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# The Island

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# Terrorists target ship carrying 700 troops

- \* Escort vessel sunk with 17 officers and men
- \* Nordic monitors declare Tigers have no rights at sea and air
- \* Tigers endanger lives of three Nordic monitors
- \* Airforce hits Kilinochchi
- \* Government hopes International community will act even now

by Shamindra Ferdinando

The government last night emphasized the immediate need for international action against the Tigers after they blew up a Fast Attack Craft (FAC) providing cover to a vessel carrying over 700 security forces personnel to the Kankesanthurai Navy base.

Despite losing one of the escort vessels (P 418), the Navy fought back preventing a direct Sea Tiger attack on MV Pearl Cruiser. The navy acknowledged the attack was undoubtedly the biggest since the Oslo-arranged Ceasefire Agreement (CFA) came into operation in February 2002. The entire crew is reported missing and believed dead. The

crew comprised two officers and 15 sailors.

Sea Tigers launched the attack around 4.15 pm, military spokesman Brigadier Prasad Samarasinghe said. According to him the Navy destroyed three enemy craft and disabled at least four. Initial reports indicated the loss of two FACs and heavy damages to several other

craft.

About 90 minutes after the sea-battle broke out the airforce launched strikes on selected targets in Kilinochchi. Speculation is rife that the Iranamadu airstrip had been targeted.

Ms Helen Olafsdottir of the Nordic truce monitoring mission last night said that they contacted the Kilinochchi-based

LTTE leadership immediately after the Sea Tigers triggered the clash off the Mullaitivu coast. "We urged them to cease the offensive and reminded them of the presence of Nordic naval monitors," she said, adding, "They asked us to get them out."

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## Tigers suffer blow as Karunanidhi gets set to take over Tamil Nadu

The DMK-led Democratic Progressive Alliance's sweeping victory in the Tamil Nadu State Assembly elections, announced yesterday, over Chief Minister Ms Jayalalitha Jayaram's AIDMK was a terrific blow to the LTTE, according to political analysts. The LTTE's strongest ally in Tamil Nadu, Y. Gopalaswamy, leader of the MDMK, vigorously campaigned for Chief Minister Jayalalitha in the run-up to the May 8 state elections.

Yet another supporter of the LTTE in Tamil Nadu, leader of the Viduthalai Chiruthaigal (meaning cheethas of freedom) Thirumavalavan was also an active campaign leader for the defeated Chief Minister Jayalalitha

Gopalaswamy, popularly known as Vaiko in Tamil Nadu

was sometime ago jailed for one year by the Jayalalitha government, under the Prevention of Terrorism Act (POTA) for praising the LTTE at public meetings. Later he severed his party's alliance with Muththuvél Karunanidhi's DMK and merged with Jayalalitha's AIDMK following a rift with Karunanidhi, since the latter began to groom his son Stalin to be DMK's future leader.

Muththuvél Karunanidhi, now set to become Tamil Nadu Chief Minister, won 126 of the 169 seats announced at the time of going to press. Tamil Nadu has a 234-member assembly.

The LTTE's less known supporters in Tamil Nadu, Pattali Makkal Katchi leader Dr S. Ramdoss, and Thamil Desiya Iyakkam leader Thirumavalavan stood with Karunanidhi. (See page 3)

## Sri Lanka frustrated

**May 11 (Washington Times)** - A suicide bomber who was thought to have been five months pregnant when she blew herself up last month in a military hospital in Sri Lanka was the final provocation that brought a targeted response from the country's navy and air force against rebel positions in a port city.

However, the rebel Tamil Tigers skillfully manipulated reporters into blaming the government for the latest violation of a shaky four-year-old cease-fire, said Sri Lankan Ambassador Bernard A.B. Goonetilleke.

"Their well-oiled propaganda machine went into effect. The rebels even used the word genocide," he said over lunch this week at The Washington Times.

The ambassador expressed

his frustration over the press that reported the rebel version of the military response but failed to provide equal coverage to an investigation by Norwegians who monitor the cease-fire. Maj. Gen. Ulf Henricsson reported that the armed forces "definitely targeted military positions and offices" of the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam. He said 10 to 12 persons were killed in the attack on the port city of Trincomalee, about the same number killed in the April 25 suicide bombing at the hospital.

Gen. Henricsson, head of the Sri Lanka Monitoring Mission, has held the rebels responsible for 3,500 violations of the 2002 cease-fire and the government responsible for 170.

Continued on page 3

## Change unlikely in co-chairs composition - Government.

by Zacki Jabbar

The composition of the Tokyo Donor Conference co-chairs is unlikely to change anytime soon, despite visiting Japanese Special Peace Envoy Yasushi Akashi calling on India to play a more proactive role in resolving Sri Lanka's long drawn out ethnic conflict

Cabinet spokesman and Media

Minister Anura Priyadarshana Yapa, questioned at yesterday's Cabinet press briefing on Akashi's comments, said "I do not think there would be a change in the composition of the co-chairs any time soon. Anyway the Foreign Minister would be able to answer your question better."

