

India, Sri Lanka deplore violations of ceasefire by LTTE

Agree that environmental implications of Sethu project must be studied

Special Correspondent

NEW DELHI: India and Sri Lanka on Friday reiterated their support for — and commitment to — the embattled peace process in the island nation and agreed that an enduring solution to the country's problems could emerge "only through internal political processes that promote consensus and reconciliation".

A joint statement which seeks to catalyse a broader economic relationship between the two countries, issued at the conclusion of the Sri Lankan President Mahinda Rajapakse's visit to Delhi, said the two nations agreed that the environmental implications of the Sethusamudram Ship Channel Project had to be studied and monitored and action taken to mitigate them if any.

Noting that "a positive collaborative relationship was being established for the study and monitoring of the environmental implications of the project," Mr. Rajapakse and Prime Minister Manmohan Singh "endorsed that the outcome of the collaboration must be to reach a common understanding as to whether there are environmental consequences and if so, the action to be taken to mitigate them". Accordingly, technical experts from both countries have been asked to continue

• **Ambitious plan for a number of joint ventures**

• **Enhancing cooperation in the field of education**

• **Setting up an Information and Communication Technology Park**

their interaction, the statement said. This formulation on the controversial project -- which Colombo feels might have harmful effects, inter alia, on wave patterns and fish stocks -- attempts to operationalise an earlier commitment made by Dr Manmohan Singh to the then Sri Lankan president, Chandrika Kumaratunge, on her last visit to New Delhi in September, that India would be prepared to modify the project if studies established the possibility of negative ecological consequences.

In addition to the Sethusamudram project, which is a key concern of the Sri Lanka, the joint statement lays out a number of India's commitments towards the development of infrastructure in the island nation.

Top among these is an ambitious plan for a number of joint ventures for the development of the eastern Sri Lankan port city of Trincomalee and its surrounding region. The two lead-

ers noted the need to prepare a master plan for realising the full potential of the proposed bilateral projects.

As a first step, a 500 MW thermal power project would be launched as a joint venture between the National Thermal Power Company of India and the Ceylon Electricity Board. In addition, India said it was prepared to consider additional concessions and credit for the development of the Colombo-Matara rail line beyond the \$100 million credit line already committed.

On the political front, Mr. Rajapakse briefed the Indian leadership on his approach to the peace process and his aim of achieving "maximum devolution which preserves the unity and territorial integrity of Sri Lanka". India, on its part, "reiterated its support for a process of seeking a negotiated political settlement acceptable to all sections of Sri Lankan society within the framework of an undivided Sri Lanka and consistent with democracy, pluralism and respect for human rights".

Both countries deplored the recent violations of the ceasefire and said these "could undermine the prospects for peace in Sri Lanka".

Among the other economic projects, India offered to support Sri Lanka's efforts to reconstruct and develop the North

and East of the country through technical and financial assistance and will assist in the construction of a library and stadium in Jaffna as a first step. New Delhi also said it had initiated action to prepare a detailed project report on the rehabilitation of the tsunami-damaged Base Hospital in Trincomalee.

Other Indian initiatives include collaborating with Sri Lanka in setting up an Information and Communication Technology (ICT) Park in that country and construction of a new 150-bed hospital at Dickoya in the central province.

In the field of human resources development, it was decided that the Joint Working Group under the India-Sri Lanka MoU on the Education Exchange Programme would be operationalised at the earliest possible. Several measures funded by India to enhance cooperation in the field of education and training were also agreed upon.

These include the Mahatma Gandhi scholarship scheme for 100 deserving Sri Lankan students every year, upgrading of libraries and science laboratories in upcountry areas, setting up of Chair in Contemporary Indian studies in Peradeniya University and commissioning of a field study on vocational training centres.

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THE HINDU

Welcome Caution

India wary of joining
Lanka peace talks

NEW Delhi's reluctance to join the peace process in Sri Lanka is understandable. Given the absence of a consensus in the Lankan political mainstream and the fascist character of the LTTE, India should refrain from entering a process that, unfortunately, holds little promise of success. The peace talks in Sri Lanka, mediated by Norway, are on the verge of collapse. Since the election of Mahinda Rajapakse as prime minister, violence has been on the rise in the island. Scores of soldiers and civilians, and an MP of the Tamil National Alliance, a coalition close to the LTTE, have been killed in the past few weeks. The LTTE has set a December-end deadline to decide on their participation in the talks. Rajapakse, despite his best intentions for peace, has not succeeded in evolving a consensus among his allies on devolution of powers in the Tamil dominated areas or outline the way ahead for the talks. The allies of the Rajapakse government include hardline nationalist outfits like Janata Vimukti Perumana and the Jathika Hela Urumeya. The bitter experience of the Indian Peace Keeping Force which went to the island in 1987 on the invitation of Colombo is too close in time to be forgotten. As for the LTTE, it continues to be as intransigent in its motives and as violent as before in its politics.

Any Indian intervention in the chaos in Sri Lanka will have a fallout in Tamil Nadu. Many mainstream political parties in the southern state voiced apprehension when reports suggesting that Colombo is seeking military hardware from New Delhi appeared in the media. Ethnic and cultural ties have a tendency to override concerns of the nation state and that should be respected. The LTTE may have few supporters in Tamil Nadu, but the Tamil cause does touch a chord with many people. Such being the case, it is important that New Delhi should calibrate its response to Colombo's concerns after giving due consideration to sentiments in Tamil Nadu. That said, New Delhi should do its best to help Colombo rebuild an economy ravaged by the war and the tsunami. Also, efforts should be undertaken to delegitimise the claim of the LTTE that they are the sole representatives of Tamils living in Sri Lanka.

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THE TIMES OF INDIA

Rajapakse, Manmohan agree on revival of peace process

India - Sri Lanka

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“Both sides agreed that talks, aimed at strengthening ceasefire, must begin soon”

Special Correspondent

NEW DELHI: Amid fears of collapse of the Sri Lankan peace process, Prime Minister Manmohan Singh and Sri Lankan President Mahinda Rajapakse on Wednesday agreed on the urgency to begin talks, aimed at shoring up the ceasefire between the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam and the Sri Lankan armed forces.

Mr. Rajapakse, visiting India on his first overseas tour since becoming President last month, held talks with Dr. Singh for 40 minutes. At the delegation-level talks that followed, he briefed the Indian side on his assessment of the status of the peace process, the External Affairs Ministry spokesperson said. “Both sides agreed that peace talks, aimed at strengthening the ceasefire, should begin at the earliest.”

The spokesperson said the discussions also covered “the wide ranging economic and commercial cooperation that existed between the two countries, as well as ways and means of enhancing it in the coming years. Specific issues in this context that came up were the conclusion of a Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement, cooperation in the field of railways, civil aviation, information technology and energy.”

The spokesperson refused to get drawn into a public discussion of the Sri Lankan proposal of India playing a greater role in the peace process. Asked about India’s willingness to become the fifth co-chair of the peace talks (along with Norway, the United States, Japan and the European Union), the spokesper-



Sri Lankan President Mahinda Rajapakse and his wife with President A.P.J. Abdul Kalam and Prime Minister Manmohan Singh at the ceremonial reception at the Rashtrapati Bhavan on Wednesday. — PHOTO: V.V. KRISHNAN.

son said India’s position was “well known” and that Mr. Rajapakse had “welcomed India’s commitment to peace and security in Sri Lanka.”

Referring to the spate of recent incidents — ranging from mine blasts to rebel attacks — which claimed the lives of more than 40 Sri Lankan soldiers in

the past month, the spokesperson said India was “deeply concerned” at the recent escalation of violence and “the repeated violations of the ceasefire.” This trend would “only undermine the search for a negotiated political settlement which was critical for the maintenance of peace and for the resumption of talks.

Confirming that Mr. Rajapakse’s visit to Tamil Nadu had been put off following cancellation of his appointment with Chief Minister Jayalithaa, the spokesperson denied that there was anything untoward in her decision. “I would not characterise it an embarrassment or anything like that,” he said.

“The programme for Tamil Nadu for the visiting President was tentative in nature and was based on mutual convenience. Given the fact that the President has a full schedule in Delhi and other places and the fact that the Chief Minister was not available that day, the programme has been changed,” he said.

29 DEC 2005

THE HINDU

Rajapakse arrives in Delhi for talks

'Despite provocation by LTTE, the peace process must go on'

Amit Baruah

NEW DELHI: India will tell Sri Lankan President Mahinda Rajapakse, who arrived here on a state visit on Tuesday, that the ceasefire agreement with the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE), though flawed, should be worked.

Top South Block officials told this correspondent that Mr. Rajapakse's visit would provide an opportunity for the two sides to discuss the recent attacks by the LTTE on Sri Lankan soldiers and the current state of the "peace" process.

