

Police accuse tamils as bomb kills president. (1993, May 3). *The Vancouver sun.*

SRI LANKA

Police accuse Tamils as bomb kills president

Washington Post

COLOMBO — Sri Lankan police Sunday blamed the rebel Tamil Tigers for Saturday's bomb assassination of President Ranasinghe Premadasa, saying they had found a fragment of a trademark cyanide capsule embedded in the neck of the suicide bomber.

The group, whose full name is the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam, is the most militarily powerful and militant of several groups that have sought independence for the ethnic Tamil minority here. It requires its fighters to wear a cyanide capsule around their necks, to be swallowed if they are captured by government forces.

The bomber was one of 24 people killed in the explosion during a May Day parade and gruesome news photographs of dismembered victims raised the question of whether enough of the bomber's body remained intact to make such a finding.

Police refused to say whether they had any other concrete evidence linking the Tamil Tigers to the assassination. The Tigers, who have claimed responsibility for a series of suicide bombings in Sri Lanka over the past several years, have denied any role in the killing of the 68-year-old president.

dasa's and Athulathmudali's rival political camps.

The Tamils, who are mostly Hindu, have fought for years for a separate state in the north and east of Sri Lanka. They say they have been discriminated against by the majority group, the ethnic Sinhalese, who are mostly Buddhist.

The capital, Colombo on the southwest coast of the island, remained calm Sunday under tight security imposed by police and army forces. The government ordered hundreds of soldiers moved south from the civil war's front line, to help discourage outbreaks of violence.

Meanwhile, thousands of Sri Lanka's poorest citizens stood in sweltering heat in a three-kilometre-long line outside of Premadasa's residence to view the coffin of a man regarded here as a crusader for the poor. Many women sobbed as they entered the house and paused in front of the coffin.

"He brought roads and electricity to our rural villages," said a taxi driver who said he had supported Premadasa. "Who is going to look after the little people now? All the politicians just want power."

But Premadasa was also a ruthless leader whose four-year administration was held responsible by international human-rights organizations for numerous human-rights violations.