

## **SOUTH INDIA, THE MALDIVES AND SRI LANKA, A VEXILLOLOGICAL TRIP**

*Michel R. Lupant*

From 15 February until 2 March, 2005, I was on a one month trip in South India, The Maldives and Sri Lanka. During this trip I tried to discover unknown flags. It was so wonderful and unexpected.

### **South India (Tamil Nadu, Karnataka and Kerala States)**

I travelled in these States from the 16th to the 28th February. I was surprised by the fact that I saw so many political parties flags but very few national flags. The States have not yet adopted flags, as it is prohibited but they used nationalist colours in their political party emblems. In the main streets of cities, in villages, in markets you can see thousands of flags. Some are hung from local wood pole and different party flags flew together, flags hung in chains from plastic lines between houses across the streets, between street lamps and used as car flags.

In Chennai (Madras) our first visit, on 16 February, was the historical centre of the capital of Tamil Nadu, specially Fort St George the seat of the State's Government. The colours of Tamil Nadu are black and red. My research on flags began on the parking lot outside the Fort when I saw a few car flags black and red with the white chest of a political leaders (fig. 1)



(fig.1)

I later learnt it was the flag of the ADMK (Anna Dravida Munnetra Kazagam) party, a progressive party. Anna Dravida, an actor, was the founder of the party. That party has the majority at the local level and the Premier of Tamil Nadu is Mrs Jayalalita, also an actress. You can look her face on many notice boards, on posters and on small plastic flags across some streets. In the front of the old fort flew a giant Indian National flag (fig. 2), in the parking lot inside



(fig.2)

the Fort between the old building and the new one I saw many cars flying the ADMK flag. With the help of my guide I discussed with a driver and he offered me my first collected flag, the cloth flag is thick, in fact it is two stitched flags to show the chest of the leader on the same way: looking to the fly. The flag has a size of 16:20 cm and has a white plastic muff of 4 cm around the pole. I also received another gift, two small paper crossed flags displayed behind the window of a small bus, 5:7,5 cm (fig. 3)



(fig.3)

In the streets Police Patrol cars used their badge on their doors, (fig. 4).



(fig.4)

In Tamil Nadu two other parties used black and red flags: the DMK (Dravida Munnetra Kazagam), bicolour horizontal black and red (fig.5) and the MDMK (Marumalarchi Munnetra Kazagam), an horizontal tricolour, red, black and red (fig 6).



(fig.5)



(fig.6)

On 18 February we travelled by railway, from Chennai to Bangalore, capital city of Karnataka. Each wagon wore the railway company emblem (fig.7). In the city there were flags with bicolour horizontal chains of yellow and red flags, the colours used in Karnataka. They told me there were the colours for their language Kannada. In fact they showed their chauvinism through these colours. Bangalore is an important industrial city in India, it is a kind of *silicon valley* and its economic development grows each day!



(fig.7)

As I had a plan to visit the Royal capital of Mysore I tried for months, before my arrival in India, to organize an appointment with the Secretary of the Maharajah of Mysore to look the old princely flags and car flags. It was a pity that when I was in the Palace they sent me from office to office and I did not see any flags.

Walking in the Mysore market on 20 February I discovered, on the top of a small building, a red and yellow flag with a religious emblem inside a State's map. I waited a long time to try to photograph the flag because there was no wind. An Indian man seeing my problem, jumped on the roof and tightened the flag, the photograph was in the pocket (fig.8)! I do not know the name of this party. In the city some rickshaws used religious flag stickers (fig.9) or the Karnataka colours. I also discovered a tricolour horizontal yellow, red, yellow flag of the JMK.



(fig.8)



(fig.9)

On 21 February going to Ooty the coach crossed the border between Karnataka and TamilNadu. Black and red flags reappeared showing a different logo, a man wearing a leaf, the symbol of the party (fig. 10).



(fig.10)



(fig.11)

There is a border between the Indian States and you have to pay taxes. In Ooty in front of the Botanical gardens flew the flag of the CITU (Communist Indian Trade Unions) (fig. 11) and the flag of the Nationalist Congress Party created on 25 May, 1999 (fig. 12).



(fig.12)



(fig.13)

Arriving in Kochi (Cochin), one of the main city of the State of Kerala, my surprise was great to see so many red flags. I thought I was in a former European communist State. My guide explained that Kerala, the most educated State in India, is governed by a communist government and the power of the Trade Unions is great. Different flags flew along the streets, I was unable to identify all of them, there were a CITU flag, a communist flag (fig.13), the flag of DYFI (fig.14) and an unknown flag (fig.15).



(fig.14)



(fig.15)

My guide had discussed with Mr Manoi K.Das, Chief Reporter in the *New Indian Express*, explaining to him I was a vexillologist and the President of FIAV. The reporter immediately understood he could write an article and he arrived at my hotel asking me to dress and to answer questions. He was fascinated by my yellow tie with flags, he had never seen such a tie and the following day my face with the tie appeared in the journal *New Indian Express* dated February 24,2005 (fig.16). Now the inhabitants of Kerala have discovered the word vexillology and the existence of the FIAV.



(fig.16)

I have visited the Mattancherry Palace, built and presented by the Portuguese to the Rajah of Kochi Vira Kerala Varma round the year 1555 in order to appease the King after they plundered a temple nearby. The palace was subsequently renovated by the Dutch and hence it is popularly known as the Dutch palace. The palace is now a museum displaying mainly Royal souvenirs as portraits, umbrellas, palanquins.... I hoped to discover flags of the Royal families of Cochin and Travancore but no flags are displayed just the coat of arms of Cochin on a kind of tapestry. At first I was disappointed because it was prohibited to take photographs inside the museum. Later after some discussions I received the permission to only take one photograph, the one I wanted, the coat of arms but I had to give land after I gave a tip. On the shield you can see a parasol (dexter), a lamp (sinister), a conch in the centre and a palanquin (in the chief) (fig. 17).