According to the officials, India wanted to listen to what Mr. Rajapakse had to say on the security situation given the fact that the Tigers had killed over 50 soldiers in the last one month, including a landmine explosion on Tuesday.

Mr. Rajapakse, whose official meetings are on Wednesday, will meet both President A.P.J. Abdul Kalam and Prime Minister Manmohan Singh. There is also interest in the Sri Lankan President's opinion about the role that India could play in the current situation.

Despite the recent attacks, New Delhi believed that there should be no return to war and

appreciated the fact that the Sri Lankan armed forces had shown remarkable restraint despite the obvious provocation from the LTTE.

There is also clarity here that the ceasefire violations have been one-sided, committed by the LTTE. According to the officials, the LTTE's policy of provoking the Sri Lankan military was expected after Mr. Rajapakse took over as President.

They said New Delhi would also seek a clarification from Mr. Rajapakse about what he termed "maximum possible devolution under a unitary structure" as a solution to the country's ethnic conflict.

Interestingly, Mr. Rajapakse will be given a presentation on India's Centre-State relationship and the devolution of powers by a senior Home Ministry official on Thursday.

During the June 2005 visit of then Sri Lankan President Chandrika Kumaratunga, India had favoured the "process of seeking a comprehensive, negotiated settlement acceptable to all communities, and reflecting the pluralistic nature of Sri Lankan society, within the framework of a united and democratic Sri Lanka."



WARM WELCOME: Sri Lankan President Mahinda Rajapakse and his wife being received by Minister of State for External Affairs E. Ahmed at the Palam airport in New Delhi on Tuesday. - PHOTO: V.V. KRISHNAN

India gives two radars to Sri Lanka

*India
Sri Lanka
#19-13
28/12*

The supply marks the resumption of non-lethal military aid to Colombo

Sandeep Dikshit

NEW DELHI: India has provided Sri Lanka with two indigenously developed military radars on the eve of Sri Lanka President Mahinda Rajapakse's maiden visit. The transfer of radars, to enable low-level detection of fighter aircraft, marks the resumption of non-lethal military aid after five years. Though the deal has been kept under wraps, Defence Ministry sources confirmed the transfer but did not provide details.

Other sources pointed out that the transfer adhered to the India-Sri Lanka draft defence cooperation agreement that did not encourage Colombo to go in for a military solution to the Tamil issue. At the same time, it beefs up the Sri Lankan defences against any distant possibility of the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam acquiring prowess in air operations. At present, the LTTE owns two microlight aircraft and is believed to have developed two airstrips in areas under its control. But the radar would be unable to detect aircraft of this size, the sources said.

Fast patrol crafts

India did provide non-lethal military equipment, including fast patrol crafts, in 2000 following the stepped up activities of the LTTE. But it has generally refrained from making high-technology supplies ever since stopping military hardware supplies in the late 1980s.

Sources said that India agreed to supply the radars after Pakistan began taking in-

• **Indra-II radar cannot detect microlight aircraft**

• **Manufactured by Bharat Electronics Limited**

• **Bid to pre-empt Pakistan from supplying equipment**

terest in filling the void in Sri Lankan military supplies. The former External Affairs Minister, Natwar Singh, made the formal offer during his visit to Colombo earlier this year as India felt uncomfortable with the idea of Pakistan-installed surveillance equipment near its shores.

On Defence Ministry instructions, Bharat Electronics Limited manufactured the radars. BEL supplies the Indra-II radars to the Indian Air Force, which has handed it over to Colombo.

Joint naval exercises

Despite the defence agreement being in limbo two years after it was first drafted, the two countries deepened the military-level contacts and held the first-ever joint naval exercises earlier this month. The two navies might meet next month when India hosts a joint exercise for the sea forces of neighbouring countries.

Sources said that despite a sluggish military equipment transfer arrangement, personnel of both the armed forces enjoyed a close relationship with most Sri Lankan military officers having been trained in India at some point of their career.

THE HINDU

India and Sri Lanka: so near, yet so far

Nirupama Subramanian

FOR A quick take on how much India matters to Sri Lanka, look no further than the planner of every new government that takes office in Colombo. Undeterred by editorial writers in the Sri Lankan press railing against "paying *pooja* to the Delhi *maligawa* [temple]," the first foreign visits of newly elected Sri Lankan leaders are inevitably to New Delhi. In 2001, Ranil Wickremesinghe was on a plane to India within days of taking office as Prime Minister. After the assassination of Lakshman Kadirgamar in August 2005, the first stop for Anura Bandaranaike, who succeeded him as Foreign Minister, was New Delhi. Following the recent election in which Mahinda Rajapakse was elected President, his Foreign Minister, Mangala Samaraweera, made a quick trip to the Indian capital. Now, President Rajapakse is in New Delhi, also on his first official visit abroad.

In a recent interaction with journalists in Colombo, President Rajapakse explained it thus: "We are neighbours and we have to work very closely. In my first policy statement, I mentioned India. Somebody from the West also asked me this question, 'why India?' It is because they are a very important country."

It is that obvious. Yet since at least 1991, neither Sri Lanka nor India, both brooding over the past, has dared or wanted to acknowledge this so openly or directly. The main issue in the bilateral relationship is the island's Tamil question. The Indian intervention in the conflict in the 1980s had ended in two stages, both messy: the departure of the Indian Peace Keeping Force in 1990 from North-East Sri Lanka, at the explicit request of the Sri Lankan government, and to the relief of the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam, and; the assassination of Rajiv Gandhi in 1991 by a suicide bomber of the LTTE. More than the first, it was the second that defined New Delhi's "hands off" Sri Lanka policy all through the 1990s.

Yet, it has also been clear over these 15 years that despite the official disengagement, India

While New Delhi seems clear about what it cannot do in relation to Sri Lanka's search for peace, there is no clarity on what it should do.

retains more than detached interest in the goings-on across the Palk Straits. More than that, in Sri Lanka, all sides to the conflict and all shades of political opinion believe India holds the key to how the story will unfold.

The reasons are well known: one side to the conflict is the LTTE, which India banned as a terror group from 1992; its leader, Velupillai Prabhakaran, is wanted by India as the prime accused in the Rajiv Gandhi assassination case. Mr. Prabhakaran wants to establish and rule over an independent state of Tamil Eelam in north-eastern Sri Lanka, a short boat ride from Tamil Nadu; many politicians in Tamil Nadu were supportive of the LTTE in the past, and some continue to be even today.

Additionally, there is the perception — true or not — that India will consider as a threat to its own unity any political solution in Sri Lanka that goes beyond the Indian model of federalism.

In line with its "hands off" policy, India demurred from articulating its interest or concerns outright, or from getting involved in Sri Lanka directly. But there was much backroom diplomacy. In the mid-1990s, from behind the scenes, New Delhi gave full backing to President Chandrika Kumaratunga's plan to marginalise the LTTE politically through a new Constitution that promised to be federal and inclusive of Tamils. India also gave ancillary support — in the form of intelligence inputs — to concurrent military action by the Kumaratunga Government against the LTTE.

But the plan depended too much on the good sense of the Sri Lankan political establishment to see the Constitution through Parliament. It also underestimated the misery the war would cause to the Tamil people in the North-East, and miscalculated the military staying power of the LTTE. The plan finally failed on both political

and military fronts. Sri Lanka — Sinhalese, Tamils and Muslims — ended up sidelining President Kumaratunga instead of the LTTE. The people voted in a government that wanted to end the war and make peace with the LTTE. Such was the extent of war-weariness that it seemed people did not care even if it meant the state virtually signing off responsibility for the North-East and for the Tamils there to the LTTE, as long as the Tigers left the south alone.

It was this stage that the limitations of New Delhi's official "hands off" policy in relation to securing its interests became obvious. The Wickremesinghe Government wanted Indian assurance that it supported a peace process that empowered the LTTE in unprecedented fashion. Given the popular backing for Mr. Wickremesinghe then, India could have opposed or criticised his moves only at the risk of sounding like an advocate for a return to war. Thus it was that New Delhi found itself nodding agreement with the Norway-facilitated peace process as it was conducted then, despite its inherent and obvious drawbacks.

For sure, India was not totally helpless. New Delhi was apparently one reason the idea of an interim self-government for North-East Sri Lanka, along the lines proposed by the LTTE, a major plan of the Wickremesinghe-steered portion of the peace process did not go further. India also built bridges with the Janatha Vimukthi Peramuna — a party opposed to most elements of the process — in the run-up to the last parliamentary election. The JVP has a major presence in the Sri Lankan parliament and supports Mr. Rajapakse's Government.

