



SCOPP Newsletter



April / May 2007

Secretariat for Coordinating the Peace Process (SCOPP)

Volume 1 Issue 8

Inside news items

- President Rajapaksa appeals for joint action against terrorism at SAARC Summit
- LTTE abducts two UN Officers
- Jaffna Traders Support GOSL Efforts to Carry Supplies to Jaffna - Prices Drop
- Full Text: President Mahinda Rajapaksa's address to the opening session of the 14th Summit of the South Asian Association of Regional Cooperation (p.1)
- Significant Reduction in prices of Essential Items in Jaffna— Private Sector lends support to Govt in price stabilization effort (p.4)
- No 'Economic Blockade in the Vanni' as Referred to by LTTE Peace Secretariat (p.6)
- SCOPP Local monitors (p.8)
- Schools Re-construction in the Eastern Province- Government facilitates the Rotary International Schools Project (p.9)
- Rapid recovery in Tsunami ravaged North and the East Government spearhead drive in Reconstruction (p.11)
- Amnesty International's campaign and LTTE's expectations fail (p.14)
- LTTE continues to target civilians (p.15)

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President Rajapaksa appeals for joint action against terrorism at SAARC Summit



▲President Mahinda Rajapaksa's addressing the opening session of the 14th Summit of the South Asian Association of Regional Cooperation at New Delhi.

President Mahinda Rajapaksa has emphasized that no country could afford to limit their resolve in the eradication of terrorism to a mere subset of national security. Addressing the 14th Summit of the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) in New Delhi on Tuesday (3 April 2007) the President said,

"Terrorism anywhere is terrorism and is a global menace. Unless we act collectively as a region, trans-border terrorist groups will find safe havens in other parts of the region. Modern day terrorists operate in a multi-dimensional fashion. They operate politically, militarily, financially and ideologically".

Full text of speech refer overleaf

LTTE abducts two UN Officers

It has been reported that two UN employees have been kidnapped by the LTTE. This is the first time that UN officers have been targeted in Sri Lanka, a flagrant violation of the traditional global protection provided to the UN. The LTTE had accused the two UN staffers, identified as Sri Lankan Tamils of assisting a group of Tamils fleeing the LTTE held region in the North, the timeframe of the incidents runs parallel with reports of massive LTTE forced recruitment in LTTE controlled areas.



Jaffna traders support GOSL efforts to carry supplies to Jaffna— Prices Drop

Twelve traders from Jaffna, under the facilitation of the Federation of Chambers of Commerce & Industry (FCCISL) have undertaken to ship two thousand metric tones of goods from Colombo to Jaffna (on a weekly basis) in support of the on going efforts of the Government to supply the needs of the people in the Jaffna peninsula.

The above initiative signals a new dimension in the combined Public-Private sector efforts towards peace building and provision of humanitarian assistance.

Refer p.6 for full story

President Mahinda Rajapaksa's address to the opening session of the 14th Summit of the South Asian Association of Regional Cooperation



Your Excellency, Dr. Manmohan Singh
Chairman of the 14th SAARC Summit
Excellencies,
Distinguished Guests,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is with a sense of happiness that I am here today to participate in the 14th SAARC Summit. Each of my visits to India has been a special occasion. However, this is very special to me since it is for the first time that I am attending the SAARC Summit as the President of Sri Lanka. I, therefore, take this opportunity to convey my sincere appreciation to the government of India; in particular, to Your Excellency, the Prime Minister of India as well as the people of India for the warm welcome and the generous hospitality that I and my delegation have been accorded and also for the excellent arrangements made for the Summit.

Mr. Chairman, let me congratulate you on your election as the Chairman of the fourteenth SAARC Summit. Your stewardship will no doubt see SAARC meet the challenges of the twenty first century, based on the goals set for the third decade of its journey. Sri Lanka will whole heartedly extend its cooperation and assistance to the Government of India in its position as the new Chair of SAARC.

I take this opportunity to pay my tribute to the outgoing Chair, Bangladesh.

I compliment His Excellency Lyonpo Chenkyab Dorji, Secretary General of SAARC and his team for their commitment.

I also take this opportunity to extend a warm welcome to Afghanistan, the most recent addition to SAARC membership.

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Our region is the proud inheritor of a unique historical tradition. Our common contribution to religion, art, literature, and moral values is second to none. But, today, we are a region of contrasts. There are significant disparities in GDP, income levels, natural resources, populations etc.

Countries, particularly in Europe, have come together to form regional blocks despite major differences in language, culture, religion, income levels and deep seated historical enmities bringing benefits to their people that could not have been possible only a few years ago. I am particularly concerned that SAARC has not realized its enormous potential yet.

I strongly believe that SAARC must become a Union where we will endeavour to achieve our political and economic pursuits. It is also high time that we adopt a single currency, which will enhance the productivity of the region and improve trade without barriers.

We should be able to transform our people to be the producers for the world given the diversity and the rich soils of our region. I request this august forum, to adopt a resolution to work with dedication and commitment to uplift the quality of our people in the rural areas.

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

SAARC, as I see, today stands at a critical point. A large majority of our peoples are living in rural environments. We should pause for a moment to ask ourselves, "What have we really done for our rural masses?" Whilst we like to have sprawling cities in our countries, haven't we neglected the majority of our people, the rural poor? The little we have done in our rural areas has been small initiatives. Most villages stand with little or no basic infrastructure.

Our region, home for over one-fifth of the global population, must focus on the livelihoods of most of our people. Let us not forget that the entire SAARC region is still seriously affected by poverty, although during the last two decades, we have concentrated on reducing it. Our shoulders to deliver now, and not wait for the future.

We should be able to transform our people to be the producers for the world given the diversity and the rich soils of our region. I request this august forum, to adopt a resolution to work with dedication and commitment to uplift the quality of our people in the rural areas.

