parades, speeches and a security clampdown that failed to prevent suspected rebels from bombing a civilian bus, killing 12 people, the military said.

In an attempt to block such attacks in the capital, troops sealed off many roads and a major cell phone operator shut off its text messaging service throughout the morning as officials and residents gathered for the national ceremony.

President Mahinda Rajapaksa railed in a televised speech against the Tamil Tiger rebels and said the current economic and security difficulties would be over soon. He reiterated the government's vow to crush the rebels after decades of warfare, despite an escalation of the civil war in recent months.

"Our defense forces have achieved victories that were never before seen. Terrorism is facing a defeat that it has never before faced," he said. Top government officials have said they hope to rout the rebels by the end of the year.

Thousands of troops, local dancers and religious leaders paraded along Colombo's coastal road in the independence celebration.

Hours later, a roadside bomb blast tore through a civilian bus in the Welioya region, about 150 miles northeast of Colombo, military spokesman Brig. Udaya Nanayakkara said. The attack killed 12 people and injured 17 others, he said, blaming the rebels.

Rebel spokesman Rasiyah Ilanthirayan did not answer calls seeking comment. The **Tamil Tigers**, listed as a terror group by the United States and European Union, routinely deny responsibility for such attacks.

Another roadside bombing in the southeastern town of Buttala killed one soldier and injured two others, the military said.

The blasts came amid a wave of bombings targeting civilians across the country. On Sunday, a **female** suicide bomber blew herself up inside Colombo's main railway station, killing 11 people and wounding 92 others. A day earlier, a bomb on a bus killed 18 people, mostly Buddhist pilgrims, in the central town of Dambulla.

The independence celebration began with a 21-gun salute and a parade by hundreds of army, navy, air force and police officials, along with tanks, artillery guns and multiple rocket launchers.

Sri Lankan celebrates 60th anniversary as bus attack kills 12 civilians

Twelve naval gunships and fast-attack craft sailed off the coast, while 26 fighter jets and attack helicopters flew overhead.

The U.S. Embassy advised American citizens to avoid unnecessary travel in the capital region during the holiday, warning of possible attacks. The government also closed schools in Colombo for the week because of the security situation, Education Ministry official Nimal Bandara said.

The **Tamil Tigers** have been fighting since 1983 for an independent homeland for ethnic minority Tamils after decades of marginalization by Sinhalese-dominated governments. More than 70,000 people have died.

A 2002 cease-fire ushered in several years of calm and fostered hopes that peace would prevail, but the truce broke down as renewed attacks over the past two years killed 5,000 people.

The government ousted the guerrillas from their strongholds in the east last year, and daily fighting rages along the front lines in the jungles of the north, where the rebels still control a de facto state.

A string of battles in the north Sunday killed 36 rebels and one soldier, the military reported Monday. The rebels were not available for comment, but the two sides routinely give widely differing death tolls.

The government blames the rebels for the recent attacks on civilian targets inside government-held territory, which continue despite a maze of checkpoints throughout the country.

The government officially pulled out of the cease-fire last month and forced independent Nordic monitors to leave the country.

Many had high hopes for the nation, formerly known as Ceylon, when it achieved independence from Britain in 1948, months after South Asian neighbors India and Pakistan became independent.

But the civil war undermined the country's potential to become a regional economic power, said Paikiasothy Saravanamuttu, executive director of the Center for Policy Alternatives, a Colombo-based think tank.

"The development potential was huge, and it has been totally stymied by this war," he said.

Post-independence governments lacked the foresight to develop a national identity that would include all ethnic groups, Saravanamuttu said.

Tensions between the mainly Buddhist Sinhalese majority, who comprise about 74 percent of the nation's 20 million people, and the mainly Hindu Tamil community, who make up about 18 percent, quickly surfaced after independence.

Sinhalese-dominated governments, fearing local Tamils would work with Tamils in neighboring India to take over the nation, tried to marginalize the Tamil language and culture. At least two efforts to broker a compromise were retracted by the government amid protests by Sinhalese nationalists.

The tensions eventually erupted into violence, with Sinhalese mobs targeting Tamils and Tamil guerrilla groups launching attacks on government targets.

Associated Press writer Bharatha Mallawarachi contributed to this report.

Load-Date: February 5, 2008

Sri Lanka Celebrates 60th Anniversary

Associated Press Online

February 4, 2008 Monday 1:24 PM GMT

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Section: INTERNATIONAL NEWS

Length: 846 words

Byline: By RAVI NESSMAN, Associated Press Writer

Dateline: COLOMBO Sri Lanka

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Associated Press writer Bharatha Mallawarachi contributed to this report.

Load-Date: February 5, 2008

ASSEMBLY LANKA CONGRESS THREE LAST CHENNAI

UNI (United News of India)

November 12, 2008 Wednesday 6:23 PM EST

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Length: 327 words

Byline: Report from UNI brought to you by HT Syndication.

Body

Referring to Mr Karunanidhi's remarks that both parties should agree for ceasefire, Mr Alphonse said India could talk to Sri Lanka to enforce ceasefire and wanted to know who was the "points man" for the other side. "Who will, on behalf of the other side (**LTTE**), give a guarantee that peace will prevail after the ceasefire", he asked. At this juncture, MDMK leader M Kannappan and PMK leader Velmuguran said on behalf of the **LTTE**, its political wing leader Natesan had said that they were ready for peace.

Stating that Mr Karunanidhi had enormous clout with the Centre, Mr Alphonse said before the Chief Minister took the initiative for the ceasefire, it should be clarified whether the "ceasefire is a destination or just a stop over". Supporting the resolution, Deputy Leader of the Opposition O Panneerselvam called for a permanent political solution to the ethnic crisis. India had the responsibility to ensure a lasting peace in Lanka, he said. Like India intervened in the case of Bangladesh, it should intervene and bring about a solution to the Tamils issue. The DMK government should continue to exert pressure on the Centre to find a solution, he suggested. After the ceasefire, India should call representatives of both the Lankan government and Tamils for a negotiated settlement, the AIADMK leader said. While finding a solution to the Tamils issue, India should also find a way out to end the killings of Indian fishermen and regain Katchateevu, which was given to Sri Lanka during 1974-76, Mr Panneerselvam said. PMK Floor leader G K Mani said nowhere in the world an ethnic crisis of this nature remained unsolved for the past 40 years. Detailing the sufferings of the Tamils, especially **women** and children, Mr Mani said the Lankan government should agree to unconditional ceasefire. If it failed to declare ceasefire, India should impose economic blockade and exert pressure, he said.

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Load-Date: November 12, 2008

UNICEF fears worst for children trapped in Sri Lanka's conflict

UNI (United News of India)

March 22, 2009 Sunday

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Length: 860 words

Dateline: New, Delhi

Body

New, Delhi,. Ap -- As 35,000 people have fled Sri Lanka's conflict zone, the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) has said it held grave fears for those children who remain trapped in escalating fighting.

With tens of thousands of children still caught amid growing hostilities between the **LTTE** and troops of the Government of Sri Lanka, UNICEF warned of dreadful consequences for children. "If fighting continues and if the **LTTE** refuses to allow people to leave the conflict zone, then we face the intolerable inevitability of seeing many more children killed," said UNICEF's Regional Director for South Asia, Daniel Toole in a statement received here. The United Nations estimates that more than 100,000 people remain trapped in the middle of intense fighting on a 14 square kilometer strip of beach in Sri Lanka's north. "With this latest surge in fighting, our greatest fear is that the worst is yet to come. With the high concentration of people in a small space, the number of children killed in this conflict will continue to escalate. This is a price too heavy to pay. Solutions should be sought not just to win the war, but to win the peace," said Mr Toole. UNICEF supports calls by the UN Secretary General for a cessation in fighting during which aid workers could access the conflict zone and those civilians who want to leave are given the chance to do so. To date there are 65,000 IDPs in camps in Vavuniya, Jaffna and Mannar, with 35,000 more to arrive in the next 48 hours. Overcrowding is a problem in most of the camps. **Women** and children coming out of the conflict affected areas have endured extreme conditions, including scarcity of food, for extended periods of time. UNICEF and the United Nations strongly advocate an early resettlement of IDPs. In the meantime, emergency relief assistance is required for these people. UNICEF's emergency support for children and their families includes nutritional support to malnourished children and their mothers, the provision of hygiene kits, emergency health kits, safe water, latrines and bathing facilities, and temporary learning shelters and educational kits for children. At the same time UNICEF is supporting hospitals to meet the increased needs for mother and child health, and is supporting the provision of psychosocial support and the identification of separated and unaccompanied children. UNICEF is in urgent need of 3.5 million dollars to cover the most immediate needs of the affected population in health and nutrition, water and sanitation, protection and education. As 35,000 people have fled Sri Lanka's conflict zone, the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) has said it held grave fears for those children who remain trapped in escalating fighting. With tens of thousands of children still caught amid growing hostilities between the **LTTE** and troops of the Government of Sri Lanka, UNICEF warned of dreadful consequences for children. "If fighting continues and if the **LTTE** refuses to allow people to leave the conflict zone, then we face the intolerable inevitability of seeing many more children killed," said UNICEF's Regional Director for South Asia, Daniel Toole in a statement received here. The United Nations estimates that more than 100,000 people remain trapped in the middle of intense fighting on a 14 square kilometer strip of beach in Sri Lanka's north. "With this latest surge in fighting, our greatest fear is that the worst is yet to come. With the high concentration of people in a small space, the number of children killed in this conflict will continue to escalate. This is a price too heavy to pay. Solutions should be sought not just to win the war, but to win the peace," said Mr Toole. UNICEF supports calls by the UN

UNICEF fears worst for children trapped in Sri Lanka 's conflict

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Load-Date: April 22, 2009

UN REFUGEE AGENCY WARNS RETURNING SRI LANKANS AFTER EIGHT DROWN IN ACCIDENT

States News Service

September 16, 2008 Tuesday

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Length: 342 words

Byline: States News Service

Dateline: NEW YORK

Body

The following information was released by the United Nations:

The United Nations refugee agency voiced sadness today at the deaths of eight Sri Lankans who drowned while attempting to return to their homeland by boat from southern India.

UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) spokesperson William Spindler said the eight people who drowned last Friday were part of a group of 13 Sri Lankans who had each paid about 6,000 Indian rupees (about \$140) to a local boatman for the journey from Tamil Nadu state in India to the northern Sri Lankan town of Talaimannar.

The returning refugees drowned after the boat capsized on the high seas, Mr. Spindler said, adding that that one survivor told local media that she preferred to cross illegally because it was difficult to obtain the necessary clearances to leave.

"We appeal to refugees to use official channels to return home in safety and dignity," Mr. Spindler said. The dead included four **women** and two children.

Since 2006 at least 22,000 Sri Lankans have fled conflict in their homeland between Government forces and members of the rebel Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (**LTTE**) and sought asylum in India. An estimated 73,000 Sri Lankan refugees now live in 117 separate camps scattered across southern India.

Mr. Spindler said UNHCR was assisting the voluntary repatriation of Sri Lankans only to the relatively calm parts of the east of the country, stressing that the official channel for refugee returns to Sri Lanka is by air.

Northern Sri Lanka has been particularly hard hit in the most recent fighting and most of the remaining UN staff in the town of Kilinochchi have now been relocated to Vavuniya after a Government request.

So far, some 29 staff have moved to Vavuniya, joining colleagues who relocated earlier this week and also staff from non-governmental organizations (NGOs), UN spokesperson Marie Okabe told reporters.

She said 21 UN national staff remain in Kilinochchi, and they are staff who were not given passes by the **LTTE** or chose to stay with family members who could not obtain passes.

UN REFUGEE AGENCY WARNS RETURNING SRI LANKANS AFTER EIGHT DROWN IN ACCIDENT

Load-Date: September 17, 2008

End of Document

Sri Lankan Army Is Pushing for End to 25-Year War Against the Tamil Rebels

The New York Times

December 6, 2008 Saturday

Late Edition - Final

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Section: Section A; Column 0; Foreign Desk; Pg. 6

Length: 1287 words

Byline: By SOMINI SENGUPTA

Dateline: VELLANKULAM, Sri Lanka

Body

With Sri Lanka's military making its deepest push into rebel territory in a decade, Asia's longest-running civil war appears to be edging closer to a military solution -- though one that has already extracted a high cost for the divided country's civilians.

Following a hard-line strategy designed by the country's defense secretary, Gotabhaya Rajapaksa, an American who once worked as a computer systems administrator in Southern California, the government says its troops have ringed the rebel capital, Kilinochchi, near the northern tip of the island.

Journalists are not allowed to visit rebel strongholds, and so the claim is impossible to verify. But a rare visit near the front, with an escort of soldiers, revealed the remnants of Mr. Rajapaksa's uncompromising assault all along the highway that snakes its way up this island's northwest coast.

The miscellany of war was everywhere. The fishing village of Vellankulam was empty, save for the odd box of mortar rounds. Houses lay in ruins. There were no civilians left, only soldiers and birds.

The destruction was evidence that Mr. Rajapaksa, the brother of President Mahinda Rajapaksa, is determined to do what no Sri Lankan government has been able to do in the 25-year conflict: crush the rebels militarily. He has ended long-running peace negotiations and ignored international calls to improve Sri Lanka's human rights record.

Over the last year, the military has bombed rebel strongholds, sent commandos to execute high-profile rebel leaders and pressed steadily into the rebels' lair, driving an estimated 250,000 civilians ahead of the military advance.

Having fled as many as seven times over the last year, according to aid workers, some of the displaced are huddling in lean-tos in perilous, open paddy fields and, when they can, taking shelter from shelling in rebel-built bunkers.

How long the military can hold on to the jungles and paddy fields remains uncertain. An even bigger mystery may be what happens if the rebel force, the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam, are genuinely defeated and the continent's most persistent civil conflict actually comes to an end.

Sri Lankan Army Is Pushing for End to 25-Year War Against the Tamil Rebels

Despite pressure from its allies, the government has yet to present a serious proposal on how Sri Lanka, a polarized multiethnic country of 21 million people, will be governed. At the nub of the war is the question of political rights of the Tamil minority.

The rebels have fought to carve out a homeland for Tamils on this island for a generation. It has been the government's aim to stop that.

Asked in a recent interview if his mission was accomplished, Mr. Rajapaksa, 59, offered a look of immense satisfaction. Yes, he said, his government had not only bolstered the morale of its own troops and weakened the rebels, but it had also, more importantly, turned public opinion in favor of war. "Earlier, the thinking was, the L.T.T.E. is so strong that militarily, we can't defeat them," he argued. "We have proved we can."

"We were tolerating them for so long," he added of the rebels. "To have a meaningful political solution, you have to eliminate terrorism."

Privately, Mr. Rajapaksa's friends and associates say that his resolve is deeply personal: The **Tamil Tigers** tried to kill him two years ago.

After more than a decade in the United States, during most of which he said he worked as a Unix systems administrator at Loyola Law School in Los Angeles, Mr. Rajapaksa returned to Sri Lanka in 2005, just before his brother, a veteran of Sinhalese populist politics, was elected.

While Mr. Rajapaksa makes no apologies for his hard-line approach, the stepped-up war effort has drawn a wave of international criticism over Sri Lanka's deteriorating record on human rights and civil liberties charges.

Extortion, abductions and extrajudicial killings continue in government-held areas, and pro-government militias are usually blamed.

Mr. Rajapaksa dismisses this criticism as pro-rebel propaganda. He defends a botched government effort last year to deport ethnic Tamils from the capital, Colombo, to the Tamil-dominated north.

His office vets the movement of all humanitarian aid agencies. In September, he ordered them all to leave rebel-controlled areas in the northeast.

And he insists that journalists should not be allowed to report anything that demoralizes the war effort. Journalists have in fact come under sustained scrutiny, and some have been jailed under the country's preventive detention law.

The restrictions have made divining exactly what is happening on the rebel side all but impossible. Recently the famously elusive rebel leader, Vellupillai Prabhakaran, gave an interview to a Tamil newspaper in India, and described the military's aim of capturing the guerrillas' de facto capital, Kilinochchi, "a daydream."

For its part, the army says it is now on the outskirts of Kilinochchi, which one recent visitor described as "a ghost town." According to the military, the **Tamil Tigers** hold less than half of the land they administered under a 2002 cease-fire agreement.

This month, the army announced the capture of a strategic crossing, about 19 miles north of here, called Pooneryn, which connects the island to Jaffna peninsula to the north and robs the guerrillas of a crucial smuggling corridor.

But no one knows for sure, since Mr. Rajapaksa does not allow journalists, aid workers or other independent monitors into the conflict area.

It is clear that Mr. Rajapaksa's drive to eliminate the **Tamil Tigers** has been no cakewalk for the military, either. In October, a suicide bombing killed more than two dozen people, including a retired army major general in Anuradhapura, an ancient Buddhist pilgrimage site in the heart of the island.

Sri Lankan Army Is Pushing for End to 25-Year War Against the Tamil Rebels

The same month, crudely made Tamil Tiger fighter planes bombed a power station, plunging the capital into darkness. No longer does the military promise a deadline for the war to end; it has missed all previous deadlines.

Perhaps the military's biggest obstacle is the civilians still holed up in rebel territory, alongside the rebels. Artillery fire and aerial attacks would inevitably yield heavy civilian casualties, something the government has repeatedly said it wants to avoid.

According to aid workers who have visited the area, the displaced are sleeping in makeshift tents of plastic and stick, or if they are lucky, crowding into temples and community halls. Schools, if they are not housing homeless families, are taking in students from three or four other schools as well as their own. Classes are going on in shifts. It is a cruel testament to how well this country has adjusted to unending war.

Mr. Rajapaksa has allowed the United Nations to ferry dry food rations to the displaced, but despite pleas from Sri Lankan and foreign aid agencies, neither tents nor tarpaulins, not even after the winter rain and snake bites have set in.

The plight of the displaced is virtually unknown. Phone lines are dead in the rebel-controlled areas. Very few people are able to cross the rebel front line. Those who succeed are kept in military-run camps on the government side.

Sometimes, a small slice of life slips out. In the ground floor women's ward of the main hospital in government-held Vavuniya town the other day sat a 65-year-old woman, with a mane of gray hair, wide stunned eyes and a tube through her side.

She had been hiding in a bunker in a rebel-held village, holding her baby grandson tightly to her chest, she said, when the bunker was shelled. A piece of shrapnel punctured her left side, perforating the left lung.

Her grandson lay in the pediatric ward next door. His mother had been killed in a previous bout of fighting, the old woman said.

<http://www.nytimes.com>

Graphic

PHOTOS: A herd of cows, abandoned by their Tamil owners, ran across a road while government soldiers passed last month in captured territory in northwestern Sri Lanka.

An abandoned Christian shrine in the Mannar district of Sri Lanka, where government forces have gained ground.(PHOTOGRAPHS BY RUTH FREMSON/THE NEW YORK TIMES) MAP: The government says its forces threaten Kilinochchi. Map details area of SRI LANKA.

Load-Date: December 6, 2008

Female Tiger bomber kills 28

The Australian

February 10, 2009 Tuesday

3 - All-round Metro Edition

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Section: WORLD; Pg. 12

Length: 370 words

Body

COLOMBO: A Tamil Tiger suicide bomber killed 20 soldiers and eight civilians when she blew herself yesterday at a centre where government forces were processing Sri Lankans fleeing the northern war zone.

The bombing was the first major suicide attack in more than a month and led to fears the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam -- boxed in by the military and on the verge of defeat -- will increasingly turn to guerilla warfare.

Following a string of victories, the military backed the rebels into a small strip of land on the northeastern coast, where the Red Cross estimates 250,000 civilians are also trapped.

The military has accused the rebels of holding the civilians as human shields and called for non-combatants to flee to government-controlled areas. The rebels have accused the government of indiscriminately shelling the war zone, leading to increasing civilian casualties.

Yesterday morning, more than 800 civilians had crossed the front lines and were being searched by soldiers before being sent to camps farther south, military spokesman Udaya Nanayakkara said.

When the attacker was frisked, she set off the bomb she was wearing, killing 28 people, Brigadier Nanayakkara said. The blast also wounded 24 troops and 40 civilians.

Footage on state television showed a child in a purple checked dress lying lifeless on the ground. Other civilians lay dead nearby. Plastic chairs they were sitting in as they waited to be processed were overturned, and blood stained the ground.

“The LTTE is desperate because they don't have any control over the civilians now,” Brigadier Nanayakkara said.

“They wanted to stop these people coming in.”

The UN condemned the bombing.

“We deplore the loss of civilian life in this targeted killing. It's a blow for people who have suffered so much,” UN resident co-ordinator Neil Buhne said.

The military has said the flow of civilians out of the war zone has increased in recent days, with 4700 fleeing on Sunday, bringing the total number of non-combatants to escape the war zone to 20,000 this year, Brigadier Nanayakkara said.

Female Tiger bomber kills 28

The **LTTE** has been fighting since 1983 for a separate state for the nation's ethnic Tamil minority. More than 70,000 people have been killed in the fighting.

Load-Date: February 9, 2009

End of Document

Shroud over conspiracy behind Rajiv Gandhi assassination

Indo-Asian News Service

May 20, 2008 Tuesday 12:51 PM EST

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Length: 602 words

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

Dateline: New Delhi

Body

New Delhi, May 20 -- Seventeen years have passed since former prime minister Rajiv Gandhi was killed by a suicide bomber, but the monitoring agency constituted to probe the conspiracy is far from wrapping up its decade-long investigations.

The multi-disciplinary monitoring agency (MDMA) was formed in 1998. It has been probing the alleged role of controversial self-styled godman Chandraswami and leaders of the Sri Lanka-based Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (***LTTE***) in Gandhi's assassination May 21, 1991, in Tamil Nadu.

"We have sent letters rogatory (legal letters of request for help or LRs) to various countries out of which some have responded and some have not," said G. Mohanty, spokesman of the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) that probed the assassination.

The MDMA has sent LRs to 27 countries, of which only six have responded and this lack of cooperation is impeding the probe into the conspiracy angle, he added.

"All the investigations have to be done by the countries to which LRs have been sent. We can proceed only after the responses come from them," Mohanty maintained.

The LRs relate to Chandraswami's links with the now defunct Bank of Credit and Commerce International, where a senior ***LTTE*** operative known as Kumaran Padmanabhan alias KP operated accounts.

Also being probed are Chandraswami's alleged connections with major intelligence agencies like America's CIA and Israel's Mossad, and the role of 21 "suspects" who were not charged in the Gandhi killing.

Unwilling to reveal more details, Mohanty said: "The investigations are secret and cannot be revealed."

The MDMA came into being on the recommendation of the Justice Milap Chand Jain, who was appointed in 1991 to probe Gandhi's assassination independent of the CBI. In his nine-volume final report presented in 1998, Jain pointed to the need to probe three elements to uncover the conspiracy behind the killing.

These three aspects form the basis of the LRs the MDMA has sent out.

The MDMA has also despatched its investigators to various countries but failed to unearth anything on the conspiracy angle.

Shroud over conspiracy behind Rajiv Gandhi assassination

"We have sent our people to Sri Lanka, Malaysia, Canada and Australia to investigate the matter. But the end of the tunnel is still far away," an agency official said.

Despite its failure to unravel the mystery shrouding Gandhi's assassination, the government has extended the term of the MDMA that expires May 31 by another year.

Giving reasons for the delay, another CBI official said the Gandhi assassination was akin to that of US president J.F. Kennedy and the accident that claimed the life of Britain's Princess Diana.

"The assassination is similar to that of Kennedy's and Diana's accident with a meticulous cover-up involved. The investigations into these cases have dragged on for long because of their sheer complexity," the CBI official said.

An **LTTE** human bomber assassinated Gandhi, 46, at Sriperumbudur in Tamil Nadu May 21, 1991. Seventeen other people were also killed in the explosion and 44 injured.

A special court set up under the Terrorists and Disruptive Activities (Prevention) Act sentenced 26 accused, including five **women**, to death in the case. Among them is Nalini, the only surviving member of the squad that was formed to kill Gandhi.

Nalini has now sought early release from jail.

When it was constituted, the MDMA comprised officials from the CBI, the Indian Army's Directorate of Military Intelligence, the Research and Analysis Wing (RAW) and the Directorate of Enforcement. However, it has now been reduced to a skeletal staff.

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Load-Date: May 20, 2008

U.S. donates US\$ 6.9 ml. worth of food aid

Daily Mirror (Sri Lanka)

January 28, 2009 Wednesday

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Length: 372 words

Dateline: Colombo

Body

Colombo, Jan. 28 -- At a ceremony held in Wellampitiya yesterday, U.S. Ambassador Robert Blake handed over \$6US.9 million (785 million rupees) in food aid to the World Food Programme (WFP) for distribution to internally displaced persons in the North. The donation demonstrates the United States continued concern for the welfare of Sri Lankans who have been displaced and trapped by the ongoing conflict.

The US Embassy in Colombo said that the donation, including 1,344 tons of lentils, 779 tons of vegetable oil, and 4,270 tons of wheat, is the most recent contribution of food relief by the Government of the United States through its development arm, the United States Agency for International Development (USAID).

It comes as part of the \$29 million in food assistance that the U.S. provided in 2008 to the people of the North in Fiscal Year 2008. World Food Programme and Government officials are working together to move the ongoing food relief donations to warehouses closer to the conflict area so it can continue to be distributed to the men, women, and children affected by the conflict who depend on the assistance. Ambassador Blake thanked Director, World Food Programme, Adnan Khan; Minister of Resettlement and Disaster Relief Services, Risath Bathiyutheen and Secretary, Ministry of Nation Building and Estate Infrastructure Development, Mr. W.K.K. Kumarasiri, for their organizations efforts to reach citizens in need and provide the services they so desperately require.

In his remarks, the Ambassador expressed grave concern for more than 230,000 internally displaced persons trapped by fighting in the north who currently face great danger as fighting gets closer to the no-fire zone established by the Government. He urged both the LTTE and the Government to take special care now to protect civilians.

"The LTTE must immediately desist from firing heavy weapons from areas within or near civilian concentrations. The Government must also resist the temptation to launch retaliatory shelling into areas populated by civilians," stated Ambassador Blake. "Both sides must exercise maximum restraint to ensure civilians are not caught in a crossfire."

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Load-Date: May 6, 2009

U.S. donates US\$ 6.9 ml. worth of food aid

End of Document

Govt targets 7 to 8 pc economic growth

Daily News (Sri Lanka)

March 17, 2009 Tuesday

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Length: 925 words

Dateline: Colombo

Body

Colombo, March 17 -- The Government hopes to achieve an economic growth rate of seven to eight per cent in the medium term. The Government's way forward to achieve such growth is by adopting pro-poor and pro-growth strategies, Prime Minister Ratnasiri Wickramanayaka said.

"Sri Lanka's achievements are considered rather exceptional for a country with a GNP per capita of US \$ 1,600. All these achievements have been made despite our resources being debilitated by a scourge of terrorism and a natural disaster, the tsunami of 2004. Mercifully one is behind us and the other is now about to be rooted out," Prime Minister Wickramanayaka said. He was addressing the inauguration of the ECOSOC Annual Ministerial Review Regional Meeting at the Cinnamon Grand Hotel, Colombo yesterday. "The Government's firm belief is that economic and social objectives should focus on the needs and aspirations of the ordinary people. Sri Lanka has achieved almost universal primary education. Net enrollment ratio reached 97.5 per cent in 2006 for both males and **females**. Literacy rate has been high among the 15-24 age group at around 95 per cent," he said. According to the Prime Minister, while free healthcare and free education for all have always been the State policy, President Mahinda Rajapaksa has today effectively placed development issues including poverty alleviation at the centre of his policy agenda known as the Mahinda Chinthana. The gradual empowerment of rural poor and factors such as gender equality and high levels of **female** literacy have contributed towards a greater awareness of healthcare and the progressive establishment of salutary practices, he said. Prime Minister Wickramanayaka said public financing for healthcare began in Sri Lanka more than 2,000 years ago when Buddhist Kings established public hospitals and maintained them with royal revenue. Ancient records show that 18 hospitals were established by King Dutugemunu in the second century B.C. This tradition was strongly influenced by Buddhist culture which accords high priority to actively caring for the needy, the poor and the sick, he said. Foreign Minister Rohitha Bogollagama said that during more than two decades of combating terrorism in the North and East, the Government continues to effectively deliver healthcare facilities to the civilians in these parts. "Even in areas which are held by the **LTTE**, all health infrastructure, including hospitals, medicine, doctors, nurses and healthcare personnel are maintained and paid through the funds allocated by the Government, since the inception of the conflict," he said. According to Minister Bogollagama this healthcare infrastructure has been maintained despite these supplies and facilities being used by the **LTTE** for their own cadres. "The regular dispatch of medical provisions to these areas by land, air and sea routes is a challenging and risk-ridden operation, and its continuation for over two decades demonstrates our commitment to looking after the health related humanitarian needs of the civilians," he said. Minister Bogollagama pointed out that these efforts continue to date with the efforts concentrated on ensuring the evacuation of patients from among the population still held captive by the **LTTE** in the very small area to which they are now confined. Highest priority has also been accorded to the provision of healthcare to the 36,000 civilians and displaced persons in Vavuniya, who have escaped from the **LTTE**. Healthcare and Nutrition Minister Nimal Siripala de Silva said there are three major problems at the moment. They are the food crisis, energy crisis and financial crisis. The financial

Govt targets 7 to 8 pc economic growth

crisis is pandemic and similar to an economic tsunami. The Sri Lankan Government has not compromised the health budget for war and free health service is available for the whole nation. The health budget is only second to the budgets on defence and education. "President Mahinda Rajapaksa has identified expenditure on health as an investment. The health budget has been increased up to US \$ 800 million and it is a 100 per cent increase," he said. According to Minister de Silva, the Sri Lankan health sector does not depend much on donors and only six per cent are contributed by them. The life expectancy has increased up to 71 years. Infant mortality rate is only 11.2 per cent for 10,000 live births and maternal mortality rate is only 0.14 per 10,000 births. Sri Lanka has one doctor per every 1,300 persons and one nurse for every 1,000 persons. The literacy rate for women is 89 per cent and it is 92 for men. The Sri Lankan health system is very cost effective. Sri Lanka has already eradicated polio and Leprosy and about to eradicate Malaria and some other diseases. Diseases such as SAARS and Avion Influenza did not hit Sri Lanka. WHO Deputy Director General Dr Anarfi Asamoah paid a tribute to the Sri Lankan Government and all Sri Lankans for volunteering to hold the event and said he is touched by the efforts taken by Sri Lanka to organise the meeting. Prevention of ill health and promoting of good health do not come cheap. It is more expensive to look after the aged people than young people. About 50 per cent of drugs and 75 per cent of injections are not necessary, he added. Vice President of the United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) Ambassador Hamidon Ali and Assistant Secretary General of the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UNDESA) Thomas Stelzer also spoke. Published by HT Syndication with permission from Daily News Sri Lanka.

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

Load-Date: March 18, 2009

End of Document

Striking advocates face wrath of HC

UNI (United News of India)

February 11, 2009 Wednesday

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Length: 390 words

Dateline: Chennai

Body

Chennai, Feb. 11 -- A Full Court of the Madras High Court today took a serious view of the continuous boycott of courts by the Advocates over the Sri Lankan issue and decided to hold talks with the representatives of various Associations to break the impasse.

The meeting, chaired by Acting Chief Justice S J Mukhopadhyaya, was convened following representation from a section of advocates expressing concern over the hardships faced by the litigants in view of the agitation. In their petition to Mr Mukhopadhyaya, the advocates demanded stern action against the striking lawyers for preventing their colleagues from attending the courts, threatening them and for supporting the banned **LTTE** by organising agitations inside the court campus. All the judges, who attended the meeting, expressed serious concern over the continued boycott of courts and wanted the Chief Justice to take steps to end the agitation. The meeting decided to hold talks with representatives of various associations, including the Madras High Court Advocates' Association, **Women's** Lawyers Association and the Tamil Nadu Bar Association tomorrow to resolve the issue amicably. A Full Court of the Madras High Court today took a serious view of the continuous boycott of courts by the Advocates over the Sri Lankan issue and decided to hold talks with the representatives of various Associations to break the impasse. The meeting, chaired by Acting Chief Justice S J Mukhopadhyaya, was convened following representation from a section of advocates expressing concern over the hardships faced by the litigants in view of the agitation. In their petition to Mr Mukhopadhyaya, the advocates demanded stern action against the striking lawyers for preventing their colleagues from attending the courts, threatening them and for supporting the banned **LTTE** by organising agitations inside the court campus. All the judges, who attended the meeting, expressed serious concern over the continued boycott of courts and wanted the Chief Justice to take steps to end the agitation. The meeting decided to hold talks with representatives of various associations, including the Madras High Court Advocates' Association, **Women's** Lawyers Association and the Tamil Nadu Bar Association tomorrow to resolve the issue amicably. Published by HT Syndication with permission from United News of India.

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Load-Date: March 31, 2009

Xinhua Asia-Pacific news summary at 1600 GMT, Feb. 9

Xinhua General News Service

February 9, 2009 Monday 2:10 PM EST

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Section: WORLD NEWS; Political

Length: 374 words

Body

NEW DELHI -- The Indian economy is expected to grow 7.1 percent in the 2008-2009 fiscal year, slower than last year's 9 percent and the lowest in six years, said official projections of national income published Monday.

The 2008-2009 fiscal year started on April 1, 2008 and ends on March 31, 2009. (India-Economy-Growth)

CANBERRA -- Australian Prime Minister Kevin Rudd said on Monday the deliberate lighting of bushfires amounts to "mass murder".

He made the remarks while meeting victims of the deadly fires in Victoria. More than 150 people have been killed by the deadliest bushfires in the nation's history over the past three days, and the figures of fire victims are still climbing. (Australia-Bushfire)

COLOMBO -- At least 28 people were killed and 64 others injured when a **female** suicide bomber from the **Tamil Tigers** blew herself at a refugee rescue center in northern Sri Lanka Monday morning, the military said.

Military spokesman Udaya Nanayakkara said 20 soldiers and eight civilians were killed when the suicide bomber launched the attack around 11:30 a.m. local time (0600 GMT) at the North of Visuamadu in Mullaittivu. (Sri Lanka-Suicide Bomb)

ISLAMABAD -- A total of 25 people were killed and 40 others were injured Monday by rocket shells of militants in northwestern Pakistan, according to the private Geo TV.

Militants fired mortar shells on a school where local people took shelter, said the Geo TV. (Pakistan-Rocket-Death)

SEOUL -- South Korea and the European Union (EU) agreed to conclude their free trade negotiation as early as possible, South Korean officials said on Monday.

Xinhua Asia-Pacific news summary at 1600 GMT, Feb. 9

The two sides reached the agreement during their 7th talks on their free trade agreement (FTA) in Seoul, South Korean officials told local media. (SKorea-EU-FTA)

ISLAMABAD -- Militants killed two persons in Pakistan's tribal areas on charges of spying for the United States, according to local press reports.

The body of an Afghan national was found Monday near the roadside in the Spinwam area of Miranshah, North Waziristan. A note found near the body said that he had been spying for the United States. (Pakistan-US-Spy)

Load-Date: February 10, 2009

End of Document

NALINI TO CONCENTRATE ON SOCIAL WORK AFER RELEASE

UNI (United News of India)

August 5, 2008 Tuesday 6:01 PM EST

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Length: 346 words

Byline: Report from UNI brought to you by HT Syndication.

Dateline: Tiruchirapalli

Body

Tiruchirapalli, Aug 5 (UNI) Nalini Sriharan, serving a life sentence at Central Prison, Vellore, for her involvement in the assassination of the former Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi, will involve herself in active social work, especially for the uplift of women, after her release, according to her Counsel S Duraisamy, Madras High Court. Talking to newsmen here yesterday, Mr Duraisamy said this was informed to him by Nalini during his recent meeting. She 'regretted' the killing of Rajiv Gandhi and claimed that the real conspirators had not been booked as yet, he added.

Mr Duraisamy said Nalini was one of the prime accused in the assassination case. Nalini has also alleged that the real culprits, Sivarasan, Suba and Dhanu, were dead, he added. The Counsel said Nalini was of the view that apart from the banned Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE), somebody else was also involved in the conspiracy to murder Rajiv and his identity should be revealed. Referring to Nalini's meeting with Priyanka Gandhi Vadra in prison in March, he said the gesture shown towards Nalini by Priyanka, was amazing. Mr Duraisamy said Priyanka wanted to meet Nalini to know the truth behind the murder of her father. Nalini was happy to meet Priyanka after 17 years of the assassination of Rajiv and lauded the gesture shown to her by Priyanka and her mother Sonia, he added. Dhanu, a suicide bomber, had carried out the attack at Sriperumbudur in Tamil Nadu on May 21, 1991 killing Rajiv Gandhi and 15 others on the spot. During the course of investigations, pictures clicked by S Haribabu, an LTTE photographer, who was also killed in the blast, exposed the role of Nalini and others. Arrested about a month after the assassination, Nalini was sentenced to death by hanging after being convicted on 16 counts of murder. However, her sentence was later commuted to life imprisonment on the intervention of Congress President Sonia Gandhi, who pleaded for clemency on account of Nalini's young daughter who was born in jail.

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Load-Date: August 5, 2008

Xinhua Asia-Pacific news summary at 1600 GMT, Feb. 9

Xinhua General News Service

February 9, 2009 Monday 1:18 AM EST

Copyright 2009 Xinhua News Agency

Section: WORLD NEWS; Political

Length: 374 words

Body

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Load-Date: February 11, 2009

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Female bomber kills soldiers

The Australian

February 10, 2009 Tuesday

1 - All-round Country Edition

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Section: WORLD; Pg. 12

Length: 368 words

Body

COLOMBO: A female suicide bomber attacked a camp for civilians fleeing Sri Lanka's war zone yesterday, killing several soldiers and wounding at least 60 people, military spokesman Udaya Nanayakkara said.

The bomber blew herself up as she was being searched by female soldiers outside the camp for people escaping the conflict between government forces and Tamil Tiger rebels, Brigadier Nanayakkara said.

"Initial reports show that at least 60 people, including military personnel, were injured. Several women soldiers were killed," he said.

He gave no further details but said that the injured had been taken to nearby hospitals for treatment.

More than 15,000 civilians have fled the country's northern war zone over the past three days as government forces appeared poised to crush the separatist Tamil Tigers.

The military's relentless offensive in recent months has almost routed the rebels, virtually ending their 25-year war for a separate Tamil nation in the Sinhalese-majority country.

But the UN and aid agencies have expressed concern for the estimated 250,000 civilians trapped in the shrinking sliver of land still controlled by the Tigers. International organisations, including the Red Cross, have urged both sides to let noncombatants out of the conflict zone.

The Government accuses the rebels of holding civilians as human shields, a charge the rebels deny.

The Red Cross said at the weekend that more than 400 patients are also stranded in a makeshift hospital in the north. It urged both sides to allow them to be evacuated.

Warnings from the UN of a looming food crisis in the conflict zone added to the plight of civilians trapped in the region. The group said that the World Food Program stocks in the area were gone.

Sri Lanka barred nearly all aid groups from the war zone last year. And it does not allow journalists in, making independent verification of the situation impossible.

On Saturday, army troops foiled a rebel attempt to breach the government forces' defence line near the town of Puthukkudiyiruppu in the north, killing at least 15 insurgents, a military statement said.

Female bomber kills soldiers

The rebels could not be reached for comment because communications to rebel-held territory have been severed.

Load-Date: February 9, 2009

End of Document

Minister Sirisena escapes suicide blast

Daily News (Sri Lanka)

October 10, 2008 Friday 3:28 PM EST

Copyright 2008 The Associated Newspapers of Ceylon Ltd. All Rights Reserved

Length: 387 words

Byline: Daily News Sri Lanka

Dateline: Colombo

Body

Colombo, Oct. 10 -- Agriculture Development and Agrarian Services Development Minister Maithripala Sirisena narrowly escaped an **LTTE** attempt on his life yesterday afternoon in Pirivena junction, Boralesgamuwa.

A **female** suicide terrorist blew herself targeting Minister Sirisena's motorcade at Pirivena junction around 1.15 p.m. when the Minister was returning after a Government function in Bandaragama, Military spokesman Brigadier Udaya Nanayakkara said.

The Minister escaped unharmed and one of the cars in the convoy was caught in the suicide attack. "A civilian was killed and five others injured including Deputy Minister Siripala Gamlath and newly appointed Ministry Secretary Ranjith Wijethilaka," he added.

"Wijethilaka had taken oaths today in the presence of Minister Sirisena before the suicide blast," Ministry sources said.

According to sources at Kalubowila hospital, five persons were admitted to the hospital immediately after the bomb blast. The Deputy Minister and the Ministry Secretary had been transferred to the Colombo National Hospital later.

Deputy Director of the Colombo National Hospital Dr. Anil Jasinghe told the Daily News that three injured persons had been brought to the CNH including Ministry Secretary Wijeyathilaka and two others. One succumbed to his injuries on admission to hospital.

"Ministry's Secretary Wijethilaka who is seriously injured in the blast was treated at the ICU and the third victim Ananda Withanage had undergone brain surgery," he added.

Two of the Minister's vehicles and several other vehicles were damaged in the incident.

"The minister's convoy vehicle bearing the number KB-0935 caught in the blast was badly damaged and several other vehicles in the vicinity were also damaged," police spokesman SSP Ranjith Gunasekera said. He said police beefed up security and a subsequent search operation was launched in the area. "Four police teams were deployed to conduct a full scale of investigation," he added.

The Government Analyst had visited the scene. He however declined to reveal the weight of the explosives used by the Tiger suicide cadre as it was early to ascertain the degree of explosives. Minister Sirisena earlier escaped an **LTTE** suicide attempt on his life in Modera on March 1, 2008.

Minister Sirisena escapes suicide blast

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

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

Load-Date: October 11, 2008

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Jetliner - Swiftest link between North and South

Daily Mirror (Sri Lanka)

June 24, 2008 Tuesday 3:23 PM EST

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Length: 1641 words

Byline: Daily News Sri Lanka

Dateline: Colombo

Body

Colombo, June 24 -- Pitch darkness was engulfing the entire Trincomalee harbour as the clock ticked midnight switching us to another date. Except for the rising moon and a few essential guiding lights, there was no other source of lighting to see what was going on there.

A sound akin to the humming of bees indicated that the place was fully crowded despite the darkness, but it was difficult to get an idea about the numbers. Thick darkness had covered them, except those who were exposed to the lights switched on to guide them to this specific location.

A mixture of Security Forces personnel and policemen in their uniforms were resting on their huge baggages till they got a signal to board the ship to start the voyage to Kankesanthurai.

After a weeks long vacation with their beloved ones and after waiting for days at a transit camp they were eagerly awaiting to start their voyage to Jaffna peninsula to report back to their duty.

All mechanisms were put in place at the Trincomalee harbour for this huge operation involving each and every unit of the Sri Lanka Navy and also of the Army, Air Force and the Police.

The roar of dinghies and water jets patrolling the inner harbour in the darkness gives an impression of the security sensitivity of the operation, meaning any unwanted elements infiltrating the harbour would lead to a bigger disaster.

So vigilance had become an essential part of this operation since this is the number one target of the **LTTE** to turn the tide against the Security Forces at this decisive juncture of the conflict.

First, it is time to load cargo into the ship. A certain amount of cargo is being transported in the ship to fulfil the needs of the Security Forces personnel serving in the Jaffna peninsula.

Captain Nilantha Heenatigala the Officer in Command of Jetliner is ready with his staff to signal the green light for the troops to board the vessel. It was at 12.30 a.m. that the green light was given for the troops to board on the ship.

Shadows on the ground started to move as the Officer in Charge Loading Lieutenant D.R.A. Wimalaratne gave the green light for the troops to get in. First it was the sailors and Navy officers who started to reach the ship.

