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Can he stabilize 'the most dangerous place on earth'?

The Island

Leisureland

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A miasma of suspicion

`Vol. 28 No. 149 Monday 11th May, 2009. 28 Pages Rs. 20 Registered in Sri Lanka as a Newspaper - Late City Edition

Tiger spin docs create casualty figures to mislead UN — Gota

by Shamindra Ferdinando

The LTTE now on the verge of collapse on the Mullaitivu front has accused the army of killing over 2,000 civilians in an artillery barrage over the weekend.

Defence Secretary Gotabhaya Rajapaksa denied the accusation. In a brief interview with *The Island*, he pointed out that the LTTE had timed the latest propaganda lie for an informal session of the UN Security Council scheduled for today (May 11). He said that the LTTE was making a desperate attempt to force the international community to stop the offensive.

He said that nothing could be as ridiculous as a claim of over 2,000 civilians being killed in a single barrage. The army couldn't have mounted a large scale artillery assault without the international community knowing it, he said. Had they employed satellites to monitor the area of operations, they would have known the ground situation, he said.

The LTTE and its supporters were trying to influence international opinion by propagating lies, he said, emphasising that the government had irrefutable evidence of an attempt to force international intervention.

He said that the army refrained from using heavy weapons even at the risk of taking casualties. Despite all the constraints, the army had now fought its way up to the newly set up civilian safe zone, south of Karayamullivaikkal with an area

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'Breakthru' within 48 hrs

The Defence Secretary said that the army was continuing with operations and there could be a major breakthrough within the next 48 hours. According to him, the ground forces had made significant gains over the past three days and the LTTE would soon lose its wherewithal to offer organised resistance.

LG polls in Jaffna and Vavuniya

UPFA eyes a winning formula

by Shamindra Ferdinando

UPFA General Secretary Minister Susil Premjayanth yesterday expressed confidence that the ruling coalition could find a winning combination to win the forthcoming elections to the Jaffna Municipal Council and the Vavuniya Urban Council.

Douglas

Susil

Premjayanth told *The Island* that the SLFP would discuss ways and means of reaching an agreement with its coalition partners in this regard. Responding to our queries, he said that the TMVP, the breakaway LTTE group which contested the first PC election in the East on the UPFA ticket was unlikely to join the fray.

Referring to President Mahinda Rajapaksa's recent address to the Colombo based diplomatic community, he said that the Elections Secretariat would go ahead with necessary arrangements for the northern LG polls. The President said that nominations would be called later this month,

Premjayanth said the results at the forthcoming LG polls would reflect the armed forces' triumph over the LTTE. He asserted that the breakaway SLMC group now with the ruling coalition, too, would be with the government.

He said that Parliament, following deliberations had cleared the way for LG polls. He said that both legal and security impediments had been cleared for the polls.

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Chief Justice Sarath Nanda Silva and Defence Secretary Gotabhaya Rajapaksa share a light moment at Vesak celebrations at the Sambodhi Viharaya Saurday night. (Pic Kamal Wanniarachchi)

Raid on 9-acre *ganja* plantation

The Excise Department has raided a large *ganja* (cannabis) plantation in the Ambakola-ara forest reserve in the Thanamalwila area about to weeks prior to harvesting. An Excise Department spokesman told *The Island* that a 30-man team drawn from the Southern Province officers had walked about nine kms through jungle to reach the *ganja* plantation. According to him there had been nine acres full of *ganja* plants divided into eight blocks. "We arrested eight persons,"

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The team of Excise officers involved in the raid

Govt. likens Eelam bank to collapsed GK

by Norman Palihawadana

The government yesterday likened the now defunct LTTE run clandestine 'Eelam bank' to the failed Golden Key company and other illegally run financial institutions in the south.

A senior government official yesterday told *The Island* that the government was making an attempt to ascertain the amount of money deposited with the so-called 'eelam bank' by people living in the LTTE-controlled area before the army liberated all civilian centres.

Speaking on the condition of anonymity, he said that the LTTE had forced the Tamil diaspora to

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Three foreign journalists deported over 'false reporting'

The Government yesterday announced that it had deported three journalists of the London-based Channel 4 television for what it termed false reporting on the on-going humanitarian operations in the North.

Head of the Media Center for National Security Lakshaman Hulugalle told media that the journalists had admitted they had 'done something wrong' and they would not be allowed to come back to Sri Lanka.

They had been deported at 7.30 am yesterday, the government said.

Nick Paton-Walsh, the channel's Asian correspondent, however spoke to The Associated Press from Singapore and denied giving a statement to police or admitting wrongdoing. "This is complete rubbish," he told AP after arriving in Singapore. Walsh said he had been detained with producer Bessie Du and cameraman Matt Jasper by the police in the eastern town of

Nick Paton Walsh and cameraman Matt Jasper leave their Colombo hotel after being expelled

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Drug shortage hits cancer patients

by Emanthi Marambe

Lives of many cancer patients are in danger owing to a severe drug shortage at the Maharagama Cancer Hospital. About 20 brands of vital drugs are not available, according to hospital sources.

Drugs in short supply are Anastrosol, Doxorubicin, Interferon, Carboplatinum, Cisplatinum, Letrozole, Exemestane, Flutamide, Thalidomide, Temozolomide, and Cytarabin. Doctors said those drugs were expensive and most patients could not afford them.

One tablet of some drugs cost as much as Rs 400 to 500 at private pharmacies, doctors said.

The Cancer Hospital had experienced the drug shortage for months with no action taken to remedy the situation, sources said.

Hospital authorities are calling upon philanthropists to help purchase the life saving drugs.

Crook turns cancer unit into 'gem mine'

by Cyril Wimalasurendre

KANDY – An employee of the Kandy General Hospital has been nabbed by the Investigations Unit of the Ministry of Health in the act of using the Cobalt Therapy Machine of the Cancer Unit to treat common *geuda* (a kind of mineral corundum) stones and make them look like blue sapphires.

The suspect together with bags full of *geuda* stones found near the machine were handed over to the Kandy police.

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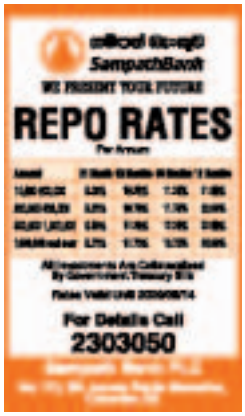
Sea tiger Dy. leader killed

Chelliyan

Deputy Sea Tiger Leader 'Chelliyan' had been killed in fighting with the military two days ago at Kariyanmullivaikkal in the Mullaitivu battle field, the Army said yesterday.

The latest information received from Kariyanmullivaikkal had confirmed that Chelliyan was among the dead LTTE cadres found after the confrontations that occurred when the troops captured a terrorist earth bund built in the same area on Thursday (07), the Army said.

A resident of Trincomalee, Chelliyan was in his early 30s. He had led many attacks on the Sri Lanka Navy in the past and received injuries in a confrontation with the Navy on March 27, 2008.

He also had held a few key appointments in the organization, the Army said.