For the rest, New Delhi has been a bystander to a process that has often looked like drifting away from the oft-repeated Indian position that the Sri Lankan Government and the LTTE must

arrive at a "negotiated settlement acceptable to all communities, and reflecting the pluralistic nature of Sri Lankan society, within the framework of a united and democratic Sri Lanka". India watched as the LTTE grew politically powerful, liquidated rival Tamil politicians, and absorbed the once moderate Tamil United Liberation Front in its fold. Despite its obvious influence over them, India also watched leaders of southern Sri Lanka — the country's "national leadership" — contribute to the LTTE's ascendance through manifold short-sighted moves to the point where the group is now confident it stands at the threshold of an independent Eelam.

Is it time then that New Delhi shed its "hands off" policy and asked itself if it needs to play a more activist role in the search for a solution to Sri Lanka's conflict, if only to ensure that the conflict does not drag India into its vortex at some later stage in ways more complex and dark than we can imagine now?

Sea Tigers's issue

At least one academic has already made a veiled hint for military action by India to protect its interests. In his recent book, *Conflict Over Fisheries in the Palk Bay*, V. Suryanarayan, formerly of the Centre for South and South East Asian Studies, University of Madras, has said New Delhi must "develop the political will ... to neutralise the Sea Tigers at the earliest opportunity."

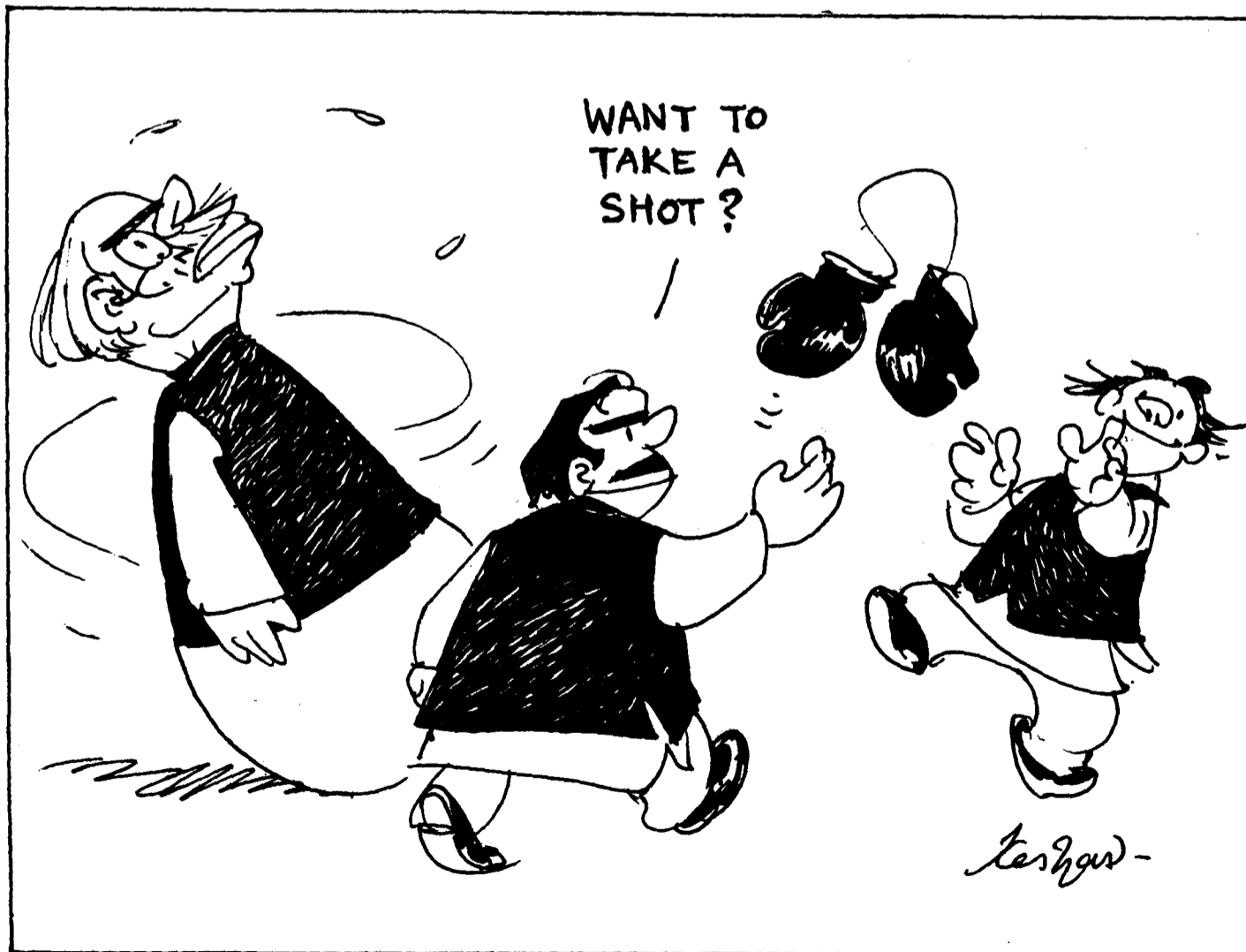
In the last two years, the LTTE has been winding up the demand that the Sea Tigers be recognised as equivalent to a navy controlling the waters around North-East Sri Lanka. It almost convinced the Norwegian ceasefire monitoring committee that this was the only way to avoid incidents between the Sea Tigers and the Sri Lankan Navy. While the Sea Tigers do pose a threat to the maritime boundaries of both Sri Lanka and India, direct action against them is too far out a plan unless New Delhi is also ready to take on the military consequences that could follow for Sri Lanka. A mediatory role for India in brokering peace is also ruled out because it would mean re-establishing links with the LTTE. But while the Indian Government seems to be clear about what it cannot do in Sri Lanka, there is no such clarity on what it should.

President Rajapakse wants India to "at least" become a co-chair in the peace process along with Norway, the United States, Japan, and the European Union. This, he says, will enable a role for India in the development of the North-East. Indications are that India is willing to finance health, housing, and educational projects in the North-East, routing money through the Sri Lankan Government and keeping clear of the LTTE.

This may have its uses. But perhaps more importantly, India needs to more forthrightly articulate its concerns so that it is communicated to and understood clearly by all sides to the conflict in Sri Lanka. These concerns of course relate to the LTTE, and the present dispensation in Colombo fully shares them. But New Delhi must make clear to President Rajapakse that the LTTE cannot vanish with India becoming a co-chair in the peace process. Or funding projects in the North-East. Nor even with the signing of the long-pending India-Sri Lanka defence cooperation agreement, initiated by the Wickremesinghe Government in 2003. In any case, the draft of the agreement suggests only the formalising of existing cooperation between the two defence establishments. It is certainly not an Indian commitment for on the ground assistance to Sri Lanka in case of a war with the LTTE.

India needs to convey in no uncertain terms to President Rajapakse that his government, its allies — the JVP and the Buddhist monks — and other southern politicians have no option other than to make major concessions in the form of political devolution to the Tamils; that these concessions are difficult within the existing unitary framework of the Constitution, and; the Sri Lankan political establishment must think seriously of a federal solution, because that is the only answer to the LTTE's separatism. This should be India's most important message to the visiting President of Sri Lanka.

CARTOONSCAPE



India for continued ceasefire in Sri Lanka

419-12
Sri Lanka
Sri Lankan Foreign Minister meets Manmohan

Amit Baruah

NEW DELHI: India favours the maintenance of the ceasefire in Sri Lanka, Prime Minister Manmohan Singh told the new Sri Lankan Foreign Minister Mangala Samaraweera during a 35-minute meeting on Thursday evening.

Sri Lanka and India also agreed that they needed to conclude, as early as possible, a Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (CEPA), which has been under discussion between the two countries for some time now.

On the peace process, Mr. Samaraweera, who met Minister of State for External Affairs E. Ahamed earlier in the day, emphasised that President Mahinda Rajapakse remained committed to the ceasefire agreement with the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE).

The Rajapakse Government also desired a review of the ceasefire's operations so that the implementation of the "agreement" could be made more effective, a joint statement issued after the talks said.

"The [Sri Lankan] Government also extends a firm invitation to the LTTE to negotiations

to discuss a political solution. President Rajapakse views the greatest possible degree of openness, transparency and inclusivity in the peace process, as being essential for its acceptance and eventual success," it said.

Priority to development

Mr. Samaraweera spelt out the "approaches" the Rajapakse Government would adopt towards arriving at a "broad national consensus." Parallel to this endeavour, reconstruction and development in northern and eastern Sri Lanka would be accorded the highest priority, he said.

"Minister Samaraweera affirmed that the Government of Sri Lanka would, in the tradition of close dialogue between the two countries, continue to apprise the Government of India in regard to the ways and means by which the peace process could be made more effective," the statement said.

New Delhi, on its part, felt that an enduring solution in Sri

"President Rajapakse views the greatest possible degree of openness, transparency and inclusivity in the peace process..."

Lanka could emerge "essentially" through internal political processes. "India supports the process of seeking a negotiated settlement acceptable to all sections of Sri Lankan society within the framework of a united Sri Lanka, and consistent with democracy, pluralism and respect for human rights."