Jetliner - Swiftest link between North and South

They were creeping through the darkness to reach the ship through a bridge created out of a number of dinghy boats connected together. They moved fast into the ship with their heavy baggages. But Naval Provost and Military Provosts were there to maintain discipline.

The four decks of the ship started to get crowded as a large number of soldiers and recruits were getting into the ship.

The soldiers awaiting at the China Bay transit camp are first transported in small ships to this location in the Trincomalee harbour.

Many veterans prefer to sit on the floor since they know it is convenient for them to travel sitting on the floor rather than the seats available in other decks.

The operation seems too big. "We start preparing for this mission several days ahead with the involvement of all three Forces and the Police once we feel the ship is fit for the mission," Captain Heenatigala explained.

A preparatory meeting for the mission is held at the Trincomalee Naval Base with the participation of representatives from all three Forces and the Police. They discuss the number of personnel to be allocated to the Army, Navy and the Police.

"But priority is given for the Army to transport their troops since we have other assets to transport our sailors," says Captain Heenatigala.

The meeting is held not only to discuss the number of personnel allocated to each Service but also to discuss the security arrangements for the troop movement with the involvement of intelligence officials.

"All three Services have to be on alert to make this effort a success to provide air, surface and underwater security," according to Captain Heenatigala.

A fleet of Navy Dvoras are also ready for the mission to clear the path for the ship, removing all fishing trawlers in the path.

"We impose restrictions on fishing trawlers 12 hours ahead of our mission. But we still find some trawlers not adhering to our instructions."

All the staff on board the ship, seven officers including three executive officers and 113 sailors fulfil duties in the fields of seamen, medical, supplies, logistics, marine engineering and communications services.

There was pindrop silence in the ship as it began its voyage at 3.45 a.m. after more than 3,000 Security Forces personnel boarded it. No one could feel the ship move in the darkness.

The ship crew began to retreat into their respective billets after completing their duties as another set of officials took over the navigation of the ship.

It was around 5 a.m. that we felt the swinging of the ship. A clear picture of the situation can be observed only after dawn as the ship was passing the sea off the coast of Alampil.

Sea conditions were becoming rough with 'white horses' appearing on the surface of the sea. "When we see white horses it predicts that the sea is going to be rough," Lieutenant Wimalaratne says while taking us on a tour of the ship.

All the Security Forces personnel were resting on various places seeking their own comfort on seats and on the floor, some watching TV and some having meals at the canteen.

The women soldiers and sailors have a separate area to travel in. The Seva Vanitha Unit of the Sri Lanka Navy runs a cafeteria on the third deck of the ship.

Jetliner - Swiftest link between North and South

"The respective Services are providing meals for the troops in the ship since it is difficult for us to provide meals for all," Lt. Wimalaratne explained while showing us the cafeteria and the adjoining medical section on the third floor.

"Many soldiers prefer to sit on the floor as they do not feel the rolling and pitching of the ship in the rough seas," Lt. Wimalaratne noted.

Navy officials and sailors were busy on the 'bridge' of the ship which is the key area to navigate the ship. They were keenly observing the radar screen to detect any threatening movements to the ship while keeping contact with the Dvoras.

Captain Heenatigala gave instructions to the Navigating Officer to take the ship into the deep seas to avoid the rough seas as the ship was passing the Mullaitivu area.

The sea waves come to the deck putting the sailors providing security for the ship in an inconvenient position. They hang on to the deck despite the sea spray thrashing on their faces.

"We are taking precautionary measures to avoid any LTTE threat," Captain Heenatigala says while recalling the number of attempts made by the LTTE to attack the ships transporting troops.

The LTTE made a major attempt to attack the Jetliner on August 01, 2006 as it was heading towards Trincomalee harbour. Another vessel 'Pearl Cruise II' carrying 700 troops came under an LTTE attack on the eve of Vesak Poya in the same year, but the Navy's support craft foiled the LTTE mission.

"The LTTE is aware that they can make a significant change in the current warfare if they can block this mission," Captain Heenatigala added.

Now all are awake on board the vessel as it was reaching Point Pedro, the tip of the island in the Eastern edge of the Jaffna peninsula.

Troops were getting ready to disembark the ship as they saw the ship reach towards land.

"In another one hour we will be reaching our destination the Kankesanthurai harbour," Lt. Wimalaratne says pointing his finger towards Kankesanthurai harbour.

Another fleet of Dvoras were escorting the Jetliner as it was reaching land. Two MI 24 helicopters were providing close air surveillance as the ship passed Point Pedro.

Fleets of Dvoras from the Eastern Naval Area and the Northern Naval Area escort the troop movement mission.

The ship is now getting ready for the final phase of its operation. The Security Forces personnel were busy preparing for disembarking with the huge baggages on their shoulders.

The officer in charge of loading Lt. Wimalaratne was giving instructions to sailors, while the Navigating officer was taking the ship into the harbour.

Dots in blue and green were visible on the edge of the harbour. The dots become more clear and it was a gathering of more than 3,000 Security Forces personnel on land. They are eagerly awaiting to board the vessel to go on leave after a hectic duty.

All things were ready at the Kankesanthurai harbour to unload 3,000 troops and cargo while loading another 3,000 Trincomalee bound troops.

First it was time to unload the cargo. Labourers were running with their luggage on their shoulders to fasten the process of unloading cargo. Two gates are now open from the two sides to facilitate the loading and unloading process.

Jetliner - Swiftest link between North and South

"This might be the fastest loading and unloading process in the world. We complete the process within 30 minutes to commence our return journey to Trincomalee," Captain Heenatigala added.

As the last soldier boards the ship for the return journey the ship closes its gates. Refuelling also takes place swiftly with the Navy improving all its facilities at the KKS harbour.

The Dvoras escorting the ship are first launched into the sea giving close protection to the ship. Then the ship starts the return voyage towards Trincomalee.

But the burden on the Naval personnel in the ship had not eased. They were still busy in their operation rooms and checking each and every movement of the ship till they reached its final destination.

The Commanders of the Navy, Army and the Air Force too are on alert on the movement since it is a major operation concerning all three Forces and the Police connecting the South and Jaffna at this decisive juncture of war.

It was around 9 p.m. that all of them breathed a sigh of relief and relaxed relieving a heavy burden on them as the Jetliner - the bridge connecting the South and the Jaffna peninsula safely entered the Trincomalee harbour.

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

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

Load-Date: September 16, 2008

Tigers fire at bus killing four

Daily Mirror (Sri Lanka)

July 12, 2008 Saturday 2:49 PM EST

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Length: 373 words

Byline: Daily News Sri Lanka

Dateline: Colombo

Body

Colombo, July 12 -- Four people including a mother and a son and two other **females** were killed and 25 others sustained injuries yesterday as **LTTE** cadres hiding in the Yala National Park opened fire at a Sri Lanka Transport Board bus plying from Moneragala to Kataragama.

The incident took place between 50 and 51 Kilometre posts on the Buttala - Kataragama road yesterday around 10.30 a.m.

Nine-year-old Mahesh and his mother Karunawathie travelling to Kataragama along with his two brothers and father were killed in this shooting. The five member family from Puwakgodra area was travelling to Kataragama to attend the Kataragama festival.

According to Kataragama Police, Tiger cadres have opened fire at the bus from the front and later from various directions when it slowed down due to fire as it had passed the 49th Kilometre post on the Buttala-Kataragama road after nearly half a kilometre past the fourth Police Post close to Galge camp.

The incident had taken place just 10 kilometres away from Kataragama town.

Several Police posts have been established along the Buttala Kataragama road following the recent incidents in and around Yala National Park. The Army is patrolling the jungle area.

According to Kataragama Police the driver had accelerated the bus despite the minor injuries caused to him from the shooting and arrived at Kataragama once he felt that the bus was under fire and passengers have been injured.

"The injured people were admitted to the Kataragama hospital soon after the bus arrived in Kataragama. Out of 25 injured four people have been discharged after being treated at the hospital," Military Spokesman Brigadier Udaya Nanayakkara told the Daily News.

The CTB bus from the Moneragala depot which was plying between Colombo and Moneragala has been extended upto Kataragama to facilitate pilgrims attending the Kataragama festival held from July 3 to 17. "This is a cowardly attack by the **LTTE** to disturb the ongoing Kataragama festival which has witnessed the participation of a large number of people," the Brigadier added.

A combined cordon and search operation was launched in the area soon after the incident by the Army and the Police.

Tigers fire at bus killing four

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End of Document

RAW trying to separate Balochistan Province and destabilize regional countries

The Balochistan Times (AsiaNet)

January 24, 2009 Saturday

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Length: 640 words

Body

ISLAMABAD, January 24: The leading newspaper of Sri Lanka 'Daily Mirror' in its editorial has highly criticized the role of Indian Intelligence Agency (RAW) is playing in the regional countries to destabilize them. The editorial has specially referred to Pakistan. It says "among its (RAW's) most ambitious operations that are currently underway is the move to separate Balochistan province from Pakistan by supporting Balochistan Liberation Army." The newspaper writes that "It certainly is a monumental task for the informed Sri Lankan or for that matter anyone in the neighbourhood of India to keep a straight face when talking about the Research and Analysis Wing (RAW) in India.

Formed in 1968, the predatory operations carried out by this external intelligence agency of India in the neighboring countries, is perhaps the best example as to how a geographically advantageous nations bully their little neighbours.

A careful study of the RAW would spell out that its modus operandi include multi-nationals, non-governmental organizations and even cultural centres. Among its most ambitious operations that are currently underway is the move to separate Baluchistan province from Pakistan by supporting Balochistan Liberation Army." Commenting on RAW's role in Sri Lanka, it says "The RAW in Sri Lanka has a pretty colourful record. Having raised, nursed and fortified the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam it later went through phases where it adopted 'rock the baby, pinch the baby' approach towards the LTTE. While many thought the assassination of Rajiv Gandhi would have hardened the approach of the RAW towards the LTTE it really did not happen that way.

While New Delhi was shattered by the death of Nehru's grandson the less emotional RAW moved on with rest of operation. In 2007 ripples were created in the spy agency when one of its Colombo based officers Ravi Nair of 1975 batch was found allegedly carrying on an affair with a woman working for another country's spy agency. The 'crime' was considered only second to what was committed by the RAW Joint Secretary Rabinder Singh in 2004 when he escaped with copies of several highly confidential documents and is believed to have passed them on to the CIA.

This was after Singh's superiors confronted him with evidence that he had spent time with a Delhi based female US embassy officer at a resort down New Delhi Jaipur highway. The incident really rocked the RAW and forced it to go for several reforms which included strong counter-check measures on its officers. Despite these measures within three years a second scandal broke out, this time in Colombo. Following the embarrassment caused by Ravi Nair in Colombo, the RAW recalled the officer made it a point to post a lady officer to Colombo, probably thinking that's the best way to discourage other countries".

The editorial of Daily Mirror further concedes that "That reports that the RAW is out to create mischief in the backdrop of recent military victories by Sri Lanka troops surfaced days after media reports that Pottu Amman who was pulled up by Prabhakaran over recent debacles, had slipped off to India.

RAW trying to separate Balochistan Province and destabilize regional countries

That the RAW was planning to host a selected group of fleeing LTTE seniors in India with a view to checkmate Sri Lanka in the future was the speculation among many war analysts around this time.

Many held that it would only be a surprise if it doesn't resort to such a counter strategy given its record which included among others dozens and dozens of moves to weaken both SLFP and UNP led governments in Sri Lanka.

The editorial concludes that "All this is little too much evidence for a cynic to dismiss that the whole thing is just a grand 'conspiracy theory', a rumour spread by the anti-Indian lobby in Colombo. Sri Lanka is certainly in no mood to trust the Research and Analysis Wing of India.

Load-Date: January 30, 2009

End of Document

UN inaction and the China factor; Child soldiers in Burma

The International Herald Tribune

September 13, 2008 Saturday

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Section: OPINION; Pg. 8

Length: 837 words

Byline: Jo Becker - The New York Times Media Group

Dateline: UNITED NATIONS, New York

Body

Myin Win was 11 years old when he was first recruited into Burma's national army. He was picked up by soldiers while selling vegetables at a railway station and sent to a military training camp. He weighed only 70 pounds, or about 32 kilograms, and said that the guns were so heavy he could hardly lift them.

He was able to escape, but was recruited a second time at the age of 14. This time he tried to negotiate. "I'll give you money," he said to the lance corporal. The recruiter replied, "I don't want your money." Myin Win said, "I'll call my mother and she can vouch for me." The soldier told him, "I don't want to see your mother or father and I don't want money. I want you to join the army."

Myin Win was sent to training again and, while still only 14, deployed into ethnic minority areas where he was ordered to burn down houses and capture civilians. "We were ordered that if we see anyone, including women and children, then we must approach and catch them and take them to our officers for interrogation," he said. "If they try to run, shoot them."

Burma's military regime may have the largest number of child soldiers in the world. Thousands of children serve in Burma's national army, swept up in massive recruitment drives to offset high rates of desertion and a lack of willing volunteers. The United Nations Secretary General has identified the regime as one of the world's worst perpetrators of child recruitment, citing it in six separate reports to the UN Security Council since 2002.

Two years ago, the Security Council created a special working group specifically to address abuses against children in armed conflict. The group is empowered to recommend arms embargoes and other targeted sanctions against violators, like Burma, that repeatedly recruit and use child soldiers.

But in Burma's case, the Security Council has shamefully squandered its responsibility. After a formal review of Burma's violations, the working group's recent report fails even to acknowledge that Burma's army recruits children. Far from considering well-justified sanctions, the working group repeatedly welcomed the regime's "cooperation" with the UN.

The approach to Burma is in stark contrast to the Security Council working group's tough - and effective - approach to other perpetrators like Sri Lanka's Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam. Last year the Security Council threatened sanctions against the Tamil Tigers for the group's use of child soldiers during Sri Lanka's two-decade-long civil war, and gave a six-month deadline for action. It worked. Reports of child recruitment by the Tamil Tigers dropped from 1,090 in 2004 to 26 in the first six months of this year.

UN inaction and the China factor Child soldiers in Burma

In other cases, the Security Council has also obtained results. In Ivory Coast, it pushed government and rebel forces to adopt action plans to end child recruitment; the practice has now been abandoned in that country. In the Democratic Republic of Congo, it referred information on violations to sanctions committees and urged the arrest and prosecution of commanders responsible for child recruitment. Although some child recruitment continues in the country, an estimated 30,000 child soldiers have been released or demobilized since 2003.

So why is the Security Council giving Burma a free pass? In a word, China. A stalwart ally of Burma's military regime, China tried to prevent the Security Council from discussing Burma's record of violations against children. According to diplomats, China's representatives (often backed by Russia and Indonesia) have consistently rejected all efforts to pressure Burma to address its use of child soldiers - including proposals for a more detailed action plan on the issue from Burma's government, access by UN personnel to Burma's territory to verify Burma's claims that it has no child soldiers, or even a follow-up report on progress.

Despite all eyes being on China during the recent Olympic Games, this obstructionist behavior provides another sad illustration of China's failure to uphold basic human rights standards, including protections for some of the world's most vulnerable children.

One diplomat said, "China's position was that we must build a relationship of trust with Burma, and to do that, we must accept whatever they say." Including, apparently, the fiction that Burma has no child soldiers.

Without credible pressure from the Security Council, UN officials in Burma - already doing little to engage the military regime on its use of child soldiers - are unlikely to demand concrete action. And unfortunately for Myin Win and thousands like him, the regime has even less incentive to end the routine recruitment of children into its military ranks.

It's hard to decide whose actions are more shameful - Burma's exploitation of children as soldiers or the Security Council's failure to condemn the practice.

*

Jo Becker is the Children's Rights Advocacy Director for Human Rights Watch and co-author of "Sold to be Soldiers: The Recruitment and Use of Child Soldiers in Burma."

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UN inaction and the China factor; Child soldiers in Burma

The International Herald Tribune

September 13, 2008 Saturday

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UN inaction and the China factor; Child soldiers in Burma

The International Herald Tribune

September 13, 2008 Saturday

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Section: OPINION; Pg. 8

Length: 837 words

Byline: Jo Becker - The New York Times Media Group

Dateline: UNITED NATIONS, New York

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Load-Date: September 14, 2008

Letters

South China Morning Post
February 21, 2008 Thursday

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Section: NEWS; Letters; Pg. 18

Length: 1236 words

Body

Televised trials the answer to an outdated system

With few exceptions, jury service is a statutory obligation of every able citizen of good character. When selected as a juror, a person will carry, as the judiciary's jury guide says, a "personal responsibility to ensure that justice is done". Given such a weighty duty, every juror is entitled to query why some citizens enjoy exemption.

Consider Mr Justice Woo Kwok-hing's excuse for the exemption of judges ("Law panel calls for wider jury pool", January 29). "Because of his knowledge of law, a judge serving as a juror may not listen to the trial judge ... He may encourage other members of the jury to disregard what the trial judge says."

The gist of what Mr Justice Woo said is that jurors may disregard the trial judge's direction on evidence and law because it is not necessarily correct. If the jury must abide by bench direction, the court may as well bring such direction to its own conclusion and do without the jury.

If legal correctness is the overriding concern, the judiciary should conscript legal professionals into jury service and spare lay folks. Legal professionals are excluded from jury service because jury trials are meant for the court to understand and adopt lay representatives' idea of justice - not for jurors to follow the court's version of justice.

Jury trials which selectively bring lay citizens into the court are an outdated institution much criticised nowadays. The judiciary can better legitimise its rulings if it reaches out to the public by televising hearings. Some jurisdictions are televising their trials. Does our judiciary have the courage to follow suit?

Audrey Lam, Mid-Levels

Committed to finding peace

Regarding your editorial ("UN must intervene in Sri Lanka's bloodshed", February 4), Sri Lanka has upheld participatory democracy for more than 60 years and is recognised for its efforts to maintain high socio-economic standards for its people. However, Sri Lanka is dealing with a violent terrorist movement. The FBI has rated the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (**LTTE**) among the most dangerous terrorists in the world and has made a global request for co-ordination with the agency in cracking down on the outfit's covert activities.

As you may be aware, upon assumption of office in 2005, President Mahinda Rajapaksa declared his commitment for a negotiated settlement and invited the **LTTE** to participate in direct talks, which the **LTTE** has not taken seriously.

Letters

The Sri Lankan security forces were forced to intervene in humanitarian operations in 2006, when the LTTE closed the sluice gate at Mavilaru anicut, in blatant violation of international norms, causing much hardship to the livelihood of the people.

The security forces have always taken caution to minimise civilian casualties in engaging in limited operations, as they did in Vakarai, liberating the area without causing civilian casualties. Similar efforts were made in 2007, during the liberation of the rest of the eastern province.

The government of Sri Lanka never abruptly withdrew from the CFA [ceasefire agreement]. Although the CFA was seriously flawed at its very inception, the government pursued the CFA to find a political solution despite difficulties in reaching a southern consensus for this agreement. The truce was de facto ended in 2003 by the LTTE, but under the cloak of the CFA they went ahead with the development of an air wing and unabated child recruitment, killing many innocent civilians and moderate Tamil intellectuals.

The government believes that termination of the CFA should not hamper the process of finding a negotiated settlement to the national problem. It will now be a more inclusive process engaging all moderate Tamil parties. The All Party Representative Committee, comprising 13 political parties represented in parliament, has already finalised interim proposals aimed at meeting the aspirations of the people of the north and the east to which endorsement from the international community has been received, including from the governments of India and Japan.

The government of Sri Lanka is committed to the protection of human rights and would like to place itself beyond reproach regarding such concern and has pursued an open and transparent policy on these issues. The appointment of the International Independent Group of Eminent Persons, inviting high officials of UN institutions to visit Sri Lanka and deliberate on their concerns, are some cases in point.

While battling terrorism, the government remains open to scrutiny by all the core treaty monitoring mechanisms to which we have subscribed. All such national processes shall be supplemented and supported by international assistance without compromising our position as a sovereign country.

Karunatilaka Amunugama,

Sri Lankan ambassador to China

Catholic leaders streets ahead

Your profile of Coadjutor Bishop John Tong Hong ("Keeper of the faith", February 16) quoted him as modestly saying he is no orator.

Sure, Cardinal Joseph Zen Ze-kun's articulate and brave remarks on a range of issues have inspired and irritated many, and as a public figure his shoes will be hard to fill. But Bishop Tong can take heart, because anyway the Catholic leaders in Hong Kong are streets ahead of their Anglican brethren in terms of leading public opinion.

When it was announced that the last Anglican archbishop was retiring, most people learned only then that the office even existed, so low a profile did he keep. And the new one has unfortunately been equally invisible since he took on the purple mantle.

Those at the head of the Catholic Church understand that leaders must lead, and be seen to lead. That idea seems to have escaped the learned considerations of the Anglicans in similar positions.

Rob Leung, Wan Chai

Empty bags

In her letter "Persevere with bag policy" (February 16), Daphne Wong doubted the sincerity of ParknShop's motives in scrapping its "no plastic bag" policy because it abandoned the scheme so quickly. She lamented it to be a shame, as many people supported the scheme, and she blamed a few opposing voices.

Letters

But hasn't she realised that ParknShop only managed to raise about \$59HK,000 during its five-day campaign? On the basis of a 20-cent charge per bag, just 295,000 bags were sold.

Using figures from the Environmental Protection Department, that we each dispose of three bags a day, there would have been fewer than 100,000 shoppers patronising the store's 220 outlets during the five days, or about 90 customers for each outlet per day, on average.

Is that the kind of support she was talking about?

Charles Chow Chi-man, Sheung Shui

Why so noisy?

Recent complaints about loud talking on public transport ("Tone it down", January 25) reminded me of the time I got on a crowded bus in Wan Chai with two chattering women. One of them took an empty seat in front while her friend had to go way to the back, so they carried on their loud chatter over people's heads across several rows.

I sat near a middle-aged European couple who looked shocked. The man looked at one of the women and said "Ssssh!" He was ignored, not just by the chatterers but by everyone else, who seemed to accept that noise on public transport was part of Hong Kong life.

What a pity folks here can't be like the polite Japanese who don't need signs everywhere asking them to be considerate of others.

Renata Lopez, Wan Chai

Load-Date: February 21, 2008

In brief

Geelong Advertiser (Australia)

February 7, 2008 Thursday

1 - Edition

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Section: WORLD; Pg. 21

Length: 391 words

Body

Bring on the Year of the Rat

BEIJING, Wednesday -- Drum rolls and dragon dances set off Lunar New Year celebrations in Beijing today as revellers welcomed an Olympic-themed Year of the Rat. Millions will throng parks across China to enjoy the food and fun during the holiday season and in Beijing, the host of the 2008 Olympics, there was an added dimension at Long Tan Park. The park's temple fair was chosen by Olympic organisers to showcase the Games and bring the Olympics closer to the people. Adults and children were invited to try their hand at sports they have only seen on television such as archery, shooting, fencing and boxing.

Roadside bomb kills four

DIWANIYAH, Wednesday --- A powerful roadside bomb aimed at a US military convoy in Iraq has instead ripped through two civilian cars, killing four people and wounding six, police said. Two women were among the dead. a police officer said. The blast rocked the centre of Diwaniyah, about 180km south of Baghdad.

Underage drinking crackdown

LONDON, Wednesday British police could be given powers to confiscate alcohol from teenagers under 18 even if there is no indication they plan to drink it, Home Secretary Jacqui Smith said today. She told the BBC she was considering increasing police powers to help crack down on underage drinking in public places. She was also writing to all police chiefs, reminding them of legal powers they already have to take alcohol from young people and to suggest they use them over the coming half-term holiday.

Aircraft bomb Tigers

COLOMBO, Wednesday -- Sri Lankan war aircraft bombed targets inside Tamil Tiger-held territory in the north as ground forces clashed with the rebels, killing at least 37 guerillas, the defence ministry said. The warplanes hit a location near Iranamadu early today after government forces destroyed 30 bunkers of the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) along frontlines in the Jaffna peninsula, the ministry claimed It said at least 12 members of the LTTE were killed while the security forces suffered five wounded in the pre-dawn attack.

Pilot refused bail

In brief

JAKARTA, Wednesday -- Indonesian authorities have rejected a bail request for the Garuda pilot arrested over the fatal crash that killed 21 people, including five Australians, in Yogyakarta last year. But the Yogyakarta indicated bail may be considered in the future.

Load-Date: February 7, 2008

End of Document

People hail Pillayan's entry into democratic stream

Sunday Observer (Sri Lanka)

May 25, 2008 Sunday 2:30 PM EST

Copyright 2008 The Associated Newspapers of Ceylon Ltd. All Rights Reserved

Length: 930 words

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

Dateline: Colombo

Body

Colombo, May 25 -- The Provincial Council Election in the Eastern Province was concluded last week. According to final results, President Mahinda Rajapaksa appointed the TVMP leader Sivanesanathurai Chandrakanthan alias Pillayan as the Chief Minister.

When the 'Sunday Observer' interviewed people about the Chief Ministerial appointment, a teacher, attached to Jaffna Hindu College and living in Bambalapitiya, Nirmala Sellahewa welcomed the Government's decision in appointing Pillayan as the Chief Minister in the Eastern Province.

"He is the most suitable candidate because he is the only person who has the courage and the ability to tackle the LTTE leadership".

She said after this appointment the Chief Minister cannot play his usual 'hide and seek' game any longer as he has lots of responsibilities to fulfil for the sake of people.

"I think the CM should first bring a peaceful atmosphere to the entire Eastern Province in order to stop killings that we hear almost everyday".

Private sector Executive, Adrian Mendis welcomed the appointment of Pillayan and said that the new CM has to play a positive role to bring unity among Tamils and Muslims in the Province.

He said after the appointment of Pillayan many Muslims are of the view that the new CM will not fulfil the aspirations of the Muslim community.

"Therefore, I urge Pillayan to call for a public meeting before he assumes duties and brief all communities in the District about the future development plans he is expected to carry out.

Advanced Level student of Pushpadana Balika Vidyalaya, Kandy, Swarna Rambukwella is confident that Pillayan and his group could tackle the LTTE easily with the support of the Government.

She said the President would have appointed Pillayan, because Pillayan could do a better job to bring the LTTE to the democratic stream. Dental surgeon of Gampaha, Dr. Hasitha Illukkumbura suggested that Pillayan should hold a public rally in the Province before he assumes duties and the rally should be addressed by President Mahinda Rajapaksa and ministers.

People hail Pillayan's entry into democratic stream

He urged the new CM to set up medical centres, schools, low income housing projects, roads and water distribution projects for drinking and agricultural purposes.

Tour guide, Sohan Ariyadurai who is attached to a tourist hotel in Batticaloa, welcomed the appointment of a Chief Minister to the Eastern Province and urged the new CM to take steps to further develop the tourism industry in the Province.

"If the CM takes steps to create a better security situation in all three districts, Trincomalee, Amapara and Batticaloa, we are confident that we can bring tourists from Colombo, so that, we will be able to generate employment opportunities to youth in the Province".

As a retired schoolteacher, Ariyadurai also said some schools in the Province lack of educational equipment and as a result several small schools have been closed down.

"I hope the new administration under the leadership of Pillayan will fulfil the needs of schoolchildren, while providing housing and other sanitary facilities to displaced people who have now returned to their homes".

University lecturer, Ranjan Amirthanayagam said that although there are parliamentarians in the Province, no one is interested in the area development activities.

"Therefore, I urge the new CM to appoint at least a committee to look into the grievances of people and provide their needs such as medical centres, hospitals, bridges, banks, schools and so on".

Private sector worker, Kamal Sujeewa of Gampaha wanted the new CM Pillayan to start development activities with foreign assistance rather than waiting for the Central Government, since the Government too running out of funds due to the unending war.

Photographer, Sasanka de Siva of Moratuwa wanted Pillayan to send sportsmen and **women** from Eastern schools to schools in the Southern Province, so that sporting links among communities can be strengthened. He also urged the new CM to construct playgrounds, repair dilapidated roads and also provide electricity in remote villages in the Eastern Province.

Executive in the Railway Department, Tyrone Preena wanted the new Chief Minister to improve the rail services between the East and the South, since it will benefit the agricultural community of both provinces.

Medical practitioner Dr. Kanchana Pushpamal of Galle said the new CM Pillayan was the ideal person to talk to the **LTTE** leader Prabakaran and urged the President or any other Government minister to encourage Pillayan to take up the challenge.

Garment factory owner, Srinath Kapuruge welcomed the appointment of new CM and urged him to establish new industrial zones in the Eastern Province in places such as Katunayaka, Biyagama and Seethawaka with foreign collaboration.

"It will largely help to provide employment to youth in the Eastern Province".

Mercantile sector employee, Dharmasiri Ananda of Kaduwela asked the new CM to take immediate steps to improve the agricultural sector in these three provinces by granting bank loans to farmer families and also the fisher families.

D. K. Wasantha of Ambalangoda said "I urge the new CM to expedite the work of housing construction to improve the resettlement process of displaced persons, since the current records reveal that nearly 120,000 people have returned to their homes".

Private Sector employee, R. B. Gunawardana of Padukka proposed the Government to hold ministerial conferences in the three provinces every week, so that, people can put forward their grievances and proposals.

People hail Pillayan's entry into democratic stream

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

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Load-Date: October 1, 2008

End of Document

Female Tiger bomber kills 28

The Australian

February 10, 2009 Tuesday

2 - All-round First Edition

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Section: WORLD; Pg. 12

Length: 372 words

Body

COLOMBO: A suspected Tamil Tiger suicide bomber killed 20 soldiers and eight civilians when she blew herself yesterday at a centre where government forces were processing Sri Lankans fleeing the northern war zone.

The bombing was the first major suicide attack in more than a month and led to fears the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam -- boxed in by the military and on the verge of defeat -- will increasingly turn to guerilla warfare.

Following a string of victories, the military backed the rebels into a small strip of land on the northeastern coast, where the Red Cross estimates 250,000 civilians are also trapped.

The military has accused the rebels of holding the civilians as human shields and called for non-combatants to flee to government-controlled areas. The rebels have accused the government of indiscriminately shelling the war zone, leading to increasing civilian casualties.

Yesterday morning, more than 800 civilians had crossed the front lines and were being searched by soldiers before being sent to camps farther south, military spokesman Udaya Nanayakkara said.

When the attacker was frisked, she set off the bomb she was wearing, killing 28 people, Brigadier Nanayakkara said. The blast also wounded 24 troops and 40 civilians.

Footage on state television showed a child in a purple checked dress lying lifeless on the ground. Other civilians lay dead nearby. Plastic chairs they were sitting in as they waited to be processed were overturned, and blood stained the ground.

“The LTTE is desperate because they don't have any control over the civilians now,” Brigadier Nanayakkara said.

“They wanted to stop these people coming in.”

The UN condemned the bombing.

“We deplore the loss of civilian life in this targeted killing. It's a blow for people who have suffered so much,” UN resident co-ordinator Neil Buhne said.

The military has said the flow of civilians out of the war zone has increased in recent days, with 4700 fleeing on Sunday, bringing the total number of non-combatants to escape the war zone to 20,000 this year, Brigadier Nanayakkara said.

Female Tiger bomber kills 28

The **LTTE** has been fighting since 1983 for a separate state for the nation's ethnic Tamil minority. More than 70,000 people have been killed in the fighting.

Load-Date: February 9, 2009

End of Document

Tamil Tigers blamed for deadly bus bombing

The Gazette (Montreal)

February 2, 2008 Saturday

Final Edition

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Section: NEWS; Pg. A21; Fast Track

Length: 81 words

Byline: AFP; Reuters

Dateline: COLOMBO

Body

At least 20 people were killed and another 50 wounded in a powerful bomb attack on a bus in north-central Sri Lanka, military spokesman Udaya Nanayakkara said. Six men and 14 women were killed in the attack in Dambulla, 150 kilometres north of Colombo, Nanayakkara said, adding that the wounded had been admitted to several hospitals in the region. A hospital spokesman said there were no foreigners among the casualties. The military said Tamil Tiger rebels were responsible for the attack.

Load-Date: February 5, 2008

Liberating the Wanni: At whose expense?

Daily Mirror (Sri Lanka)

September 4, 2008 Thursday 3:54 PM EST

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Length: 1538 words

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

Dateline: Colombo

Body

Colombo, Sept. 4 -- To say that the situation in Kilinochchi is normal, is far from the truth. While military operations continue in the district, thousands of civilians are forced to flee their homes in order to avoid the battle and save themselves and their children from falling prey to the war.

The government which was well aware of the increasing number of refugees, especially in the Wanni region has reacted to the situation and had not only invited but urged the refugees to cross into government controlled areas, where safety has been assured.

However, despite the guarantee, civilians were unable to move. Having being forced to witness a bloody battle, they remain trapped and have become pawns in this conflict as the LTTE denied them their freedom of movement in order to use them as human shields in the event the security forces move further into the area.

The situation which is far more than what it sounds, has even led to the United Nations reiterating to the LTTE directly, their obligation towards international humanitarian law and has urged them to allow maximum numbers to move into areas they prefer.

The UN which is responsible along with the government and the NGOs in distributing aid and food to the civilians admits that all is not well in the Wanni but adds that the situation currently remains as a humanitarian emergency rather than a humanitarian crisis.

"The current situation in the Wanni is a cause for much concern but it is better than what we expected. Thousands of civilians remain trapped but we have reminded all parties to the conflict their obligation towards humanitarian law. We hope that taking this into consideration, the civilians are allowed their freedom of movement soon," UN Spokesperson, Gordon Weiss said.

In an interview with Daily Mirror, Weiss added that a large number who were trapped and affected by the conflict in the Wanni were children which is why the situation was a cause for much concern. "Civilians in the area live in fear as a very large number who remain trapped are children. Therefore the civilians are worried about the survival of their young which is why they want to move to safer areas at any cost," Weiss said.

Taking the matter into consideration, government efforts to remove the civilians from LTTE controlled areas into safer ground cannot be ignored. A day after Defence Secretary Gotabhaya Rajapaksa, at a rare media briefing said that steps would be taken to invite the civilians into government controlled areas, action was immediately taken.

Liberating the Wanni: At whose expense?

During the press briefing Rajapaksa assured that as an initial step leaflets would be dropped over Kilinochchi inviting the civilians to cross into government controlled areas - an assurance which was immediately implemented by the Air Force the next day.

Rajapaksa also mentioned that the security forces would soon establish an escape route for the civilians and the ongoing military operations was mainly aimed at freeing the thousands trapped by the LTTE.

He also stressed that once the escape route was established and the civilians safely brought to Vavuniya, they would defeat the LTTE and take control of the Killinochchi District. "Our military plans are going perfectly to what we expected. But before we accomplish our goal fully, we have to take the civilians out as the LTTE has currently trapped thousands of civilians for its personal gain. But as time goes on and the security forces advance further into the north, they will have no choice but to free the civilians. That is what we are expecting," Rajapaksa told the media.

The military is currently trying its best to establish the escape route for the estimated 200,000 refugees in the Wanni. Just earlier this week, the military said that once an escape route was established, an additional leaflet in the form of a map would be air dropped over Kilinochchi once again so that refugees would know which route to take in order to flee.

The military however refused to divulge the details, stating that if done so right now, there would be a threat of a possible sabotage along the route. "We want the civilians out safely that is why we are working on the escape route and will not divulge it immediately," the military said.

According to the Defence Secretary the route would be well protected by the security forces who would assist the civilians into Vavuniya safely.

All of Rajapaksa's words may have been implemented but what is yet to be implemented is improving the health and shelter services in the Wanni according to reports from the NGO's.

The UN earlier this week admitted that thousands of civilians continued to live in rough conditions and many under trees due to the lack of shelter. However the civilians themselves were trying to find immediate alternate shelters where the women and children could live in hygienic and safe environment, the UN added.

"It is false to say that each civilian is living in a safer temporary house or camp. Due to the large number of civilians, thousands continue to sleep roughly, in Cadjan huts and under trees. However the situation seems to be changing everyday so we are unable to say how many civilians are without shelters right now," Weiss said.

The government however at a press briefing last week said otherwise and assured that all civilians were living in safe and hygienic shelters with over 90% of the refugees living with friends or relatives. Human Rights and Disaster Management Minister Mahinda Samarasingha himself denied that civilians were sleeping under trees and said that such allegations were only false and fabricated.

Minister Samarasingha also assured that schools would begin to function on September 8 as many schools which had been used to house the displaced had to be re-opened by the time the new school term starts on the said date.

Meanwhile, as reports of a medical disaster seems to surface in the Wanni due to the large number of refugees, the government however said that such reports too were false and fabricated. Supporting their statements, the government said that adequate medicines were reaching the civilians with officials from the Health Ministry also admitting that according to reports by the respective GA's it was false to say that the medical sector in the Wanni had been hampered.

Drugs may however not be the cause for concern but what truly has hampered the medical sector is the lack of fuel, with even the UN admitting that medical services in the Wanni were suffering due to this reason.

Transporting seriously ill patients from Killinochchi to Vavuniya has raised much concern and ambulances have ceased to function in the Killinochchi District.

Liberating the Wanni: At whose expense?

Meanwhile, according to the UN, since the larger number of refugees who had been affected by the conflict were children, there were reports that malnutrition was on the rise amongst children in the Wanni - an allegation which the government once again denied this week.

However the UN said that many cases of malnutrition had been reported.

The UN also said that although there was no threat of a disease outbreak, the possibility always existed. "It is very unlikely that the refugees in the Wanni are going to suffer from an outbreak of disease but we have noticed that every time there is a concentration of people, the threat always exists. Especially now that the rains have started and many civilians are still without shelters, the threat of an outbreak can grow," UN's Weiss said.

Meanwhile, the government indeed has to be commended on their efforts to send adequate food and relief supplies to the trapped refugees with even the UN admitting that there was no immediate shortage.

The government seems to have maintained their word, with the Defence Secretary himself last week guaranteeing that the government would not allow the refugees to starve at any cost.

He stressed that adequate food and relief supplies were made available for the civilians trapped in the Wanni as a lorry containing medicines and dry rations entered Kilinochchi every day. He added that the results were "dead satisfactory" as the government agents in the north had informed the government that ample food and medicines were available for the thousands trapped in the Wanni.

"We are working closely with the UN organizations and it has been confirmed by the respective GAs that the civilians are not starving or suffering from medical shortages," Rajapaksa said.

According to Essential Services Commissioner, S.B. Divaratna, there are currently 110,000 IDPs in the Kilinochchi District while an estimated 15,000 remained in Mullaitivu.

About 80,000 IDPs (around 20,000 families) from Mannar north, Thunukkai and Pandiyakulam AGA regions had moved into the Kilinochchi district.

Most of them have been housed in 22 schools in Kilinochchi while some have moved in with their relatives.

In the Mullaitivu district over 132,990 persons (around 31,000 families) had been displaced from three to four AGA divisions.

GA Mullaitivu Ms. Emelda Sukumar said there were around 75 villages that have been abandoned due to the fighting in Thunukkai and surrounding areas. The people have moved into the Mullaitivu area and were accommodated in welfare centres.

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Load-Date: September 4, 2008

World - Nine killed in Sri Lanka shell attack

Morning Star

January 3, 2009 Saturday

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Length: 370 words

Byline: Our Foreign Desk

Body

Artillery shells slammed into an overcrowded hospital in Sri Lanka's northern war zone, killing at least nine patients, the Red Cross reported yesterday.

The attack on the hospital on Sunday intensified concern for the fate of some 250,000 civilians trapped in the shrinking war zone where Tamil Tiger guerillas have been boxed in.

The **Tamil Tigers** claimed that they had killed 150 soldiers and injured more than 300 since Sunday, but the army denied that it had lost any men.

The fighting is taking place in Puthukkudiyiruppu area, where three artillery barrages landed on the paediatrics and **women**'s wards of the Puthukkudiyiruppu hospital.

Red Cross spokeswoman Sarasi Wijeratne said that the shells, which also hit a kitchen and a chapel, had killed nine people and wounded at least 20.

The aid agency, which has offices in the hospital, did not say which side fired the shells, but Dr Thurairajah Varatharajah, the top government health official in the area, said that two of the attacks appeared to have come from the army.

Mr Varatharajah said that the shelling had caused extensive damage to the overcrowded hospital, one of the last functioning health institutions inside rebel-held territory.

He reported that hospital workers were having trouble counting the injured because many staff members were too scared to leave their fortified bunkers and the hospital had been suffering power cuts.

The United Nations confirmed that the hospital had been struck by artillery shells throughout the day on Sunday.

UN spokesman Gordon Weiss said: "It seems to have struck the paediatric ward, a 30-bed ward filled to overflowing.

"The last communication that we had from our staff member on the ground was that they were still counting the dead," Mr Weiss added. He did not cast blame on either side.

International Committee of the Red Cross Colombo delegation chief Paul Castella said: "We're shocked that the hospital was hit and for the second time in recent weeks."

World - Nine killed in Sri Lanka shell attack

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

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

Load-Date: February 3, 2009

End of Document

Brief

The Toronto Star
March 7, 2009 Saturday

Copyright 2009 Toronto Star Newspapers, Ltd.

Section: NEWS; Pg. A15

Length: 353 words

Body

Quebec

Lawyer convicted of gangsterism charges

Montreal lawyer Louis Pasquin, who has defended members of the Hells Angels, was found guilty yesterday of various charges involving drug trafficking and committing a crime for the benefit of a criminal organization, or gangsterism.

Pasquin, arrested in 2006 as part of a police operation against a drug-trafficking ring, is believed to be the first lawyer in Quebec, and possibly Canada, to be convicted of gangsterism.

Evidence at his trial suggested he acted as a liaison between the leader of the drug ring and a pilot who allegedly made cocaine runs.

New runway approved in Inuit territory

The federal and Quebec governments have agreed to finance a \$30 million runway extension at an airport in the northern community of Puvirnituq, Que.

Inuit leader Pita Aatami of the Makivik Corp. says Quebec's Nunavik region has one of the highest costs of living in Canada and the runway, which will allow transport planes to land, should help reduce the price of goods brought in from the south.

Ottawa

Duty-free purchases on arrival considered

Finance Minister Jim Flaherty is mulling the idea of allowing people to buy duty-free goods as they arrive home from abroad, a move he says he's been told would create jobs and make Canadian airports more competitive.

Currently, travellers can buy duty-free goods like alcohol, tobacco, and perfumes only on departure.

Ontario

Woman's body found in river in Port Hope

Brief

A fisherman found the body of a **female** estimated to be between 17 and 25 yesterday in the Ganaraska River in Port Hope.

Police say there were no obvious signs of trauma on the body.

Man facing extradition to U.S. freed on bail

Suresh Sriskandarajah was freed on \$445,000 bail yesterday, just one day after he was taken into custody and ordered extradited to the United States to face charges of helping a terrorist group.

The interim release of the 28-year-old Waterloo man was made pending his appeal of an order to surrender to U.S. officials to stand trial on charges of helping the **Tamil Tigers**. It could be a year or more before his appeal is heard.

From the Star's wire services

Load-Date: March 7, 2009

End of Document

World - Nine killed in Sri Lanka shell attack

Morning Star

February 3, 2009 Tuesday

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Length: 370 words

Byline: Our Foreign Desk

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World - Nine killed in Sri Lanka shell attack

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Load-Date: April 9, 2009

End of Document

CHRISTOPHER NEWPORT UNIVERSITY'S WOMEN'S FILM FESTIVAL
HIGHLIGHTS RENOWNED POLITICAL ACTIVIST THIRANAGAMA

US Fed News

January 29, 2009 Thursday 2:16 AM EST

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Length: 352 words

Byline: US Fed News

Dateline: NEWPORT NEWS, Va.

