



# RAPID CONTEXT ASSESSMENT

## Executive Summary

### National Analysis

- Political 1
- Governance 2
- Human Rights 3
- Environment 4
- Civil society & Media 5
- Humanitarian & Development Space 7

The UNP which is supposedly the main opposition party continues to be in a state of disarray despite the much hyped reorganization intended to allow more inner party democracy in the election of its office bearers.

A distant glimmer of hope and a positive development in August was the talks between President Rajapakse and the Leader of the Opposition Ranil Wickremesinghe on reforms of the Executive Presidency and the 17<sup>th</sup> Amendment. However speculation that more opposition parliamentarians were waiting to join government ranks also gathered momentum as government patronage has become a strong incentive to switch political allegiance.

The law would be amended to provide for the filing of Human Rights cases in the court of appeal. At present such cases are filed before the Supreme Court. The amendment if enacted will enable an aggrieved party that is dissatisfied with a ruling to appeal to the Supreme Court while according to the present law there is no appeal possible as such petitions are determined by the Apex court.

Instances of violence in the month of August included the attack on some traders from the South who had gone to Jaffna and an assault on a senior official of the Inland Revenue department in Matara. The law and order situation thus calls for remedial measures in both the North and the South. As regards Rights of Children the Department of Probation and Child Care has announced that there had been more than 500 cases of child abuse in 420 Children's homes run both by the state and private institutions.

The Land Reform Commission has decided to award title deeds to the lands of those who are resettled. Legalizing the land ownership of the resettled people is a giant leap in restoring normalcy in the former conflict affected parts of the country. Civil Society initiatives in the month under review included focus on the plight of Sri Lankan House maids abused by their employers in the Middle East while University Students protested against the establishment of Private Universities.

### Province Analysis

#### North

- Jaffna 6
- Vavuniya 7
- Mannar 7

#### East

- Batticaloa 8
- Trincomalee 8
- Ampara 9

#### West

- Colombo 9

### Trend Analysis

- Political →
- Governance ↓
- Human Rights ↓
- Environment →
- Civil society & Media Space ↘
- Humanitarian & Development Space →

**NATIONAL ANALYSIS 25/07/2010 TO 26/08/2010**

**POLITICAL CONTEXT**

More cross-over's contributes towards adding to the "numbers" of the ruling United People's Freedom Alliance (UPFA) heading slowly but steadily towards a

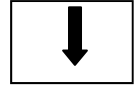
2/3rd majority of 150 seats in parliament. The UPFA secured 144 seats after the April parliamentary elections and with one more crossing over (UNP) to key positions did not and one to decide, the UPFA ultimately take place. The

### Indicator References

|                         |   |                             |   |                        |   |
|-------------------------|---|-----------------------------|---|------------------------|---|
| No change               | → | Slightly improving          | ↗ | Slightly deteriorating | ↘ |
| Significantly improving | ↑ | Significantly deteriorating | ↓ |                        |   |

grand old party continues to be led by Ranil Wickremesinghe who in his own style continues to hold the party together with dissident Sajith Premadasa willing to talk to the leader to end a possible stalemate. A positive step towards government-opposition relations is that the opposition is getting involved in assisting in Constitutional Reforms, which is a much felt need towards good governance.

## GOVERNANCE

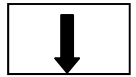


### HEARINGS ON RECONCILIATION AND ITS REVERSE IN PRACTICE

The hearings of the Commission on Lessons Learnt and Reconciliation gained much media attention. So far most of those who have testified or been invited to testify before the Commission made strong critiques of the Ceasefire Agreement, the former government that signed it. This could be on account of the restricted terms of reference of the Commission. It has been required to investigate events that took place during a given a restricted time period. This has opened it to the criticism that its appointment is political rather than what its name suggests. The terms of reference of the Commission specify that it should investigate those events that took place between 2002 when the Ceasefire Agreement came into being and 2009 when the war finally came to its end. Those who could testify about what happened during the war have so far not made their presence felt. The continuing tensions within the country were internationalized by the media coverage of a shipload of Sri Lankan refugees in Canada. The ship carrying 492 Tamil refugees, including women and children entered Canadian waters after a three month long journey from Southeast Asia. The fact that so many people are willing to flee Sri Lanka at grave risk to themselves is a negative reflection on what is happening today

