The killing in Paris

There was a knock on the door. Sabelingam's wife Komathy opened the door. Two youths presumably in their early twenties were at the door. She let them in. Earlier an unknown woman had phoned saying that someone wanted to meet Sabalingam over a refugee claim, and wanted in-structions about how to get there, So Komathy t was a warm Sunday afternoon in Paris. 42 year old Sabaratnam Sabalingam was having a late lunch at home, on the third floor of an apartment complex. There ment complex. There was a buzz on the intercom. Sabalingam's wife
Komathy answered it. A
male voice said in Tamila
"we have come to see
"Annan" (elder brothen)
about writing a case."
Komathy pressed the
button for the main entrance door to open.
Upon being told that
someone was coming to
see him. Sabalingam get there. So Komathy presumed that these youths were the people who wanted to come, Upon being told that someone was coming to see him, Sabalingam out with his plate and went into the kitchen. He stood in the kitchen gobbling up the food on his plate hurriedly. "Writing a case" is a tireal translation of the Tamil "Case Elutha Venum". Writing a case in the common parlance of the Tamil expaniate refers to the refugee claim seeking political asylum in many a western country. Many Tamils make a living by helping other refugee Tamils to draft their claims. Sabalingam too earned money in this manner. He was also a translator and interpreter. Assuming that someone was coming to obtain his services to write out a refugee claim.

the Tamil Students Federation. This organisation known as "Manavar Peravai" in Tamil was formed in 1970 as a result of the standardisation policy in Higher Education. In retrospect one may consider this as the pioneer militant movement of Tamil youths. This organisation staged many demonstrations and built up a great degree of political consciousness among Tamil students.

She had never seen them before. But, strangers dropping in was not a new phenomenon. Unsuspectingly, she invited them in and requested them to sit. The fairer of the two sat on the settee, while the

write out a refugee claim Sabalingam finished his meal and washed his

changed places. The dark complexioned guy was now on the settee talking with Sabalingam while the other was on the chair. Inside the kitchen Komathy again heard her husband say in

other sat on a chair near the dining table. Komathy and other members of the family comprising her mother, child and a cousin went iste the kitchen Tamil "Irungo, Thamby, Irungo" (sit down younger brother, sit down"). Then she heard a loud noise. She blurted out "what is that noise, is that the computer?"

noise. She blurted out "what is that noise, is that the computer?" Then there was another bang. She rushed out of the kitchen with her cousin. child and a cousin went into the kitchen.

When Sabalingam went out the two youths stood up respectfully. Sabnalingam said in Tamil "Thambi avai inna". (hungar besthere. cousin.

Her husband Sabalingam was on the floor.
Blood was oozing out.
Even as she bent down
he began to gasp spasmodically. Komathy's
cousin tried to go near
the youths who were
now dis-connecting the
telephone by vanking go" (younger brothers, sit down) when Komathy's cousin went to clear the plates on the

now dis-connecting the telephone by yanking out the wires. One of them brandished the pistol at her. Then the two youths ran out.'

Suddenly, Komathy realised that her hus-

realised that her hus-band was going to divising the felt anger welling up inside the realized to the same and the same welling up inside the realized the same and the same who had been and the same with the same and the same with the same and the same with the same and the same time to the same and the same time to same and the same and th

rived and took Sabaling am away who was however pronounced dead at the hospital. Sabalingam, a colourful character and controversial political activist had been snatched by the God of Death Yaman. One bullet entered his chest while the other grazing his head had embedded itself on the wall. the wall. . Sabaratnam Saba-

Sabaratnam Saua-lingam was born in Vela-nai, an island, off the Jaffna peninsula on 14 January 1952. His family later moved to Kokkuvii, Caticadat to Jaffna Town After receiving his secondary education at Jaffna Hindu College he Jaffna Hindu College he

was associated with Velupillair Probakaran, the LTTE supremo. It is said that at one stage Prabakaran while attempting to manufac-ture explosives had sus-tained burn injuries. It was Sabalingam who nursed Prabakaran in secret even obtaining medical treatment clan-destinely through the help of relatives. In 1973 Sabalingam was arrested and was was arrested and was