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am a strong believer of practicality. While endorsing and fully subscribing to the values of SAARC, we badly need to be action-oriented rather than dependent on rhetoric. Merely saying good things about each other and ignoring the reality will take us nowhere. Therefore, all what we have endorsed over the years, must without any further delay, be transformed into action.

Promotion of intra-regional trade is important to realize the goals enshrined in the SAARC Charter to improve the image of the region as viable economic powerhouse. We must have a region-centric approach to make the SAFTA work in a real sense and give it effective force. I believe that a sincere commitment and a strict timetable to implement the SAFTA will lead to whole of South Asia becoming one massive region for enhancement of trade.

Coincidentally, year 2007 has been named the "South Asia Year of Tourism". Tourism is one of the most lucrative trades that has not been fully tapped and developed systematically in our region. Our governments need to find new avenues to develop inter-regional and intra-regional tourism in a sustainable and eco-friendly manner. More intra-regional travel will promote people to people contact we have advocated for so long.

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Deviating from economic issues, I wish to touch upon the question of human rights in the region - an issue that is close to my heart and which has been a critical motivating force in my political career. Human rights have been a part and parcel of the great cultural tradition of the sub-continent for millennia. The edicts of Emperor Asoka scattered around the sub-continent are an ample testimony to that.

Guided by the principles of our great religions, we have respected the rights of our fellow human beings, and it has not been necessary for us to wait for the calamity of global wars or the deaths of millions due to misguided philosophies to recognize their value. We, in our region, will continue to protect and advance human rights, including economic rights, despite having to struggle with differences and poverty left behind by centuries of colonial domination.

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Speaking of terrorism, no country could sustain itself and flourish without addressing the need to maintain security and no country could afford to limit their resolve to the eradication of terrorism to a mere subset of national security. Terrorism anywhere is terrorism and is a global menace. Unless we act collectively as a region, trans-border terrorist groups will find safe havens in other parts of the region. Modern day terrorists operate in a multi-dimensional fashion. They operate politically, militarily, financially and ideologically.

Therefore, our effort to curb this menace should also be multi-pronged and sustained and far reaching, and must include their sources of sustenance. The recent air attack at Katunayake by the LTTE must attract attention of all of us to the fact that our region as a whole is not safe from the barbaric terrorist groups. I wish to appeal therefore to this august forum to work jointly on a counter terrorism strategy for our entire region, to defeat terrorism.

My government has placed great emphasis on eradicating terrorism and making Sri Lanka a safe place for our people. It is not lost on us, however, that terrorism, whilst needs to be suppressed, also has to be grappled with, on a political platform

Mr. Chairman, I am very much in agreement with your proposal to establish a South Asian university. This university need not be confined to one country. We need to ensure that learning is borderless and that any student in any of our countries could benefit out of this unique initiative.

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

The time has come to move away from 'fancy rhetoric' and give way for action and relentless effort in our resolve to achieve the collective aspirations of all of us.

In conclusion, may I therefore be permitted to quote a great son of the region, Emperor Asoka, (I quote) "May my sons, grandsons, and great grandsons strive for the welfare of all mankind. But this is difficult without great and sincere effort".

May the Noble Triple Gem Bless you all!

Significant Reduction in prices of Essential Items in Jaffna— *Private Sector lends support to Govt in price stabilization effort*

Prices of essential goods have come down dramatically in Jaffna in the last week with the increased flow of goods to the Peninsula by the efforts of the Govt supported by the Private sector.

Key Item Prices

Some goods have registered a 400 % drop in prices. For example, a piece of soap that was being sold at Rs. 100/= two months ago, is now being retailed at Rs. 25.00. One kg. of sugar that fetched Rs. 330 is now being sold at Rs. 68.00. Milk Powder that was priced at Rs. 300 per packet is now only Rs. 170.

This remarkable outcome is due to the steady flow of goods into Jaffna through ships chartered by the Govt. and lately by the private sector.

Govt-Private sector initiative

Since mid - August 2006 following the unprovoked LTTE attack at Muhamalai that forced the closure of A9 route, the Govt. has shipped over 92, 000 tonnes of essential supplies to Jaffna peninsula, according to latest figures available from the Office of the Commissioner - General of Essential Services.

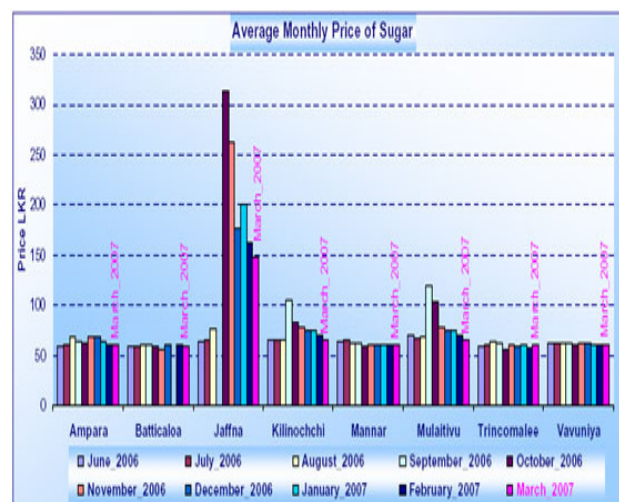
The tonnage shipped to Jaffna from Colombo will be further enhanced with two thousand tonnes per week - being the contribution of the private sector i.e. traders from Jaffna, under the facilitation of the Federation of Chambers of Commerce & Industry (FCCISL).