in the country. The refugees will obviously claim a maximum of harassment and that their lives will be at risk if they are returned to Sri Lanka. Ironically some of the statements of government spokespersons have made the claims of the refugees appear real. In their bid to discredit the sincerity of the claim of the refugees to foreign asylum, government spokespersons claimed that those aboard the ship were LTTE members, and hard core ones at that. While there is evidence that the ship that arrived in Canada is part of an LTTE-linked human smuggling operation, in a similar incident in October 2009, 76 Tamil refugees arrived on a ship to Canada where they were held but eventually released after none were determined to belong to the LTTE. A crucial government decision bearing on governance would be the one to amend the Constitution to permit the incumbent President to seek office for more than two terms and to do away with the 17th Amendment to the Constitution that limits the President's powers of high level state appointments. Until the government announced its decision on constitutional reform, there was hope that a statesmanlike solution would be found. The talks that President Rajapaksa had with Opposition Leader Ranil Wickremesinghe in previous weeks appeared to be very promising. There were reports of agreements that included the abolishing of the institu-

tion of the Executive Presidency and its replacement with an Executive Prime Minister, as well as give and take on the issue of the implementation of the 17th Amendment. These talks were welcomed by most sections of civil society as the way forward for the country in facing the international and local challenges of post-war reconstruction and development. However, with the support of the defectors from the opposition the government appears to have a safe margin to take it over the 150 votes in Parliament necessary to enact constitutional amendment. At the last General Election, the government alliance obtained 144 seats, and so it can now expect up to 155 votes in the 225 seat Parliament. There is speculation that more opposition parliamentarians will be waiting to support the government in the hope of accessing governmental patronage in the future. However, there is reason for the government to exercise caution over its plans. A limited opinion poll conducted by a leading newspaper which is read by the country's urban intelligentsia revealed that 90 percent of those polled rejected the amendment of the two term limit on the Presidency. Constitutional amendments that are hatched in secret, and do not have public acceptance and legitimacy, can be repealed in the same way tomorrow when the political balance changes.



### Human rights issues

There had been an important development in the field of human rights in Sri Lanka during this month. An announcement by the Minister of Justice indicates that the law is to be amended soon to provide for filing of human rights cases in the Court of Appeal. Currently such cases could be filed only in the Supreme Court.

The proposed law would also make it possible for a victim whose human rights case has been heard by the Court of Appeal to appeal against its decision to the Supreme Court if he is not satisfied with the decision of the Court of Appeal. As the law stands, a victim of human rights violation can seek a declaration that his right had been violated only from the Supreme Court and there is no appeal possible. It is hoped that the proposal of the Minister would become law soon and enable victims of human rights violations to obtain relief more expeditiously and at a lesser cost.

It is hoped that the proposed amendments to the Constitution would contain provisions to make room for appointments to be made to the key human rights institutions as envisaged in the 17<sup>th</sup> Amendment to the Constitution. Such a step would ensure their independence and restore the dignity of institutions such as the National Human Rights Commission and the Police Commission which are very vital for the effective protection and promotion of human rights in the country.

### Custodial deaths

It is unfortunate that there had been another instance of the death of a person taken into custody by the Police during this month. This has happened at the Kirindiwela Police Station. At his funeral the body of the dead person had been placed on the roadside and the people had demanded an inquiry into the death of that person who had died allegedly due to being assaulted by the police who had arrested him.

### Law & order situation

Several instances of violence that have occurred during this month indicate a deterioration of the law and order situation in the country. In Jaffna it is reported that some traders who had gone there from the South had been attacked and injured by a gang who are yet to be apprehended. There had been an instance of a person suspected to be an underworld leader who had been abducted by unknown persons in the South.

In Mundalama, a police officer who was on duty is said to have been assaulted by two men who had been warned for disorderly conduct after consuming liquor. In another instance a policeman had been stabbed to death in the Wellampitiya area. The residence of a provincial councillor in the North Central Province had come under a grenade attack. The head of the Inland Revenue Department's Divisional Office in Matara, had been attacked by unknown persons. This incident had prompted even the President to intervene and direct the IGP to bring those

responsible to book. There had also been another instance of a family of five who had come from abroad to visit their relations in the North, being robbed of their passports by persons who posed as police officers. The robbers had subsequently telephoned and demanded Rs. 5 million for the return of the passports. Two female students had allegedly been abducted on their way to school in Hatton town. They had been able to jump off the van and escape with injuries and had been admitted to the Gampola Hospital. The Gampola Police are investigating. These instances are indicative of a deterioration of the law and order situation in the country during this month. Consequently there is a sense of insecurity prevailing in various parts of the country today. It is desirable that the government takes note of this trend and takes remedial measures to stem the increase of such incidents.

