

You get no second chances :you either kill, or get killed . (1989, Sept 30). India Today.

COVER STORY

late the international price of tea by a rupee," says Minister for Plantation Industries Gamini Dissanayake.

The third major exchange-earning sector, tourism, has been predictably devastated. For a whole decade, as tourist arrivals swelled (to 300,000 in 1983) and brought in \$ 120 million a year, vast sections of Sri Lankan society, particularly along the coastline, merrily feathered their nests with the western tourists' travellers' cheques. Today, the entire 150-km strip of hotels and beach resorts along the south-western coast lies depressingly vacant, wiping out this new rich class with little by way of economic resilience and plenty of loans to pay off.

**T**HERE is no hope at all for lesser entrepreneurs. Walking listlessly along the picture-postcard drive to Kandy, the ancient Sinhala capital whose history and the Temple of the Tooth Relic make it a must on the tourist itinerary, Hettiarachige Ranasinghe and his pair of porcupines, Chutti and Patty, make a curious sight. In better days Ranasinghe made a spartan living by charging tourists Rs 10 each to be photographed with his prickly pets. Today there are no tourists and no pictures. "How long can I wait? Another month. Then I will perhaps eat up the porcupines and go to Colombo to look for a job."

Desperation. That is what drives the average Sri Lankan to panic stations. In a production-based economy, a steep fall in

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PREMADASA  
UDGAMPOLA, 50  
*Police DIG at Kandy*

Militants wiped out part of his family in July 1988. He now has one mission: to wipe out the militants. He is called Sri Lanka's Dirty Harry.

the value of the currency would not have affected the poorest of the poor to such a degree. Not so in Sri Lanka with its trade-based economy. Much of the country's requirements are imported, from rice to ketchup and from nuts and bolts to handcuffs (Smith &