Attack on Ships supplying goods

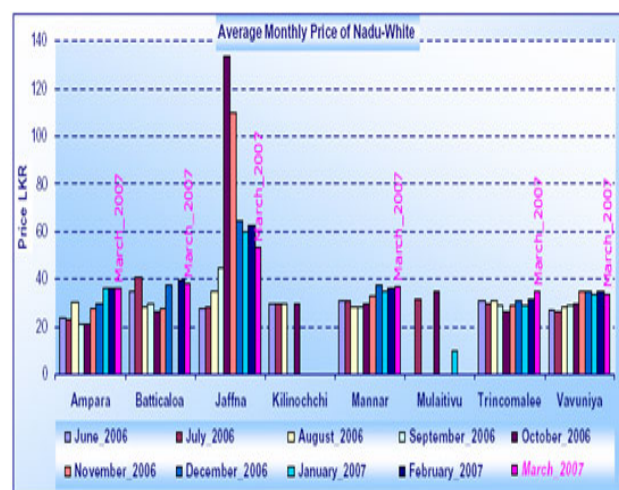
The Government commitment to ensure supplies and humanitarian assistance to people of Jaffna through chartered ships is despite LTTE obstruction and acts of piracy. One such ship i.e. cargo vessel 'City of Liverpool' came under pre - meditated attacks of the LTTE on the 21st January '07, when the ship was anchored just outside the Kankasanthurai (KKS) harbour after unloading essential food supplies.

Comparison Vs 6 months ago (Source: VAM/M&E Unit, Country Office, Colombo)

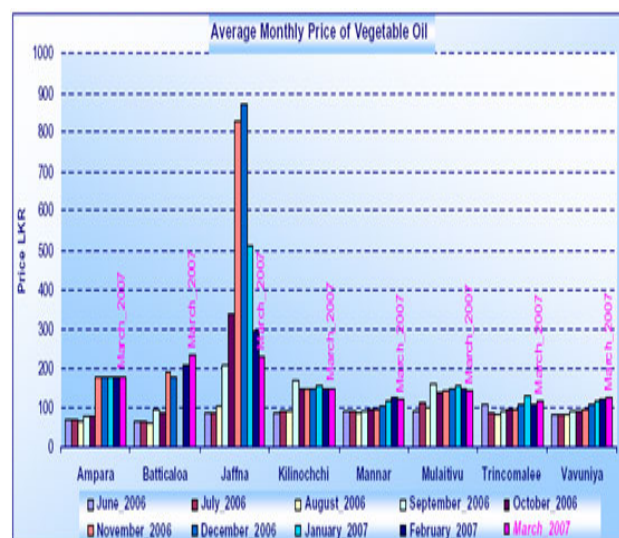
Prices of Sugar



Prices of Nadhu-White



Prices of vegetable oil





▲Public–private interaction for peace and economic building- goods being loaded onto the 'Induruwa Valley'

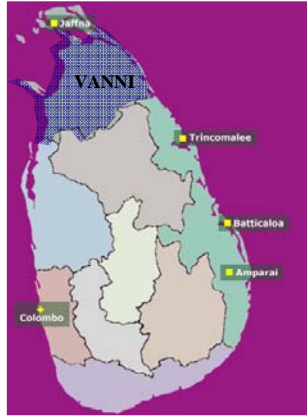
Comparison of the Prices

A comparative study of prices of select number of goods over a two month period (Prices of goods as at 4th February vis - a - vis goods as at 4th April, 2007) has revealed this drastic fall in prices.

* All values in Rupees and consumer price				
Items	Qty	Jaffna Consumer Prices (4th Feb) (Retail Price)	Jaffna Consumer Prices (4th April) (Retail Price)	Indexed
Soap - Lux	1 Unit	100.00	25.00	25
Sunlight	1 Unit	100.00	24.00	24
Toothpaste (medium)	1 Unit	55.00	48.00	87
Tooth Brush	1 Unit	40.00	39.00	98
Gram flour	1 kg			
Margarine(100g)	1 Pkt	150.00	75.00	50
Noodles	1 Kg	42.00	28.00	67
Lentils	1 kg	83.00	70.00	84
Coconuts	1 Unit	90.00	50.00	56
Sugar	1 kg	330.00	68.00	21
Milk powder	1 Pkt	300.00	170.00	57
Wheat Flour (Kg)	1 kg	90.00	50.00	56
Eggs	1 unit	32.00	25.00	78
Yeast (Kg)				
Bread (450 gr)	1 Unit	30.00	32.00	107
Rice (Samba)	1 kg	160.00	50.00	31
Potatoes	1 kg	120.00	85.00	70
Onions	1 kg	40.00	15.00	38
Brinjals	1 kg	150.00	20.00	13
Carrots	1 kg	100.00	40.00	40
Green gram	1 kg	240.00	135.00	56
Salt (kg)	1 kg	40.00	35.00	88
Box of Matches	1 Carton	50.00	30.00	60
Panadol (Card)	1 Card	35.00	30.00	51
Coriander				
Kadala gram				
Canned Fish (Medium)	1 Tin	165.00	140.00	84
Candles (medium)	1 Unit	12.00	5.00	41
Mosquito coils	1 Pkt	65.00	45.00	69
Dried Red chillies	1 kg	450.00	140.00	31
Kerosene oil (liter)	1 Ltr	75.00	90.00	120
Coconut oil	1 Ltr	450.00	150.00	33
Vegetable oil (liter)	1 Ltr	450.00	150.00	33
Source : - Jaffna Prices from Chamber of Commerce and Industries of Jaffna and Local Monitor for SCOPP - Colombo Prices – Retail Outlet				

No 'Economic Blockade in the Vanni' as Referred to by LTTE Peace Secretariat

LTTE resorts to false propaganda to counter Government success in transporting essential supplies to civilians in the Vanni



- 995 MT of essential items sent to Vanni by the Government from 27th Dec 2006 to date, facilitated by the Federation of the Chamber of Commerce and Industry Sri Lanka (FCCIISL)
- A further 3105 MT of items in the process of being delivered to the Vanni once again coordinated by the FCCIISL.
- A Whole Sale Distribution Center was instituted on the 10th of Feb 2007 by Government in Killinochchi.

