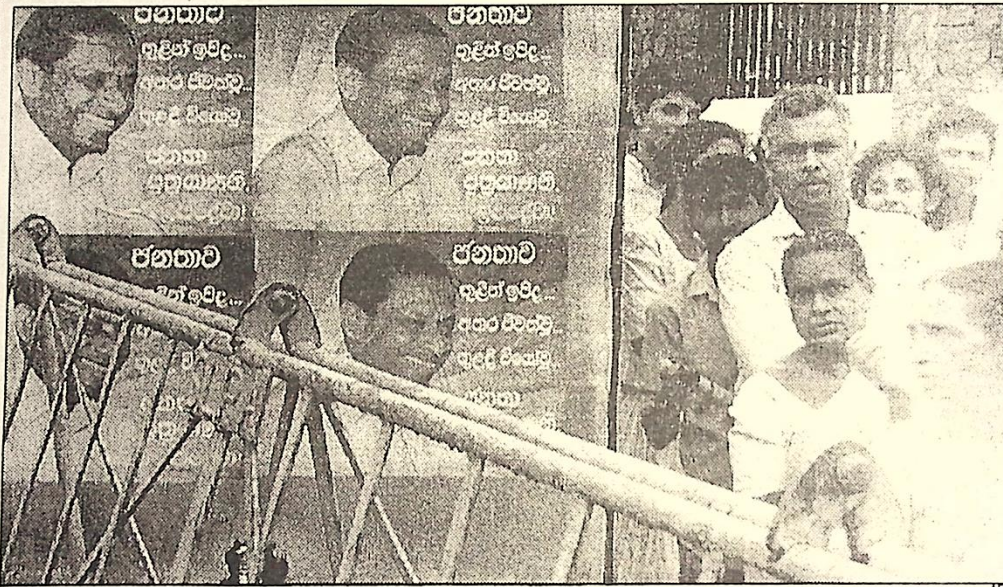


Police on alert as Sri Lankan leader's funeral nears. (1993, May 5).
The Gazette.

Police on alert as Sri Lankan leader's funeral nears



AP/REUTER

COLOMBO, Sri Lanka — Mourners lined up to pay respects to Sri Lanka's assassinated president yesterday and legislative leaders said Parliament will nominate candidates for a new chief executive this week.

Police and the army remained on alert for ethnic violence over the slaying of President Ranasinghe Premadasa by a suicide bomber Saturday.

Authorities have blamed the killing on ethnic Tamil rebels who are fighting for an independent state in the north and east of Sri Lanka, which is dominated by Sinhalese. The guerrillas deny responsibility.

Premadasa was assassinated by a man who set off explosives strapped to his chest while riding a bicycle near the president during a May Day parade. The assassin and 22 other people also died and more than 38 were wounded.

Police arrested a Sinhalese man for questioning in the bombing, a police official said yesterday.

The official said K. Saman Sujewa, described as a friend of the slaying suspect, was arrested. It was not clear whether he was suspected of being directly involved in the bombing.

Investigators earlier identified the suspect as Kumarakulasingham Weerakumar, 23, from Gurunagar village in the northern Jaffna peninsula, which is controlled by Tamil rebels fighting for a separate homeland.

They said he was an acquaintance of the president's valet, E.M.P. Mohideen, who died in the blast.

Premadasa's body will be carried tomorrow in a parade to Indepe-

Sri Lankans pass posters of slain president outside palace where body lies in state.