"India continues to maintain an abiding interest in the security of Sri Lanka and remains committed to its sovereignty and territorial integrity," the joint statement said, reiterating New Delhi's long-held position.

India also reiterated to Mr. Samaraweera its invitation to Mr. Rajapakse to pay a State visit to New Delhi at the "earliest opportunity." Senior officials said the new Sri Lankan President was likely to visit India sometime this month.

Mr. Samaraweera's meetings in the capital mark the first high-level contact between New Delhi and Colombo after Mr. Rajapakse was elected President on November 18.



CONVEYING COLOMBO'S VIEWS: Sri Lankan Minister for Foreign Affairs Mangala Samaraweera with Prime Minister Manmohan Singh in New Delhi on Thursday. PHOTO: V. SUDERSHAN

The LTTE shadow over India

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10-11
19/9

The time has come for India to target the LTTE effectively in the larger interest of security and national integrity.

Subramanian Swamy

THE ASSASSINATION of Sri Lanka's Foreign Minister Lakshman Kadirgamar has exposed the fault lines in India's policy towards the internationally proclaimed terrorist organisation, the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam. On the one side, the Indian Government has banned the LTTE as a terrorist organisation. On the other side, despite the continuing assassinations, India does not oppose the "peace dialogue" of the Sri Lankan Government with the LTTE, talks that could end up legitimising the terrorist outfit and making the ban meaningless.

Although the LTTE has officially denied any involvement in the Kadirgamar assassination, such a denial cannot be taken seriously. The organisation has always denied its involvement in terrorist activity — murder, arson, extortion, drug trafficking, and so on. The LTTE denied any part in Rajiv Gandhi's assassination. However, the Supreme Court of India, in its 400-page judgment delivered on May 12, 1999, laid bare what a huge lie that was.

'Stockholm Syndrome'

That security failed to secure the neighbourhood of the Foreign Minister's residence despite his being high on the LTTE's hit list is clear evidence that the Sri Lankan authorities are suffering from the 'Stockholm Syndrome' of capitulating to tormentors. They are wholly incompetent to deal with the murderous LTTE. The Sri Lankan President's first reaction was that the island government, despite the assassination of the Foreign Minister at his residence in the capital, would not suspend the so-called peace talks with the killers — a further indication of the tragic syndrome at work. Sri Lanka seems to have lost its collective nerve to combat and confront terror.

India needs to consider what to do to remove the fault line in its policy towards the LTTE — and thus secure its geographical neighbourhood. The LTTE, which could be legitimised through the agency of an inane Norwegian facilitation, is a menace not only to Sri Lanka's integrity, but also to India's national security. The Tigers have links with India's terrorists such as the Maoists and ULFA, and with the ISI of Pakistan and even Al Qaeda and with separatist Indian political parties. Even if the Congress shows scant interest in bringing Velupillai Prabhakaran to justice, patriotic Indians cannot forget either Rajiv's martyrdom or the LTTE's unforgivable perfidy. India has to fix Prabhakaran some day by bringing him to justice for his lack of respect for India's sovereignty.

India has a national security imperative and an unavoidable moral obligation to get involved to help free the island nation of the LTTE's treacherous terror. I thus see four specific reasons behind this obligation:

First, India trained the LTTE in the 1980s. The country has to atone for this by actions to disband and unravel the Frankenstein monster it helped create. *Secondly*, despite enjoying India's hospitality for years, and after welcoming the Indo-Sri Lanka Agreement in 1987, the Tigers betrayed India by killing more than 1000 personnel of the Indian Peace Keeping Force sent to the island to enforce the accord. The betrayal and loss of lives of our valiant jawans have to be avenged to keep up the morale of the Indian armed forces.

Thirdly, as the Home Ministry's 2005 Annual Report to Parliament points out, the LTTE has been targeting pro-Indian Sri Lanka politicians and assassinating

them. The latest is of course Kadirgamar. For India, the most heinous act is the assassination of Rajiv Gandhi. A trial court has declared Accused No.1 Prabhakaran a proclaimed offender, and the Interpol has issued a Red Corner Notice for apprehending him. India is thus obligated to search for Prabhakaran — and to immobilise the LTTE and deter it from engaging in any murderous and terrorist activities against India and Indian interests.

Fourthly, the LTTE interferes in the internal affairs of India by financing certain Indian politicians, providing training to Indian militant and extremist organisations, and extending insurgency infrastructure to bandits such as Vee-rappan. It also launders black money from India through its illegal Eelam Bank in the Jaffna area. India cannot allow such erosion of law and order within its own borders.

To discharge these obligations, what must India do? Obviously, it cannot depend on Sri Lankan governments of today or the near future to bring the LTTE to book. Sri Lankan political parties are either capitulationist or chauvinist. The recent pact of Mahinda Rajapakse, Prime Minister and presidential candidate, with the JVP that if voted to power he will defend the present failed unitary constitution is a retrograde step. This shows the Tamils are squeezed between the devil and the deep sea.

India's first move should be to initiate action to revive the hunt for those of the LTTE who need to be prosecuted under Indian law. This includes Prabhakaran and his intelligence chief Pottu Amman — and whoever has tried to help them to escape the arm of India's law enforcement.

In 1998, Parliament set up under the Central Bureau of Investigation a multidisciplinary monitoring agency (MDMA) to hunt for these wanted persons. But the National Democratic Alliance Government waffled and failed to pursue the matter. The present United Progressive Alliance Government has done even worse. When President Chandrika Kumaratunga came to India recently, India went along with the proposal to take on board the LTTE as a party in the tsunami relief work and have its share in the \$ 3 billion international aid commitment.

The time has come to energise the MDMA, to get it moving to apprehend the wanted criminals, in unconventional ways if necessary. Further, India must assist and nurture the democratic elements in the Sri Lankan Tamil population.

These include those who have demonstrated the capacity to stand up to the LTTE (such as S.C. Chandrasekaran, and the breakaway LTTE group that opposed Rajiv Gandhi's assassination, namely, the Karuna group), to form a non-violent and democratic alternative to work out with the Sinhala majority a federal constitution that would serve the purpose of power sharing. Thirdly, LTTE sleeper cells in Indian cities need to be identified and put out of action. At present, terrorists of various hues are active in several States and Union Territories.

One day, these terrorists and the LTTE sleeper cells may coordinate and cause a huge bloody incident. India must guard against such contingencies through pre-emptive action.

The time has come for India effectively to contribute to the war against terrorism and in the promotion of democracy by targeting the LTTE sincerely and effectively in the larger interest of security and national integrity.

(The writer is a former Union Law Minister.)

Anura meets Manmohan, Sonia

Diplomatic Correspondent

NEW DELHI: Sri Lankan Foreign Minister Anura Bandaranaike held discussions with Prime Minister Manmohan Singh, United Progressive Alliance (UPA) chairperson Sonia Gandhi, and External Affairs Minister Natwar Singh on Friday.

"This is Mr. Bandaranaike's first visit abroad after taking over as Foreign Minister and the fact that it is a visit to India bears testimony to the importance attached to the relationship by both countries," the External Affairs Ministry spokesman said.

Mr. Bandaranaike and Mr. Natwar Singh, the spokesman stated, agreed that bilateral relations between India and Sri Lanka were in excellent shape. The visiting Foreign Minister also briefed the Mr. Singh on domestic political develop-

ments in Sri Lanka, including the forthcoming presidential elections, and especially those following the assassination of Lakshman Kadirgamar.

Senior officials said that Mr. Bandaranaike, who was accompanied by Ambassador Jayantha Dhanapala, had no doubt that Kadirgamar's assassination was the work of the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE).

Expressing concern at the recent actions of the LTTE, the Sri Lankan Foreign Minister said the Sri Lankan Government would ask European countries to take stern steps against them.

Mr. Bandaranaike reiterated that there was no question of holding discussions with the Tigers in Oslo; the talks on the possible strengthening of the ceasefire agreement would take place in Sri Lanka.