The LTTE Peace Secretariat on 28 March 2007 spoke of an 'economic blockade of the Vanni' and of the 'banning' of all goods including 'basic food items'. This is simply not true. On a request made from the Killinochchi District Chamber of Commerce, 995 MT of essential supplies to the people in the Vanni was supplied during the last 4 months coordinated by the Federation of the Chamber of Commerce and Industry Sri Lanka (FCCIISL). This has not only ensured the providing of the essential items but has resulted in the stabilization of prices of goods in Killinochchi and Mulla-tivu. A further 3105 MT is in the process of being sent to Vanni once again coordinated by the FCCIISL.

On the recommendation made by the District Chambers of Killinochchi a Whole Sale Distribution Center was established in Killinochchi to accommodate a warehouse facility for sufficient buffer stocks in the Vanni areas. It is a known fact that the LTTE deliberately creates shortages of supplies of essential goods.

The officials of the FCCIISL who are from the private sector are committed to be a part of these strenuous efforts of the Government to meet the demands of the people in Vanni and Jaffna. 'Time has come for us to work towards the people of this country be they from the North or the South' said one of the CEO's of the District Chambers, when asked why they initiated such a programme.

The Ealanatham, a Killinochchi daily on the 18 February 2007, just three weeks before the LTTE Peace Secretariat report, advertised the maximum retail prices that could be levied by a trader in the area. This price list gives the reader a better understanding of how the prices of essential goods are being reduced and of how the supply of same was uninterrupted. The Government has done its utmost to bring normalcy for the people of

18-02-2007

கட்டுப்பாட்டு விலை தீர்மானம்

பல்கொருட்களுக்கான கட்டுப்பாட்டு விலையினை நிதித்துறையின் விலைக்கட்டுப்பாட்டுப் பகுதியின் தீர்மானத்துக்கீழ் உள்ளது. எதிர்வரும் முதுகாம் திசுவியிலிருந்து மறு அறிவித்தல்வரை தீர்மானிக்கப்பட்ட விலைவாறுக்களைப் பட்டியலிடுகின்ற பொருட்களை விற்பனை செய்யும்படி வாணிபர் அனைவரையும் நிதித்துறையினர் வேண்டியுள்ளன.

பொருட்களின் பெயர்	அனுமதிக்கப்பட்ட விலை (₹-ரூபாய்)
சீனி	65.00
மாவு	46.50
பருப்பு-மஞ்சள், சிவப்பு	70.00
மணி செண்பி	100.00
சல்லடை	23.00
லகல்	25.00
பேயி சேர்ப்	23.00
தீப் பொட்டி	3.00
லகல் பிழை	(400 கிராம்) 160.00
அங்குரி	(400 கிராம்) 170.00
அங்குரி +1	(400 கிராம்) 168.00
அங்குரி 3+	(400 கிராம்) 170.00
நெல் பிழை	(400 கிராம்) 170.00
நெல் பிழை 1+	(400 கிராம்) 188.00
செரலக்-அப்பிள்	(400 கிராம்) 180.00
செரலக்-ஹைல்	(400 கிராம்) 180.00
செரலக்-சிக்கன்	(350 கிராம்) 195.00
செரலக்-மரக்கறி	(350 கிராம்) 178.00
குலக்கோதுமை I	210.00
குலக்கோதுமை II	190.00
நெல் பிழை	185.00
சீனா	185.00
பனடோல்	1.50
பேயி பனடோல்	1.75
பனடோல் சிறுப் (60 மீ.மீ)	75.00
பனடூன்	3.25
பிறந்தோன் சிறுப் (100 மீ.மீ)	74.00

Another 3105 MT of Items in the process of delivery to the Vanni. On the 15th of March the Government approved yet another request from the Killinochchi district for the supply of 2600 MT of items once again co-ordinated by the FCCIISL. All necessary arrangements have been made at the Omanthai check point for the smooth transportation of these items. These items include general hardware, electrical items, bicycles, bicycle spare parts, tyres and tubes, roofing sheets and sewing machines.

The LTTE Peace Secretariat release on 28 March 2007 highlighted that these items were not allowed in the Vanni. This is not in keeping with the reality at the ground level.

Infrastructure in Vanni

There has not been a ban on goods being sent to Vanni nor has there been a blockade. It is the LTTE that has created such a situation in order to control people of Vanni and also to fulfill the LTTE's own needs through the Government supplies. The only restriction that is being imposed on specific goods to Vanni is due to the very nature of such goods as they are being used for LTTE terror activities. The stories written by the LTTE are only a note of desperation where they failed to stop the Government's efforts together with the FCCISL in continuing the supply of essential goods to Vanni.

Contrary to LTTE Peace Secretariat reports, an offer was made to supply 2500 MT of rice from the Vanni to other parts of Sri Lanka. This could have included the rice looted from the ship Farah III (see SCOPP report "LTTE Loots Jordanian Merchant Vessel MV Farah III")

The A9 was closed at Muhamalai on 11 August 2006 by the military as a result of a camouflaged attack launched by the LTTE. This attack at Muhamalai on A9 was launched by the LTTE by way of a bus carrying passengers. Thus the reports of this nature by the LTTE is to pressurize the Government through the international community in order to re-open the road at Muhamalai to re-inforce their illegal tax collection from those who use that road. The report on the economic blockade is not only a lie but also a deliberate attempt to mislead the people and the international community through its propaganda machine in order to collect money and seek sympathy. The consumers in Killinochchi, Mullativu, Mannar and Vavuniya are being looked after by the Government like any other consumer in the South and the North

The UN and other international humanitarian agencies working in Sri Lanka as well as other members of the international community are well aware that the people living in the Vanni and in the North of Sri Lanka are totally supported by Government infrastructure and covers areas such as health, education through Government civil administration.

