



President Mahinda Rajapaksa, First Lady Shiranthi Rajapaksa, Defence and Urban Development Ministry Secretary Gotabhaya Rajapaksa and guests at the ceremony



The President signing the book

A Valiant Soldier's Memorable Moment



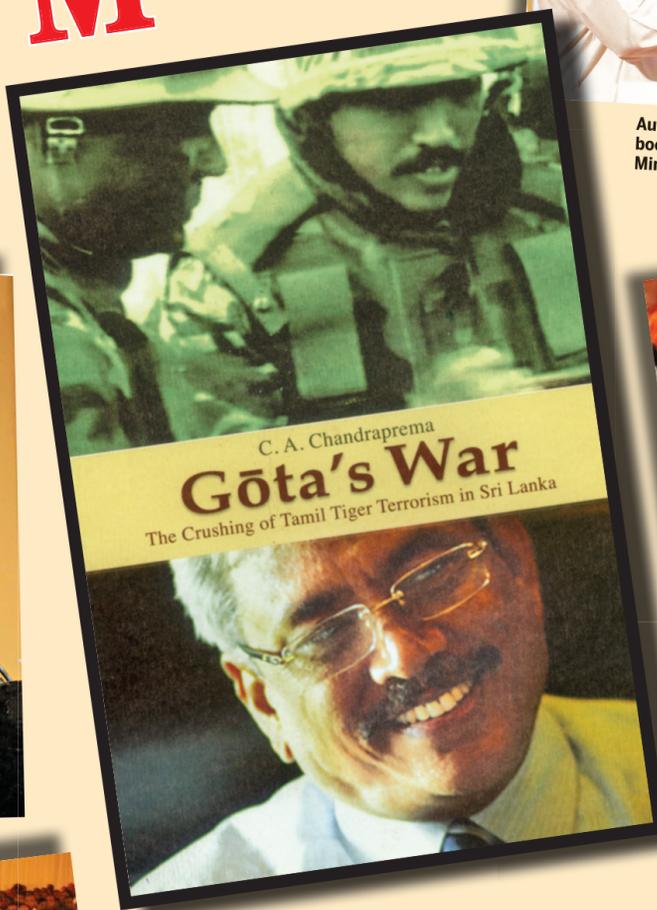
President Mahinda Rajapaksa, First Lady Shiranthi Rajapaksa and Defence and Urban Development Ministry Secretary Gotabhaya Rajapaksa entering the venue.



Author of *Gota's War* C A Chandraprema presenting the first copy of the book to President Mahinda Rajapaksa. Defence and Urban Development Ministry Secretary Gotabhaya Rajapaksa is also in the picture.



Author C A Chandraprema addressing the gathering



President with First Lady Shiranthi Rajapaksa, Defence and Urban Development Ministry Secretary Gotabhaya Rajapaksa, Senior Minister Sarath Amunugama, Secretary to the President Lalith Weerunga and guests

Gota's War mirrors the humanitarian operation - Dr Amunugama

SANDASEN MARASINGHE

The book titled *Gota's War* would restore the truths of the humanitarian operation fought in Sri Lanka where the world's largest rescue operation took place in Puthumathalan at a time when attempts are made to forget such commendable deeds by talking about baseless issues, said International Monetary Cooperation Senior Minister Dr. Sarath Amunugama.

He was addressing the gathering at the launching ceremony of the book *Gota's War - The Crushing of Tamil Tiger Terrorism in Sri Lanka*, compiled by senior journalist C. A. Chandraprema at the Waters Edge, Battaramulla on Monday evening.

Minister Amunugama stated that those who spoke of the Nandikadal lagoon, forget the world's largest rescue operation conducted by the forces under the leadership of President Mahinda Rajapaksa and Defence and Urban Development Ministry Secretary Gotabhaya Rajapaksa.

Asserting that Secretary Rajapaksa knew the Army from his first day as an officer cadet right up to the highest echelon, Dr Amunugama said that he was a soldier's soldier.

He also stated that Secretary Rajapaksa who was the chief architect of the humanitarian operation has also shown his superb administrative and technical skills.

Minister Amunugama stated that this

massive operation could have been derailed hadn't there been proper political decisions taken amidst the pressures of international actors.

He added that the Vadamarachchi operation was given up due to the pressure applied by India on the then President J R Jayawardene. He added that President Rajapaksa was firm in his decision amidst pressures by the international community.

Secretary to the President Lalith Weerunga making an analytical lecture on the book at the launching ceremony, stated that Indian intelligence agencies were involved in planning and executing terrorist attacks in Colombo in the eighties.

He also stated that when the Vadamarachchi operation commenced, the then Indian Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi, issued a strong statement against the operation. He added that Sri Lanka could have eliminated terrorism if not for the interference of the then Indian envoy J.N. Dixit.

He added that the role of India needed intensive discussion. He said that President Rajapaksa was under intense pressure from India, United Kingdom and France to stop

the operation against the terrorists in 2009. But he did not cave in to these pressures.

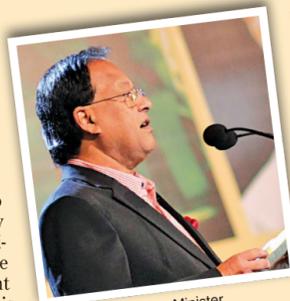
The book is titled *Gota's War* to mark the remarkable support extended by Secretary Gotabhaya Rajapaksa to President Rajapaksa as the Commander in Chief to eliminate the 30 year terrorism from Sri Lankan soil.

President Rajapaksa attended the ceremony as the Chief Guest.

The author of the book, journalist C A Chandraprema presented copies of the book to the President and to Secretary Rajapaksa.

The welcome speech was made by Sri Lankan ambassador to Turkey Barathi Wijeratne and chairperson of the General Ranjan Wijeratne Foundation by which the book was published. The vote of thanks was made by author C A Chandraprema.

Members of the Maha Sangha, other religious dignitaries, First Lady Shiranthi Rajapaksa, Cabinet ministers, Members of Parliament, ambassadors, High Commissioners, Chief of Defence Staff, Commanders of the three forces, IGP N.K. Ilangakoon, Ms. Ayoma Rajapaksa and a large number of guests participated in the ceremony.



Senior Minister Dr. Sarath Amunugama



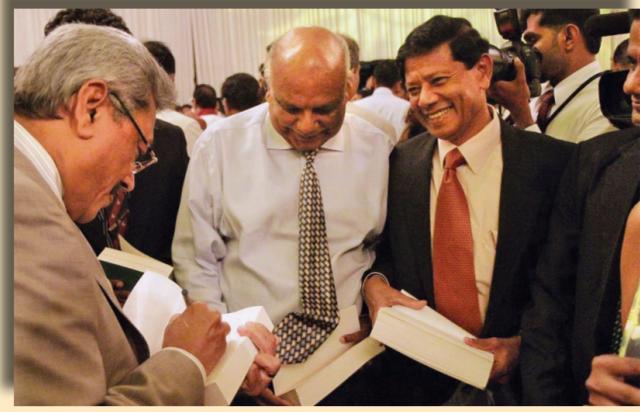
The President lighting the oil lamp



Defence and Urban Development Ministry Secretary Gotabhaya Rajapaksa signing the book



A dance item at the ceremony



Defence Secretary Gotabhaya Rajapaksa signing the book.

Pictures by Sudath Silva