

Bodo militants kill 3 policemen, toll 13

# 10 butchered in fresh Ulfa ethnic cleansing

**FROM OUR CORRESPONDENT**

**Guwahati, Oct. 27:** The orgy of violence continued in Assam today, claiming 13 lives in Nalbari district as bullets replaced crackers in a macabre form of Diwali celebrations.

While three Assam Police personnel were gunned down by suspected National Democratic Front of Boroland militants at Ananda Bazar past midnight, 10 persons — all non-Assamese — were killed by suspected Ulfa militants in the heart of Nalbari town at dusk. Five persons, including two women and two children, were also injured in the Nalbari town massacre.

The Nalbari massacre follows the same pattern of the twin strikes carried out by suspected Ulfa militants in the Upper Assam districts of Tinsukia and Dibrugarh on October 22.

A Tata Sumo carrying "four militants" screeched to a halt in Nalbari's main market around 6.30 pm. "The militants started firing in all directions from inside the vehicle close to Jain temple," Shyam Sunder Bajaj, whose wife and two sons were injured in the attack, told **The Telegraph** at a private hospital here.

Six of the dead have been identified as Laxmi Narayan Bajaj,

Viswanath Bajaj, Dharamchand Jain, Jay Kumar Jain, Sawarmal Sharma and Eswar Deo Singh. All of them belonged to prominent business families of the town. One of the injured persons succumbed to his injuries at the Gauhati Medical College Hospital. Three of the injured have been admitted to the GMCH while four were shifted to a private hospital. They are Godavari and Babita Bajaj and her two sons, aged five and three.

Shyam Sunder said Diwali celebrations turned to grief and panic as militants' "fireworks" snuffed out 10 lives in a span of few minutes. Cries of panic-stricken women and children rent the air after the militants had left, leaving the dead in pools of blood. The militants also threw out some pamphlets written in Assamese bearing the name of a unknown outfit called Asom Tiger Force.

Additional director-general of police (special branch) H.K. Deka said the "strange name may be a cover used by the Ulfa to divert attention of the police from them". "We believe the Ulfa is behind the killings," he added.

Director-general of police P.V. Sumant along with top police officials has rushed to Nalbari.

In the encounter at Ananda Bazar under Tamulpur police station, three Assam Police person-

nel, Boloram Boro, Insan Ali and Karnaram Barman were killed in an encounter with the NDFB militants. Two of them died on the spot while Barman died in hospital.

## Tripura killings

An eight-year-old boy, Mithu Deb, and four others were killed as suspected National Liberation Front of Tripura militants opened fire on a non-tribal house at the remote Debendra Sarkarpara under Kalyanpur police station at 5 pm today. Four children were also seriously injured in the incident, reports our Agartala correspondent.

Militants also abducted a senior woman CPM leader and four non-tribal fishermen over the past 24 hours. Police sources said a group of 10 rebels raided the house of Brindamohini Tripura in North Tripura last night and whisked her away.

The NLFT had warned of dire consequences if she did not hand over 50 per cent of the panchayat development funds at her disposal and quit the CPM.

Two activists of the Indigenous People's Front of Tripura allegedly directed the rebels to the CPM leader's house.

In another incident, Bru National Council of Tripura rebels abducted four non-tribal fishermen from near the Dumbur lake.

28 OCT 1990

# Ceasefire in Solomons ethnic war

**Honiara, Aug. 2:** Warring ethnic militias in the Solomon Islands signed a much-delayed ceasefire agreement on Wednesday, paving the way for a possible end to 21 months of conflict.

The agreement, a precursor to full-scale peace talks next week, will go into force from Friday, said a spokesman for the Malaita Eagles Force (MEF) militia.

It was signed by government representatives and MEF leaders on board the Australian Navy ship HMAS Tobruk anchored off the capital Honiara on Wednesday night.

It was then taken by boat to the

west of Guadalcanal island, where it was to be signed by Isatabu Freedom Movement representative Henry Tobani and four IFM commanders.

"In the next 48 hours the guns will stop firing and the birds and insects will once again enjoy nature on Guadalcanal," the MEF spokesman told. "It is not perfect, but let's promote it and activate it."

The agreement, which was to have been signed by the militias from Guadalcanal and Malaita islands on Tuesday, includes laying down of arms and the establishment of a ceasefire monitoring group.

"The agreement sets the tone for

AD-5 278 further negotiations towards a peace agreement," Mr Tobani told Solomon Islands Broadcasting Corp radio. "We will do our best to educate and inform every IFM militant to observe the obligations which are part of the agreement."