According to Article 3.7 of the CFA, Local Monitors were appointed by the Government of Sri Lanka in six districts, soon after the signing of the CFA between the Government and the LTTE, in February 2002.

The primary task of the local monitors was to monitor the implementation of the Ceasefire agreement between the Government of Sri Lanka and the LTTE in the Districts of Jaffna, Batticaloa, Ampara, Vavuniya, Trincomalee and Mannar

The local monitoring Committee is headed by a member of the SLMM and comprises of two members each, one appointed by the Government of Sri Lanka and the other by the LTTE.

Initially these Local monitors were supposed to meet with the Peace Secretariat

Staff on a quarterly basis which does not seem to be the norm as there has been no meeting/s of this nature since the last one was held in November 2005.

However, after, Dr. Palitha Kohona assumed duties as the new Secretary General, the very first meeting with all local monitors was held at the Peace Secretariat on the 20th of March 2007.

It was emphasized at this meeting that frequent meetings and the weekly and monthly reporting process was important to access the real ground situation.

This information is important not only for the implementation of the Ceasefire but also other important issues relating to the Government of Sri Lanka, for example the current IDP situation, and also the steep price fluctuation of essential commodities especially in the Jaffna Peninsular.

The next Local monitors meeting is scheduled for July 2007 and at this meeting performance in terms of submitting timely reports will be given serious consideration and appropriate action taken.

Schools Re-construction in the Eastern Province

- Government facilitates the Rotary International Schools Project

The reconstruction of the Tsunami damaged schools in the East is making rapid progress with 24 schools completed and 154 schools being constructed. This performance is the result of a focused Government initiative to normalize education in the East of Sri Lanka. However much room remains for NGO involvement in this effort.

The construction and reconstruction of schools in the East is particularly significant, as it is a reflection of the positive transformation taking place in the area after the Government Forces relieved the East from the LTTE. This development provides children with the opportunity to be in their rightful place in society through education. A School is the center for building sustainable peace and reconciliation and the partnerships with private organizations in education will play an important role in the physical and psychosocial growth of a child in the East.

The joint project between the Sri Lankan Government and Rotary Sri Lanka called 'The Schools Re-awaken Programme' is aimed at bringing normalcy in the East of Sri Lanka. With the liberation of the East by Government Forces, the Secretariat for Coordinating the Peace Process (SCOPP) took the initiative to assist the Rotary in expediting the construction of the state of the art schools in the area. The progress achieved so far is as follows:



- **Kaluthawalai RKM Vidyalayam** is a Primary and Secondary grade school with classes from Grades 1-10(O/Level).
- The school has 21 teachers and 639 students 328 male and 311 female.
- Reconstruction Cost: 59.7 million (LKR).



- **Sri Murugan Vidyalayam** is a Primary grade school with classes from Grades 1-5.
- The school has just two teachers and 126 students 65 male and 61 female.
- Reconstruction Cost: 25.7 million (LKR).



- **Kaluwachikudy Saraswathy Vidyalayam** is a Primary and Secondary grade school with classes from Grades 1-10(O Level).
- The school has 17 teachers and 304 students 166 male and 138 female.
- Reconstruction Cost: 49.65 million (LKR)



- **Puthumugathuwaram Roman Catholic Tamil Missionary school** is a Primary and Secondary grade school with classes from Grades 1-10 (O Level).
- The school has 14 teachers and 304 students, 149 male and 155 female.
- Reconstruction Cost: 49.5 million (LKR).



- **Sri Vinayagar Vidyalayam** is a Primary and Secondary grade school with classes from Grades 1-10(O/Level).
- The school has 18 Teachers and 468 students, 208 male and 260 female.
- Reconstruction Cost: 57,329,521.00 (LKR).



- **Thambaddai GTMS** is a Primary and Secondary grade school with classes from Grades 1-10(O level).
- The school has 12 teachers and 241 students, 140 male and 101 female.
- Reconstruction Cost: 26.43 million (LKR)



- **Thettativu Sivakalai Vidyalayam** is a Primary and Secondary grade school with classes from Grades 1-10(O level).
- The school has 14 teachers and 320 students -159 male and 141 female.
- Reconstruction Cost: 32.4 million (LKR).



- **Mankerni Roman Catholic Tamil Missionary School** is a Primary and Secondary grade school with classes from Grades 1-10 (O Level).
- The school has 12 teachers and 490 students, 213 male and 277 female.
- Reconstruction Cost: 48 million (LKR).

The Future

The Government of Sri Lanka encourages projects of this nature and aims to promote the importance of education across the country. The "Mahinda Chinthanaya" emphasizes the Government's plan to develop and strengthen schools in the villages. This effort provides a reassurance of making the vision of the Ministry of Education a reality:

"Reaching excellence in a global society through competent citizens who share the Sri Lankan identity".

Rapid recovery in Tsunami ravaged North and the East Government spearhead drive in Reconstruction

- 52% of Houses Reconstructed 73% Tsunami IDPs Rehoused in Permanent Dwellings

Sri Lanka has made remarkable progress in restoring normalcy in Tsunami affected areas of the North and the East. Reconstruction and recovery activity under the aegis of the Government has been rapid. Majority of the displaced has been returned to their homes, and their livelihoods restored. The memory of the disaster is gradually fading. It is being replaced by the brighter things that life has to offer to the unfortunate victims.