He said "India is a friendly neighbour and helps us when

necessary".

Pressed to elaborate on why India does not want to play a more formal role in Sri Lanka's peace process, Yapa said "I think it is better if you direct that question at the Foreign Minister."

Government sources said that India was reluctant to play a direct role in Sri Lanka's peace process since it has proscribed

the LTTE.

"India having proscribed the LTTE for killing its Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi is naturally reluctant to deal directly with it."

Akashi, on Wednesday said that the co-chairs of the Tokyo Donor Conference, comprising the European Union, Japan, Norway and America, have invit-

ed India to play a more formal role in resolving Sri Lanka's ethnic conflict.

"The co-chairs have invited India to participate in the forthcoming May meeting of the Tokyo Donor Conference Meeting. We will adopt procedures which India finds acceptable, comfortable and appropriate", he said.

## Happy Vesak



While Buddhists the World over celebrate Vesak today, these three children personify the spirit of this thrice blessed day. Pic by Kamal Wanniarachchi

## Buddha's teachings of unrivalled importance in present era - President

In a Message to mark Vesak Poya and the 2550th Buddha Jayanthi, President Mahinda Rajapakse said the teaching of the Enlightened One was of unrivalled importance, particularly in the present era, since it exhorts the mankind that all those who wage war are destined to downfall.

The President said: "It is with a profound sense of devotion that I send this message, on the occasion of the 2550th Buddha Jayanthi.

Vesak Full Moon Day is the most precious day for Buddhist world over, since it marks the birth, Enlightenment and the Passing Away of the Lord Buddha.

The transcendental teaching of the

Buddha, up holds that the mind is the precursor of all deeds and even peace as well as war evolves in the mind. Therefore, peace and solidarity too originates in the mind of mankind.

Today the entire world appears to be at loggerheads and at the brink of war. As such the teaching of the Enlightened One is of unrivalled importance, particularly in the present era since it exhorts the mankind that all those who wage war are destined to downfall and ultimate destruction. It also teaches us the futility of hatred and atrocities.

If the sublime doctrine of the Buddha is understood and followed the present day world could be converted to one of a peaceful and tranquil place where lov-

ing kindness reign. What is most needed today is to follow the five precepts, taught by the Buddha practically in our day to day life.

The objective of celebrating the 2550th Buddha Jayanthi shall be to observe the five precepts and abstain from all undesirable deeds so that we may march towards a conflict-free world. As a first step towards such a destination my government has censored the consumption liquor and meat during this most precious period of Vesak.

So let all of us determine, on this most sublime day to deviate from sinful deeds and practice the five precepts.

May the blessings of the Triple Gem, be on all of us."

## Pakistan sends 'Fasting Siddhartha' statue to Lanka

by Harischandra Gunaratna

The Pakistan government sent the sculpture of the fasting Siddhartha (Sakyamuni Buddha), a rare piece of Ghandhara Art housed at the Lahore Museum, to Colombo yesterday.

According to the Press Attache of the Pakistan High Commission in Colombo, Ms Suriya Jamal, the statue was handed over to the Cultural Ministry by the Pakistani High Commissioner in Sri Lanka Bashir Wali Mohamed, who was instrumental in getting the statue to Sri Lanka.

To mark the 2550th Buddha Jayanthi celebrations, the masterpiece will be handed over to the chief incumbent of the Kelaniya Raja Maha Viharaya, the Venerable Kollupitiye Sangharakkhitha, by the Pakistani High Commissioner at a special ceremony today, in the presence of Foreign Minister Mangala Samaraweera and Cultural Minister Mahinda Yapa Abeywardane, for the public to pay homage today and tomorrow. The presentation will be made at the Foreign Ministry at 10.00 a.m., the Foreign Ministry said yesterday.

It was only on April 2 this year that President Mahinda Rajapakse paid homage to this Fasting Siddhartha statue at the Lahore Museum when he made his first visit to Pakistan.

It is said that this statue has not been moved out of the Lahore Museum, except on one occasion, under special circumstances to Japan, for its sanctity and for security reasons.

"Bringing of the statue of the Fasting Siddhartha reflects the cordial relations between President General Parvez Musharraf and President Mahinda Rajapakse, which was further strengthened by the latter's recent visit to Pakistan. This visit brought the two nations closer", the Pakistan High Commission said.

## SLMM's first head passes away

Retired Norwegian Major-General and the first chief of the five-nation Nordic truce monitoring mission Trond Furuohve passed away at 67, in Norway on Wednesday.

Maj. Gen. Trond Furuohve, who retired from his one-year service (March 2002 - Feb. 2003), returned to Sri Lanka again in February 2004, when the Norwegian government re-appointed him after a controversy in November 2004 involving his successor.

Maj. Gen. Furuohve, an experienced monitor in international conflicts, had earlier served as the Force Commander of United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) from 1993 - 1995.

## Smuggler nabbed

Airport authorities on Wednesday arrested a security officer attached to Airport and Aviation Services when he tried to smuggle out foreign currency notes valued at over five million rupees. According to police the money was to be handed over to an Indian scheduled to leave the country.

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