Body

Christopher Newport University issued the following news release:

A movie about love, revolution and betrayal in Sri Lanka, titled No More Tears Sister, will be featured at the first film screening of 2009 hosted by the CNU **Women's** Film Festival. This event is free and open to the public through the PBS documentary series POV. The film, with introduction by Professor Linda Waldron of the CNU Department of Sociology, will take place on Thursday, February 5 at 7 p.m. in CNU's Ferguson Center for the Arts Music & Theatre Hall.

No More Tears Sister is the first of three films during the spring semester presented by **Women's** Studies and the CNU Film program. For more information, please see the website at <http://english.cnu.edu/wqfilm.html>.

No More Tears Sister, a documentary by Helene Klodawsky, explores the price of truth in times of war. Set during the violent ethnic conflict that has enveloped Sri Lanka for decades, the film recreates the courageous and vibrant life of renowned human rights activist Dr. Rajani Thiranagama.

If love is the first inspiration of a social revolutionary, as has sometimes been said, no one better exemplified that idea than Dr. Rajani Thiranagama. Love for her people and her newly independent nation, and empathy for the oppressed of Sri Lanka - including **women** and the poor - led her to risk her middle-class life to join the struggle for equality and justice for all. Love led her to marry across ethnic and class lines. In the face of a brutal government crackdown on her Tamil people, love led her to help the guerrilla **Tamil Tigers**, the only force seemingly able to defend the people. When she realized the Tigers were more a murderous gang than a revolutionary force, she broke with them, publicly and dangerously.

After the film, Dr. Waldron will lead a discussion. Audience members are invited to participate. The **Women's** Film Festival is sponsored by CNU and the award-winning documentary series, POV (Point of View). For more information, please contact Professor Rosenberg at rosenb@cnu.edu or at (757) 594-7149.

Contact: Lori Jacobs, 757/594-7961, lori.jacobs@cnu.edu

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CHRISTOPHER NEWPORT UNIVERSITY 'S WOMEN'S FILM FESTIVAL HIGHLIGHTS RENOWNED
POLITICAL ACTIVIST THIRANAGAMA

Load-Date: January 31, 2009

End of Document

Sri Lankan Cabinet minister escapes suicide blast

Associated Press International

October 9, 2008 Thursday 5:03 PM GMT

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Section: INTERNATIONAL NEWS

Length: 389 words

Byline: By BHARATHA MALLAWARACHI, Associated Press Writer

Dateline: COLOMBO Sri Lanka

Body

A suspected Tamil Tiger suicide bomber blew herself up Thursday near a convoy carrying a senior Sri Lankan Cabinet minister, killing one bystander and wounding the minister's deputy, the military said.

Maithripala Sirisena, the agricultural development minister, was not hurt in the blast in Boralwegamuwa, about nine miles (15 kilometers) from the capital, Colombo, military spokesman Brig. Udaya Nanayakkara said.

Sirisena's junior minister, Siripala Gamlath, was wounded, Nanayakkara said, blaming separatist Tamil rebels for the blast.

One of the seven wounded later died in the hospital, the military said in a statement. The bomber was also killed in the blast.

The ***Tamil Tigers***, whom the United States and European Union list as terrorists, did not comment on the blast and routinely deny involvement in suicide attacks. They have been blamed for more than 240 suicide bombings against political, military and economic targets since the early 1980s.

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With nearly all communications to the north severed, a rebel spokesman could not be contacted for comment. Independent verification of the military's claims is nearly impossible because most journalists are banned from the war zone. Both sides routinely exaggerate enemy losses and underreport their own.

Fighting has escalated in recent months, with the military capturing a series of rebel bases and large chunks of territory. Officials have pledged to crush the guerrillas by the end of the year.

Sri Lankan Cabinet minister escapes suicide blast

The rebels have been fighting since 1983 to create an independent homeland for the country's ethnic minority Tamils, who have faced marginalization by successive governments controlled by ethnic Sinhalese.

More than 70,000 people have been killed in the violence.

Load-Date: October 10, 2008

End of Document

World - Nine killed in Sri Lanka shell attack

Morning Star

January 3, 2009 Saturday

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Length: 370 words

Byline: Our Foreign Desk

Body

Artillery shells slammed into an overcrowded hospital in Sri Lanka's northern war zone, killing at least nine patients, the Red Cross reported yesterday.

The attack on the hospital on Sunday intensified concern for the fate of some 250,000 civilians trapped in the shrinking war zone where Tamil Tiger guerillas have been boxed in.

The **Tamil Tigers** claimed that they had killed 150 soldiers and injured more than 300 since Sunday, but the army denied that it had lost any men.

The fighting is taking place in Puthukkudiyiruppu area, where three artillery barrages landed on the paediatrics and **women's** wards of the Puthukkudiyiruppu hospital.

Red Cross spokeswoman Sarasi Wijeratne said that the shells, which also hit a kitchen and a chapel, had killed nine people and wounded at least 20.

The aid agency, which has offices in the hospital, did not say which side fired the shells, but Dr Thurairajah Varatharajah, the top government health official in the area, said that two of the attacks appeared to have come from the army.

Mr Varatharajah said that the shelling had caused extensive damage to the overcrowded hospital, one of the last functioning health institutions inside rebel-held territory.

He reported that hospital workers were having trouble counting the injured because many staff members were too scared to leave their fortified bunkers and the hospital had been suffering power cuts.

The United Nations confirmed that the hospital had been struck by artillery shells throughout the day on Sunday.

UN spokesman Gordon Weiss said: "It seems to have struck the paediatric ward, a 30-bed ward filled to overflowing.

"The last communication that we had from our staff member on the ground was that they were still counting the dead," Mr Weiss added. He did not cast blame on either side.

International Committee of the Red Cross Colombo delegation chief Paul Castella said: "We're shocked that the hospital was hit and for the second time in recent weeks."

World - Nine killed in Sri Lanka shell attack

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

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

Load-Date: February 5, 2009

End of Document

World - Nine killed in Sri Lanka shell attack

Morning Star

February 3, 2009 Tuesday

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Length: 370 words

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Load-Date: April 9, 2009

End of Document

World - Nine killed in Sri Lanka shell attack

Morning Star

January 3, 2009 Saturday

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Length: 370 words

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Load-Date: February 5, 2009

End of Document

**CNU's Women's Film Festival Highlights Renowned Political Activist Dr.
Rajani Thiranagama**

Targeted News Service

January 29, 2009 Thursday 4:07 AM EST

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Length: 363 words

Byline: Targeted News Service

Dateline: RICHMOND, Va.

Body

Christopher Newport University issued the following news release:

A movie about love, revolution and betrayal in Sri Lanka, titled No More Tears Sister, will be featured at the first film screening of 2009 hosted by the CNU Women's Film Festival. This event is free and open to the public through the PBS documentary series POV. The film, with introduction by Professor Linda Waldron of the CNU Department of Sociology, will take place on Thursday, February 5 at 7 p.m. in CNU's Ferguson Center for the Arts Music & Theatre Hall.

No More Tears Sister is the first of three films during the spring semester presented by Women's Studies and the CNU Film program. For more information, please see the website at <http://english.cnu.edu/wgfilm.html>.

No More Tears Sister, a documentary by Helene Klodawsky, explores the price of truth in times of war. Set during the violent ethnic conflict that has enveloped Sri Lanka for decades, the film recreates the courageous and vibrant life of renowned human rights activist Dr. Rajani Thiranagama.

If love is the first inspiration of a social revolutionary, as has sometimes been said, no one better exemplified that idea than Dr. Rajani Thiranagama. Love for her people and her newly independent nation, and empathy for the oppressed of Sri Lanka - including women and the poor - led her to risk her middle-class life to join the struggle for equality and justice for all. Love led her to marry across ethnic and class lines. In the face of a brutal government crackdown on her Tamil people, love led her to help the guerrilla Tamil Tigers, the only force seemingly able to defend the people. When she realized the Tigers were more a murderous gang than a revolutionary force, she broke with them, publicly and dangerously.

After the film, Dr. Waldron will lead a discussion. Audience members are invited to participate. The Women's Film Festival is sponsored by CNU and the award-winning documentary series, POV (Point of View). For more information, please contact Professor Rosenberg at rosenb@cnu.edu or at (757) 594-7149.

Contact: Lori Jacobs, University Relations, 757/594-7961, lori.jacobs@cnu.edu

TNS MT93-JF78-090130-2204517 18MASHMaryJane

Load-Date: January 30, 2009

CNU 's Women's Film Festival Highlights Renowned Political Activist Dr. Rajani Thiranagama

End of Document

Sri Lankan Cabinet minister escapes suicide blast

The Associated Press

October 9, 2008 Thursday

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Section: INTERNATIONAL NEWS

Length: 389 words

Byline: By BHARATHA MALLAWARACHI, Associated Press Writer

Dateline: COLOMBO, Sri Lanka

Body

A suspected Tamil Tiger suicide bomber blew herself up Thursday near a convoy carrying a senior Sri Lankan Cabinet minister, killing one bystander and wounding the minister's deputy, the military said.

Maithripala Sirisena, the agricultural development minister, was not hurt in the blast in Boralwegamuwa, about nine miles (15 kilometers) from the capital, Colombo, military spokesman Brig. Udaya Nanayakkara said.

Sirisena's junior minister, Siripala Gamlath, was wounded, Nanayakkara said, blaming separatist Tamil rebels for the blast.

One of the seven wounded later died in the hospital, the military said in a statement. The bomber was also killed in the blast.

The ***Tamil Tigers***, whom the United States and European Union list as terrorists, did not comment on the blast and routinely deny involvement in suicide attacks. They have been blamed for more than 240 suicide bombings against political, military and economic targets since the early 1980s.

The rebels have widely used ***women*** to carry out suicide attacks, including in an attack on former Indian Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi who was killed at an election rally in 1991.

On Monday, a suicide blast blamed on the rebels killed a former army general, Janaka Perera, and 26 others in the northern town of Anuradhapura.

Government troops, meanwhile, closed in on the rebels' administrative capital of Kilinochchi in the north, where heavy fighting Wednesday killed 48 rebels and eight government soldiers, Nanayakkara said.

He said troops were little more than a mile (1.5 kilometers) from the outer limits of Kilinochchi town.

With nearly all communications to the north severed, a rebel spokesman could not be contacted for comment. Independent verification of the military's claims is nearly impossible because most journalists are banned from the war zone. Both sides routinely exaggerate enemy losses and underreport their own.

Fighting has escalated in recent months, with the military capturing a series of rebel bases and large chunks of territory. Officials have pledged to crush the guerrillas by the end of the year.

Sri Lankan Cabinet minister escapes suicide blast

The rebels have been fighting since 1983 to create an independent homeland for the country's ethnic minority Tamils, who have faced marginalization by successive governments controlled by ethnic Sinhalese.

More than 70,000 people have been killed in the violence.

Load-Date: October 10, 2008

End of Document

Roadside bomb kills 24 on bus; Attack follows end of truce in Sri Lanka

The Calgary Herald (Alberta)

January 17, 2008 Thursday

Final Edition

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Section: NEWS; Pg. A18; Asia Report: News From the Region

Length: 313 words

Byline: Agence France-Presse

Dateline: COLOMBO

Body

At least 24 civilians were killed and scores wounded Wednesday in a suspected Tamil Tiger bomb attack on a crowded bus in southern Sri Lanka coinciding with the end of the island's ceasefire.

The defence ministry said the bus packed with schoolchildren was hit by a powerful Claymore-type mine -- a bomb packed with explosives and ball-bearings. It also said the bus was shot at after the blast.

With the island sliding back into all-out war, Nordic truce monitors packed their bags and made a renewed appeal for the government and the Tigers to return to talks -- arguing that neither can win the decades-old war.

But Sri Lankan President Mahinda Rajapakse said the bus bombing was precisely the kind of "act of savagery" that justified his decision to abandon a Norwegian-brokered 2002 truce.

The ceasefire officially ends at midnight Wednesday.

According to the defence ministry, **Tamil Tigers** "exploded a Claymore mine targeting the bus and subsequently opened fire at the survivors."

More than 60 people were wounded in the incident, which took place at Weliara, 230 kilometres southeast of the capital Colombo.

Eight were reported to be in critical condition, with many **women** and children among the casualties. The government appealed for blood donors and ordered schools in the province to close for three days.

The military said an army vehicle in the area was hit in a second bomb attack, and a villager was shot dead -- blaming the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam, who are known to occasionally strike in the far south of the island.

The government withdrew from the ceasefire two weeks ago, arguing that there was no point in attempting to negotiate with "terrorists" and that the Tigers had merely used the ceasefire to smuggle in more weapons.

The Norwegian-led Sri Lanka Monitoring Mission, set up to keep an eye on the tattered truce, meanwhile, closed down its operations.

Graphic

Colour Photo: Lakruwan Wanniarachchi, Agence France-Presse, Getty Images; A suspected Tamil Tiger attack killed 24 civilians on a bus Wednesday. Sri Lanka is sliding back into all-out war. ;

Load-Date: January 17, 2008

End of Document

What price the innocents in the Wannī?

Daily Mirror (Sri Lanka)

February 19, 2009 Thursday

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Length: 1323 words

Dateline: Colombo

Body

Colombo, Feb. 19 -- Darfur was a humanitarian disaster that the world could never justify. Upto 300,000 people have died and 2.5 million have been forced from their homes in fighting that began after rebel groups complaining of discrimination and neglect took up arms against the government in 2003 in Sudan. The International Criminal Court last year issued arrest warrants for a Sudanese government minister and for a commander in the government-backed Janjaweed militia, which has been blamed for the worst atrocities in Darfur.

But can the same really be said about the situation more closer at home; in the Wannī? Does the situation with regard to 100,000-150,000 people demand the kind of intervention that a special envoy was expected to garner? No one can deny that the displaced take in millions of dollars. Throughout human history and presently more so than ever, the suffering of the innocents like IDPs are a great source of funds for various NGOs with their own unique agendas. Evidence also proves that there is a more sinister political game against the government at play. The use of IDPs to halt military exercises against the LTTE cannot be undermined. Both; because it is a tactic that has been used before and more so because the defeat of the LTTE signals a heavy toll on the operations of several global NGOs. This is not to absolve the government of its bounden duty towards every IDP having fled the LTTE, to their care. But the reports being received from the ground indicate that the government is able to meet much of the criticism being made against it. No doubt the plight of the civilians cannot be ignored. Traumatized and caught so severely between the crossfires; these are men, women and children in their thousands weary of the war. Ending decades of entrapment under the ruthless terror group of the LTTE, they are quite possibly breathing free at last. In all fairness the government certainly has a daunting task with the IDPs. It is not easy for a government of a developing nation in a world facing economic crises to meet all the demands of a 100,000 people on a day to day basis. It is to the government's credit that despite a bloody military exercise and several mega scale infrastructure projects, it has not allowed even one displaced person to die of starvation. The authorities must be commended for successfully curbing any communicable diseases from spreading in the camps, which are all unavoidable factors in handling such humanitarian exercises as that of the Wannī. Despite the criticisms and moves to taint the government troops, there is sufficient evidence to ascertain that the soldiers, who are the first to greet the fleeing civilians, have taken commendable care of the IDPs. In the initial stage the military takes over the IDPs crossing over the borders and carry out a medical check up to ascertain their medical needs. Those needing immediate medical care are then transported to Kandy or Kurunegala hospitals. Following the medical examination, the displaced would be given energy packs, clothes and a hot meal cooked by the military. Within two days, they are transported to Vavuniya where they are registered under the care of the Vavuniya GA and settled in temporary camps set up in schools. Some 50 acres of land are already being cleared to provide temporary shelter. Here all their sanitary and medical needs are expected to be met. Within another 2-3 weeks they would be transferred to one of 4 transit villages which will have temporary banking facilities, Pradeshiya Sabha sub offices, schools and police posts. In the final stage they will be resettled back in their original places of residence, once the infrastructure

What price the innocents in the Wanni?

is in place, de mining is completed and civil administration established. Criticized to the limit, it is therefore not surprising that the government finds itself having to defend themselves from day one. It today remains skeptical of concerns of the international community. The govt. reiterates that they won't allow people to visit the displaced; not even the VIPs claiming that such visits divert the attention from the victims. According to the govt. such visits add unnecessary pressures on those working in these places. The concerns that the camps would be run by the military and residents would not be allowed to leave in view of the use of barbed wires, the govt. claims are unjustified. The wires were therefore put in the temporary centres to ensure the civilians safety because of forced recruitments and personal safety of the civilians. The government admits that in the East such recruitment took place and the precaution became necessary. The fact remains that the more there is uncalled for criticism the greater the chances of even the genuinely concerned to have access to the camps. There would be no end to this vicious circle where every element will try to gain greater political ground as the civilians suffer in between. Reports that emerged last week that the government was planning to force the IDPs in camps for three years till they completed search operations for the last **LTTE** cadre naturally raised concern. Agency reports claimed that according to a government draft plan, 'which the government has circulated among international aid groups and donors recently, they would keep the displaced from returning to their homes while the military spends years searching the jungles and villages for the remaining Tiger cadres.' The room such long stays in displacement camps leave to frustrate the displaced thereby intensifying ethnic tensions and open room for similar terror outfits to grow, could not be undermined. But the government dismissed the reports citing evidence that 80% resettlement was estimated to be completed by the end of this year. The government cites its success in the Eastern resettlement plan as evidence. Claiming it the world's 'fastest resettlement programme in the world' its records indicate that approximately 40,000 people were settled in Muttur in 40 days, and Vakare in three months. Certainly much remains undone, but not to a level deserving the attention that certain elements of the international community deem fit. There are no reports indicating the kind of intervention that Dafur demanded of the world. Certainly this is not to say that there is no room for the international community to help. But such assistance must be seen as genuine and require the kind of intervention that is not contrived. It is crucial that such interventions respect the sovereignty of the country, and do not come ignorant of their own past records of human rights. It would not be an exaggeration to say that some records could even justify being hauled to the ICC. Nevertheless, it would take the lowest of human kind to remain unmoved by the developments of the Wanni where the IDPs are concerned. Every child, man and woman left traumatized and displaced demands the immediate care of the government. Every single one of the IDPs is the sole responsibility of the State. They are the citizens of this country whose plight must receive the concern they deserve. It is imperative that the government releases every resource at its disposal for the physical and mental wellbeing of the victimized. It is the bounden duty of the government to ensure that the IDPs are resettled in their original habitats as soon as is possible. But the reality is that governments can't hope to achieve much when the more powerful of nations remain mere critics. Moves to put unnecessary pressures by way of criticisms such as those on the IDPs or the push for ceasefires are neither new nor difficult to comprehend. It is even less difficult to understand when the 'concern' comes sans the much needed funds for the resettlement programmes or feeding the IDPs. Such interventions deserve the apathy the government receives them with. Published by HT Syndication with permission from Daily Mirror Sri Lanka.

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

Load-Date: May 20, 2009

5 rebel bases bombed by Sri Lankan air force

Associated Press International

October 1, 2008 Wednesday 5:38 PM GMT

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Section: INTERNATIONAL NEWS

Length: 382 words

Byline: By BHARATHA MALLAWARACHI, Associated Press Writer

Dateline: COLOMBO Sri Lanka

Body

Air force fighter jets bombed five Tamil Tiger rebel positions in northern Sri Lanka on Wednesday while infantry clashes across the region killed 26 rebels and four soldiers, the military said.

Fighters pounded the headquarters of the Charles Anthony Brigade an elite rebel infantry unit and another base housing female fighters in the Tiger stronghold of Kilinochchi district, said Wing Commander Janaka Nanayakkara, an air force spokesman.

Hours later, the air force attacked logistics and administrative facilities in Kilinochchi, the military said.

Early Wednesday, the air force bombed a jungle hide-out in the Mullaitivu district believed to be used by leaders of the Tamil rebels, he said.

Nanayakkara did not have details of damage or casualties.

Ground battles Tuesday in Kilinochchi, Vavuniya and Welioya districts killed 26 guerrillas and four soldiers, military spokesman Brig. Udaya Nanayakkara said.

With nearly all communications to the north severed, rebel spokesmen could not be contacted for comment.

But rebel radio station Voice of Tigers reported that the bombs dropped by the air force hit civilian settlements killing two and wounding 13 others.

It was not possible to verify either sides' reports because most journalists and other independent observers are barred from the war zone. Both sides often exaggerate their enemy's losses and underreport their own.

Meanwhile, police asked people who have moved to Colombo from the east to register. The region made up one front of the war before the military cleared it of rebels last year.

The order follows a similar one last week for those who had moved to the capital from the north most of whom were ethnic minority Tamils.

The order drew criticism from Tamil civilians and politicians as discriminatory but police justified it saying the process was required to prevent attacks by the rebels.

5 rebel bases bombed by Sri Lankan air force

Sunday's registration will cover all groups Tamils, Muslims and Sinhalese who live in near equal proportion in the province, police spokesman Ranjith Gunasekara said.

The violence has forced about 160,000 people to flee their homes, and the withdrawal of aid groups has raised fears that the plight of displaced civilians could worsen.

The **Tamil Tigers** have fought since 1983 to create an independent state for Sri Lanka's minority Tamils.

Load-Date: October 2, 2008

End of Document

What's rebel leader's next move?; Fate of Tamil chief at center as Sri Lanka seeks final victory

The International Herald Tribune

March 20, 2009 Friday

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Section: NEWS; Pg. 2

Length: 941 words

Byline: Seth Mydans - The New York Times Media Group

Dateline: COLOMBO

Body

Will he kill himself? This is a tactical military question now as the Sri Lankan Army closes in on Velupillai Prabhakaran and the stubborn core of his Tamil separatist insurgency.

There is always the possibility that Prabhakaran, 54, is already dead or that he has fled the military offensive, and those questions, too, are critical as the army seeks a final victory and plans ahead for the aftermath of his 25-year rebellion.

Prabhakaran is the founder and driving force of the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam, a separatist movement that is known for its resourcefulness, for its brutality and for its suicides.

A pioneer in the tactic of suicide bombings, Prabhakaran created a squad called the Black Tigers - up to 40 percent of them women - that has carried out scores of attacks over the years, both targeted assassinations and mass terror killings.

Many of his regular fighters have taken their own lives as well rather than surrender, biting into cyanide tablets that they often carry on a string like a small memento mori around the neck.

This dedication is part of a cultlike devotion to Prabhakaran - a chubby man with a ragged mustache whose charisma is not always evident to outsiders - and nobody knows what will come of his mission once he is gone.

Will his soldiers continue to fight with the same savage determination, and will the insurgency regroup and revert to hit-and-run terrorism once its main force is destroyed? Without Prabhakaran, some analysts say, his rebellion may collapse. Or perhaps he might be seen as a martyr and rallying cry for further insurgency.

Just as Prabhakaran's fate dominates questions about the end game of the war, his remorselessness and ruthlessness have made him the single dominant figure in Sri Lanka's history for the past quarter-century.

His insurgency has held the country hostage to terrorism. It has held back social and economic development, heightened violent ethnic divisions and pushed the government toward a more hunkered, repressive posture.

What's rebel leader's next move? Fate of Tamil chief at center as Sri Lanka seeks final victory

There have been cease-fires and negotiations over the years; all have failed because Prabhakaran would not give up the war. Presidents have come and gone, their policies dominated by harder or softer lines toward his insurgency.

Prabhakaran has mostly remained constant, a man who is ready "to take any method, however repulsive, as long as it furthered his struggle," according to a leading biography, "Inside an Elusive Mind: Prabhakaran" by M.R. Narayan Swamy.

Though the Tigers rarely claim responsibility for their work, his suicide bombers are suspected in the deaths of two national leaders - former Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi of India in 1991 and President Ranasinghe Premadasa of Sri Lanka in 1993.

"Our methods of warfare are unacceptable to various people," said S. Subramaniam, a longtime associate of Prabhakaran's who is quoted in Swamy's 2003 book. "But Prabhakaran as well as our movement have survived precisely because of them."

A high school dropout from a middle-class family, Prabhakaran ignited the insurgency by his own hand with the assassination of a governor of Jaffna in 1975, walking up to him at a Hindu temple and shooting him point-blank.

Jaffna, where Prabhakaran was born, is the center of what separatists call Eelam, a region in which the Tigers want to create a separate state for the mostly Hindu Tamils, who make up 12 percent of Sri Lanka's population of 21 million.

Since independence from Britain in 1948, Buddhist Sinhalese, who form a majority, have pushed Tamils into the margins, declaring Sinhala the national language and Buddhism the principal religion and securing privileges for Sinhalese in education and government jobs.

Fascinated by guns, meticulous in military planning, more ruthless than his rivals, Prabhakaran built a fanatical armed movement while reaching out to a wealthy Tamil diaspora to finance his well-armed insurgency.

He is a master of escape and concealment and has seldom given interviews, emerging each year in November to give an annual address.

"No sane voice is being raised," he said last November in an address carried on Tamil Web sites, "either to abandon war or to seek a peaceful solution to the conflict."

His reserved demeanor has often puzzled outsiders, who have found him neat, polished and soft-spoken to the point of seeming shyness.

"The quietest man I have come across," said Sadanand Menon, a veteran Indian journalist who met him in the early 1980s. "He was so soft-spoken that you could not hear him under his breath. It made you wonder, even if momentarily, if he really led the Tamil Tigers."

Or Anita Pratap, another prominent Indian journalist who met him about the same time: "My first impression was that of utter disappointment. He looked stunningly ordinary. Dressed in a light-blue shirt and gray trousers, he could have easily been mistaken for a petty Tamil businessman."

Since last August, the military has driven the Tigers out of their strongholds in the north and cornered them by the northeastern shore, on a spit of land just 12 kilometers, or 7 miles, long and 2 kilometers wide.

Trapped with them are tens of thousands of Tamil civilians who have fled the fighting elsewhere.

The Tigers have been accused of kidnapping them en masse, shooting some who try to leave and dragooning many others, including children, to take up arms and join them.

What's rebel leader's next move? Fate of Tamil chief at center as Sri Lanka seeks final victory

The Sri Lankan military appears determined to end the war here and now, and the separatist fighters show no sign of backing down.

If the army does make a final push and hundreds or thousands of civilians are killed, it could amount to the **Tamil Tigers**' most deadly mass suicide of the war.

Load-Date: March 25, 2009

End of Document

Asia-Pacific news calendar

Agence France Presse -- English

October 30, 2008 Thursday 4:55 AM GMT

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Length: 1035 words

Dateline: HONG KONG, Oct 30 2008

Body

Asia-Pacific news calendar from Saturday, November 1 to Friday, November 28:

Saturday, November 1

BANGKOK: Tens of thousands of pro-government supporters expected to rally at Bangkok's Rajamangla Stadium at 0800 GMT

DHAKA: United Nations Secretary General Ban Ki-moon scheduled to arrive on a two-day visit to Bangladesh

FUKUOKA, Japan: Dalai Lama visits Japan (until Nov 7)

JAKARTA: Britain's Prince Charles expected to visit Indonesia to encourage inter-faith dialogue (until Nov 5)

KABUL: A Dutch general assumes command of NATO-led forces in volatile southern Afghanistan in a ceremony at the largest military base in southern Afghanistan near Kandahar

PATTAYA, Thailand: Miss International Queen, one of the world's largest transgender beauty pageants

INCHEON, South Korea. Golf. LPGA Hana Bank/KOLON championship (until November 2)

GOLD COAST, Australia: Rugby League. World Cup. New Zealand v PNG

WOLLONGONG, Australia: Rugby League. World Cup. Fiji v France

Sunday, November 2

YANGON: Six-month anniversary of devastating Myanmar cyclone

MELBOURNE: Rugby League. World Cup. Australia v England

Monday, November 3

BANGKOK: Committee looking into Bangkok's October 7 street clashes due to meet to decide next steps

Asia-Pacific news calendar

BANGKOK: Thai inflation report

HANOI: ASEAN task force on AIDS meeting (until Nov 5)

HONG KONG: Retail sales statistics

SINGAPORE: Court to hold closed-door hearing into contempt allegations filed by the government against the Wall Street Journal Asia and two editors (until Nov 7)

TOKYO: Culture Day, a public and market holiday

Tuesday, November 4

BANGKOK: Third hearing for alleged Russian arms dealer Viktor Bout

SINGAPORE: Singapore Energy Conference featuring international experts on sustainable energy

ZHUHAI, China: China Airshow 2008 (until Nov 9)

MELBOURNE: Horse racing. Melbourne Cup

Wednesday, November 5

MANILA: October inflation data

GOSFORD, Australia: Rugby League. World Cup. Scotland v Fiji

SYDNEY: Rugby League. World Cup. Ireland v Samoa

Thursday, November 6

COLOMBO: Sri Lanka's government to present its 2009 budget including a major hike in defence expenditure to fight the **Tamil Tigers**

DHAKA: End of former Bangladeshi prime minister Sheikh Hasina's parole, which allowed her to travel to North America for medical treatment

HANOI: Vietnam, Laos, Cambodia and Myanmar Summit on Cooperation and Development (until Nov 7)

MANILA: Monetary board meeting on policy rates

THIMPHU: Coronation of Bhutanese King Jigme Khesar Namgyel Wangchuck

SHANGHAI: Golf. HSBC Champions tournament (until Nov 9)

Friday, November 7

HONG KONG: Coffee Fest Asia (until Nov 9)

MANILA: October foreign exchange reserves data

MIE, Japan: Golf. USLPGA Tour Mizuno Classic (until Nov 9)

Saturday, November 8

WELLINGTON: New Zealand general election

NEWCASTLE, Australia: Rugby League World Cup. England v New Zealand

Asia-Pacific news calendar

HONG KONG: Cricket. Annual Hong Kong sixes tournament (until Nov 9)

TOKYO: Football. J-League matches.

Sunday, November 9

BANGKOK: Seven leaders of the anti-government People's Alliance for Democracy due to deliver their defence statements to police on charges of inciting unrest and illegal assembly

PHNOM PENH: Cambodia marks Independence Day

TOKYO: Spanish King Juan Carlos and Queen Sofia visit Japan (until Nov 14)

SHANGHAI: Tennis. ATP season-ending Masters Cup (until Nov 16)

TOWNSVILLE, Australia: Rugby League World Cup. PNG v Australia

Monday, November 10

HONG KONG: Government to release external trade statistics

TOKYO: Japan publishes September machinery orders

MANILA: August FDI data

Tuesday, November 11

PHNOM PENH: Cambodia celebrates water festival (until Nov 13)

Wednesday, November 12

MANILA: September export data

Thursday, November 13

TOKYO: Japan releases September balance of payments data and revised September industrial production data

GOTEMBA, Japan: Golf. Taiheiyo Masters (until Nov 16)

MACAU: Motor Sport. Macau Grand Prix (until Nov 16)

Friday, November 14

BANGKOK: Six-day funeral begins for Thailand's late Princess Galyani

BANGKOK: Fourth hearing for alleged Russian arms dealer Viktor Bout

RAIPUR, India: State elections in the Maoist insurgency-hit eastern Indian state of Chhattisgarh (second phase of polls to be held on Thursday, Nov 20)

Saturday, November 15

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

SINGAPORE: Activists may be planning to hold the community's first outdoor gay rights protest

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

Sunday, November 16

Asia-Pacific news calendar

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

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

TOKYO: Athletics. Tokyo women's marathon

Monday, November 17

MANILA: September overseas workers remittance data

MANILA: October balance of payments data

SINGAPORE: Government releases monthly trade figures for October

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

Wednesday, November 19

FIJI: Football. World Cup qualifier. New Zealand v Fiji

Thursday, November 20

MANILA: Central bank policy rate-setting meeting

TOKYO: Bank of Japan opens two-day policy meeting

TOKYO: Japan releases October trade statistics

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

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

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

Friday, November 21

TOKYO: Bank of Japan governor Masaaki Shirakawa holds a press conference at the end of policy meeting

MANILA: Release of central bank business confidence survey

Saturday, November 22

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

BRISBANE, Australia: Rugby League. World Cup Final

Monday, November 24

BANGKOK: Second ruling expected for Canadian paedophile Christopher Neil

Tuesday, November 25

BHOPAL, India: State elections in Madhya Pradesh

Wednesday, November 26

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

Asia-Pacific news calendar

MANILA: September import data

Thursday, November 27

WELLINGTON: New Zealand trade data for October released

MELBOURNE. Golf. Australian Masters (until Nov 30)

Friday, November 28

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

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Load-Date: October 31, 2008

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Leading terrorist agents arrested in Cyprus

Daily News (Sri Lanka)

February 14, 2009 Saturday

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Length: 423 words

Dateline: Colombo

Body

Colombo, Feb. 14 -- Herath Mudiyansele Rohan Priyantha was arrested by the Cyprus Police yesterday on information provided by the Tamil community.

According to the information he was one of the foremost agents of the LTTE. In order to transmit money to the terror outfit, H.M. Rohan Priyantha and another Sri Lankan Sinhalese woman was engaged in finding European husbands for Sri Lankan women for marriage with the aim of obtaining Cyprus citizenship for which he had been charging Euro 5,000. Herath Mudiyansele Rohan Priyantha's real name was Thyagarajah and he hailed from Vavuniya. After having entered Cyprus under his real name, he re-entered Sri Lanka on a forged passport under the name of Herath Mudiyansele Rohan Priyantha.

Everyone who knew him thought he was a Sinhalese. At the control of the video of the demonstration of LTTE at Nicosia, in Cyprus, the Police had identified the man whom they knew as a Sinhalese among the Tiger sympathizers. Later the Police had obtained a search warrant from the Provincial Courts and entered the residence of H.M. Rohan Priyantha alias Thyagarajah. They had found in the living room a large photograph of Prabhakaran and there was a pistol that was kept in front of the photograph which was found to be a toy. There was a large Eelam map and a Tiger flag on either side of Prabhakaran's photograph. The Police also had found Sri Lankan Passports, copies of visas, applications for Refugee Status and Euro 10,000. He was remanded for eight days pending investigation and was committed to the Police custody and is to be kept at Likavitos Police Station at Nicosia. Agriculture Development and Agrarian Services Minister Maithripala Sirisena with Ambassador Hemantha Warnakulasuriya when they were on a mission in Cyprus, met important officers of the Police and had explained to them about the terrorist activities of the Tiger Movement and cautioned them that there are terrorist cells in Cyprus. The Police after interrogating Priyantha alias Thyagarajah will apprehend other Tamils who are working with him to transmit money to Sri Lanka to aid and abet terrorism in Sri Lanka. This is in sequel to the arrests of number of terrorist suspects in Italy in 2008 and a leading terrorist agent in Palermo in the Island of Sicily, Italy was arrested. It is believed that the Secret Police in Italy is in contact with other authorities in France, Switzerland and Germany to apprehend everyone connected with terrorism. Published by HT Syndication with permission from Daily News Sri Lanka.

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Load-Date: April 1, 2009

Leading terrorist agents arrested in Cyprus

End of Document

As peace eludes Lanka, refugees pour

UNI (United News of India)

February 1, 2009 Sunday

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Length: 1000 words

Dateline: By

Body

By, G. Sa -- For thousands of ethnic Tamil-speaking Sri Lankans caught in the three-decade-long hostilities between the **LTTE** and the Sri Lankan Army, the journey to seek refuge in India never seems to end.

Fearing persecution by the Sinhalese Government and the Sri Lankan Army after the 1983 riots and the resulting hostilities, thousands of displaced ethnic Tamils in the Island Nation sought asylum in various countries with a majority of them coming to India. The voyage, it seems, will never end till a permanent political solution is reached in Sri Lanka. Official sources told this Correspondent at Mandapam, where the largest refugee camp in the State was located, there was a dip in the arrival of refugees during the last couple of months through clandestine boat service due to fierce fighting between the Tamil rebels and Sri Lankan forces. The refugees find it difficult to hire clandestine boats to reach Tamil Nadu following the strict orders issued by the Sri Lankan Government to the boat owners not to venture into sea after sunset. If a Lankan-registered boat was intercepted with refugees by the island nation's Navy, it is seized and the owner of the boat gets severe punishment, sources claimed. Moreover, the Sri Lankan Navy was intensively patrolling the strip of sea dividing the island and Tamil Nadu, making it difficult for the fleeing Tamils to take refuge in India, leading to a sharp drop in their arrivals. Only few get the luck to hire clandestine boat after paying a huge sum ranging from Rs 10,000 to Rs 30,000, at a very high risk. The sources said as on date as many as 3,303 refugees were accommodated in the Mandapam Camp, including 1,169 **women**, comprising 1,032 families. The State received a total of 23,168 Tamil refugees from January 2006 to January 2009. While the head of the family gets a dole of Rs 400 per month, the second in the family is paid Rs 290 and the children given Rs 150. Once they reached Tamil Nadu, the refugees should register themselves with the Tamil Nadu Government and then get assigned to any of the 117 refugee camps in the State, the sources added. A retired teacher, who was an inmate of the camp and does not want to be named, said while the Indian Government was raising its voice in support of Palestine people, they did not want to show similar passion towards Tamil refugees because of political animosity of the Indian State towards Tamil militancy in the Island Nation in the aftermath of Rajiv Gandhi Assassination. "The Indian Government does not seem to realise that hapless Tamil refugee cannot be victimised to settle scores with the **LTTE**," he said. While Tibetan refugees were treated well in India, Tamil refugees were made to suffer inhumane treatment in the camps, he claimed. "We are not allowed to stay outside after 1800 hrs and during the visit of Indian leaders to Rameswaram, the inmates of Mandapam Camp were kept indoors for two days without any justification, he added. For thousands of ethnic Tamil-speaking Sri Lankans caught in the three-decade-long hostilities between the **LTTE** and the Sri Lankan Army, the journey to seek refuge in India never seems to end. Fearing persecution by the Sinhalese Government and the Sri Lankan Army after the 1983 riots and the resulting hostilities, thousands of displaced ethnic Tamils in the Island Nation sought asylum in various countries with a majority of them coming to India. The voyage, it seems, will never end till a permanent political solution is reached in Sri Lanka. Official sources told this Correspondent at Mandapam, where the largest refugee camp in the State was located, there was a dip in the arrival of refugees during the last couple of

As peace eludes Lanka, refugees pour

months through clandestine boat service due to fierce fighting between the Tamil rebels and Sri Lankan forces. The refugees find it difficult to hire clandestine boats to reach Tamil Nadu following the strict orders issued by the Sri Lankan Government to the boat owners not to venture into sea after sunset. If a Lankan-registered boat was intercepted with refugees by the island nation's Navy, it is seized and the owner of the boat gets severe punishment, sources claimed. Moreover, the Sri Lankan Navy was intensively patrolling the strip of sea dividing the island and Tamil Nadu, making it difficult for the fleeing Tamils to take refuge in India, leading to a sharp drop in their arrivals. Only few get the luck to hire clandestine boat after paying a huge sum ranging from Rs 10,000 to Rs 30,000, at a very high risk. The sources said as on date as many as 3,303 refugees were accommodated in the Mandapam Camp, including 1,169 women, comprising 1,032 families. The State received a total of 23,168 Tamil refugees from January 2006 to January 2009. While the head of the family gets a dole of Rs 400 per month, the second in the family is paid Rs 290 and the children given Rs 150. Once they reached Tamil Nadu, the refugees should register themselves with the Tamil Nadu Government and then get assigned to any of the 117 refugee camps in the State, the sources added. A retired teacher, who was an inmate of the camp and does not want to be named, said while the Indian Government was raising its voice in support of Palestine people, they did not want to show similar passion towards Tamil refugees because of political animosity of the Indian State towards Tamil militancy in the Island Nation in the aftermath of Rajiv Gandhi Assassination. "The Indian Government does not seem to realise that hapless Tamil refugee cannot be victimised to settle scores with the LTTE," he said. While Tibetan refugees were treated well in India, Tamil refugees were made to suffer inhumane treatment in the camps, he claimed. "We are not allowed to stay outside after 1800 hrs and during the visit of Indian leaders to Rameswaram, the inmates of Mandapam Camp were kept indoors for two days without any justification, he added. Published by HT Syndication with permission from United News of India.

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Woman bomber targets packed train station

The Times (London)

February 4, 2008, Monday

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Section: OVERSEAS NEWS; Pg. 34

Length: 430 words

Byline: Jeremy Page, South Asia Correspondent

Body

A suspected Tamil Tiger suicide bomber killed at least 11 people at the main railway station in Colombo, the capital of Sri Lanka, yesterday on the eve of the 60th anniversary of independence.

The woman bomber also injured more than 100 others when she blew herself up on a crowded platform, officials and witnesses said, in the deadliest attack on Colombo since the Government scrapped a ceasefire with the Tigers last month.

A wave of violence across the country since the truce was dissolved has now killed more than 700 people - including many civilians. Attacks on Colombo are particularly damaging for the Government as the city is a staging post for the foreign investors and tourists who prop up the economy.

The suicide attack came just a few hours after a grenade attack injured at least seven people at Colombo's Dehiwala Zoo - a popular destination for residents on public holidays. On Saturday, another bomb on a bus killed 18 people, mostly Buddhist pilgrims, in the town of Dambulla about 90 miles northeast of the capital.

The Government blamed all three attacks on the Tigers - whose official name is the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (***LTTE***) - and accused the group of trying to sow panic ahead of today's anniversary celebrations. The centrepiece is a full military parade along the seafront in Colombo, with more than 4,100 extra soldiers and thousands more paramilitary troops being deployed to ensure security.

President Mahinda Rajapaksa, who won an election in 2005 pledging a harder line against the Tigers, accused the group of trying to compensate for the defeats it has suffered recently in the north and east. "I call upon the people to remain calm and refuse to be provoked by this repeated brutality by the ***LTTE***, which in its desperation...is eager to create a backlash to its terror to obtain the sympathy of the international community," he said.

The Tigers, who were not immediately available for comment yesterday, usually deny being involved in any attacks on civilians.

The Government has pledged to crush the group militarily by the middle of this year. Last month, it drew international criticism by withdrawing from a ceasefire brokered by Norway in 2002 and launching a major offensive against the Tigers in the north.

THE BLACK TIGERS

Woman bomber targets packed train station

Tamil Tiger suicide squads, known as the Black Tigers, have carried out more than 240 attacks since 1983 Many of the suicide bombers are women On October 16, 2006, Black Tigers targeted a Sri Lankan naval convoy, killing 93 sailors in one of their bloodiest attacks Source: Jane's; globalsecurity.org; Times archive

Load-Date: February 4, 2008

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Rural Empowerment

Daily Mirror (Sri Lanka)

May 15, 2008 Thursday 3:09 PM EST

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Length: 3161 words

Byline: Daily News Sri Lanka

Dateline: Colombo

Body

Colombo, May 15 -- The address by President Mahinda Rajapaksa to the Oxford Union on an invitation of the Oxford Union and the Sri Lankan Society of Oxford University on Monday.

I wish to speak to you on a subject of much interest to my country at the present time. That is the empowerment of the rural economy, a central theme of my development strategy for Sri Lanka.

Our development strategy towards empowering the rural economy of our country, where majority of our people live, has now become relevant to the global economy itself in the context of the emerging world food crisis and environmental challenges to our own survival. We have an additional burden. We are threatened by the challenge of terrorism and the need to protect the rights of our fellow beings.

Traditional culture

Sri Lanka where I was born and bred is a country where our culture is firmly rooted in rural tradition. The Sri Lankan culture has been essentially conditioned by the great religion of Buddhism, but later influenced by Hinduism, Islam and Christianity.

The concepts of loving kindness, compassion and tolerance are at the heart of our psychological make up. They nourish and sustain us through the uncertainties of life. Our traditional greeting 'Ayubowan' means - May you live long.

It is not surprising then that in a world where rulers constructed massive castles and grand palaces to demonstrate their power and wealth, our kings constructed huge reservoirs - tanks, as we call them to provide water to sustain food production and ensure sustainable livelihood to the people. The great legacy left behind by our ancient rulers, and which is in use even today scattered across three vast provinces of my island home, is the massive irrigation network.

