



JOURNALISTS FOR DEMOCRACY IN SRI LANKA

State of Human Rights in Sri Lanka

E bulletin / Monthly Summary Report
October 2009

Curtailing Freedom of Expression

1. 2nd Oct. - "Irida Lanka" posters and papers removed

A publicity poster put up by 'Lanka Irida' Sinhalese weekly in the Monaragala area was removed by the workers employed by Monaragala Pradeshiya Sabha (Regional Council). Chief Editor of 'Lanka Irida' Chandana Sirimalwatta was quoted saying, "last week, through our newspaper, we revealed something the chief minister of Uva Provincial Council had done. We published a news item stating that bundles of letters including people's requests and proposals sent to Chief Minister Shashindra Rajapakse were found at a garbage heap. However, a group of people in Monaragala had removed our newspaper as soon as it reached newsstands."

http://www.lankatruth.com/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=3429:workers-of-monaragala-pc-employed-to-remove-lanka-irida-posters-&catid=35:local&Itemid=50

2. 3rd Oct. - Tissainayagam's wife accept the award

J.S. Tissainayagam, a Tamil journalist and editor serving a 20-year prison sentence in Sri Lanka, was awarded the first Peter Mackler Award for Courageous and Ethical Journalism on Friday. His wife, Ronnate Tissainayagam, accepted the award, named after a 30-year veteran of Agence France-Presse who died last year, at a ceremony at the National Press Club. Tissainayagam was honored by the US branch of Paris-based media rights group Reporters Without Borders and Global Media Forum, a company founded by Mackler to train journalists and non-profit organizations to use the media as a tool for social change.

http://news.yahoo.com/s/afp/20091003/wl_asia_afp/ussrilankaunrestmediapressfreedomrsfafp_20091003025833

3. 4th Oct. - Four journalists assaulted, equipment damaged

A group of Journalists who accompanied an exposure tour organized by Opposition parliamentarians on 4th October 2009 to visit a large residence being built allegedly misusing government resources was assaulted by ruling political party supporters.

The owner of the house Mr. Thusitha Ranawaka is a brother in law of president Rajapaksa. Opposition parliamentarians had organized dozens of vehicles with supporters for the exposure tour. The journalists who were assaulted were Kishan Jeewaka Jayaruk of of Lankadeepa, Chandika Jayawardana and Shaman Chanuka of of Sirasa TV media Net work and Kalum Jayaweera of TNL TV. There Cameras have been damaged beyond repair.

<http://sunandadeshapriya.wordpress.com/2009/10/06/four-journalists-were-assaulted-equipments-damaged/>

4. 04th Oct. - Unofficial radio broadcasting station for government party candidate

The UNP candidate for the Southern PC election Manusha Nanayakkara had asked the Commissioner of Elections and Telecommunication Regulatory Commission to stop the illegal radio channel broadcasting messages asking voters to cast their votes to Ms. Anarkali Akarsha, another candidate contesting from the ruling UPFA. Mr. Nanayakkara in his complaint states the radio channel is broadcast over FM 97 - 95 channels and has asked the Telecommunication Regulatory Commission to hold a comprehensive inquiry regarding the radio channel which is being carried out illegally.

http://www.lankatruth.com/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=3455:ban-anarkalis-radio-channel--manushe-asks-commissioner-of-elections&catid=35:local&Itemid=50

5. 04th Oct. - Matara police refuse to accept complaint from scribe

The Matara police in the Southern Province have refused to accept a complaint from a journalist who was allegedly attacked together with a few other reporters while they were covering an incident that took place in Deniyaya yesterday. They were targeted when they were on their way to inspect the alleged Presidential palace under construction in the area, along with some opposition party politicians.

http://www.dailymirror.lk/DM_BLOG/Sections/frmNewsDetailView.aspx?ARTID=63677

6. 05th Oct. – ‘JDS should be punished’ says Human Rights Minister

The Minister of Human Rights and Disaster Management Mahinda Samarasingha, told media that the Government will take action against the media group Journalists for Democracy in Sri Lanka (JDS) for trying to destabilize the country by spreading false information and tarnishing the image of the security forces. While addressing the government news briefing he said, “We are hoping to implement an action plan against the JDS, who sent this video to Channel 4. We have obtained information about the members of this organization. Our Embassy in Germany has already sent us all the relevant details. What they did was absolutely wrong. We cannot remain

silent. They should not go unpunished for deliberately planning to destabilize the country.” <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FndpvnjLOGM>
(BBC Sinhala Service – Sandeshaya (05.10.2009))

