

he Lanka Academic, 1 April 2006, 1 April 2006

Sri Lankan president's governing coalition secures stunning victory in local polls

'OLOMBO: Sri Lanka's ruling coalition won an overwhelming victory in local elections, according to results released by the government a win seen as an endorsement of the president's negotiations with Tamil Tiger rebels. President Mahinda Rajapakse's United Peoples' Freedom Alliance won majorities in 212 out of 249 local councils where results were declared, the Government Information Department said Friday. The main opposition group won 29 seats, and minor parties won the other eight seats. Remaining results for 17 councils were expected Saturday, the department said. Elections in the north and east where the Tigers operate have been postponed until Sept. 30 due to security concerns.

hindustan Times, 1 April 2006, 1 April 2006

Pakistan backing jihadi group in Lanka: LTTE

'OLOMBO: The Pakistani intelligence agency Inter Services Intelligence (ISI) is backing a Muslim terrorist group called "Jihad" in Eastern Sri Lanka, the LTTE's ideologue and chief peace negotiator, Anton Balasingham, charged on Wednesday. According to the Tamil daily Sudar Oli, Balasingham had complained about this to the Norwegian peace facilitator Erik Solheim when the latter met him in London on Wednesday. "I gave him details about the Jihad group and its links with Pakistani intelligence," Balasingham told Sudar Oli in an interview. The LTTE's chief negotiator hoped that Solheim would inform the Indian government about this during his forthcoming visit to New Delhi to brief the Indian authorities about the state of the peace process in Sri Lanka.

Asian Tribune, 1 April 2006, 1 April 2006

Musharraf, Rajapakse hold wide-ranging talks

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan's President General Pervez Musharraf and his Sri Lankan counterpart Mahinda Rajapakse on Friday held wide-ranging talks aimed at consolidating bilateral political and economic ties with a particular emphasis on expanding commerce between the two South Asian nations. The two leaders went into an exclusive meeting immediately after the formal welcome ceremony for President Rajapakse, who is on his first ever visit to Pakistan since victory in general elections in November 2005. Welcoming the Sri Lankan leader, President Musharraf felicitated him on his victory in the general elections in November 2005 and expressed the hope that during his tenure the two countries would further bolster their ties to their mutual benefit.

Asian Tribune, 2 April 2006, 2 April 2006

Pakistan-Sri Lanka to set up Business Council to boost trade

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan and Sri Lanka have agreed to set up a joint Business Council to boost trade and economic cooperation between the private sectors of two countries. The signing of Memorandum of Understanding MOU here on Saturday was also witnessed by the Sri Lankan President Mahinda Rajapakse at an inter-active session arranged by the Federation of Pakistan Chambers of Commerce and Industry. It was also attended by the Pakistani businessmen and members of visiting Sri Lankan delegation including leading businessmen from Sri Lanka. President FPCCI Chaudhry Muhammad Saeed and President FCCI of Sri Lanka Nawaz Rajabdeen signed the MoU.

Asian Tribune, 2 April 2006, 2 April 2006

Pakistan, Lanka vow to boost cooperation in all fields

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan and Sri Lanka have expressed the resolve to enhance their cooperation in all fields particularly education, economy, trade and security. Pakistan's Prime Minister Shaukat Aziz and Sri Lankan President Mahinda Rajapakse during their one-on-one meeting here on Saturday reviewed the whole gamut of bilateral relations between the two countries and stressed the need for further enhancing cooperation in various fields.

he Lanka Academic, 2 April 2006, 2 April 2006

Sri Lanka and cease-fire monitors lock-horns over armed groups

'OLOMBO: The government and European cease-fire monitors have fired out letters at each other over the existence of armed groups operating in state-controlled areas with both parties trading charges at each other just weeks ahead of the next round of peace talks. In a two-page letter addressed to the Defense Secretary Gotabhaya Rajapaksa, Sri Lanka Monitoring Mission's outgoing chief Hargrup Haukland said the monitors encountered 10-15 armed men in civilian clothes operating in Valachchenai, who told SLMM that they belong to the Karuna faction. Haukland also referred to several "sighting of armed civilians claiming to represent Karuna is often reported to SLMM."

the Hindu, 3 April 2006, 3 April 2006

Sri Lanka and Pakistan agree to combat terrorism

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan and Sri Lanka have expressed their resolve to combat terrorism in all its forms and manifestations for the preservation of shared values and principles and in the interest of peace and progress of their societies. A joint statement issued here on Saturday on the occasion of the three-day visit of Sri Lankan President, Mahinda Rajapakse, said in the course of the interaction between the two sides the leaders agreed that combating terrorism is the great challenge of our times. "Both Pakistan and Sri Lanka have been victims of terrorism," the statement said. Much to the surprise of observers here, Pakistan Prime Minister Shaukat Aziz received the visiting dignitary at the military airport in Chaklala on Friday. On Sunday, the Sri Lankan President would be addressing a forum of Pakistan and Sri Lankan business leaders in Karachi.

the Lanka Academic, 3 April 2006, 3 April 2006

Sri Lanka to assure India over China and Pakistan

A team of senior government officials are scheduled to visit India this week, just days after President Mahinda Rajapakse's visit to Pakistan, presidential sources said. The delegation is set to leave on Thursday, and will comprise of I.M.G. S. Palihakkara, foreign secretary, Gotabaya Rajapakse, defense secretary, P.B. Jayasundere, secretary finance and John Gooneratne, secretary general of the Secretariat for Coordinating the Peace Process. The trip takes place on the heels of President Rajapakse's visit to Pakistan and an earlier visit by Sri Lanka's defense secretary to China, the officials said. The sources said India had raised concerns over Sri Lanka's seemingly increased ties with Pakistan and China, and the visit is to reassure the island's northern neighbor and water-down concerns.

Asian Tribune, 3 April 2006, 3 April 2006

Doubts persist on links between Indian Naxalites and LTTE

NEW DELHI: As the Naxalites have carved out a red corridor from India- Nepal border to Tamil Nadu, periodically questions are raised as to whether the Indian Naxalites have links with the Nepali Maoists and the Sri Lanka's Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE.) Also, questions about from where the Naxalites were getting their sophisticated weapons are raised frequently. I had put the question to Indian Federal Interior Secretary V K Duggal. He said there are no links between Naxalites and the LTTE. The weapons are those mostly snatched from the police. This view is not shared by some experts. One of them, Brigadier Bansi Kumar Ponwar, opines that military hardwares for Naxalites are being provided by LTTE. "They have these outside alliances. We have got video clippings of the LTTE giving them training in IED methodology. And this is being used extensively all across the border. In fact they have put IED's where ever there are approach roads to their camps," the Brigadier was quoted as saying by TV Channel, CNN-IBN.