This unique hydraulic civilisation which sustained an essentially prosperous rural society, was based on a philosophy which has much to offer the modern world.

Buddhism taught us that we have no absolute ownership of the forests, the rivers, the oceans and the atmosphere that sustain life; that every generation holds the environment in trust, so that its abuse is prevented; and that our duty was to hand down the environment. to future generations without harm.

Rural areas

Rural Empowerment

Even today, over 77 per cent of our people still live in rural areas because of a wide range of attractions in our rural home base. I myself hail from the deep south, from an agrarian village with a beautiful natural environment.

I am extremely proud of that fact. The attraction in our villages is not only the economic resources and greenery, but also the traditional culture, arts, religion and bio-diversity which are incentives to keep our people away from migrating into urban townships.

The horrors of poverty and suffering that have engulfed many booming Asian cities have not affected Sri Lanka.

Strengthened by the caring attitude inherited from our ancient rulers, we were able to adapt to modern democracy with great ease. It was in 1931, while still under the British, that Sri Lanka was granted universal franchise.

You will recall that Britain achieved this status only in 1926. Since then we have continued to develop and strengthen democratic institutions in Sri Lanka. Political pluralism has always been fundamental to our democracy. We have parties of different political views represented in our parliament. This diversity uniquely enriches Sri Lanka's political canvass.

Coalition

The Government, although elected by a Sinhala Buddhist majority, represents a coalition of Sinhala, Tamil, and Muslim communities and all the religious groups in the country. You will be hard pressed to find a similarly representative government in any of the other democracies of the world. I am proud of our vibrant parliamentary system, the strong judicial establishment, and the independent press.

Not a day passes without an attack on me, I must say totally without foundation, from some parts of the media. We have not hesitated to adopt global standards, collaborate with international organisations such as the UN, ILO and the Commonwealth, and participate in efforts to consolidate institutions designed to protect the rights of our fellow humans.

Sri Lanka has contributed with vigour and creativity to the development of the principles incorporated in international conventions, through their work in international organisations and through the International Court of Justice.

We have always played our part in global efforts to establish higher standards, and to make our earth a better place for all, because we fundamentally feel that this is the correct thing to do.

Equal opportunities

This is a reflection of our cultural traditions. Sri Lanka's conformity to global environmental standards has been commended time and time again.

Women in Sri Lanka enjoy equal opportunities with men. Over 60 per cent of our medical practitioners are **women**. Over 80 per cent of our teachers are **women**.

The nursing profession is dominated by **women**. The legal profession too is increasingly dominated by **women**. **Women** have also entered sections of the work force previously monopolized by men such as, academia, engineering, computing, quantity surveying and architecture.

I recall with great delight that Sri Lanka produced world's first elected woman Prime Minister in 1960. Her husband, Mr. S.W.R.D. Bandaranaike, whose portrait hangs over there, was also a prime minister of Sri Lanka.

For decades we have invested in education and health. My country enjoys one of the highest literacy standards in the world, while still being categorised as a middle income developing country. 97 per cent of our children are enrolled at school.

Rural Empowerment

Our infant mortality rate and maternal mortality rate at child birth, is on par with that of many developed countries. The country provides free healthcare to all. Education is free and universal from childhood to university. During the primary and secondary school life of every child the government provides free text books and uniforms.

One of my long-lasting joys is the sight of thousands of children in crispy white uniforms heading for school each morning.

This is probably a sight that one cannot witness in many other places of the world. Children are precious to us. I believe they are our future. We have ensured a massive investment in our children.

My government firmly believes that no child must be deprived of his or her childhood. We have created a separate ministry to look after the welfare of our children. We do not employ any children in our labour force, and no one below the age of eighteen is recruited to our Armed Forces - unlike the LTTE, which engages thousands in its baby brigades.

These children are robbed of their childhood, and brutality is ingrained into their character, making them life-long misfits for society.

Achievements

Sri Lanka has achieved a very high standard in the United Nations Human Development Index, and we have already, to a large extent, achieved the Millennium Development Goals. It was only last month that a UN Report commended Sri Lanka for being well on its way to eliminating malaria.

We have a very low rate of HIV/AIDS infection. I point these things out to you only because of the intense campaign that is being conducted internationally, to describe my country as one that does not care about our fellow human beings and human needs. Facts demonstrate that this is far from the truth.

There are no signs of obvious starvation in any part of the country. In fact for over 25 years, since the beginning of the LTTE's violent challenge to our very existence, to our sovereignty, the government has been sending food, medicine and educational material to the two districts dominated by the LTTE.

Every single teacher, nurse, doctor, hospital and government official in the LTTE controlled areas is appointed and paid by the Government. Very few countries grappling with terrorism have been so accommodating. This itself illustrates the caring nature of our society.

These noteworthy achievements have been possible because of a holistic view of human development to which we have always been firmly committed. We believe that development becomes meaningful to the vast mass of the people only when its fruits are capable of being enjoyed by all segments of the people.

That is why we have constantly tried not only to achieve growth and expansion of our national wealth but to ensure that the resources generated by our efforts are distributed among the people, especially, in the rural hinterland, on an equitable basis.

Empowerment

Our development model as presented in my election manifesto, the Mahinda Chinthana, signifies the empowerment of the rural economy.

The centre piece of this new strategy will be the development of modern infrastructure throughout the country to provide a basis for development of Agriculture, Industry, Construction, Tourism, SMEs and transport services that will bring about new opportunities to our people in the rural economy.

Our strategy has enhanced the public investments over 6 percent of GDP to support 'Randora' - meaning Golden Gate - our infrastructure development initiative to develop new ports, power generation and distribution networks, and integrated townships to link rural economy to the global economy and create new space for growth.

Rural Empowerment

We have integrated strategies to promote insurance, shipping, aviation, trade, logistic industries and petroleum explorations, and above all, skills and knowledge to position Sri Lanka as an emerging economic hub in South Asia.

Empowering people at grassroots level is equally important in this whole development process. 'Gama Neguma', meaning revival of the village, is an initiative to empower communities, adopting bottom up programmes originating from communities and reflecting their needs.

A series of rural development initiatives have been implemented, permitting the community to prioritise their needs and objectives. These initiatives are monitored by community leaders to ensure that a larger volume of resources are productively used for the betterment of the rural community.

Healthy environments

The main thrust of this programme is to retain people in rural environments, rather than encouraging them to move into urban areas; which has been the pattern in many developing economies.

Why should people move into urban areas and live in slums or sub-standard housing, when they can live in very healthy environments in villages, and enjoy clean air, water and pure and good food. It is my belief that rural people are much healthier than those who live in urban cities.

Our approach to development takes into consideration the dangers of destroying the green environment. Every project that is implemented under Gama Naguma recognises the value of green belts and the preservation of the forest cover.

The environmental protection programmes that are implemented throughout the island make a serious attempt to ensure that rivers are kept clean, waterways are not dirtied and trees are not destroyed. The bed rock of our development is maintaining and preserving the environment.

Consolidating our achievements in human resource development, we are now working towards a knowledge economy based on productivity, skills, knowledge and technology. Therefore, education and health is being undertaken at grass roots level through multi-faceted government programmes. In particular, I am very keen to ensure that our children are able to become global citizens through the use of Information Technology.

In a novel programme called 'Nenasala', a network of 500 rural tele-centers has already been established. I have set a target to increase this upto 1,000 by next year.

Three years ago, Sri Lanka's IT literacy stood at a little over 5 per cent. Today I feel accomplished that we have been able to enhance this to 20 per cent. Which means that more and more people will be able to enter the lucrative IT job market. All this is being done to enhance the employability of rural youth.

The essence of our rural empowerment programme is to ensure that rural infrastructure development takes place at a rapid rate. So far neglected rural roads are being paved today with concrete to make them last the monsoon rains that are common in our part of the world. Rural electricity programmes, community water supply schemes, minor irrigation projects, housing and market facilities are included in our rural infrastructure development drive.

In essence our strategy is to level the playing field between the 'urban, organised minority' and the 'rural, unorganized majority', in the national development process. I am encouraged that our development strategy - Mahinda Chinthana - Vision Towards a New Sri Lanka, sustained a near 7 per cent economic growth during the last three years, and reached US dollars 1,600 per capita income in 2007. Except in one district, people below the poverty line have declined drastically in 2007.

Challenged

Unfortunately we are being challenged by "the most brutal terrorist group in the world" as the LTTE has been described by the FBI. Suicide killings using even women and children have become their hallmark. It is this terror

Rural Empowerment

group that invented the deadly suicide vest for the suicide killer. Having pioneered the suicide vest, they have freely given this technology to other terror groups in the world. This has now become a global menace.

There have been hundreds of innocent, civilians returning home after work, children going to school and young mothers going to their weekly clinics, being maimed or killed by indiscriminately exploded bombs in crowded centres or being targeted by brain-washed suicide bombers.

You need to see the carnage caused by shattered limbs and burning human flesh, to understand the sheer brutality that motivates this group of terrorists.

They killed Rajiv Gandhi, the former Prime Minister of India, and Ranasinghe Premadasa, the former President of Sri Lanka.

Most recently, a senior Minister of my government, a Tamil speaking Catholic, was brutally murdered by a suicide killer, along with a former Olympic athlete among many others participating in a sporting event.

They also killed our former Foreign Minister Lakshman Kadirgamar, a scholar of distinction, and legal luminary, who once occupied this seat as the President of the Oxford Union with distinction.

It has become incumbent upon us to confront this group to the extent of our ability, deploying all the resources of the State, to protect the people of Sri Lanka and their democratic way of life. I must add that what I am doing is in no way different to what other democracies have done before, and continue to do, in the face of terrorism.

Brutal terror outfit

However, I must state that the **LTTE** is the most brutal terror outfit the world has ever seen, and defeating them requires global support.

What Sri Lanka is doing, in my opinion, is fighting this terror outfit single handed to ensure that democracy and respect for human life prevail in the world. If we fail in our war against the **LTTE**, the world will fail in its fight against terrorism, and democracy will be the victim. This is the plain truth.

Our development thrust unfortunately has had its own obstacles, the main being the brutal terrorist threat that makes us, a developing country, to take a heavy toll. It is time that the world, raising its united voice, expressed its utter revulsion of the barbaric practice of suicide bombings.

It must be made absolutely clear that this form of political expression, if it could be described as such, is utterly unacceptable in the civilised world.

There is a considerable challenge to the Security Forces of my country, whose goal is simply to protect the innocents and their simple way of life. We need to understand that our Security Forces do not go out of their way to harass innocents, or to discriminate against a minority.

They take great personal risks constantly. The fear psychosis created by the **LTTE** terror, may cause some lapses in judgment, but by and large, independent observers have always commended the efficiency, politeness and courtesy of the men in uniform.

We must remember that there are no methods or solutions which are universally applicable to situations of this nature. It is the principal duty of a government to assure the public of security of life and limb.

It is the terrorist group that decides when to strike: They decide the time, the place and the opportunity. They are in no way constrained by the values and procedures which rightly control the responses of democratic Governments. These realities must be taken into account as the basis of a fair and objective assessment of Sri Lanka's situation.

Free and fair elections

Rural Empowerment

Although many have said that the LTTE is invincible, we have freed our Eastern Province of their terror. Within one year we have restored democracy there after nearly two decades.

Only last week we conducted free and fair elections to the first ever Eastern Provincial Council, contested by several political parties.

As our forces seek to defeat and disarm the LTTE, we are firm in our resolve to have a negotiated solution to the crisis in Sri Lanka.

I do not believe in a military solution. We have attempted talks with the LTTE on several occasions - thrice since my election as the President - but they have not reciprocated. They have always left the talks with lame excuses. We are still ready to talk, once we are certain of their genuine intent for a political solution... and their readiness to give up arms.

As young leaders, you will take on increasing responsibilities in later life. Destiny will place you in circumstances where you will be called upon to lead and defend your countries. As someone who has been nurtured and strengthened by an ethical and caring culture, I wish to leave with you with some thoughts.

You and I are privileged to be what we are today, but, there are millions of our fellow beings who are not that fortunate, and who need our guidance, leadership and caring. Leadership to these masses of people will have to be given by you.

Your leadership must be one that reflects your cultural and religious values, sense of integrity, dedication to the cause of eliminating human suffering, and a sense of generosity. In conclusion, let me say that our chosen path to development of my country, especially the rural areas, continues to be a challenge for all of us, particularly with threats that are both internal and external.

The protection and advancement of human rights continues to be a challenge for all of us, not only in Sri Lanka but globally. I only seek to encourage you to think of Sri Lanka as a country that has achieved considerable success in caring for its people, in the face of a most brutal challenge thrown at us by terrorists.

We will continue to comply with the highest standards in keeping with values and traditions we hold to be sacrosanct.

May the Noble Triple Gem Bless you all!

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Central theme of development

Sunday Observer (Sri Lanka)

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

Dateline: Colombo

Body

Colombo, May 18 -- The address by President Mahinda Rajapaksa to the Oxford Union on an invitation of the Oxford Union and the Sri Lankan Society of Oxford University on last week.

I wish to speak to you on a subject of much interest to my country at the present time.

That is the empowerment of the rural economy, a central theme of my development strategy for Sri Lanka.

Our development strategy towards empowering the rural economy of our country, where majority of our people live, has now become relevant to the global economy itself in the context of the emerging world food crisis and environmental challenges to our own survival.

We have an additional burden. We are threatened by the challenge of terrorism and the need to protect the rights of our fellow beings.

Traditional culture

Sri Lanka where I was born and bred is a country where our culture is firmly rooted in rural tradition. The Sri Lankan culture has been essentially conditioned by the great religion of Buddhism, but later influenced by Hinduism, Islam and Christianity.

The concepts of loving kindness, compassion and tolerance are at the heart of our psychological make up. They nourish and sustain us through the uncertainties of life. Our traditional greeting 'Ayubowan' means - May you live long.

It is not surprising then that in a world where rulers constructed massive castles and grand palaces to demonstrate their power and wealth, our kings constructed huge reservoirs - tanks, as we call them to provide water to sustain food production and ensure sustainable livelihood to the people.

The great legacy left behind by our ancient rulers, and which is in use even today scattered across three vast provinces of my island home, is the massive irrigation network.

This unique hydraulic civilisation which sustained an essentially prosperous rural society, was based on a philosophy which has much to offer the modern world.

Central theme of development

Buddhism taught us that we have no absolute ownership of the forests, the rivers, the oceans and the atmosphere that sustain life; that every generation holds the environment in trust, so that its abuse is prevented; and that our duty was to hand down the environment to future generations without harm.

Rural areas

Even today, over 77 per cent of our people still live in rural areas because of a wide range of attractions in our rural home base. I myself hail from the deep south, from an agrarian village with a beautiful natural environment.

I am extremely proud of that fact. The attraction in our villages is not only the economic resources and greenery, but also the traditional culture, arts, religion and bio-diversity which are incentives to keep our people away from migrating into urban townships.

The horrors of poverty and suffering that have engulfed many booming Asian cities have not affected Sri Lanka.

Strengthened by the caring attitude inherited from our ancient rulers, we were able to adapt to modern democracy with great ease. It was in 1931, while still under the British, that Sri Lanka was granted universal franchise. You will recall that Britain achieved this status only in 1926.

Since then we have continued to develop and strengthen democratic institutions in Sri Lanka. Political pluralism has always been fundamental to our democracy. We have parties of different political views represented in our parliament. This diversity uniquely enriches Sri Lanka's political canvass.

Coalition

The Government, although elected by a Sinhala Buddhist majority, represents a coalition of Sinhala, Tamil, and Muslim communities and all the religious groups in the country.

You will be hard pressed to find a similarly representative government in any of the other democracies of the world. I am proud of our vibrant parliamentary system, the strong judicial establishment, and the independent press.

Not a day passes without an attack on me, I must say totally without foundation, from some parts of the media. We have not hesitated to adopt global standards, collaborate with international organisations such as the UN, ILO and the Commonwealth, and participate in efforts to consolidate institutions designed to protect the rights of our fellow humans.

Sri Lanka has contributed with vigour and creativity to the development of the principles incorporated in international conventions, through their work in international organisations and through the International Court of Justice.

We have always played our part in global efforts to establish higher standards, and to make our earth a better place for all, because we fundamentally feel that this is the correct thing to do.

Equal opportunities

This is a reflection of our cultural traditions. Sri Lanka's conformity to global environmental standards has been commended time and time again.

Women in Sri Lanka enjoy equal opportunities with men. Over 60 per cent of our medical practitioners are women. Over 80 per cent of our teachers are women.

The nursing profession is dominated by women. The legal profession too is increasingly dominated by women. Women have also entered sections of the work force previously monopolized by men such as, academia, engineering, computing, quantity surveying and architecture.

I recall with great delight that Sri Lanka produced world's first elected woman Prime Minister in 1960. Her husband, Mr. S.W.R.D. Bandaranaike, whose portrait hangs over there, was also a prime minister of Sri Lanka.

Central theme of development

For decades we have invested in education and health. My country enjoys one of the highest literacy standards in the world, while still being categorised as a middle income developing country. 97 per cent of our children are enrolled at school.

Our infant mortality rate and maternal mortality rate at child birth, is on par with that of many developed countries. The country provides free healthcare to all. Education is free and universal from childhood to university. During the primary and secondary school life of every child the government provides free text books and uniforms.

One of my long-lasting joys is the sight of thousands of children in crispy white uniforms heading for school each morning.

This is probably a sight that one cannot witness in many other places of the world. Children are precious to us. I believe they are our future. We have ensured a massive investment in our children.

My government firmly believes that no child must be deprived of his or her childhood. We have created a separate ministry to look after the welfare of our children. We do not employ any children in our labour force, and no one below the age of eighteen is recruited to our Armed Forces - unlike the LTTE, which engages thousands in its baby brigades.

These children are robbed of their childhood, and brutality is ingrained into their character, making them life-long misfits for society.

Achievements

Sri Lanka has achieved a very high standard in the United Nations Human Development Index, and we have already, to a large extent, achieved the Millennium Development Goals. It was only last month that a UN Report commended Sri Lanka for being well on its way to eliminating malaria.

We have a very low rate of HIV/AIDS infection. I point these things out to you only because of the intense campaign that is being conducted internationally, to describe my country as one that does not care about our fellow human beings and human needs. Facts demonstrate that this is far from the truth.

There are no signs of obvious starvation in any part of the country. In fact for over 25 years, since the beginning of the LTTE's violent challenge to our very existence, to our sovereignty, the government has been sending food, medicine and educational material to the two districts dominated by the LTTE.

Every single teacher, nurse, doctor, hospital and government official in the LTTE controlled areas is appointed and paid by the Government. Very few countries grappling with terrorism have been so accommodating. This itself illustrates the caring nature of our society.

These noteworthy achievements have been possible because of a holistic view of human development to which we have always been firmly committed. We believe that development becomes meaningful to the vast mass of the people only when its fruits are capable of being enjoyed by all segments of the people.

That is why we have constantly tried not only to achieve growth and expansion of our national wealth but to ensure that the resources generated by our efforts are distributed among the people, especially, in the rural hinterland, on an equitable basis.

Empowerment

Our development model as presented in my election manifesto, the Mahinda Chinthana, signifies the empowerment of the rural economy.

The centre piece of this new strategy will be the development of modern infrastructure throughout the country to provide a basis for development of Agriculture, Industry, Construction, Tourism, SMEs and transport services that will bring about new opportunities to our people in the rural economy.

Central theme of development

Our strategy has enhanced the public investments over 6 percent of GDP to support 'Randora' - meaning Golden Gate - our infrastructure development initiative -- to develop new ports, power generation and distribution networks, and integrated townships to link rural economy to the global economy and create new space for growth.

We have integrated strategies to promote insurance, shipping, aviation, trade, logistic industries and petroleum explorations, and above all, skills and knowledge to position Sri Lanka as an emerging economic hub in South Asia.

Empowering people at grassroots level is equally important in this whole development process. 'Gama Neguma', meaning revival of the village, is an initiative to empower communities, adopting bottom up programmes originating from communities and reflecting their needs.

A series of rural development initiatives have been implemented, permitting the community to prioritise their needs and objectives. These initiatives are monitored by community leaders to ensure that a larger volume of resources are productively used for the betterment of the rural community.

Healthy environments

The main thrust of this programme is to retain people in rural environments, rather than encouraging them to move into urban areas; which has been the pattern in many developing economies.

Why should people move into urban areas and live in slums or sub-standard housing, when they can live in very healthy environments in villages, and enjoy clean air, water and pure and good food. It is my belief that rural people are much healthier than those who live in urban cities.

Our approach to development takes into consideration the dangers of destroying the green environment. Every project that is implemented under Gama Naguma recognises the value of green belts and the preservation of the forest cover.

The environmental protection programmes that are implemented throughout the island make a serious attempt to ensure that rivers are kept clean, waterways are not dirtied and trees are not destroyed. The bed rock of our development is maintaining and preserving the environment.

Consolidating our achievements in human resource development, we are now working towards a knowledge economy based on productivity, skills, knowledge and technology.

Therefore, education and health is being undertaken at grass roots level through multi-faceted government programmes. In particular, I am very keen to ensure that our children are able to become global citizens through the use of Information Technology.

In a novel programme called 'Nenasala', a network of 500 rural tele-centers has already been established. I have set a target to increase this upto 1,000 by next year.

Three years ago, Sri Lanka's IT literacy stood at a little over 5 per cent. Today I feel accomplished that we have been able to enhance this to 20 per cent. Which means that more and more people will be able to enter the lucrative IT job market. All this is being done to enhance the employability of rural youth.

The essence of our rural empowerment programme is to ensure that rural infrastructure development takes place at a rapid rate.

So far neglected rural roads are being paved today with concrete to make them last the monsoon rains that are common in our part of the world. Rural electricity programmes, community water supply schemes, minor irrigation projects, housing and market facilities are included in our rural infrastructure development drive.

In essence our strategy is to level the playing field between the 'urban, organised minority' and the 'rural, unorganized majority', in the national development process.

Central theme of development

I am encouraged that our development strategy - Mahinda Chinthana - Vision Towards a New Sri Lanka, sustained a near 7 per cent economic growth during the last three years, and reached US dollars 1,600 per capita income in 2007. Except in one district, people below the poverty line have declined drastically in 2007.

Challenged

Unfortunately we are being challenged by "the most brutal terrorist group in the world" as the LTTE has been described by the FBI. Suicide killings using even women and children have become their hallmark.

It is this terror group that invented the deadly suicide vest for the suicide killer. Having pioneered the suicide vest, they have freely given this technology to other terror groups in the world. This has now become a global menace.

There have been hundreds of innocent, civilians returning home after work, children going to school and young mothers going to their weekly clinics, being maimed or killed by indiscriminately exploded bombs in crowded centres or being targeted by brain-washed suicide bombers.

You need to see the carnage caused by shattered limbs and burning human flesh, to understand the sheer brutality that motivates this group of terrorists.

They killed Rajiv Gandhi, the former Prime Minister of India, and Ranasinghe Premadasa, the former President of Sri Lanka.

Most recently, a senior Minister of my government, a Tamil speaking Catholic, was brutally murdered by a suicide killer, along with a former Olympic athlete among many others participating in a sporting event.

They also killed our former Foreign Minister Lakshman Kadirgamar, a scholar of distinction, and legal luminary, who once occupied this seat as the President of the Oxford Union with distinction.

It has become incumbent upon us to confront this group to the extent of our ability, deploying all the resources of the State, to protect the people of Sri Lanka and their democratic way of life. I must add that what I am doing is in no way different to what other democracies have done before, and continue to do, in the face of terrorism.

Brutal terror outfit

However, I must state that the LTTE is the most brutal terror outfit the world has ever seen, and defeating them requires global support.

What Sri Lanka is doing, in my opinion, is fighting this terror outfit single handed to ensure that democracy and respect for human life prevail in the world. If we fail in our war against the LTTE, the world will fail in its fight against terrorism, and democracy will be the victim.

This is the plain truth. Our development thrust unfortunately has had its own obstacles, the main being the brutal terrorist threat that makes us, a developing country, to take a heavy toll.

It is time that the world, raising its united voice, expressed its utter revulsion of the barbaric practice of suicide bombings. It must be made absolutely clear that this form of political expression, if it could be described as such, is utterly unacceptable in the civilised world.

There is a considerable challenge to the Security Forces of my country, whose goal is simply to protect the innocents and their simple way of life.

We need to understand that our Security Forces do not go out of their way to harass innocents, or to discriminate against a minority. They take great personal risks constantly. The fear psychosis created by the LTTE terror, may cause some lapses in judgment, but by and large, independent observers have always commended the efficiency, politeness and courtesy of the men in uniform.

Central theme of development

We must remember that there are no methods or solutions which are universally applicable to situations of this nature. It is the principal duty of a government to assure the public of security of life and limb.

It is the terrorist group that decides when to strike: They decide the time, the place and the opportunity. They are in no way constrained by the values and procedures which rightly control the responses of democratic Governments.

These realities must be taken into account as the basis of a fair and objective assessment of Sri Lanka's situation. Although many have said that the LTTE is invincible, we have freed our Eastern Province of their terror. Within one year we have restored democracy there after nearly two decades.

Only last week we conducted free and fair elections to the first ever Eastern Provincial Council, contested by several political parties. As our forces seek to defeat and disarm the LTTE, we are firm in our resolve to have a negotiated solution to the crisis in Sri Lanka.

I do not believe in a military solution. We have attempted talks with the LTTE on several occasions - thrice since my election as the President - but they have not reciprocated.

They have always left the talks with lame excuses. We are still ready to talk, once we are certain of their genuine intent for a political solution... and their readiness to give up arms.

As young leaders, you will take on increasing responsibilities in later life. Destiny will place you in circumstances where you will be called upon to lead and defend your countries.

As someone who has been nurtured and strengthened by an ethical and caring culture, I wish to leave with you with some thoughts.

You and I are privileged to be what we are today, but, there are millions of our fellow beings who are not that fortunate, and who need our guidance, leadership and caring.

Leadership to these masses of people will have to be given by you. Your leadership must be one that reflects your cultural and religious values, sense of integrity, dedication to the cause of eliminating human suffering, and a sense of generosity.

In conclusion, let me say that our chosen path to development of my country, especially the rural areas, continues to be a challenge for all of us, particularly with threats that are both internal and external.

The protection and advancement of human rights continues to be a challenge for all of us, not only in Sri Lanka but globally.

I only seek to encourage you to think of Sri Lanka as a country that has achieved considerable success in caring for its people, in the face of a most brutal challenge thrown at us by terrorists. We will continue to comply with the highest standards in keeping with values and traditions we hold to be sacrosanct.

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Load-Date: October 1, 2008

Bid to evacuate bombed hospital

The Australian

February 12, 2009 Thursday

2 - All-round First Edition

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Section: WORLD; Pg. 11

Length: 468 words

Byline: Amanda Hodge, South Asia correspondent

Body

THE evacuation of a hospital in Sri Lanka's battle zone will be attempted today after the Government denied killing 16 patients.

At least 160 people, many seriously wounded, remained in the makeshift hospital in northern Putumattalan with little food or fresh drinking water last night as the International Committee for the Red Cross negotiated with Tamil Tiger rebels and the Sri Lankan military for their safe passage.

A ferry flying the ICRC flag evacuated 240 patients from the hospital, in the northern district of Mullaittivu, to Trincomalee for treatment early yesterday, following security guarantees from troops and Tigers.

ICRC spokeswoman Sarasi Wijeratne described the rescue as "dangerous and difficult", with fishermen working through the night to help ferry patients to the boat.

A day earlier the hospital was hit by artillery shells, killing 16 patients, the ICRC said.

ICRC Colombo delegation head Paul Castella yesterday condemned the attacks on civilians. "We are shocked that patients are not afforded the protection they are entitled to," he said.

"Once more, we call on both parties to meet their obligation under international humanitarian law to spare at all times the wounded and sick people, medical personnel and medical facilities."

Many of the patients had been evacuated a week earlier from the Puthukkudiyiruppu Hospital in the northern Vanni region after 15 people died in shelling.

Military spokesman Udaya Nanayakkara yesterday denied his forces were involved in the attack, but said it was "quite possible that the **LTTE** (Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam) attacked them".

The military accused the Tigers of gunning down 19 civilians and wounding a further 75 on Tuesday as they tried to cross the front lines into government-held territory.

The rebels yesterday denied responsibility, and claimed the Sri Lankan army had turned the government-declared safety zone into "killing fields".

Bid to evacuate bombed hospital

In an article posted on TamilNet.com, a news website sympathetic to the Tamil cause, **LTTE** political head C. Ilamparithy yesterday accused the Sri Lankan army of entering the safety zone and firing on civilians. The alleged attack occurred a day after a **female** Tiger suicide bomber killed 30 people at a centre for displaced civilians, in what Sri Lankan authorities said was another attempt to prevent people leaving rebel territory.

Sorting fact from propaganda is near impossible in Sri Lanka's 25-year civil war as independent journalists are banned from the conflict zone.

Fighting continued yesterday between government troops and the depleted Tiger force, said to be squeezed into a coastal strip of less than 200sq km. With them are an estimated 200,000 civilians.

The UN yesterday said ``tens of thousands" of Tamils had poured across the front lines and into government territory.

Load-Date: February 11, 2009

End of Document

19 civilians killed in Lanka

Hindustan Times

February 11, 2009 Wednesday

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Length: 141 words

Dateline: New Delhi

Body

New Delhi, Feb. 11 -- The Sri Lankan army (SLA) and the **LTTE** on Tuesday leveled allegations against each other of killing displaced Tamil civilians in the embattled north-eastern district of Mullaitivu, some 350 km north of Colombo.

According to the army, **LTTE** fired at civilians attempting to crossover to government territory, killing 19 of them and injuring another 75 in the Udayarkattukulam area of the district. "Among the dead are two children, five **women**, and 12 males. Another 28 children, 30 **women** and 17 men have suffered injuries," the military claimed. The **Tamil Tigers** claimed that 36 civilians were killed and 76 injured in SLA shelling when they were fleeing the "safety zone" declared by the government. This happened in a village called Mathalan in the same district. Published by HT Syndication with permission from Hindustan Times.

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Load-Date: April 1, 2009

Keheliya regrets Ranil's remarks

Daily Mirror (Sri Lanka)

June 12, 2008 Thursday 4:11 PM EST

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Length: 446 words

Byline: Daily News Sri Lanka

Dateline: Colombo

Body

Colombo, June 12 -- Government Defence Affairs spokesman Minister Keheliya Rambukwella said at a time the world and world leaders are fighting terrorism, UNP and Opposition Leader Ranil Wickremesinghe is denigrating the Government's and Security Forces' efforts to defeat one of the most ruthless terrorist organisations in the world.

At the weekly media briefing on the current security situation Minister Rambukwella vehemently condemned the Opposition Leader's comment during the visit to India that the Government has failed in its war against terror citing the spate of bomb blasts in the South.

Minister Rambukwella asserted terrorism was a cancer that has spread all over the world.

The war against terror became a world phenomenon and people accepted the issue without any argument.

We are dealing with the territorial integrity and sovereignty of the country", he added. The Opposition Leader undermined the Government's and forces achievements in waging war against terror. "The Security Forces liberated the East defeating terrorism to restore peace and prosperity in the region.

People were allowed to practice and franchise their political rights. The aspiration of the Government is to provide citizens a safe, independent and violent free country", Minister Rambukwella said.

"When a country fights against a ruthless terrorist organisation like the LTTE who are exploding bombs targeting children, women and elders at public places such incidents cannot be stopped at once", he added.

Minister Rambukwella pointed out that at a time the world was endorsing the Government's efforts to fight against the LTTE, it is a shame that the Leader of the country's main Opposition party to criticise and denigrate the Government's efforts to fight against terror citing some bomb blasts in the South while ignoring the Government and Security Forces achievements in the North and the East.

During the President's visit to the United Kingdom Prime Minister Gordon Brown and Opposition Leader David Cameron congratulated President Rajapaksa on the steps taken to defeat terrorism. "Britain's Opposition Leader David Cameron said they realise the prevailing situation and the challenges Sri Lanka is facing as a democracy confronted with terrorism and the efforts being made to overcome them.

They were keen to understand the problems in countering terrorism and how best they can help the country to resolve the long lasting problem", Minister Rambukwella remarked.

Keheliya regrets Ranil's remarks

When a delegation from Sri Lanka met the Pope, he expressed His Holiness described terrorism as a cancer spread all around the world," he added.

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EU Parliamentarians' flight of fancy

Daily Mirror (Sri Lanka)

August 2, 2008 Saturday 2:56 PM EST

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Length: 1079 words

Byline: Daily News Sri Lanka

Dateline: Colombo

Body

Colombo, Aug. 2 -- I read with great interest the story about the EU Parliamentarians who were "turned back from Ratmalana Airport" while on their way to visit the Eastern Province.

It's too bad, because their aborted tour to Trincomalee District could have demonstrated the tremendous progress the Government has made in the area since its liberation last year - politically, socially, economically, and otherwise.

A UN aircraft which the delegation wanted.

Robert Evans, the EU spokesperson said, "the last minute cancellation and a catalogue of chaos and confusion meant that the delegation did not fly to Trincomalee. Despite repeated assurances, endless complications resulted in the party being turned back from Ratmalana Airport, destroying months of preparation, time and expense."

The Foreign Ministry has a totally different story, which I am inclined to believe. In spite of the Government's kind offer to provide a plane, the EU wanted to charter its own aircraft, which arrived from South Africa (why?) two days before the junket. The Defence Department needed to inspect the plane and make sure it was airworthy, etc.

It wasn't licensed to fly within domestic destinations in Sri Lanka, so this obstacle had to be overcome. Its flight crew had never been to the Eastern Provinces and was unfamiliar with the route - another obstacle that had to be addressed.

Then, of course, there is the security issue, which is understandably a great one. As any of us who travel frequently can attest, you've got to keep your cool these days because things always take a bit longer than you think.

Apparently the VIP European Union group didn't have the cool - or the patience - to deal with the red tape. A half hour before their scheduled flight time they decided to call off their important trip and go back to the hotel - claiming, as I said, that they were "turned back from Ratmalana Airport."

Eastern Province

I can just see those Parliamentarians with their white man colonial attitudes getting huffy and irritated at the frustrated civil servants who were just trying to do their jobs.

Knowing the importance of the EU mission I'm sure those "simple local folk" were doing their best to accommodate their VIPs - given the last-minute nature of the

EU Parliamentarians' flight of fancy

Robert Evans EU delegation leader Nirj Deva Aditya: Contradicted Evans' claims arrangements (despite the months the EU had to plan it right).

It is clear to me that the EU group didn't really want to go to the Eastern Province in the first place - in spite of their elaborate plans. If they had, they might have been forced to say something good about the Government of Sri Lanka, and the success it's had with its Eastern Re-development programs.

In all of the reports I've read they've had nothing but whiny little comments about "abductions," "ill treatment of journalists," and "human rights abuses" - all of their information having been gleaned from unsubstantiated, questionable sources that have their own axes to grind.

They also "called on the President to immediately re-establish the Constitutional Council and independent commissions as they are necessary to address the general crisis of governance."

The President definitely has a crisis on his hands, yes, but it's not about governance.

It's about getting rid of the suicide bombers and keeping the public buses safe. And he's doing a good job, I might add.

In fact, the EU Parliamentarians have said nothing about the great gains the Government has made against the terrorists - or the fact that within a few months the whole island will be one country again - for the first time in 25 years.

Oh, by the way, they did remember to call the LTTE a terrorist group. But did they call Prabhakaran, the terrorist leader, a megalomaniacal, genocidal criminal? No. Perhaps they were talking to their Norwegian colleagues who were trying to figure out a way to save him and spirit him away to some safe haven in Africa. No bias there, is there? No sense, either.

When you're a guest in a foreign country you usually find something good to say about your hosts - at least "the people were nice," "the food was good," or "the mixed race culture has lived, for the most part, in peace and harmony for centuries."

No. All you came away saying was, "In the light of all these apprehensions, the European Delegation remains extremely anxious about the impact a possible loss of GSP+ status would have on the economy and employment in Sri Lanka..."

Sounds like a threat to me. Also sounds like they came to Sri Lanka with their minds already made up. They wanted to go home with their story in tact, so I guess that's what they did.

To be perfectly frank, the LTTE and its public relations machine, which employs people like the former Deputy US Attorney General Bruce Fein, to do its dirty work - with a happy face.

Bruce and his bosses have been very successful in convincing the Western media and Western governments in general, that the LTTE has a legitimate case for using pregnant women as suicide bombers to attain their goal of an independent Tamil state.

Misguided

I know it sounds unbelievable, but it's very true that they've done an amazing job painting themselves as "freedom fighters" - even comparing themselves to the US colonists who signed the Declaration of Independence in 1776.

They've managed to collect millions of dollars from the misguided Tamil Diaspora to finance their expensive and extensive international spin war, and they've done a great job influencing the world opinion in favour of the LTTE. I expect to hear that Prabhakaran has been nominated for the Nobel Peace Prize any day now...

EU Parliamentarians' flight of fancy

I can't understand why the Sri Lankan Government can't wage its own war on terrorists - just like every other Government on the planet is doing right now. The US for instance, has been torturing terrorist suspects at its base in Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, for years, and keeping them locked up without so much as a hearing.

Bush's war on Iraq has made the headlines for human rights abuses almost daily - remember Abu Graib? Those naked prisoners being led around like dogs? Why not attack the US President - and pick on someone (almost) your own size.

By the way, the people are wonderful, the food is great, and the mixed-race culture has lived, for the most part, in peace and harmony for centuries. I've always loved the truth - almost as much as I've loved beautiful islands. So I'll definitely be back.

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PEOPLE ON A ROAD TO NOWHERE

Daily Mirror (Sri Lanka)

February 23, 2009 Monday

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Length: 1509 words

Dateline: Colombo

Body

Colombo, Feb. 23 -- Even after some 20 years had gone by they still remain displaced people; some of them are still at the mercy of the elements with most of the others still stuck in a quagmire of hopelessness wondering if they can get back to a life of normalcy.

We visited a few camps for the displaced in the Puttalam district where Muslims who were evicted by the LTTE in 1990 call home. There we discovered disparities in the resources at the camps -- abject poverty was still rampant, a collage of social problems and a large number of people still undecided whether returning to their original homes would spell more suffering for them. With eyes filled with tears, M. Umar's frail frame shook as he remembered the harrowing journey that brought him and his family from Jaffna to Puttalam in 1990. "The LTTE gave us two hours to leave and did not allow us to take anything with us and at every exit point they were there, confiscating the gold from women, and even little gold items from children," 65-year-old Mr. Umar alleged. "There was one woman in front of me who fainted in despair as a cadre tried to take away her Sawadi or the marriage necklace. I could not bear to see it and I went up to him and asked him if he would take the same away from his mother or sister." Mr. Umar said they were transported in a lorry a few miles up to a school and with thousands of others walked the rest of the way to Vavuniya and were transported again to Puttalam where he and the others set up house at the Hijira Puram Camp later. "I used to work in an Ice Cream factory in Jaffna," he reminisced, his eyes lighting up momentarily. "We have suffered so much here, what is the use of going back to our home town and repeating this suffering again? My children are here and I am too old to think of going back." Mr. Umar's expressed these views after we asked him about Social Services Minister Douglas Devananda's suggestion during a speech recently that the displaced Muslims who were pushed out of Jaffna could return home if they choose to do so no sooner the war comes to an end. The Northern Displaced People's Puttalam Secretariat said that if the displaced people continue to remain in the district problems could erupt with the host community, as the town was unable to bear the weight of the population overflowing and the tensions ensuing from the concept that 'outsiders' are buying their land and taking their jobs. As such the Government was considering Musali in Mannar as a first stage for the relocation of the displaced Muslims in Mannar. The displaced population consists of some 150,000 in the district and out of these nearly 5,000 were those evicted from Jaffna, Kilinochchi and Mullaitivu. The ones who walked hundreds of miles and crossed the seas in overcrowded boats and some of the older generation, said that going back was an option yet they would have to be assured they would be provided with resources and relief by the government to rebuild their lives in the North. The younger generation on the other hand unhesitatingly said they will not leave as some of them have their livelihood and family ties in Puttalam. "It is just a mound of earth left where my home was," said Casim Fathima Bibi from the Saltern Camp 1 a few Kilometers away from Puttalam town. Originally from Iranamadu, Fathima's husband, a businessman, was murdered nine years ago while he was working in Puttalam town leaving her with a son and daughter to fend for. "My children have jobs here and they are all what I have left now, going back would mean more difficulties. But if everyone leaves we would have little choice but to leave with

PEOPLE ON A ROAD TO NOWHERE

them and then all we can hope for is that we would have some support to rebuild our lives," she remarked. Kaadar Umma's three daughters who have married and settled down in Puttalam said that as they had no intention of going back to their hometown Nachchikuda, their mother did not want to leave either. "Our parents used to have some coconut land there and earned their living from it, now we do not expect anything to be left," one of her daughter's spoke. Another woman in the Saltern Camp 1, S.S.C. Najeeba said that even though she did not mind going back to her land in Jaffna if peace prevailed, her children had no intention of following her. "They say that even though I have land there is nothing for them there," she said. Shahul Hameed Basaria on the other hand unhesitatingly said she was more than ready to return to her home in Mannar yet again if the government helps them rebuild their lives. "The only thing the **LTTE** did not take away from us is our education, that is how we educated our children and made a life for ourselves here when we lost everything. If we can go back there is no stopping us, it is our land nobody can take it away from us," she said. Naushad who takes the helm at the Hijira Puram Camp said that he was willing to return to his hometown Jaffna if the government provided them with housing, livelihood and educational support there. "We were just one family when we came here first and lived under tents, now we have a roof over our heads in the same place and our family has grown to three," he mentioned adding that as thankful as they are for the support they have received poverty is still not very far away for the 200 inhabitants of the camp. He mentioned that the people at Hijira Puram earned their living by manual labour or fishing for oysters or shrimps, a large number of them worked in the Saltern Factory. "We earn a nominal fee a day and all IDPs from the time they came were provided with a dry ration allowance of Rs 1260 a month which remains the same amount to this day. That only suffices for two days at present," Naushad said remarking that until they returned home it would be good if the government increased that amount. Mansura in the Saltern Camp 1 added that the dry ration allowance had to be reapplied for every four months and if it is missed would result in having to wait four months without it. "Most of us hardly earn a days wage to feed our children, returning to Jaffna might help us get back on our feet. However, there has to be a stable peace for us to go there," she pointed out. Walking through both camps we were able to see that poverty was an issue in Hijira Puram and Saltern Camp 1. However, there was a marked disparity between them as Hijira Puram had sturdier abodes built under the patronage of Minister of Resettlement and Disaster Relief Services Rishad Badurdeen and sponsored by the World Bank. Saltern Camp 1 on the other hand did not have proper toilets for any of the inhabitants, let alone houses. Most of their homes were made out of thatched coconut leaves and a few that were in brick were built by hardworking individuals themselves. We were told that 3000 houses had already been sponsored by the World Bank and completed while another group of houses were hoping to be built. In Hijira Puram a Loan system, Technical training and livelihood support including sewing classes for young girls were all provided for by the Minister. However, Saltern struggles to keep on its feet to get a proper water system for themselves while they received electricity for their camp after much effort in 2002. "Nobody comes to look at our situation let alone build houses for us," spoke S.M. Jinnah of Saltern Camp 1. "There are 120 people in this camp and a very few toilets. Whatever new ones being built now are by a private donor, but they are still not enough." The most heartrending tale came from S. Mohammad, Jinnah's father who showed us his ID card and said it was a curse that 'Kilinochchi' was written at the back of it. "I shudder at checkpoints because they take one look at it and think that I am **LTTE**. They say 'Kotiya! Kotiya!' and question me a million times over," he said adding that the general misconception was that everyone from Kilinochchi had some connection with the **LTTE**. "I had a hotel in Kilinochchi town before we were asked to leave, called the Taj Mahal. We used to provide meals for the Sri Lanka Army before 1990 and the **LTTE** used to harass us saying that we were spying for the Sri Lankan Government," he said adding that now in Puttalam they were accused of being terrorists by the locals. "We are sandwiched with nowhere to turn to. When we go to ask help from local politicians we are not allowed in on suspicion that we might be suicide cadres." This is a major problem of a large number of inhabitants in the camp who are from Kilinochchi and Mullaitivu, and some of them are reluctant to travel anywhere beyond Puttalam town. "During the peace process we returned to Kilinochchi in 2003 but again we had to leave, so unless there is a stable peace in this county we cannot go back," he remarked adding that they had confidence the army would protect them. "Sometimes I feel so cornered that I do not feel like living anymore," Jinnah said quietly. "Can our fate get any better or worse by going back home?" 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PEOPLE ON A ROAD TO NOWHERE

Load-Date: April 1, 2009

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Arrested for extorting money

Daily Mirror (Sri Lanka)

October 16, 2008 Thursday 1:42 PM EST

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Length: 128 words

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

Dateline: Colombo

Body

Colombo, Oct. 16 -- Walikanda Police arrested two women and a man who were alleged to have extorted money from businessmen of the area on behalf of the Liberation Tamil Tigers Eelam (LTTE), Police spokesman SSP Ranjith Gunasekara said. The initial inquiries into the case had revealed that they had been extorting money for the LTTE, SSP Gunasekara said.