7. 07th Oct. - Ambassador lies to European parliament on Tissa

Sri Lanka’s Ambassador to Brussels Ravinatha Aryasinha, told the Human Rights Sub Committee of the European Parliament on the 1st October, that he wondered “whether journalists in Europe accepting a cheque from al-Qaeda would be acceptable.” Aryasinha said the committee members sought to give the impression that Tissainayagam, sentenced to 20 years in jail for links with Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE), was convicted by the Colombo High Court for writing two articles, while ignoring the more serious charges of accepting funds from the LTTE, a proscribed terrorist organization in a number of countries. The LTTE is not mentioned in the indictment at all. And a person cannot be found guilty of something he has not been charged with. Furthermore the prosecution did not provide the court with any material evidence to link the funds flowing into the designated bank account with the LTTE or any other terrorist organization.
<http://www.thesundayleader.lk/20091011/insight.htm>

8. 10th Oct. - PM accuses exile journalists of forming an armed group

Speaking at the state of emergency debate Prime Minister Rathnaisri Wickremanayaka told the parliament that there is a group of Sri Lankans living in Europe posing themselves as journalists, trying to organize an armed group to support the LTTE. He further said that allowing such groups to emerge would be a threat to all countries. <http://www.divaina.com/2009/10/09/news27.htm>

9. 12th Oct. - Court releases two Journalists wrongfully charged

A Sri Lankan court acquitted two journalists that were charged by police for non-divulging information vital for investigations to police. The two journalists were the Editor of Lanka-e-News website Sandaruwan Senadheera and his News Editor Benet Rupasinghe. They were arrested by the police for informing the authorities regarding the abduction of journalist Poddala Jayantha by an unknown group on 1st June 2009. <http://www.lankapolity.com/2009/10/sri-lankan-court-aquits-two-journalists.html>

10. 15th Oct. - Lasantha murder case taken up for 22nd time

The case pertaining to the murder of veteran journalist Lasantha Wickrematunga was taken up at the Mount Lavinia magistrate’s court today for the 22nd time. Mirihana police informed the court that investigations were underway following the statement that had been obtained from the suspect who had been detained in connection with

the theft of the journalist's mobile phone. The magistrate ordered the police to conclude investigations into the assassination immediately and submit a report on the outcome. The next hearing was fixed for the 29th of October and the suspect was further remanded. <http://www.srilankaguardian.org/2009/10/lasantbas-murder-case-taken-up-for-22nd.html>

11. 16th Oct. – A writer threatened over the video released by the JDS

Colombo's pro-government news media carried out continuous defamatory attacks against Sri Lankan writer Rainjith Hennayaka, who lives in Berlin, Germany, over the execution video released by the JDS. The video clip showed some armed men summarily executing bound and naked victims. Although the JDS took complete responsibility for releasing the video, certain news media base in Colombo launched a vicious campaign against Mr. Hennayaka citing it was the International Network of Sri Lankan Diaspora (INSD) that conspired with the JDS to tarnish the image of the SL army. Mr. Hennayaka is a founding member of the INSD, an organization which agreed to let the JDS to use its postal address on a temporary basis. The INSD address happened to be the residence address of Mr. Hennayaka. – <http://jdsrilanka.blogspot.com/2009/09/jds-clarifies.html>

12. 16th Oct. - Journalists not allowed to meet the IDPS brought to Jaffna

Sri Lanka Army (SLA) officials in Jaffna did not allow media in Jaffna to meet and interview the Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) brought to Jaffna from Vavuniya SLA internment camps Friday. The officials who had warned the IDPs of severe consequences should they meet or say anything to media persons and said that they have been directed by the Ministry of Defence not to allow the media to meet the IDPs. <http://www.tamilnet.com/art.html?catid=13&artid=30453>

13. 17th Oct. - Editor arrested

A group claiming to be from the Criminal Investigation Department (CID) arrested Chandana Sirimalwatta, the Chief Editor of the "Lanka Irida" newspaper, on Saturday (17) evening in Homagama, a suburb of Colombo. According to the initial reports coming from Colombo, Mr. Sirimalwatta, was arrested while he was at a playground, by a CID group led by SP Gajasingha, saying that he will be taken in for questioning. He was released after questioning. <http://jdsrilanka.blogspot.com/2009/10/gang-claiming-to-be-from-cid-breaks-in.html>