Overall the recovery has demonstrated the Government's good will and genuine commitment towards the well being of its people irrespective of considerations of race, religion or creed. Today members of the Tamil, Muslim and Sinhala communities in the North and East are the proud beneficiaries of the Govt.'s efforts in restoring their livelihood and homes.

District	Transitional Shelter		Requirement		No. of Permanent Houses Completed				No. in Progress				In Excess / Shortfalls	Total No. of Grants Released
	No. of Temporary Shelters as at 31.12.05	No. of Temporary shelters as at 28.02.07	Original Count Mid-2005	Revised Count	Donor Driven	Owner Driven	Other*	Total	Donor Driven	Owner Driven	Other*	Total		
B	C	d	e	g	h	i	j	K= h+i+j	l	m	n	O= l+m+n	P= k+o-g	Q=i+m
Ampara	18,491	1,730	24,438	28,439	1,004	15,063	0	16,067	2,249	8,608	0	10,587	-1,425	23,671
Batticaloa	12,437	3,430	17,948	22,648	1,139	14,009	116	15,294	681	6,035	436	7,152	-202	20,074
Trincomalee	6,207	2,751	8,074	10,325	1,300	3,480	0	4,780	1,990	656	0	2,646	-2,899	4,136
Jaffna	3,574	2,943	5,109	9,140	884	2,496	0	3,380	1,153	1,917	0	3,070	-2,690	4,413
Mullativu	2,214	760	5,556	5,457	51	979	2	1,032	402	3,238	3	3,663	-762	4,237
Kilinochchi	473	330	288	1,891	143	0	0	143	265	644	0	909	-839	644

(Source : MOF & RADA December 2006)

Tsunami Destruction

Overall in the North and the East, 77,900 houses were destroyed by the Tsunami. 40,696 new houses have up to date been re-constructed. This figure represents 52% of the requirement. Work is in progress in respect to reconstruction of 28,027 houses. This figure combined with the houses already completed totals a percentage of 88% of the houses required to be built.

The reconstruction of houses in Tsunami affected areas of the North and the East has registered a success rate of 88 % compared to the national average of 67 %. The statistical details of the re-construction effort are set out below under the sub - heading 'Permanent Housing'. A breakdown of the re-construction of houses in various Tsunami affected Districts in the North and East is as follows:

District	No of Houses Destroyed	No of Houses Completed	%	Work in Progress	%	Total	%
Ampara	28,439	16,067	56	10,587	37	26,654	93
Batticaloa	22,648	15,294	67	7,152	31.6	22,446	99
Trincomalee	10,325	4,780	46	2,646	25.6	7,426	71
Jaffna	9,140	3,380	37	3,070	33.6	6,450	70
Mullativu	5,457	1,032	18	3,663	67.1	4,695	86
Kilinochchi	1,891	143	7	909	48	191	10
Total	77,900	40,696	52	28,027	36	67,862	88

The 2004 Tsunami was catastrophic. It claimed 35,322 lives islandwide, injured 21,441, and orphaned 1,500 children. Over 500,000 people were displaced and many more indirectly affected. Around 100,000 houses were damaged or destroyed and over 150,000 people lost their homes. 2/3ds of the country's coast line was ravaged. The damage was estimated to be 4.5 of the GDP.

Sri Lanka Recovers

Despite the effects of Tsunami and the rise in oil prices the economy grew by 6% in 2005 and 7.4% in 2006 and it is forecast that Sri Lanka will record a growth rate of 7.5% in 2007. Sri Lanka had an outstanding year in 2006 with overall unemployment declining by 6.4 %, exports growing by 8% whilst the country was able to attract over 2 billion US \$ in foreign remittances. The FDI inflow exceeded 500 million US \$ thereby highlighting foreign investor confidence in the resilience of the Sri Lankan economy.

Displaced move out of transitional shelters into reconstructed permanent homes

73% of the Tsunami IDPs living in temporary shelters in the North and East have been rehoused in permanent dwellings.

No. of Tsunami IDPs in temporary shelters as at Dec. 2005 - 43, 496

No. of Tsunami IDPs in temporary shelters as at February 27, 2007 - 11, 764

Permanent housing

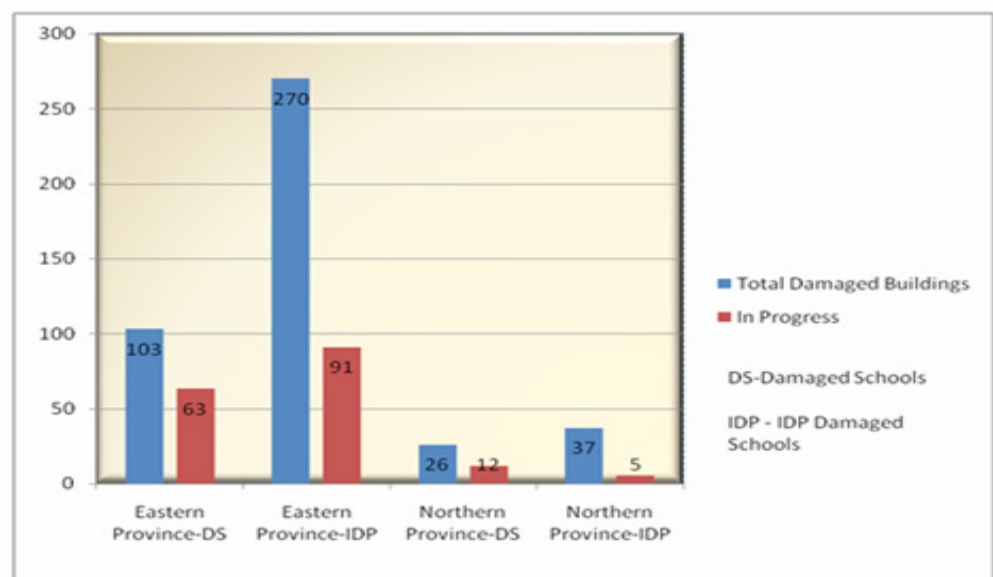
While the Government played the primary role in reconstruction, development partners, civil society and private donors made a significant contribution. 76,586 houses out of the 114, 069 houses that were partially or fully damaged have been re-constructed at a 67 % achievement level.