Hindustan Times, 4 April 2006

Norway peace envoy to discuss Sri Lanka with India

NEW DELHI: Norway's new peace envoy to Sri Lanka will be here this week to discuss with Indian leaders the situation in the island in the run up to the next round of peace talks in Geneva on April 19-21. Jon Hanssen-Bauer will arrive in New Delhi on April 6, two days after he turns 54, for his first trip to India after taking charge of the new responsibility on March 17, with or without the company of his predecessor Erik Solheim. Both Hanssen-Bauer and Solheim will be in Sri Lanka prior to that, meeting leaders of the Sri Lankan government and the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) as well as representatives of the civil society and politicians.

the Lanka Academic, 4 April 2006

New Norwegian envoy arrives in Sri Lanka amid electoral boost for government's peace bid

A new special peace envoy arrived in Sri Lanka on Monday as nationalist political parties opposed to Norway's peace efforts suffered a crushing defeat at last week's local poll. Jon Hanssen-Bauer's visit takes place days after President Mahinda Rajapakse's ruling United People's Freedom Alliance won a landslide victory by securing 225 out of the 266 local councils at a mini poll, according to official results. The president's victory was largely seen as an overwhelming endorsement of his efforts to negotiate a peace deal with the Tamil Tiger rebels. The Marxists People's Liberation Front or JVP, which had intensified its campaign for the ouster of Norway as facilitator, suffered a major electoral rejection at Thursday's poll, managing to retain only the one council they previously held.

Asian Tribune, 4 April 2006

Norwegian Special Envoy in Colombo, familiarizing issues connected with peace

COLOMBO: Jon Hassen-Bauer, Norway's new special peace envoy arrived in Colombo yesterday on a four-day familiarization visit "went straight into meetings" with a group of non-governmental organizations. According to a report, Tom Knappskog, Norwegian embassy spokesperson said, "The envoy will meet political leaders from different political parties, except the JVP and the JHU." "The idea of the four-day visit is to enable the new envoy to familiarize himself with the ground situation here and to meet decision makers," Knappskog said. During a four-day initial visit the envoy is scheduled to travel to Kilinochchi on Wednesday to discuss with S.P. Tamilselvan, Head of the Political Division of the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam, to give a general outline of the negotiations scheduled later this month between the government and LTTE in Switzerland.

Daily News, 4 April 2006

Saudi help for oil quest

COLOMBO: Saudi Arabia has pledged assistance to Sri Lanka for exploring oil resources along its sea belt. During Petroleum Resources Development Minister A.H.M. Fowzie's recent visit, the Saudi Arabian Government has agreed to provide Sri Lanka with the technology, expertise and training required for oil exploration. Saudi Arabia is the world's largest crude oil producer and exporter accounting for 13 per cent of the world oil output. It also owns one fourth of the world's oil reserves.

Daily News, 4 April 2006

New peace envoy to meet political leaders

COLOMBO: Jon Hassen-Bauer, the new Nordic special peace envoy will meet President Mahinda Rajapaksa and other political leaders this week in the run-up to second round of the Geneva talks, diplomatic sources said yesterday. "Hassen-Bauer who arrived in Sri Lanka yesterday is expected to meet political leaders across the political divide, the LTTE and leaders of other Tamil political parties," Tom Knappskog, Norwegian embassy spokesperson said. He said: "The envoy will meet political leaders from different political parties, except the JVP and the JHU."

The Lanka Academic, 5 April 2006

India calls for 'southern consensus' in Sri Lanka

NEW DELHI: India on Tuesday appealed for "consensus" among Sri Lanka's two main political parties to take the country's wobbling peace process forward. The idea emerged as Sri Lanka's former prime minister and present opposition leader Ranil Wickremesinghe met Prime Minister Manmohan Singh and held detailed discussions with Foreign Secretary Vyom Saran and National Security Advisor M.K. Narayanan. The subject of what is known as "southern consensus" - a meeting of the minds among the predominantly Sinhalese parties - in Sri Lanka figured prominently in Wickremesinghe's talks with Indian leaders, Indian and Sri Lankan sources said.

Daily News, 5 April 2006

Major boost for Lanka, Pakistan ties

COLOMBO: The Government yesterday expressed optimism that the President's recent visit to Pakistan would boost trade between the two countries, bring in more Pakistani investors and strengthen economic and trade relations between the two countries. Foreign Affairs, Ports and Aviation Minister Mangala Samaraweera told the media yesterday that the main aim of President Mahinda Rajapaksa's visit to Pakistan was economic cooperation and trade matters and there was a range of successful discussions on important areas such as apparel, aviation and tourism. The two sides have also held discussions on bilateral, regional and international issues. The President's visit to Pakistan was preceded by his visit to India December last year, which was also very successful in terms of trade and economic cooperation.

The Hindu, 6 April 2006

Disappointed, says LTTE

COLOMBO: The Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) on Wednesday said it was "totally disappointed" with the Sri Lankan Government's "implementation" of the agreements reached at the February talks in Geneva. The LTTE conveyed its position to new Norwegian Special Envoy Jon Hanssen-Bauer, who is on his first visit to Sri Lanka. The LTTE's political wing leader S.P. Tamilselvan said the main complaint was the "non-fulfilment" of the "pledges" on "the activities of the paramilitary groups" in Government-controlled north and east.

The Lanka Academic, 6 April 2006

Tamil rebels accuse Sri Lanka of failing to honor pledges given at Geneva talks

ILLINOCHCHI: The Tamil Tiger rebels said Wednesday that the Sri Lankan government has failed to honor a pledge made at peace talks in Geneva earlier this year to disarm paramilitary groups. "Our expectations were very high when the government delegation pledged in Geneva to end paramilitary activities and we are totally disappointed now over the accelerated pace of paramilitary violence," Tamil Tiger political chief S.P. Thamilselvan said after meeting with new Norwegian envoy Jon Hanssen-Bauer, according to the rebel's Web site. The Tigers split in 2004, and the mainstream group accuses the army of backing the breakaway faction. The government was not immediately available for comment, but Colombo has in the past denied such charges. Hanssen-Bauer met with Tiger leaders in the rebel stronghold of Jilinochchi ahead of the next round of talks in Geneva, Switzerland later this month which will be crucial in view of the rising tension.

Asian Tribune, 6 April 2006

Col. Karuna tops the list of LTTE and Norway

COLOMBO: Col. Karuna is now on the top of the list of agenda of the LTTE and Norway. Both are putting pressure on the Sri Lankan government to disarm Karuna, former No. 2 LTTE leader and presently the leader of the Tamil Eelam Liberation Front (TMVP). Initially, when Karuna broke away from the LTTE in March 2004, the LTTE dismissed it as an "internal affair". Their attempts to control Col. Karuna has failed since then. Their next move has been to get the Sri Lankan government to disarm Col. Karuna's group entrenched in the east. Yesterday when S.P. Thamilselvan, head of the LTTE Political Wing, met the new Norwegian envoy Jon Hanssen-Bauer at the Peace Secretariat in Jilinochchi, Karuna figured prominently in their discussions.

The Hindu, 7 April 2006

Talks: safe travel promise for LTTE

COLOMBO: Sri Lankan President Mahinda Rajapakse on Thursday guaranteed safe travel for the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) delegation through Colombo to participate at the peace talks scheduled to be held in Geneva from 9 April. Expressing satisfaction at the guarantee, Norwegian Minister for International Development Erik Solheim said he was optimistic that the talks would go ahead as scheduled. "The LTTE requested a very clear cut guarantee from the president that all security would be provided when it is passing through Colombo. President Rajapakse gave a clear guarantee that he would do everything to make certain that no harm happens to the LTTE delegation," he told the Foreign Correspondents' Association of Sri Lanka. "We expect the next round of talks to go ahead."