### Rights of Children

A report released this month by the Department of Probation and child care states that during the past six months that there had been more than 500 cases of child abuse in 420 children's homes run by the State and private institutions. It is alleged that many of these incidents had been with the knowledge of the guardian of the children's homes. There had been several other instances of abuse of children that had come to light during this month. In Mount Lavinia, the CID had arrested a member of an underworld gang for forcibly retaining a thirteen year old girl, allegedly forcing her into a life of prostitution.

In another instance in the Deniyaya district. There had also been an unusual instance of two 11 year old girls from Trincomalee who had been reported missing by their parents, being found late in the evening on the same day in Jaffna. It is reported that these girls had not performed well in their school exams and did not want to go home for fear of being punished by their parents. They had got into a bus and gone to Vavuniya. Later wanting to go back home they had mistakenly taken a bus to Jaffna. The Jaffna police who found them had contacted their parents and handed these children to them with a warning not to torture children for not performing well in their studies. All these instances relate to child rights issues in the country which need serious consideration by the authorities. Perhaps due to the publicity these instances had been given in the press, the President had issued an order to the relevant officers to take stringent measures against those responsible for abuse of women and children. It is a welcome step that the President had held a

meeting with officials of the Ministry of Child Development and Women's Affairs and stressed the need for a mechanism to constantly monitor children's homes and prosecute those responsible for the abuse of children. They were specially requested to take care of children left behind by mother's who have gone abroad for employment. The National Child Protection Authority has also shown interest in the welfare of these children

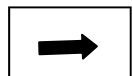
There has been a report of a Grama Niladhari in the Wanathawillua area sexually abusing a girl who had gone to him to get help to obtain a loan. He had subsequently being produced before the Puttalam Magistrate and remanded.

In the Sabaragamuwa Province the Minister in charge of Childcare had found that at a Childcare Centre in Ratnapura, some of the children are being used to do labour work such as going to a jungle nearby and cutting leaves to feed goats. The Minister had then ordered that this Centre be closed and the children transferred to two other children's homes in the

meeting with officials of the Ministry of Child Development and Women's Affairs and stressed the need for a mechanism to constantly monitor children's homes and prosecute those responsible for the abuse of children. They were specially requested to take care of children left behind by mother's who have gone abroad for employment. The National Child Protection Authority has also shown interest in the welfare of these children

**Land Rights**  
The decision of the Land Reform Commission to award title deeds to the lands which the displaced people occupy following the re-settlement. This move to legalize the landownership is a welcome move by the LRC. It is reported that 25,000 displaced families have already been identified for award of title deeds. It is hoped that they will continue this service consistently and enable all the nearly 300,000 IDPs to legalize their land ownership. This will enable them to get bank loans to repair or rebuild their houses which had been destroyed during the war.

## ENVIRONMENT



The month of August began once again with the dengue epidemic being the forefront of concern; although being a health concern the actual reason for the disease increasing is an environmental concern of poor solid waste management, water stagnation etc. It is for this reason that we continue to report on this particular situation in the Environment component. Emergency measures such as random checks, high fines and even imprisonment for improper waste disposal have been imposed; however

the over all problem of waste management is still ongoing as many districts face the major issue of having no proper management plan as well as space in which to dispose of the waste according to environmentally sustainable methods. Large scale landfill, technologically intense waste plant/systems have shown in the past to be of no use in the Sri Lankan context as sustainability of these large scale schemes rarely when finally handed over to local authorities. It is for this reason that reducing of waste

given to municipalities is being promoted by many government, non government and private sector actors as the first step in solving/reducing the issue of solid waste. The dry hot spell that occurred in the course of the month was broken on the last few days by sudden torrential rains especially in the hill country region. Fog warnings were issued in these areas and due to the heavy rains sluice gates of the Luxapana reservoir having to be opened.

## CIVIL SOCIETY & MEDIA SPACE



A Sri Lankan House Maid Tortured by her employer In Saudi Arabia returns with 23 Nails inserted in her body. A senior Inland Revenue Official in the Southern City of Matara assaulted by a group of unidentified men. University Students Protest against establishments of Private Universities. Building Public Awareness in fighting the spread of Dengue fever.