The Eastern province has witnessed the completion of 36,141 houses at a 59% achievement level whilst the Northern province has registered an achievement level of 28% despite the impediments of incessant terrorism and conflict affecting the building and construction industry in the North.

Education:

School attendance of children previously enrolled at Tsunami damaged schools and schools damaged through use as IDP camps has been brought back to normalcy through establishment of temporary buildings, repair of damaged structures or temporary arrangements for children to attend nearby functioning schools. Reconstruction of directly damaged schools (total 183) is making marked progress and 57% schools are in various stages of re - construction.

Progress in the Education Sector



(Source : MOP & RADA December 2006)

Restoring livelihoods:

An estimated 150,000 people lost their livelihoods as a result of Tsunami damage, including workers in fisheries (50% total jobs lost), service sector (45%) and agriculture (5%). To date, livelihoods restoration has been via cash grants, cash for work, asset replacement, and micro-finance systems.

Health:

The Ministry of Health and Development Partners have been successful in preventing the outbreak of disease among affected populations in the initial Tsunami aftermath and over the past two years. The Government of Sri Lanka also developed a National Policy in Nutrition that defines the overall nutrition strategy of the country including response in time of disaster. A National Mental Health Policy was approved and is under implementation and efforts to develop national disaster response capacity through the National Health Sector Emergency Preparedness plan and establishment of a trauma secretariat.

Protection:

Mechanisms and campaigns for strengthening the prevention of abuse, exploitation and neglect of children and women in Tsunami affected areas were developed and Disaster Relief Monitoring Units Helpdesks have been established in nine Tsunami affected districts to monitor services and address grievances. Achievements also include the establishment of four Social Care Centres while 15 more Centres will be open to the public in April 2007.

Infrastructure:

The Tsunami road recovery initiative aims to provide a reliable, durable and safer road system in the Tsunami-affected areas. 5 major bridges on A2 road i.e. bridges linking Kalutara to Matara at Akurala, Seenigama, Magalla, Goyyapana and Weligama have been completed and the Eastern Province bridges such as Koman bridge and causeway (A004), Koddakallar Causeway (A004), Kallady bridge (A004) and Oddaimavadi bridge (A015) are in progress.

Railways

Losses include buildings, officers' quarters, workmen dwellings, gate huts, parapet walls, culverts, etc. 75% of the buildings have been reconstructed and the renovation work in respect to the rest is in progress. The damaged railway track on the coast line, Trincomalee line and Batticaloa line were restored within two months after Tsunami. 40% of the damaged signal system has already been restored.

Electricity:

The Ceylon Electricity Board (CEB) was able to restore power supply within two months after the Tsunami; however the requirement of providing power connections to the relocated housing programme has increased its role. CEB has so far connected power supply to 17,928 new Tsunami-affected households.



(Source : MOP & RADA December 2006)

Amnesty International's campaign and LTTE's expectations fail

Amnesty International earned the wrath of cricket fans all over the world with its plan to distribute "play by the rules" slogan printed soft balls during the current Cricket World Cup tournament in the West Indies. Angry demonstrators also gathered outside the AI office in Washington to press home their opposition while the political opposition in Sri Lanka too raised its voice in condemnation. Quite rightly, the Sri Lanka Government alleged that the campaign was aimed at demoralizing the national cricket team. Fans of the game in the Asian region decried the AI's move to tarnish the image of a regional country which has contributed its share to popularizing the gentleman's game. AI's campaign was ill timed and foolishly conceived.

There is also resentment among the fans for targeting Sri Lanka which, with India and Pakistan out of the race and Bangladesh unable to advance to the Super Eight, kept Asia's hopes high of becoming the World Champions once again.

Perhaps, Amnesty International and the LTTE wished Sri Lanka would lose its shine in the Super Eight round and be marginalized. But, the Sri Lankan cricketers have continued to prevail, with a sterling performance by young Lasith Malinga who produced a hat trick and captured four South African wickets while Muralitharan wove his magic spell – in all it was a superb team effort. **It is a multi ethnic team, showing the world how Sri Lankan cricketers have found unity in diversity, proudly holding aloft the Lion flag. Muralitharan is a hill country Tamil who is considered a rare gem of a cricketer by all Sri Lankans – ethnicity has no role to play here.**

Looking back, we can see how the people lived with respect and affection for each other in Sri Lanka, irrespective of their ethnicity. Leading schools in Jaffna, like in Colombo, had their own big matches. **Many youngsters from the North would have joined the national cricket team if not for the conflict and conflagration promoted by the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam to achieve their narrow objectives.** Tragically, the violent events set in motion by the LTTE, have dashed the aspirations of the students of the Northern and Eastern parts of the country – the LTTE stunted an entire generation, not only in sports but also in the educational field

The Sri Lanka cricketers, playing far away from home, are seen on television, being cheered by Tamils, Indians, Pakistanis and Bangladeshis alike. They have understood the true spirit of sports and its ability to transcend national borders. This should be seen as an eye opener to the LTTE and others who wish to drive a wedge between people on the basis of ethnicity and gain space to promote their own narrow agenda of dissent, deceit. and hatred.