The suspects have been taken into custody while they were extorting money from a businessman in Karapola, SSP Gunasekara said. The suspects are believed to have collected Rs. 2.5 million from businessmen of the area and they are residents of Batticaloa said the police spokesman. He also said that they have been arrested and are under detention.

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Load-Date: October 16, 2008

Bid to evacuate bombed hospital

The Australian

February 12, 2009 Thursday

1 - All-round Country Edition

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Section: WORLD; Pg. 11

Length: 468 words

Byline: Amanda Hodge, South Asia correspondent

Body

THE evacuation of a hospital in Sri Lanka's battle zone will be attempted today after the Government denied killing 16 patients.

At least 160 people, many seriously wounded, remained in the makeshift hospital in northern Putumattalan with little food or fresh drinking water last night as the International Committee for the Red Cross negotiated with Tamil Tiger rebels and the Sri Lankan military for their safe passage.

A ferry flying the ICRC flag evacuated 240 patients from the hospital, in the northern district of Mullaittivu, to Trincomalee for treatment early yesterday, following security guarantees from troops and Tigers.

ICRC spokeswoman Sarasi Wijeratne described the rescue as "dangerous and difficult", with fishermen working through the night to help ferry patients to the boat.

A day earlier the hospital was hit by artillery shells, killing 16 patients, the ICRC said.

ICRC Colombo delegation head Paul Castella yesterday condemned the attacks on civilians. "We are shocked that patients are not afforded the protection they are entitled to," he said.

"Once more, we call on both parties to meet their obligation under international humanitarian law to spare at all times the wounded and sick people, medical personnel and medical facilities."

Many of the patients had been evacuated a week earlier from the Puthukkudiyiruppu Hospital in the northern Vanni region after 15 people died in shelling.

Military spokesman Udaya Nanayakkara yesterday denied his forces were involved in the attack, but said it was "quite possible that the **LTTE** (Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam) attacked them".

The military accused the Tigers of gunning down 19 civilians and wounding a further 75 on Tuesday as they tried to cross the front lines into government-held territory.

The rebels yesterday denied responsibility, and claimed the Sri Lankan army had turned the government-declared safety zone into "killing fields".

Bid to evacuate bombed hospital

In an article posted on TamilNet.com, a news website sympathetic to the Tamil cause, **LTTE** political head C. Ilamparithy yesterday accused the Sri Lankan army of entering the safety zone and firing on civilians. The alleged attack occurred a day after a **female** Tiger suicide bomber killed 30 people at a centre for displaced civilians, in what Sri Lankan authorities said was another attempt to prevent people leaving rebel territory.

Sorting fact from propaganda is near impossible in Sri Lanka's 25-year civil war as independent journalists are banned from the conflict zone.

Fighting continued yesterday between government troops and the depleted Tiger force, said to be squeezed into a coastal strip of less than 200sq km. With them are an estimated 200,000 civilians.

The UN yesterday said ``tens of thousands" of Tamils had poured across the front lines and into government territory.

Load-Date: February 11, 2009

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Guardian Weekly: Weekly review: Quiet war gets louder: Euan Ferguson returns to Sri Lanka to find conflict between Tamil rebels and government forces intensifying and the island in a state of fear

Guardian Weekly

July 11, 2008 Friday

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***The*GuardianWeekly**

Section: Pg. 25

Length: 2427 words

Byline: Euan Ferguson

Body

Hard not to laugh when you're told about Claymore landmines near a military checkpoint, and learn that the Claymore, shaped like a fat, convex laptop with little legs to bury in the ground, has embossed writing on the business end that says: "Front towards Enemy." Even the arms industry has health and safety disclaimers. One of the most effective counters to their tripwires is Silly String, which lands on, and discloses, them, without detonation. So the deadly weasels of modern warfare come with safety warnings, and they're fought by streamers for kids' parties.

Not much laughter here otherwise. This is a foul place to die, this inner country. Food rots at an awful rate. Vines and creepers twist around any dead animal or abandoned house, pulling them back to an ancient green. Wooden shacks tick at night in the heat; and in the morning, thin, young, scared soldiers, many disastrously untrained, smell of fear as they check bags and trucks, and channel their panic to the innocents. "Their mothers will get 200,000 rupees [\$6,000] when they are killed," explains Pearl Thevanayagan, an exiled Tamil, "so it is, if you like, a good career move to join. At least for the family."

Sri Lanka is one of the kindest countries on earth. Even when I was here after the Boxing Day 2004 tsunami, I was struck by the welcome from those who had nothing, both the majority Sinhalese and the Tamils. And, still, you can head south from Colombo, take a taxi to the beaches and beauty of Galle.

And then you try to go north. Here are the landmines. Here is one of the world's most vicious little wars. Here are not only the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (***LTTE***) but their offshoot, the Black Tigers, the suicide squads. Between 1980 and 2000, the Tigers carried out 168 suicide attacks on civilians and military targets, easily exceeding those in the same period by Hizbullah and Hamas combined. And now they're going for the softest targets of all, the impoverished working people of Sri Lanka. At the start of 2008 the government vowed to break the Tigers within a year, and there is now fear among travellers, in markets, at any public event.

For all those decades of suicide practice, you'd think they might be getting the hang of it. But in Colombo's Fort Railway Station, a few weeks before my visit, it all went wrong. A ***female*** bomber was spotted acting oddly by police - too many clothes for the cloying heat - and fled from the turnstile back into the station. By platform three she sat

Guardian Weekly: Weekly review: Quiet war gets louder: Euan Ferguson returns to Sri Lanka to find conflict between Tamil rebels and government forces intensifyi....

down and exploded and took 11 others with her. It is a miserable station, the ground dank with old fruit and poverty, but travel must go on. "I remember the smell, mainly," says Neel, who heard the explosion. "I couldn't get in to do anything, but I remember the smell from just outside." The dead included half a high school baseball team; 92 were injured.

A rank odour hangs over Mount Lavinia, a suburb south of the capital, when I get there just after hearing of a bus bomb. They're still mopping up. Outsiders are not welcomed by the authorities, but the shopkeepers are as friendly as most on this unhappy island. A passenger, Indrani Fernando, saw a suspicious bag left under a seat: "When no one claimed it I told the crew and shouted at people to get off." The bus halted in the middle of a junction and everyone filed off and began walking away, and the police were called. Twenty seconds after the driver had climbed off, the bomb exploded; 10 passersby were injured. Fernando later took a call from the president thanking her for her vigilance. I go to see the bus: no one would have survived.

Just before I arrived in Sri Lanka, another bus had been blown up outside Dambulla, a holy rest stop on the journey to the east. The 18 dead were almost all pilgrims, and included children. In the remote southern town of Buttala, rebels had recently failed to kill most of the passengers on a bus with a bomb; so they gunned down 32 passengers as they fled in flames. Desperate tactics have been adopted by the Tigers, but there are signs that by targeting civilians they are losing whatever sympathies they once had within the majority Sinhalese population.

In January the government ended a six-year official ceasefire that was a flimsy confection, but at least nominally policed by outside observers. The problem with Sri Lanka is the impossibility of access: it is a jungle out there. The government will give very little access north other than to carefully approved agencies, and it only allows them to see what it wants: journalists and aid workers have been targeted by both sides, and have disappeared.

For years there has been skirmishing, and quiet rearming, on both sides, and the gathering of funds, not least from London. An estimated 150,000 Tamils live in Britain, and there has long been fundraising there for the LTTE; the Sri Lankan government estimates \$140m is raised annually in Britain, despite the Tigers being a proscribed organisation.

There was a brief rapport, and even co-operation with the military, after the tsunami. But open war erupted this January. President Mahinda Rajapaksa was elected last year on a tough anti-Tiger ticket, and is winning more public sympathy, at home at least, than he had expected. (The western world still frowns on him, so the arms now come from China.) The UN's Norwegian observers, who'd been urging a political rather than military solution, have left in disgust. So the army, its numbers boosted to more than 150,000, now wages open war in the north. Even though government figures are spun - if you count the number of dead rebels claimed by its press releases, there would hardly be a Sri Lankan alive - and the press based in the capital are spoon-fed, everyone agrees there had been vital ground taken in the north-west, towards Mannar, where artillery battle still rages, and on the north-east coast. More than 1,500 rebels have died this year, according to the government, and although the Tigers dispute the figures they don't do so with much enthusiasm.

The rebels, pinned down in two territories, have taken to bombs on trains and on buses. In Colombo, around the presidential palace and the army HQ, the security is fierce. The main roads in the city begin to close shortly after sundown. Along the waterfront, just north from the tourist hotels, there is a sentry every 10 metres. Gunboats growl offshore. There are, away from the hotels, checkpoints everywhere. The rebels have had to go for soft targets.

We are stopped four times one night on the way to Colombo 13, a predominantly Tamil area. After a while it becomes a nuisance, although some police are more pleasant than others. Many are, like the Tamils, boys with guns. The Voeni Bar grows subtly more quiet on our entry. It's only after two hours, when most drinkers have got through a bottle of arrack, a fierce coconut liquor, that they will talk. However, "I have kept my mouth shut for 20 years," whispers one Tamil, "I'm not going to start talking now." This is the story of their lives: Tamils are wary of speaking either for or against the Tigers. Both the government and the Tigers are notorious for making people disappear. The UN working group on enforced and involuntary disappearances last year noted 317 in Sri Lanka, the highest number in the world. The security services deny involvement; the LTTE deny everything.

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Youngsters at the table are less reticent. "It is difficult to talk. Whatever you say, one side will see you as a traitor," says the most confident. "But I think things have changed, a little. A lot. LTTE used to have support from many people who were not Tamil. Here, in the cities, within the Sinhalese. These people are still our friends, my friends, we move freely. The man you are with . . ." He breaks off to take a cigarette from the taxi driver. "He is Sinhalese, and welcome. But most of them have fallen out with the LTTE now and do not like them. This business of bombing buses. It is the poorest people they get. It seems a mad thing to do."

We get stopped four more times on the way back to the hotel. It is good practice for the next day. The drive to Trincomalee, on the far east coast, should take about eight hours from Colombo, there and back. It takes 16. There are, at a rough count, 70 checkpoints. Each police or military commander is made to answer for any mistakes. Papers are checked four times, at heavy gunpoint. There are no computers, just pencils, and barked queries. There is much frustration. A quiet fear, beating away softly. The impenetrable nature of the forest beyond, the wilds of the Huluhu reserve, where elephants still roam - we almost hit two of them, grey boulders swinging suddenly into the jeep-lights - lasts for hundreds of miles north, to the Tamil enclaves. The early tracks have all been mined, by both sides; according to a couple of soldiers they have lost count of where they are, as have the rebels. And beyond that lie few villages, and days of walking, until the northern provinces. No one wants to go, apart from a party of Buddhist pilgrims, trying to get to Tamil territory to visit a shrine, a few weeks ago. They were bombed at Dambulla.

The soldiers are talkative. They say little you couldn't read in the Colombo papers: we are winning, Tigers are dying, it will be over by the end of the year. It's getting others to talk that is excruciating. "I know who you are, but I do not know who you may be talking to," says a young woman, watching a stall. "Trust is not good here. You say the wrong thing and the wrong side hears . . . children have disappeared. Families have disappeared. Both sides have had these tactics." In Trincomalee, once a coastal hideaway for tourists, few hotels are open, alcohol licences have been revoked, there are no tourists at all. Fort Frederick, a picturesque castle on the headland, has become once more a garrison. Troops march and strut and sweat and shout.

Back in Colombo, the Hilton is at 40% occupancy, the ritzier Galadari at 25%. Visitors still sun themselves, inured by money. Half a mile away, life for the Sinhalese has not been this hard for years. Inflation is racing. Rice has trebled in price within four weeks. Everywhere, checkpoints. Everywhere, signs of hapless poverty. Rubbish lies burning on every corner at night - most of it. Some is left to rot. Old women drag themselves through the detritus of markets, seeking scraps. There is an improbable number of men with one leg: landmines. It is into these poorest parts that the Tigers have taken their battle, and you can feel former sympathies evaporate.

It is not, I am told, by both moderate Tamils and worried Sinhalese, that it has been a mad cause. Tamils were mainly brought over from India by Britain, to help run the plantations in what was then Ceylon: they were schooled in governance, bookkeeping, administration, better than the locals. After independence, there was resentment from the Sinhalese majority, now at 80%. Tamils were effectively exiled to the north, around Jaffna, yet given little say in their own affairs - hence the liberation fight. And 80,000 dead, about 6,000 in the past two years; and today again, far to the north-west, another pitched battle is breaking out on the Mannar peninsula. The Tiger cadres are formed mainly of women and, reportedly, heavily defeated: there is scepticism at government reports, but not too much.

I meet Ajith Nivard Cabril, one of the president's closest advisers. He speaks of the many great plans for highways, docks, a revitalisation of the economy. He grows most passionate when talking of the Tigers. "You have to remember that the LTTE is the most ruthless terrorist organisation you can think of . . . And the LTTE is certainly not the Tamil people. The moderates do not have a voice. I want them to have that voice, as does the president, all of us." I ask him to explain the government's apparent promise to the world to resolve things politically while, in its own country, boasting daily of new victories and promising a rout within a year.

"The government is trying to work out a political solution with the Tamils, but not with the LTTE," Cabril says. "I was part of the 2006 delegation to talks in Geneva and met these people, heard what they had to say . . . It is a war on terror. The LTTE will have to change, stop, come to the table or . . . be reduced. They said for a long time this war was unwinnable. Well, we are winning now." I point out that the UN, Unicef and other human rights organisations

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have pointed at his government for illegal abductions, detentions, threats and violations. "In a warlike situation, mistakes are made."

It is an unhappy walk back to a tourist hotel. Soldiers bristle throughout this fortified zone. The streets are quiet but for the fires: a population cowed, by the threat from the north and the security measures that have kept the government and military safe but shifted the war to school sports teams, innocents on their way home with a repaired Hoover. It is a subtly changed country and a hardening one, rank with propaganda on both sides. But unless the Tigers radically change tactics soon they will have lost all support in the south of the country. "There has to, must be, international intervention," says Thevanayagan, the exiled Tamil. "But it has to be neutral. Not India. Our duty, as exiles, is to hold meetings, do anything, somehow, to simply tell the world this can't go on. I am a Tamil, yes, but look at what is happening to the whole country. The Sinhalese are not exactly having a good time."

The night before I fly out, I wander down to the beach at Colombo. The last time I was here, two days after the tsunami, crowds wandered by the sea every sunset, to look at the ocean. Some would climb up a disused watchtower: there was a feeling something could happen again. Today from the watchtower two mounted guns and a bristle of rifles point directly down into their own people, the enemy within. Within a couple of weeks of my departure, a suicide bomber exploded at the start of a marathon just outside Colombo, killing 13. Then a parcel was left on a bus departing a depot just south of the capital: the fireball killed 24 and injured scores. The local hospital had to close its doors. The bloodiest proper encounter, near the Tigers' Jaffna strongholds, claimed 52 rebels and 38 soldiers. Last month, the rebels made it into central Colombo, killing six with a bomb close to the Hilton. Bus bombs have gone off on the road to Kandy, which is tourist central. Things are coming closer, speeding up. Observer

Load-Date: July 11, 2008

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?(EURO)~Govt. must apply rule of law?(EURO)(TM)

Daily Mirror (Sri Lanka)

July 30, 2008 Wednesday 2:24 PM EST

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Dateline: Colombo

Body

Colombo, July 30 -- The recent failure by the EU delegation to visit the East as planned and the statement issued by the EU delegation consequently, blaming the government for the delays, has caused much controversy over the past few days. Member of the delegation and First Vice Chairman of the European Parliament Delegation for Relations with South Asia, Niranjana de Silva Deva Aditya, yesterday alleged that the EU delegation came to the country with preconceived notions and an agenda leading to the controversial statement.

In an interview with the Daily Mirror, he apologised on ?(EURO)~behalf of the EU?(EURO)(TM) for what he termed the failure by the delegation in ?(EURO)~engaging Sri Lanka in a dialogue of equals as an ongoing and regular process, without employing megaphone diplomacy.

?(EURO)~This was something, which we failed to do, last week, and for which, on behalf of the British Conservative Members of European Parliament I do now apologise.

How do you see the most recent criticism of the EU on their failure to gain permission to visit the East last week?

The govt. of Sri Lanka encouraged us to go to the East and did everything possible to help us make that trip and in fact said while we could meet the governor and the Chief Minister on the first day we could do whatever we wanted on the second day.

How much more helpful could they have been?

The Foreign Minister claimed on Saturday that members like those of the EU team that visited the country, come to Sri Lanka and meet people with a certain agenda to meet their (EUs) own preconceived notions about the situation here. Does the EU have an agenda with regard to Sri Lanka?

I don't think he was talking about everybody in the delegation. The majority of the members of the delegation had never visited Sri Lanka and were clueless about what was happening here. Two or three knew what was happening and were concerned. One or two thought they were experts on the situation and had close links with certain groups. So you can't lump all together as one group. There were different agendas. I tried my best to put a balance into it and then gave up.

The EU has an agenda all the world over; it wants to be the super state. It wants to crush the independence of member states to determine foreign policy. It wants to create a country called Europe. And with Sri Lanka it wants to be able to determine one foreign policy over that of the relations that independent countries have with Sri Lanka. There are some countries in the EU who have been colonial masters and know countries like Sri Lanka. So there is

?(EURO)~Govt. must apply rule of law?(EURO)(TM)

a huge clash within the EU on EU trying to become the United States of Europe with a single foreign Minister and President. For some of us this is a treaty too far and feel that we should stop pretending we are a country and restrict it to just trading.

You are making some very serious charges against Mr. Evans. What is the basis for these allegations?

I said this was claimed by the Government, by the democratic Tamil political parties including PLOTE, Mr Anandasagaree, by the JHU and even the JVP. One newspaper even claimed that the Labour Party Member and Leader of the European Parliament delegation Mr Evans was an LTTE propagandist having appeared on LTTE platforms in London. One of the stories claimed that Mr Evans as an alleged LTTE supporter had a hidden agenda which made him avoid meeting the new Chief Minister of the Eastern Province Mr Pillayan in Trincomalee; thus aborting the visit to Trincomalee. I made the point that the fact that we never went to Trinco had a lot to do with the way the aircraft was booked, rather than he contriving to make it happen. It is well known in the EU parliament that he has a number of constituents who are familiar to him and are LTTE supporters.

But to your knowledge is there anything to suggest that he or any other member made any contact with the LTTE while here?

Not to my knowledge. I doubt any member would have the ability to do so. The only person who has much local knowledge is Mr. Evans. But I don't think that was a possibility.

The EU as an international grouping crucial to Sri Lanka has continued to be critical of the government on areas of governance and human rights. How justified have these criticisms been in your opinion?

I'm not saying that. But it is about how we convey this; as a friend who cares for Sri Lanka. Or we can say it in a way that strengthens the hand of the terrorists that try to destroy this country. It must be said in a constructive and mature way. We need to engage Sri Lanka in a dialogue of equals as an ongoing and regular process, without employing megaphone diplomacy.

There is a tendency in the EU to think of ourselves far superior in democratic practices than the developing world, which is why I took the trouble to analyse the democratic practices of Sri Lanka which is far older than 20 of the EU member states, who only became member states yesterday. This is something few people in the EU understand because they can't distinguish between Sri Lanka and Burma or Pakistan for example. They can't understand because they haven't made the effort to do so.

We don't have this in Britain. We don't have the ability to challenge the government of Britain of fundamental rights. We don't have the mechanism for that- we have to go to the European court for that.

Germany has had 16 general elections having earlier been a Fascist dictatorship from 1932 to 1945. Spain has had 10 general elections having been a Dictatorship between 1936-77.

Portugal was a dictatorship from 1933 to 1976 and had the first of its 9 democratic elections only in 1975. Greece was a dictatorship from 1964-74 with the first of its 6 democratic elections held only in 1976. The Czech Republic, Slovakia, Hungary, Poland, Latvia, Lithuania, Estonia Romania, Bulgaria were totalitarian states since 1948 only becoming democracies less than 12 years ago.

But now for the EU to suddenly be imbued with all this knowledge and lecture Sri Lanka is absurd!

But you do admit that there are human rights abuses which the Sri Lankan government needs to address?

But it's rubbish to term Sri Lanka a failed state based on these few allegation. Sri Lanka is not a failed state. The country is in the middle of the bloodiest war with the most fearsome terrorist gang. And to be able to keep the rule of law going, parliamentary process, an independent judiciary and human rights records on track without any interference is a magnificent thing! Look at the region- Bangladesh, Burma or Nepal. There are huge instabilities in these countries compared to Sri Lanka.

?(EURO)(TM)~Govt. must apply rule of law?(EURO)(TM)

But you do admit that you?(EURO)(TM)d like the government to investigate further into some of the abuses that are on record?

Yes, absolutely, like Britain had to take action against some soldiers accused of abusing Iraqis. Does it make Britain a failed state? Does it? It means that Britain is conscious that this has happened; we?(EURO)(TM)re all human beings and when it happens the rule of law must apply. It is useful for a few to be punished for the greater good of the larger majority.

Similarly in Sri Lanka given various allegations of disappearances and abuse, a few indictments and arrests would do the Government good. By applying the rule of law and by being seen to apply it; such actions would immediately promote Sri Lanka as a nation where the rule of law even in times of the bitterest conflict reigns supreme.

I this regard I look forward to receiving soon the report by Justice Udalagama on the Presidential Committee of Inquiry set up to investigate the killing of 5 youth in Tricomalee and the 17 aid workers in Muttur in 2006.

How do you assess the refusal by the EU to accept Pillayan in view of the allegations of human rights abuses against him?

It?(EURO)(TM)s not the EU per se but some misguided people within who can?(EURO)(TM)t understand the situation. What else is the EU about if not forgiveness? The EU should ideally be cheering a process where a former terrorist has come into the democratic process. They are not cheering for several reasons; mainly because they were not involved. The EU had been the co-chairs of the peace process, and felt very important and that they could go to important conferences and that its commissioners views were considered by the media. Not that it?(EURO)(TM)s not happening; its like a little child sulking in a corner.

Do you not then accept the recorded violations by the Karuna faction that could have contributed to the criticism by the EU?

I?(EURO)(TM)m sure there must be unless he turned into a saint overnight! But if there are then the full force of the law and due process must apply. I can?(EURO)(TM)t decide that and we can?(EURO)(TM)t sit in Colombo saying so! Or some NGOs in Colombo doing so either. I?(EURO)(TM)m not having any of that.

You claim that there are large amounts of discrimination against minorities within the EU member states. Isn?(EURO)(TM)t there a contradiction given that most people of minority groups seek asylum in these countries?

The European Union is not some Utopia. It is an area of land where nearly 70 million people were slaughtered in 9 years during two world wars; where millions of innocent women and children were bombed and gassed to death as recently as 60 years ago at a time when Sri Lanka was a self governing country living in communal harmony and peace

I have to confront discrimination against gypsies and minority communities, a trade in sex workers and young girls sold into prostitution from some of the poorer EU member States, waves of illegal immigrants and asylum seekers whose human rights are unprotected, corruption in the newer member states where the independence of their judiciary is highly questionable.

There are terrible problems which need to be addressed. It?(EURO)(TM)s a mystery to me why Foreign Ministers of developing nations don?(EURO)(TM)t ask why asylum seekers are treated in the manner they are in these countries.

Why do you think they don?(EURO)(TM)t ask that question?

Because they lack the confidence which I don?(EURO)(TM)t. We are too polite. I?(EURO)(TM)d love to see one of our foreign Ministers doing that.

How realistic is our bid for GSP+ in this backdrop?

?(EURO)~Govt. must apply rule of law?(EURO)(TM)

The GSP is a gift not an entitlement that you?(EURO)(TM)d give a friend. You don?(EURO)(TM)t demand it. We want to give it to friends, but we need to know they are our friends and how friends behave depend on how they keep to various treaties etc.

Would you say the refusal by the government to accept the ceasefire will in some way affect any economic gains that the country can obtain from the EU like GSP+?

When has the **LTTE** ever been serious about a ceasefire. The SLMM itself said **LTTE** had violated the CFA over 4000 times.

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Load-Date: August 11, 2008

FIR registered against 2 advocates for assault on Swamy

UNI (United News of India)

February 18, 2009 Wednesday

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Length: 426 words

Dateline: Chennai

Body

Chennai, Feb. 18 -- The Madras High Court B4 police today registered an FIR against 20 advocates, including five women lawyers on the basis of Justice B K Mishra's report on the untoward incident of attack on Janata Party President Subramanian Swamy in the court hall before a Division Bench yesterday.

Under the instruction of City Policy Commissioner K Radhakrishnan special teams spread out to nab the accused. The special teams were formed on the orders of Director General of Police K P Jain, who earlier held a meeting with Acting Chief Justice of Madras High Court S J Mukhopadhyaya on the issue. Mr Jain met the Chief Justice on the instructions of Chief Minister M Karunanidhi who expressed regret over the incident. The Special teams were formed to nab the advocates and senior police officials were asked to maintain vigil to prevent any untoward incident. It may be recalled that a group of dvocates barged into a court hall and assaulted Dr Swamy for his anti-LTTE stand. They also hurled rotten eggs at him and abused him by his caste, in the presence of Division Bench comprising Mr Justice P K Mishra and Mr Justice K Chandru yesterday. The Bench took serious view of the incident and suo motu referred the matter to the Acting Chief Justice. The Madras High Court B4 police today registered an FIR against 20 advocates, including five women lawyers on the basis of Justice B K Mishra's report on the untoward incident of attack on Janata Party President Subramanian Swamy in the court hall before a Division Bench yesterday. Under the instruction of City Policy Commissioner K Radhakrishnan special teams spread out to nab the accused. The special teams were formed on the orders of Director General of Police K P Jain, who earlier held a meeting with Acting Chief Justice of Madras High Court S J Mukhopadhyaya on the issue. Mr Jain met the Chief Justice on the instructions of Chief Minister M Karunanidhi who expressed regret over the incident. The Special teams were formed to nab the advocates and senior police officials were asked to maintain vigil to prevent any untoward incident. It may be recalled that a group of dvocates barged into a court hall and assaulted Dr Swamy for his anti-LTTE stand. They also hurled rotten eggs at him and abused him by his caste, in the presence of Division Bench comprising Mr Justice P K Mishra and Mr Justice K Chandru yesterday. The Bench took serious view of the incident and suo motu referred the matter to the Acting Chief Justice. Published by HT Syndication with permission from United News of India.

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Load-Date: March 31, 2009

Over 7 Killed by Shelling at a Sri Lanka Hospital

The New York Times

February 2, 2009 Monday

Late Edition - Final

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Section: Section A; Column 0; Foreign Desk; Pg. 6

Length: 419 words

Byline: By SOMINI SENGUPTA

Dateline: NEW DELHI

Body

Three artillery shell attacks struck a Sri Lanka hospital overflowing with wounded patients Sunday night, the last of them hitting a ward of women and children, according to international agencies and health workers. At least six people died in the first two attacks and an unknown number in the last, with workers still counting the bodies on Monday.

The shellings came as the Sri Lankan military pushed further into a small corner of the island controlled by separatist guerrillas, the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam, their last redoubt in one of the world's longest-running civil wars. It was impossible to determine from which side the artillery shells had originated.

The first shell hit the hospital at Puthukkudiyiruppu, killing at least two and injuring five, the International Committee of the Red Cross said in a statement. A government health official, according to The Associated Press, reported one death in the first attack and five deaths in the second.

The third attack, at 11:45 p.m., hit the pediatric ward, a United Nations spokesman, Gordon Weiss, said by telephone from the capital, Colombo, on Monday. A cellphone text message from a United Nations worker described the carnage this way, Mr. Weiss said: "Women and kids wards shelled. God, no words. Still counting the dead bodies."

Meanwhile, a senior government official threatened to expel foreign diplomats, aid agencies and journalists who appeared to be sympathetic to the rebels by, for instance, broadcasting images of civilian casualties.

The defense secretary, Gotabaya Rajapaksa, in an interview with the newspaper The Island on Sunday, singled out CNN, the BBC and Al Jazeera. "They will be chased away," Mr. Rajapaksa was quoted as saying.

He made his comments amid intensifying fighting between Sri Lankan forces and the rebels. The fighting has raised alarm about the fate of civilians trapped in a fast-shrinking zone still controlled by the Tamil Tigers near the island's northeastern coast.

It is impossible to know what is happening behind the front line because the government bars journalists from traveling to the war zone, except on guided tours of areas seized by the army.

Over 7 Killed by Shelling at a Sri Lanka Hospital

The hospital struck by shelling was filled beyond capacity, with more than 500 wounded patients, some lined up on mattresses on the floor, said officials at the Red Cross, which helps run the hospital. The agency said that many patients had been waiting to be taken to a government-run hospital across the front line.

<http://www.nytimes.com>

Load-Date: February 2, 2009

End of Document

International briefs

Telegraph Herald (Dubuque, IA)

January 26, 2009 Monday

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Section: A; Pg. 5

Length: 433 words

Byline: The Associated Press

Body

Suicide bomber kills 1, wounds 8 KABUL, Afghanistan - A suicide bomber blew himself up at a market in eastern Afghanistan, killing a civilian and wounding eight others, an official said Sunday. The bomber's target in the Saturday attack was an intelligence officer in Samkanai district of Paktia province. He missed the target but killed one civilian and wounded eight others at Samkanai's market, the official said.

Darfur peacekeepers: Sudanese bomb town CAIRO, Egypt - Sudanese government planes bombed a rebel-held town in southern Darfur, killing a child, burning homes and sending civilians fleeing to a peacekeepers compound, the peacekeeping force said Sunday. The conflict in Darfur has pitted the Arab-led government in Khartoum against mainly ethnic African rebels who rose up in 2003 complaining of discrimination. Khartoum is accused of unleashing Arab militias to wage a campaign of violence on ethnic African civilians, including killings and rapes. Families of missing seek to meet 'acid man' TIJUANA, Mexico - Relatives of 100 missing people want to show photos of their loved ones to a man arrested in Tijuana on charges of helping a druglord dispose of his slain enemies by dissolving their bodies in acid, a victims' group said Saturday. Santiago Meza Lopez, known as the "Pozole Maker" after a local stew, is accused by Mexico's military of disposing of 300 bodies for a suspected former lieutenant of the Tijuana-based Arellano Felix drug cartel. Italian premier criticized over rape comments ROME - Premier Silvio Berlusconi sparked outrage for suggesting that Italy's women were so beautiful they needed military escorts to avoid being raped. He made the comments in response to questions about his proposal to deploy 300,000 soldiers in the streets to fight crime. Giovanna Melandri, of the opposition Democratic Party, said Berlusconi's comments were "profoundly offensive," saying the pain of rape could never be joked about in such a way. Sri Lanka: Army seizes last rebel stronghold COLOMBO, Sri Lanka - Sri Lankan forces captured the Tamil Tigers last major stronghold Sunday, confining the rebels to a narrow slice of jungle and ending their decade-long domination of the country's north. Army Lt. Gen. Sarath Fonseka said the bloody ethnic separatist war that has plagued this Indian Ocean island nation since 1983 was nearly over. But analysts warn that it is simply shifting from a conventional fight between two armies to a guerrilla war likely to be fought among the estimated 250,000 displaced civilians reportedly trapped in the northern jungles with the rebels.

Load-Date: January 27, 2009

Air strikes after suicide bomber kills 12 police in Sri Lanka

Agence France Presse -- English

June 16, 2008 Monday 12:05 PM GMT

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Length: 411 words

Byline: Amal Jayasinghe

Dateline: COLOMBO, June 16 2008

Body

A Tamil Tiger suicide bomber on a motorcycle blew himself up outside a police compound in northern Sri Lanka on Monday, killing at least 12 police and wounding 40 other people, officials said.

The powerful blast occurred during the morning rush hour directly in front of a police building in the tightly-guarded town of Vavuniya, 258 kilometres (160 miles) north of the capital Colombo, the defence ministry said.

The wounded, some of them schoolchildren, were rushed to the main hospital, doctors said.

"It was a Tiger suicide bomber who rammed his (explosives-packed) motorcycle as policemen were leaving for duty," military spokesman Udaya Nanayakkara said.

"All those killed in the attack were police personnel," police spokesman Ranjith Gunasekara said, identifying the victims as nine policemen and three **female** constables.

Sri Lanka's military retaliated with a string of air attacks on rebel targets inside guerrilla held-territory north of Vavuniya, defence sources said.

They said jet aircraft bombed a store house of the **Tamil Tigers** in Mullaitivu district while Mi-24 helicopter gunships attacked Tiger bunkers in the northern peninsula of Jaffna.

There were no immediate reports of casualties in the air attacks and there was also no immediate reaction from the guerrillas. However, the rebels said that two civilians were killed and 11 more wounded in an air strike on Sunday.

Vavuniya is a de facto frontier town bordering territory further north held by the rebels, who are fighting for a separate Tamil homeland in the majority Sinhalese island.

The drawn-out conflict has claimed tens of thousands of lives.

The latest attack came as the defence ministry reported that 47 rebels and eight security personnel were killed in weekend battles in the north.

Air strikes after suicide bomber kills 12 police in Sri Lanka

The latest deaths raise the number of rebels killed by security forces to 4,269 since January, according to the defence ministry, which says 386 security personnel and police have died in combat during the same period.

The government insists it now has the upper hand in the 36-year-old conflict with the Tigers, and has poured a record 1.5 billion dollars into the war effort this year.

In the island's eastern district of Batticaloa, suspected Tiger gunmen shot dead two police constables while a trooper from the paramilitary home guard unit was shot dead elsewhere in the region on Sunday, the ministry said.

It said troops also killed four more Tiger rebels in a fresh confrontation in the north on Sunday.

Load-Date: June 17, 2008

End of Document

Military: Fighting in northern Sri Lanka kills 29 rebels, 3 soldiers

Associated Press International

July 23, 2008 Wednesday 6:44 AM GMT

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Section: INTERNATIONAL NEWS

Length: 409 words

Byline: By RAVI NESSMAN, Associated Press Writer

Dateline: COLOMBO Sri Lanka

Body

Sri Lankan troops attacked a rebel bunker line in northern Sri Lanka, sparking a three-hour battle that killed 12 Tamil Tiger fighters, the military said Wednesday.

The battle in Murunkaiadipiddi was part of a wave of fighting along the front lines of Sri Lanka's civil war Tuesday that killed 29 rebels and three soldiers, the military said.

In Murunkaiadipiddi, troops destroyed five rebel bunkers after a fight that lasted from 12 p.m. to 3 p.m., the military said. A total of 12 rebels were killed, and the army recovered the bodies of two male and two **female** rebel fighters, the military said in a statement.

Fighting in other parts of the war zone killed 17 Tamil rebels and three soldiers, the military said.

Rebel spokesman Rasiyah Ilanthirayan was not immediately available for comment. Both sides routinely exaggerate enemy death tolls while underreporting their own.

It was not possible to independently verify the military reports because the government has barred most journalists from the northern jungles where much of the fighting takes place.

The **Tamil Tigers** have been fighting for an independent state in the nation's north and east since 1983, following decades of marginalization by governments dominated by the Sinhalese majority. More than 70,000 people have been killed in the conflict.

The rebels said Tuesday they would declare a unilateral cease-fire for 10 days beginning Saturday in honor of a regional summit of South Asian leaders starting in Colombo at the end of the month.

However, if the government continued its offensive against them, they would respond, the rebels said.

Government officials have given contradictory statements on the offer, with some rejecting it out of hand and others saying it needed to be studied.

Meanwhile, the government announced that a cherished statue of the Virgin Mary, known as Our Lady of Madhu, had been returned to government-held territory ahead of a religious pilgrimage.

Military: Fighting in northern Sri Lanka kills 29 rebels, 3 soldiers

In April, government forces captured the Roman Catholic Church in Madhu, 130 miles (210 kilometers) north of Colombo, after it had been abandoned by the rebels. But priests had moved the statue deeper into rebel-held territory and away from the front lines for safekeeping.

The statue, which is believed to possess miraculous healing powers, was brought into government territory in an ambulance Tuesday morning, the government said.

Thousands of Sri Lankans make the annual August pilgrimage to the church to see the statue.

Load-Date: July 24, 2008

End of Document

Polls watchers and prophets of violence

Daily Mirror (Sri Lanka)

August 23, 2008 Saturday 2:21 PM EST

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Length: 2534 words

Byline: Daily News Sri Lanka

Dateline: Colombo

Body

Colombo, Aug. 23 -- The elections to provincial councils to the North Central and Sabaragamuwa Provinces being held today are not showing any major deviation from the type of elections that we have been having for several decades, especially after the election of the UNP in 1977, which was followed by the introduction of the current Presidential System of Government under the 1978 Constitution, and the obnoxious District-based system of Proportional Representation with the added menace of the "manaapey".

To deny the existence of violence in the campaigns is to turn a blind eye to reality. Similarly, to keep screaming that all is lost for democracy through violence is a downright exaggeration of the truth.

The latter appears to be the defeatist tactic of the UNP and whatever allies it may be having, especially among the infantile reds that are once again having dreams nightmares of a bloody trail to power, giving nightmares to the people, having squandered the opportunity they had of a more peaceful approach to governance.

If in earlier elections PAFFREL led the way in polls monitoring, doing it much better and more reliably than the questionably funded CMEV that I have said was an acronym for the Centre for Manufacturing Election Violence than monitoring it, the sections of the media that see in the UNP the greatest defenders of democracy today, have latched on to the Campaign for Free and Fair Elections or CaFFE, which has more of a cafeteria approach to polls watching, very much akin to the questionable reporting of polls violence by the CMEV.

Not surprisingly, the names and faces that come to light from CaFFE are not much different from the CMEV, and their song sheet is no contrast to that of the UNP.

This convergence of allegedly pro-democratic forces gives much cause for concern. These are forces that take their cue from the neo-liberal thrust of the Bush-Cheney-backed Rose Revolution in Georgia and the Orange Revolution in the Ukraine, and look forward eagerly to the day when they can bring about a Pomelo or Jambola Revolution in Sri Lanka.

That their path to democracy is only paved with a thin veneer of good intentions is evident by the reliable reports that were received on Thursday (21) evening, after campaigning had been officially stopped, of moves being made by the UNP to flout the law and put on a show of strength in the NCP, especially the Anuradhapura District, by holding demonstrations that would be provocative and leading to clashes that would make the violence of the past month mere mock exercises for a greater battle ahead.

Polls watchers and prophets of violence

While the cafeteria monitors of polls violence were mum on what would be a major threat to the poll, (with cafe' vision having little if no pre-emptive insight) the government was quick to act through the Commissioner General of Elections, who is also now at the receiving end of the ire of the caf' types, whose skill in inflating incidents of polls violence is as easy as their false pretensions of defending women's rights for the cameras at Lipton Circus.

Concert song

The build up to the planned violence in the NCP came via a press conference in Colombo where the green-cafeteria sang a new concert song that warned of UNP and JVP violence unless the police neutralized government gangs. That the police should neutralise govt. or any gangs that resort to violence goes without question.

But it is interesting how these recent doctoral types, who have always lived on the largesse of western votaries of neo-liberalism, see only the violence carried out by pro-govt. gangs and remain like the three monkeys who see no evil, hear no evil and speak no evil when it emanates from the new UNP/JVP "Axis of Evil".

The danger today is in this attempt that is being made to justify a situation of violence, not confined to polling day, which is bad enough, but which can ominously continue even after, if the strategies of these forces that are eager to take the country back to a ceasefire situation that will be advantageous to the strategy of terror of the separatist LTTE, are worked out according to plan.

In a twist

Today's Caf' Mother of Peace of Rajarata, in the form of Nimalka Fernando of Kollupitiya, accuses the Rajapaksa government of turning the PC elections to a mini-referendum to facilitate the prosecution of the war. She's obviously got her nether garment in a twist, if she believes there is any referendum needed to prosecute the ongoing battle against the LTTE's terror.

The battle was on before the Eastern Polls, which was able to be held and the UNP-led opposition was able to get minority representation in the PC there, because of those military operations.

They are proceeding on three fronts in the North, despite the attentions of the Government, and a good number of Security Forces personnel having to be shifted away from areas where they could help the push against the Tigers faster and stronger; to preserve the peace in the two provinces where polling takes place today; where there are ominous warnings of retaliatory violence by the dreamers of a Jambola revolution helped on by the stripes of the Tigers.

Fernando's caf' thinking is critical of the government for focusing its attention on the war and thereby denying the people of the two provinces to decide on provincial administration "which would strive to meet the requirements of the people".

Little does she, and the caf' types yearning for a phony peace with the Tigers, seem to be aware that no provincial administration would be able to take on the terror of the type that was unleashed when that claymore mine killed more than 60 civilians - men, women and children at Kebitigollewa, in the NCP, long before the Rajapaksa Government abrogated that cozy exchange of greetings between Prabhakaran and Ranil Wickremesinghe, couriered by Norway, that was passed off as a Ceasefire Agreement.

It would be interesting to see the reaction of the people to Fernando and the caf' types if they took a fancy to stopping by the Sri Maha Bodhi and handing over leaflets opposing the battle against LTTE terror to pilgrims on their way to worship the sacred tree, that was chosen as the site for one of the earliest acts of carnage by the LTTE.

The glow of arms

While those who promote the UNP from so-called organisations of civil society aka questionable NGOs and INGOs, oppose the battle against terror, and charge that the PC polls are a means of pushing the military agenda of the Rajapaksa Administration, they see nothing questionable in the manner in which the UNP's non-resident candidate

Polls watchers and prophets of violence

for Chief Minister of the NCP, makes use of the military uniform to impress upon voters that he's the guy they can depend on to pursue their most pressing cause - the defeat of the LTTE terror.

It was many years ago that Lt. Gen (Ret.) Janaka Perera hung up his boots and lay abroad for his country in the very civilian role of High Commissioner down under. Those who have retired from active service are very rarely seen in the uniforms of their former regiments, except at gatherings of their respective corps or special ceremonial occasions such as Armistice Day or Remembrance Day for those who laid down their lives in battle.