কলম্বোকে এড়িয়ে দিল্লির সঙ্গে বোঝাপড়া চায় টাইগাররা

অগ্নি রায় • নয়াদিল্লি

১৬ অগস্ট: শ্রীলঙ্কার টাইগার-সমস্যায় আর কোনও ভাবেই হাত পোড়তে রাজি নয় নয়াদিল্লি।

ভারতবন্ধু, শ্রীলঙ্কার বিদেশমন্ত্রী লক্ষ্মণ কাদিরগামারের হত্যাকাণ্ডের পরে উৎসাহিত এল টি টি ই জঙ্গিরা যাতে ভারতেও সংঘর্ষ ছড়িয়ে দিতে না-পারে, সে দিকে মনমোহন সরকার সতর্ক নজর রাখছে। ঠিক একই ভাবে কলম্বোর শান্তি-প্রক্রিয়াতেও ভারত বিয়ু ঘটাতে চাইছে না। সব মিলিয়ে সরকারের কাছে পরিস্থিতি অনেকটা দড়ির উপরে হাঁটার সামিলা।

এল টি টি ই-র পক্ষ থেকে বেশ কিছু দিন ধরেই ভারত সরকারের কাছে প্রস্তাব আসছিল যে, শ্রীলঙ্কার টাইগারদের এলাকাভিত্তিক আধিপত্যকে আন্তর্জাতিক অনুমোদন পেতে সহায়তা করা হোক। সে ক্ষেত্রে অতীতের যাবতীয় সংঘাত এবং সন্দেহের ইতিহাস মুছে ফেলে টাইগারেরা নতুন করে ভারতের সঙ্গে বোঝাপড়ায় যেতে রাজি। ভারত কিন্তু এই ধরনের কোনও গোপন বোঝাপড়ায় যেতে আর রাজি নয়। মন্ত্রিসভার নিরাপত্তা বিষয়ক কমিটির সিদ্ধান্ত, প্রত্যেকের অথবা তার পাল্টা গোষ্ঠী করুণা— কলম্বো সরকারকে অবজ্ঞা করে কারও সঙ্গেই গোপনে আলোচনা করবে না ভারত।

গোয়েন্দাদের কাছ থেকে পাওয়া স্তব্ধতার ভিত্তিতে ভারত জেনেছে:

● বিদেশমন্ত্রী কাদিরগামারের সঙ্গে এল টি টি ই-র বিক্ষুব্ধ নেতা ভি মুরলীধরন ওরফে করুণার ঘনিষ্ঠ যোগাযোগ ছিল। করুণা গোষ্ঠী অনেক

দিন থেকেই গোপনে ভারত সরকারের সঙ্গে যোগাযোগ গড়ে তুলতে চাইছিল। আবার ভারতের সঙ্গে কাদিরগামারের সম্পর্কও ছিল যথেষ্ট বন্ধুত্বপূর্ণ। ফলে, কাদিরগামারের হত্যাকাণ্ড ভারতের কাছে এক প্রকারের অশুভ ইঙ্গিত।

● নেপালের মাওবাদী জঙ্গি প্রশিক্ষণ কেন্দ্র এবং ভারতের নকশালপট্টী সংগঠনকে এল টি টি ই নানা ভাবে মদত দিচ্ছে বলেও সুনির্দিষ্ট তথ্য এসেছে।

প্রতিরক্ষামন্ত্রী প্রণব মুখোপাধ্যায় বলেন, “এই ধরনের সব জঙ্গি সংগঠনের মধ্যে পারস্পরিক যোগাযোগ রয়েছে।” কেন্দ্রীয় স্বরাষ্ট্র মন্ত্রক সূত্রে আরও জানা গিয়েছে, অসমে আলফাডের কাছে এমন লাইফ বোট পাওয়া গিয়েছে, যেগুলি টাইগারেরাই ব্যবহার করে।

ছাব্বিশ বছর পরে কলম্বো সফরে গিয়েছিলেন প্রণববাবু। সঙ্গী ছিলেন বিদেশমন্ত্রী নটবর সিংহ এবং সরকারি

প্রতিনিধিদল। এই সফরে প্রণববাবু, প্রেসিডেন্ট চন্দ্রিকা কুমারতুঙ্গার সঙ্গে বৈঠক করেছেন। প্রণববাবু বলেন, “কলম্বোকে জানিয়েছি, এল টি টি ই-র সঙ্গে শ্রীলঙ্কা সরকারের যে শান্তি-প্রক্রিয়া চলছে, আমরা তা ভেঙে

দিতে চাই না। শ্রীলঙ্কার জাতীয় ঐক্য ও সংহতি বজায় থাক, সেটাও আমরা চাই। কিন্তু ভারতের সার্বভৌমত্ব এবং অভ্যন্তরীণ শান্তি ও নিরাপত্তা যাতে হিংসায় বিঘ্নিত না-হয়, তা নিশ্চিত করতে হবে।” তিনি

জানান, ক্রমবর্ধমান হিংসার বিরুদ্ধে ব্যবস্থা গ্রহণে কলম্বো সরকারকে ভারত সব রকম সাহায্য করবে।

দক্ষিণ-পূর্ব এশিয়ায় প্রতিটি দেশের মধ্যে পারস্পরিক শান্তি রক্ষার প্রসে

বোঝাপড়া রয়েছে। ঠিক যে কারণে ভারত ও পাকিস্তানের মধ্যে শান্তি-প্রক্রিয়া বিঘ্নিত

হলে শ্রীলঙ্কা উদ্বিগ্ন হয়, একই কারণে শ্রীলঙ্কার সঙ্গে এল টি টি ই-র সংঘর্ষ

ভারতের কাছেও অভিহিত নয়। ভারতীয় গোয়েন্দাদের রিপোর্টে দেখা যাচ্ছে, শুধু

জাফনা নয়, শ্রীলঙ্কার আরও বেশ কিছু এলাকা এখন এল টি টি ই-র সম্পূর্ণ

নিয়ন্ত্রণে। যেখানে কলম্বো প্রশাসন টুকতেই পারে না। সুন্মির পরে আণকাবে এল টি টি

ই-র সক্রিয় অংশগ্রহণ তাদের দাপট আরও স্পষ্ট করে দিয়েছে। এই সব এলাকায় আণকাবে পরিচালনা টুকতেই পারেনি কলম্বো সরকার।

সুন্মির জন্য বিদেশি অর্থ সাহায্য আসতে শুরু করলে এল টি টি ই দাবি

জানায় ওই অর্থ তাদের সরাসরি দেওয়া হোক।

নরওয়ে সরকার এই দাবি মেনে বিতর্ক সৃষ্টি করেছিল। কিন্তু অন্য কোনও দেশ তা করেনি। নরওয়ে জানায়, তারা যে হেতু এল টি টি ই এবং কলম্বো প্রশাসনের মধ্যে মধ্যস্থতাকারীর ভূমিকা পালন করতে চায়, তাই এই কাজ করা হয়েছে। ভারত কিন্তু এল টি টি ই-র বৈধতা এ ক্ষেত্রেও স্বীকার করেনি। আমেরিকা এবং ব্রিটেনে যে ভাবে

আজ্ঞাও এল টি টি ই নিষিদ্ধ, সে ভাবে ভারতও এই সংগঠনকে নিষিদ্ধ ঘোষণা করে রেখেছে।

টাইগারদের সম্পর্কে নতুন করে আলোচনার পক্ষে ছিল ডি এম কে। বিজেপি-র সঙ্গে ছেড়ে ডি এম কে এখন ইউপিএ জোট চলে আসায় সেই চাপ এখনও কাজ করছে। কিন্তু প্রতিরক্ষামন্ত্রী প্রণব মুখোপাধ্যায় থেকে জাতীয় নিরাপত্তা উপদেষ্টা এম কে নারায়ণন, কেউই

আর প্রত্যেককে বিশ্বাস করতে রাজি নন। অতীতে এল টি টি ই-র সঙ্গে শান্তি স্থাপনের চেষ্টা করে অনেক বড় মূল্য দিয়েছেন কংগ্রেস নেতৃত্ব। পরে সেই এল টি টি ই-র সঙ্গে কার্যত যুদ্ধে অংশ নিয়েছিল ভারত। আর এই রেয়ারেবির ফলস্বরূপ রাজীব গান্ধী-হত্যা। তাই চাপ

যা-ই থাকুক, নয়াদিল্লি সাধারণে পা ফেলে এসেগোতে চায়।

প্রতিরক্ষামন্ত্রীর বক্তব্য, “শ্রীলঙ্কায় সম্ভ্রাস সৃষ্টি হলে তার একটা প্রভাব আমাদের দেশে পড়বেই। তাই আমাদের এ ক্ষেত্রে একটা মধ্যস্থতা নিয়ে চলতে হবে।”

● পতাকা ছিড়ে ক্ষোভ শ্রীলঙ্কার...পৃঃ ৫

গুট্টা - S. Lanka

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India condemns assassination

Amit Baruah

NEW DELHI: India has "unreservedly" condemned the assassination of Sri Lankan Foreign Minister Lakshman Kadirgamar. It expressed deep shock and profound grief at Friday's murder in Colombo.

Defence Minister Pranab Mukherjee and External Affairs Minister Natwar Singh will represent India at the funeral on Monday.

Prime Minister Manmohan Singh on Saturday evening telephoned Sri Lankan President Chandrika Kumaratunga and expressed his condolences. He said Kadirgamar was "a great Sri Lankan" and "a friend of India."

Earlier, the External Affairs Ministry, in a statement, described him as a long-standing friend of India.

"This [his assassination] has been a heinous act and we condemn it unreservedly. We have every confidence that [the] Gov-

ernment and the friendly people of Sri Lanka will rise to the challenge and defeat the forces which seek to undermine Sri Lanka's unity and political stability," the release said.