14. 19th Oct. - EU commission's statement on Sri Lanka GSP+ report

Attacks on the media, both through verbal threats by the Government and through brutal physical assaults by unknown persons, have been widely reported. Since 2006

a significant number of journalists have been killed which has deterred the press from closely monitoring conflict related violence. Reported motives for targeting journalists include accusations of supporting the LTTE, having criticized the Government too strongly and having revealed information the Government disliked. In January 2009, the prominent journalist Lasantha Wickrematunge, editor of The Sunday Leader, was murdered; no-one has been charged in connection with his killing. http://trade.ec.europa.eu/doclib/docs/2009/october/tradoc_145141.pdf

15. 19th Oct. - 3500 newspapers burned to cover up a story

State controlled English daily Ceylon Daily News burned 3,500 copies of its 19th edition to cover up that the president was using a tele prompter to speak in public functions. The newspaper had mistakenly printed a photograph which showed the tele prompter when the president was addressing a school function at Joseph Vass collage, Vennappuwa. www.lankanewsweb.org

16. 20th Oct. - Sri Lanka ranked 162 in press freedom ranking

The authoritarianism of existing governments, for example in Sri Lanka (162nd) and Malaysia (131st), prevented journalists from properly covering sensitive subjects such as corruption or human rights abuses. The Sri Lankan government had a journalist sentenced to 20 years in prison and forced dozens of others to flee the country. In Malaysia, the interior ministry imposed censorship or self-censorship by threatening media with the withdrawal of their licence or threatening journalists with a spell in prison. <http://jdsrilanka.blogspot.com/2009/10/sri-lanka-ranked-162-in-latest-press.html>

17. 22th Oct. - Ruling political parties owe state TV (SLRC) Rs.34 Mil.

Media Minister Anura Priyadharashana Yapa informed Parliament that the political parties including the UPFA owes State Television Cooperation (SLRC) a total of Rs 34 million while they owe Rs 5 million as payments to the Independent Television Network (ITN), which is also controlled by the state. Furthermore, it was stated that UPFA owes an additional sum of Rs 5.2 million to the ITN for the institutional propaganda advertisements telecasted in the year 2005.

http://www.dailymirror.lk/DM_BLOG/Sections/frnNewsDetailView.aspx?ARTID=65471

18. 22nd Oct. - Death threats to Sunday Leader editors

Identical death threats in red color have been sent by post to the Editor in chief of “The Sunday Leader” Ms. Frederica Jansz and the News Editor Ms. Munza Mushtaq. The letters postmarked on Wednesday October 21st were received on Oct

22nd Thursday. The two letters are identical — written in red ink and appear to have been posted on October 21, 2009. Coincidentally, the late Lasantha Wickrematunge, founder Editor-in-Chief of The Sunday Leader was sent a similar missive — also written in red ink — in December last year, three weeks before he was murdered. It is widely believed that the new threats were sent due to certain news reports published by the paper regarding the horrendous video clip released by the JDS. http://transcurrents.com/tc/2009/10/post_444.html

19. 24th Oct. - Military spokesperson reminds media of emergency regulations

Reminding the Section 120 Penal Code and Gazette Extraordinary of the Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka and also in the Army Act and the Emergency Regulations military spokesperson Brigadier Udaya Nanayakkara said that officers serving the Army are completely barred from political work and use of their names for personal political gains and agendas for such wrong reports is therefore illegal and liable for prosecution. The Government reiterates that those failing to do so are liable for prosecution. The Defence Secretary has instructed the Police and the authorities to take action with immediate effect. Hence, publication of such false reports using names of those officers should be stopped forthwith. http://www.lankapuvath.lk/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=4387&Itemid=51

20. 24th Oct. - Gov. appoints a committee to censor websites

The government has set up a special unit to monitor websites in its latest attempt to censure news websites which carry controversial reports and those against the government, The Sunday Leader learns. The move comes after several news websites, some independent and some with political affiliations, reported on an alleged rift between President Mahinda Rajapaksa and former Army Commander Sarath Fonseka and that the ex-army chief was planning to contest a forthcoming presidential poll as an opposition candidate. <http://www.thesundayleader.lk/?p=249>