(fig.17)

**Pondichéry (Pondicherry) (Puduchcheri)**

At our arrival, on 28 February, at the border between Tamil Nadu and Pondicherry we stopped in front of a welcome monument with religious statues built to protect the territory. Next to the monument was a poster with the flag of the Revolutionary Socialist Party (fig. 18)



(fig.18)

*Pondichéry* was a French enclave, part of the "Etablissements français de l'Inde" (French India). After the independence of India in 1947, Nehru urged France to retrocede its colonies. There was a *de facto* transfer on 1 November, 1950. The French government of Mendès France agreed to hold discussions on 21 October, 1954 and the Treaty of transfer was signed in New Delhi, on 28 May, 1956, by the French Ambassador and the Prime Minister Nehru. The French Parliament ratified the Treaty on 27 July, 1962 with effect on 16 August, 1962. *Pondichéry* together with *Karikal* (Karaikal) on the coast of Tamil Nadu, *Mahé* (on the coast of Kerala) and *Yanaon* (Yanam) on the coast of Andhra Pradesh became the Union Territory of Pondicherry on 7 January 1963. Chandernagor the French Territory North of Kolkota (Calcutta) returned to India in 1951 after a referendum hold on 19 June 1949 and is now a part of West Bengal. The Territory has 1 million inhabitants and covers 480 km<sup>2</sup>. There are around 10,000 inhabitants with the French citizenship. I had discovered in a French magazine "Geo" N°177 from November 1993 a photograph showing old soldiers in front of local association flags. I tried before my departure to organize an appointment and I received a very friendly welcome at the "*Foyer du Soldat*" (Soldier House) by M.N.Jean Couppoussamy, French Army Officer (retired) manager of Soldier House, President of "*Section de Pondichéry de l'Association Démocratique des Français à l'Etranger ADFE*" (Democratic Association of French living outside) (fig.19) and by M. Kenil Danaradjoi, President of "*Amicale des Anciens d'Outre-Mer et Anciens Combattants des Territoires d'Outre-Mer*" (Association of Ancients from Overseas and Veterans from Overseas Territories) together with other old soldiers well dressed and wearing their medals (fig.20).



(fig.19)



(fig.20)

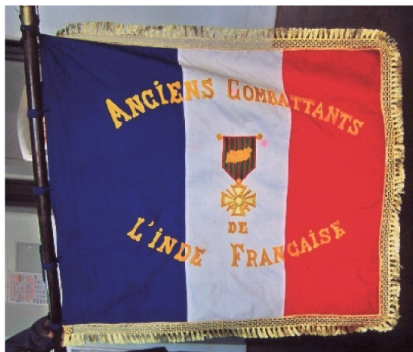
The old soldiers with their high standard of living (they receive a French pension) are privileged in India. I took photographs of the following association flags:

-*Médaillés Militaires Section de Pondichéry* (Decorated soldiers, section of Pondicherry) (fig.21)



(fig.21)

-*Anciens Combattants de l'Inde française* (Veterans from French India) (fig.22)



(fig.22)

-*Fédération Nationale des Anciens Combattants résidant hors de France , section Inde FASC* (National Federation of Veterans living outside France, section India) (fig.23)



(fig.23)



-UNSOR Pondichéry

-*Mutualités des Militaires Retraités Pondichéry* (Mutual benefit insurance of retired soldiers Pondicherry)

-*Union des Militaires Retraités Français et Civils d'Oulgaret* (Union of Retired French Soldiers and Civilian of Oulgaret)

-*Amicale des Anciens d'Outre Mer et anciens combattants des Troupes de marine* (fig.24)

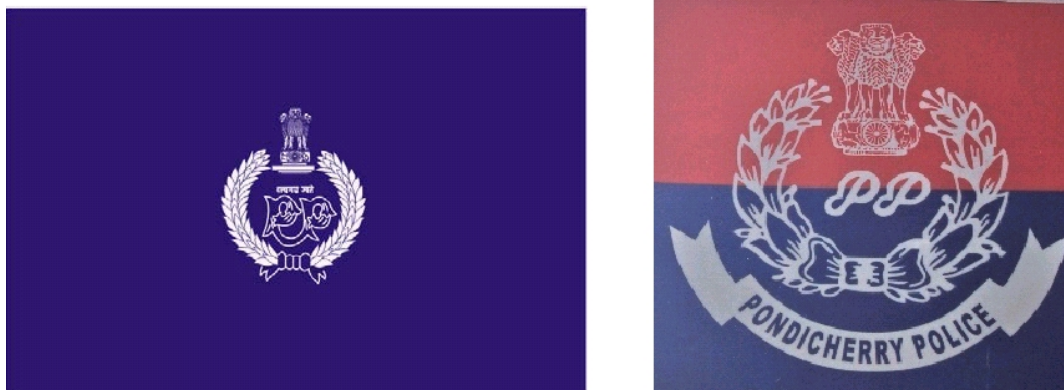


(fig.24)

(Association of Ancients from Overseas and Veterans from the Navy).

The French citizenships residents are registered with the French Consulate which helps them to organize meetings.

