

CHRONOLOGY OF LTTE TERROR - Part 10

From the Daily News Archives

When the euphoria of victory dies down, and together with it the media hype ceases, when the guns do not rattle and boom anymore, and the sky, the land and the sea become calm and serene, when tranquillity reigns through it is natural to live in the present moment and forget the past. But one cannot live in the present without a past. Nor can one envision the future discarding the experience of the preceding events. Hence the Daily News is serialising the Chronicle of LTTE Terror taken from our own archives which would remind our readers how it all began. An awareness of the chronology of terror would help us prevent the recurrence of such terror and frustrate any attempts by misguided elements to repeat history to suit their evil designs. It was not simple terror. Nor was terror sporadic. It was all pre-planned, pre-determined, well-calculated terror. The victims were innocent people. Though it is too many innumerate we would like to recall the major episodes in the Chronology of Terror.

Anuradhapura carnage

● Aim is to provoke people, says Govt —
Appeal to remain calm

Terrorists kill civilians at A'pura

Tamil terrorists dressed in army uniform came in a CTB bus and shot dead 70 civilians and injured over 100 others at Anuradhapura at 8.00 a.m. yesterday morning.

A Press communique issued by the State Ministry stated that at 8 a.m. yesterday morning, a group of Tamil terrorists travelled in a bus disguised as Military personnel to Anuradhapura. They had fired at the public at Anuradhapura bus stand killing and injuring many there; then proceeded to the old town and near the Srimaha Bodhi opened fire at the public who were there.

About 70 have been killed and 100 injured. Doctors, nurses and medicine have been flown to Anuradhapura.

No damage has been caused to Sacred Bo-tree.

After the wanton killing of innocent public at Anuradhapura the terrorists have proceeded towards Puttalam.

En route they had opened fire at Nochchiyagama Police Station injuring a police constable and proceeded to the Wilpattu game Sanctuary. At Maradanmadura they had opened

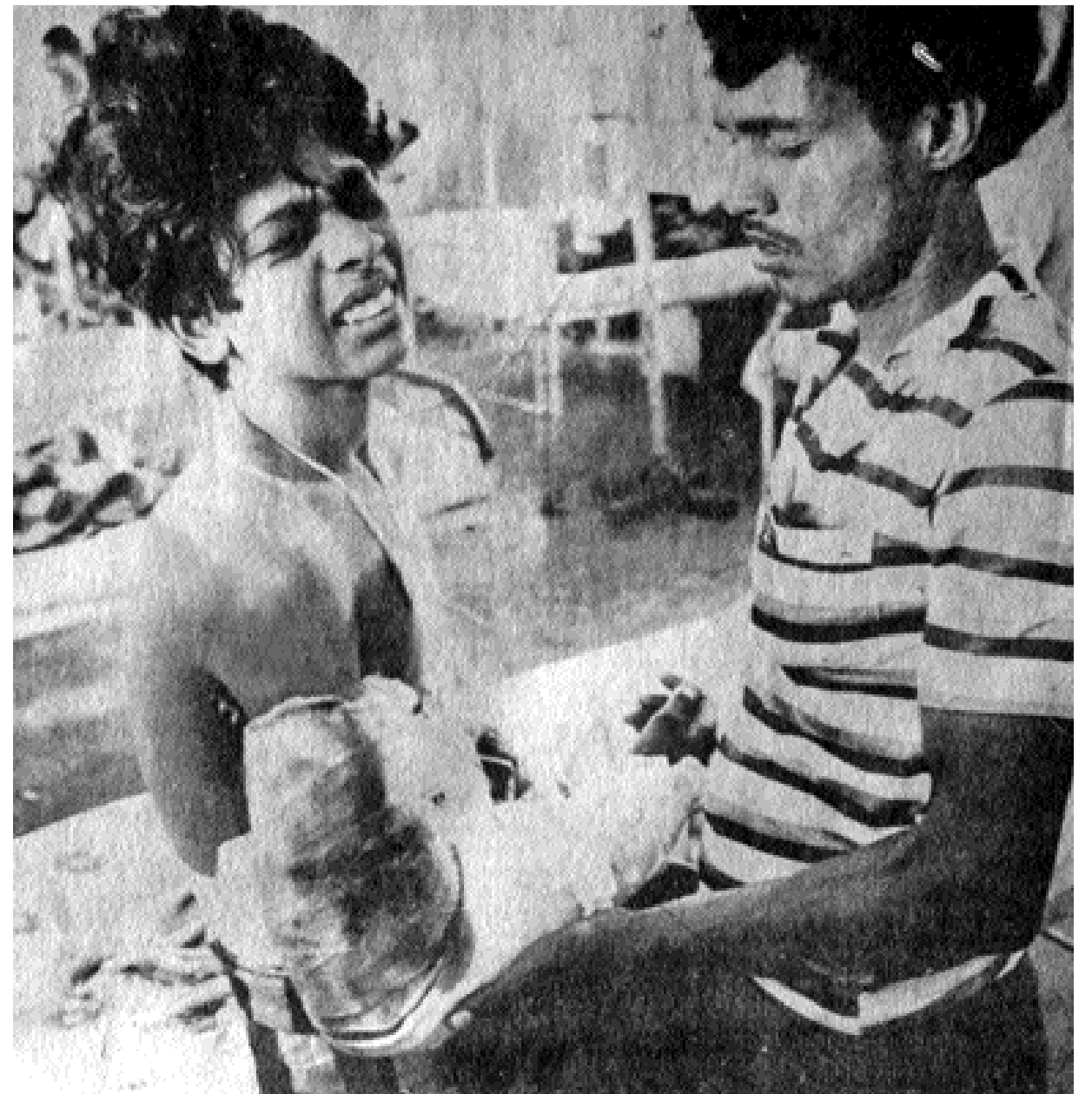
fire injuring some members of the public in the Sanctuary.