21. 26th Oct. – V. Jaseekaran withdraws petition, court acquits him of charges

The Supreme Court allowed the withdrawal of a petition filed by the Co-director of the “Outreach” website and “North Eastern Monthly” V. Jaseekaran while separately the High Court acquitted him and his wife of all charges. Jaseekaran and his wife Valarmathy were arrested with journalist J.S. Tissainaygam over allegations of having links with the LTTE. Tissainaygam was recently sentenced to 20 years rigorous imprisonment. http://www.dailymirror.lk/DM_BLOG/Sections/frmNewsDetailView.aspx?ARTID=65877

22. 27th Oct. - Police to arrest journalists who violate the new 'order'

The police confirmed having received instructions from the Defence Ministry to take legal action against any media institution or journalists who write news items linking names of serving Army officers for political gain or agenda. Police spokesman Nimal Mediwake told Daily Mirror Online. He said that using the names of Senior Army Officers in baseless reports for political purposes was illegal, and as such media institutions which published such news were liable for legal action.

http://www.dailymirror.lk/DM_BLOG/Sections/frmNewsDetailView.aspx?ARTID=6599&

23. 28th Oct. - Shantha Fernando refused bail

Santha Fernando, the Executive Secretary of the Commission for Justice & Peace of the National Christian Council of Sri Lanka, and has been detained since end of March, after being arrested at the airport, allegedly for carrying some CDs with information of effect of the war on civilian population. He has been refused bail continuously on the grounds that TID is about to file charges against him. Now his case has been postponed to 11th November 2009.

24. 30th Oct. - Father of Sri Lanka Street drama passed away

Father of local street drama field Gamini Hattottuwagama passed away on oct. 30 2009. Prof. Hattottuwagama, an English lecturer by profession, was also involved in writing and was a renowned film critic. Prof. Hattottuwagama also created several talented artists by producing dramas and conducting workshops. Prof. Gamini Hattottuwagama's contribution for the field of street drama has been for more than three decades. He has been the guru of a number of versatile and talented actors today. <http://www.srilankaguardian.org/2009/10/prof-hattottuwagama-father-of-local.html>

General Curtailment of Democratic Rights

Political and Social Rights

1. 02nd Oct. - Lanka will not respond to GSP+ investigation expert's report

Sri Lanka will not respond to the GSP+ investigation EU expert's report but will instead continue to engage on the issues of concern with the European Commission, Sri Lanka's Ambassador to Belgium, Luxembourg and the EU, Ravinatha Aryasinha told the Human Rights Sub Committee of the European Parliament, Thursday. On GSP+, Ambassador Aryasinha said the Government had not accepted the process of GSP+ investigation and a request for experts to visit Sri Lanka as a matter of principle, as it was felt inappropriate and unnecessary and the Government was not willing to compromise on its sovereignty. -

http://www.dailymirror.lk/DM_BLOG/Sections/frmNewsDetailView.aspx?ARTID=6340
3

2. 03rd Oct. - Ruling UPFA supporters attack UNP members

A group of opposition UNP members including UNP MP Ravi Karunanayaka, General Secretary Tissa Attanayaka, their supporters were attacked in Deniyaya in Southern Province of Sri Lanka while they were on their way to inspect the alleged Presidential palace under construction in the area.

http://www.dailymirror.lk/DM_BLOG/Sections/frmNewsDetailView.aspx?ARTID=6356
4

3. 4th Oct. – Opposition Parliamentarian's house burnt down

Opposition Member of Parliament blamed his political opponents for burning down his residence. Speaking to BBC Sinhala Service, Puttalam District United National Party(UNP) parliamentarian Palitha Ranga Bandara had said "Someone who is against UNP politics had set fire to my house". The house and political office at Madampe, Chilaw belongs to the parliamentarian was set alight on Sunday night.

http://www.bbc.co.uk/sinhala/news/story/2009/10/091005_rangabandara.shtml

4. 05th Oct. - Riot police called in to disperse agitating villagers

A team of riot police was deployed to counter a protest campaign launched by villagers in Ampara at Galmadu Junction demanding drinking water. People in many areas of Ampara find it difficult to get drinking water. More than thousand protestors who took onto roads said that the politicians who promised to solve their water issue during the provincial council election never turned up in their villages after getting their votes. The agitated villagers put up barriers across the road and obstructed transport.