During a short free time I have discovered, not so far the "*Foyer du Soldat*", the Police of Pondicherry badge and flag. The guard gave me permission to take his photograph and also that of the flag but entering in the courtyard to take a better photograph due to the sun, I had to escape quickly, another person told me it was prohibited. The flag is blue with a white badge (fig.25; drawing by Jaume Olle)



(fig.25)

## The Maldives

I arrive at Male' airport on 1st March. I had only one and half day to search for flags and I immediately began my research. First discovery in the hotel: a booklet including information about Maldivian National Symbols but in Japanese language! I did not know I would discover so many different flags along my walk in the island and city of Male'.

I arrived at the Maldives Service Police (MSP) building to ask for material. I received a friendly welcome by Mr Abdul Shakoor Abdulla, Deputy Commissioner of Police and by his staff. I took a photograph of the flag (fig.26), he gave me a pamphlet about the Police emblems and promised me a small flag which arrived the following day at my hotel (fig.27). That flag has gold fringes and I am not sure if it is a table's flag or a car flag. The Maldives Service Police was inaugurated, as a civil authority, by the President of the Republic on 1st September 2004. During the ceremony the flag of the Maldives Police Service was ceremonially hoisted for the first time. (fig.26) (fig.27)



(fig.26)



(fig.27)

In front of the Police building, on *Jumhoree Maidhaan* (Independence place), flew the largest Maldivian flag of the country (fig.28).



(fig.28)

At the Presidency office and at the Residence flew the Presidential standard (fig.29). I tried to photograph the car flag of the President, it was not possible but they tried their best. After my 2nd visit the following day they sent a person at the Residence to take a photograph of the Presidential standard and car flag, put in on a CD-Rom and sent it to my hotel a few minutes before my departure! (fig.30)



(fig.29)

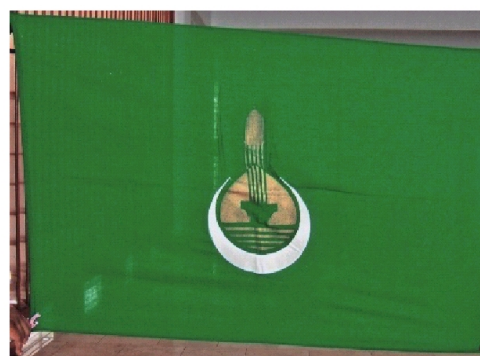


(fig.30)

I had a meeting in the National Security Service (NSS) with Lieutenant Mohamed Shuhail who told me it was no permitted to take a photograph of the NSS flag inside the building but he promised to give me a flag and I received the flag at my hotel together with a patch (fig.31)!



(fig.31)



(fig.32)

I visited the Supreme Council for Islamic, I met a responsible person of the centre and he agreed to lower the flag from the flag pole. It is a green flag, symbol of Islam, with the Grand Friday Mosque (fig.32).

Mr Ibrahim Zuhair welcomed me at the Maldives Customs Service office and gave me material about the Customs' emblems. The symbolism of the emblems is the following: the light blue (pantone colour S232-1) colour of the flag for the sky and the dark blue (pantone colour S181-1) for the sea; the golden wreath: discharge of duty with integrity, dignity and authority; the gate: screening the entry and exit of persons, goods and conveyances to and from Maldives, protection of state revenue; National emblem: national law enforcement authority (fig. 33).

The Maldives Port Authority of Male' has not yet adopted a flag but use a seal (fig. 34).



(fig.33)



(fig.34)

In the National Museum together with Sultanates relics such as umbrellas, chairs with arms, Sultan's hats, black and white photographs showing Sultanate's flag, is exhibited the Maldives flag which travelled to the Moon, a gift of the United States of America (fig.35).

In the port all boats for passengers did not fly the National flag but the Maldives Transport and Contracting Company (MTCC) flag, light and dark blue with their emblem (fig. 36).



(fig.35)



(fig.36)

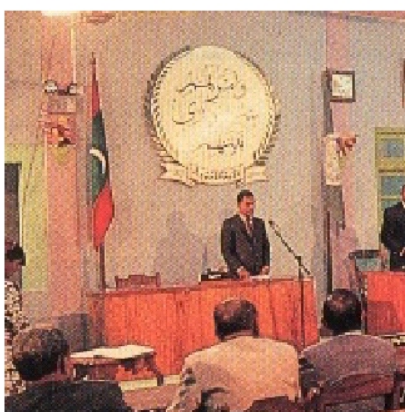
The next stop was the National Library which flew a particular flag. There was no wind and I could not take a photograph of their special flag. I came again the following day and met Mrs Zulfah Mohamed, Chief Librarian. I asked permission to lower the flag but she refused. I was disappointed, before I left I asked to take her photograph in local dress, she enjoyed that and agreed. A few minutes later she remembered a second flag was inside the building. After 15 minutes an employee came with a flag, displayed it and I took the photograph! (fig. 37).



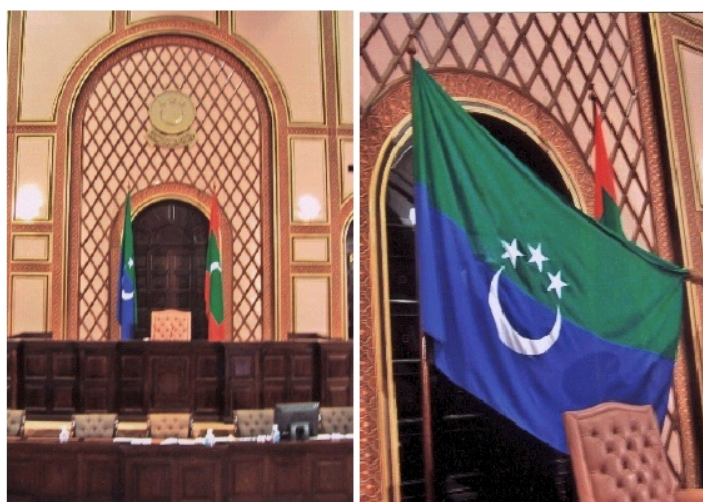
(fig.37)

In the Maldives Tourism Promotion Board I received a beautiful book on the islands, a pin with the National flag. Looking the book I discovered a picture taken inside the *Majlis* (Parliament) showing the Assembly of Deputies and next to the Speaker the National flag and, what I supposed, a Parliament flag which seems blue with a logo as on the picture (fig 38) but I did not know *Majlis* had moved to a new building.