Telecommunication Regulatory Authority moves to prevent children from accessing pornographic web sites. Italian Experts to restore the ancient frescoes of the World Heritage site of Sigiriya.

Government to present the Proposed amendments to the Constitution in Parliament. These represent a random selection of Front Page headlines in the Print and Electronic Media. Except for the singular exception of the last item – the Constitutional Amendments all others provoked not only editorial comments and public debate but also stimulated civil society action.

There were delegations visiting the Embassy of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and Civil Society initiatives that questioned why Sri Lanka should not ban the recruitment of females as House Maids to be sent to the Middle East.

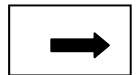
The Inland Revenue Department employees resorted to trade union action that resulted in the Inspector General of Police himself leading a team of Hundred officers who swooped on the city of Matara to apprehend the perpetrators of the attack on the Provincial Inland Revenue Chief while the public was informed by the media watch dogs that the dastardly deed was the work of some powerful persons. Who else would have had a grudge against an official of the Inland Revenue Department queried one commentator in an editorial that totally ignored the question why the government has made such lamentable progress in broadening its base of taxation specifically that of individuals paying tax on individual income.

The Student protests against the establishment of private Universities

was mainly treated as a part of a political agenda of a political party that is undoubtedly in control of the largest student grouping. However the sad indictment of the media pundits is that they failed to deal with the question why the students gravitate to that particular Student Grouping. Universities as they are presently constituted cannot meet the demand and hence the inevitable filtering process of a highly competitive selection process coupled with some form of affirmative action towards less privileged students from the less developed parts of the country.

Private Universities represent the aspirations of the affluent and the privileged. To the vast majority of students to whom tertiary education is the only unhindered path to upward social and financial mobility this represents a moving of the Goal Posts after the game has commenced. It was no surprise that the point was made only by the radical press while the issue itself concerns a majority of students and parents who neither radical nor liberal but just plain a political.

## HUMANITARIAN & DEVELOPMENT SPACE



### Ex-Combatants

Legal action is to be taken against 1,350 frontline LTTE members identified as having been involved in serious crimes now in custody. 650 of these are in a detention camp in Vavuniya while 700 are in the Boossa detention camp in Galle. Meanwhile the Colombo High Court sentenced to ten years rigorous imprisonment two

LTTE cadres who pleaded guilty to transporting LTTE suicide kits and explosive items from North to Colombo. The Attorney General had indicted these two suspects under the provisions of Prevention of Terrorism Act. The government told Parliament yesterday that 723 suspected LTTE cadres were arrested in IDP camps during the past month alone.

### Resettlement

The Government has taken steps to legalize the land ownership of families who were displaced from their original native places during the war in the North and East. Initially, the Land Reform Commission (LRC) has targeted awarding deeds to 10,000 families before the end of November for them to settle down in their origi-

nal native places with proper land demarcation. The Government will also increase the resettlement allowance that was being paid to Internally Displaced Persons from Rs. 25,000/- to Rs.50,000/-. This increase in the allowance would be given to all IDPs who had already settled down in other areas as well.

Accordingly, now IDPs that leave camp and decide to settle down on their own land get 16 Roofing Sheets, Rs.50,000/- in cash, dry rations for six months, agricultural implements, kitchen utensils and other essential items as well. 203,208 IDPs have been resettled so far. Many of them, according to the UN, still have very basic accommodation. There is also a shortage of teaching staff at 240 schools in Kilinochchi, Mullaitivu, Mannar where displaced people had been resettled. The number of students has now increased to 35,379.

#### **IDPs in Welfare Centres**

The balance 34,476 IDPs waiting to be resettled are presently residing in five relief villages and two IDP centres. About 1,000 Sri Lankan refugees who fled to Tamil Nadu have

also come back to their land with the assistance of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) from January this year. Meanwhile around 5,000 IDPs are being sounded to be ready to be shifted from one camp to another giving the inmates less than 24 hours notice. However, this was called off following protests voiced by certain MPs of the area. The main concern were the security measures and the strict surveillance observed at the Kadirgamar welfare that could hamper free movement of school children and people working at various State and private organisations housed in the Menik Farm if they are moved to the Kadirgamar welfare centre.