Sinhala - Catholic



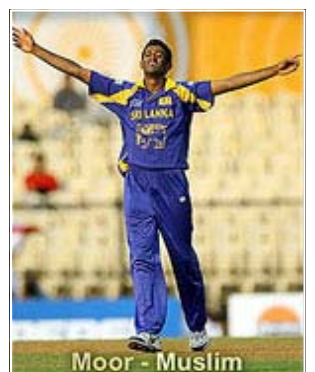
Tamil - Catholic



Tamil - Hindu



Sinhala - Buddhist



Moor - Muslim



(Photos from the LTTE attack on bus carrying civilians- 02 April 2007 in Ampara)

The LTTE deliberately targeted the civilian passenger bus which was traveling between Mannar and Vavuniya, killing seven and injuring 26 civilians.

Previous attacks by the LTTE

This attack comes just five days after an attack in the eastern district of Ampara, which killed 14 people, including 3 children and 11 women. These attacks are reminiscent of previous bus bombings against innocent, unarmed civilians organized by the LTTE, the very group which claims to be the sole representative of the Tamil people in Sri Lanka. On two earlier occasions the LTTE targeted a civilian bus in Nittambuwa in the Gampaha district and Seenigama, in the Galle district, killing several civilian commuters. Furthermore, in June last year, in one of the most brutal attacks, an LTTE claymore mine destroyed a fully loaded civilian bus at Kebithogollewa in the Anuradhapura District. More than sixty people, many of them children, were killed in this LTTE attack. Since this attack, a total of 102 civilians have been killed and 231 injured, in attacks against buses alone.

Violation of CFA

These attacks are not only a continuous violation of the CFA but also of International Humanitarian standards.

The deaths which occur are not due to an unfortunate cross-fire or loose-cannon, but a pre-meditated, deliberate and targeted attack, against civilians. It emphasises the LTTE's will to commit mass murder. Furthermore, such attacks fail to single out a particular ethnic group and therefore results also in the death of innocent Tamil persons, the very people, the LTTE claim to represent. Thus far the bus attacks have made victims of children, women and men, regardless of their social standing, their views or race. The most important factor is that the targets of the LTTE attacks are completely innocent individuals.

The constant threat which looms over the civilian, which in the recent past have focused heavily on public transportation (along with the threat made to civilians using the naval ferry service- SCOPP report on 12 March 2007), places a heavy burden upon the people of Sri Lanka and the Government. The strategy adopted by the attackers (LTTE) is to kill civilians in the hope that the attacks shock and frighten the population and may thus lead them to make compromises or offer concessions to their cause.

International Community and International Terrorism

These continuous attacks upon civilians are and should be an eye opener for the international community. Having to continuously rely upon such terrorist attacks should and are being seen as measures adopted in desperation by the LTTE, as they are being restricted in their ground operations by the government security forces.

Terrorist acts of this nature are by no means native to Sri Lanka. States across the globe have felt the impact of such terrorist attacks for decades and therefore the need to condemn such attacks is immense.

In April 1989 in Jerusalem a 6-kg explosive charge detonated under a seat in the center of a crowded city bus in Jerusalem, instantly killing three passengers and 29 needed to be hospitalized. The commuters were unarmed innocent civilians. The immediate response from the international community was that they condemned such 'terrorist atrocities'. This led to implementing extensive security measures in their public transportation systems.

In August 2004, Police in India blamed separatist rebels for a series of attacks that killed at least four people and wounded scores of others in a deliberate attack on a bus carrying civilians.

The 7 July 2005 London terrorist bomb blasts were on the London public transport system in the early rush hours. The bombing killed 52 commuters and the four suicide bombers and injured approximately 700 and caused disruptions to the city's transport system. This too the International community condemned immediately and recognized it as a 'terrorist attack' on innocent civilians.

It is thus obvious that the LTTE in its desperation in the new phase of humanitarian engagements by the government in its efforts on liberating the people have proved their links in ideology and action with the other terrorist organizations operating around the world.

SAARC and Terrorism

If the 9/11 attacks in New York, United States, are to be considered as an attack on innocent civilians, where their commercial flights were used as weapons of terror by the terrorists and hit installations where there were thousands of civilians working, the simultaneous attacks on the British Transportation system or in a string of explosions in Madrid railway network where 186 were killed or a similar train blast in Mumbai (July 2006) killing 147 civilians and injuring 400, by all means the continuous attacks on the buses carrying civilians in Sri Lanka are no different.

The 14th SAARC summit took place this month under the shadow of terrorism. Terrorism plagues not only Sri Lanka, but also SAARC countries such as Afghanistan, India, Pakistan and Bangladesh. The operating terrorist groups are vast and range from the Al-Qaeda to LTTE. Therefore the need to address the issue of terrorism has reached its peak.

In the light of recent attacks in Sri Lanka, President HE Mr. Mahinda Rajapaksa said in addressing the SAARC leaders "terrorism anywhere is terrorism and a global menace. Unless we act collectively as a region, trans-border terrorist groups will find safe havens in other parts of the region".



◀ LTTE attack public bus killing 7 and injuring 28, carrying Tamil pilgrims for Easter Festival. The explosion had taken place in the Pirmanalankulam area on the Vavuniya-Mannar main road on April 7, 2007

SCOPP Mandate

Coordinate the implementation of decisions of the Government of Sri Lanka (GOSL) on the Peace Process

Liaise with the Sri Lanka Monitoring Mission (SLMM) and the Norwegian facilitators

Monitor the Ceasefire Agreement (CFA) between the GOSL and the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE)

Provide research and logistical support to the GOSL delegation during political negotiations between the GOSL and the LTTE

Liaise with government ministries, institutions, armed forces and the Police, UN agencies, international humanitarian organizations and national and international NGOs on matters pertaining to the Peace Process

Monitor the free movement of people and goods to and from the uncleared areas

Communicate issues relating to the Peace Process to the national / international media and the public through its Communications Division

For further information please contact us at:

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