Looking on my city map I discovered the new Parliament with its flag hoisted in front. There was no wind and I had to come again the next day, the flag was different from the one found in the book. I came the following day after a visit to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs where I hoped to take a photograph of a Ministry car flag. It was impossible but I have received a pamphlet on the National emblems and Mr Abdul Hameed Zakaria gave his reference for my visit in the *Majlis*. At my arrival I had to wait one hour because there was a meeting of the Deputies. I received a warm welcome and I took a photograph of the flag inside the Chamber during the tea time break! The new Parliament was inaugurated on 1 August 1998 and a new logo and flag was adopted. The emblems of the People's *Majlis* were designed by Ibrahim Nashwan Shahidin in consultation with the relevant governments departments. I think green is for religion and blue for the sea (fig.39)



(fig.38)



(fig.39)

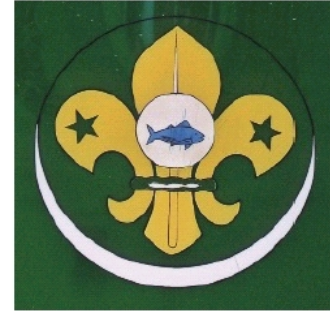
I also discovered emblems of the Maldives Olympic Committee (fig. 40), the Government Employees Club (fig.41), The Scout Association of Maldives (fig. 42), the Maldives Post Limited (fig. 43) and the flag of the Maldives National Telecommunications Network which is white with a red and black logo (fig. 44).



(fig.40)



(fig.41)



(fig.42)



(fig.43)

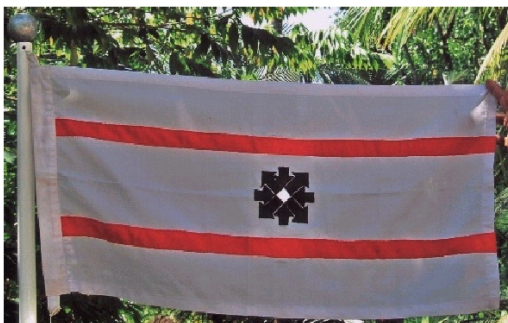


(fig.44)

I spent two days in Laguna Hotel Resort, located in South Male' atoll, to rest and at the same time in that very small island I spoke about flags! Dominique Meyer the Swiss Executive Manager, so happy I had visited his birthplace (Delémont, Jura), he invited me for drinks and dinners and offered me a Maldivian flag as souvenir. Speaking with members of the staff I discovered a man whom the grand father had taken part in the revolution which proclaimed the United Suvadiva Republic on 3 Jan 1959 in the South of Maldives (Former British base of Gan in Addu atoll), this Republic was extinguished on 30 Sep 1963 and its leaders went into exile, mainly in the Seychelles.

## Sri Lanka

I arrived in Colombo Airport on 6 March. Mr Kumaran Fernando, President of the Flag Research Centre of Sri Lanka FRCSL and Mr Dharmadasa waited for me with a taxi. Mr Fernando had organized an official programme for the FIAV President's visit! It was great and I thank him a lot. At first when we arrived in his home, decorated with a lot of flags (Belgium, UNO, Sri Lanka, FRSCSL(fig.45), VASLA (Vexillological Association of Sri Lanka) (fig.46), there was a ceremony to hoist the FIAV President flag I came with (fig.47).



(fig.45)



(fig.46)



(fig.47)

He showed and displayed a large flag (3 m x 1m50) of President Chandrika Bandanaraike Kumaratunga, President of the Democratic Republic of Sri Lanka since 12 November 1994. The flag had been embroidered by his workers and we went together to lay down at the Bandanaraike Memorial Hall. (fig. 48)



(fig.48)

7 February was the day of Sri Lanka Military Forces. I have discovered so many flags it is impossible to present all these flags in that lecture. I have decided to present you a few for each force.

#### ARMY

The first meeting was organized in the Sri Lanka Army Headquarters, *Baladaksha Mw*, where Officer Brigadier Moses, his assistant Captain Mutumala and members of his staff welcomed us offering tea and toasts. I walked to the stadium where all the Army flags were displayed. Later they offered a copy of all these flags (fig 49).



(fig.49)

You can look at 6 of the 24 flags discovered:

#### **-Volunteer Force in the Sri Lanka Army:**

The flag background is yellow. In the middle there is a Tusker who is in a saluting by holding its trunk over the head. Tiny white line is encircled the Tusker. There are two cross swords under the Tusker. The sentence "Volunteer Force in the Sri Lanka Army" is stated in the background of the talipot shaped opened book. There is a reason to use yellow and black colours in the flag according to a retired senior army personnel, the kilt Uniform which was worn by the British Highland Battalion in a state where the governor of Sri Lanka at that time, used these yellow and black colours (fig 50).



