

New Tiger Chief “KP” arrested and brought to Sri Lanka

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By D.B.S. Jeyaraj

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Selvarasah Pathmanathan alias “KP” a.k.a Kumaran Pathmanathan was seized in Malaysia on Wednesday August 5th and brought to Sri Lanka on Thursday August 6th.



["KP"-pic: puthinam.com]

KP in his capacity as General-Secretary of the re-structured Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) was the virtual global tiger chief.

According to informed sources KP was staying in Kuala Lumpur(KL) , Malaysia when taken into custody.

Pathmanathan had met with two visitors from London, England at a hotel room in KL in the afternoon of August 5th.

He had received a call on his cellular phone. KP had then signaled to his visitors that he was going out to the corridor and walked away while conversing on the phone.

He had not returned for a long time and the when the worried visitors from Britain went out in search there was no sign of the new global tiger chief.

Meanwhile the friend who had been talking to KP on the phone had heard a sudden thud and some noise while chatting. The phone went dead and repeated calls were not successful.

The friend then alerted some assistants of KP in Malaysia who went in search of KP to the place where he was staying in KL. The place was empty but KP's insulin and syringes and other medical stuff was still there.

The visitors from London also got alarmed and contacted circles close to KP.

Meanwhile KP seized in Malaysia was taken to Bangkok in Thailand.

Sri Lankan authorities were contacted and a team from the Police Terrorist Investigation Department flew to Bangkok in the early hours of Thursday August 6th.

The team returned with Pathmanathan alias KP on a special flight on the same day.

KP was handcuffed and had a mask covering his head and face when disembarking from the plane at Katunayake Airport.

He was whisked away in a vehicle with tinted glasses to a high-security , secret location run by the terrorism investigation dept personnel.

KP is to be interrogated intensively by Sri Lankan anti-terrorist sleuths.

It is widely believed that the arrest was made possible through “inside information” supplied by some members of the LTTE abroad who were opposed to KP donning the tiger leadership mantle after the demise of supremo Velupillai Prabhakaran.

KP was at one time the chief arms procurer for the LTTE and headed a tiger division known as Overseas purchases dept or simply KP dept.

He went into voluntary retirement in 2003 and married a Thai national

In January this year, KP was appointed the LTTE’s international relations chief.

As the senior most LTTE member alive, KP assumed leadership of the tigers after Prabhakaran’s demise.

This was vehemently opposed by a section of the Diasporic tigers led by Perinbanayagam Sivaparan alias Nediyan

After protracted talks an agreement was arrived at. KP assumed control of the LTTE as “Thalaimai Seyalar” or Chief Secretary/ Secretary-General.

A cabal of influential LTTE and pro-LTTE members abroad continued to oppose KP’s leadership and were engaged in conspiratorial moves to sabotage the accord.

The LTTE hardliners were disappointed with KP's public acknowledgement that Prabhakaran was dead and also his announcement that the armed struggle had ended.

His "arrest" was a consequence of the internal opposition to KP it is suspected.

KP known as Tharmalingam Shanmugam Kumaran in India was proclaimed as a wanted offender by that country through INTERPOL.

India wanted INTERPOL to apprehend KP for interrogation regarding charges like Criminal conspiracy, arms smuggling, violation of Indian terrorist act, breach of Indian explosives act and the assassination of Rajiv Gandhi.

Pathmanathan a native of Myliddy in Jaffna was born on April 6th 1955. He is an old student of Nadeswara College, Kankesanthurai and Mahajana College ,Thellippalai.

Pathmanathan was also an undergraduate at the Jaffna university but did not complete his degree.

The following is a Reuters report by C.Bryson Hull on the arrest of KP:

COLOMBO (Reuters)–The new head of the Tamil Tigers, the separatist group defeated by the Sri Lankan military after a 25-year war, has been arrested in Thailand, Sri Lanka's military said on Thursday.

Selvarajah Pathmanathan was wanted on two Interpol warrants and took the reins of the remnants of the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) after their defeat in May.

"He has been arrested in Bangkok. That is all we know at the moment," military spokesman Brigadier Udaya Nanayakkara said.

There was no immediate comment from Thai officials.

Pathmanathan, better known as KP during his decades running the LTTE's arms and smuggling networks, took over as the public leader of the separatist group after Sri Lanka's military announced victory on May 18 after a 25-year war.

He was the first LTTE official to acknowledge the death of Tiger founder and leader Vellupillai Prabhakaran, who was killed in the closing days of Sri Lanka's offensive on a narrow spit of northeastern coast where they had surrounded the rebels.

Security experts had long suspected Pathmanathan was hiding in southeast Asia.

A Western diplomat assigned to Sri Lanka met him somewhere in the region earlier this year, part of an effort to persuade the LTTE to surrender in the face of an imminent defeat and free civilians they were holding by force in the war zone.

Pathmanathan was believed to have earned millions of dollars procuring weapons for the Tigers and running smuggling operations from bases across the region including Thailand, Cambodia and Myanmar. Security experts say he had multiple passports.

Some estimates said the LTTE earned between \$200–300 million from extortion, weapons sales and drug smuggling. Analysts said part of a brief struggle for Prabhakaran's mantle after the war was to take control of its financial assets.

After the war, Pathmanathan said the LTTE would try non-violent means to achieve its goal of a separate state for Sri Lanka's minority Tamils. Among his first initiatives was to try to form a transnational government-in-exile.

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