#### **Returning SLA land to the returnees?**

Towards the middle of the month the Defence Secretary stated that the civilian lands acquired for security purposes in the Jaffna peninsula would be reduced and given to owners while others whose lands have to be kept to maintain certain essential security establishments would be provided either compensation or alternative land. He also said that in the Vanni

region all civilian land had been released and the Security Forces had redeployed certain military establishment. The Government property occupied by the military too has been released to relevant local civilian administrative authorities.

#### **HRC Complaints**

4763 complaints have been received by the Human Rights Commission of Sri Lanka (HRCSL) from the districts of Jaffna, Mannar and Vavuniya in Northern Province from May last year. Of these more than 3,000 complaints are regarding the disappearances of persons from May 2009 till now.

#### **Children**

A Children's Home in Ratnapura was closed amidst charges of sexual abuse and exploitation. More than 500 cases of child abuse have been reported in the past six months from some 420 government and privately maintained children's homes in the country, Probation and Child Care Services (DPCCS) Department. DPCCS Commissioner told that legal action would be taken against those responsible.

## **PROVINCIAL ANALYSIS 25/07/2010 TO 26/08/2010**

### **NORTHERN**

#### **VAVUNIYA**

**G**A Vavuniya had plans to provide adequate facilities to Government servants who find difficult to reside in Vavuniya. 1,000 housing scheme at Omanthai and 200 at Chettikulam had been earmarked for this purpose. Omanthai railway station would be established at the

end of the month. The railway line work to Jaffna would commence next month.

300 IDP had been sent to Mulliwaikal village and balance will be sent very soon once the land is cleared of mines. In the Vavuniya district only Mahilankulam village is not resettled due to mines. IDP who resettled at

Kilinochchi have cultivated around 4,000 acres of paddy and harvest had just commenced in 2,000 acres. But farmers do not have proper storage place and dispose paddy for a cheap price to middle men. Farmers hope that the Paddy marketing board should buy the entire product. Dengue is spreading up in Vavuniya

district too, MOH Vavuniya had taken precaution all over the places as more patients are admitted in hospitals. Education Department had decided due to dengue schools to be reopened from 8 a.m to 2.p.m for the next term . Ministry of Social service have revealed that out of the total population, there are 7% disabled, 10% Elders, 23% single headed house wives. GA Vavuniya says that 32 NGOs have been permitted to do rehabilitation work in resettled areas on highways, irrigation and schools infrastructures. More traders flock to the North daily and traditional busi-ness men encounter some difficulties. In another way consumers get cheaper goods due to competition. In Kilinochchi 30 villages have been opened for resettlement and very soon electricity will be reinstalled under Northern awakening programme.

## JAFFNA

It is observed that a large number of general public from the Southern part of the Island visiting Jaffna since the opening of the A9 road. Especially this month the number of people visiting Jaffna became very high as the festivals of Nallur Hindu temple and Nagadeepa buddist temple were taking place at the same time. Nagadeepa is overcrowded with visitors who make it a holiday destination with their families during the August school vacation.

Lines of pilgrims' vehicles are seen moving along the causeway to Nagadeepa and thousands of people are falling in line at Kurikadduwan waiting for ferry to the sacred island. A sufficient number of boats are on service between Kurikadduwan and Nagadeepa to facilitate the crowd. All hotels and lodges are reserved for accommodation during the whole month August.

Security Forces in Jaffna have deployed troops to assist the Police and to guide visitors in Jaffna town and to

other places of tourist interests. The Jaffna defense centre informs that the high security zone in Kurunagar has been removed. This provides a safer space for the people living in Kurunagar area for free movement and peace full life. They can engage in their own activities without fear. In addition members of 90 IDP families have been re settled in the same district. Hence defense restriction for fishing also has been removed to help the community for their livelihood development.

The particular area was restricted for general public as high security zone since 1995. People appreciate the act of the government in this regard. Enhancing the government's program to develop infrastructure facilities in the Jaffna peninsula, the foundation stone for a new central hospital was laid in the Jaffna Central Nursing Home premises recently.