http://www.lankatruth.com/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=3457:riot-police-to-deter-villagers-demanding-water&catid=35:local&Itemid=50

5. 05th Oct. - President's rally causes one death

Delay causes death to mother of two, at President's rally held at Matara in Southern Province. Monica Manamperi, a forty two year old mother of two, had to pay her life due to the delay in transferring her to Matara General hospital from smaller hospital in Bathigama. The driver of the ambulance carrying the serious heart patient has pleaded the organizers in vain to send the vehicle without being delayed.

http://www.lankatruth.com/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=3456:presidents-rally-causes-one-death&catid=35:local&Itemid=50

6. 05th Oct. - Eleven JVP offices destroyed

Eleven election offices of the Peoples Liberation Front (JVP) were destroyed by gangs of thugs at night on the 4th states the media unit of the JVP. Some of the election offices that have been attacked and destroyed were at Beliatta, Pahala Beligalla, Ambalantota Depot Junction, Mirijjawila Adasiya Road, the office at the residence of Mr. Kumudu Sanjeewa, JVP candidate for Southern PC election at Debarawewa, the office at Wekandawala polling station No.1, Bandagiriya, Yahangala, Tangalle and Pahajjawa.

http://www.lankatruth.com/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=3460:eleven-jvp-offices-in-hambantota-destroyed&catid=35:local&Itemid=50

7. 08th Oct. - Emergency passed with 70 vote majority

The motion to extend the State of Emergency was passed in Parliament today by a majority of 70 votes. Eighty-two votes were cast in the favour of the motion while 12 MPs of the Tamil National Alliance (TNA) voted against. Meanwhile, the United National Party (UNP) abstained from voting while the Janatha Vimukthi Peramuna (JVP) was not present in the House at the time of voting. The motion was presented

in Parliament by Prime Minister Ratnasiri Wickremanayake.

http://www.newsfirst.lk/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=5092%3Apower-supply-restored-in-some-areas&Itemid=159

8. 08th Oct. - Ruling UPFA candidate abducts a Buddhist monk

A candidate of the ruling UPFA who is contesting the Southern Provincial Council election had abducted a Buddhist Monk from the Temple and subsequently poured arrack on him, Pitigala Police in Galle District said. The Monk, Ven. Ratnapure Kolitha Thera, the chief incumbent of the Narangowita Sumanaramaya, said that the Provincial Councillor and his supporters accused him of not casting the preference vote for him.

http://www.lankatruth.com/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=3577:upfa-candidate-abducts-a-buddhist-monk&catid=35:local&Itemid=50

9. 14th Oct - Unemployed Graduates Union's convener bailed out

The convenor of the Unemployed Graduates Union, Sujith Kuruwita who was summoned to appear in court was given personal bail by Colombo Additional Magistrate Ruwan Dissanayaka. Mr.Kuruwita was summoned after the police submitted a B report against the unemployed protestors who staged a hunger strike demanding the government to provide jobs. The police claimed that the protest campaign is a violation of public order and civil life.

<http://www.lankaenews.com/Sinbala/news.php?id=10721>

10. 16th Oct. - University students given conditional bail

Twenty three undergraduates of the Sri Jayewardenepura University in Colombo who were protesting at the Administrative building of the university, surrendered through their lawyers as per the court order issued by the Gangodawila Magistrate and were each given personal bail of hundred thousand rupees each today. They were released under the conditions that they move out of the Administrative building of the university, stop vandalizing public property, stop behaving in a harassing manner to the public and finally that they report to the police to give statements when they are called to do so.

http://www.dailymirror.lk/DM_BLOG/Sections/frmNewsDetailView.aspx?ARTID=64918

11. 17th Oct. – Opposition Parliamentarian complains about death threats

United National Party (UNP) MP Palitha Range Bandara, in a letter to the Speaker, has requested that immediate attention of relevant authorities be drawn towards the safety of his life, the lives of his family members and their property. The letter goes

on to say that he had received information to suggest that members of an armed political group from the East was currently pursuing him with the intention of assassinating him.

http://www.newsfirst.lk/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=5247%3Apolitical-goons-out-to-kill-me-range-bandara-tells-speaker-&Itemid=159

12. 20th Oct. – Ruling party PC member alleges death threats

UPFA Southern Provincial Council member elect Nishantha Muthuhettigama, speaking to Daily Mirror online, claimed that he is under threat by the Sri Lankan government and is going to seek political asylum from countries including Canada, Switzerland and India.