The Lanka Academic, 7 April 2006

Tamil rebels, Sri Lankan govt to go ahead with Swiss peace talks: Norwegian peace envoy

COLOMBO: Tamil Tiger rebels and the Sri Lankan government will go ahead with peace talks in Switzerland despite simmering tensions and accusations that both sides violated a cease-fire agreement, Norway's top peace envoy said Thursday. Erik Solheim, who heads Norwegian efforts to end Sri Lanka's nearly two decades of civil war, said he had urged both sides to stick to the cease-fire agreement and work toward strengthening their peace efforts. "Both sides have agreed to meet in Geneva," Solheim told reporters after meeting with President Mahinda Rajapakse.

Daily News, 7 April 2006

Govt keen to move onto substantive issues

COLOMBO: The Government has conveyed to the LTTE through the visiting Special Norwegian envoy that they must move from CFA talks to more concrete issues such as a final solution to the problem without delay. Norwegian special envoy Jon-Hanssen Bauer met President Mahinda Rajapaksa at Temple trees yesterday. He was accompanied by Norwegian International Development Minister Erik Solheim and Norwegian Ambassador Hans Brattskar. New Director General of the Government Peace Secretariat (SCOPP) Dr. Palitha Kohona, who assumed duties yesterday, told the Daily News: "We cannot travel all the way to Geneva to draw up a checklist of what has been done and what has not been done under the CFA."

Asian Tribune, 7 April 2006

Glimmer of hope for the round 2 Round of talks

COLOMBO: Norwegian peace facilitators had closed door talks with Sri Lanka President with lingering doubts about the next round of talks in Geneva and of salvaging the peace process which is under constant threat of faltering. As it was a closed door meeting details were sketchy, however it is learnt that according to a source, Sri Lanka President Mahinda Rajapakse has told Norway's Minister for International Development and the Special Peace Envoy Jon-Hanssen Bauer

at issues such as finding solutions to the ethnic issues has to be taken up as early as possible for discussion to bring an end to this festering ethnic conflict.

Daily News, 8 April 2006

Govt to ensure Lanka's prosperity

COLOMBO: President Mahinda Rajapaksa yesterday invited all political forces seeking a better future for Sri Lanka to join him and the Sri Lanka Freedom Party (SLFP) to ensure prosperity for the masses. Addressing the 16th National Convention of the SLFP, President Rajapaksa said the Executive Power of the Presidency, the legislative power of Parliament and the executive power of the local bodies will be harnessed to create a better environment, a better tomorrow and a better country for posterity. "Our party has become the most powerful political party today, whilst completing 50 years since the tremendous victory of 1956," he said.

Asian Tribune, 8 April 2006

Norwegian brokers brief Delhi of their latest tryst with Lanka peace

NEW DELHI: The two Norwegian peace brokers –one outgoing and the other incoming - today briefed the Indian government about the late situation report. It was in a manner of speaking the current status of the peace process since both Erik Solheim and his successor Ambassador Jon Hanssen Bauer have just returned from Sri Lanka after talks with the Rajapakse government in Colombo and with the LTTE in Kilinochchi. The briefing to the Foreign Secretary Shyam Prasad Menon at the South Block covered their perception of the prospectus that awaits the next round of talks in Geneva between the Government and the Tigers.

Hindustan Times, 9 April 2006

Mod Sri Lanka, LTTE to work for peace: Expert

NEW DELHI: An Indian scholar has urged the international community to push both the Sri Lankan government and the Tamil Tiger guerrillas to reach a negotiated settlement of the dragging ethnic conflict. Nevertheless, nothing is likely to work in the island nation unless the two sides "decide to move forward keeping in mind the interest of the people", said N. Manoharan of the Institute of Peace and Conflict Studies (IPCS) here.

The Lanka Academic, 9 April 2006

Violence escalates in Sri Lanka; truce monitors warn attacks could mar talks

COLOMBO: Suspected Tamil Tigers exploded a Claymore mine and opened fire at troops in two separate incidents in Sri Lanka's north and east on Saturday as cease-fire monitors warned the spate of violence could jeopardize peace talks, officials said. A truck with 12 soldiers on board, carrying food rations was caught in the explosion in Neerveli, Jaffna, said Brig. Prasad Samarasinghe, military spokesman.

Hindustan Times, 10 April 2006

L Tamils see India as their fatherland: LTTE ideologue

COLOMBO: The Tamils of Sri Lanka consider "Tamil Eelam" in the North East of their island, as their "motherland", and India as their "fatherland", says the LTTE's ideologue and chief negotiator, Anton Balasingham, in an interview to the popular Chennai-based weekly Ananda Vikatan, which has been widely reproduced here, Balasingham said that the Sri Lankan Tamils had "always looked upon India as their fatherland." We expect good relations to develop between India and the LTTE. I feel that such a situation will arise in the near future," Balasingham said.

The Lanka Academic, 10 April 2006

Sri Lanka 's top donors ask Tamil Tigers to move political solution forward

COLOMBO: Sri Lanka's top donors and backers of the peace process with Tamil Tiger rebels are traveling to guerrilla-held territory on Monday to urge the rebels to stay committed to a peaceful settlement of the island nation's two-decade conflict. An attack in eastern Sri Lanka, injuring two soldiers. Both sides also accuse the other of violating pledges made at the last round of talks. The rebels say the government has failed to disarm its proxy paramilitaries, while the government accuses the rebels of attacking troops and recruiting underage combatants.

Daily News, 10 April 2006

Ambassadors of Co-Chairs meet Thamilselvan today

KILINOCHCHI: Ambassadors of the Co-Chairs of the Donor conference will meet LTTE's political wing leader S. P.

Thamilselvan in Killinochchi today. LTTE spokesman Daya Master told the Daily News the envoys of Norway, Japan, European Union and the Netherlands will arrive in Killinochchi in a helicopter and meet Thamilselvan at the LTTE's Peace Secretariat. "The discussion will be based mainly on the Ceasefire Agreement talks to be held at the next round of talks in Geneva this month and on the rehabilitation and reconstruction activities in the North and East," Daya Master said.

The Lanka Academic, 12 April 2006

Mine attack in Sri Lanka kills two police officers; government says peace talks will go forward

COLOMBO: A mine blast struck a truck carrying policemen in northeastern Sri Lanka - on Wednesday, killing at least two officers and wounding two others in an attack that police blamed on Tamil Tiger rebels. The rebels began fighting in 1983 for a separate homeland for Sri Lanka's Tamil minority, alleging discrimination by the Sinhalese majority. About 5,000 people have been killed in the conflict.

Daily News, 12 April 2006

SLMM condemns attacks commends Govt. for not retaliating

COLOMBO: Head of the Sri Lanka Monitoring Mission, Major General Ulf Henricsson, while strongly condemning the laymore mine attack on the Army in Jaffna and the Navy in Trincomalee district yesterday has commended the government for not taking any retaliatory actions and thereby adhering to the CFA. The SLMM statement on the laymore mine attacks in Jaffna and Trincomalee: The Sri Lanka Monitoring Mission (SLMM) strongly condemns the laymore mine attacks on the Sri Lanka Army in Jaffna on 8 and 10 April, and on the Sri Lanka Navy in Trincomalee district yesterday.