But the doves of the UNP and its dwindling allies are obviously thrilled to see their candidate showing off his old fatigues on every possible occasion, putting up cut-outs wherever they are allowed or not, displaying him in a great show of military attire.

The message comes very clear that while his party is still eager to appease the LTTE, Janaka Perera thinks the best way to garner votes for himself, and possibly get an official residence in the NCP, instead of being a candidate with IDP status next time too, is to let the glow of arms that has caught the imagination of the people, as the troops move deeper into the ever shrinking Tiger held territory, reflect on him as much as possible.

In fact there are reports that all this anti-war rhetoric of the NGO types that support the UNP in its efforts to make even the slightest turn in its tide of electoral defeats, has been causing much embarrassment to Janaka Perera, who feels that he is in quite a jam, not of the bottled type he is more familiar with, but of the political type, with the yes to jaw-jaw and no to war-war talk of his supporters, taking away what is left of the shine on his old uniform.

Batman Polish

While Janaka Perera is trying to make hay in the sunshine of today's troops who are driving the Tigers out of their bunkers and other strongholds, ironically trying to win votes through the popularity of the troops whose battle is being strongly opposed by the party that has nominated him, and those who support it, there are signs that his electioneering is showing him to be much less of both an officer and a gentleman, that one would imagine a person of his rank to be.

Reports of some of his campaign speeches have alluded to a UPFA candidate who was a much lower noncommissioned ranker of the 1st Gajaba Regiment, Upali Wijekoon, who left service as Warrant Officer 2 who at one time served as batman to a high ranking soldier killed by the LTTE.

In references the retired Lt. Gen. sought to give the impression that Wijekoon and such others were lowly servants, fetching and carrying for higher officers, in an effort to make the voters think the UPFA candidate was of the serving kind and not one of those who orders around in the Security Forces.

In an interview with the media Upali Wijekoon has said that the success of the Armed Forces today is attributable to the absence of officers epitomised by Janaka Perera, who look down almost with contempt on the lesser ranks, being replaced by a much more understanding officer corps, that can keep the respect of their rank very well without having to denigrate their subordinates.

It is quite a shift in the psychology that prevails within the army today, and as Wijekoon says it, this could very well be one good reason why the Armed Services are scoring so many quick successes against an enemy that was touted as invincible by many an expert in military strategy from the West, whose views were repeated with glee by the "peace at any cost" lobby here, which included the UNP that is making a big show of Janaka Perera and his old uniform today.

Media Freedom activists both here and abroad have been making much, and at times with some justification too, about the prolonged detention and investigations into the suspicions about the alleged activities of journalist J. S. Tissainayagam, a Tamil journalist who has been held under the Prevention of Terrorism Act since March 2008.

When a Government minister recently said he is to be charged with "terrorism" on the basis of articles written in 2006 and his activities as the editor of a website, Reporters without Borders (RSF) that is most strident in its defence of media freedom once again demanded the immediate release of the suspect.

Emergency regulations

There is no question that there can be many questionable aspects about the Prevention of Terrorism Act and other emergency regulations that are enforced in the country and the call for their amendment or even repeal is understandable, even by interfering foreign bodies such as RsF, that did not consider it wrong to abuse the Media Accreditation passes of its members to stage a protest about the alleged Chinese occupation of Tibet, when the Beijing Olympic torch began its run at Athens earlier this year.

The situation now is that the Attorney General has filed indictments against Tissanayagam, and it is up to the courts to judge whether these indictments merit further inquiry or trial.

This applied both to foreign and local bodies that are so loud in slating Sri Lanka, and downright rude in their letters and missives to the Sri Lankan authorities about media freedom and due process of law here, but see hardly any evil in how the media and journalists, other than the embedded types, are dealt with in many other parts of allegedly flourishing democracies.

Media freedom

The attempts now being made to pooh-pooh the charges in the indictment filed against Tissanayagam, rather than seen as any part of a vibrant campaign for media freedom, can be seen as an attempt at interfering with the judiciary and judicial process of this country.

The debate on media freedom in Sri Lanka, which is a necessity, must not be allowed to be hijacked by the forces who are now showing their real interests in how they report on the "crisis" in Georgia, and the sharp contrast in the attitudes towards media freedom and democracy in Zimbabwe and Egypt, where apart from the level of inflation in Zimbabwe, the process of democracy is as much flawed in Egypt, but still gains millions of dollars of military and economic aid from the USA in its commitment to promote democracy in the Middle East.

Musharraf

The resignation of Pakistani President Pervez Musharraf did not come as a major surprise considering the volatile situation in the country.

Sri Lanka has some association with his ascent to power, as it was on his return flight from an official visit here as Chief of Staff in 1999 that he was informed of a plot to have him arrested, and while still in the air put into action the plan that made it possible to him to seize power by effecting coup d'etat.

He took power on the elected Prime Minister, dismissed the national and provincial legislative assemblies, assumed the title of Chief Executive and became Pakistan's de facto head of Government, thereby becoming the fourth Army chief of Pakistan to have assumed executive control. Later in 2001, Musharraf appointed himself to the office of President of Pakistan.

The record shows impressive economic growth in Pakistan during his regime, and it also brought Pakistan much closer to the US and Western backed "War on Terror", which ultimately cost him much in popularity.

Although removed by the newly elected Parliament Musharraf gets the credit for holding a largely free and fair election, which saw the parties range against him get a majority of seats in parliament and the state assemblies, that ultimately let to his threatened impeachment and resignation earlier this week.

The consequences of his resignation will remain the stuff of the internal politics of Pakistan, no doubt impacted upon by the West because of its armed involvement in Afghanistan that is now a SAARC member.

Whatever the outcome for Pervez Musharraf, we in Sri Lanka must remain grateful to him and consider both him and Pakistan as a great friend of Sri Lanka, for the ready assistance he gave the country, and at such speed too, when the LTTE was making its strongest bid to take over Jaffna, after having captured Elephant Pass.

Polls watchers and prophets of violence

That was a time when closer neighbour only offered transport ships as humanitarian assistance to transport the Sri Lankan troops out of the Tiger threatened Jaffna peninsula.

But for the multi-barrels supplied by Musharraf, and all the other necessary assistance given at the time, and later too, the progress of the fight against **LTTE** terror would be much different today. It is time to say thank you to a good and staunch friend of Sri Lanka.

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

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

Load-Date: August 23, 2008

In short

The Irish Times
August 8, 2008 Friday

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Section: WORLD; Other World Stories; Pg. 11

Length: 432 words

Body

A round-up of today's world news

UN Burma envoy visits prisoners

RANGOON -The new United Nations human rights envoy to Burma, Argentine lawyer Tomas Ojea Quintana, met five prominent political prisoners on his first trip to the military-ruled country.

However, he did not say whether he had met detained opposition leader and Nobel Peace laureate Aung San Suu Kyi, who has been in prison or under house arrest continuously for the past five years, and on-and-off for nearly 13 of the past 19 years. - **(Reuters)**

Desert crash kills nine 'illegals'

PHOENIX -Nine people were killed and nine injured when a sports utility vehicle packed with suspected illegal immigrants rolled over on a desert highway near Phoenix, Arizona, police said.

Arizona Department of Public Safety spokesman Bart Graves said the vehicle crashed on state route 79 a few miles south of Phoenix yesterday. - **(Reuters)**

Drink and drugs link to Aids rise

MEXICO CITY -Younger men who binge drink and abuse drugs are the gays and bisexuals most likely to transmit HIV to others, and prevention programmes should be developed to target them, US researchers said yesterday. The study, presented at an international Aids meeting in Mexico City, also helps explain why the Aids epidemic is starting to grow again among US homosexuals. - **(Reuters)**

Tamil Tigers killed in raid

COLOMBO -Sri Lanka's government said yesterday it was making gains in an offensive against Tamil Tiger rebels after soldiers killed 16 rebels in fresh battles in the north. Defence spokesman Keheliya Rambukwella rejected any possibility of a ceasefire or peace talks at this stage, saying this could only happen if the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam were to lay down arms unconditionally. - **(Reuters)**

Oyster ban after health fears

BORDEAUX -Authorities in southwestern France have banned the harvest and sale of oysters from one of the country's most famous shellfish-producing regions after a series of public health scares.

In short

The ban on oysters from the Bay of Arcachon, on the Atlantic coast, comes after tests revealed safety concerns over local oysters and mussels. - **(Reuters)**

Morgan Freeman to divorce

NEW YORK -Morgan Freeman was discharged from hospital yesterday as his lawyer confirmed the actor and his wife were set to divorce after 24 years.

The Oscar-winning star, who broke several bones in a car crash last weekend, was discharged from the Regional Medical Centre in Memphis, Tennessee.

Freeman was with a **female** passenger, Demaris Meyer, who was also injured, when the car he was driving overturned several times in rural Mississippi on Sunday. - **(PA)**

Load-Date: August 8, 2008

End of Document

This Tiger's claws hidden, but bloody; Shroud surrounds Tamil rebels' leader

The International Herald Tribune

March 20, 2009 Friday

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Section: NEWS; Pg. 2

Length: 946 words

Byline: Seth Mydans - The New York Times Media Group

Dateline: COLOMBO

Body

Will he kill himself? This is a tactical military question now as the Sri Lankan Army closes in on Velupillai Prabhakaran and the stubborn core of his Tamil separatist insurgency.

There is always the possibility that Mr. Prabhakaran, 54, is dead or that he has fled the military offensive, and those questions, too, are critical as the army seeks a final victory and plans ahead for the aftermath of his 25-year rebellion.

Mr. Prabhakaran is the founder and driving force of the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam, a separatist movement that is known for its resourcefulness, for its brutality and for its suicides.

A pioneer in the tactic of suicide bombings, Mr. Prabhakaran created a squad called the Black Tigers - up to 40 percent of them women - that has carried out scores of attacks over the years, both targeted assassinations and mass terror killings.

Many of his regular fighters have taken their own lives as well rather than surrender, biting into cyanide tablets that they often carry on a string like a small memento mori around the neck.

This dedication is part of a cultlike devotion to Mr. Prabhakaran - a chubby man with a ragged mustache whose charisma is not always evident to outsiders - and nobody knows what will come of his mission once he is gone.

Will his soldiers continue to fight with the same savage determination, and will the insurgency regroup and revert to hit-and-run terrorism once its main force is destroyed? Without Mr. Prabhakaran, some analysts say, his rebellion may collapse. Or perhaps he might be seen as a martyr and rallying cry for further insurgency.

Just as Mr. Prabhakaran's fate dominates questions about the end game of the war, his remorselessness and ruthlessness have made him the single dominant figure in Sri Lanka's history for the past quarter-century.

His insurgency has held the country hostage to terrorism. It has held back social and economic development, heightened violent ethnic divisions and pushed the government toward a more hunkered, repressive posture.

This Tiger's claws hidden, but bloody Shroud surrounds Tamil rebels' leader

There have been cease-fires and negotiations over the years; all have failed because Mr. Prabhakaran would not give up the war. Presidents have come and gone, their policies dominated by harder or softer lines toward his insurgency.

Mr. Prabhakaran has mostly remained constant, a man who is ready "to take any method, however repulsive, as long as it furthered his struggle," according to a leading biography, "Inside an Elusive Mind: Prabhakaran" by M.R. Narayan Swamy.

Though the Tigers rarely take responsibility for their work, his suicide bombers are suspected in the deaths of two national leaders - former Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi of India in 1991 and President Ranasinghe Premadasa of Sri Lanka in 1993.

"Our methods of warfare are unacceptable to various people," said S. Subramaniam, a longtime associate of Mr. Prabhakaran's who is quoted in Swamy's 2003 book. "But Prabhakaran as well as our movement have survived precisely because of them."

A high school dropout from a middle-class family, Mr. Prabhakaran ignited the insurgency by his own hand with the assassination of a governor of Jaffna in 1975, walking up to him at a Hindu temple and shooting him. Jaffna, where Mr. Prabhakaran was born, is the center of what separatists call Eelam, a region in which the Tigers want to create a separate state for the mostly Hindu Tamils, who make up 12 percent of Sri Lanka's population of 21 million.

Since independence from Britain in 1948, Buddhist Sinhalese, who form a majority, have pushed Tamils into the margins, declaring Sinhala the national language and Buddhism the principal religion and securing privileges for Sinhalese in education and government jobs.

Fascinated by guns, meticulous in military planning, more ruthless than his rivals, Mr. Prabhakaran built a fanatical armed movement while reaching out to a wealthy Tamil diaspora to finance his well-armed insurgency.

He is a master of escape and concealment and has seldom given interviews, emerging each year in November to give an annual address.

"No sane voice is being raised," he said last November in an address carried on Tamil Web sites, "either to abandon war or to seek a peaceful solution to the conflict."

His reserved demeanor has often puzzled outsiders, who have found him neat, polished and soft-spoken to the point of seeming shyness.

"The quietest man I have come across," said Sadanand Menon, a veteran Indian journalist who met him in the early 1980s. "He was so soft-spoken that you could not hear him under his breath. It made you wonder, even if momentarily, if he really led the Tamil Tigers."

Or Anita Pratap, another prominent Indian journalist who met him about the same time: "My first impression was that of utter disappointment. He looked stunningly ordinary. Dressed in a light-blue shirt and gray trousers, he could have easily been mistaken for a petty Tamil businessman."

Since last August, the military has driven the Tigers out of their strongholds in the north and cornered them by the northeastern shore, on a spit of land just 12 kilometers, or 7 miles, long and 2 kilometers wide.

Trapped with them are tens of thousands of Tamil civilians who have fled the fighting elsewhere.

The Tigers have been accused of kidnapping them en masse, shooting some who try to leave and dragooning many others, including children, to take up arms and join them.

The Sri Lankan military appears determined to end the war here and now, and the separatist fighters show no sign of backing down. If the army does make a final push and hundreds or thousands of civilians are killed, it could amount to the Tamil Tigers' most deadly mass suicide of the war.

This Tiger's claws hidden, but bloody Shroud surrounds Tamil rebels' leader

Load-Date: March 25, 2009

End of Document

India remembers Rajiv Gandhi on death anniversary

Indo-Asian News Service

May 21, 2008 Wednesday 1:20 PM EST

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Length: 472 words

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

Dateline: New Delhi/Chennai

Body

New Delhi/Chennai, May 21 -- India paid homage to former Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi on his 17th death anniversary Wednesday, observed as Anti-Terrorism Day with government employees taking a pledge to fight the scourge.

India's top political leadership gathered at Vir Bhumi, Gandhi's memorial here, to pay homage in a drizzle.

President Pratibha Patil, Vice President Hamid Ansari, Prime Minister Manmohan Singh, Home Minister Shivraj Patil, Defence Minister A.K. Antony and Delhi Chief Minister Sheila Dikshit were among those who paid floral tributes and attended a prayer meeting.

The late leader's widow and Congress president Sonia Gandhi paid homage with her son and MP Rahul Gandhi and daughter Priyanka Vadra.

A speech Rajiv Gandhi delivered in 1985 was played at the end of the prayer meeting, which brought back memories of the popular leader.

In Chennai, Tamil Nadu Chief Minister M. Karunanidhi administered an oath to legislators at the secretariat to combat terrorism. The chief minister also paid floral tributes to Gandhi.

Parliamentary Affairs and Overseas Indian Affairs Minister Vayalar Ravi and several state Congress leaders paid their respects to the departed leader at the memorial to him in Sriperumbudur, near Chennai, where he was felled by a suicide bomber on this day in 1991.

Tamil Nadu Congress president M. Krishnaswamy and party workers offered flowers at Rajiv Gandhi's statue at Satyamurthi Bhavan, the party's state headquarters in Chennai.

Governor Surjit Singh Barnala also offered rose petals to Rajiv Gandhi's portrait at Raj Bhavan in Chennai.

Congress leaders paid floral tributes in party offices in several states across the country.

In Madhya Pradesh, Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan paid tributes to Gandhi and administered oath to police officials to weed out terrorism.

Every year, May 21 is observed as Anti-Terrorism Day across the country.

India remembers Rajiv Gandhi on death anniversary

Employees in government offices, state-run undertakings and other public institutions throughout the country took the pledge. Home Minister Patil administered the oath to the officers and staff of the home ministry on North Block lawns in New Delhi.

Seminars and debates were organised in educational institutions and elsewhere on the dangers of terrorism.

Gandhi, who was prime minister 1984-89, was killed when a woman suicide bomber from the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (**LTTE**) detonated a bomb attached to her at an election rally while pretending to touch his feet. The **LTTE** denied killing Gandhi.

Seventeen people were also killed with Gandhi, who was then 46 years old, in the explosion and 44 others were injured.

A special court set up under the Terrorists and Disruptive Activities (Prevention) Act sentenced 26 accused, including five **women**, to death in the case.

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Load-Date: May 21, 2008

End of Document

Extremists push Pakistan to breaking point; CRICKET TERROR ATTACK - ANALYSIS

The Age (Melbourne, Australia)

March 4, 2009 Wednesday

First Edition

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Section: NEWS; Pg. 2

Length: 993 words

Byline: Daniel Flitton

Body

PAKISTAN is a country in chaos. The extremist threat is growing, the grip of the fragile democratic government loosening, and the economy is in tatters. The army - a nest of nationalist suspicion over the aims of nuclear rival India - is severely compromised. There are very real worries that the country could soon collapse.

This brazen attack on the visiting Sri Lankan cricket team in Lahore is the latest marker of Pakistan's downward spiral.

Like the bomb that flattened the Marriott Hotel in Islamabad last September or the assassination of Benazir Bhutto the year before, yesterday's strike is a clear sign that Pakistan is the world's most dangerous hot spot.

But the tangle of problems inside Pakistan have an enormous impact on the wider region - indeed, the world.

The rampage in India's commercial capital, Mumbai, last November was blamed on militants abetted from across the border. The terrorist cell that struck London's transport network in 2005 trained in Pakistan - and the Taliban in Afghanistan have carved out a haven in Pakistan's restive tribal lands.

Finding the culprit behind yesterday's attack is no easy task. With so many conflicts swirling around both the targets and the location, the accusations will be fierce.

Suspicion will naturally fall on the **Tamil Tigers**, fighting for an independent homeland in Sri Lanka but facing annihilation after military setbacks in recent months.

It would be an act of extreme desperation for the Tigers to attack the national team, let alone in Pakistan, said to be traditional source of arms for the rebel movement. Nor have the Tigers typically carried out attacks abroad, barring the 1991 assassination of Indian prime minister Rajiv Gandhi by a **female** suicide bomber.

Others will reach into the depths of Pakistan's murky political scene to find blame, pointing the finger at supporters of Nawaz Sharif, Pakistan's former prime minister.

Lahore is a Sharif stronghold, and only last week he was again banned from seeking office. Sharif blames the ruling on President Asif Ali Zardari, widower of Bhutto and a bitter political rival.

Extremists push Pakistan to breaking point CRICKET TERROR ATTACK - ANALYSIS

The spectre of Lashkar-e-Taiba - the most notorious Islamist group in the region and blamed for shootings in Mumbai - will also hang in the air.

But most likely, the so-called Pakistan Taliban will be the focus of concern.

The malignant spread of this extremist movement is the greatest threat to Pakistan's stability. It springs from capricious efforts over decades by hardliners in the Pakistan military to exploit Islamist ideology to fight proxy wars, against India in the disputed territory of Kashmir or in an attempt to control Afghanistan.

Now the extremists have turned back against the Government in Islamabad. Sensitivity over US missile attacks against suspected Taliban and al-Qadea hide-outs in the border lands near Afghanistan fuels their rage.

The Pakistan Taliban is not yet a co-ordinated movement guided by a single objective, but they will attack when and where the opportunity presents.

Claude Rakisits is an Australian-born security specialist based in Geneva who spent the past fortnight in Pakistan talking with officials and academics. He has watched Pakistan over many years, and says there is now a real sense of political crisis in the country.

"All these attacks also confirm that the Pakistan security apparatus is not managing to deal effectively with the security situation," Mr Rakisits says.

"The aim of the Taliban militants is to destabilise the Pakistani state. Unfortunately, they are being assisted indirectly by the politicians who are too busy fighting among each other."

Australian Foreign Minister Stephen Smith last week called Pakistan one of the most strategically important countries in the world. He is right. But the world needs to appreciate that Pakistan is a country perilously close to breaking down.

PAKISTAN AND TERROR

2001

Suicide attack by Pakistani militants on the Indian Parliament in New Delhi kills 12 people. All five terrorists killed by security forces.

2007

Pakistani troops storm the Red Mosque in Islamabad in an assault against hardline Islamist students occupying the compound, killing more than 100 people. Days later, a bomb goes off killing at least 11 people.

2007

Pakistani opposition leader and two time prime minister Benazir Bhutto is assassinated as she leaves a political rally. Her death plunges Pakistan further into political turmoil.

2008

Massive suicide bomb blast at the Marriot Hotel in Islamabad kills at least 52 people and injures more than 200.

2008

The bloody terrorist attack on the Taj Mahal hotel in Mumbai is blamed on Jihadist group Lashkar-e-Taiba, which is based in Pakistan. In what was intended to be India's 9/11, more than 100 people are killed. The ensuing tensions between India and Pakistan escalate after it is discovered the only surviving terrorist was from Pakistan.

SPORT AND TERROR

Extremists push Pakistan to breaking point CRICKET TERROR ATTACK - ANALYSIS

1972

Munich Massacre: 11 members of the Israeli Olympic team murdered by Palestinian militant group Black September.

1986

More than 100 people are killed after a bomb explodes and **Tamil Tigers** spray machine-gun fire near the New Zealand cricket team's hotel in the Sri Lankan capital of Colombo. NZ team flies home.

2002

A car bomb explodes outside the Pearl Continental Hotel in Pakistan, where the NZ cricket team is staying. The blast kills fourteen people and forces the cancellation of the NZ tour.

2005

A witness alleged convicted terrorist Abdul Nacer Benbrika plotted to carry out terrorist attacks on the 2005 AFL grand final, the 2006 NAB Cup and Crown Casino on the Grand Prix weekend in 2006.

2008

Terrorist attacks in Islamabad cause the Australian cricket team to cancel their April tour of Pakistan.

2008

Terrorist attacks in Mumbai kill more than 100 and force England to abandon tour and the cancellation of International Cricket League Twenty20 series.

2009

Six members of the Sri Lankan cricket team wounded when masked gunmen opened fire on their bus in Pakistan's eastern city of Lahore.

Graphic

FOUR PHOTOS: ABOVE AND BELOW: The scenes of blood and destruction after the masked gunmen's attack on the Sri Lankan cricket team's bus in Lahore. PICTURES: AFP, REUTERS

Load-Date: March 3, 2009

The 1530 GMT News Advisory

Agence France Presse -- English

January 3, 2008 Thursday 3:44 PM GMT

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Length: 431 words

Dateline: HONG KONG, Jan 3 2008

Body

Duty Editor: John Weaver

News Desk: + 852 2829 6211

-- WORLD HEADLINES --

ISLAMABAD: Musharraf "unsatisfied" with Bhutto probe

NAIROBI: Kenyan police clash with protestors

DES MOINES: First showdown in White House race

LONDON: Oil trades close to 100 dollars a barrel

-- ASIA --

Pakistan-attacks-Bhutto,4thlead-WRAP

ISLAMABAD

Pakistan President Pervez Musharraf says there was no government involvement in the assassination of Benazir Bhutto but admits he is unsatisfied with the probe into her death.

700 words 1630 GMT by Danny Kemp. Picture. Graphic

Pakistan-attacks-Bhutto-probe,ANALYSIS

ISLAMABAD

The investigators of Scotland Yard may not have much to work with in the assassination of Benazir Bhutto in Pakistan, leading to an inquiry that raises more questions than it answers, analysts say.

800 words moved by Marc Carnegie

The 1530 GMT News Advisory

We have also moved: Pakistan-attacks-Bhutto-vote,ANALYSIS

Pakistan-attacks-US-Britain-WHouse,4thlead

SriLanka-unrest,4thlead-WRAP

COLOMBO

Heavy fighting between government troops and ***Tamil Tigers*** breaks out in northern Sri Lanka, hours after Colombo announces it is pulling out of a tattered ceasefire agreement with the rebels.

630 words 1630 GMT by Amal Jayasinghe. Picture. Graphic

China-Singapore-aviation-airline,2ndlead-ANALYSIS

BEIJING

Singapore Airlines' bid for a stake in China Eastern Airlines is looking doomed ahead of a key shareholder vote next week that could presage a revived counter-bid by Air China, analysts say.

700 words moved by Dan Martin.

-- AFRICA --

Kenya-vote-unrest,5thlead-WRAP

NAIROBI

Kenyan police use tear gas and water cannon to prevent a mass protest rally by opposition leader Raila Odinga, as Europe and the United States push for a unity government to guide the country out of its current crisis.

750 words 1630 GMT by Francois Ausseill. Picture. Graphic. Video

-- AMERICAS --

US-vote-2008,3rdlead

DES MOINES, Iowa

White House hopefuls launch a final blitz to mobilise support for the too-close-to-call Iowa caucuses in the first electoral showdown of the longest, most gruelling US presidential race in history.

750 words 1515 GMT by Stephen Collinson. Picture

-- EUROPE --

Commodities-energy-oil-price,2ndlead

LONDON

Oil prices ease but still trade close a record 100 dollars a barrel on worries about tight supplies and weakness in the US currency.

500 words 1600 GMT. Graphic

-- MIDDLE EAST --

Mideast-conflict,6thlead-WRAP

The 1530 GMT News Advisory

GAZA CITY

Nine Palestinians, including two women, are killed in Israeli ground and air bombardments in Gaza, medical sources say, in the latest blitz against the Hamas-ruled territory.

700 words 1530 GMT by Adel Zaanoun. Picture

afp

Load-Date: January 4, 2008

End of Document

Headlines you might have missed this week

The Gazette (Montreal)
January 5, 2008 Saturday
Final Edition

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Section: SATURDAY EXTRA; Pg. B5

Length: 385 words

Byline: The Gazette

Body

Obama's first step

Barack Obama took a first step to being the first black man to become U.S. president by winning the Iowa primary for the Democratic nomination. Hillary Clinton, fighting to be the first ***female*** president, stumbled, finishing third.

For the Republicans, Mike Huckabee beat Mitt Romney.

Church torched

Kenya descended into savagery as a mob torched a church, killing about 30 people taking shelter inside. Countrywide protest erupted after the disputed re-election of President Mwai Kibaki.

Scotland yard gets call

Pakistan's elections will be delayed to Jan. 18 as the country struggles with the aftermath of the assassination of Benazir Bhutto. London police agreed to a Pakistani request to send Scotland Yard detectives to help in the investigation of Bhutto's murder.

Santa's letters late

Canada Post's Santa Claus service was left red-faced again. After some children got obscene responses to their letters to Santa before Christmas, others only received their replies after the holiday.

"This happens, sometimes," said a Canada Post official.

heritage homes burn

About 50 people were left homeless after a heritage apartment building on Mount Stephen Ave. in Westmount burned late Wednesday. The 100-year-old structure was ranked second-highest on Westmount's scale of heritage buildings.

Sri Lanka fighting

Headlines you might have missed this week

Northern Sri Lanka was the scene of renewed heavy fighting this week as the government pulled out of a tattered ceasefire with the rebel group **Tamil Tigers**.

Libya back in the fold

Libya, once a pariah for its involvement in terrorism, presides over the UN Security Council this week, sealing its return to international respectability. "It means we are back to normal," said Libya's UN ambassador, Giadalla Ettalhi.

Gold gleams, oil on fire

Gold and oil hit all-time highs this week, with gold selling at almost \$870 an ounce and oil flirting with \$100 a barrel.

bridge closed

A man who police say has a history of mental illness was arrested after causing a massive traffic tie-up Thursday by parking his car at the entrance to the Victoria Bridge and claiming it contained a bomb.

Nice to be home

The Canadiens looked right at home at the Bell Centre on Thursday with a 6-3 win over the Tampa Bay Lightning. The Habs have been struggling at home recently, while their away record has been impressive.

Load-Date: January 5, 2008

End of Document

The true horror of suicide bombings

Daily Mirror (Sri Lanka)

September 8, 2008 Monday 2:00 PM EST

Copyright 2008 Wijeya Newspaper Ltd. All Rights Reserved

Length: 939 words

Byline: Daily News Sri Lanka

Dateline: Colombo

Body

Colombo, Sept. 8 -- The suicide attacks have increased since Parvez Musharraf left the power politics of Pakistan. Just some time ago only in the three days, three big suicide attacks have shown their horror.

The next day from the day Musharraf left, there was a planned suicide attack in Dera Ismail Khan town in the west north border state of Pakistan. On 19th august the unknown motorcyclist shot a man from Shia community. The man was taken to local district civil hospital. The big crowd and a great number of politicians followed him.

Right at that time, a suicide bomber joined the crowd and busted himself. As a result of it 25 persons died there and then, among the deaths the majority belonged to Shia community whereas many policemen too, died in this attack. Many suicide attacks have been done before, in Dera Ismail Khan.

The second fresh suicide attack was done on August 21 about 30 K.M. from Islamabad in a Government Ordinance factory that manufactures weapons for pak army. Here the attackers did two blasts at two main gates of the factory when the workers were coming out after finishing their work.

The scene of a suicide blast in Colombo

These blasts were done at the interval of only 30 seconds and news is that 75 persons died whereas 100 were badly injured. The responsibility of this suicide dattack was taken by a resident of Pakistan, Maulvi Omar, a Taliban spokesman. This Talibani spokesman says that this action has been done to oppose the military action done by Pak army in Tribal area of Pak-Afghan border.

The Talibani spokesman said that this suicide attack has been done to take revenge for the death of innocent women & children died in Bajore. It is known that Pak army along with NATO army had killed more than one hundred Talibani extremist with in four days in the second week of august near the tribal area on Pak-Afghan border specially near Bajore. In this anti Taliban Military action 9 soldiers of Pak army were also killed.

Now the question is from where do these attackers or their bosses get inspired for suicide bombs? Is it a result of any religionist education or an eccentric inspiration? How does a savage action get a place in the mind of a suicide bomber?

If we look into the history of suicide bombers, first of all the organization work of suicide bombers started in 1980. Its first biggest experiment was done in 1983, when a truck full of explosives was collided with a very safe and big building in Beirut by a suicide bomber. 300 persons were killed in this suicide bomber truck explosion and hundreds were injured. This attack was done to worn America and British armies.

The true horror of suicide bombings

This scheme was much liked by the persons revolting for freedom of the country and many other armed organizations in different parts of the world. After that this method to fight was followed by **Tamil Tigers** in Sri Lanka and armed organization like Hamaas in Palestine. After that when the attackers and the persons revolting got its positive result, there was increase in the work of suicide bombers.

At present about 30 countries of the world are affected by suicide bombers or there are chances of being badly affected. Mainly the suicide bombers are getting training in Israel, Palestine, Iraq, Afghanistan Sri Lanka & Pakistan. The suicide bombers are being mentally prepared for suicide attack in these countries.

An individual walking alone can perform his job easily in a crowded place. Whereas if the place is very secure and watched and barricaded, the suicide bombers collide a car or a truck loaded by explosive driven by him against the place to be exploded. In very few cases, such suicide bombers can be checked. In the terrible and painful history of these suicide bombers, many lives have been lost.

The former Prime Minister of India Rajiv Gandhi and President of Sri Lanka Ranasinghe Premdassa have also lost their lives because of suicide bombers. The experts have different opinion about the eccentric nature and the mentality of suicide bombers. Most of the peoples are of the opinion that this work of suicide bombing is because of the excesses of American and allied army in many countries.

After the successful experiment in Beirut in 1983, this policy was adopted by many rebels. Whereas some people are of the view that martyrdom in the Islam religion give such inspirations. But after seeing the non Islamic suicide bombers such as **Tamil Tigers**, these words do not sound true.

But this can be accepted that such attacks were started because of opposition of America and its allies and are increasing now. The suicide bombers being heard in Iraq are most likely with the motive to oust the American armies and their allies and let the Iraq people live freely.

About the question of Islamic inspiration, none of the Islamic saint has done such work of suicide or suicide bombing. No religious leaders have inspired for it. No such writing is written in any Islamic scripture. Islam gives inspiration to lay the life for truth and not to bow before untruth.

To aim at the innocent and unarmed is anti Islamic. If today some poor children or youths are inspired for crusade, heaven or in the name of Islam by the terrorist organizations, it is not good. It is sin. Islam does not like unnatural death. Then how can a suicide bomber be a claimant of heaven?

Such bomber does a crime of giving his life in an unnatural way and is also a culprit of many other innocent killings. But those who show them the way to heaven, those fundamentalist, religionists and religious leaders are also culprits that deserve punishment.

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

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Load-Date: September 8, 2008

Troops kill 29 Tigers in Sri Lanka

Hindustan Times

March 27, 2009 Friday

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Length: 169 words

Dateline: Colombo

Body

Colombo, March. 27 -- At least 29 **Tamil Tigers** were killed in fresh clashes with troops in Sri Lanka's northeastern Mullaitivu district, the defence ministry said Friday.

It said the 58 Division confronted the Liberation Tigers of Tamil, now confined to an area of just 21.5 sq km, in and around Puthukkudiyiruppu as well as Iranapalai, "causing considerable damage to the enemy".

"In subsequent search operation following the fighting, troops found 13 bodies of **LTTE** (Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam) terrorists," it said.

The army gunned down 16 more **LTTE** cadres in Puthukkudiyiruppu, said the ministry.

Meanwhile, 2,108 Tamil civilians trapped in the war zone have reached government-held areas Thursday, officials said. These included 571 men and 597 **women** besides children.

The military said the number of civilians fleeing the rebel-held areas was on the rise. Over 55,000 people had entered the government-held areas since the start of 2009. Published by HT Syndication with permission from Indo-Asian News Service.

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

Load-Date: August 1, 2009

Saturday: If you write you'll be killed: In the aftermath of the assassination of Sri Lankan newspaper editor Lasantha Wickrematunge, his family and friends remember a man who died challenging his government's account of the civil war

The Guardian - Final Edition

January 17, 2009 Saturday

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theguardian

Section: GUARDIAN SATURDAY COMMENT PAGES; Pg. 32

Length: 2468 words

Byline: Amelia Gentlemen, Colombo

Body

Lasantha Wickrematunge thought and talked a lot about his own death. He had known for a decade that his career as Sri Lanka's most provocative independent journalist would ultimately prove fatal. He made precise preparations for the end.

In public, he appeared sanguine. When Sri Lanka's president, Mahinda Rajapaksa, called him in a fury last year, screaming that he would be killed if he continued to speak out, he laughed it off. When a funeral wreath was delivered to his door, colleagues at the Sunday Leader, the virulently anti-establishment paper he edited, said he got a "kick out of it". Earlier this month, when he received a page of his own newspaper daubed in red paint with the words "If you write you will be killed", he appeared to pay no attention.

Privately, however, he sat down in his office and composed a powerful, valedictory column, accusing the government of his still-to-be-committed murder. "When finally I am killed, it will be the government that kills me," he wrote in this obituary, which he left for publication after the expected assassination. He predicted that the president - who was, despite their differences, a longstanding friend - would be "anguished" by his death, but would have "no choice" but to protect his killers; addressing the president directly, he anticipated a police cover-up: "You will see to it that the guilty one is never convicted."

With crushing eloquence, he expressed bleak despair about the state of his homeland. "Murder has become the primary tool whereby the state seeks to control the organs of liberty," he wrote.

It is not clear quite when he completed the 2,500-word column, which he saved on his office computer in a file marked "Final Ed", but early on 8 January, Wickrematunge was stopped as he drove to work by a group of three or four armed men on motorcycles. They fired through his windscreen, and he was shot in the head. He died later that day in hospital. His mobile phone filled with the numbers of his numerous contacts has not been recovered.

Saturday: If you write you'll be killed: In the aftermath of the assassination of Sri Lankan newspaper editor Lasantha Wickrematunge, his family and friends rem....

The civil war in Sri Lanka has been so protracted, and the political situation remains so intractably complex that, in normal times, the routine human rights violations provoke only the most languid international response. But Wickrematunge's murder has dragged global attention back to the conflict. This week newspapers around the world carried reports on his death, and several, including the Guardian and the online edition of the New Yorker, published his last column in full.

In death, much more powerfully than in life, Wickrematunge has forced the world to take note of the state-sponsored crackdown on dissent, which has coincided with a recent intensification of the Sri Lankan military's offensive against the Tamil Tiger rebels in the north of the country.

Very little is known about the human cost of the massive drive to eliminate the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE). Significant military advances are announced almost daily by the state media, but since last autumn the government has prevented journalists from travelling independently to the conflict zone, and international humanitarian agencies have been forced to pull out.

The Sunday Leader highlighted this worrying absence of information and relentlessly questioned the government's use of force. This undermining stance was as unwelcome as the critical coverage of the war broadcast by Maharaja Television, a large private broadcasting network, which was destroyed by gunmen armed with grenades and mines two days before Wickrematunge was killed.

"I sensed he was seeking martyrdom. He wanted to die," a close friend, who regularly discussed the subject with him, says. Like many people close to the journalist, he asked not to be identified, afraid of reprisals.

"He knew he was walking with death. There was this inevitability. I think he felt that everything he stood for would be proved and demonstrated by his murder - the growing intolerance of the government, of society."

This heroic posthumous vindication offers little comfort to the friends and family he left behind. But despite their grief, they agree that this was a man quite prepared to die in pursuit of the profession he loved. Wickrematunge, they say, was a charmer, who tracked down stories with indefatigable enthusiasm, someone who routinely arranged his first meeting of the day at 5am or earlier - a time when he believed he would not be followed by the police. He was a man who returned to his desk the morning after his house was showered with 40 rounds of bullets, "bright as a button".

"He would say it is better to die one death from a bullet, than 1,000 deaths as a coward," explained his first wife Raine, who left him in 2002 and fled to Australia with their three children, too afraid for their safety to remain in Sri Lanka.

"Sometimes I thought he was irresponsible, as a father, but no one could match his fearlessness. It was as if he didn't care whether he lived or died as long as he could do his job properly," she says, dressed in funereal white robes, looking out on to the verandah of their old family home, to which she returned the day he was killed. In the garden outside, a growing crowd of visitors lined up, waiting to offer her their condolences.

Wickrematunge was under threat since 1994, when he and Raine co-founded the paper and he began to write his weekly column, charting political scandal and exposing government corruption. In 1995 the couple were pulled from their car in a quiet residential street and beaten with wooden batons pierced with nails. Raine is vague about the details - this kind of thing happened all the time.

"We were coming home that night. He had just exposed . . . what was it he had exposed? Let me think . . . some corrupt deal by one of the ministers. I don't remember what," she says. The violence was so regular it became routine, unremarkable. "There were so many threatening calls. 'We are going to kill you. We are going to kill your children . . .'"

One evening someone stuck a rifle through the grill of the gate, and shot through the front window, she recalls, getting up to see if the bullet holes were still there in the wall. "There were so many people gunning for him, from

Saturday: If you write you'll be killed: In the aftermath of the assassination of Sri Lankan newspaper editor Lasantha Wickrematunge, his family and friends rem....

the president down. In the end it was intolerable. We had to leave," she says. She wanted her husband to join her, but he felt his work was too important. "I understood that."

Too detached now from the Sri Lankan political scene, Raine is unwilling to speculate on why Wickrematunge was killed, but elsewhere in Colombo the talk is of little else.

At the mournfully empty offices of the Sunday Leader, Sonali Samarasinghe, Wickrematunge's second wife, who he married just two months ago, was back at her desk, the day after his murder. That morning as she looked through his computer she found his farewell column, ready for publication. She brushed off backbiting rumours, which briefly circulated the capital this week, suggesting that the article had been written by colleagues on the paper posthumously.

"It was there, saved electronically," she says. "I was shocked to find it; I didn't know he thought it would be so soon. Usually he was blasé about the threats, but he had obviously had a premonition that they were coming for him."

So far (as her husband anticipated) the police have not caught those responsible. She suspects the murder was ordered by someone "on a rung lower than the president", but will say no more.

Attempting to explain the power of Wickrematunge's weekly column, Raneer Mohamed, features editor, gripped her hands around an imaginary baseball bat and swung it from right to left. "It was like this. He whacked everybody." She says people would caution each other mid-sentence: "Don't let's talk about this in public, it will end up in the Sunday Leader."

The columns were prone to sensation. One regular reader described the style as "muckraking" and heavy with gossip, hazarding that the accuracy rate was somewhere between 60% and 70%. The English-language paper has a circulation of about 70,000, and is not read by the vast majority of Sri Lanka's 21 million multi-ethnic population, but the English speakers are disproportionately powerful. For all its idiosyncrasies, Wickrematunge's work was feared as much as it was respected, and he had many enemies.

He had no political affiliations, attacking previous governments as relentlessly as the current one. One week he would argue for the legalisation of homosexuality, the next he might scrutinise the involvement of the president's brother Gotabhaya Rajapakse, the defence minister, in a deal to buy MiG fighter jets from Russia. He was fiercely critical of the LTTE, describing them as among "the most ruthless and bloodthirsty organisations to have infested the planet".

But it was his refusal to buy into the government's current triumphalist approach to the war that really enraged parts of the government, observers say. Determined to crush the Tamil Tigers, Rajapakse's administration has poured enormous resources into the military struggle in the north and east of the country, and in recent months, these investments have paid off. In the year since the government withdrew from the Norwegian-brokered ceasefire, much of the Tigers' territory has been seized back. For the first time in decades, the government is contemplating victory.

Wickrematunge refused on principle to send his journalists on state-orchestrated tours of the war zone, and his farewell column expressed his "horror that Sri Lanka is the only country in the world routinely to bomb its own citizens". He stressed that a military victory without a negotiated settlement with the Tamil people of the north and east would lead to a long-term "festering wound that will yield strife for all eternity".

Editors at Maharaja TV, took a similarly critical stance on the war. Shortly after a military mine was detonated in their studios, Wickrematunge hurried to the building to show solidarity. It was 4am and he was still in his slippers. Two days later he was assassinated.

Colombo does not immediately feel like the capital of a country riven by civil war. Women walk at a leisurely pace through the palm-lined streets; small groups of Birkenstock-shod backpackers congregate in courtyard cafes. But at

Saturday: If you write you'll be killed: In the aftermath of the assassination of Sri Lankan newspaper editor Lasantha Wickrematunge, his family and friends rem....

the city's centre, which has been repeatedly targeted by suicide bombers, a thick log-jam of army checkpoints is in place, manned by soldiers with AK-47s.

Residents - particularly those in liberal circles - have begun to watch what they say, and throw twitching glances behind them before they speak. "There appears to be a systematic campaign to stamp out any kind of dissent," Dr Paikiasothy Saravanamuttu, director of the Centre for Policy Alternatives, an independent thinktank based in Colombo, says. "I think that Lasantha was killed by elements within the government."

The popular delight over the military victory was being used as a "smokescreen" to eliminate dissent, he argues. With state newspapers reporting daily military triumphs, public attention could swiftly be diverted from news of human rights abuses.

The brazen nature of the daylight assassination also leads friends and colleagues to point to the government.

"Everyone is asking how four motorbikes could get in that high-security zone and carry out that attack. You can't go out to buy two aspirins without being stopped at a checkpoint. This kind of attack couldn't be done by someone without influence," one journalist says, adding: "Please don't name me. They'll come for me next."

At the end of his obituary, Wickrematunge said: "I hope my assassination will be seen not as a defeat of freedom but an inspiration for those who survive." But among friends and colleagues there is a palpable sense of helplessness.

Despite words of condemnation from Gordon Brown and other leaders this week, no one anticipates that the surge in censorship, extra-judicial killings, disappearances and other human rights violations will trigger any real crackdown on Sri Lanka from the west.

"Sri Lanka is not a country that is of any importance to anyone. Its government knows that statement after statement of condemnation will be made by western governments, but nothing will be done," Dr Saravanamuttu says.

