

# War clouds loom over north again

The LTTE, in a massive build-up in the North, is gearing for war after calling off an unofficial ceasefire due to end today, reports from the North said.

The LTTE is reported to have constructed an underground tunnel network and put up a series of bunkers over the past few weeks, amidst preparations for the commemoration of 'Heroes Week' which also coincides with its leader, Velupillai Prabhakaran's birthday on November 26.

Reports of the build-up came amidst indications that the rebels were expecting an arms shipment from Ukraine, to be unloaded off the North-Eastern Mullaitive coast. Army and Navy sources said they had no direct reports

about the arms shipment, but surveillance over the North-Eastern coast had been stepped up.

The ship is reported to have left a Ukraine port on August 25 and was due to arrive in the next few weeks.

The unofficial ceasefire was called off on Friday after the LTTE claimed that the government had violated the ceasefire by attacking a fishing craft off the North-Western coast in Mannar on Wednesday, followed by the killing of a senior LTTE member in the Welioya area on Thursday.

The LTTE had never officially announced the ceasefire, but had only communicated to its cadres not to carry out attacks in the North and East. The message had been intercepted by rival Tamil groups and security forces,

but was not announced on the LTTE radio, 'Voice of the Tigers'.

The sudden decision to call off the ceasefire was announced on the rebel radio, it claimed that three civilian fishermen had been killed in the Naval attack which was a violation of the ceasefire.

Reports from the North said the LTTE had put up reinforced bunkers over the past few weeks, while strengthening its positions and recruiting fresh cadres to the movement. The build-up was seen mainly in the Kopay, Chavakachcheri and Kondavil areas.

Military spokesman, Gemunu Kulatunga said he did not rule out the possibility of the LTTE continuing its build-up.

Meanwhile, the LTTE has

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called for a week long hartal in the North, to commemorate some of its key leaders who have been killed in battle front. Among them are one of

Prabhakaran's close associates, Charles Anthony alias Seelan, killed on November 22, 1984 at Mirusuvil.

Troops have been placed on alert in the North and East with the LTTE announcement

of the heroes' week.

Meanwhile security forces continued their routine operations over the week and over-ran one of the hideouts of the LTTE in the Eastern province.