



Above: 'Justice' Sarwa and State Counsel Allirani; (left) the three Appeal Court judges Sagirtha, Jesudas and Anbu

# Jaffna's cub judges

**Rita Sebastian**  
reporting from Jaffna

What you see from the well of the court is a bespectacled, curly haired young woman seated on a raised dais of the Jaffna District court, Kalki, 21, is one of the 12 judges of the Tamil Eelam judiciary.

Madam, the peninsula's law college named after a victim of Indian Peace Keeping Force operations in the island's northeast, in 1987-1990.

Judge Sarwa has heard 563 cases and given judgements in 367. Long black pants, white overshirts belted at the waist, black jackets and black bow ties formed the standard dress for the women judicial officers.

The Eelam Appeal court has three-member bench. Judges Sagirtha, Jesudas and Anbu, their ages ranging from 22-24. All of them battle hardened LTTE fighters.

Upon now 41 cases have gone before the Appeal court, and the judgement reversed in 21 of them. A man denies paternity. The case is dismissed in the lower court. The complainant appeals.

The judgement is reversed and the man made to pay Rs. 50,000 in a fixed deposit for the child.

Eiyathambey Pararajasingham, who heads the department of Justice and law administration in the peninsula points to the incorruptibility and impartiality of the Eelam judges. Lawyers and litigants in the peninsula have accepted the system, he says. "It is their faith in the LTTE leadership that has built confidence in the system. Leader Velupillai Prabhakaran has respected the judiciary, just as he did the military commanders".

enforced and police personnel found guilty of misusing their powers are given a three week punishment training on how to behave.

Police personnel in the proportion of 60% men to 40% women undergo military training as well, before being inducted into the service. In dark blue pants and light blue shirts and blue berets you find them manning the police stations that have been set up all over the peninsula.

is, the strength of the police force in each village depending on the size of the community.

"People come to us without fear with their complaints because they know they will get a just deal," says Nadesan.

With the administration of justice, and the law and order machinery in the peninsula having been firmly set in place, the LTTE would work any negotiated political settlement to accommodate these institutions.



Prabhakaran inspecting a guard of honour. "This is our land and we pass the laws."

Pararajasingham, who as an MP of the Eelam Revolutionary Organisation of Students (EROS), sat in the country's legislature for a brief period, talks of the amendments made to the existing laws. The law of Thesavalam has been changed so as to abolish the subjugation of women. In Tamil Eelam the woman is an independent person, who can sue and be sued, can sell, or donate her private property, unlike earlier when she had to have the written consent of her husband.

None of the Eelam judges is paid. And lawyers cannot charge more than Rs. 500 for each case. The case fee is not paid directly to the lawyer, it is channelled through the courts registrar, and all litigation completed within six months.

The penalty for rape, murder and drug offences is death. And the peninsula has seen the first man found guilty of rape face the firing squad. Once Tamil Eelam is established the guilty will get the imprisonment not death," says Pararajasingham.

From the courts to the peninsula's police force. Heading the Tamil Eelam Police force is Basalingham Nadesan, formerly of the Sri Lankan Police, and married to a former police colleague from the island's deep south.

The first batch of the Eelam police recruits passed out in 1991, says Nadesan. In battle fatigues, Nadesan oversees a substantial contingent of police personnel.

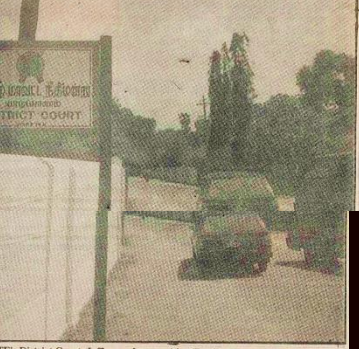
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LTTE's District Court, Jaffna, and a car with a Tamil number plate

# Peace process in hot water: EPDP

**By Ismeth**

The major attack on a naval craft in Mannar on Monday is seen by the EPDP as a serious setback to the peace process initiated by the PA government.

EPDP MP Muruges Chandrakumar, in an interview with *The Sunday Times* in the Parliament lobby said.

The peace-loving people of this country, be they the Sinhalese, Tamils, Muslims or Burghers, were anxious that something would come out of the peace initiative and the attack on Monday was not the thing the government or the people expected from the LTTE.

"If it is a minor incident, it would not have caused much harm, but an incident of this magnitude is really a setback. Moreover, when the wheel of peace is set in motion by the government, this was uncalled for."

Welcoming the lifting of the embargo on essential items, Mr. Chandrakumar said this should have been done much earlier. Anyway it's better late than never. It's the people who went through all sorts of hardships by the embargo and not the LTTE, for the Tigers have everything they wanted. We, the EPDP, had right along been telling the former government too, to lift the embargo, but something or other made it not to be said.

What does he say regarding the lifting of the embargo on batteries, as there is widespread belief that the government should not have sent the batteries to the North-East. He smiled and said, "batteries are just nothing for the Tigers."

The 31-year-old bespectacled



EPDP MP Muruges Chandrakumar

"A correct picture of all events connected with the peace talks should be given to the people. They must know what is happening. Our people who are mature will understand the initiative and the stand taken by the government which has got the blessings of all the parties and people in general to put an end to this ethnic strife."

What are his aspirations in his first stint as an MP? "We have to fulfil our obligations as representatives of our people. The Tamil political groups in Parliament will give voice to the Tamil speaking people and we will through Parliament try to solve the problems they face."

"The EPDP stand is that if the LTTE wants a ceasefire it should come forward for talks. This would be welcomed by all other Tamil groups. But it all depends on how both sides implement the ceasefire. It should not be used as a stop gap to mark time to prepare for a full scale war."

"We sincerely hope air and sea attacks and shelling would stop," Mr. Chandrakumar said in the interview during a break in Parliament.

and objected to the 6 pm SLRC Tamil news broadcast of September 20 which said that "the attack on the naval patrol craft could have been the handiwork of certain forces which were against the peace talks".

"We totally condemn this type of news broadcast," he said. The Minister assured it would be looked into. We request the government to tell the people what actually happened. Today much is said in the media about the peace process, not only in the North but also in the South, but actually more is said than done," Mr. Chandrakumar lamented.

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Prabhakaran receiving Guard of Honour from LTTE's women police



An opening ceremony of a police station.