



Minister Wijesekera being moved from the scene of the blast.  
Pic Sharman Perera

The blast captured in video

Vol. 28 No. 99 Wednesday 11th March, 2009 32 Pages Rs. 20 Registered in Sri Lanka as a Newspaper - Late City Edition

**The Island**  
Published by Upali Newspapers Ltd.  
223, Bloemendaal Road, Colombo 13.  
Tel: 2497574, Fax: 2497543  
E-mail: prabath@unl.upali.lk  
Wednesday 11th March, 2009

### A show of brutality on a holy day

Yesterday's dastardly suicide terror attack on the national Milad-un-Nabi celebrations at Godapitiya, Matara, which left 15 dead and over 40 others injured, has demonstrated once again that the LTTE will never give up violence. If it does not heed calls from the international community to eschew terrorism, bid farewell to arms and enter the democratic mainstream at a time it is about to be decapitated, never will it change.

It is being argued that the objective of yesterday's LTTE attack was to kill a group of government politicians. But, what could the LTTE achieve at this juncture by accounting for some politicians? Suicide bombers usually go for high profile political or military leaders thought to be a threat to the LTTE's cause. Given the deep crisis Prabhakaran finds himself in, expending human bombs will not serve his purpose unless attacks have a debilitating impact on the country's war effort. He cannot be unaware that even if he succeeds in wiping out one half of the Cabinet, he won't be able to put the brakes on the government's military onslaught. Nor can he boost the morale of his cadres surrounded by the army with death staring them in the face by means of some terror attacks on politicians.

Why did the LTTE carry out yesterday's attack?  
Reports that the LTTE has links with Pakistani Islamic terrorists responsible for the recent attack on Sri Lanka's national cricket squad in Lahore could not have come at a worse time for its Tamil Nadu backers who are pressuring India, which is consumed with antipathy against Pakistan and terrorist groups operating from there, to throw a lifeline to Prabhakaran. The alleged ties between the LTTE and Pakistani terrorists have also caused serious concern to the West, whose support the LTTE sympathisers are trying to muster to open an escape route for Prabhakaran. Nothing would have dealt a more devastating blow to their save-the-Tigers campaign than the news of a nexus between the LTTE and Islamic terrorists.

Therefore, the LTTE may have sought to control damage by allaying India's fears and pandering to the anti-Muslim frenzy of the West with an attack on a national event to mark the Holy Prophet Mohammed's birthday.  
Now, the LTTE activists in India and elsewhere may ask how an outfit that has attacked an event holy to Muslims could be accused of having links with any Islamic terror groups. They may also cite in support of their argument the large number of heinous crimes the LTTE has committed against Sri Lankan Muslims such as their forcible eviction from the North and massacres at Kattandudi and Erarur in 1990.

However, no amount of such cowardly violence will help save Prabhakaran and his fellow terrorists in the departure lounge.  
Meanwhile, yesterday's terror strike should serve as a warning to the government that it must never lower its guard.

# Blast claims 15 lives: Minister Wijesekera critically injured

by Dasun Edirisinghe and Norman Palihawadane

At least fifteen persons were killed and 40 others seriously injured when an LTTE suicide cadre blew himself up at the Godapitiya Jamma mosque in Akuressa, where the national Milad-Ud-Nabi festival was to be held to mark the birthday of Prophet Mohammed yesterday.

The suicide bomber, who arrived at the scene on a bicycle, triggered off the bomb around 10.15 a.m. while the chief guest and guests of honour were coming into the mosque in procession to participate in the national Milad-Ud-Nabi festival.

Posts and Telecommunications Minister Mahinda Wijesekera, who was critically injured in the blast was first admitted to the Matara hospital and later airlifted to Colombo. He was undergoing treatment at

the Intensive Care Unit (ICU) at the time of going to press.

Petroleum and Petroleum Resources Minister A. H. M. Fowzie, who was an eye witness

were being conducted to the mosque in a procession. Minister Wijesekera was walking ahead of the other politicians when the suicide bomber blew himself up.

Fowzie said Wijesekera was walking along with him and the other ministers about 20-30 metres in front of the procession but suddenly he decided to move to the front despite appeals to stay with the other politicians.

"No sooner minister Wijesekera had moved to the front, we heard a loud explosion," he said. "The next thing I saw was Minister Wijesekera and many others lying on the ground and people running for their lives," he

## Six ruling party LG members killed

by Dasun Edirisinghe

Among those killed in yesterday's LTTE attack in Godapitiya, Matara were Chairman of Devinuwara Pradeshiya Sabha Linton Abeydheera, Deputy Chairman of the Akuressa Pradeshiya Sabha Upali Sarathchandra, Deputy Chairman of Kamburupitiya Pradeshiya Sabha Tikak Damnika Wijesekera, Member of Matara Municipal Council L. H. Sirisena, Member of Thihapada Pradeshiya Sabha Rohana Battage, Member of Althureya Pradeshiya Sabha Anura Wickremasinghe and Kapila Hettiarachchi, who unsuccessfully contested the last LG election to the Matara MC.

Southern Provincial Councillor Manoj Sirisena was transferred to the National Hospital with his father former Southern Province Chief Minister H. G. Sirisena.

to the blast, told *The Island* that the area was thronged by thousands of people who had come to attend the ceremony and the religious leaders and guests



Minister Wijesekera was walking along with him and the other ministers about 20-30 metres in front of the procession but suddenly he decided to move to the front despite appeals to stay with the other politicians.

More pics on page 2

**LankaCom**  
The National Communications Commission  
The National Information Technology Commission  
The National Cyber Security Commission  
The National Consumer Affairs Commission

## Our resolve strengthened to eradicate terrorism - Govt.

The Government yesterday strongly condemned the LTTE suicide attack on the Milad-un-Nabi Festival to mark the birthday of Holy Prophet Mohammed, at Godapitiya, Akuressa, Matara, in which 14 persons were killed and many injured, including a

Government minister. The following is the statement issued by the Information Department:  
The Government notes with utmost contempt this wanton act of terrorism and observes that the attack

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## Tiger attack jeopardises food supply

by Shamindra Ferdinando

Tuesday's LTTE artillery attack on MV Bintan carrying essential food items to people trapped on the Vanni front would severely affect attempts to move in supplies and evacuate the sick and wounded with the help of the ICRC, government sources said.

A Foreign Ministry official asserted that the attack could be part of the LTTE's strategy to block supplies to civilians, now believed to be fewer than 70,000, to bolster its call for an immediate cease-

fire. Foreign Minister Rohitha Bogollagama said that the humanitarian operation launched with the help of the ICRC was evidence of the Rajapaksa administration's commitment to provide assistance to civilians.

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## J'lalitha backs separate state for Lankan Tamils

March 09 - CHENNAI: Former Tamil Nadu Chief Minister and AIADMK general secretary J. Jayalalitha on Monday scored a significant victory over her political rivals in the state when she declared her party's support for the demand of a separate state for Tamils in Sri Lanka, within the ambit of a unified Lankan Constitution, during a mega protest last organised by her party in the city.

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