

# TAMIL GUARDIAN

50p

ISSN 1369-2208

No. 159

WEDNESDAY MAY 01, 2002

www.tamilguardian.com

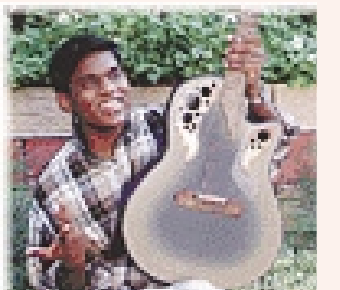
**FURTHER PROTESTS PLANNED** Page 2



**TARGETING THE CEASEFIRE** Page 6



**A RISING STAR** Page 8



## Sri Lankan armed forces resist ceasefire implementation

BARELY a week after the Norwegian facilitators hailed the rapid progress in Sri Lanka, the military is refusing to implement the terms and conditions stipulated in the indefinite ceasefire agreement signed on February 22, while actively violating other aspects.

In the past week Sri Lankan military personnel have arrested a Tamil Tiger political leader, confronted a Sea Tiger convoy registered with ceasefire monitors, blocked LTTE political cadres from access to government-held civilian areas and impeded civilian movement along the A9 - the opening of which was a key aspect of the truce.

The problems come as one hundred LTTE political cadres prepare this week to enter government-controlled territory in line with the terms of the agreement to join fifty other who began work a month ago.

Triggering a sudden stand-off last week, the Sri Lanka Navy suddenly declared the islets of the west coast of the Jaffna peninsula which are home to several thousand Tamil civilians as a 'military zone' and barred LTTE political cadres presently working in Jaffna town from entering. The Navy also said the Tigers could not bring their radios or wear their cyanide

capsules. The LTTE this week formally registered a strong protest with the Sri Lanka Monitoring Mission (SLMM), arguing that the agreement explicitly allows its political cadres access to these areas.

The Sri Lankan military is dragging its feet over the withdrawal of troops from public places. Troops should have vacated temples and places of worship by March 24, but most remain occupied. Residents in Batticaloa say the army still occupies at least 10 places of worship there, for example. A schedule of withdrawal the Army

- Islet crisis, p3
- Target ceasefire, p6
- Editorial, p7

had to produce is still outstanding. Although Sri Lankan forces have to vacate schools within 160 days of the ceasefire coming into effect on February 23, no troop movement has yet taken place.

Lorry owners in Jaffna town complained this week-end that the SLA was only allowing a restricted number of vehicles into Jaffna through the Muhamalai checkpoint, with delays of up to a week building up. Over seventy lorries were parked at

Muhamalai on Sunday, waiting for the army's permission, they said. The number of civilians allowed through Muhamalai is being arbitrarily capped, Jaffna residents say.

The Army has also failed to disarm Tamil paramilitaries operating alongside its troops - something which should have been completed within the first month of ceasefire. But in Jaffna, cadres of the paramilitary Eelam People's Democratic Party (EPDP) continue to bear arms in the islets that were declared a military zone last week.

There are fears the escalating ceasefire violations by the military, along with SLA's failure to withdraw from public places such as schools and temples could further delay the first direct talks between the LTTE and the Sri Lankan government, tentatively set for mid-June in Thailand.

When the Norwegian Deputy Foreign Minister Vidar Helgesen met LTTE leader Vellupillai Pirapaharan on April 17, the latter had expressed dissatisfaction with Sri Lankan delays in the implementing of the terms and conditions of the truce agreement.

The cease-fire agreement had to be fully implemented before peace talks went ahead in Thailand, the LTTE



SLA troops are resisting ceasefire rules on withdrawals from public places Photo AFP

had pointed out to the Norwegian delegation. The Tigers also reiterated that Sri Lanka's ban on the movement had to be lifted before direct talks.

Last Wednesday, the Sri

Lanka Navy launched a flotilla to intercept senior LTTE officials from the eastern province returning home after meetings in the Vanni with top LTTE commanders and Tamil and Muslim politi-

cians. Despite having been informed of the scheduled Sea Tiger convoy through the SLMM, the Navy launched a sudden raid. Although the Navy failed to apprehend

Continued to page 3

## India plans for 'credible nuclear deterrent'

INDIA, which has been in a tense military standoff with Pakistan for months, plans to set up a nuclear command structure, a move seen as a demonstration of its resolve to build a "minimum credible nuclear deterrent."

A Defense Ministry official told Reuters last week the government had given "in principle" clearance for such a command, but it was not linked with the dangerous stand-off with Pakistan. "The government is working at it," he said. "It can take several months. But we have reached a general agreement that the command will be headed by the air force for the time being."

The plans for the command structure come four years after India conducted nuclear tests and follow comments by Pakistan's President Pervez Musharraf that his country could use nuclear weapons against India if

its security was threatened. "Setting up of the strategic command is a step in the direction of greater transparency," nuclear affairs expert P.R. Chari said Friday. It demonstrated the Indian government's resolve in pressing ahead with plans to build a "minimum credible nuclear deterrent," he said.

The composition, size and chain of command of Indian and Pakistani nuclear weaponry is so far unclear, though India has said its command will be headed by an air force officer, suggesting the deterrent will be based on fighter planes rather than at sea. The only other thing known about India's highly secretive nuclear weapons program is that the button lies in the hands of the prime minister.

The announcement comes when nearly a million troops are mobilised on the Indo-Pakistan border.

## Delhi tests 300km cruise missile

THE Indian authorities say they have successfully tested a supersonic cruise missile developed jointly with Russia, the BBC reported Monday.

A defence ministry spokesman in Delhi said the missile, known as Brahmos, had a range of 300 kilometres and could carry a 200 kilogram conventional warhead.