Hindustan Times, 13 April 2006

Manmohan talks to Rajapaksa on SL situation

COLOMBO: Indian Prime Minister Manmohan Singh and Sri Lankan President Mahinda Rajapaksa spoke to each other on the phone on Wednesday on the deteriorating security situation in Sri Lanka. According to the Sri Lankan government website, Singh expressed "deep concern" over the present situation in the island. Singh "condemned the recent violence and killings and expressed condolences to the bereaved," the website said. Singh further said that India would extend cooperation to the peace initiatives made by President Rajapaksa. According to informed sources, Singh had made the call at the request of the Sri Lankan President.

The Lanka Academic, 13 April 2006

Sri Lanka capital under security net after fatal blasts in northeastern town

COLOMBO: Soldiers patrolled a restive northeast Sri Lankan town Thursday after fatal bombings and subsequent ethnic clashes killed 16 people, prompting authorities to impose a curfew on the town and boost security in the capital. Army and navy units were deployed to Trincomalee to enforce the indefinite curfew and curb the violence that erupted after the blasts rocked the port town on Wednesday, killing seven people, including two policemen and a soldier, and wounding two others. Nobody claimed responsibility for the blasts and it was not immediately known who started the mob violence, which left nine other people dead, according to doctors and the military.

The Hindu, 15 April 2006

New dates for Geneva talks

COLOMBO: The second round of Geneva talks between the Sri Lankan Government and the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) is to be held on April 24 and 25. The decision to hold the two-day talks, an abridged version of the originally-scheduled talks to be held between April 19 and 21, was announced by the peace facilitator Norway on Friday. The parties to the peace process in Sri Lanka have today agreed on a short postponement of the peace talks in Geneva. "New dates for the talks are 24-25 April," the Norwegian embassy said. Meanwhile, in renewed violence in Trincomalee, a laymore mine was exploded by suspected LTTE rebels in the eastern district, injuring two soldiers and a civilian driver, the army said.

Daily News, 15 April 2006

<http://dailynews.lk/>

UNITED NATIONS: UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan expressed serious concern Wednesday at the upsurge of violence in Sri Lanka and appealed to the Government and the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) to attend peace

talks in Geneva next week to implement the current ceasefire agreement. "The Secretary General is very concerned about the escalating violence and loss of life in Sri Lanka, including mine attacks on soldiers and police and targeted killings of political activists," his spokesman Stephane Dujarric told reporters. Thirty seven people have been killed, a majority of them security forces personnel, in four blasts since Monday.

amilNet, 16 April 2006

Talks possible only after hurdles are cleared: Thamilselvan

LTTE Political Head S.P. Thamilselvan on Sunday, in a letter to the Norwegian Ambassador Hans Brattskar, informed that LTTE will not attend the Geneva Talks until the hurdles in front of the the LTTE to attend Geneva talks were removed and a more conducive environment created. He expressed the critical need for the LTTE leadership in Vanni to meet the eastern commanders before any future talks, and accused Sri Lanka Navy (SLN) for "acting in a manner that threatened the safety of LTTE commanders," thereby forcing the LTTE to cancel the sea-transport arrangement.

The Hindu, 16 April 2006

Doubts over Geneva talks

COLOMBO: Escalated violence in Sri Lanka's northeast and a last-minute standoff between the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) and the Government on rebel sea passage have raised doubts whether the postponed second round of direct talks will be held later this month. Five soldiers, an LTTE cadre and a civilian were killed in different incidents in the north on Saturday. Reports from the east spoke of a confrontation between the LTTE and supporters of its former special commander, V. Muralitharan ('Col.' Karuna) in rebel-held Batticaloa. There is no confirmation of the numbers killed in this incident. The five soldiers were killed in a claymore explosion aboard a bus in Vavuniya district. An improvised explosive device was triggered from a hand-held tractor, reports said. According to army sources, at least four soldiers were injured.

Asian Tribune, 16 April 2006

Geneva talks off again: Peace Monitors reject LTTE excuse

COLOMBO: The on-again, off-again peace talks in Geneva which were postponed from April 19-20 to April 24-25 are off again. The Tamil Tigers announced their withdrawal yesterday for the second time complaining that their commanders were at risk because of the closeness of the Sri Lankan Navy boat escorting the civilian ship carrying their fighting commanders from Mullaithivu to Vakarai. European Peace Monitors rejected this LTTE excuse of Tiger commanders being at risk when escorted by the Sri Lankan Naval vessels. Helen Olafsdottir, the spokesperson for the Peace Monitors, said: "They (LTTE cadres) were getting on board the ferry and suddenly they said they will not go because a Sri Lankan naval vessel was coming too close. We are not buying that because there are no risks as our monitors were aboard the naval vessels to ensure that nothing happens. The Government and the guerillas were told in advance that ships would be present to ensure that nothing happens," she said. Norway Post, an English language daily, also quoted the head of the Nordic Peace Monitors, Ulf Henricsson, as saying that the Tamil Tigers had agreed to let the Sri Lankan Navy monitor the boat transport.

The Hindu, 17 April 2006

LTTE suspends participation in Geneva talks

COLOMBO: The Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) on Sunday announced suspending participation in the second round of the Geneva talks "until hurdles" placed before it by the Sri Lankan Government were removed and "a more conducive environment" was created for the negotiations. Referring to the stand off between Colombo and the Tigers on Saturday over sea transport, the LTTE's political wing leader, S.P. Tamilselvan, informed the facilitator, Norway: "Until the hurdles in front of us to attend the Geneva talks are removed and a more conducive environment is created, our team is unable to come to the talks." The second round of the Geneva talks was originally scheduled for April 19-21. Last week, following a stand off between the Government and the rebels, the talks were postponed to April 24 and 25. The Geneva talks are to discuss implementation issues of the ceasefire agreement (CFA).

The Lanka Academic, 17 April 2006

Dissident rebels enter Sri Lanka political stage

COLOMBO: Amid increasing violence by Tamil rebels against the security forces in the north and eastern parts of Sri Lanka, a breakaway group of the rebels has entered the political stage by opening its first office in a government controlled area in the east. Two years after V. Muralitharan alias Karuna broke away from the Liberation Tigers of Tamil

elam (LTTE) its political front has established its political office under heavy police and army protection. The party known as the Tamil Eelam People's Liberation Tigers has been accused of carrying out hit and run attacks on its rivals.

he Hindu, 18 April 2006

ix killed in Sri Lanka

'OLOMBO: At least six persons were killed and 14 others injured in four incidents in Sri Lanka's north-east on Monday. The attacks continued a day after the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) announced suspending participation in the Geneva talks. According to the army, four soldiers were killed in an LTTE claymore explosion in the northern Vavuniya district on Monday. Seven others were injured in this attack. The army said Monday's attack in Vavuniya was the 14th claymore explosion by the LTTE since the sharp escalation of violence on April 8.

he Lanka Academic, 18 April 2006

Top Norwegian envoy due in Sri Lanka to save faltering peace bid

'OLOMBO: Norway's special envoy to Sri Lanka is due to make an unscheduled visit here on Tuesday in stepped-up efforts to save the island from plunging back to civil war, officials said. Jon Hanssen-Bauer is expected to shuttle between meetings with President Mahinda Rajapakse, other government leaders and the Tamil rebels. He will try to bring an end to escalating tensions between the government and the Tigers and also ensure that talks to save the island's tottering truce takes place as scheduled next week. "The decision is based on the latest escalation of violence and developments in relation to the Geneva talks," said Erik Crnberg, spokesman for the Norwegian embassy in Colombo. The Tigers have repeatedly said they must hold an internal meeting between its commanders before attending the second round of Swiss talks, prompting the negotiations to be pushed back by five days to April 24.