Wickrematunge's desk at the Sunday Leader is piled high with the documents he was reading through the night before his murder. The room is hot and stuffy, silent except for the heavy ticking of the clock which hangs above a framed award from Transparency International, the corruption monitoring group.

Outside the window, a long shed with a huge hole in the corrugated iron roof is visible - the scene of an arson attack last year on the paper's printing presses. A white mourning bunting hangs in the courtyard, and a huge, two-metre high painting of the dead editor's face is propped in stairwell.

Sonali Samarasinghe, the second wife, is determined to continue publishing, but it seems likely that the Sunday Leader has been dealt a mortal blow. "We can't work without him," Ranee Mohamed says; he was the source of most of the paper's scoops. Others are considering whether it is safe to remain in the office, and even in the country.

"People will be scared, but we will carry on," Samarasinghe says. "Just because our general has been removed does not mean that our army cannot operate."

She has been strong, but suddenly tears began to slip silently from her eyes. Embarrassed, she apologises and continues: "I don't want his life to be in vain."

Thirty years of civil war

* 1976 The Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (**LTTE**) is formed.

* 1983 Anti-Tamil riots in Colombo kill hundreds. Start of what Tigers call "First Eelam War".

* 1986 Sri Lanka launches offensive against Tamil strongholds in Jaffna peninsula, with huge civilian casualties.

Saturday: If you write you'll be killed: In the aftermath of the assassination of Sri Lankan newspaper editor Lasantha Wickrematunge, his family and friends rem....

- * 1987 India sends troops to enforce truce. Tigers refuse to disarm. India withdraws in 1990 after heavy losses.
- * 1990 "Second Eelam War" begins.
- * 1992 President Ranasinghe Premadasa killed in suicide blast.
- * 1995 "Third Eelam War" begins.
- * 1996 Colombo's Central Bank bombed.
- * 1997 Sri Lankan army launches offensive in Jaffna peninsula.
- * 2001 Tiger attack on main international airport - many planes destroyed.
- * 2002 Ceasefire signed.
- * 2003 Tigers pull out of talks.
- * 2006 Tamil Tiger attacks increase. Peace talks in Geneva fail.
- * 2007 In January, government troops capture Tiger's eastern stronghold. Tens of thousands of civilians are displaced. In March, Tigers launch air raid on military base and three airmen are killed. In June, police force hundreds of Tamils out of Colombo.
- * 2008 In January, government annuls 2002 ceasefire. In July, Sri Lankan military capture Tamil naval base.
- * 2009 8 January, Lasantha Wickramatunga is murdered. On 14 January, Ministry of Defence declares Jaffna peninsula is free from Tamil Tiger control.

Load-Date: January 17, 2009

39 civilians flee LTTE

Daily Mirror (Sri Lanka)

July 4, 2008 Friday 5:05 PM EST

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Length: 144 words

Byline: Daily News Sri Lanka

Dateline: Colombo

Body

Colombo, July 4 -- Around 39 civilians fleeing from the grip of the **LTTE** in Mullaitivu sought protection with the Security Forces in Pulmodai on Wednesday evening, Military spokesman Udaya Nanayakkara said.

He said 39 civilians from 13 families comprising 26 males and 13 **females** had arrived on a boat fleeing from the **LTTE** controlled areas in Mullaitivu and reached Pulmodai around 3.00 pm. seeking protection with the Security Forces.

"The civilians who had fled from the **LTTE**'s clutches complained that they had been forced by the **LTTE** to carry out hard tasks such as digging bunkers and other field jobs. They were also intimidated and prevented by the outfit from fleeing their area," Brigadier Nanayakkara said. The Security Forces provided the civilians with essential needs and shelter.

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

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Load-Date: September 16, 2008

UNICEF says Sri Lankan rebels step up recruitment of child soldiers =

Deutsche Presse-Agentur

February 17, 2009 Tuesday 11:40 AM EST

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Section: POLITICS

Length: 509 words

Dateline: Colombo

Body

DPA POLITICS SriLanka Conflicts UN UNICEF says Sri Lankan rebels step up recruitment of child soldiers = Colombo

UNICEF officials on Tuesday expressed serious concern about children caught up in the conflict in the northern part of Sri Lanka and urged both sides - the government and Tamil rebels - to provide protection to civilians.

"UNICEF reiterates the call it has made time and again to the government and the LTTE (Tamil rebels) that civilians, especially children, must be given every protection from the fighting," the UN agency said in a statement.

The organisation said there were clear indications that the Tamil rebels had intensified forcible recruitment of civilians, and children as young as 14 were being targeted.

"The children are facing immediate danger and their lives are at great risk. Their recruitment is intolerable," UNICEF's representative in Sri Lanka Philippe Duamelle was quoted as saying in a statement.

UNICEF said it had recorded 6,000 cases of child recruitment by the LTTE from 2003 to end of 2008.

UNICEF also said it was extremely alarmed at the high number of children being injured in the fighting in the northern area of Sri Lanka.

"Children are victims of this conflict by being killed, injured, recruited, displaced, separated and denied their every-day needs due to the fighting," UNICEF said.

They said the main injuries to children have been burns, fractures, shrapnel and bullet wounds.

The UNICEF call came as the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) evacuated some 440 civilians, including children and

UNICEF says Sri Lankan rebels step up recruitment of child soldiers =

women, by sea from the areas of fighting in the north-eastern part of the country.

Fighting is taking place in the Mullaitivu district where the Tamil rebels are reported to be confined to an area of 140 square kilometres.

But at least 100,000 civilians are also reported to be trapped in the area, after some 34,000 left the area following intense fighting between security forces and the rebels.

Tamil rebels have prevented civilians from leaving the area, fearing it would then be easy for the security forces to enter the area.

A moderate Tamil political party in Sri Lanka Tuesday called on President Mahinda Rajapaksa to direct the armed forces to stop aerial bombing and firing artillery until all trapped civilians are brought to safety.

V Anandasangaree, who heads the Tamil United Liberation Front (TULF) and had been critical of the rebels, said in a statement that 288 persons had been killed and 766 injured last week in the fighting.

But Defence Secretary Gotabhaya Rajapaksa denied the possibility of mass civilian casualties, saying that among them are Tamil rebels dressed in civilian clothing.

Government troops launched military offensives to recapture Tamil rebel held areas in the north and eastern provinces in August, 2006 and since then have captured almost all areas held by the rebels. Military leaders say they are now engaged in the final phase of the campaign, ending the rebel movement that has been fighting for the last 25 years.

Feb 1709 1140 GMT

Load-Date: February 18, 2009

End of Document

Tiger suicide attack kills 27 in Sri Lanka: officials

Agence France Presse -- English

October 6, 2008 Monday 11:24 AM GMT

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Length: 513 words

Byline: Mel Gunasekera

Dateline: COLOMBO, Oct 6 2008

Body

A Tamil Tiger suicide bomber triggered a blast inside offices of the main opposition party in Sri Lanka on Monday, killing at least 27 people, including a retired senior general, officials said.

The attack in the northern town of Anuradhapura came as the Sri Lankan military appeared on the verge of capturing the Tigers' key headquarters as part of a major offensive in the drawn-out ethnic conflict.

"The **LTTE** (Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam) set off a suicide explosion. There are a large number of casualties. At least 27 are dead and 80 injured," said military spokesman Brigadier Udaya Nanayakkara.

The blast killed the provincial head of the United National Party, retired army general Janaka Perera, who was about to speak at a ceremony to open the offices when the attack occurred.

Officials said it was likely he had been directly targeted by the blast, which left many of the dead slumped beside overturned blue plastic chairs put out for the morning event.

"Buddhist monks had just conducted prayers when Perera got up to address the gathering, and then the blast took place," one eyewitness, who declined to be named, told AFP.

"There was chaos and the smell of blood in the air, with bodies thrown everywhere and people crying," he said.

Perera, whose wife was also killed, was a prominent war veteran credited with some of the army's biggest victories over the Tigers, including a 1996 battle in which 200 rebels were killed with the loss of just one soldier.

The United National Party (UNP) officially supports a negotiated settlement with the Tigers and says the current offensive is being used by the government for political ends.

Among those killed on Monday was a **female** television reporter filming the opening ceremony, said her employer, the privately run Sirasa network.

Sri Lankan President Mahinda Rajapakse denounced the attack, saying the Tigers were "making every attempt to create violent backlashes" after suffering a series of setbacks.

Tiger suicide attack kills 27 in Sri Lanka : officials

The army said at the weekend that its troops are within two kilometres (1.25 miles) of the northern rebel headquarters in Kilinochchi.

Losing control of Kilinochchi would be a major blow to the Tigers, who took up arms in 1972, demanding minority rights. In 1976 they raised the stakes, demanding a separate Tamil state.

As the political capital of the LTTE's northern mini-state, Kilinochchi is where the rebels have hosted visiting foreign dignitaries and peace brokers.

The Tigers, who are known for their suicide attacks, have put up only intermittent resistance to the military advancing on several fronts in the north of Sri Lanka.

But defence analysts recently warned that the Tigers still had suicide attackers who could be deployed with devastating effect.

Fighting across the northern frontier on Sunday left at least 13 Tigers and two soldiers dead, the defence ministry said Monday.

Since the Colombo government formally revoked a moribund truce in January, 7,196 Tigers have been killed, according to the military, which places its own losses at 704 soldiers.

The casualty figures cannot be independently verified.

Load-Date: October 7, 2008

Bomb blast outside Sri Lanka capital injures 18: military

Agence France Presse -- English

February 23, 2008 Saturday 8:49 AM GMT

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Length: 497 words

Byline: Mel Gunasekera

Dateline: COLOMBO, Feb 23 2008

Body

A parcel bomb planted by suspected Tamil Tiger rebels exploded on a bus in a Colombo suburb on Saturday, wounding at least 18 people in the latest in a string of violent attacks, the defence ministry said.

Casualties would have been far greater if an alert passenger had not spotted the booby-trapped package and shouted at people to get out of the vehicle, military spokesman Brigadier Udaya Nanayakkara said.

"I noticed a parcel left behind on a vacant seat. When no-one claimed it, I alerted the bus crew and shouted at people to get off," passenger Mervyn Silva told AFP.

The driver then moved the white bus towards an isolated spot and the crew went to inform a nearby police station when the explosion took place, injuring passersby, the defence ministry said.

"The terrorists' beastly intention to commit carnage against civilians was foiled due to the vigilance of the civilians themselves," the defence ministry said. Terrorists is the word that the government uses to describe the rebels.

There was no immediate comment from the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (**LTTE**), who are fighting for independence for Sri Lanka's minority ethnic Tamils, concentrated in the north and east of the island.

Ten men, seven **women** and a child were admitted to hospital after suffering minor injuries in the blast in Mount Lavinia, 10 kilometres (six miles) south of the capital of Colombo, the ministry said.

"The private bus was completely destroyed by fire from the explosion," the defence ministry said.

Earlier this month, suspected Tamil Tiger rebels used a parcel bomb to blow up a crowded bus in northern Sri Lanka, killing at least 20 people.

The new violence came as the defence ministry said war planes bombed a rebel military base inside Tamil Tiger-controlled territory in the northern town of Oddusan early on Saturday.

Air force pilots said they had "accurately hit" and "completely destroyed" the base.

Bomb blast outside Sri Lanka capital injures 18: military

There was no immediate comment from the LTTE, though the rebels said a similar air strike on guerrilla targets on Friday killed eight civilians.

On Friday, six guerrillas died when troops fired at rebels who tried to infiltrate the state-run Weli Oya region. Artillery duels across the island's north on Friday also left 31 rebels and a soldier dead, the ministry said.

According to the defence ministry, some 1,487 rebels have been killed so far this year. The military estimates the rebel strength at 5,000 combatants.

The military said 84 soldiers and police have been killed in 2008.

Casualty figures provided by both sides differ vastly and cannot be independently verified since the government bars journalists and human rights workers from frontline and rebel-held areas.

The Sri Lankan government last month officially pulled out of a truce with the guerrillas, who have fought for more than three decades for a homeland in the Sinhalese-majority island.

The army says it is winning the ethnic war and President Mahinda Rajapakse has promised to wipe out the rebels.

lw-mg/pmc/msl

Load-Date: February 24, 2008

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67 leave LTTE

Daily Mirror (Sri Lanka)

June 30, 2008 Monday 3:31 PM EST

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Length: 95 words

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

Dateline: Colombo

Body

Colombo, June 30 -- Over 67 have left the LTTE during the last five months sources from the Vanni told Daily Mirror yesterday.

According to the sources, a majority of those who left were child soldiers who had been forced to join the organisation.

Some of them had surrendered to the security forces. Others had left the area; some had even migrated to other countries.

39 of the 67 were females.

The LTTE is reported to have enhanced security in their camps and launched operations to re-enlist the dropouts.

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Load-Date: August 11, 2008

Civilian killed by LTTE

Daily Mirror (Sri Lanka)

June 27, 2008 Friday 1:42 PM EST

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Length: 160 words

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

Dateline: Colombo

Body

Colombo, June 27 -- A 29-year-old father of a child was killed when he and 12 others from Kilinochchi attempted to escape to cleared areas in Mannar on Wednesday; the defence ministry said quoting the civilians.

The civilians escaped from the LTTE in Chundikulam, Kilinochchi and reached a welfare centre in Mannar by boats.

"On their way 29 year old Selwamogan Rathnasinham a civilian was killed and thrown to the sea by the LTTE who followed them by boats, while the crew of civilians passed about 600 metres off Pulipanchikal LTTE check point," the ministry said

It also said that the 23 year-old wife of the assassinated civilian and her three years old daughter had escaped from the LTTE.

Meanwhile, another group of civilians of eight members including six females and two males escaped from the Nachchikuda un-cleared areas and surrendered to the Navy camp in Irrukalampiddi on Wednesday.

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Load-Date: August 11, 2008

Sri Lanka says rebel group on brink of defeat

Associated Press International

January 11, 2009 Sunday 12:54 AM GMT

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Section: INTERNATIONAL NEWS

Length: 1408 words

Byline: By RAVI NESSMAN, Associated Press Writer

Dateline: COLOMBO Sri Lanka

Body

When Hamilton Wanasinghe was Sri Lanka's military chief in the early 1990s, he tried to buy desperately needed weapons from Russia to fight the Tamil Tiger rebels. Money was so short he offered to trade crates of tea for arms.

The Sri Lankan treasury rejected the deal, Wanasinghe says. Then, three years ago, a new president took office and the coffers burst open.

Military recruitment swelled, training improved and hundreds of millions of dollars were spent on new hardware to crush the rebels and end a civil war that has lasted 25 years and killed more than 70,000 people on this teardrop-shaped island off India's southern tip.

"The sky is the limit. Whatever the country can afford, they get," Wanasinghe said.

Senior officials, analysts, diplomats and former military officers say President Mahinda Rajapaksa's commitment to the fight coupled with a string of miscalculations by the **Tamil Tigers** has brought one of the world's most sophisticated rebel groups to the brink of defeat.

In recent weeks, government forces have broken through the rebels' front lines, forced them out of much of their de facto state in the north and cornered them in a shrinking pocket of northeastern jungle.

Top officials predict the imminent demise of the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam and its dream of creating a breakaway state for the country's ethnic Tamil minority in the north and east.

If Sri Lanka succeeds, it could signal the end of one of Asia's most persistent and bloody insurgencies. But a lasting peace will depend on whether the 75 percent Sinhalese majority on the island of 20 million people can come to a political compromise with the Tamils.

The Tamils have long felt the government, dominated by the Sinhalese, has discriminated against them, their culture and their language.

Rajapaksa has said he would seek a political resolution to the ethnic conflict once the rebels were destroyed. But Sinhalese nationalist politicians have already said with victory in sight there was no need for the sort of power-sharing arrangement seen as crucial to placating the Tamils and preventing a new outbreak of violence.

Sri Lanka says rebel group on brink of defeat

By some estimates, the retreating rebels still have as many as 10,000 hardcore cadres and another 10,000 reservists still ready to fight.

Iqbal Athas, a military analyst for Jane's Defense Weekly, cautions against declaring an early victory. "The war is not yet over," he said. "It could be protracted."

Some of the insurgents could take off their uniforms, blend in with the mass of civilians still living in their stronghold and fight on as guerrillas, said Austin Fernando, a former defense secretary.

The war that led to the murder of a former Indian prime minister erupted in 1983 after a rebel ambush in the northern Tamil city of Jaffna killed 13 soldiers. Vengeful Sinhalese mobs rampaged through Colombo, the capital 190 miles to the south, leaving more than 2,000 Tamils dead, according to human rights groups.

The army of about 40,000 was unprepared for the brutal fighting that ensued, said Wanasinghe.

"Our army was mainly for containing internal unrest. It was not trained for war," the ex-military chief said.

It soon realized that the rebels, with their rocket-propelled grenades and makeshift armored tractors, were better armed than the troops, he said. The air force was reduced to bombing the rebels with barrels of explosives rolled out the doors of transport planes, he said.

Over time, the violence would spike and ebb. India, with its own sympathetic Tamil community, sent in peacekeepers in 1987, but they soon became targets of the rebels and left in 1990. The following year, Rajiv Gandhi, who as Indian prime minister had ordered in the peacekeepers, was killed by a Tamil Tiger ***female*** suicide bomber in southern India.

Hoping to limit casualties and the mounting expense of the war, Sri Lankan governments vacillated between fighting and seeking peace, with different officials in the same government often working at cross purposes, said Fernando. And while the military did its best to get new equipment and modernize buying fighter jets and attack boats it never was properly funded, he said.

Norwegian mediators brokered a cease-fire in 2002. But in 2005 Rajapaksa was elected president and after a brief stab at peace talks, he committed himself to all-out war. A year ago, he withdrew from the cease-fire.

A recruitment drive expanded troop levels by 40 percent, Defense Secretary Gotabhaya Rajapaksa said, and the defense budget hit a record \$1.6 billion.

In previous administrations "the soldiers were getting mixed signals," said Rajapaksa, who is the president's brother. "Here there was no ambiguity in the aim. It was very clear: destroy the ***LTTE***. That was clear from the first day to the last day."

"We had a plan. We knew what strength we needed. We knew what equipment we needed ... We gave those to the commanders so the commanders had greater flexibility."

The government ignored international pressure to restart peace efforts and shrugged off accusations from human rights groups that it sanctioned extrajudicial killings, allowed paramilitaries to run amok and disregarded the safety of civilians.

Rights groups also accused the rebels listed as a terror group by the U.S. and European Union of forcibly conscripting child soldiers and holding the civilian population under their control hostage.

The government barred independent media from the war zone and underreported its casualties, allowing it to suffer huge casualties without losing public support for the war, said several diplomats, who spoke on condition of anonymity because they were not authorized to speak to the media.

Sri Lanka says rebel group on brink of defeat

As the war neared its apex last year, the government forced aid workers the last independent witnesses out of rebel-held areas.

Rebel leader Velupillai Prabhakaran had transformed the organization from little more than a street gang in the 1970s into a fearsome guerrilla group that ran a dictatorial regime that ruled a wide swath of the north, with its own police, courts and customs department.

The rebels dug in effectively, deployed heavy artillery, established a significant naval wing and a rudimentary air force that once bombed Colombo's international airport. It raised up to \$300 million a year from a network of fake charities and international smuggling of arms, drugs and possibly even people, according to Jane's Intelligence Review.

At the same time, Prabhakaran molded a suicide cult blamed for more than 240 attacks.

He managed to parry many of the government's battlefield successes. When government forces captured the city of Jaffna in 1995, the rebels the following year overran an army base in Mullaittivu, 60 miles away, killing 1,200 troops.

But Prabhakaran was making costly errors, analysts said.

Gandhi's assassination alienated Prabhakaran's strongest allies in India.

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

In 2004, a top commander known as Col. Karuna ran afoul of the Tiger leadership and defected to the government side with thousands of his fighters.

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After new peace talks failed, the rebels cut off the water supply to more than 60,000 people in the east, provoking the latest government offensive.

With Karuna helping the government, the military was able to capture the east in July 2007. Then it turned its attention to the north and forced the rebels into a broad retreat.

Now the rebels are huddled in the northeastern jungles along with hundreds of thousands of civilians, many of them war refugees living in makeshift shelters.

Military officials believe Prabhakaran is hiding there, protected by hundreds of fighters and an inner security ring of up to 30 Black Tigers, the rebels' suicide commandos. He, like many of his fighters, is said to wear a cyanide vial around his neck to kill himself if captured.

Capturing or killing him could plunge the rebels into disarray. But Jehan Perera, a Sri Lankan political analyst, says much more will be needed before Sri Lanka is fully at peace.

"Ultimately, this is a conflict between the two largest communities that live on this island and that is not resolved," he said.

Load-Date: January 11, 2009

Sri Lanka says rebel group is on brink of defeat

Deseret Morning News (Salt Lake City)

January 11, 2009 Sunday

Copyright 2009 The Deseret News Publishing Co.

Length: 1417 words

Byline: Ravi Nessman/Associated Press

Body

COLOMBO, Sri Lanka -- When Hamilton Wanasinghe was Sri Lanka's military chief in the early 1990s, he tried to buy desperately needed weapons from Russia to fight the Tamil Tiger rebels. Money was so short he offered to trade crates of tea for arms.

The Sri Lankan treasury rejected the deal, Wanasinghe says. Then, three years ago, a new president took office and the coffers burst open.

Military recruitment swelled, training improved and hundreds of millions of dollars were spent on new hardware to crush the rebels and end a civil war that has lasted 25 years and killed more than 70,000 people on this teardrop-shaped island off India's southern tip.

"The sky is the limit. Whatever the country can afford, they get," Wanasinghe said.

Senior officials, analysts, diplomats and former military officers say President Mahinda Rajapaksa's commitment to the fight -- coupled with a string of miscalculations by the **Tamil Tigers** -- has brought one of the world's most sophisticated rebel groups to the brink of defeat.

In recent weeks, government forces have broken through the rebels' front lines, forced them out of much of their de facto state in the north and cornered them in a shrinking pocket of northeastern jungle.

Top officials predict the imminent demise of the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam and its dream of creating a breakaway state for the country's ethnic Tamil minority in the north and east.

If Sri Lanka succeeds, it could signal the end of one of Asia's most persistent and bloody insurgencies. But a lasting peace will depend on whether the 75 percent Sinhalese majority on the island of 20 million people can come to a political compromise with the Tamils.

The Tamils have long felt the government, dominated by the Sinhalese, has discriminated against them, their culture and their language.

Rajapaksa has said he would seek a political resolution to the ethnic conflict once the rebels were destroyed. But Sinhalese nationalist politicians have already said that with victory in sight there was no need for the sort of power-sharing arrangement seen as crucial to placating the Tamils and preventing a new outbreak of violence.

By some estimates, the retreating rebels still have as many as 10,000 hardcore cadres and another 10,000 reservists still ready to fight.

Sri Lanka says rebel group is on brink of defeat

Iqbal Athas, a military analyst for Jane's Defense Weekly, cautions against declaring an early victory. "The war is not yet over," he said. "It could be protracted."

Some of the insurgents could take off their uniforms, blend in with the mass of civilians still living in their stronghold and fight on as guerrillas, said Austin Fernando, a former defense secretary.

The war that led to the murder of a former Indian prime minister erupted in 1983 after a rebel ambush in the northern Tamil city of Jaffna killed 13 soldiers. Vengeful Sinhalese mobs rampaged through Colombo, the capital 190 miles to the south, leaving more than 2,000 Tamils dead, according to human rights groups.

The army of about 40,000 was unprepared for the brutal fighting that ensued, said Wanasinghe.

"Our army was mainly for containing internal unrest. It was not trained for war," the ex-military chief said.

It soon realized that the rebels, with their rocket-propelled grenades and makeshift armored tractors, were better armed than the troops, he said. The air force was reduced to bombing the rebels with barrels of explosives rolled out the doors of transport planes, he said.

Over time, the violence would spike and ebb. India, with its own sympathetic Tamil community, sent in peacekeepers in 1987, but they soon became targets of the rebels and left in 1990. The following year, Rajiv Gandhi, who as Indian prime minister had ordered in the peacekeepers, was killed by a Tamil Tiger **female** suicide bomber in southern India.

Hoping to limit casualties and the mounting expense of the war, Sri Lankan governments vacillated between fighting and seeking peace, with different officials in the same government often working at cross purposes, said Fernando. And while the military did its best to get new equipment and modernize -- buying fighter jets and attack boats -- it never was properly funded, he said.

Norwegian mediators brokered a cease-fire in 2002. But in 2005 Rajapaksa was elected president and after a brief stab at peace talks, he committed himself to all-out war. A year ago, he withdrew from the cease-fire.

A recruitment drive expanded troop levels by 40 percent, Defense Secretary Gotabhaya Rajapaksa said, and the defense budget hit a record \$1.6 billion.

In previous administrations "the soldiers were getting mixed signals," said Rajapaksa, who is the president's brother. "Here there was no ambiguity in the aim. It was very clear: destroy the **LTTE**. That was clear from the first day to the last day."

"We had a plan. We knew what strength we needed. We knew what equipment we needed ... We gave those to the commanders so the commanders had greater flexibility."

The government ignored international pressure to restart peace efforts and shrugged off accusations from human rights groups that it sanctioned extrajudicial killings, allowed paramilitaries to run amok and disregarded the safety of civilians.

Rights groups also accused the rebels -- listed as a terror group by the U.S. and European Union -- of forcibly conscripting child soldiers and holding the civilian population under their control hostage.

The government barred independent media from the war zone and underreported its casualties, allowing it to suffer huge casualties without losing public support for the war, said several diplomats, who spoke on condition of anonymity because they were not authorized to speak to the media.

As the war neared its apex last year, the government forced aid workers -- the last independent witnesses -- out of rebel-held areas.

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Rebel leader Velupillai Prabhakaran had transformed the organization from little more than a street gang in the 1970s into a fearsome guerrilla group that ran a dictatorial regime that ruled a wide swath of the north, with its own police, courts and customs department.

The rebels dug in effectively, deployed heavy artillery, established a significant naval wing and a rudimentary air force that once bombed Colombo's international airport. It raised up to \$300 million a year from a network of fake charities and international smuggling of arms, drugs and possibly even people, according to Jane's Intelligence Review.

At the same time, Prabhakaran molded a suicide cult blamed for more than 240 attacks.

He managed to parry many of the government's battlefield successes. When government forces captured the city of Jaffna in 1995, the rebels the following year overran an army base in Mullaittivu, 60 miles away, killing 1,200 troops.

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Load-Date: January 11, 2009

Sri Lanka has rejected its basic responsibilities

Ottawa Citizen

January 9, 2009 Friday

Final Edition

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Section: NEWS; Pg. A13

Length: 937 words

Byline: Robert Muggah, The Ottawa Citizen

Body

Sri Lanka is in the grips of a major humanitarian crisis. The resumption of all-out war between the nationalist government of Mahinda Rajapaksa and the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (***LTTE***) has killed thousands of civilians and forcibly uprooted hundreds of thousands more from their homes. Much to the government's irritation, aid agencies have described conditions on the ground as similar to those in Somalia.

The defence ministry claims that its soldiers are laying waste to key rebel bases where the Tigers have concentrated their forces. If ministry statements are to be believed, the capture of the Tiger strongholds in the Vanni and Jaffna districts is "imminent." But behind each declaration of military victory are tragic stories of human suffering, eroding civil freedoms, and the deepening of Tamil angst at home and abroad.

The real scale of bloodshed in the north of the country is not known. The New York-based Genocide Prevention Project recently added Sri Lanka to a list of "red alert" countries. But the fact is that few journalists, let alone human rights monitors, are permitted to report above the war zones in the north. International and domestic newspapers are also routinely censored. Reporters critical of the Rajapaksa government are often harassed and assassinated.

The present Sri Lankan administration is committed to a military victory at any cost. A charitable interpretation of its strategy is that a decisive victory over the ***LTTE*** "terrorists" would pave the way to a meaningful political solution after more than two decades of war. The government is trying hard to convince people that it is winning on the battlefield: its political survival depends on it.

The human and economic cost of military victory -- if it is ever achieved -- will be phenomenal. Civilians are already paying a heavy price. The violent death toll continues to rise; more than 9,000 men, ***women*** and children were killed since the beginning of 2008. Owing to spiralling inflation and unemployment, poverty is deepening across the country.

Meanwhile, the Tigers continue to put up a stiff resistance and routinely perpetrate atrocities of their own. The fiercest resistance is likely yet to come. The insurgents are convinced that soaring government military expenditures will undermine the economy. The Treasury has already warned Sri Lankan parliamentarians that the escalation of war is not a licence to print more money. The International Monetary Fund has grumbled loudly about inflation -- which has been as high as 20 per cent this year.

Sri Lanka has rejected its basic responsibilities

The Tamil Diaspora is increasingly disinterested in resolving the armed conflict. From North America to Western Europe, resentment among expatriate Tamils is growing. Even as India's sizeable Tamil population rallies peacefully behind the Sri Lankan Tamil cause, their frustration is palpable.

Whatever happens next, it is unlikely that the Sri Lankan army will be perceived as anything more than an occupying force in the north of the country. Nor will the insurgents simply fade away after the shooting stops. Even though government-led artillery and deep penetration attacks are weakening their capacities, the Tigers remain a credible insurgency force.

The international community watches on with a sense of déjà-vu. The armed conflict has claimed the lives of more than 75,000 people since 1983, and literally millions have fled abroad as refugees or within Sri Lanka's borders as internally displaced people. Meanwhile, donors have quietly shut down operations in the country. United Nations agencies and humanitarian organizations are also regularly denied access to the sick and wounded.

The outside world is failing to protect civilians in Sri Lanka. But blame cannot be shouldered by foreign governments alone. Development agencies have tried to offer financial carrots to the Sri Lankan government and the LTTE in a bid to end fighting. Having been stung in the past, they are loath to keep trying in vain.

As bad as the situation is, now is not the time for the outside world to turn its back on Sri Lanka. Together with responsible civic leaders, the Sri Lankan government should be encouraged to craft a meaningful political solution. Much-needed constitutional reform, the resumption of the All Party Conference and the promotion of basic religious, education, and language rights are a starting point. Unfortunately, there does not appear to be much will to resume negotiations.

The Sri Lankan government would do well to craft a Marshall-style aid package for social and economic reconstruction in the north and east. This would mean assembling the country's brightest minds and designing a comprehensive strategy that starts without delay. In the current political climate, however, such a plan may not be seen as credible. The majority Sinhalese population and the all-important Buddhist clergy would likely interpret such "concessions" with outright derision.

The international aid community could also review its overall support to the Sri Lankan government, including preferential trade arrangements. Until meaningful progress is made on dealing with basic minority grievances, donors might also consider withholding certain forms of financial assistance.

The untied provision of aid dollars has allowed the government to shirk its fundamental responsibilities to protect. Unless the Sri Lankan government assumes its basic responsibilities, this war will surely continue without end.

Robert Muggah is affiliated with the Graduate Institute of International and

Development Studies (Geneva) and is the author of *Relocation Failures in Sri Lanka*

(Zed Books, 2008).

Graphic

Photo: Buddhika Weerasinghe, Reuters; Government soldiers guard a road in northern Sri Lanka. ;

Load-Date: January 9, 2009

Sri Lanka says rebel group on brink of defeat

Associated Press Online

January 10, 2009 Saturday 9:29 PM GMT

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Section: INTERNATIONAL NEWS

Length: 1408 words

Byline: By RAVI NESSMAN, Associated Press Writer

Dateline: COLOMBO Sri Lanka

Body

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The Sri Lankan treasury rejected the deal, Wanasinghe says. Then, three years ago, a new president took office and the coffers burst open.

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Senior officials, analysts, diplomats and former military officers say President Mahinda Rajapaksa's commitment to the fight coupled with a string of miscalculations by the **Tamil Tigers** has brought one of the world's most sophisticated rebel groups to the brink of defeat.

In recent weeks, government forces have broken through the rebels' front lines, forced them out of much of their de facto state in the north and cornered them in a shrinking pocket of northeastern jungle.

Top officials predict the imminent demise of the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam and its dream of creating a breakaway state for the country's ethnic Tamil minority in the north and east.

If Sri Lanka succeeds, it could signal the end of one of Asia's most persistent and bloody insurgencies. But a lasting peace will depend on whether the 75 percent Sinhalese majority on the island of 20 million people can come to a political compromise with the Tamils.

The Tamils have long felt the government, dominated by the Sinhalese, has discriminated against them, their culture and their language.

Rajapaksa has said he would seek a political resolution to the ethnic conflict once the rebels were destroyed. But Sinhalese nationalist politicians have already said that with victory in sight there was no need for the sort of power-sharing arrangement seen as crucial to placating the Tamils and preventing a new outbreak of violence.

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By some estimates, the retreating rebels still have as many as 10,000 hardcore cadres and another 10,000 reservists still ready to fight.

Iqbal Athas, a military analyst for Jane's Defense Weekly, cautions against declaring an early victory. "The war is not yet over," he said. "It could be protracted."

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The war that led to the murder of a former Indian prime minister erupted in 1983 after a rebel ambush in the northern Tamil city of Jaffna killed 13 soldiers. Vengeful Sinhalese mobs rampaged through Colombo, the capital 190 miles to the south, leaving more than 2,000 Tamils dead, according to human rights groups.

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Over time, the violence would spike and ebb. India, with its own sympathetic Tamil community, sent in peacekeepers in 1987, but they soon became targets of the rebels and left in 1990. The following year, Rajiv Gandhi, who as Indian prime minister had ordered in the peacekeepers, was killed by a Tamil Tiger **female** suicide bomber in southern India.

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In previous administrations "the soldiers were getting mixed signals," said Rajapaksa, who is the president's brother. "Here there was no ambiguity in the aim. It was very clear: destroy the **LTTE**. That was clear from the first day to the last day."

"We had a plan. We knew what strength we needed. We knew what equipment we needed ... We gave those to the commanders so the commanders had greater flexibility."

The government ignored international pressure to restart peace efforts and shrugged off accusations from human rights groups that it sanctioned extrajudicial killings, allowed paramilitaries to run amok and disregarded the safety of civilians.

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Load-Date: January 11, 2009

Sri Lankan jets attack suicide bombers' camp

Associated Press International

October 10, 2008 Friday 6:40 AM GMT

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Section: INTERNATIONAL NEWS

Length: 454 words

Byline: By BHARATHA MALLAWARACHI, Associated Press Writer

Dateline: COLOMBO Sri Lanka

Body

Sri Lankan fighter jets pounded a Tamil Tiger suicide bombers' camp deep in the embattled north on Friday, a day after a suicide attack blamed on the rebels killed two people and wounded five near the capital, the military said.

The airstrike on the camp for the suicide bombers, known as Black Tigers, in the rebel stronghold of Kilinochchi came during an intensified government offensive against the guerrillas' de facto state in the north. Officials have pledged to crush the rebels by the end of the year.

Also Friday, air force jets bombed a guerrilla communication center and hide-out used by senior rebel leaders in Kilinochchi, said air force spokesman Wing Commander Janaka Nanayakkara.

He said pilots confirmed the attacks were successful, but details of damage and casualties were not immediately available.

On Thursday, a suspected rebel suicide bomber blew herself up near a convoy carrying a senior Sri Lankan Cabinet minister, killing two bystanders and wounding the minister's deputy.

Maithripala Sirisena, the agricultural development minister, was not hurt in the blast in Boralwegamuwa, about nine miles (15 kilometers) from the capital, Colombo, military spokesman Brig. Udaya Nanayakkara said.

Sirisena's junior minister, Siripala Gamlath, was wounded, Nanayakkara said, blaming *Tamil Tigers* for the blast.

On Monday, a suicide blast blamed on the rebels killed a former army general, Janaka Perera, and 26 others in the northern town of Anuradhapura.

The rebels, banned as a terrorist group in the United States and European Union, did not comment on the suicide attacks or the air force bombings.

The rebels, who are blamed for more than 240 suicide bombings against military, political and economic targets, routinely deny involvement in such attacks.

The rebels have often used *women* to carry out suicide attacks, including the killing of former Indian Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi at an election rally in 1991.

Sri Lankan jets attack suicide bombers' camp

Fighting has escalated in recent months, with the military capturing a series of rebel bases and large chunks of territory.

Clashes Thursday along the northern front lines killed 11 rebels and two soldiers, according to a military statement.

With nearly all communications to the north severed, rebel spokesmen could not be contacted for comment. Independent verification of the military's claims is nearly impossible because most journalists are banned from the war zone. Both sides routinely exaggerate enemy losses and underreport their own.

The rebels have been fighting since 1983 to create an independent homeland for the country's ethnic minority Tamils, who have faced marginalization by successive governments controlled by ethnic Sinhalese.

More than 70,000 people have been killed in the violence.

Load-Date: October 11, 2008

End of Document

DMK forms state-wide human chain, demands ceasefire in Lanka

UNI (United News of India)

February 21, 2009 Saturday

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Length: 523 words

Dateline: Chennai

Body

Chennai, Feb. 21 -- Youth wing members of the ruling DMK in Tamil Nadu, joined hands to form a human chain, throughout the state this evening, demanding immediate ceasefire in Sri Lanka.

Youth wing Secretary and Local Administration Minister M K Stalin inaugurated the human chain agitation in front of party headquarters, Anna Arivalayam. "We have taken up the peaceful agitation to urge both the sides (Lankan forces and the LTTE) to lay down arms and pave way for immediate ceasefire and return of peace", Mr Stalin said, joining the human chain agitation. The war should stop and atleast the remaining innocent Tamils should be saved, he said. Though the youth wing of the party organised the agitation, women and partymen of all ages participated in the human chain in large numbers. As the partymen were gathering to form the chain, a 60-year-old Sivaparkasam, a party office bearer in Velachery areas, created a flutter, when he suddenly poured kerosene and set himself ablaze, shouting slogans to protect the Lankan Tamils. Fellow partymen put out the fire, using their towels and rushed him to the Kilpauk Medical College hospital. He sustained 75 per cent burns and his condition was critical, Hospital sources said. Soon after ending the human chain agitation, Mr Stalin, accompanied by party Rajya Sabha member and his sister, Kanimozhi visited him at the hospital. Elsewhere in the state, partymen organised human chain rally right from morning, demanding ceasefire. They raised slogans to stop the killing of Tamils and ceasefire. Youth wing members of the ruling DMK in Tamil Nadu, joined hands to form a human chain, throughout the state this evening, demanding immediate ceasefire in Sri Lanka. Youth wing Secretary and Local Administration Minister M K Stalin inaugurated the human chain agitation in front of party headquarters, Anna Arivalayam. "We have taken up the peaceful agitation to urge both the sides (Lankan forces and the LTTE) to lay down arms and pave way for immediate ceasefire and return of peace", Mr Stalin said, joining the human chain agitation. The war should stop and atleast the remaining innocent Tamils should be saved, he said. Though the youth wing of the party organised the agitation, women and partymen of all ages participated in the human chain in large numbers. As the partymen were gathering to form the chain, a 60-year-old Sivaparkasam, a party office bearer in Velachery areas, created a flutter, when he suddenly poured kerosene and set himself ablaze, shouting slogans to protect the Lankan Tamils. Fellow partymen put out the fire, using their towels and rushed him to the Kilpauk Medical College hospital. He sustained 75 per cent burns and his condition was critical, Hospital sources said. Soon after ending the human chain agitation, Mr Stalin, accompanied by party Rajya Sabha member and his sister, Kanimozhi visited him at the hospital. Elsewhere in the state, partymen organised human chain rally right from morning, demanding ceasefire. They raised slogans to stop the killing of Tamils and ceasefire. Published by HT Syndication with permission from United News of India.

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DMK forms state-wide human chain, demands ceasefire in Lanka

Load-Date: March 31, 2009

End of Document

Sport again a terrorist target

Geelong Advertiser (Australia)

March 5, 2009 Thursday

1 - Main Edition

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Section: PERSPECTIVE; Pg. 21

Length: 428 words

Byline: EDITORIAL

Body

NOT since early September, 1972 has sport been hijacked and bloodied to the extent it was outside Gaddafi Stadium in Lahore on Tuesday. Sri Lankan cricketers were injured -- thankfully, not severely -- and eight Pakistani police and security officers were killed when up to 12 terrorist gunmen fired machine guns and grenade launchers at the team bus and security vehicles.

Back in 1972, the Munich Olympics were hijacked by Palestinian terrorists and 11 Israelis died in a hail of gunfire. The Olympics continued but sport was innocent no more.

Sport is not immune to politics and is often one of the biggest tools used by governments. Indeed, there are only three nations which have attended every Olympics -- Australia is one of them -- because of political boycotts.

Australian cricketer Stuart MacGill refused to tour Zimbabwe because of his feelings about the Mugabe Government.

Tuesday's attack by as yet unknown terrorists on the Sri Lankan cricketers' bus has put any sort of sporting visit to the sub-continent in jeopardy and has sentenced Pakistan to expulsion from the international cricket circuit.

If the aim of the attack was to embarrass Pakistani officials then it has succeeded brilliantly. Previous evidence of unrest had forced an Australian tour of Pakistan to be rescheduled to Abu Dhabi and Dubai, a world Twenty/20 domestic championship was called off and New Zealand was quick to cancel its tour in the wake of Tuesday's terror.

There is a bigger picture and that is what it means for international sport as a whole. September 11 proved no one going about their normal daily routine is safe against those who place no value on human life. Not just cricket teams but soccer teams, hockey teams, golfers and athletes will all have to think twice before they commit to competing in the sub-continent for, make no mistake, it is not just Pakistan that provides the danger. Sri Lanka has its decades-old problem with the **Tamil Tigers** and the bombing in Mumbai just three months ago which cost more than 160 lives is evidence India is not in a position to make any guarantees.

Perhaps Tuesday's security was inadequate and no doubt an inquiry will decide that but, significantly, Sri Lanka team management had not requested any upgrading of security since the tour began.

Sport again a terrorist target

Cricket has become the first target and not just a tool. Tuesday's bloody incident has proved sport is no longer safe and attackers can target sportsmen and women to advance their own vested interest.

Which will be the next sport to become the terrorists' means to justify their ends?

Load-Date: March 4, 2009

End of Document

17 killed, 45 injured in suicide explosion in Sri Lanka 17 killed, 45 injured in suicide explosion in Sri Lanka

Xinhua General News Service

February 9, 2009 Monday 8:41 PM EST

Copyright 2009 Xinhua News Agency

Section: WORLD NEWS; Political

Length: 187 words

Dateline: COLOMBO Feb. 9

Body

At least 17 people were killed and 45 others injured when a **female** suicide bomber from the **Tamil Tigers** blew herself at an refugee rescue center in northern Sri Lanka Monday morning, the military said.

Officials from the Ministry of Defense said the explosion occurred at the North of Visuamadu in Mullaittivu at around 11:30 a.m. local time (0600 GMT)

Both military personnel and civilians were among the casualties, said the officials.

Military spokesman Udaya Nanayakkara said he is still checking the exact number of casualties of the explosion.

Security forces immediately cordoned off the area, while medical units were rushed to the site.

The Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (**LTTE**) has lost most of its strongholds as a result of the government's military offensive started in July 2006.

Claiming discrimination at the hands of Sinhalese dominated governments, the **LTTE** has been fighting for more than two decades to carve out a Tamil homeland in the north and east for the minority Tamils.

More than 70,000 people have been killed so far in Asia's longest civil war.

Load-Date: February 10, 2009

Restoring justice in post conflict areas

Daily News (Sri Lanka)

February 20, 2009 Friday

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Length: 579 words

Dateline: Colombo

Body

Colombo, Feb. 20 -- "Work for Justice ,Peace will result" is the vision of the Legal Aid Commission. Discrimination and deprivation of equal access to justice to all citizens in any country give rise to oppression and disputes some time resulting in fratricidal armed conflicts.