"India will, as always, extend its full support to our friendly neighbour in its hour of need," the statement said.

"The Government of India's support for the unity and territorial integrity of Sri Lanka remains constant and undiluted.

"We convey the sincere condolences of the Government and people of India to Mrs. Kadirgamar and the entire Kadirgamar family on their irreparable loss. Our prayers are with them in their moment of sorrow."

Senior officials told *The Hindu* that India was closely watching the developments in Sri Lanka. The assassination could have an impact not just on the ceasefire with the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam but on the Sri Lankan Government itself.

The officials described the situation in Sri Lanka as "delicate," one that might force New Delhi to make policy choices on its future approach to the island nation. The assassination posed a number of questions to India as well, they said.

The formal Indian statement makes no reference to the need for continuing with the three-year-old ceasefire. It only speaks of India extending support to Sri Lanka in its hour of need.

On the other hand, a statement issued by the United States Secretary of State, Condoleezza Rice, refers to the need to persist with the ceasefire. "I last met Foreign Minister Kadirgamar this June. He was a man of dignity, honour and integrity, who dedicated his life to bringing peace to Sri Lanka. Together, we must honour his memory by re-dedicating ourselves to peace and ensuring that the ceasefire remains in force."

14 5/10/98

THE HINDU

Sethu project: Sri Lanka wants "joint monitoring"

Approaching international courts about concerns "a measure of last resort," says Lakshman Kadirgamar

V.S. Sambandan

COLOMBO: Sri Lanka on Thursday pressed the case for "joint monitoring and assessment of any adverse implication" of the Sethusamudram Ship Channel Project (SSCP).

In a written reply to Parliament, Foreign Affairs Minister Lakshman Kadirgamar described as "premature" and one that "remains in the realm of possibility" a question raised by the Jathika Hela Urumaya on seeking international legal redress in the case of environmental destruction. Mr. Kadirgamar, however, kept his country's option open by stating that countries could approach international courts as "a measure of last resort."

Mr. Kadirgamar said international conventions reflected concerns such as the impact of cross-border pollution and that some countries had "taken similar matters to international fora." "This is obviously a measure of last resort in the event of failure to resolve any issue through bilateral consultation and

take all the necessary steps to safeguard the wellbeing and the interests of our people and our country." This, he said, would be in a "calibrated and graduated manner, opting first for a cooperative and consultative approach." As Colombo was currently engaged in such an exercise, "We will consider further action thereafter if and when necessary," he said.

After Sri Lanka had raised its concerns relating to the SSCP's "likely trans-frontier impact on Sri Lanka, specially in environment and livelihood areas," it was agreed that India would "facilitate continuing Indo-Sri Lanka consultations," including at the "expert technical level," to arrive at a "common understanding on the environmental concerns," Mr. Kadirgamar said.

The Sri Lankan initiative, he said, was to "build a mechanism for exchange of information and jointly assess risks through a common base of information." Such a mechanism, he said, would be "based on well-recognised principles of inter-

national law relating to the duty to have due regard to the rights of other states and to ensure that activities under the jurisdiction or control of a state are so conducted as not to cause damage by pollution to other states and their environment."

Hoping that India "would

agree to a mechanism for joint monitoring" of any adverse fallout from the canal project, he said Prime Minister Manmohan Singh had "very clearly stated" that the island-nation's "environmental concerns and possible adverse implications are receiving India's serious at-

tention as well." On the meeting between the Sri Lankan President, Chandrika Kumaratunga, and Dr. Singh last month, Mr. Kadirgamar said: "We have to appreciate this constructive attitude and understanding shown by the Indian Prime Minister."

"Willing to talk with Colombo"

Diplomatic Correspondent

NEW DELHI: India is willing to discuss Sri Lanka's concerns about the Sethusamudram canal project. South Block officials told this correspondent.

Asked to comment on Sri Lanka Foreign Minister Lakshman Kadirgamar's remarks that Colombo may take New Delhi to an international court as a "last resort," the officials said a meeting between India and Sri Lankan experts on the issue would take place soon.

A joint statement issued in Colombo on June 10, during the visit of External Affairs Minister Natwar Singh, said: "The exchange of views should continue with regard to the Sethusamudram canal project, as agreed during the meeting between the Indian Prime Minister and the Sri Lankan President in June 2005.

"Accordingly, the next meeting of experts to be held at an early date, preferably in July, will focus on environmental concerns with a view to reaching a common understanding for addressing

them," the statement said. In turn, the June 3 joint statement issued after a meeting between Dr. Singh and Sri Lanka President Chandrika Kumaratunga, had stressed, "With regard to the Sethusamudram canal project, it was agreed that the exchange of views between the Indian and Sri Lankan technical experts should continue. This would be with regard to environmental concerns and prospects of closer economic cooperation between the two countries in the Palk Bay area."

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India boosts Lankan air defence

Island country will buy radar systems to counter LTTE threat

Colombo, June 10

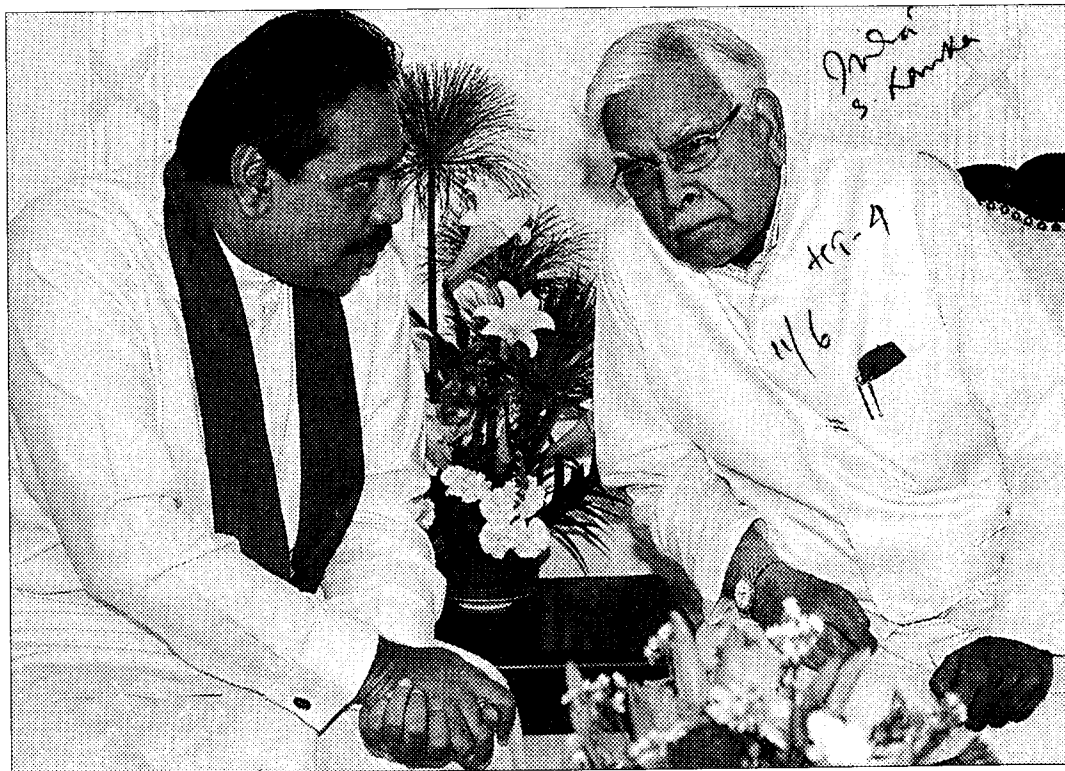
AMID CONCERNS over "acquisition" of air capability by the LTTE, Sri Lanka agreed on Friday, to purchase air defence radar systems from India. The South Asian neighbours signed two agreements and announced a slew of measures to bolster cooperation in economic, educational and developmental projects.

"Yes, we will certainly accept it", Sri Lankan foreign minister Lakshman Kadirgamar said at a joint press meet, with India's external affairs minister K. Natwar Singh, after a meeting of the India-Sri Lanka Joint Commission in Colombo. Kadirgamar added, "We are looking at ways and means to see how this can be done". The minister, however, declined to fix any timeframe for accepting it. The LTTE is suspected to have clandestinely built two airstrips in the areas under its control.

Singh said a defence cooperation agreement between the two countries "is in the process of being finalised. There are certain procedures to be gone through and that process is underway".

This would be a framework for providing cooperation for regular exchanges between their defence establishments, training of personnel and capacity building, he said. The two agreements, one relating to small development projects and the other dealing with an exchange programme on education, were signed in the presence of the two foreign ministers.