Asian Tribune, 18 April 2006

UNICEF calls on the LTTE to immediately release all under-age recruits

'OLOMBO: UNICEF in a statement released to the press has deplored the death of an underage recruit of the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam in Vavuniya. Recruitment of children is a direct violation of their right to protection from violence. UNICEF calls on the LTTE to immediately release all under-age recruits within its ranks and to cease recruitment of children.

he Lanka Academic, 19 April 2006

Truce Monitor Chief Blames Rebels For Sri Lanka Violence

'OLOMBO: The chief European cease-fire monitor blamed the Tamil Tiger rebels on Tuesday for the recent spate of land mine blasts that have killed dozens in Sri Lanka and imperiled a four-year-old, Norwegian-brokered truce. In an interview with The Associated Press, retired Swedish general, Ulf Henricsson, said while he couldn't be completely certain the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam were responsible for all of the mine attacks, it was likely they were to blame for most. "If I look into the pattern and whole series of mine blasts, I would...rule this as a serious violation by the LTTE," Henricsson said. "I can't prove every explosion to one single party, (but) the blasts directed toward the army, (I'm) quite sure that it could not be launched by any other organization than the LTTE."

Daily News, 19 April 2006

Bauer on mission to resolve crisis

'OLOMBO: The much-awaited response of the LTTE over their participation in the crucial Geneva talks later this month is to be conveyed to Norwegian special envoy during his visit to Kilinochchi tomorrow. Special envoy Jon Hanssen Bauer arrived in Colombo yesterday making an unscheduled visit to settle the current crisis over the transport issue and persuade the LTTE to go to Geneva for a direct round of talks to iron out differences and stop the escalating violence. He will meet President Mahinda Rajapaksa, Peace Secretariat (SCOPP) Secretary General Dr. Palitha Kohona and the LTTE leaders in Kilinochchi during the current visit. The Government, following a lengthy discussion between the SCOPP chief and SLMM officials in the presence of Navy Commander Wasantha Karannagoda on Monday agreed to the Norwegian offer to hire a private helicopter to transport the Eastern leaders to meet the LTTE Wannu leadership ahead of the second round of truce talks.

Asian Tribune, 19 April 2006

LTTE escalates demands after escalating violence

'OLOMBO: The Tamil Tigers put the next round of Geneva talks in doubt for the third time by escalating their demands

irst, they postponed talks from 19 April to April 24 after escalating violence. Second, they refused to come to talks saying that the Navy was threatening their commanders by escorting them from the north to east and rejected the offer to travel in a commercial vessel from the north to the east. Now they insist that violence against ethnic Tamils should be stopped before they go to Geneva for the second round of talks. Political analysts say that the Government has not refused to go to talks because the LTTE has escalated violence. Nor have they insisted on the LTTE stopping violence against the security Forces and civilians -- two volunteers in NGOs and a Tamil boy who were victims of a LTTE claymore mine. More than 70 people have died in LTTE claymore mine attacks and ethnic rioting in Trincomalee since the first week of April. Ethnic rioting began after the LTTE exploded a bomb tied to a bicycle near a Sinhalese vegetable market.

The Hindu, 20 April 2006

Colombo hopeful of talks schedule

COLOMBO: Sri Lanka on Wednesday said it remained hopeful that the second round of ceasefire talks in Geneva later this month would be held. The Government's position is against the backdrop of the recent spiralling violence in the north-east and a stand-off between Colombo and the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE). "As far as the government is concerned, we are optimistic that the talks will go on," Keheliya Rambukwella, Minister and Colombo's recently appointed spokesperson on the security situation, told a press conference on Wednesday.

The Lanka Academic, 20 April 2006

Five Tamils killed in northern Sri Lanka; mine explosion wounds sailors, says military

COLOMBO: A Norwegian peace envoy met with Sri Lanka's prime minister Wednesday in a bid to save a faltering cease-fire with separatist Tamil Tiger rebels, while two sailors and three civilians were wounded in two separate mine blasts, officials said. The rebels have warned they will not join the Geneva talks if they cannot be guaranteed safe passage across government-held territory in northern Sri Lanka - to their headquarters for an internal meeting first. The government has refused to airlift the guerrillas by Sri Lankan navy helicopters a facility allowed since the February 2002 cease-fire while the Tigers have not responded publicly to a later government offer for peace mediator Norway to use private helicopters to transport rebel commanders to the meeting.

Daily News, 20 April 2006

Bauer intensifies talks efforts

Norwegian Special Envoy Jon Hanssen Bauer remained tight-lipped as he left the Foreign Ministry after having a closed door meeting with Foreign Minister Mangala Samaraweera last afternoon, ahead of the decisive trip to Kilinochchi today. Bauer will be meeting LTTE political wing leader S.P. Thamilselvam at the LTTE peace secretariat this morning where he is to be briefed on the LTTE's stance on the private helicopter offer and their participation in Geneva 2. Contacted by the Daily News, a senior official of the Presidential Secretariat said the need for a meeting between President Mahinda Rajapaksa and Peace Envoy Bauer did not arise at the moment as Bauer had been fully briefed on the issues at hand by the Peace Secretariat as well as by Prime Minister Ratnasiri Wickremanayake and Minister Samaraweera.

Asian Tribune, 20 April 2006

Failed LTTE commanders removed from their posts

COLOMBO: Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam has decided to remove the present special commanders of the East of Sri Lanka, Colonel Bravo Bahnu of the Batticaloa and Colonel Sornam presently of Trincomalee districts from their current posts. The Vanni command considers that both have been failures. The Vanni command is concerned about the violence being waged against the LTTE and targeting their cadres. Key political figures like Joseph Parajasingham and T.Vigneswaram were gunned down by suspected cadres of the Karuna group. According to inside information, Colonel Bahnu who was stripped of his uniform and demoted was reinstated and sent to Batticaloa Amparai district as a special Commander with 100 special guards, to replace Colonel Ramesh in the first week of October 2005. Vanni command considers that Col. Bahnu too has failed to check the challenge posed by Col. Karuna's men in the region.