The MEF pulled out of a signing ceremony at the last minute on Tuesday because it wanted control of land outside the capital Honiara currently in the hands of the IFM.

Tuesday's setback marked the fourth time peace talks had stalled since negotiators were appointed last month by the new government of Prime Minister Mannasseh Sogavare.

The MEF has now been allocated areas on the west and east of Honiara, while the IFM will occupy the rest of Guadalcanal, excluding Marau on the eastern part of the island. The MEF has controlled much of Honiara since launching a June 5 coup which led to the resignation of former Prime Minister Bartholomew Ulufa'alu. The coup sparked fierce jungle fighting with the Guadalcanal-based IFM.

Mr Sogavare's government has already paid out A\$3.1 million (\$1.8 million) in compensation for lost land and damaged property in a bid to bring the militias to the negotiating table. (Reuters)

THE ASIAN AGE

3 AUG 2000

# Violence spreads to North Tripura

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE

AGARTALA, July 15. — Ethnic violence escalated in certain parts of north Teliamura, prompting panic-stricken people to flee their villages even as no fresh incidents of violence were reported from the West district in the past 12 hours.

Hoodlums from the hill community torched several houses of non-tribal villagers at Emrapasa in the Fatikray area of North district's Kailasahar sub-division last night.

Villagers fled from Ambasa, the headquarter of Dhailai district. Tension ran high in several areas of Dhalai and North districts.

An indefinite curfew was earlier imposed in areas around Teliamura, a hill township in west Tripura, after suspected United Bengali Liberation Front rebels torched over 180 houses yesterday. Paramilitary forces are now patrolling the area.

Trouble sparked off at

Teliamura after militants abducted a non-tribal villager.

The militants hurled bombs, creating panic among the villagers. Tripura State Rifles personnel and the CRPF fired in the air and lathicharged to disperse them. Twelve people were injured.

Eighteen people were arrested after they were caught setting fire to houses.

The situation at villages in Teliamura remains tense but under control, police said.

Meanwhile, night curfew has been imposed at Khasia Basti, Reang Basti, Shivbari, Marachhara, Dhalai, Baligaon, Bilashchhara, Bagai Chhari, Ganganagar, Malaya, Bara surma, Chandannagar, Bishnupur, Sonarai in Dhalai district along the India-Bangladesh border.

The sub-divisional officer of Kamalpur said the curfew order would remain in force between 11 p.m. and 5 a.m. every day till 31 August to check trans-border movement of armed insurgents and criminals.

THE STATESMAN

16 JUL 2002

# 'Confederation' move divides Sri Lankans on ethnic lines

P. K. Balachandran  
Colombo, June 2

HC-19 396

THE SRI Lankans are divided on ethnic lines over an American suggestion to replace the present unitary Sri Lanka by a "loose confederation" comprising two autonomous units, one a predominantly Tamil unit and the other a predominantly Sinhala unit, to bring an end to the war and the ethnic conflict. While the majority Sinhala vehemently oppose the idea, the minority Tamils warmly welcome it.

The idea of a confederation was thrown up by a former US Ambassador to Sri Lanka, Ms Teresita Schaffer, in an article in the latest issue of the *South Asia Monitor*, a publication of the Washington think-tank, the Centre for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS). Though Ms Schaffer told *The Hindustan Times* over the phone that she had only spoken for herself and not for the US Government, her utterances are taken seriously here because the CSIS, where she heads the South Asia programme, is seen as being influential with the US State Department. "Confederation is not possible at all. Confederations have been tried out before and

have never worked. Libya and Egypt broke off. So did Malaya and Singapore," argued Mr Tilak Karunaratne of the *Sinhala Urumaya* — which voices the Sinhala interest. "I would like Ms Schaffer to tell us why the US refused to yield to the demand for a confederation and fought a civil war in the 1860s. Has she been bought over by the LTTE lobby, which had tossed the confederation concept earlier?" asked Mr Karunaratne.

Mr Karunaratne said that the LTTE would see a confederation only as a stepping stone to an independent Eelam, its final goal. According to Dr Piyasena Dissanayake of the National Joint Council of Sinhala Organisations, experience shows that separatism is in the very womb of confederations, whether they are "loose" or "tight". Neutral diplomatic sources also felt that the Sri Lankan state and polity would not accept a confederation. "When they can't accept federation, how can they accept a confederation?" asked a senior S. Asian diplomat.

