

LTTE's Modera bomb centre busted

- Suicide bomber blasts himself during operation
- Police foil major plot in the city, powerful claymore mines recovered

By Senaka De Silva

A major LTTE operation in the city may have been foiled following yesterday's recovery of a cache of high-powered explosives including two suicide jackets during a search operation in Modera just minutes after a suicide cadre blew himself up inside a house in the area, police said.

The blast killed the bomber and injured seven people including a woman Sub Inspector and two constables.

Among the injured civilians were two women passers-by.

The blast took place when the police surrounded a partially built three-storey house where an LTTE suspect was said to be hiding and the police officers broke into the

second floor room after the person inside refused to open the door.

Army Spokesman Udaya Nanayakara said the military launched the search operation in Modera following a tip-off by a vigilant neighbour. The suicide bomber identified as Sharni Vivendra (26) a resident of Vavuniya appeared to have been alone in the house at the time and was known to have worked as an electrician.

He had come to Colombo with his relatives who had subsequently returned to Vavuniya.

Two police teams were deployed to investigate the incident.

The Defence Ministry said the body of the bomber was badly disfigured in the explosion while iron ball-bearings could be seen strewn all over the room.

The Ministry praised the civilian whose vigilance led to the discovery of the bomber's hideout thus foiling an attempt by the suicide bomber to commit a dastardly crime in the South.

Meanwhile, soon after the blast the army and police launched a search operation in the Modera area and recovered a cache of high powered explosives including two 20 kg and four 5 kg claymore mines, two suicide jackets, four type-82 grenades, 50 pistol ammunition, two remote controls and other material.

The latest incident came two days after the LTTE claimed eight civilians were killed in two claymore attacks inside rebel territory and blamed the army deep penetration unit for the incident. In both instances the victims were travelling in a tractor-trailer to work in the paddy fields, the LTTE peace secretariat said. The military however denied any involvement in the attacks.