**-Gemunu Watch:**

This flag depicts the warrior ship of the Forefathers in Sri Lanka. Especially the warrior's ship of King Dutugemunu. The peacock symbolizes the vehicle of Sri Skanda (God Katharagama) from which King Dutugemunu god gives blessings before the start to each war. This was used in the flag to commemorate that historical fact. The colour which are depicted in the flag are red, white, yellow and blue. Colour red depicts the winning of war. White colour depicts purity. Yellow colour depicts the Runuha (the birth place of King Dutugemunu). The colour blue depicts the connection between King Dutugemunu, Peacock and God Katharagama. The sun and the moon depicts the assurance of eternity (fig.51). I saw this flag flying in front of the Barracks in Galle but it was prohibited to take photographs.



(fig.50)



(fig.51)

**-Gajaba Regiment:**

The emblem of the Regiment is symbolized by the shield (Paliha) and battle axe (Keteriya) which denote the weapons used by the ancient infantry warriors. It bears the motto "Unity is strength". The colours Green is for prosperity, Red to recognize victories in battle and Gold to denote rich traditions (fig 52).

**-Corps of Engineer Service:**

The lion passant denotes, Heroism, Strength and discipline. The sword held in the lion's right paw denotes justice for all and righteous rule. The ear of corn (encircled paddy seeds), signifying the prosperity and self sufficiency. "Arabatha Nikkhamatha", the meaning of the lord Buddha's pali saying "Initiate and Proceed"(fig.53).



(fig.52)



(fig.53)

**-Corps Sri Lanka Army Medical :**

The heraldic Lion of Sri Lanka is mounted on the laurel wreath. At the very centre of the badge there is "Rod and Serpent". It has been the sign of art and science of medicine through the world. In ancient Greece the laurel wreath stood for more victory in war. It was awarded for outstanding merit in the art of peace. Sri Lanka Medical Corps is shorten in Sinhala characters is for med the base of the badge (fig.54).

**Corps Sri Lanka National Guard (SLNG):**

The lion symbolizes the Nation; SLNG task to shield the Nation from enemy threat; Sheaves of paddy signify prosperity to the Nation and the SLNG; Scrolls: the name of the Regt SLNG motto of the SLNG "Country before Self"; two hand clasping swords providing closely guarded protection to the nation (fig.55).



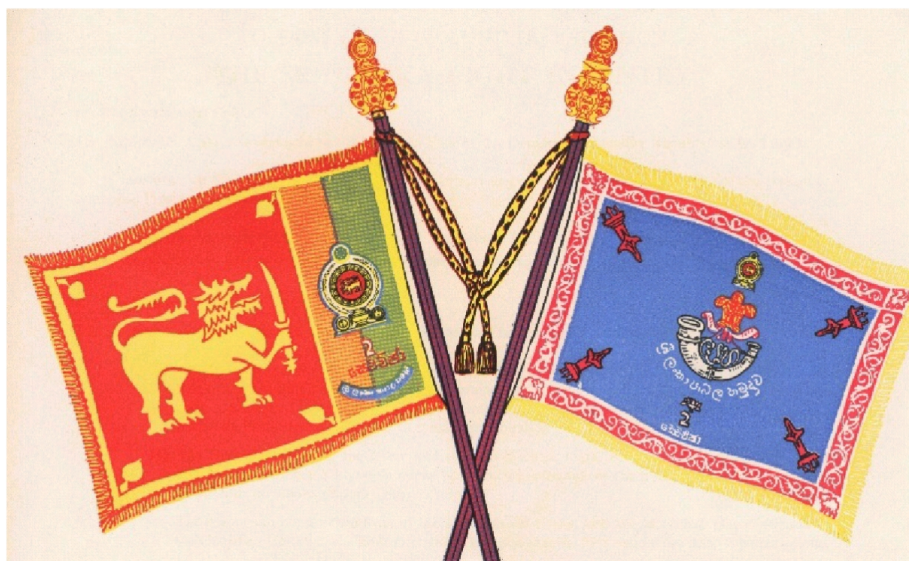
(fig.54)



(fig.55)

**The 1st Battalion of the Sri Lanka Light Infantry**

The President's and Regimental Colours of this Battalion were presented by His Excellency J.R.Jayewardene, President of the Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka (DSRSL) on 10 October, 1978 (fig.56).



(fig.56)

The President's Colour is in silk with the Armorial Sign of the Republic embroidered in gold and silver on the green and orange stripes. Below the Armorial Sign is the numeral "1" in gold to denote the 1st Battalion and below this numeral is the Regimental nomenclature embroidered in silver on a blue background. The Colour has a border of maroon and gold tassels. Two gold cords with two bell shaped tassels at the ends spotted in maroon fastens the Colour to the pike at the top.

The Regimental Colour has a blue silk with the Regimental Crest embroidered in the centre. Above the Crest is embroidered the Armorial Sign of the DSRSL and a Coconut Flower wreath surrounds the Regimental Crest. Below the Crest is the nomenclature of the Regiment. In the four corners of the Flag are the point of spears and the numeral "1" is embroidered on the top left-hand side of the Flag to denote the First Battalion. The Colour has a border of maroon and gold tassels. Two gold cords with two bell shaped tassels at the ends spotted in maroon fastens the Colour to the pike at the top.

## NAVY

The second visit took place at Sri Lanka Base Camp. A big flagpole with different arms typical the Navy has been erected near the main gate of the Sri Lanka Base Camp Welisara. At the top of that pole there was a Sri Lanka Ensign, white with the National flag in the canton (fig.57).



(fig.57)



(fig.58)

I received a friendly reception by Naval Officer Captain Sisira Jayakody who offered us a cup of tea and after discussions he asked an officer to escort us to a large room where they had displayed, for my intention, many Navy flags used by ships and by Navy colleges. I took photographs of all these unknown flags.