http://www.dailymirror.lk/DM_BLOG/Sections/frmNewsDetailView.aspx?ARTID=65294

13. 19 Oct. - Govt. reduces budget allocation to establish private campuses: IUSF

The Inter-University Students' Federation stated that the Government while reducing the budget allocation for the local universities had encouraged the establishment of private universities in the country. "The suppression of the Students' Movement is continuing in all the universities with the government's knowledge" the acting convenor of the Federation, Sanjeewa Bandara told the media. The convenor of the Federation was in prison for more than a month and also 13 students from the University of Peradeniya had been taken into custody. The administration had suspended 66 students from the University of Peradeniya and nine students from the University of Ruhuna.

http://www.dailymirror.lk/DM_BLOG/Sections/frmNewsDetailView.aspx?ARTID=65265

14. 28th Oct. - Protesting students videoed

The students who participated at the agitation in Colombo against unlawfully detaining the convener of Inter University Students Federation (IUSF) Udul Premaratne and against privatization of education had been videoed while they were on their way. Students from the University of Sri Jayawardenepura in Colombo, on their way to the agitation in Colombo were checked at two police check points. At the second check point students were made to stand in line and the police had videoed them.

http://www.lankatruth.com/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=3668:students-participating-in-agitation-videoed&catid=35:local&Itemid=50

15. 30 Oct. - Student leader released on bail.

Convenor of Inter University Students Federation (IUSF) Udul Premaratne who had been remanded for more than 1 ½ months has been released on bail by Gangodawila

Magistrate.

http://www.lankatruth.com/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=3688%3Audul-released-&Itemid=41

Workers Rights

1. 01st Oct. – Nurses protest in Colombo

A protest campaign against the failure of the government to solve eight issues confronted by nurses was held in Colombo. The protestors highlighted the failure to remove salary anomalies, halting recruitment of new students, closing down of nurses training colleges and demanded for immediate solutions. As to the reports, a large number of nurses had participated in the campaign.

http://www.lankatruth.com/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=3419:nurses-campaign-for-their-rights&catid=35:local&Itemid=50

2. 05th Oct. – Over 50,000 lost jobs due to economic crisis

Over 50,000 Lankans have been rendered jobless due to the global economic crisis, says the Ministry of Labour Relations. “This figure was arrived at after a survey carried out last month,” said Mahinda Madiyahewa, Secretary to the Ministry. The survey, carried out for one month, gathered data on the number of individuals earning below Rs. 20,000 per month, who had lost their jobs.

http://www.newsfirst.lk/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=5030%3A50000-lankans-lost-jobs-due-to-world-economic-crisis&Itemid=159

3. 20th Oct. - Union leader assaulted – office attacked

The media spokesman of the Ceylon Petroleum Common Services Union (CPCSU) was assaulted by some persons attached to the ruling party trade union, while he was addressing the workers at Muthurajawela Storage Complex in Colombo. The attack took place within the premises of the Complex, while the security officials watched without intervening to stop the attackers. Few hours after the attack, the main trade union office of the CPCSU was also attacked and damaged by an unidentified gang. President of the CPCSU Ashoka Ranwala told media that the attackers came to the premises in a van bearing registration WPNA-6150.

<http://www.lankaenews.com/Sinhala/news.php?id=10809>

4. 23rd Oct. - 29,150 persons have lost their jobs in the first quarter

In a statement tabled before the Parliament yesterday (22) by the Chief Government whip Minister Dinesh Gunawardena it was revealed at a survey conducted by the Labour Department that 29,150 persons have lost their jobs in the first quarter of 2009.

http://www.lankatruth.com/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=3631:29150-has-lost-jobs-in-the-first-quarter-of-2009--minister-dinesh&catid=35:local&Itemid=50

5. 23rd Oct. - A Petroleum worker arrested by the Police

An employee of the Ceylon Petroleum Corporation on security duty at Kolonnawa complex was arrested by the Police around 3.00 p.m. The OIC of crimes section of the police has made the arrest and the police had not made any charges against the employee. A trade union spokesman said that the arrested employee, Mr. Pushpakumara, is an active member of the Alliance of Petroleum Trade Unions and his arrest is definitely linked to the measures taken by the authorities to suppress employees. (He was later released.)