The Security Forces are carrying on a combined operation to capture the terrorists, dead or alive, the press release said.

The Government appealed to the people to remain calm and not to believe rumours because the main objective of this brutal massacre of civilians by the terrorists was to provoke people in other parts of the country.

CURFEW IN A'PURA:

The Government yesterday declared curfew in the Anuradhapura from 12 noon to 5 a.m. today.



This young man in the picture was only 15 years, one of the victims of Tuesday's terrorist attack on Anuradhapura. The boy was riding his bike in Anuradhapura town when the killers' bus passed him, spraying bullets from automatic weapons. One bullet went below his shoulder and three more pierced his abdomen. But the boy gritted his teeth and pedalled on until he reached his home a mile away.



A section of those killed

● CLOSURE OF TERRORIST BASES IN TAMILNADU Muslims to send petition to Rajiv

by D. B. S. Jeyaraj
Thirty-seven Muslim organisations are proposing to send a mass petition to Indian Premier Rajiv Gandhi calling for a closure of terrorist bases in Tamilnadu.
"The Island" learns that efforts would be made to obtain one hundred thousand Muslim signatures to this petition.
The petition while stressing that the Muslim people have no enmity towards the Tamil people will call upon the Indian Prime Minister to take

Sacrilege and murder at Sri Maha Bodhi

WUJITHA NAKKAWITA

History sits in millennia over the ancient city of Anuradhapura yet during its long existence of over 25 centuries conflicts too had taken place between invading South Indian Forces and the local armies. Most often all those invaders had been defeated and chased out of the country by some valiant king or prince of our own country. Yet the longer

history of this ancient city was emphasized for the piety and judiciousness of its kings who had ruled the people mercifully.

The month of May in the western calendar coincides though not exactly with the Month of Vaishaka or Vesak in the Sinhalese and Bengali calendars and of course of other calendars of the Indian subcontinent.

