

Suicide bomber on bicycle kills Sri Lankan president. (1993, May 2).
The Toronto star.



REUTERS PHOTO

ASSASSINATION AFTERMATH: Police examine an unidentified body after a suicide bomber killed

President Ranasinghe Premadasa and at least 11 others yesterday during a May Day parade.

Suicide bomber on bicycle kills Sri Lankan president

COLOMBO, Sri Lanka (AP) — A suicide bomber on a bicycle killed President Ranasinghe Premadasa and at least 11 others at a crowded May Day parade yesterday.

Police suspected Tamil guerrillas, but a rebel spokesperson denied involvement.

The assassination — eight days after a leading opposition politician was slain — threatened to plunge the war-racked island nation into a political crisis. Premadasa held all important cabinet posts, including minister of defence.

There were no immediate claims of responsibility for the attack, which injured at least 60 people. Police suspected Tamil rebels, who have often used suicide bombings against opponents and recently stepped up their anti-government campaign.

The Tamils' 10-year struggle to break away from the Sinhalese-dominated government has

claimed more than 17,000 lives.

But Lawrence Thilakar, a Tamil Tiger spokesperson in Paris, said the rebels "deny any responsibility" for the attack.

But the group has issued similar denials for attacks they carried out.

Minutes before the blast, Premadasa, wearing white clothes and a green cap, was greeting people from atop a jeep and then got down to mingle with the crowd.

The assassin, who had explosives taped to his body, crashed his bicycle into Premadasa before detonating the bomb, state-run television reported. The president had been talking to his governing party activists when the bomb went off.

The explosion blew off the bomber's head and splattered the street with blood and pieces of flesh. Police said that in addition to the president and the assassin, at least 11 other people were killed.