http://www.lankatruth.com/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=3669:employee-of-cpc-on-duty-arrested--trade-unions-say-act-to-repress-trade-unions&catid=35:local&Itemid=50

6. 29th Oct. – Unions protest against ‘cycle of suppression’

The Common Service Union of the Ceylon Petroleum Cooperation staged a protest opposite the Kolonnawa Oil Refinery today against the threats levelled against their employees. The protesters charged that the police had taken measures to arrest their activists subsequent to the work to rule campaign carried out by the Ceylon Petroleum Cooperation Combined Trade Union Alliance demanding salary increments due for 2009. They also charged that the attack carried out against the spokesperson of the alliance D. J. Rajakaruna was yet another phase in the cycle of suppression. http://www.newsfirst.lk/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=5402%3Acpc-unions-stage-a-protest-against-cycle-of-suppression&Itemid=159

7. 31st Oct. - Unions to launch work to rule campaign

Trade Unions attached to the Petroleum, Water, Electricity and Port sectors announced their plan to launch a work to rule campaign from November 11 until the government meets their salary demands. This decision was taken after a meeting was held between Trade Unions today at the Viharamahadevi Park after the recent

talks between the Trade Unions (TU) and officials ended on negative note.

http://www.dailymirror.lk/DM_BLOG/Sections/frmNewsDetailView.aspx?ARTID=66486

8. 27th Oct. – ‘International conspiracy behind trade union actions’ – SL President

There is a possibility of international conspiracies surfacing on the pretext of trade union struggles, said President Mahind Rajapaksa yesterday. He expressed these views while meeting certain trade union representatives at the Temple Trees. The President, noting that there was a conspiracy to create a shortage of essential goods and bring the government into disrepute, had urged the trade unions to be alert and not fall prey to such political conspiracies.

http://www.newsfirst.lk/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=5358%3Aconspiracies-surfacing-through-trade-unions-president-&Itemid=159

Arbitrary arrest & Detention

1. 01st Oct. - Medical doctor arrested in Vavuniya

Sri Lanka Army (SLA) Wednesday night arrested a visiting physician of the general hospital in Vavuniyaa, Dr. Maheswaran Umakanth, at his official residence in Kuruma'nkaadu, according to medical sources in the town. Dr. Umakanth has been working in Vavuniyaa hospital for last three months. Earlier, he was employed in Karapitiya hospital in Galle. <http://www.tamilnet.com/art.html?catid=13&artid=30351>

2. 06th Oct. - CID arrests 3 Tamil youths at Medawachchiya

The Criminal Investigation Department (CID) of Sri Lanka has arrested three Tamil youths, two of them on Sunday and the third on Monday at Medawachchiya check point while they were on their way to Colombo from Vavuniyaa, according to their relatives. Two of them were to attend an interview in Colombo and the third was to make arrangement to go abroad, their relatives said.

<http://www.tamilnet.com/art.html?catid=13&artid=30388>

3. 08th Oct. - 20 Rehabilitation camps for surrendered rebels

Measures have been taken to set up 20 rehabilitation camps in the North and East in order to rehabilitate over 10,000 LTTE cadres who surrendered to the Army after the war," says the Commissioner of Rehabilitation Major General Daya Rathnayake. According to the Commissioner these camps would be set up in Batticaloa, Trincomalee, Ampara, Welioya and Jaffna. He noted that the locations where these camps would be set up had already been identified and construction work would begin within the next two months. Major General Daya Rathnayake further noted

that nearly 100 LTTE cadres, found at welfare camps by the security forces and the police, have also been identified for rehabilitation.

http://www.newsfirst.lk/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=5094%3A20-rehabilitation-camps-in-nae-for-surrendered-ltte-cadres-&Itemid=159

4. 12th Oct. – 3 Tamil youth arrested in Colombo

Sri Lanka Army (SLA) soldiers and police took into custody three Tamil youths in a joint search conducted in Hettiyawatta in Mattakuliya, a suburb of Colombo city. One of the youths was arrested as he was travelling in No. 155 public transport bus which was bound to Mt.Lavinia. The other two youths were taken into custody in the search conducted in Hettiyawatta junction. All passengers in the buses plying between Mattakuliya and Galkisse were subjected to search.