By D. B. S. Jeyaraj

completed his National analke's regime. He was Diploma of Technology at Katubedda. Sabalingam was one of the founders of the Anuradhapura and at Tamil Students Federation. This organisation while at Bogambara, known as "Manavar Sabalingam" while at Bogambara, known as "Manavar Sabalingam" while at Bogambara, known as "Manavar Sabalingam" while at Bogambara, known as "Manavar Feroma nupper storey formed in 1970 as a brothing and beginned in 1970 as a brothing and beginned in 1975 he was reconstrations or part in political consciousness closely associated with among Tamil students, but was political consciousness closely associated with among Tamil students, but was profiled and the proposed profiled and the prof one may consider this leased and began workas the pioneer militant ing as a technical officer
movement of Tamil at the Paranthan Cheyouths. This organisamicals Corporation. He
too staged many dediff ont play an active
monostrations and built part in politics during
up a great degree of this phase but was
political consciousness
closely associated with
During Sabalingam's the TULF. Later these
involvement with the
youths broke away from
Manavar Peravai he also
the TULF and formed

the latter. He functioned as the Paris spokesman for the TELO from 1983 to 1986. After TELO leader Sri Sabaratnam was killed, Sabalingam too severed his links with the movement. Thereafter he re-

contemporary I amil writers. Incidentally he also published a collection articles written by Taraki in the "Sunday Island" under the name "The Elusive Peace."

their own organisation. Sabalingam also was aligned to this move-ment in 1978 after the killing of CID Inspector Bastianpillai, Sabaling-am was arrested but re-leased after a month. He left Sri Lanka for France in 1981

In Paris he was an active member of the Tamil Co-ordinating Committee. Later he helped form the Tamil Eelam Liberation Movement in Paris. After 1933 this movement broke up into three factions. One backed the EPRLF, another the EROS and the third the TELO. Sabalingam was with the latter. He functioned as the Paris spokersman

Thereafter he re-mained very much a lone wolf. He formed his own publishing com-pany named Asia Pub-lications. He published many anthologies of contemporary Tamil wri-

As a political activist Sabalingam took up a firm anti-LTTE position.
He reproduced several

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Human Rights Organisation reports that were critical of the LTTE. While reiterating his commitment to broad Tamil nationalist

on two publishing pro-jects. One was a history of the early stages of the Tamil militant move-ment. The other was a journal documenting

During Sabalingam's involvement with the Manavar Peravai he also was associated with Velupillai Prabakaran, the LTTE supremo. It is said that at one stage Prabakaran while attempting to manufacture explosives had sustained burn injuries. It was Sabalingam who nursed Probakaran in secret even obtaining medical treatment clandestinely through the help of relatives.

goals he remained cri-tical of the human right violations perpetnated by the LTTE. He spoke frankly and fearlessly on the subject in public places. At the time of his death he was engaged

the LTTE. In that context Sabalingam's death puts the LTTE in the dock although there is no conclusive evidence at

is o blo Eel mit present. The Frenchict present. The French'police are conducting all
inquiries and much's
would depend on their is
investigations. Many of a
Sabalingam's relations tried and associates is
voice their suspicion ab no
out the LTTE hand butadmit that there is no admit that there is no concrete evidence to substantiate their

charges.
It is reported however in the Paris based "Eelanadu" that Lawrence Thilagar, the LTTE spokesman in Paris has. spokesman in a suppose on record denying a any LTTE involvement in the killing. The assassination has however sent shock tree!

mors throughout the o Tamil Dialspora. Therefreedom of expressionaramong Tamil expatrixates has been assailed from different quartersic
with particular politicativ
views. This intolerance! has manifested itself intolerance! has manifested itself lift various forms including of the beating up of Tamil Cournelists and burning of newspaper offices! In Expansion of the Sababratian of this sense of intolerance. If Sabaratiann's killing! If sabaratiann's killing! If sabaratiann's killing! If some of the sense of the

could very well be and could very well be and warning signal to the Tamil Diaspora. The signal in that sense is very clear. Toe the line or clear.