This was long standing need for the people living in Jaffna and has been fulfilled by the government. Goods are available according to the demand

and the prices also similar to other district. It is a relief for them when compared with the previous period of war. Monsoon rains started and resettled families are suffering due to heavy rain in this month. The situation will continue up to December and there is no any other alternative arrangements made by the government. Immediate steps should be taken to help the suffering families. Significant improvements were noticed on the ground situation in Jaffna where the transport service is concerned. Few months back the available routes ( 6 routes) within Jaffna was covered by the government transport service but the starting times were ( first bus) 7 am and the ending time (last bus) was 4.30 pm were the timing has been improved for the first bus to start at 4.30 am and the last bus to run at 9 pm. Apart from the Omanthai check point there were two new check pints noticed in Elephant pass where the drivers need to give the security forces information about the vehicle, and the owner of the vehicle etc

## MANNAR

Ministry of Railway has plans to rehabilitate the Railway road from Madawachchiya to Mannar. Also to

open a new railway station at Parayannaran kulam. Junction.A railway station in too will come into being in order to attract more pilgrims to Madhu shrine.Cairn Sri lanka Pvt

Ltd a subsidiary of Cairn India Pvt Ltd will begin drilling the first three oil wells in the Mannar Basin in January. So far 5 deaths have reported in Mannar due to dengue fever, 86 posi-

tive cases have been admitted in various hospitals. Most of the LTTE cadres who undergo rehabilitation wished to have driver training so far 941 inmates applied for this training. Parents are happy to note that Government is very keen in rehabilitating the LTTE cadres according to their wishes.

Paddy cultivators who have a stock of harvested paddy are unable to sell it for better price. Farmers hope that the Paddy Marketing Board should be reopened in this area. Farmers are disappointed that they cannot access the Government fertilizer subsidy for the coming Maha season as most of them

lost or misplaced their land deeds in the displacement. Fishermen from Thevanpiddy, Kalliaddy & Nachikudah had complained that Jaffna fishermen have encroached their area in trawlers & damaging their nets. Fishing in Mannar is hampered by fleets of Indian trawlers. They fish more than three days each week.

The August Madhu festival on 15<sup>th</sup> was jointly celebrated by several Bishops and a large number of Southern devotees who flocked to the shrine. Special fleet of buses and trains made more devotees to turn out during this school holidays. Daily

activities in the main town and the sub towns around Mannar such as Murukan, Silawathura etc., proceed as in Anuradhapura. Check points in the town have reduced including the point where passes were issued to leave the district. The Mannar Colombo road through Eluwankulama which was inaccessible for close upon a decade, has been re-opened with access limited to between 8am and 3pm. Those who cannot access this road are now using a new route from Silawathura to Vilachchiya, through Nochchiyagama to Puttalam towards Colombo. This route is apparently 40km lesser than the normal route through Anuradhapura.

## EASTERN

### AMPARA

Overall situation of the district remains calm and no any major incident reported during the reporting period. Grassroots level communities are freely engaged in their day to day livelihood activities without fear. Most of their livelihood activities are based in the jungle.

Presently there are no security barriers to work in their paddy fields. People allowed entering in to the jungle to collect fire wood, honey, timber etc. Yala harvesting is started and the paddy cultivators are demanding reasonable price and the government to purchase their product. But there is no sign of fixing a reasonable price and according to the Chairman of

Paddy Marketing Board government could purchase only half of the product. Under the circumstances the paddy cultivators are facing difficulties to sell their product and to continue paddy cultivation.

Middle level communities are very much engaged in business and white colour jobs in the government department, private firms and non government sectors. They are freely moving to their work places and returning home without any harassment as in the past.

There are complaints regarding domestic violence, gender harassment, child abuse, violation of law and theft among the community. Most of the

violent acts are noted among the ex combatants and they need counselling assistance. Recruiting youth for Oluvil Harbor is a burning issue among the youths in the district. Mainly they complain that they are being neglected, though they have all required qualifications. Some unskilled and un-qualified outsiders are being recruited through their political influences. The issue of un-lawful occupation of crown land by individuals in an organized way is becoming a burning issue among the minority and majority communities. This is creating tension and the general public fears that the issue will lead to violent conflict and become threat for prevailing peace in the district.

### BATTICALOA

Batticaloa District situation remain same as in July. People living in the remote villages are satisfied with the

present situation. Presently they are concentrating on their own development. The general opinion of the poor villages that the restrictions harass-

ments, and security forces restrictions have been reduced and on the other hand no more tax payment or recruitment for armed group, in the district.