The Indian Express, 21 April 2006

Tigers not to attend Geneva peace talks

COLOMBO: Tamil Tiger rebels on Thursday told Norwegian peace envoy Jon Hanssen-Bauer they are indefinitely postponing their rescheduled April 24 talks with the Sri Lankan government at Geneva on saving the battered 2002 ceasefire. No new date has been announced. "Until a stable and conducive environment is created, we will not be able to attend the talks," the LTTE's Nitharsanam website quoted the group's political wing leader SP Thamilselvan as saying.

Until the government implements what was agreed to in Geneva in February, including the disarming of para militaries, the violence will not stop." Hanssen-Bauer travelled to the rebel-held Kilinochchi today for talks with the Tigers on saving the ceasefire that has come under renewed pressure following a surge in violence. But he failed to secure meetings either with President Mahinda Rajapakse or reclusive Tiger leader Velupillai Prabhakaran, and some diplomats increasingly say that neither side is really serious about moving the peace process forward.

The Lanka Academic, 21 April 2006

Norway makes another bid to save Sri Lanka talks and truce

COLOMBO: Peace broker Norway prepared to meet Tamil rebels and make another attempt to resuscitate Sri Lanka's faltering peace process, a day after the guerrillas indefinitely put off scheduled talks to save the island's cease-fire from collapse, officials said on Thursday. Jon Hanssen-Bauer was expected to travel to northern rebel-held Kilinochchi on Friday for more talks with the rebels aimed at pinning them down to talks with the Sri Lankan government, officials involved in the peace process said. The decision was made after Hanssen-Bauer held a series of meetings with top government representatives, hours after the rebels made known they will not turn up for the April 24-25 talks, planned in Geneva, Switzerland. "The door is not shut," said Palitha Kohona, top official of the government's peace secretariat. Discussions are continuing through the facilitator."

The Lanka Academic, 22 April 2006

Sri Lanka appoints committee to review troubled areas

Sri Lankan President Mahinda Rajapakse himself heads a committee appointed Friday to review the situation in the violence-ridden Northern and Eastern provinces, a senior minister said. Maithripala Sirisena, the Minister of Agriculture and Irrigation, said, "the president will head the committee which will look at emerging situation in the north and east and will take appropriate action." The other members of the committee are Prime Minister Ratnasiri Wickramanayake, Foreign Minister Mangala Samaraweera, Minister of Health Nimal Siripala De Silva, Minister of Trade Jeyaraj Fernando-Pulle and Minister of Media and Information Anura Yapa, Sirisena said. The two provinces have been engulfed in a wave of violence since April 7 with nearly 80 people being killed in attacks throughout the region.

The Lanka Academic, 22 April 2006

Norway makes fresh bid to break talks deadlock

COLOMBO: Peace broker Norway and truce monitors on Friday prepared to discuss a new proposal on transport for Tamil Tiger rebels aimed at luring the guerrillas back for talks with the Sri Lankan government. Ulf Henricsson, head of the European team monitoring Sri Lanka's fragile truce and Norwegian peace brokers were set to travel to northern rebel-held Kilinochchi, officials involved in the peace process said. "Yes, the delegation will meet Mr. Pulidevan here today," said Daya Master, Tiger spokesman. Jon Hanssen-Bauer, Norway's special envoy to Sri Lanka was earlier to also participate in the talks but there had been a change in the composition of the delegation, the officials said.

TamilNet, 22 April 2006

Colombo responsible for creating cordial atmosphere: Thamilselvan

Accusing Sri Lanka Government of renegeing on providing established modes of travel, and proposing impractical travel procedure that showed scant respect for the security of the Senior commanders of the Liberation Tigers, the Head of LTTE Political Wing, S.P. Thamilselvan in an interview to TamilNet Thursday said that violence is likely to spiral out of control if Sri Lankan forces do not urgently stop killing Tamil civilians in NorthEast.

Asian Tribune, 23 April 2006

Canadian Police raid banned WTM (LTTE) Headquarters in Toronto

TORONTO: The head office of the World Tamil Movement in Toronto Canada - which is the front organization of Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam - was raided and sealed off by the police in the early hours of Saturday morning. The police yellow taped the premises off the World Tamil Movement Head Office located in 39 Cosentino Drive, Scarborough, Toronto in the Canadian province of Ontario. Royal Mounted Police of Canada along with the Ontario provincial police raided the premises in the morning of Saturday, which caught the LTTE agents manning the office by surprise.

The Hindu, 24 April 2006

Colombo for sanctions on LTTE

'OLOMBO: Sri Lanka on Sunday called upon the international community, particularly Norway and the European Union, to exert more pressure including "sanctions" on the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE). "We expect the U.S. to go ahead with its threatened sanction, which is the listing of the LTTE as a terrorist organisation if the LTTE continues to behave in this appalling manner and continues with its wave of violence and terrorism and continues to offer flimsy excuses for not coming to Geneva for the talks," Palitha Kohona, Secretary General of the Secretariat for Coordinating the Peace Process, told a press conference on Sunday. The Government's call was against the backdrop of the continued standoff over the LTTE's demand for transportation of its eastern leaders to Kilinochchi. The rebel-held east and north is separated by Government territory and the LTTE would require permission to travel between the two regions

The Lanka Academic, 24 April 2006

Low violence hits Sri Lanka, 3 rebels killed, 3 soldiers wounded, 6 villagers found dead

'OLOMBO: Sri Lankan government forces on Sunday shot and killed three Tamil rebels in two separate incidents in the country's troubled northeast after the insurgents lobbed hand grenades at the soldiers, the Defense Ministry said. The Trincomalee police chief would not comment on the dead villagers' identities, but another police officer said they were Sinhalese, Sri Lanka's ethnic majority. The bodies had multiple stab wounds, said the officer, who asked not to be named because he is not authorized to talk to the media. Earlier Sunday, troops manning a checkpoint in the town of Kantalai stopped two men.

Daily News, 24 April 2006

Force the LTTE to come for talks

'OLOMBO: The Government yesterday called upon the international community to exert pressure on the LTTE to force it to come to the negotiating table. The call came at the same time the Government agreed to a request from the LTTE that it be provided a large helicopter to facilitate passage of its Eastern leaders to meet the Wannu leadership. Following this, Government Chief Negotiator Minister Nimal Siripala de Silva yesterday dispatched a missive to the LTTE through Norwegian facilitators.

Daily News, 24 April 2006

LTTE stance today

KILINOCHCHI: The LTTE is to give their stance today on the Government's offer of helicopters for transporting cadres to or from the pre-talks meetings, the LTTE announced yesterday. LTTE Spokesperson Daya Master insisting that they have not pulled out from the talks, said they have forwarded two pre-conditions if they were to take part in Geneva II, earlier scheduled April 24-25. "We want the Government helicopter offer in writing," said the spokesperson, adding that all killings should be stopped before any attempts to be made for revival of talks.

SamilNet, 24 April 2006

Colombo "in a military mindset": Balasingham

With Sri Lanka's government refusing to disarm Army-backed paramilitaries whose 'shadow war' against the LTTE is spiralling into increasingly cycles of revenge killings, the Ceasefire Agreement is "falling apart," the LTTE's Chief Negotiator and Political Strategist, Anton Balasingham, said this week. Colombo's support for the paramilitaries and the escalated repression against Tamil civilians in government-controlled areas of the Northeast means "we can safely assume that Rajapakse administration has not given up the military option," he told The Sunday Leader newspaper.