You can discover here a few of these flags:

Southern Command flag (fig.58); Northern Command flag (fig.59); Advance Naval Training Centre (fig.60) and the Vice-Admiral flag (fig.61).



(fig.58)



(fig.59)



(fig.60)

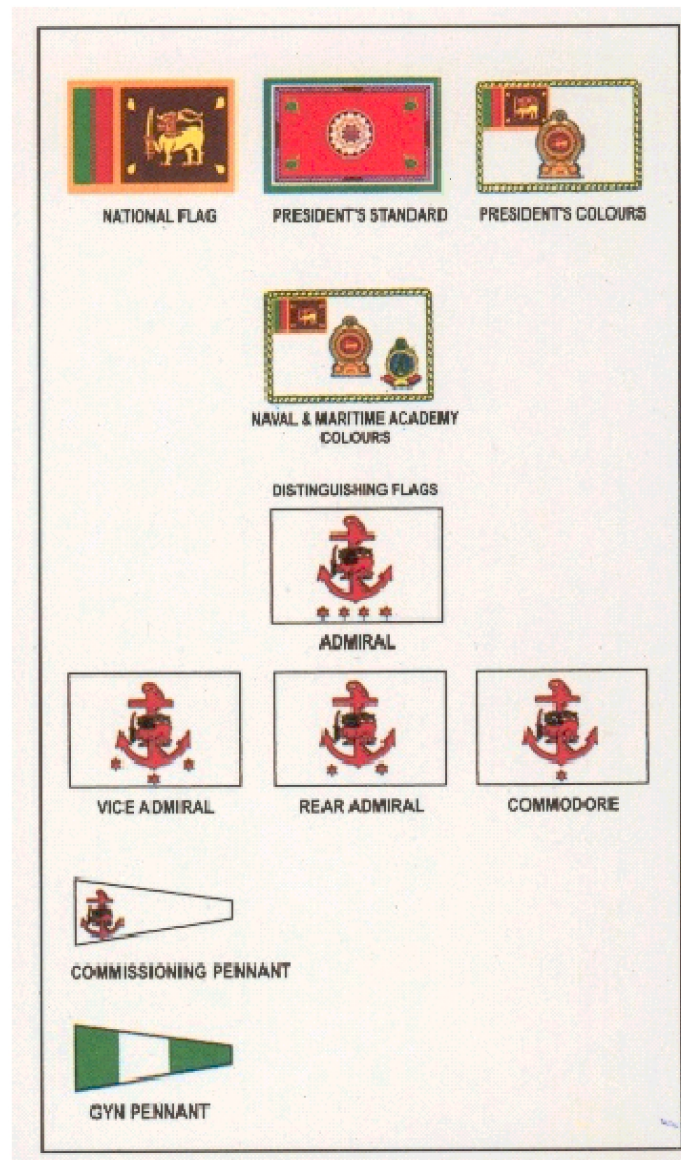


(fig.61)

I asked information about car flags and another officer came with the distinguished ranks car flags: Vice-Admiral, Rear-Admiral, Commodore (fig.62).

Later before my departure Captain Sisira Jayakody gave money to a servant asking him to buy me a small booklet "Booklet Signal Card" which arrived 2 days later at the home of Kumaran Fernando for my intention. I discovered a former presidential flag, the Navy Colours, the President's Colour for the Navy and a flag for the Admiral. It seems that last flag was no longer in use (fig.63).

It was the flag of President R. Premadasa 2 January, 1989 1 May, 1993. A better picture coming from a local unidentified newspaper from that time is shown here (fig.64).



(fig.63)



(fig.64)

## AIR FORCE

The last meeting was for the Air Force where Group Captain Sanjaka Wijemanne, Directorate of Planning, Air Force Headquarters, Colombo welcome us in Ratmalana Air Base. In the courtyard the Air Base flag flew together with a guidon of the Wing Command flag (fig.65), yellow, blue and dark red. We visited together the Air Force Museum, all the flags used in the Army are displayed inside (fig.66) but also a kind of large slides (fig.67) showing the different flags which a similar pattern, these are tricolour with the badge in the centre.



(fig.65)



(fig.66)



(fig.67)

Here you can look 6 of the 44 flags of Bases, Units and Formations I had discovered. The flags are tricolour with a badge, up the badge the National Coat of Arms:

-Base RMA: Sri Lanka Air Force Base, Ratmalana (fig.68)



(fig.68)

-Unit BCL : Sri Lanka Air Force, Batticaloa (fig.69)



(fig.69)

-Unit WLA : Sri Lanka Air Force, Weerawila (fig.70)



(fig.70)

-Formation 04 Sqn: N°4 Helicopter Squadron, Katunayake (fig.71)



(fig.71)

-Formation CTS: Combat Training School, China Bay (fig.72)



(fig.72)

-Formation MTRS: N°3 Maritime Squadron (fig.73)



(fig.73)



### The Air Force Colour

President William Gopallawa (22 May 1972 - 4 February 1978) granted Colour on 31 March, 1976 to Sri Lanka Air Force in Connection with its 25th Anniversary Celebrations. The President's Colour is in the design of the Air Force ensign with the approved emblem of the Republic of Sri Lanka superimposed on vertical stripes of the colours of the National flag (fig.74). The colour is paraded only on the following occasions:

- a) By a Guard of Honour mounted for the President or for a visiting Head of State.
- b) On important ceremonial occasions as directed by the Commander of the Air Force.



(fig.74)

The President's Colour which was consecrated at the Dalada Maligawa (Temple of the Sacred Buddha Tooth Relic), Kandy, on the twenty-fourth of March, 1976 is accorded the highest honours when paraded. When carried uncased, all ranks pay appropriate compliments.