Singh said India has decided to train 450 Sri Lankan policemen. India will also provide a Rs 10 million grant for funding a pilot project of 20 e-libraries in the



Natwar Singh is all ears for Sri Lankan PM Mahinda Rajapakse at their breakfast meeting in Colombo.

PTI

Experts to meet on Sethusamudram

EXPERTS FROM India and Sri Lanka are likely to meet in July to discuss the environmental fallout of the Rs 2,300 crore Sethusamudram Canal Project. A joint statement, issued at the conclusion of India-Sri Lanka Joint Commission meeting in Colombo, said

the meeting of experts might be held in July to focus on environmental concerns regarding the project on the Palk Straits. The two sides further agreed to explore avenues for increased cooperation in the Palk Bay area.

PTI

island nation. Welcoming the ongoing close cooperation between the two countries in the areas of defence and security, Sri Lanka

thanked India for the offer of training for its police personnel and other facilities extended by the neighbouring country, a joint

press statement said.

The two sides also noted that regular exchange of visits by senior defence and security officials has contributed to enhanced cooperation, it said.

India has also offered to upgrade the Hatton-Dickoya hospital as well as the hospitals in Hambantota, Jaffna, Trincomalee and Point Pedro. Besides, the Archaeological Survey of India has agreed to assist in the restoration of the Thiruketheeswaran temple in Mannar and the Mulkirigala Raja Maha Viharaya in Hambantota on the southern coast.

Agencies

11 JUN 2005

THE HINDUSTAN TIMES

এলটিটিই নিয়ে উদ্বেগ জানাবে ভারত

স্টাফ রিপোর্টার, নয়াদিল্লি, ৯ জুন: আর দেরি না-করে শ্রীলঙ্কা সরকারকে এল টি টি ই-র কার্যকলাপ সম্পর্কে সতর্ক করতে চায় ভারত। দু'দেশের যুগ্ম কমিশনের বৈঠক উপলক্ষে আজ কলম্বো সফরে গিয়েছেন বিদেশমন্ত্রী নটবর সিংহ। সেই অবকাশে তিনি শ্রীলঙ্কার প্রেসিডেন্ট চন্দ্রিকা কুমারতুঙ্গাকে এল টি টি ই সম্পর্কে ভারতের উদ্বেগের কথাও জানাবেন।

প্রাক্তন প্রধানমন্ত্রী রাজীব গাঁধীকে হত্যার ঘটনায় এল টি টি ই সরাসরি যুক্ত ছিল। রাজীব-হত্যার তদন্তের কাজ এখনও চলছে। তার মধ্যই ভারতীয় গোয়েন্দাদের কাছে খবর এসেছে, সংঘর্ষ-বিরতির সুযোগ নিয়ে শ্রীলঙ্কায় এল টি টি ই জঙ্গি কার্যকলাপকে আরও প্রসারিত করছে। এল টি টি ই রীতিমতো একটি বিমানঘাটি তৈরি করে ফেলেছে এবং দু'টি বিমানও কিনেছে বলে গোয়েন্দারা খবর পেয়েছেন।

শ্রীলঙ্কা সরকার সম্প্রতি এল টি টি নেতা প্রভাকরনের সঙ্গে সংঘর্ষ-

বিরতি ঘোষণা করেছে। সুনামি কবলিত এলাকায় ত্রাণকার্য চালানোর ক্ষেত্রে শ্রীলঙ্কা সরকার এবং প্রভাকরন যৌথ ভাবে কাজ করেছে। এ বিষয়ে একটি যৌথ ব্যবস্থা গড়ে তোলা হয়েছে। উত্তর শ্রীলঙ্কায় এল টি টি ই-র প্রভাব-প্রতিপত্তি এত বেশি যে, ওই সব এলাকায় তাদের সাহায্য ছাড়া সরকারের পক্ষে কোনও কাজ করা সম্ভব নয়। কিন্তু প্রভাকরনের সঙ্গে এই সমঝোতার ঘোরতর বিরোধী শ্রীলঙ্কা সরকারের অন্যতম শরিক জনতা বিমুক্তি পেরমুলা। তাদের বক্তব্য, শুধু এল টি টি ই নয়, তামিল, বৌদ্ধ, মুসলিম ও মার্ক্সবাদী দলগুলিকেও এই কাজে সামিল করা হোক। শ্রীলঙ্কা সরকার অবশ্য তা করেনি।

এক দিকে যখন এল টি টি ই-র জঙ্গি তৎপরতা বৃদ্ধির খবর আসছে, অন্য দিকে আবার তাদের সংগঠনের ভিতরে ভাঙনের কথাও প্রকাশ্যে এসেছে। প্রভাকরনের পাল্টা গোষ্ঠী এল টি টি ই (করণা)-ও এখন খুব সক্রিয়। এই গোষ্ঠীর নেতারা ভারত

সরকারের সঙ্গে যোগাযোগ গড়ে তুলতে চেষ্টা চালিয়েছিলেন। কিন্তু পরিস্থিতি পর্যালোচনা করে মনমোহন সিংহের সরকার সিদ্ধান্ত নিয়েছে যে, এল টি টি ই-র এই বিক্ষুব্ধ গোষ্ঠীর সঙ্গে কোনও যোগাযোগ গড়ে তুলবে না দিল্লি। শ্রীলঙ্কা সরকারকে না-জানিয়ে বা তাদের চটিয়ে এই প্রসঙ্গে কোনও ব্যবস্থা নিতে ভারত চায় না।

এল টি টি ই-সংক্রান্ত আরও কিছু উদ্বেগজনক তথ্য এসে পৌঁছেছে ভারতীয় গোয়েন্দাদের হাতে। তাঁরা জানতে পেরেছেন, আলফা জঙ্গিরা যে 'লাইফ বোট' ব্যবহার করছে, সেগুলি এল টি টি ই-র কাছ থেকে পাওয়া। উত্তর-পূর্বাঞ্চলের অন্য জঙ্গি সংগঠনগুলির সঙ্গেও সম্প্রতি এল টি টি ই-র সম্পর্ক গড়ে উঠেছে।

বিদেশমন্ত্রী নটবর সিংহ তাঁর সফরে শ্রীলঙ্কার অভ্যন্তরীণ বিষয়ে নাক গলাবেন না। কিন্তু সংঘর্ষ-বিরতির সুযোগ নিয়ে এল টি টি ই-র দৌরাহ্মা বৃদ্ধির প্রচেষ্টার ব্যাপারে কলম্বোকে সতর্ক করে আসবেন।

India backs Lanka peace

Statesman News Service

NEW DELHI, June 9. — External affairs minister Mr K Natwar Singh said today that Delhi strongly supported the efforts of Sri Lanka government to shore up the peace process.

Saying this on his arrival at Colombo airport, where he will be co-chairing the India-Sri Lanka Joint Commission, along with his Sri Lankan counterpart, Mr Lakshman Kadirgamar, Mr Singh said he would be discussing ways to advance bilateral co-operation on education, culture, science and technology.

"The government and people of India remain firmly committed in their support for efforts being made by the government and the people of Sri Lanka to consolidate the process of peace and promote development in their country," Mr Singh, who will be in Sri Lanka for three days, said.

PM meets Koirala

NEW DELHI, June 9. — Dr Manmohan Singh met former Nepal Prime Minister and Nepali Congress leader, Mr GP Koirala, at his residence, this evening. Mr Koirala was accompanied by his party members and his family. There was also a one-on-one meeting between Dr Singh and Mr Koirala. Earlier in the day, Mr Koirala (82) met Mrs Sonia Gandhi. — SNS

THE STATESMAN

India backs Colombo plan

Role for LTTE in domestic mechanism for tsunami relief

HD-1
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WOMEN POWER: Sri Lankan President Chandrika Kumaratunga with the Congress president Sonia Gandhi, in New Delhi on Friday. During Ms. Kumaratunga's three-day visit, several bilateral issues including Colombo's plans to strike a tsunami-aid sharing deal with the LTTE are likely to figure in discussions.

— Photo: REUTERS

India Sri Lanka news

Siddharth Varadarajan

NEW DELHI: Ending all speculation to the contrary, India has come out in support of a controversial Sri Lankan Government proposal to involve the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) in a joint domestic mechanism for administering post-tsunami operations in that country.

Joint statement

The India-Sri Lanka joint statement issued here on Friday during the ongoing working visit of Sri Lankan President Chandrika Kumaratunga notes that she apprised Prime Minister Manmohan Singh of her efforts

to establish a Post-Tsunami Operational Management Structure (P-TOMS) and that the "Prime Minister expressed understanding of and support for these ongoing efforts".

New Delhi's endorsement of P-TOMS assumes significance in the light of the strong opposition by the Janatha Vimukthi Peramuna and other Sinhala political forces to the involvement of the LTTE in any administrative mechanism.