The Hindu, 25 April 2006

India concerned over Sri Lanka situation

NEW DELHI: India on Monday expressed deep concern at the mounting violence in eastern Sri Lanka, which had put the ceasefire in the island nation under "serious strain." "The Government of Sri Lanka has conveyed to us its policy of restraint and its intention to restore normalcy in the affected areas. We welcome this and call upon the parties concerned to scrupulously adhere to the letter and spirit of the ceasefire agreement," the External Affairs Ministry said in a statement. "We take this opportunity to express our conviction that violence is not the answer to any problem and that political dialogue is the only way to resolve outstanding issues. We hope that the parties make every effort with a view to commencing talks at the earliest and taking the stalled peace process forward," it added.

The Lanka Academic, 25 April 2006

Government taking necessary steps to ensure law and order is maintained

COLOMBO: The Government today assured that it was taking 'all necessary measures' to ensure that law and order is maintained in the face of provocative acts initiated by the LTTE organisation. Issuing a release today, the Director of the Government Information Department Anusha Palpita stated that, 'in a deliberate act of terrorism directed against the civilian population, it is reported that LTTE cadres have brutally murdered 6 farmers on the evening of April 23, 2006 at Pallanpattu in the Gomarankaduwela area in the Trincomalee District. This massacre of innocent farmers while attending their paddy fields is another attempt by the LTTE to instigate a communal backlash in the Trincomalee district. The indiscriminate bombing of the Trincomalee market on 12 April 2006, and the intensified campaign of attacks against the Security Forces, Police and Homeguards is a deliberate and orchestrated strategy of the LTTE to trigger a communal backlash which it hopes to exploit to its own advantage locally and to a greater extent internationally, the release said.

Daily News, 25 April 2006

Govt urges sanctions and incentives to deal with Tigers

COLOMBO: The Government yesterday urged the international community led by the European Union to find the correct mixture of incentive and sanctions to deal with the LTTE and to prevail upon the Tigers to come to the negotiating table. Deputy head of the Peace Secretariat Kethish Loganadan said the only way to deal with the LTTE is through a combination of sanctions and incentives and it is up to the donor and the international community to find the correct mix. He said that the Government would lobby the support of the International community, particularly the European Union to impose sanctions against the LTTE, but he did not elaborate on the measures. "It is not up to us to suggest the measures, we only ask them to prevail upon the LTTE to give up its ways of violence and come to the negotiating table," he said.

The Lanka Academic, 25 April 2006

Suicide bomber attacks Sri Lanka's top military commander, 2 dead, general hurt

A female suicide bomber, believed to be a Tamil Tiger rebel and pretending to be pregnant, exploded a bomb in front of a car that was taking Sri Lanka's top military general inside the army headquarters in Colombo on Tuesday, the military said. The bomber died on the spot and Lt. Gen. Sarath Fonseka suffered serious abdominal injuries, said military officials who spoke on condition of anonymity because of military regulations. The general's escort and driver also died, the officials said. Fonseka was undergoing surgery. Ten other people, including some civilians caught in the blast, were also hospitalized. Top Sri Lankan military officials work in the headquarters, which is protected by fences and troops guarding all entry points. Fonseka, a battle-hardened soldier with 35 years in the infantry, was appointed to the top post after President Mahinda Rajapakse took office in November. There was no claim of responsibility. The Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam rarely take credit for such attacks.

The Lanka Academic, 26 April 2006

Sri Lanka's President Vows to Fight Terrorism After Bomb Attack

Sri Lanka's President Mahinda Rajapakse said his government will fight terrorism after a suicide bombing blamed on Tamil Tiger rebels wounded the army commander and prompted air and sea attacks on rebel-held areas. The Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam have "broken all the efforts toward peace," Rajapakse said late yesterday in a televised address, according to the government Web site. "Our government is ready to face any challenge." Violence has escalated in Sri Lanka's north and east since the government and rebels held their first meeting in three years in February and agreed to enforce their 2002 cease-fire. Peace talks scheduled for this month in Geneva have been postponed twice. Sri Lanka's Colombo All-Share Index fell 2.7 per cent at its close yesterday after the suicide bombing.

The Hindu, 26 April 2006

India terms LTTE attack a brazen act of terrorism

NEW DELHI: Defence Minister Pranab Mukherjee on Tuesday described the suicide attack on the Sri Lankan Army commander Sarath Fonseka in Colombo as a "brazen act of terrorism." Mr. Mukherjee, who is deputising for Prime Minister Manmohan Singh, spoke to Sri Lankan President Mahinda Rajapakse and conveyed India's shock at the attack. During the conversation, the Minister reiterated India's conviction that violence was not the answer to any problem and political dialogue remained the only way to resolving outstanding issues.

Daily News, 26 April 2006

Int'l condemnation on LTTE's barbaric terrorist attack

COLOMBO: The international community yesterday deplored the barbaric LTTE terrorist attack at the Army headquarters, calling on the LTTE to give up terrorism and all acts of violence. The Co-Chairs of the Sri Lankan Peace

rocess (United States, European Union, Japan and Norway) condemning the attempted assassination of Lt. General arath Fonseka, exhorted the LTTE to cease all suicide attacks and other forms of violence. The Co-Chairs sent their condolences to the families of the persons who lost their lives in the attack. They expressed their grave concern about the further escalation of violence. The United States condemned the suicide bomb attack against the army headquarters.

he Hindu, 27 April 2006

Sri Lanka defends air strikes

'OLOMBO: The Sri Lankan Government on Wednesday said it had the "right to self-defence" and asserted that "co-ordinated operations" by its armed forces, including air strikes on "selected targets" in areas controlled by the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE), "will continue" as long as rebel attacks take place. According to unofficial figures, at least 12 persons were reported killed in the rebel-held areas of eastern Trincomalee district after the Government launched its "deterrent strikes" on Tuesday, hours after its Army chief, Sarath Fonseka, survived a suicide bomb attack in Colombo.

he Indian Express, 27 April 2006

Delhi worried after Colombo plans fresh strikes on Tigers

NEW DELHI: Fresh indications that Sri Lanka was contemplating a seaward strike on five LTTE bases had a nervous New Delhi drawing up diplomatic options for Prime Minister Manmohan Singh, on his way home from Uzbekistan tonight, to prevent an escalation of violence and avert a breakdown of the four-year-old ceasefire agreement. While no major influx of refugees into Tamil Nadu has been reported, the government is worried by reports that thousands have fled areas being targeted in northeastern Sri Lanka. This at a time when Tamil Nadu is going to polls. Singh will decide on the course of action after a detailed briefing tomorrow.

he Lanka Academic, 27 April 2006

Tamil rebels say 40,000 people have fled homes in face of government airstrikes

Some 40,000 civilians fled their homes in northeastern Sri Lanka to escape government airstrikes on Tamil rebel areas, rebel insurgents said Thursday, as the country's cease-fire faced its most serious threat in four years. No new strikes were launched early Thursday, the Defense Ministry said, following two days of air attacks near the northeastern port of Trincomalee that killed at least 12 people and were the government's biggest military operation since its 2002 cease-fire with Tamil Tiger rebels.