During armed conflicts, justice evaporates depriving the ordinary people with any semblance of human security. The elderly, women and children suffer the most, as they are the most vulnerable sections of society. All vestiges of human dignity vanish and rehabilitation of affected war victims confronts many of the conflict prone countries. The Legal Aid Commission, the primary provider of legal aid to deserving persons in Sri Lanka as an independent humanitarian Commission which has made continuous efforts to provide legal aid to the poor persons in the conflict affected areas throughout the conflict period. Lawyers from the North and East continued to be active members of the Bar Association of Sri Lanka throughout the troubled period with periods of dismantled court system. The Legal Aid Commission maintained centers in Jaffna, Vavunia, Trincomalee and Batticaloa even at the height of the troubled times when many courts were closed down. Even though few members of the legal profession in the Northern and Eastern Provinces migrated to greener pastures exploiting asylum procedures, many committed lawyers stayed behind with their flock of clients tending to their numerous legal needs. The BASL should fittingly acknowledge the professional and ethical commitment of these lawyer heroes. In 2002, the BASL with the support of the UNHCR launched a comprehensive legal empowerment program specially targetting the Internally Displaced Persons, returnees and the affected population in general. The program provided mobile legal aid to IDP camps and assisted the displaced with documentation and property disputes. The complicated power structure on the ground where the militant groups sometimes countermanded regular judicial process hampered the smooth working of these legal aid programmes. Despite the brave efforts of few individual members of the judiciary, the regular court sytems in the confclit areas ceased to function. The LTTE estbalished their own courts in areas under their control and applied a hybrid half baked legal system of their own making. The task before the remnaing legal community in former confclit areas for restoration of easy access to justice is vital to reestablish at least a modicum of human security. The Magistrate's Courts in Kilinochchi and Mullaitivu which were replaced by LTTE Kangaroo courts need to be refurbished and restored at the earliest. The northern population which historically produced eminent lawyers and legal thinkers of national and international standing should be provided secure conditions to restore their former condition. The Tamil Diaspora totaling over one million living successful lives in the western countries, abandoning their country of origin, could be encouraged to invest to uplift the shattered lives of their brethern who were left behind. After all the global software dominance of southern India was steered by the national minded young Indian diaspora who reached key positions in the USA. The restoration of judicial infrastructure is a priority requirement to restore a resemblance of the rule of law after a 25 year lawless period. Published by HT Syndication with permission from Daily News Sri Lanka.

Restoring justice in post conflict areas

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

Load-Date: April 1, 2009

End of Document

The AFP Asia news agenda

Agence France Presse -- English

November 15, 2008 Saturday 8:55 PM GMT

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Length: 505 words

Dateline: HONG KONG, Nov 16 2008

Body

Duty Editor: Huw Griffith

News Desk +852 2829 6211

ASIA NEWS HIGHLIGHTS ON SUNDAY

+ G20 pledges action to reverse recession.

WASHINGTON: Full coverage as Asian leaders and counterparts in the G20 pledge action to reverse a looming global recession and prevent future financial upheaval (FINANCE-ECONOMY-G20-SUMMIT)

-- OTHER STORIES --

BANGKOK: Reporting on third day of the funeral of Thailand's late Princess Galyani, elder sister of the revered king. Ceremonial collection of remains following cremation set to begin at 0100 GMT (THAILAND-ROYALS-FUNERAL-CULTURE)

BEIJING: Reporting on government efforts to boost China's economy amid the global crisis, after it announced a half-trillion-dollar stimulus plan. (FINANCE-ECONOMY-CHINA)

-- Monitoring for Beijing's response to hijacking of Chinese fishing boat off Kenya (CHINA-KENYA-SOMALI-UNREST-PIRACY)

COLOMBO: Reporting after Sri Lanka's president asks *Tamil Tigers* to surrender after troops claimed to have recaptured a strategically important town from rebels following months of heavy fighting (SRILANKA-UNREST)

DHAKA: Monitoring political developments in Bangladesh just five weeks before the emergency-ruled country holds its first elections in nearly two years (BANGLADESH-POLITICS)

-- Moving item on regeneration of the world's largest mangrove forest a year after it was hit by a devastating cyclone (BANGLADESH-CYCLONE-ENVIRONMENT-SUNDARBANS)

The AFP Asia news agenda

HANOI: Moving a story on Vietnam's economic challenges as it seeks to stimulate a flagging economy while keeping rampant inflation under control (VIETNAM-ECONOMY)

ISLAMABAD: Monitoring Taliban-linked unrest in Pakistan's rugged northwestern tribal belt bordering Afghanistan (PAKISTAN-UNREST)

NEW DELHI: Monitoring ahead of the start of seven-stage state elections in disputed Indian Kashmir on Monday (INDIA-KASHMIR-VOTE)

-- Monitoring developments ahead of a meeting starting on Monday gathering over 500 leading Tibetan exiles in the Indian northern hill station of Dharamshala that could radically alter the course of their decades-old struggle against Chinese rule in Tibet (INDIA-TIBET-CHINA-DIPLOMACY)

-- Reporting start of India World Economic Forum (INDIA-MEETING-ECONOMY-WEF)

-- Moving item on identity politics stoking fear in Mumbai (INDIA-POLITICS)

-- Moving item on Kashmir set to vote as politicians urge boycott (INDIA-KASHMIR-VOTE)

SEOUL: Following after North Korea escalates threats against Seoul's government with a vow to close the border (NKOREA-SKOREA-POLITICS-RELATIONS)

-- Monitoring after North Korea said it had never agreed to allow samples to be taken from nuclear facilities as part of six-nation efforts to scrap its nuclear weapons programme (NKOREA-NUCLEAR-SKOREA)

SYDNEY: Rugby League World Cup Semi-final, Australia v Fiji, in Sydney (RUGBYL-WC2008-AUS-FIJ)

TAIPEI: Monitoring situation after Taiwan's former president Chen Shui-bian stops eating in protest at his detention in a corruption probe (TAIWAN-POLITICS-CORRUPTION-CHEN)

TOKYO: Athletics: Tokyo International Women's Marathon. (ATHLETICS-JPN-MARATHON)

afp

Load-Date: November 16, 2008

Sri Lanka says rebel group on brink of defeat

The Associated Press

January 10, 2009 Saturday

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Section: INTERNATIONAL NEWS

Length: 1408 words

Byline: By RAVI NESSMAN, Associated Press Writer

Dateline: COLOMBO, Sri Lanka

Body

When Hamilton Wanasinghe was Sri Lanka's military chief in the early 1990s, he tried to buy desperately needed weapons from Russia to fight the Tamil Tiger rebels. Money was so short he offered to trade crates of tea for arms.

The Sri Lankan treasury rejected the deal, Wanasinghe says. Then, three years ago, a new president took office and the coffers burst open.

Military recruitment swelled, training improved and hundreds of millions of dollars were spent on new hardware to crush the rebels and end a civil war that has lasted 25 years and killed more than 70,000 people on this teardrop-shaped island off India's southern tip.

"The sky is the limit. Whatever the country can afford, they get," Wanasinghe said.

Senior officials, analysts, diplomats and former military officers say President Mahinda Rajapaksa's commitment to the fight coupled with a string of miscalculations by the **Tamil Tigers** has brought one of the world's most sophisticated rebel groups to the brink of defeat.

In recent weeks, government forces have broken through the rebels' front lines, forced them out of much of their de facto state in the north and cornered them in a shrinking pocket of northeastern jungle.

Top officials predict the imminent demise of the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam and its dream of creating a breakaway state for the country's ethnic Tamil minority in the north and east.

If Sri Lanka succeeds, it could signal the end of one of Asia's most persistent and bloody insurgencies. But a lasting peace will depend on whether the 75 percent Sinhalese majority on the island of 20 million people can come to a political compromise with the Tamils.

The Tamils have long felt the government, dominated by the Sinhalese, has discriminated against them, their culture and their language.

Rajapaksa has said he would seek a political resolution to the ethnic conflict once the rebels were destroyed. But Sinhalese nationalist politicians have already said that with victory in sight there was no need for the sort of power-sharing arrangement seen as crucial to placating the Tamils and preventing a new outbreak of violence.

Sri Lanka says rebel group on brink of defeat

By some estimates, the retreating rebels still have as many as 10,000 hardcore cadres and another 10,000 reservists still ready to fight.

Iqbal Athas, a military analyst for Jane's Defense Weekly, cautions against declaring an early victory. "The war is not yet over," he said. "It could be protracted."

Some of the insurgents could take off their uniforms, blend in with the mass of civilians still living in their stronghold and fight on as guerrillas, said Austin Fernando, a former defense secretary.

The war that led to the murder of a former Indian prime minister erupted in 1983 after a rebel ambush in the northern Tamil city of Jaffna killed 13 soldiers. Vengeful Sinhalese mobs rampaged through Colombo, the capital 190 miles to the south, leaving more than 2,000 Tamils dead, according to human rights groups.

The army of about 40,000 was unprepared for the brutal fighting that ensued, said Wanasinghe.

"Our army was mainly for containing internal unrest. It was not trained for war," the ex-military chief said.

It soon realized that the rebels, with their rocket-propelled grenades and makeshift armored tractors, were better armed than the troops, he said. The air force was reduced to bombing the rebels with barrels of explosives rolled out the doors of transport planes, he said.

Over time, the violence would spike and ebb. India, with its own sympathetic Tamil community, sent in peacekeepers in 1987, but they soon became targets of the rebels and left in 1990. The following year, Rajiv Gandhi, who as Indian prime minister had ordered in the peacekeepers, was killed by a Tamil Tiger ***female*** suicide bomber in southern India.

Hoping to limit casualties and the mounting expense of the war, Sri Lankan governments vacillated between fighting and seeking peace, with different officials in the same government often working at cross purposes, said Fernando. And while the military did its best to get new equipment and modernize buying fighter jets and attack boats it never was properly funded, he said.

Norwegian mediators brokered a cease-fire in 2002. But in 2005 Rajapaksa was elected president and after a brief stab at peace talks, he committed himself to all-out war. A year ago, he withdrew from the cease-fire.

A recruitment drive expanded troop levels by 40 percent, Defense Secretary Gotabhaya Rajapaksa said, and the defense budget hit a record \$1.6 billion.

In previous administrations "the soldiers were getting mixed signals," said Rajapaksa, who is the president's brother. "Here there was no ambiguity in the aim. It was very clear: destroy the ***LTTE***. That was clear from the first day to the last day."

"We had a plan. We knew what strength we needed. We knew what equipment we needed ... We gave those to the commanders so the commanders had greater flexibility."

The government ignored international pressure to restart peace efforts and shrugged off accusations from human rights groups that it sanctioned extrajudicial killings, allowed paramilitaries to run amok and disregarded the safety of civilians.

Rights groups also accused the rebels listed as a terror group by the U.S. and European Union of forcibly conscripting child soldiers and holding the civilian population under their control hostage.

The government barred independent media from the war zone and underreported its casualties, allowing it to suffer huge casualties without losing public support for the war, said several diplomats, who spoke on condition of anonymity because they were not authorized to speak to the media.

Sri Lanka says rebel group on brink of defeat

As the war neared its apex last year, the government forced aid workers the last independent witnesses out of rebel-held areas.

Rebel leader Velupillai Prabhakaran had transformed the organization from little more than a street gang in the 1970s into a fearsome guerrilla group that ran a dictatorial regime that ruled a wide swath of the north, with its own police, courts and customs department.

The rebels dug in effectively, deployed heavy artillery, established a significant naval wing and a rudimentary air force that once bombed Colombo's international airport. It raised up to \$300 million a year from a network of fake charities and international smuggling of arms, drugs and possibly even people, according to Jane's Intelligence Review.

At the same time, Prabhakaran molded a suicide cult blamed for more than 240 attacks.

He managed to parry many of the government's battlefield successes. When government forces captured the city of Jaffna in 1995, the rebels the following year overran an army base in Mullaittivu, 60 miles away, killing 1,200 troops.

But Prabhakaran was making costly errors, analysts said.

Gandhi's assassination alienated Prabhakaran's strongest allies in India.

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

In 2004, a top commander known as Col. Karuna ran afoul of the Tiger leadership and defected to the government side with thousands of his fighters.

Prabhakaran then called a Tamil boycott of the 2005 presidential election, which helped propel the hard-line Rajapaksa to victory.

After new peace talks failed, the rebels cut off the water supply to more than 60,000 people in the east, provoking the latest government offensive.

With Karuna helping the government, the military was able to capture the east in July 2007. Then it turned its attention to the north and forced the rebels into a broad retreat.

Now the rebels are huddled in the northeastern jungles along with hundreds of thousands of civilians, many of them war refugees living in makeshift shelters.

Military officials believe Prabhakaran is hiding there, protected by hundreds of fighters and an inner security ring of up to 30 Black Tigers, the rebels' suicide commandos. He, like many of his fighters, is said to wear a cyanide vial around his neck to kill himself if captured.

Capturing or killing him could plunge the rebels into disarray. But Jehan Perera, a Sri Lankan political analyst, says much more will be needed before Sri Lanka is fully at peace.

"Ultimately, this is a conflict between the two largest communities that live on this island and that is not resolved," he said.

Load-Date: January 11, 2009

LTTE kills civilians

Daily News (Sri Lanka)

February 23, 2009 Monday

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Length: 152 words

Dateline: Colombo

Body

Colombo, Feb. 23 -- **LTTE** terrorists showcasing their ruthlessness and wildness, on Saturday stormed a village on the Bibile-Ampara main road, killing 15 innocent civilians and injuring more than 20. Four women and a child were among the victims.

According to Police spokesman SSP Ranjith Gunasekera, this group of **LTTE** terrorists had opened indiscriminate fire on innocent farmers and their families who were engaged in chena cultivation in Kirimetiya, Rathmalagaha Ella in the Iginiyagala Police division at around 3.30 p.m on Saturday. Ampara General Hospital sources yesterday confirmed that four children including two infants and five others who sustained serious injuries were admitted to the hospital. The Security Forces jointly with the Police and the STF have launched a massive search operation in search of perpetrators in the areas. Published by HT Syndication with permission from Daily News Sri Lanka.

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

Load-Date: April 1, 2009

The 1500 GMT News Advisory

Agence France Presse -- English

January 3, 2008 Thursday 3:13 PM GMT

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Length: 481 words

Dateline: PARIS, Jan 3 2008

Body

Duty Editor: Giles Hewitt

Tel: (33) 1 4041 4586

-- TOP STORIES --

- + Kenyan police clash with protestors
- + Musharraf 'unsatisfied' with Bhutto probe
- + First showdown in White House race
- + Israel strikes Gaza, nine dead

Kenya-vote-unrest,5thlead-WRAP

NAIROBI

Kenyan police use tear gas and water cannon to prevent a mass protest rally by opposition leader Raila Odinga, as Europe and the United States push for a unity government to guide the country out of its current crisis.

750 words 1630 GMT by Francois Ausseill. Picture, video, graphic

Pakistan-attacks-Bhutto,3rdlead-WRAP

ISLAMABAD

Pakistan President Pervez Musharraf says he is "not fully satisfied" with the probe into the assassination of opposition leader Benazir Bhutto's death, reacting to reports that the murder scene was quickly hosed down.

700 words 1745 GMT by Danny Kemp. Picture. Graphic

The 1500 GMT News Advisory

US-vote-2008,3rdlead

DES MOINES, Iowa

White House hopefuls launch a final blitz to mobilize support for the too-close-to-call Iowa caucuses in the first electoral showdown of the longest, most gruelling US presidential race in history.

750 words 1515 GMT by Stephen Collinson. Picture.

Mideast-conflict,6thlead-WRAP

GAZA CITY

Nine Palestinians, including two women, are killed in Israeli ground and air bombardments in Gaza, medical sources say, in the latest blitz against the Hamas-ruled territory.

700 words 1530 GMT by Adel Zaanoun. Picture

FILING PLANS BY REGION

-- AMERICAS --

US-vote-2008-caucus

DES MOINES, Iowa

Iowa's caucuses are a quirky, complicated system of picking presidential candidates, but the first state contest of the 2008 White House race can launch a lagging candidate to the front of the pack.

500 words 1630 GMT by Alain Jean-Robert. Picture

UN-Libya-diplomacy

UNITED NATIONS

Once treated as a pariah state by the West, Libya seals its international respectability by taking over the presidency of the UN Security Council this month and securing a Washington visit by its foreign minister.

650 words 1800 GMT

-- MIDEAST --

Saudi-media-Internet-politics

DUBAI

Saudi Internet bloggers are campaigning for the release of their most famous colleague, arrested last month after notoriously slamming religious extremism and demanding political reforms in the ultra-conservative Muslim kingdom.

600 words 1700 GMT by Habib Trabelsi.

-- ASIA --

SriLanka-unrest,4thlead-WRAP

COLOMBO

The 1500 GMT News Advisory

Heavy fighting between government troops and **Tamil Tigers** breaks out in northern Sri Lanka, hours after Colombo announced it was pulling out of a tattered ceasefire agreement with the rebels.

650 words 1545 GMT by Amal Jayasinghe. Picture. Graphic

Pakistan-attacks-Bhutto-Musharraf-ICG,lead

ISLAMABAD

President Pervez Musharraf must quit if Pakistan is to regain stability in the wake of the assassination of opposition leader Benazir Bhutto, a think-tank says.

540 words moved by Arthur MacMillan

We have also moved: Pakistan-attacks-Bhutto-probe,ANALYSIS

afp

Load-Date: January 4, 2008

End of Document

MORAN PENS RICE AND CLINTON ON HUMAN RIGHTS IN SRI LANKA

States News Service

March 11, 2009 Wednesday

Copyright 2009 States News Service

Length: 1164 words

Byline: States News Service

Dateline: WASHINGTON

Body

The following information was released by the office of Virginia Rep. Jim Moran:

Congressman Jim Moran, Virginia Democrat, has organized a bipartisan Congressional effort calling for U.S. and international action to confront the grave humanitarian crisis in northern Sri Lanka. Over 200,000 civilians are trapped in the Vanni region of northern Sri Lanka amid fighting between Sri Lankan Government forces and the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (**Tamil Tigers**).

Rep. Moran sent letters, signed by 35 House Members, to both Secretary of State Hillary Clinton and U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations Susan Rice urging the State Department to use all its leverage to press for emergency civilian relief, safe passage from the conflict zone, and political reconciliation between ethnic Tamils and Sinhalese in Sri Lanka.

The crisis in Sri Lanka demands attention and action by all of us who care about human rights, said Moran. We simply cannot look away when hundreds of thousands of lives are threatened.

Members of Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch and non-governmental groups focused on Sri Lanka praised Rep. Moran for his leadership in the Congress on the Sri Lankan crisis.

We thank Congressman Moran for his leadership to help end Sri Lanka's crisis, said Tasha Manoranjan, Advocacy Director of People for Equality and Relief in Lanka (PEARL). We deeply appreciate his support on this issue and his speaking out on behalf of civilians suffering in Sri Lanka.

Moran continued, The attacks against civilians by the Sri Lankan Government and the **Tamil Tigers** should be condemned. Specific attention should be paid to the dire conditions and lack of security at detention camps where Tamil civilians have been evacuated.

Moran also organized a State Department briefing on Sri Lanka last week during which his concerns over the humanitarian situation were raised.

March 9, 2009

The Honorable Hillary Clinton

MORAN PENS RICE AND CLINTON ON HUMAN RIGHTS IN SRI LANKA

Secretary of State

U.S. Department of State

2201 C Street, NW

Washington, DC 20520

Dear Madame Secretary:

We write with great concern regarding the grave humanitarian crisis in northern Sri Lanka.

Human rights groups report that up to 200,000 civilians are trapped in the Vanni region, amid fighting between Sri Lankan Government forces and the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam. Most have been cut off from outside food and medical supplies for weeks, and their lives are threatened by the war and their resulting humanitarian needs. Human Rights Watch reports that 2,000 Tamil civilians have been killed since January, and 7,000 civilians have been wounded.

We appreciate the good work of the U.S. Embassy and the State Department, in concert with the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), to arrange delivery of humanitarian aid and to press for protection of noncombatants in northern Sri Lanka. We applaud your recent statement with UK Foreign Secretary David Miliband calling for protection of all noncombatants and provision of increased food and medical supplies to head off further deaths and suffering.

At the same time, given the gravity of the situation, we urge that you call Sri Lankan President Rajapaksa and press for full protection of all civilians, authorization for active involvement by United Nations agencies in humanitarian relief, and progress toward a political settlement that grants ethnic Tamils meaningful participation in national governance and an end to discrimination against them. Your active leadership at this critical time can help save thousands of lives and make progress toward a sustainable political solution to end the horrific cycle of violence in the country. We urge you to continue to condemn all attacks against civilians by the Sri Lankan Government and the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam. Both sides need to establish humanitarian corridors to allow noncombatants to travel freely and to receive humanitarian assistance. All UN agencies and aid workers, as well as journalists and human rights monitors, need to be granted access to the region, and we hope this can be arranged soon. We urge you to encourage the Sri Lankan government to fully investigate and prosecute attacks on journalists.

Also of great concern to us are the conditions in the internment camps set up by the Sri Lankan Government to relocate Tamil civilians from the conflict zone. While providing refuge for noncombatants seeking to flee the violence is clearly a priority, these camps are not adequate to the humanitarian needs of the civilians there.

As Human Rights Watch noted in its Feb. 20 report, these camps are internment centers masquerading as welfare villages where entire families detained in these military-controlled, barbed-wire camps are denied their liberty and freedom of movement. Currently, paramilitaries operate inside the camps, and numerous women, men and children have been attacked or forcibly taken from them, and some remain missing, according to human rights monitors. All civilians in the camps need to be given the freedom either to remain in the camps or to return home when they wish, and to be treated in full accordance with international norms. We believe that the ICRC should continue playing a key role in assisting civilians to leave the conflict zone, while United Nations agencies could assume leadership in helping to administer and to provide security in the camps. We urge you to encourage the United Nations to play this role and the Sri Lankan Government to allow the UN to do so. We urge continued efforts to press other UN Security Council members to bring Sri Lanka's crisis to the agenda of the Security Council.

We also wish to point out that the Genocide Prevention Project considers Sri Lanka one of eight countries on Red Alert a ranking reserved for countries experiencing ongoing or imminent genocide. While some would dispute the legal definitions of genocide at this time, there can be no doubt that ethnic-based violence is widespread in Sri Lanka, and Tamil noncombatants are deliberately victimized by Sri Lankan Government policies.

MORAN PENS RICE AND CLINTON ON HUMAN RIGHTS IN SRI LANKA

Finally, we strongly encourage active U.S. leadership to bring about a long-delayed political settlement to the conflict that will guarantee Tamils full political rights and participation in their governance, and an end to the longstanding ethnic discrimination that has fueled the half-century-long violence. Until the ethnic conflict is substantively addressed, there will not be an enduring end to the conflict. As U.S. and international reconstruction aid is provided to Sri Lanka in the coming months, we urge that the Administration work with other international donors to condition assistance on meaningful participation by Tamils in the government. This is important leverage that the international community possesses, and we believe we should insist on progress toward a just political solution as part of our engagement with Sri Lanka.

We appreciate your attention to this urgent crisis.

Sincerely,

M

James P. Moran

Load-Date: March 11, 2009

End of Document

The 2000 GMT News Advisory

Agence France Presse -- English

January 3, 2008 Thursday 8:14 PM GMT

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Length: 450 words

Dateline: PARIS, Jan 3 2008

Body

Duty Editor: MJ Smith

Tel: (33) 1 4041 4586

-- TOP STORIES --

- + Kenya police clash with protesters
- + Car bomb kills five in Turkey's Kurdish region
- + Iowa voters set to name White House picks
- + Nine killed in new Israeli blitz on Gaza

Kenya-vote-unrest,6thlead-WRAP

NAIROBI

Kenyan police fire tear gas and water cannons to prevent an opposition rally before the country's top legal official calls for an independent probe into the presidential election which has sparked a week of deadly unrest.

750 words 2100 GMT by Francois Ausseill. Graphic, picture, video.

Turkey-Kurds-attacks,5thlead-WRAP

DIYARBAKIR, Turkey

A powerful car bomb explodes near a military base in Diyarbakir, the main city in Turkey's mainly Kurdish southeast, killing five people and wounding about 70 others, officials say.

650 words 2015 GMT by Mahmut Bozarslan. Picture, graphic

The 2000 GMT News Advisory

US-vote-2008,5thlead

DES MOINES, Iowa

White House hopefuls nervously await the judgment of the first voters weighing in on the most intense presidential race in history, in the too-close-to-call Iowa nominating caucuses.

750 words 2130 GMT by Stephen Collinson.

Mideast-conflict,7thlead-WRAP

GAZA CITY

Nine Palestinians, including two women, are killed in Israeli bombardments in the Gaza Strip, medical sources say, in the latest blitz against the Hamas-ruled territory.

775 words moved by Adel Zaanoun. Picture

FILING PLANS BY REGION

-- AMERICAS --

US-vote-2008-caucus,lead

DES MOINES, Iowa

As the world turns to this unpretentious farm state for signs of who might be the next US president, it struggles to follow one of the most bizarre processes on the electoral map.

600 words 2230 GMT

UN-Libya-diplomacy,2ndlead

UNITED NATIONS

Once shunned as a pariah by the West, Libya seals its international respectability by presiding over the UN Security Council this month and securing a Washington visit by its foreign minister.

750 words 2130 GMT by Gerard Aziakou

Commodities-energy-oil-price,4thlead-WRAP

NEW YORK

Oil prices briefly leap back above 100 dollars a barrel in New York on worries about tight supplies and US currency weakness.

550 words 2000 GMT. Graphic

-- ASIA --

Pakistan-attacks-Bhutto,4thlead-WRAP

ISLAMABAD

Pakistan President Pervez Musharraf says there was no government involvement in the assassination of Benazir Bhutto but admits he is unsatisfied with the probe into her death.

700 words moved by Danny Kemp. Picture. Graphic

SriLanka-unrest,4thlead-WRAP

COLOMBO

Heavy fighting between government troops and **Tamil Tigers** breaks out in northern Sri Lanka, hours after Colombo announces it is pulling out of a tattered ceasefire agreement with the rebels.

630 words moved by Amal Jayasinghe. Picture. Graphic

Load-Date: January 4, 2008

End of Document

Forces handover LTTE bodies

Daily Mirror (Sri Lanka)

September 4, 2008 Thursday 3:07 PM EST

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Length: 122 words

Byline: Daily News Sri Lanka

Dateline: Colombo

Body

Colombo, Sept. 4 -- Twenty **LTTE** bodies were handed over to the ICRC by Security Forces on Tuesday at the Omanthai entry/exit point, Military spokesman Brigadier Udaya Nanayakkara said.

The Security Forces handed over bodies of 20 **LTTE** cadres who had been killed in the Wannai battle front. The bodies were handed over to the ICRC at the Omanthai entry/exit point on Tuesday.

"Four bodies of **female** were among the bodies handed over to the ICRC in Vavuniya," the Brigadier said.

The Tiger bodies were recovered by the Security Forces following subsequent search operations after confronting the **LTTE** cadres in Weli Oya, Pallamodai, Trincomalee and Mallavi battlefront.

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

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Load-Date: September 4, 2008

REP. MORAN PENS AMBASSADOR TO U. N. RICE, SECRETARY OF STATE CLINTON ON HUMAN RIGHTS IN SRI LANKA

US Fed News

March 13, 2009 Friday 10:56 PM EST

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Length: 1183 words

Body

WASHINGTON, March 11 -- Rep. Jim Moran, D-Va. (8th CD), issued the following news release:

Congressman Jim Moran, Virginia Democrat, has organized a bipartisan Congressional effort calling for U.S. and international action to confront the grave humanitarian crisis in northern Sri Lanka. Over 200,000 civilians are trapped in the Vanni region of northern Sri Lanka amid fighting between Sri Lankan Government forces and the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (**Tamil Tigers**). Rep. Moran sent letters, signed by 35 House Members, to both Secretary of State Hillary Clinton and U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations Susan Rice urging the State Department to use all its leverage to press for emergency civilian relief, safe passage from the conflict zone, and political reconciliation between ethnic Tamils and Sinhalese in Sri Lanka. "The crisis in Sri Lanka demands attention and action by all of us who care about human rights," said Moran. "We simply cannot look away when hundreds of thousands of lives are threatened." Members of Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch and non-governmental groups focused on Sri Lanka praised Rep. Moran for his leadership in the Congress on the Sri Lankan crisis. "We thank Congressman Moran for his leadership to help end Sri Lanka's crisis," said Tasha Manoranjan, Advocacy Director of People for Equality and Relief in Lanka (PEARL). "We deeply appreciate his support on this issue and his speaking out on behalf of civilians suffering in Sri Lanka." Moran continued, "The attacks against civilians by the Sri Lankan Government and the **Tamil Tigers** should be condemned. Specific attention should be paid to the dire conditions and lack of security at detention camps where Tamil civilians have been evacuated." Moran also organized a State Department briefing on Sri Lanka last week during which his concerns over the humanitarian situation were raised. March 9, 2009 The Honorable Hillary Clinton Secretary of State U.S. Department of State 2201 C Street, NW Washington, DC 20520 Dear Madame Secretary: We write with great concern regarding the grave humanitarian crisis in northern Sri Lanka. Human rights groups report that up to 200,000 civilians are trapped in the Vanni region, amid fighting between Sri Lankan Government forces and the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam. Most have been cut off from outside food and medical supplies for weeks, and their lives are threatened by the war and their resulting humanitarian needs. Human Rights Watch reports that 2,000 Tamil civilians have been killed since January, and 7,000 civilians have been wounded. We appreciate the good work of the U.S. Embassy and the State Department, in concert with the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), to arrange delivery of humanitarian aid and to press for protection of noncombatants in northern Sri Lanka. We applaud your recent statement with UK Foreign Secretary David Miliband calling for protection of all noncombatants and provision of increased food and medical supplies to head off further deaths and suffering. At the same time, given the gravity of the situation, we urge that you call Sri Lankan President Rajapaksa and press for full protection of all civilians, authorization for active involvement by United Nations agencies in humanitarian relief, and progress toward a political settlement that grants ethnic Tamils meaningful participation in national governance and an end to discrimination against them. Your active leadership at this critical time can help save thousands of lives and make progress toward a sustainable political solution to end the horrific cycle of violence in

REP. MORAN PENS AMBASSADOR TO U. N. RICE, SECRETARY OF STATE CLINTON ON HUMAN RIGHTS IN SRI LANKA

the country. We urge you to continue to condemn all attacks against civilians by the Sri Lankan Government and the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam. Both sides need to establish humanitarian corridors to allow noncombatants to travel freely and to receive humanitarian assistance. All UN agencies and aid workers, as well as journalists and human rights monitors, need to be granted access to the region, and we hope this can be arranged soon. We urge you to encourage the Sri Lankan government to fully investigate and prosecute attacks on journalists. Also of great concern to us are the conditions in the internment camps set up by the Sri Lankan Government to relocate Tamil civilians from the conflict zone. While providing refuge for noncombatants seeking to flee the violence is clearly a priority, these camps are not adequate to the humanitarian needs of the civilians there. As Human Rights Watch noted in its Feb. 20 report, these camps are "internment centers masquerading as 'welfare villages'...where entire families detained in these military-controlled, barbed-wire camps are denied their liberty and freedom of movement." Currently, paramilitaries operate inside the camps, and numerous **women**, men and children have been attacked or forcibly taken from them, and some remain missing, according to human rights monitors. All civilians in the camps need to be given the freedom either to remain in the camps or to return home when they wish, and to be treated in full accordance with international norms. We believe that the ICRC should continue playing a key role in assisting civilians to leave the conflict zone, while United Nations agencies could assume leadership in helping to administer and to provide security in the camps. We urge you to encourage the United Nations to play this role and the Sri Lankan Government to allow the UN to do so. We urge continued efforts to press other UN Security Council members to bring Sri Lanka's crisis to the agenda of the Security Council. We also wish to point out that the Genocide Prevention Project considers Sri Lanka one of eight countries on "Red Alert" - a ranking reserved for countries experiencing ongoing or imminent genocide. While some would dispute the legal definitions of genocide at this time, there can be no doubt that ethnic-based violence is widespread in Sri Lanka, and Tamil noncombatants are deliberately victimized by Sri Lankan Government policies. Finally, we strongly encourage active U.S. leadership to bring about a long-delayed political settlement to the conflict that will guarantee Tamils full political rights and participation in their governance, and an end to the longstanding ethnic discrimination that has fueled the half-century-long violence. Until the ethnic conflict is substantively addressed, there will not be an enduring end to the conflict. As U.S. and international reconstruction aid is provided to Sri Lanka in the coming months, we urge that the Administration work with other international donors to condition assistance on meaningful participation by Tamils in the government. This is important leverage that the international community possesses, and we believe we should insist on progress toward a just political solution as part of our engagement with Sri Lanka. We appreciate your attention to this urgent crisis. Sincerely, M James P. Moran

For more information please contact: Sarabjit Jagirdar, Email:- htsyndication@hindustantimes.com

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Load-Date: March 30, 2009

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Sri Lanka conflict returning to cities; Is the military, buoyed by recent successes in the country's north, becoming complacent?

The Toronto Star
April 14, 2008 Monday

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Section: WORLD AND COMMENT; Pg. AA02

Length: 855 words

Byline: Namini Wijedasa, Special to the Star

Dateline: COLOMBO

Body

A senior Sri Lankan minister killed in a suspected Tamil Tiger rebel suicide blast has been buried amid certainty that the country has entered one of its worst phases of conflict - with the fight returning to big cities.

Highways Minister Jeyaraj Fernandopulle, a staunch Catholic and member of the minority Tamil community, died April 6 when a suicide bomber detonated explosives as he was about to flag off a marathon near the bustling city of Gampaha. Fifteen others, including a popular marathon runner and a national athletics coach, were killed while more than 90 people were injured.

President Mahinda Rajapaksa, who said he was grief-stricken at the death of a close political ally, used the assassination to rally support for his war against the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (***LTTE***).

In a message read out at Fernandopulle's funeral last week, Rajapaksa said, "When the lion flag is proudly raised after completing the last battle against the enemy you will undoubtedly rise again under its shade." The lion is the dominating symbol of the Sri Lanka flag and represents the Sinhalese who comprise more than 70 per cent of the population.

It is a strategy that works with the majority Sinhalese who are frustrated by years of bombings and assassinations by Tamil Tiger rebels. One unidentified ***female*** caller to a popular radio show said, "We have had enough of Tiger terrorism. We must strengthen the hands of the president and destroy them once and for all. We don't care about economic woes. Let's finish the war."

Similar opinions have been voiced over television news broadcasts and published in local newspapers. But Rajapaksa's detractors have a different take on the increasing number of explosions in crowded cities and townships.

"The ***LTTE*** is being given the chance to show they are powerful and can do anything in and around Colombo," said Somawansa Amarasinghe, leader of the Marxist People's Liberation Front.

Amarasinghe figures the government, buoyed by apparent military successes in the country's north, has become complacent.

Sri Lanka conflict returning to cities Is the military, buoyed by recent successes in the country's north, becoming complacent?

But is there cause for complacency? With battles raging between the armed forces and Tamil Tiger rebels on at least four fronts in the north, there are swelling casualties on both sides.

The military said soldiers killed at least 73 Tamil Tiger rebels in fighting Saturday along the northern front lines, while the rebels said 30 soldiers were killed in the clashes.

In the meantime, the security establishment is under pressure to protect a plethora of possible targets - including daredevil VIPs.

"There have obviously been no significant military gains made during the latest phase of fighting," says Rohan Edrisinha, an academic with the University of Colombo.

"The north is an entirely different ball game to the east. Capturing the north from the LTTE, which is the government's declared intention, is not as easy as they might have originally thought. Add the prohibitive cost of living on top of that and the government is under a lot of pressure," he said. "The casualty figures also don't look as positive as they were a few months ago," he added. "The signs are that the government is not having things easy on the northern battlefield."

Others point out, however, that the government had never expected it to be easy. Last week, Prime Minister Ratnasiri Wickramanayaka told Parliament that 93 soldiers were killed and 688 wounded during fighting in March alone.

Meanwhile, civilian death tolls are shooting through the roof. According to military statistics, 158 civilians were killed from January to March. But the International Committee of the Red Cross said in a recent statement more than 180 civilians were killed in the first six weeks of 2008 alone. They stressed that civilian casualties in Sri Lanka were reaching "appalling levels".

The government, nevertheless, reiterated its determination to stick this phase out. Speaking at the launch of the Central Bank's 2007 annual report, Rajapaksa said, "the terrorists are sadly mistaken if they think that we could be driven into submission ... far from it, we will be even more determined to wipe out terrorism from this land."

With almost daily attacks on the militants, Sri Lanka is now shopping for weapons and getting them from willing sources. Slovakia has just sold 10,000 military missiles to Sri Lanka while there are indications that other Eastern European countries have been approached. Pakistan has been selling weapons to Sri Lanka for months. And President Hu Jintao on Friday assured Rajapaksa, who was an official visit to China, that his country would "support Sri Lanka in its efforts to counter terrorism."

But some analysts feel the hardware is not enough.

"The key question is the sustainability of the president's gamble," said Paikiasothy Saravanamuttu, executive director of the Center for Policy Alternatives, an independent think-tank. "With the rising cost of living and, with it, the rising cost of war, the challenge that confronts the regime is whether it can politically manage a protracted and intensifying conflict with a high probability of stalemate."

Namini Wijedasa is a freelance journalist

Graphic

Eranga Jayawardena AP A Sri Lankan police commando stands guard outside a funeral parlour after last week's deadly suicide blast at the start of a marathon.

Sri Lanka conflict returning to cities Is the military, buoyed by recent successes in the country's north, becoming complacent?

Load-Date: April 14, 2008

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Sri Lanka fears more civilian attacks as fresh fighting erupts

Agence France Presse -- English

April 26, 2008 Saturday 3:34 PM GMT

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Length: 534 words

Byline: Amal Jayasinghe

Dateline: COLOMBO, April 26 2008

Body

Sri Lanka on Saturday warned of more indiscriminate attacks against civilians as troops launched a new offensive against Tamil separatists a day after a bus bombing killed 26 people.

President Mahinda Rajapakse said Friday's bus bomb attack was the work of the rebel Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) guerrillas who are fighting a major military campaign in the island's north.

The president in a statement warned that the rebels could resort to further bombings and told residents to be more wary.

The Tigers made no comment on the bus bombing, but on Saturday said the military had mounted a fresh assault against rebel positions in the northeastern Weli Oya region.

The Tigers said they were resisting a "large-scale" offensive by troops while military sources said soldiers were making a fresh advance into rebel-held territory.

There was no official word on casualties, but military sources told AFP that four soldiers were killed and many more wounded in long range attacks launched by the Tigers. Rebel casualties were not immediately known.

On Friday, a powerful time-bomb ripped through an overcrowded bus, blowing off its roof, as it pulled out of a terminal into rush-hour traffic on the capital's outskirts.

"Two more passengers died in hospital and the number of people remaining in hospital this morning is 64," a police spokesman said, adding that the death toll had risen to 26.

Grief-stricken relatives thronged two hospitals to claim the dead from the explosion on the bus which was jammed with office workers and schoolchildren returning from private classes.

Among those killed were a 10-year-old boy, a Buddhist monk and eight women.

Police rounded up several people and held them for questioning following the blast, a local police official said, adding that there had been no breakthrough in the case.

Sri Lanka fears more civilian attacks as fresh fighting erupts

"The president deplored the LTTE bomb attack on a packed bus in Piliyandala, saying terrorists had once again resorted to killing innocent civilians in the face of heavy setbacks in the battlefield," Rajapakse's office said.

The bombing was the "latest in a series of indiscriminate attacks aimed at civilians," Rajapakse said in the statement, appealing to the public to be more vigilant and to help troops foil the "destructive plans" of the rebels.

The defence ministry on Saturday reported 19 more guerrillas were killed by security forces in three separate clashes in the north on Friday.

Latest defence ministry figures, which include Wednesday's toll, show 3,124 Tigers have been killed by security forces this year. According to official figures, the military has lost 223 soldiers this year.

Independent verification of the tolls is impossible as Colombo bars journalists and rights groups from the embattled areas.

Police said they expected the Tigers to stage more attacks against civilians as military pressure mounts on the rebels in the north.

Three similar blasts in February killed 34 and wounded over 90 bus passengers while 28 were killed in another bus blast in January.

The rebels have been fighting to carve out an independent homeland for the Tamil minority since 1972. Tens of thousands of people have died on both sides in the conflict in the Sinhalese-majority nation.

Load-Date: April 27, 2008

Family taking food to LTTE arrested

Daily Mirror (Sri Lanka)

July 15, 2008 Tuesday 1:29 PM EST

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Length: 184 words

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

Dateline: Colombo

Body

Colombo, July 15 -- A family was arrested along with a canter loaded with dry rations while transporting food to the **LTTE** at Aselapura, in Valaichchenai yesterday morning.

The Defence Ministry said that the family - three adults- two males and one **female** and three children - have confessed that they were transporting the dry rations to the **LTTE** terrorists hiding in the jungles in the Punani area.

The father of the family told the police that his family was threatened by an **LTTE** cadre who had been a resident of the area before joining the **LTTE** to supply rations to the **LTTE** cadres remaining in the area. Therefore, the suspect had opted to transport the food risking the lives of his wife and children using a hired vehicle, the ministry said quoting the police.

The said **LTTE** cadre had asked the family to unload the food items close to the 112th mile post on the Polonnaruwa - Batticaloa main road, the police said. The stock of food contains packets of instant noodles, soft drinks, sugar, cheese, milk powder, biscuits etc., it added.

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Load-Date: August 11, 2008

Sri Lanka fears more civilian attacks, as bus toll hits 26

Agence France Presse -- English

April 26, 2008 Saturday 11:00 AM GMT

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Length: 576 words

Byline: Amal Jayasinghe

Dateline: COLOMBO, April 26 2008

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Three similar blasts in February killed 34 and wounded over 90 bus passengers while 28 were killed in another bus blast in January.

Sri Lanka's army chief, Lieutenant General Sarath Fonseka, in remarks published Saturday in the private Island newspaper, vowed to step up pressure on the mini-state of the Tigers in the north.

Fonseka denied media reports that security forces lost over 150 soldiers in a major confrontation with the Tigers on Wednesday, insisting the losses were far smaller.

The defence ministry claimed killing more than 100 Tigers in Wednesday's battle while the rebels said they killed over 100 government soldiers.

Both sides are known to play down their own casualties and exaggerate those of the other.

The rebels have been fighting to carve out an independent homeland for the Tamil minority since 1972. Tens of thousands of people have died on both sides in the conflict in the Sinhalese-majority nation.

Load-Date: April 27, 2008

Swiss Tamils attack LTTE front office

Daily News (Sri Lanka)

February 7, 2009 Saturday

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Length: 130 words

Dateline: Colombo

Body

Colombo, Feb. 7 -- The **LTTE** front office in Switzerland was surrounded and pelted with stones by a group of Tamil protestors yesterday urging the immediate release of the civilians held as a human shield by the **LTTE** in Mullaitivu.

The group of Swiss Tamils led a protest in the morning, also accusing the **LTTE** terrorist outfit of being solely responsible for the plight of the Tamil youth in Vanni. "**LTTE** is no longer the liberators; they are the true cause for the unprecedented suffering of our brethren. Our children are dragged from schools, **women** turned into human bombs and elderly forced to an 'essential arms training' what they (**LTTE**) define as a 'self defence' training," a protestor was quoted as saying. Published by HT Syndication with permission from Daily News Sri Lanka.

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Load-Date: April 1, 2009