### KANDY

On 8 March Kumaran, Dharmadasa and myself made a journey to Kandy the capital of the former Kingdom of Kandy whose last Royal flag was the first flag of Independent Ceylon in 1948. Here you can see a reproduction from Kumaran's house (fig.75). To entry in the Dalada Maligawa compound we cross a gallery with a painted Royal procession, in that procession appeared a lot of flags (fig.76).



(fig.75)



(fig.76)

In the museum behind the gallery are displayed metallic flags from the history. It was prohibited to take photographs but I have some photographs of these procession flags showing animals (fig.77) (fig.78). Inside two bad paintings represents the original Royal Kandy flags from the Royal Chelsea Hospital where they are.

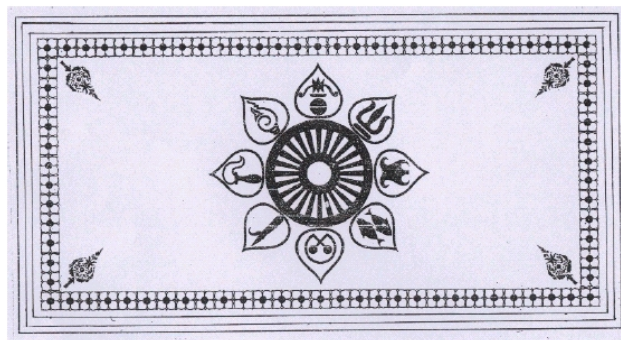


(fig.77)



(fig.78)

On the way to Kandy we stopped in front of the house of former President D.B.Wyjetunga (1 May, 1993 12 November, 1994), in Mawanella. In the archives of Kumaran I have discovered a black and white drawing of President Wyjetunga flag (fig.79).



(fig.79)

GALLE, the Tsunami road: On 9 March we drove together in a taxi from Colombo to Galle, in the South West. On the way we saw the damage caused by the tsunami and the beginning of the reconstruction. On the way I saw many flags from many countries helping the Sri Lankese to reconstruct the devastated coast as well as the Sri Lanka Red Cross flag (fig.80)



(fig.80)

**COLOMBO**

Sri Lanka has adopted a lot of unusual flags as the districts flags all manufactured in the past by Kumaran, you can see a few of these flags. During my trip I have never seen these flags flying on buildings it was the same for the provincial flags. Here you can look at five flags from the 24 district flags: Colombo (fig 81; drawing from J.Olle), Trincomalee (fig.82), Kandy (fig.83), Badulla (fig.84), Kalutara (fig.85) and Jaffna (fig.86).



(fig.81)



(fig.82)



(fig.83)



(fig.84)



(fig.85)

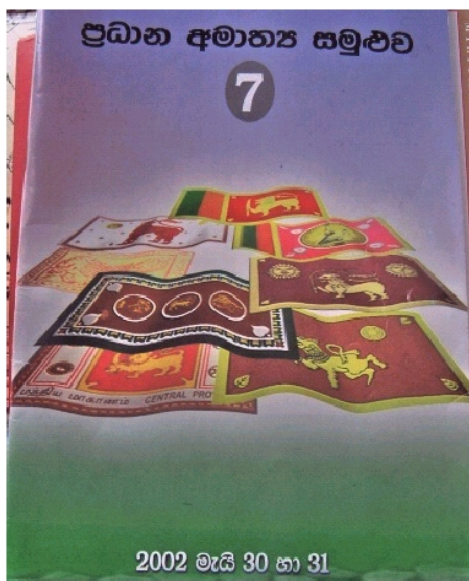


(fig.86)

From 30 to 31 May 2002 the 7th Provincial Chief Ministers Conference was held in Colombo, capital of the Western Province. A book was published, on the cover appeared 7 provincial flags and only the North East Province flag was missing. The 7 flags are presented inside the book written in the Sinhala language (fig.87).

The National Museum of Colombo shows a replica of the throne and of the crown of the last King of Kandy, the crown is used on the top of the National coat of arms (fig.88).

The reception organised by my guest Kumaran Fernando was great and I have to thank him a lot as well as his friend Dharmadasa with his wife Chandani who prepared such good food not too spicy!



(fig.87)



(fig.88)

### India (Andhra Pradesh)

Before I returned home I again stopped in India to answer the invitation of Kambampati Sanjeevarao, the founder of the Indian Vexillological Association and to support him to develop vexillology.

I arrived on 10 March in Chennai airport where I was welcomed by Sanjeevarao, together we travelled by night train to his city, Khammam, around 600 km North of Chennai. He had reserved a room in the Army guesthouse. I spent the day of 11 March with him. A car came at the guesthouse to pick me, in front an Indian car flag, the national flag was rolled up inside a transparent sheath (fig.89).

The flag is only flown when a local authority is inside the car but not in all cases. It is an Indian tradition to display the national flag on a car, mainly the "Ambassador" the traditional Indian car (fig.90). It is the only flag which can be used on car by authorities. All the distinguished ranks car flags (except in the Military Forces) are prohibited (same for the President, the Princes...). Lesser authorities used a flagpole but with only a transparent sheath from the national colour but without any flag.



(fig.89)



(fig.90)



(fig.91)

In front of the way to his home and at the entry of the exhibition hall Sanjeevarao displayed a banderole celebrating my visit as FIAV President (fig. 92).



(fig.92)



(fig.93)

Together with Mr.Rajendra Narendra Nimje, District Collector of Khammam, I have inaugurated a flag exhibition from the Sanjeevarao collection, all these flags were made by himself (fig.93). All the city journalists were present and I had to answer interviews explaining what was vexillology, FIAV, the symbolism of flags and why I was present. I wanted to support the action of Sanjeevarao in the development of vexillology in India (fig.94). He was also helped by Mrs. Renuka Chowdary, Minister for Tourism of India.