daily News, 27 April 2006

LTTE must stop attacks: SLMM

'OLOMBO: Despite the major setback suffered following Tuesday's LTTE suicide attack, there was still hope for the two parties to meet in Geneva, SLMM spokesperson Helen Olafsdottir said. Emphasising the high costs of a full-blown war on the innocent civilians, she stressed that both parties must maintain restraint and work towards a peaceful solution to the conflict. She expressed that the LTTE must immediately stop attacks on the Government Forces if they were to make progress with the peace process.

daily News, 27 April 2006

US to lead global campaign against Tigers

WASHINGTON: The United States yesterday vowed to organise an international pressure campaign against the LTTE in the aftermath of Tuesday's suicide bombing in Colombo. Assistant Secretary of State Richard Boucher said the State Department was in touch in Washington and abroad with other countries "to bring to bear whatever pressure we can on the Tigers to abandon this course of action" and to look for ways to support the Government of Sri Lanka. Boucher called the bombing, which targeted the Army Chief, a terrible terrorist attack and said it was "regrettable the Tigers decided to start the war instead of restarting the peace process".

'amilNet, 27 April 2006

International Community has failed to exert pressure on Colombo: LTTE

he Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE), on Wednesday, called on the International Community to strongly condemn the "genocidal attempt" on the Tamil people in Muthur east in Trincomalee district. "The International Community is turning a blind eye," while Colombo has openly declared a war and is carrying out "reprehensible murders" of Tamil civilians in the Tamil homeland. The Government of Sri Lanka (GoSL) has violated gravely the ceasefire

greement (CFA) with the LTTE, said the statement issued by the Head Quarters of the Political Division of the Tigers. More than 40,000 people have displaced, terrorized and are languishing as refugees, the statement said.

The Lanka Academic, 28 April 2006

Sri Lankan peace deal in danger as five government troops die in mine attacks

Five explosions killed five government military personnel, and police found five decapitated bodies dumped in a rubber plantation, as violence that has pushed Sri Lanka to the brink of civil war showed no signs of letting up. Authorities said it was too soon to say whether the beheadings were sectarian killings or gang warfare, but one ethnic Tamil leader accused security forces of involvement in the slayings. This week's bloodshed, including two days of government airstrikes against rebel positions and a suicide bombing in the capital, posed the most serious threat yet to a 2002 truce between the government and Tamil Tiger rebels seeking a separate state in the north of the country.

Daily News, 28 April 2006

President Briefs Co-Chairs

COLOMBO: President Mahinda Rajapaksa yesterday met the Ambassadors of the Co-Chair countries (United States, European Union, Japan and Norway) in Colombo, to brief them on the peace process and the Government's response to the LTTE's continued campaign of terror. The Ambassadors appreciated being briefed by the President himself on the current situation and the restraint shown by the Government. They also expressed their continued support for the president's stand in this regard. Foreign Minister Mangala Samaraweera briefed the diplomatic community separately.

Asian Tribune, 28 April 2006

Co-Chairs meet in Oslo on Friday while appealing Lankan government for restraint

WASHINGTON: Ambassadors from Sri Lanka's main donor countries met Sri Lankan president Mahinda Rajapakse on Thursday to urge his government for restraint while arrangements are under way for the Co-Chairs to meet in Oslo on Friday to discuss the volatile situation in Sri Lanka. The Colombo-based ambassadors expressed that they understood the government was provoked in the aftermath of attack on its army headquarters. The situation in Sri Lanka deteriorated after a suspected Tamil Tiger suicide bomber blew her up within the premises of the Army headquarters in the capital city of Colombo killing nine and severely injuring the army commander Lieutenant General Sarath Fonseka, and subsequent security forces air attacks on LTTE stronghold in the eastern part of the island nation.

The Hindu, 29 April 2006

Sri Lankan Govt., LTTE agree to meet in Geneva for peace talks

OSLO: The Sri Lanka Government and Tamil Tiger rebels have agreed to meet for peace talks in Geneva, but no date has been set, a Norwegian peace envoy has said. Jon Hanssen-Bauer said yesterday, the peace talks would be held after a meeting by the leaders of the rebel Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam, or LTTE. The two sides had been set to meet in the Swiss city earlier this week, but the rebels backed out, citing attacks on Tamil civilians and other disputes with the government. "The parties have confirmed that they will participate in Geneva, but there is one issue that must be solved first," Hanssen-Bauer said in Oslo after a meeting of nations overseeing the Sri Lanka peace process. "The LTTE must hold a central committee meeting before they go." The announcement came as Sri Lanka reopened roads linking government and rebel-held territory yesterday after two days of airstrikes against guerrilla areas ended, but the threat of a return to civil war remained amid continuing bloodshed.

The Hindu, 29 April 2006

Colombo will not fall into LTTE trap, says envoy

NEW DELHI: Colombo would act with restraint despite the recent provocation from the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE), Sri Lanka's High Commissioner to India, C.R. Jayasinghe, told newsmen on Friday. His Government would, however, not tolerate continued escalation from the Tigers. Mr. Jayasinghe said the Sri Lankan Government asked the European Union to consider listing the Tigers as a terrorist organisation. Holding the LTTE responsible for the attack on Army Commander Sarath Fonseka earlier this week and the August 2005 assassination of Foreign Minister Lakshman Adirigamar, he said the Tigers would suffer the consequences. According to the High Commissioner, a European ban on the LTTE would be a reasonable, prudent measure. "If the LTTE was to change, it can be taken off the [banned] list," Mr. Jayasinghe maintained.

The Indian Express, 29 April 2006

Sri Lankan Foreign Minister to visit India

NEW DELHI: Sri Lankan Foreign Minister Mangala Samaraweera is expected to visit India on May 7, at a time when India is looking with concern at the escalation of violence in the neighbouring country. While the visit was planned before the suicide attack targeting the Sri Lankan Army Chief, the strains in the peace process with the LTTE were already on the agenda. The last two months have seen nearly 80 ceasefire violations by the LTTE. India is worried that retaliatory strikes by the Sri Lankan government on LTTE bases would lead to a refugee influx into Tamil Nadu. All these issues will be discussed with Samaraweera, who is expected to meet Prime Minister Manmohan Singh. The government, however, is yet to receive an official confirmation about the visit.

Daily News, 29 April 2006

Forces targeted only LTTE positions, exodus exaggerated: SLMM Chief

COLOMBO: The Head of Mission of the Sri Lanka Monitoring Mission (SLMM) Major General Ulf Henricsson confirmed that the Sri Lanka Air Force and Navy had definitely targeted military positions and offices of the LTTE, when he met Dr. Palitha Kohona, Secretary General of the Secretariat for Coordinating the Peace Process (SCOPP) at his office yesterday. Major General Henricsson offered his observations following his trip to Trincomalee and Sampur on April 27. He also added that the report relating to a mass exodus of people from the Sampur area were grossly exaggerated. He had the opportunity to make first hand observations on the ground following the limited military operation launched by the security forces on April 25-26 against identified LTTE targets in the Sampur area, which had now come to an end.