However there are incidents related to domestic violence, gender harassment, and kidnaps have been reported during the reporting period. Possibilities to take action against these incidents are minimal due to various reasons. . Psychologists and counsellors complain that these sort of cruel activities are done by ex-combatants and counselling assistances is badly needed in the villages.. The people villages are gradually developing their livelihoods by using locally available resources and finding opportunities to work in adjoining vil-

ages without fear.The middle level community is engaged on business and working in the government department and nongovernmental business firms. They engaged on their own development and very rarely participate in political activities. There are noticeable increases in family functions, religious festivals, cultural programmes, and educational activities in all communities living in the district. Large scale business development is taking place. Many companies, business firms, service provides owned by people from south and other parts of the island have opened up in the district. The general public is getting opportunities to bargain for a reasonable prize, choice of quality goods and satisfactory services, but, as a result business rivalries are being developed between the new business men and those who running same business for the last considerable period in the district.

## WESTERN

### COLOMBO

Sri Lanka signed a commercial agreement with India today for Indian assistance to reconstruct the Northern Railway Line from Medawachchiya to Thalaimannar that was destroyed during the three decades of conflict. The reconstruction will be carried out in two phases.

In the first phase the 43 kilometer track from Medawachchiya to Madhu will be reconstructed at a cost of US \$ 81.3 million. Madhu to Thalaimannar segment will be built at a cost of US \$ 149.74 million. India is also assisting in the rehabilitation of the Colombo-Matara rail link through a US \$167.4 million line of credit.

Work on the Colombo-Kalutara sector of this line is already at an advanced stage and the work on the 42 kilometer Galle- Matara Section is likely to be completed by December 2010. Sri Lanka has also signed a contract with China National Machinery Import and Export Corp to build the first phase of the 110-kilometer Matara-Kataragama line along the south coast.

In the first phase of the project a 30-kilometer segment of the rail line from Matara to Beliatta along with four stations will be built with Chinese financial assistance. The first phase is to be completed by the end of this year.

The second phase will extend the rail line to Hambantota and the final stage will complete the line to Kataragama. China is also funding the reconstruction of a 56- kilometer segment of the rail line between Pallai and Kankasanthurai. From health point of view, Minister of Health Maithripala Sirisena instructed the health officials to guarantee the supply of quality food to patients admitted to government hospitals.

In terms of Education Higher Education, the Ministry stated that 99 percent of the university curriculum will be conducted in English from next year. Minister S.B. Dissanayake told parliament that special classes would be conducted for the undergraduates who are weak in English to enable them to follow the lessons. The Minister said that lecturers from India would train local lecturers who are

incompetent in English. A presidential advisor on North and East development Chandra Fernando has told Media that all efforts would be made to complete the resettlement of remaining 10 percent of IDPs before end of September. There are only 28,000 people left to be resettled in Mullaitivu and Kilinochchi. Mr.Fernando has said that the resettlement in Mannar and Vavuniya districts in the North has been 95 percent completed.

**We are on the web!**

**Visit us at :**

**[http://www.humanitarian-srilanka.org/ Knowledge\\_Centre/ Publications.php](http://www.humanitarian-srilanka.org/Knowledge_Centre/Publications.php)**

**“The Rapid Context Assessment (RCA) is a Monthly Publication that** aims to provide the essential information about Sri Lanka that will help you to arrive at a comprehensive assessment of the Economic, Social and Political environment with a clear insight in to any changes in government policy in those spheres. In addition It seeks to give you a clear and concise report on Governance, civil society, space claimed or ceded by both print and electronic media, Human rights, Human security and the Environment. In addition the same elements would be covered at a micro level in three districts Vavunia,Jaffna, Mannar in the Northern Province, the three districts of Ampara,Batticaloa,Trincomalee in the Eastern Province and the Entire Western Province. It is an ongoing process of producing a Monthly Country Profile prepared by a team whose members have been chosen for their expertise and ability to present the essence of the particular topic with accuracy and clarity. It is must read for those engaged in Multi lateral agencies, Advocacy groups, INGOs ,NGOs, Volunteer Workers and Staff of Foreign Missions. It is intended to help with risk assessment, calibrate your response in conflict mitigation/transformation and identify the most effective means of responding to evolving conditions with the right attitude and resources. Read the RCA and your decision making process will be automatically conditioned to "do no harm" but certainly to "Do Good" or ("do Some good")

**WE Strive for perfection. We can assure you of near perfection.**

We welcome your comments and suggestions on the contents of this report.

Please mail us at [peacepal@cha.lk](mailto:peacepal@cha.lk)

**Consortium of Humanitarian Agencies (Gte) Limited,**

86, Rosmead Place, Colombo 7,

Phone/Fax: 94-114 610943