<http://www.tamilnet.com/art.html?catid=13&artid=30429>

5. 19th Oct - 29 Tamil youths arrested in Katunayake in two incidents

Twenty nine Tamil youths were taken into custody by the State Intelligence Unit of the Sri Lanka Police at Katunayake International Airport in two separate incidents. The arrested youths are detained in the Katunayake Police and interrogated. In the first incident eleven Tamil youths were arrested by the State Intelligence Unit on 15th October when they were turned back by Singaporean Immigration and Emigration officials after arriving at the Singapore Airport. In the second incident, eighteen Tamil students were arrested by the State Intelligence Unit on 16th when they arrived in Katunayake International Airport to take a flight to London. The youths had valid student visas issued by the UK embassy.

<http://www.tamilnet.com/art.html?catid=13&artid=30474>

6. 23rd Oct. - Jaffna gets a ‘new prison complex’

The Department of Prisons has decided to construct a new prison complex on a three acre land in a bid to minimize the congestion at the Jaffna Prison. The media spokesperson for the Prisons Department, Prisons Commissioner Kenneth Fernando said that at present three houses adjacent to the Jaffna Prison had also been leased out for house inmates and around 400 prisoners are housed at this complex.

http://www.newsfirst.lk/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=5323%3Anew-prison-complex-for-jaffna-&Itemid=159

7. 23rd Oct. - Suspected LTTE female area leader arrested in Ampara

A suspected LTTE female area leader was arrested in Ampara today following a search operation launched by the Special Task Force (STF) while in a similar operation four LTTE suspects, including a female LTTE cadre, were arrested from Vavuniya, the police said today.

http://www.dailymirror.lk/DM_BLOG/Sections/frmNewsDetailView.aspx?ARTID=65620

8. 27th Oct. - 60 transferred IDPs arrested from transit centers in Trincomalee

Sri Lanka Army Intelligence personnel who were 'screening' the Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) transferred to transit centers in Trincomalee, have arrested 60 IDPs for interrogation and 'rehabilitation'. The arrested IDPs had been brought from Vavuniya internment camps to be resettled in their villages in Trincomalee district. The 60 IDPs were registered as alleged 'LTTE suspects' and would be handed over for 'rehabilitation' under the supervision of Rehabilitation Commissioner Maj. General Daya Ratnayake after being interrogated by the police.

<http://www.tamilnet.com/art.html?catid=13&artid=30519>

Abductions, Torture & Extra-judicial killings

1. 02nd Oct 2009 - Mysterious corpse at bottom of precipice

A corpse of an unknown person was found in Hali-Ela Uma Oya Reserve, in the Uva Province. The corpse was in an advanced decomposed state making it beyond recognition. The Magistrate ordered Police to have the corpse to be examined by a Forensic Medical Specialist for a post mortem and a report to be submitted.

http://www.dailymirror.lk/DM_BLOG/Sections/frmNewsDetailView.aspx?ARTID=63384

2. 18th Oct - 15 IDPs abducted from transit camp

Fifteen Internally Displaced Tamil men were abducted by a group of unidentified persons clad in army uniform on 17th evening from the transit camp located in the complex of Eachchilampathu Sri Shenpaga Maha Vidiyalayam in Seruvila division in Trincomalee district. Abducted IDPs are married and in the age group 25-45, according to complaints filed with the police and the civil authority by relatives. The whereabouts of the abducted IDPs are not known till 18th morning. A group of one hundred IDPs held in Vavuniyaa internment camp were brought on Thursday to Eachchilampathu Sri Shempaga Maha Vidiyalayam transit camp. The abductions occurred while the refugees were awaiting resettlement, it was reported.

<http://www.tamilnet.com/art.html?catid=13&artid=30469>

3. 30th Oct. – A mentally challenged person forced to drown by Police

A mentally challenged man who was not allowed onshore by police officers attached to Colombo 4 Police Station, subsequently drowned after being beaten by the police officers with sticks and poles. The police accused the victim, Balawarnam Sivakumar, an ethnic Tamil, of throwing stones at them and passing by vehicles, before jumping into the sea in order to evade the police. The incident was captured live on tape by a television cameraman attached to privately owned TNL Television, from a nearby building. The video footage contained shocking images where it showed Sivakumar begging for his life, before being beaten to death. The incident occurred in broad day light while dozens of onlookers watched without any protest. The victim's brother had identified the body. A civilian and three policemen were arrested after the video footage was aired on TV.





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