Those opposed to the 'joint mechanism' had claimed that India had reservations about the plan, and New Delhi's official silence on the issue helped fuel rumours in Colombo that this

was indeed the case. Anxious to clear the air, Ms. Kumaratunga came to Delhi on Thursday with the principal aim of discussing the 'joint mechanism' with India at the highest level.

Importance of P-TOMS

According to officials on both sides, the Sri Lankan President explained the importance of P-TOMS in the context of the ongoing peace process. "For the first time, the LTTE is going to involve itself in an administrative process with the Sri Lankan Government", a Sri Lankan official told *The Hindu*. "And this will be in an open, transparent mechanism with observers from

the donors".

When the joint mechanism gets off the ground, it would represent the first time Colombo and the LTTE engage each other since April 2003, when the latter broke off talks with the then UNP government. Not only is the Tigers' cooperation needed to make the disbursal of relief more effective, say officials, in the long-term this process might help generate trust and give an impetus to the peace process.

In a separate meeting on Friday, Ms. Kumaratunga briefed Congress president Sonia Gandhi about the proposed plan and received a positive response, say Lankan officials.

04 JUN 2005

THE HINDU

01 MAY 2005

THE HINDU

India committed to helping Sri Lanka

Plantation workers' welfare always close to our hearts: Shyam Saran

V.S. Sambandan

KANDY: Foreign Secretary Shyam Saran on Saturday said India was committed to the development of Sri Lanka's north-east through "economic and technical assistance."

Mr. Saran, who arrived here on a four-day official visit, made these remarks at a function in the eastern Trincomalee district.

The presence of the petroleum joint venture, IOC-Lanka in the eastern district, and Indian assistance to the Trincomalee Technical College were "symbolic and representative of the close and enduring ties that India has with north-eastern Sri Lanka," Mr. Saran said.

His remarks on India's commit-

ment marks a significant reiteration of New Delhi's position. They also come against the backdrop of efforts by the Sri Lankan Government to put in place a joint mechanism with the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam to work on post-tsunami reconstruction in the northern and eastern districts, parts of which are under control of the LTTE.

According to military estimates, the LTTE holds about 130 km of the total 330 km of tsunami-affected coastline in the north-east. Later this evening, at a function in Kandy to hand over four ambulances as India's gift to the people of Sri Lanka's central plantation districts, Mr. Saran said steps would be taken to expedite the construction of a 150-bed hospital.

● **Presence of petroleum joint venture 'symbolic'**

● **Four ambulances handed over**

● **150-bed hospital to be constructed in Dikoya**

Meets Kadirgamar

After his arrival in the early hours of Saturday, Mr. Saran met the Foreign Affairs Minister, Lakshman Kadirgamar, and "held cordial discussions on a wide range of bilateral, regional and global issues," the Indian High Commission said.

Mr. Monty Gopallawa, Governor of the Central Province, Mr. C. Nanda Mathew, Governor of the Uva Province, and the Chief Minister of the Central Province, Sarath Ekanayake, thanked India for its continued assistance to the central districts.

The hospital, to be constructed at Dikoya, is aimed at serving the plantation workers, who are descendants of indentured labourers brought from India during the British rule. India hoped that the

Tamil Nadu not facilitating LTTE activities, says Jayalalithaa

"Report claiming that the group smuggled essential items to Sri Lanka blown up"

Special Correspondent

CHENNAI: Chief Minister Jayalithaa on Sunday denied that the activities of the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam were being facilitated by Tamil Nadu.

The Annual Report of the Union Home Ministry for 2004-2005 which mentions that the LTTE "continues to use Tamil Nadu as a base for carrying out smuggling of essential items such as petrol, diesel and drugs to Sri Lanka," was blown up by certain sections of the media to create an impression that there was heightened LTTE activity in the State, she said.

Ms. Jayalalithaa said in a statement here that she had written to Union Home Minister Shivraj Patil expressing apprehensions about "a concerted move to denigrate the State Gov-

ernment despite its firm and uncompromising stand against the LTTE."

Referring to the inclusion of the item in the Annual Report, she said, "the subsequent attempt to play up this terse and trite statement in the media to create a political tsunami seems to be a deliberate ploy."

On Janata Party president Subramanian Swamy's demand for action on the Report and his charge that she was failing to control the LTTE's activities, Ms. Jayalalithaa said there appeared to be a carefully orchestrated plan to "besmirch the unique track record" of her Government on the issue.

"I have emphasised that it is essential to bring this to the notice of the Union Home Minister as I believe that in matters relating to the security of the country

and maintenance of law and order there ought not to be any attempt at scoring political brownie points," she said.

Her Government had never countenanced the violence practised by the LTTE and had worked to eradicate the spread of its culture in the State, she said.

Against great odds and at personal risk to her, the administration saw to it during 1991-96 that the LTTE could not retain even a toehold in the State.

"I have invited the specific attention of the Union Home Minister to the communication from the Union Home Ministry on May 19, conveying a specific personal threat to me from the LTTE, by assigning a mission to a woman suicide bomber," she said.

Ms. Jayalalithaa recalled that

the move to ban the LTTE was spearheaded by her in 1992.

"Despite the high security threat perception to me personally, I have been unwavering in my stand against the LTTE and it is my stand which has ensured that the LTTE continues to be banned to this day."

She referred to the resolution moved by her in the Assembly in 2002 urging the Centre to take legal and diplomatic efforts to get the LTTE chief V. Prabhakaran, extradited and face trial in India.

The Chief Minister Ms. Jayalalithaa also referred to her earlier suggestions to the Centre opposing a ferry service between Tuticorin and Colombo and favouring joint naval exercise by the Indian Navy and Sri Lankan Navy to curb unauthorised naval operations by the Sea Tigers.

1992
1995
1996

MAY 2005

THE HINDU

No danger to Sri Lankan Government: Kadirgamar

By Our Diplomatic Correspondent

NEW DELHI, FEB. 26. There is no threat to the survival of the Sri Lankan Government despite the little "push and shove" displayed by some allies in the coalition, the visiting Sri Lankan Foreign Minister, Lakshman Kadirgamar, said today.

Addressing a press conference at the Foreign Correspondents' Club (FCC), Mr. Kadirgamar said parties came into a coalition with different philosophies and disputes did break out between partners. However, he did not see any danger to the Government.

Mr. Kadirgamar, who had come here as a "special envoy" to thank the Government and people of India for the post-tsunami assistance, was effusive in his praise.

He made it a point to mention that today was the second month since the tsunami had hit the region.

The Foreign Minister called on the Prime Minister, Manmohan Singh, today and handed over a letter from the Sri Lankan President, Chandrika Kumaratunga, thanking India for its help. He also met the Congress President, Sonia Gandhi.

Mr. Kadirgamar told persons that literally within hours of the tsunami Indian aircraft and ships had come to Sri Lanka's aid.

Some 560 tonnes of relief material, including medicines, were provided by India. The Indian Navy, he stressed, had dis-



SPECIAL CALLING: The Sri Lankan Foreign Minister, Lakshman Kadirgamar, interacts with the Prime Minister, Manmohan Singh, at a meeting in New Delhi on Saturday. — AFP

played that it was a "first grade" force that put India in the forefront of modern naval powers.

Asked about the status of the Indo-Sri Lankan defence agreement, Mr. Kadirgamar revealed that all preparatory work had been completed and formal signatures of the two sides could be appended at any moment.

In response to another question, the Foreign Minister said

that India had no reason to be concerned by the presence of tsunami-linked foreign troops in Sri Lanka.

Pointing out that American marines had already left the island, he said no foreign troops would be stationed in Sri Lanka for the long haul.

Stressing that American troops had gone a great job, Mr. Kadirgamar maintained that the

Janatha Vimukthi Peramuna (JVP), a key ally in the coalition Government, had paid the best tribute to their role. He pointed out that some foreign medical personnel were still working in Sri Lanka.

India was initially concerned by the arrival of U.S. marines, but quickly New Delhi was satisfied that this was not an issue. All the American soldiers that

landed in Sri Lanka were not armed.

On the status of the peace process in Sri Lanka, Mr. Kadirgamar was of the view that this was not the time to revive the peace talks that were snapped by the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) 20 months ago.

According to him, the resumption of the peace talks involved difficult negotiations and the current priority was to rehabilitate people and areas devastated by the December 26 tsunami. He pointed out that talks were going on between government and LTTE representatives to arrive at a "practical working mechanism", especially in the "uncleared areas", to take on the task of rehabilitation.

The Foreign Minister stressed that a detailed reconstruction plan had been drawn up and India, to give one specific instance, had shown interest in putting the Negombo-Matara rail link back on track.

About a tsunami-warning system, he said it was absolutely critical to have such a system in place. International efforts to have such a system in the Indian Ocean were going on while India was going ahead with its own plans to put in place an early warning mechanism.

On Afghanistan's desire to join the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC), Mr. Kadirgamar said he had little doubt that the day would come when Afghanistan would join the grouping.