Though the holiest of the Buddhist festivals Vesak

falls on the full moon day of this month the whole month is sacred to the Buddhists and the Sri Lankan Buddhists in particular reach Anuradhapura during the month and live there for weeks or the whole month observing the ten precepts dasa sil at the holiest shrines like Swarnamali Sthupa or the Jaya Sri Maha Bodhi.

It was day in the Vesak month on May 14, 1985

that the holy city witnessed one of the unholy sights in the contemporary year yet the gory details of the incident had to be recalled to understand the lowliest depths to which some persons of this country who had styled themselves 'freedom fighters' (sic) had sunk.

The sacred bo tree one of the oldest trees in the recorded history of the world at least two thousand

three hundred years old, a sapling planted by King Devanampiyatissa in the 3rd Century looked at peace with the world with its pensile foliage shading the holy ground where pilgrims had gathered in their numbers on that morning. Some of them were clad in pure white and were in meditation while others were chanting gathas.

It was dawn and the silence was broken only by the soft chants of the pilgrims. A bus was moving towards the holy city at this time but before it came to Anuradhapura an incident had occurred at Puttalam, Ceylon Transport Board Depot Puttalam at dawn.

A group of about 20 armed men in military type uniforms, fully armed had come to the depot, got into one of the buses parked in front of the depot shot the conductor a Muslim and the driver a Sinhalese dead and had driven the bus away - no one had known where they were going.

When the bus was reaching Anuradhapura it was around 8.00 in the morning. The bus turned towards the Sri Maha Bodhi shrine where the pilgrims were performing religious rites at the hallowed ground.

The bus stopped in front of the open space before the shrine and the armed LTTE terrorists opened fire from the bus on the unsuspecting pilgrims and it took about 20 minutes for the whole satanic exercise. By the time it was over 120 men and women some of them senior citizens lay dead on the ground in pools of blood.

The terrorists having completed their carnage got off the CTB bus and took another bus parked on the grounds and sped towards Nochchiyagama and while fleeing the scene of crime they also opened fire on a police post on the way. The next destination of the terrorists was the Vilpattu National Park. On this day the park that was a regular place of visit of local or foreign tourists had not attracted much visitors due the prevalence of terrorist activity in the north and east.

However the officer in charge of receiving visitors was surprised to see a bus load of visitors arriving and he instructed one of the employees Abraham to enter their names in the visitor register and provide the group with a tour guide.

But when he took out the register and was preparing to do his duty he felt the pressure of a gun barrel on face.

When he looked up he saw it was a young man armed with an AK47 standing in front of his pressing the gun barrel on him face. A few more of such armed men followed and started ransacking the office after ordering out all the staff who were all asked to stand out in a line.

Next the terrorists ransacked the living quarters and robbed all the money and valuables. They next, attempted to start some of the vehicles of the national park warden's centre but they could not start any as expecting the eventuality of a terrorist incursion the vehicles electricity circuits had been manipulated so

that the engines could not be ignited by any outsider.

However one of the employees standing in the line thought he may stand a chance to escape death volunteered to start one of the Land Rovers. The terrorists first shot six of the men standing in the line and next moved down the others a while later. They however spared the life of the first person who was trying to enter the names in the visitors register and asked him to act as their guide.

The terrorist group sped toward Puttalam with Abraham who was taken as their guide but on the way they spotted a helicopter hovering overhead. They stopped the two vehicles and stretched out on the ground after everyone removed the colourful shirts they were wearing. Abraham who saw he had an opportunity to escape ran away amidst the bushes and while running he fell into an irrigation reservoir where he hid among the water plants till the terrorists left the area. He was the single person left to tell the tale. The LTTE terrorists had killed 148 people all civilians that day, including 24 employees of the Vilpattu National Park, 120 pilgrims at the Sri Mahabodhi and the bus crew of two at Puttalam. The sole survivor was Abraham.



The Jaya Sri Maha Bodhi in Anuradhapura

TOMORROW

LTTE bombs Airlanka plane

YESTERDAY

Tigers kill 22 IPKF, 15 civilians

