

Eternal vigilance is the answer. (1995, August 13). Sunday observer.

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Monday's bomb explosion at Independence Square which led to the deaths of 22 persons, including the Tiger suicide bomber who set it off, and the wounding of 52 others had several lessons for those involved in providing security to the city as well as the country.

It not only exposed the shortcomings but also the strength of the police force which is entrusted with

providing security to the ordinary people.

According to senior police officers, the arrest by a patrol from the Borella police, the previous Sunday evening, of the accomplice of the bomber identified as Kumar indicated that some sections of the police force are dedicated and take their

job seriously enough to take the trouble to check on even the least suspicious thing such as two men pu-

shing an inconspicuous cart.

In this case, their suspicions paid off as investigations into the blast indicated that one of the men whom they had detained on suspicion was in fact an explosives expert of the LTTE.

In sharp contrast was the action taken by the Narahenpita Police when informed much earlier of sus-

icious goings-on in a house by civic minded neighbours. According to the neighbours who were interviewed over the TV, the police had failed to take any action or check on the information provided.

In security circles, it was felt that, had the police taken any action earlier, they would have been able to discover the Tiger 'mole' Kumar thus averting the

independence square bomb blast.

All that is now history, but among the lessons that are to be learnt from this bitter experience as from all those in the past are that the LTTE are well ensconced in the city.

While it is difficult for the police or any other intelligence system to uncover the rebel 'moles' in the city, it is felt that they (the auth-

orities concerned) should pay more serious attention to the information that is being provided by the public.

Thwarted

It is felt among defence circles that special intelligence cells comprising dedicated officers should be established in all police stations to check on even the minutest of information

that is being provided to them.

Monday's blast as well as those that occurred before have clearly indicated that the enemy is well within the gates and have been over the past few years. And if the police and security forces are to combat and bring them under control, there is a greater need for alertness and the follow-up of all possible leads.

According to security sources, a greater need for vigilance by the public too is required to tackle the problem for the rebels who have infiltrated the city many years ago have well established covers and have the advantage of knowing whom, where and when they will take on their target.

While the authorities are not spread all over to notice slight slips and suspicious

actions of these rebel agents, a member of the public may notice some 'out of the ordinary' event which would go a long way in helping the authorities.

According to a senior police officer, the rebels are known to have one or more explosive dumps in the city to help them carry out attacks on more targets. They are also known to have agents with well established 'covers'.

The question is, will the authorities be able to crack down on them 'before the next bomb goes off in the city'.

There is only one instance where the authorities have been successful in uncovering a rebel cell and preventing a major disaster occurring in Colombo. It occurred last year when a military officer re-

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turning home after a hard day's work took the trouble to check on a vehicle carrying some suspicious youths who turned out to be a rebel 'hit team' on a bombing

mission in Colombo. The initial detection thwarted the Tiger plan to blow up the Air Force headquarters, the Crime Detective Bureau headquarters and

several other key installations in the city. A number of rebel agents were arrested while explosives and an arms cache were detected along with a vehicle bomb.