I was granted a gift, a gold metallic plate with the FIAV flag, as souvenir of my official visit (fig.95).

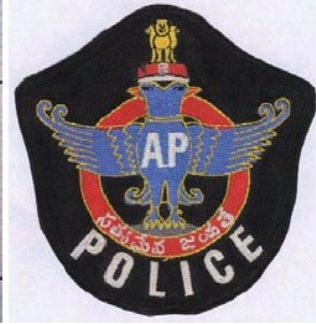
On my way to the guest house I discovered a political party flag, the flag of *Telugu Desam Party TDP*/ Telugu Land Party. It was founded by the late Sri N. T. Rama Rao, ex-Chief Minister of Andhra Pradesh. I stopped and met one of its leader who offered a flag (56 :70 cm) (fig.96) (fig.97). I also stopped at the Police station, the Commissioner of Police offered me a patch of the Andhra Pradesh Police (fig.98) and on the wall in the parking lot I discovered a poster with the flag of Joint Defence Forces!



(fig.96)



(fig.97)



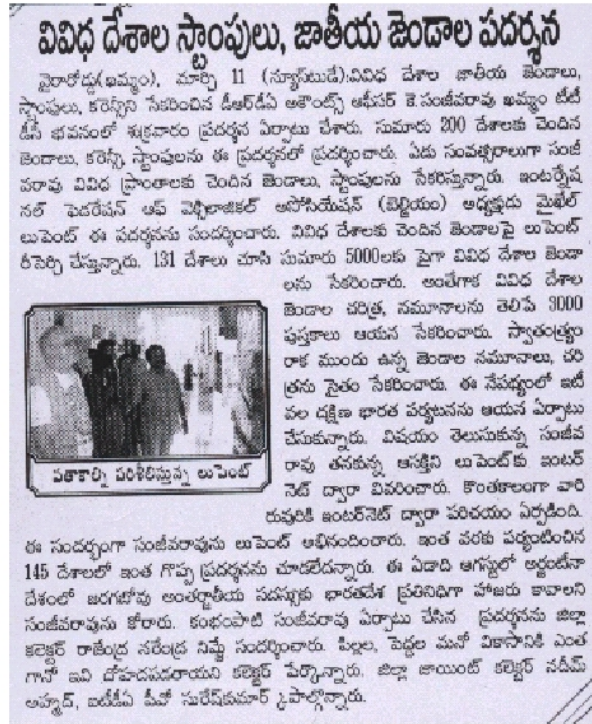
(fig.98)

On March 12 I returned to Chennai by day train and on my way I was surprised to discover myself in newspapers in Telugu the language of Andhra Pradesh:  
- *Andhra Bhoomi* / Andhra Pradesh Land (fig.99)



(fig.99)

- Eanadu / Today (fig.100)



(fig.100)

- Vaartha / The News (fig.101)



(fig.101)

and in the Deccan Chronicle, Vijayawada, Ravindra Seshu wrote an article "He champions cause of flags" (fig. 102).



(fig.102)

The inhabitants of Andhra Pradesh have discovered the goal of vexillology and what was the FIAV. The FIAV's president is now notorious in India!

Last but not least in the evening and a few minutes before I left my hotel in Chennai to the airport in order to fly to London and then to Brussels, a representative of TCI (Tourist Corporation India) the Indian tour operator offered me 15 car flags from political parties used in Tamil Nadu, their size are 17:25 cm. I thank Mr Shankar for his help. If the authorities do not used anymore ranks flags it is very usual to see cars flying political party flags mainly when local leaders sat in the car. Now I am researching which party uses these flags! I show two of these flags, the Pattali Makkal Katchi (fig.103) founded in 1993, as an organization, by people from lower castes and which became a party in 1996 and the Congress Party flag (Indira section) which leader is Mrs Sonia Gandhi (fig.104)



(fig.103)



(fig.104)

My special thanks to all people who welcomed and helped me during this trip.





Photo taken by Francisco Gregoric

### **Michel Lupant**

Born August 1, 1944 in Frameries (Belgium). Married with 4 children. Teacher of Geography and Sciences since June 1964 at different educational institutions.

Recipient of the Belgian Order of Merit granted by HM the King of the Belgians in November 2001 and Knight of the Cross of Merit, Robert de Caluwé International Heraldry Award in the category of Vexillology, Helsinki May 6, 2005.

Hobbies: Vexillology (study of flags), philately and trips (135 countries since 1962).

Founder of the *Centre Belgo-Européen d'Etudes des Drapeaux* (CEBED) (Belgian-European Flags Studies Centre) in April 1, 1990. Its library and archives on flags are the largest in Europe.

Editor, since 1992, of the bulletin « *Gaceta de Banderas* » (flag newsletter) edited in collaboration with the Spanish Vexillological Association. Published 10 times a year.

Member of all the Vexillological Associations through the world (50).

Elected President of the International Federation of Vexillological Associations (FIAV) on August 14, 1997 during the XVIIth International Congress of Vexillology in Cape Town (South Africa), and re-elected until the present.

Has prefaced the "Album des Pavillons" (Navy and national flags of all Nations) edited by the French Navy Hydrographical Service, Brest (France). The only book of that kind published in the world.

He has also prefaced "Nuestras Banderas, Vexilología Argentina" by Alberto Rubén Perazzo, Buenos Aires, 2002, and written many books and articles on flags.

He has established many contacts through the world during his trips.

