

Sri Lanka blast kills 11

Remote-control bomb explodes in post office

VAVUNIYA, Sri Lanka (AP)—A parcel bomb exploded in a post office Thursday, killing at least 11 people, including soldiers sending money home from the war front, the military and witnesses said.

Defense Ministry spokesperson Brigadier Palitha Fernando said evidence from the scene suggested the bomb was sent by the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam, which is leading a 17-year-old separatist campaign in Sri Lanka, a small island country off India's southern tip.

The blast occurred late in the morning, injuring more than 73 people in Vavuniya, a Tamil-dominated town 130 miles north of Colombo and the gateway to the Vanni jungles, which are controlled by the Tamil Tigers.

There was no immediate claim of responsibility, but the rebels rarely comment on bombs or terrorist actions the government ascribes to them.

Sri Lankan soldiers collected their wages Tuesday and, after making purchases Wednesday, many were sending money to their families at the time of the attack.

Fernando said the bomb was placed next to a mail box for letters destined for foreign countries, and it exploded late in the morning when the post office was busy.

"It was a big explosion from a powerful bomb which was hidden in a packet," Fernando said. "Our first reports say we have lost at least seven soldiers."

Letters, currency notes and clothes were strewn over the single-story post office.

"I was on my seat when I heard this huge sound," the postmaster, Kanathi Pillai, said from his hospital bed. "I felt heat on my body, and then I felt



blood coming down from my head." At least 25 of the wounded were in serious condition and were transferred to a military hospital in Anuradhapura, 25 miles south of Vavuniya.

Federal investigators said the explosion was triggered by remote control.

The rebels threatened to overrun Vavuniya last November, advising the area's 220,000 residents to evacuate. Sri Lanka troops fought back that attack.

The blast came a day after a delegation from Norway concluded talks in Sri Lanka in a bid to broker peace talks between the government and the Tamil Tigers.

They've got the beat



Logan Youree, a junior speech communications major; Chris Etheredge, a freshman computer engineering major; and Kevin Grubbs, a junior computer engineering major, play the drums to promote the Drummers of West Africa.

Man detained in Senegal for planning attack, may be working with bin Laden

MONTREAL (AP) — A man reportedly detained in Senegal on suspicion of planning a bomb attack was under investigation in Canada before he fled the country, an intelligence spokesperson said Thursday.

Dan Lambert of the Canadian Security Intelligence Service confirmed that Mohamedou Ould Slahi was a subject of an investigation by Canadian authorities in cooperation with the FBI.

The *New York Times* reported Thursday that Slahi is the brother-in-law of one of Osama bin Laden's top lieutenants. Bin Laden, a millionaire Saudi exile, is one of 18 people indicted in the United States on charges of conspiracy to at-

tack Americans in the 1998 bombings of U.S. embassies in Kenya and Tanzania that killed 224 people, including 12 Americans.

Bin Laden is believed to be in Afghanistan. Slahi has not been charged, but the United States requested his arrest and federal prosecutors in New York are preparing formal charges that can be used to seek his extradition, according to the *Times*.

In Washington, a law enforcement official who requested anonymity said investigators were not sure whether the man in Senegal was in control of the operation or merely a messenger, and, if he was just a messenger, they do not know for whom.

U.S. officials also do not know whether the man's brother-in-law is a key bin Laden aide or not, the official added. Canadian authorities started their investigation after the Dec. 14 arrest of Ahmed Ressay, an Algerian living in Montreal, who allegedly tried to smuggle bomb-making components across the border into Washington state.

Slahi later left Canada "due, in part, to the investigation that was ongoing," Lambert said. He refused to provide any details of the case.

No specific evidence has been released that shows that bin Laden was behind the alleged Algerian plot and authorities have not suggested possible U.S. targets.

A senior government official in Senegal and the central police station in Dakar told the *Associated Press* Thursday they knew nothing of Slahi's detention.

A U.S. official in Senegal declined to comment. A U.S. official, speaking on condition of anonymity, said the situation was sensitive.

At least four Algerian nationals and one woman Algerian face charges in connection with the plot. Little was revealed about Slahi, a citizen of Mali. Investigators told the *Times* he was in constant contact with a construction company in Sudan that was owned by bin Laden's international organization.

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