Brahmos can be launched from ships, submarines or aircraft, and can travel at twice the speed of sound. The missile was first tested last year. It is fuelled with a solid propellant and has a pre-set trajectory. But a sen-

sor on its head detects the target and can change course to strike 20 km from the targeted range.

The missile was developed by a joint venture company formed in 1998 by Indian and Russian state defence organisations. India is vigorously pursuing its missile programme.

The two countries have enjoyed close defence ties stemming from the cold war period. Nearly 70% of India's defence hardware is of Soviet origin and in recent years Delhi has ordered fighter planes, tanks and submarines from Russia.



Mr. Balasingham (front, 2nd r) is accompanied by his wife Adele (back, 1st l), Mr. Thamil Chelvan (bk, 3rd l), Norwegian official Kirsti Tromsdale (bk 1st r), LTTE Col Soosai (fore, 1st r) and LTTE police chief Nadesan (fore 2nd l). Photo Alex/LTTE

## Chief negotiator returns to London

THE Liberation Tigers' chief negotiator and political strategist, Mr. Anton Balasingham, returned to London last week via the Maldives following several weeks of hectic diplomatic activity in the Vanni.

Accompanied by his wife, Adele, and Norwegian Foreign Ministry official Kirsti Tromsdale, Mr. Balasingham last Wednesday boarded a Maldives 'Air Taxi' twin otter seaplane which arrived at Irinamadula lake in the Vanni. The aircraft flew to Maldives via the island's east coast, crossing the Trincomalee area.

The Sri Lanka Air Force this week protested that the aircraft had deviated from its expected flight path (overland across Mannar to Maldives) and filed a complaint with the Lanka Monitoring Mission (SLMM). However, Mr. Balasingham who arrived in London late Thursday

told the Tamil Guardian that the Canadian pilots selected the Norwegian-sponsored plane's flight path based on security considerations.

Sri Lankan press reports claimed the aircraft had risked being shot down by deviating from its scheduled path. The SLAF chief, Air Marshal Jayalath Weerakkodi, said the military were able to keep the plane under surveillance.

Mr. Balasingham flew to Vanni in late March to hold discussions on the Norwegian peace process with LTTE leader, Mr. Vellupillai Pirapaharan and other senior officials. Mr. Balasingham also participated in key meetings between the LTTE and the Norwegian peace envoys and others with Tamil, Muslim and upcountry political parties as well as a landmark international press conference held by Mr. Pirapaharan on April 10.

## SLA seeks recruits, steps up training

THE Sri Lankan Army this week began a new recruitment drive and said it had intensified training to levels higher than before the indefinite ceasefire was signed in February. The Deputy Chief of Staff Lohan Gunawardane

also said arms purchases were continuing amid the ceasefire as the military needed to maintain its strength.

"Any army will use such a period to re-arm and re-train itself, and we are also doing our own training at a level much more than what we did during times of war," Gunawardane said.

"The Army has an approved cadre for the provision of maintaining security for Sri Lanka. Right now, there is a shortfall and we are recruiting only to fill up the shortfall," he said.

Beset for many years by desertions and low recruitment, the Army says it has a shortfall of around 15,000

soldiers annually, and that the same number is needed to replace those who reach retirement age. The Army expects to enlist 5,000 soldiers in its current campaign.

Gunawardane denied that the move implied lack of confidence on the part of the Army about the success of ceasefire with the LTTE. "I don't think it will go against the [agreement] because we are only stabilising ourselves."

"Because of the shortfall, we are finding it difficult to do our duties. Maybe if peace comes, we will reduce our side," he added.

Gunawardane also denied rumours about the military's reservations over the government's peace moves and said the Sri Lankan Army was "extremely supportive" of the Norwegian peace process because it was the soldier who suffered most during war.

**TILKO ESTATES**

Sales, Letting and Financial services

Established over 12 years

Covering all of East London

Investment properties available to buy or to let

BUY TO LET MORTGAGES ARRANGED

www.tilko.com

East Ham E6 Walthamstow E17 Bethnal Green E2 Wanstead E11 Stratford E15

T: 020 8472 0029 T: 020 8520 9968 T: 020 8981 4000 T: 020 8989 0002 T: 020 8503 1999

F: 020 8503 5996 F: 020 8503 7661 F: 020 8981 5678 F: 020 8989 0003 F: 020 8503 0999

**Mortgages**

YOU MIGHT HAVE TRIED THE REST BUT NOW DON'T MISS THE BEST

Independent advice given on mortgages

Please call Mr P Jegan for more confidential advice

NON STATUS CCJ's

BUY TO LET ADVERSE CREDIT

RIGHT TO BUY FOREIGN NATIONALS

RE-MORTGAGE SELF CERTIFIED (No payslips/Bank Statements)

Your home is at risk if you do not keep up a mortgage or other loan secured on it

**WILSON**

FINANCIAL SERVICES LTD

383 Northholt Road, South Harrow, Middlesex HA2 8JD

Tel: 020 8426 7100 Fax: 020 8426 7500

info@wilsonestate.co.uk www.wilsonestate.co.uk

**Your Dream Home Mortgages**

Trouble GETTING a MORTGAGE?

You need to TALK to US for a BETTER DEAL

Mortgages Buy to Let

Re-mortgages No proof of Income

Adverse Credits CCJ'S

Right to Buy Self Certified

Bright Homes estate agents Ltd

Call Aravin for a more a detailed & personal advice

49 North Road Southall, Middlesex, UB1 2JL

Tel: 020 8867 9696, Fax: 020 8867 9339, info@bright-homes.co.uk

Your home is at risk if you do not keep up a mortgage or other loan secured on it