But Tamil analysts think that a confederation is not only a good idea but practicable too. According to Mr Kethesh Loganathan of the Centre for Policy Alternatives (CPA), a system of substantial devolution to the Tamil North

East coupled with a significant minority representation with veto power in a bicameral legislature at the Centre, may be described as a loose confederation. "This could be justifiably seen as an alternative to Eelam," Mr Loganathan said.

Dr P. Saravanamuttu, the Director of CPA, thought a confederation might come within the realm of possibility when the military ground situation forced both the warring parties to realise that they would have to give in politically. The LTTE might have to give up its demand for separation and the Sri Lankan state its opposition to federalism/ confederalism. "Changed circumstances could bring about radical changes in thinking," the CPA scholars said.

"The 13th Amendment introduced in the wake of the Indo-Lanka Accord of 1987 might have been rejected if it was proposed at the 1984 All-Party Conference," pointed out Mr Loganathan.

Ms Schaffer had painted a grim scenario if the war continued. She feared that the current uneasy military stalemate could be short-lived. Something had to be done quickly to stem a deterioration in the military/ political situation and avoid a bloodbath leading to separation.

- 3 JUN 2000

# 1008 Jaffna, a symbol of Eelam war <sup>யுத்தம் - புனை</sup>

By Nirupama Subramanian 14/5

**NEW DELHI, MAY 13.** If the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) succeeds in wresting control of Jaffna peninsula from the Sri Lankan forces, it would imply a victory over much more than just another piece of real estate.

Through years of armed conflict, Jaffna has been the ultimate prize in the Eelam war. Capital of an independent medieval kingdom, it was an important outpost for successive colonial rulers.

A fort built by the Dutch is still its most important landmark. Notwithstanding its arid landscape, it was the second most important city of independent Sri Lanka after Colombo, a centre of Tamil erudition and learning and the seat of its culture and traditions.

But, most of it has been lost in years of war. In the 80s, the cradle of culture became a centre of militancy. The LTTE leader, Mr. Velupillai Prabhakaran, and many top rankers are

from Valvettithurai, a fishing village in north-eastern Jaffna peninsula.

Large-scale migration of Tamils from the peninsula, the constant internal displacement of those who have not been able to migrate and the early destruction of its most important cultural symbol, the Jaffna library, have left the social and cultural fabric of the peninsula in tatters.

Yet, Jaffna is the most important psychological symbol of the Eelam war. It was from here that the LTTE established a *de facto* Eelam between 1990 and 1995, after the exit of the Indian Peace Keeping Force (IPKF).

The Tigers collected taxes, had an independent police and judiciary and printed their own stamps and currency.

The capture of Jaffna by the Sri Lankan armed forces in 1995-96, in three massive operations, was therefore symbolically significant. The then Deputy Defence Minister, Mr. Anuruddha Ratwatte, even presented a victory scroll to the President, Mrs. Chandrika Kumaratunga,

in a ceremony that harked back to the medieval age.

As the two sides are once again locked in a battle for this prized piece of territory, the Tigers will no doubt use their intimate knowledge of the battlefield, to their advantage.

If the Tigers gain control over Jaffna, it would be the first time they would have fought for it, and that would be used by the LTTE to boost its image among the Tamils at home and abroad.

In many ways, the Sri Lankan Army was the first to foresee the present situation. Top military brass posted at Jaffna emphasised that the Army could not be expected to hang on there indefinitely and Army control of the peninsula was no substitute for devolved civilian rule. But as events have proved, the Sri Lankan polity failed to build on the victories of its armed forces, dragging its soldiers deeper and deeper into a war that many commentators have described as "unwinnable" for either side.

10 MAY 2000

WEDNESDAY, MAY 24, 2000

## ETHNIC ERUPTIONS IN FIJI

THE CIVILISED WORLD will unanimously condemn the crude attempt to topple the democratically elected Government in Fiji, in particular to oust its Prime Minister. That the principal victim is of Indian origin is only an additional reason why India and Indians will be outraged by the manner in which a gang of disgruntled but apparently powerful men have held Mr. Mahendra Chaudhary and his Cabinet at gunpoint inside the country's Parliament. Whatever the final outcome of the effort to end the crisis, the way the so-called coup leader, Mr. George Speight, has held out threats and subjected the country's Prime Minister and others to unbearable psychological and physical pressure is reprehensible. New Delhi has reacted with surprise and disgust at the ethnic eruptions in the Fijian capital, Suva, including mob riots targeted mostly at Indian establishments, and must take the lead to mobilise international opinion to ensure that Mr. Speight and the forces behind him do not succeed in their design. People of Indian origin, who were in a majority when the South Pacific island nation gained its independence from Britain in 1970 and have since been overtaken in numbers by the indigenous population, need the reassurance that there will be no repetition of the trauma they underwent in 1987 during a similar attempt at blatant ethnic denial.

Ethnic divisions have dominated politics in Fiji since independence and the latest attempt to derail constitutional order is a symptom of a deeper malaise. The first signs of discord in the multiethnic society came when the military intervened in 1987 in the name of ensuring that any future setup will guarantee political power to Fiji's native Melanesian population. It was an unconcealed attack on people of Indian origin who had over the years acquired a dominant role in some areas of activity such as commerce and trade. The then successful coup leader, Col. Sitiveni Rabuka's systematic campaign against peo-

ple of Indian origin led to the promulgation of a ridiculous constitution in 1990 that gave the indigenous Fijians more than half of all seats in Parliament and barred people of Indian origin from the post of Prime Minister. This distortion was removed in a new constitution in 1997 which also abolished the racially biased provisions. In free democratic elections last summer, Mr. Chaudhary was elected Prime Minister. The divisive forces that had ruled from 1990 were never reconciled to this. Last week's attempted coup is the culmination of their systematic destabilisation campaign.

The Indian diaspora, unlike the Chinese and others, in some respects was a colonial legacy as the British recruited indentured labour to serve in their distant colonies and helped in the transplantation of large populations. Decolonisation threw up problems. Where people of Indian origin assimilated themselves in the local society, as in the West Indies and South Africa, everything was easy and smooth. Problems began elsewhere when native politicians started to target these ethnic groups in their attempt to capture and retain power. Eastern Africa in the Seventies saw much turmoil and uprooting of people of Indian origin. In pockets like Fiji attempts to construct a multiethnic society in the post-colonial era have been repeatedly thwarted by interested groups. These must be defeated and the country helped to evolve acceptable constitutional arrangements that safeguard the rights of the minorities while providing for the majority's unhindered progress. People of Indian origin must be allowed to live with dignity and self-respect and not be reduced to the status of second class citizens. The international community must make it clear that it will not countenance the creation of a system which does not respect and protect the rights of all Fijians regardless of the accident of their ethnicity.

# Kosovo town wears uneasy calm as ethnic rioting eases

AA-5  
23/2

**Kosovska** **Mitrovica**  
(Yugoslavia), Feb. 22: The flash-point Kosovo city of Mitrovica was calm early on Tuesday after Western peace keepers fought to prevent an outbreak of ethnic violence.

The Nato-led KFOR peacekeeping force on Tuesday said the streets had been calm overnight after running battles between troops and ethnic Albanian demonstrators, seeking to reach Kosovo's largest remaining Serb enclave on Monday.

"After the dispersion of the crowd, the night was very calm," said Lieutenant Francis Megerlin, a spokesman for the Nato-led KFOR peacekeeping force in Mitrovica.

The clashes had erupted after tens of thousands of Albanians, many of whom had marched from the provincial capital Pristina, converged in front of the main bridge dividing the northern industrial city along ethnic lines.

Nato leaders blamed the clashes on Yugoslavia and warned it against touching off a new ethnic conflict beyond the province's borders.

British, Canadian and French troops fired tear gas and fought with their bare hands to stop hundreds of Albanians who tried to storm the bridge to get into the Serb-dominated part of the city.

After several hours of clashes, the situation calmed and the pro-

testers dispersed peacefully, the troops said.

The clashes were the latest in a series of violent eruptions in Mitrovica this month in which at least nine people have been killed and more than 20 wounded, including two French soldiers injured in gun battles.

The city has been the tensest in post-war Kosovo.

Albanians from northern Mitrovica area angry that Serbs are preventing them from returning to the homes they fled in fear of Serb repression last year.

The Serbs say they have grouped together in the north for their own protection, having been driven out of many other parts of Kosovo by ethnic Albanian revenge attacks.

Mr Richard Holbrooke, the US ambassador to the United Nations, said in New York on Monday that trouble in Mitrovica was being fomented by the Yugoslav government, which was forced by Nato bombing last year to surrender control of Kosovo.

"The problem here comes from Belgrade," Washington's former Balkans trouble-shooter told reporters.

"This is not a simple question of local Serbs who are all stirred up north of the bridge. This is being stirred up by the MUP (Yugoslav interior ministry), by the Yugoslav authorities and the Yugoslav leadership is responsible for this," he said. (Reuters)

THE ASIAN AGE

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