

**BRIEFLY**



United States Ambassador to the United Nations Madeleine Albright makes her point during an address to the UN Fourth World Conference on Women Wednesday. The US delegation chief to the conference delivered a new broadside at China over human rights and anticommunism. — AFP/UNB photo

**Hillary in Mongolia:** US First Hillary Clinton, leaving behind the controversy of a visit to China, arrived in Ulan Bator, Mongolian capital yesterday for a two-day stay. Reuter reports from Ulan Bator.

In an arrival statement for the mainly symbolic visit, she announced a new US 4.5 million dollar aid package for Mongolia, a nation strategically placed between China and Russia. Her visit was part of American efforts to build close ties with Mongolia since it became independent from the former Soviet Union five years ago and adopted a democratic form of government.

**Rushdie to appear in public:** Salman Rushdie, who has lived in hiding under police guard since Iran's revolutionary leader called for his death in 1989, will participate in a public forum Thursday night in London. AP reports from London.

Rushdie's public appearances are rarely announced in advance. The Times of London, which organised the forum on "Writers Against the State" at Westminster Central Hall, described it as a step toward normalising Rushdie's life. "This is a very important moment for me and I hope the debate will be the first of more such moments." The Times quoted Rushdie as saying.

**Blast in Srinagar BBC office:** A parcel bomb exploded Thursday in the office of the British Broadcasting Corp. and Reuters news agency in Srinagar, the capital of Kashmir, injuring at least three people, the two news companies said, AP reports from Srinagar.

The bomb was believed to have been left by an unidentified woman dressed in a *burga*, a long gown that also covers the face and is worn by devout Muslim women, at the office in the press enclave in downtown Srinagar, the centre of the Kashmiri separatist movement. The parcel was addressed to Yusuf Jamil, a reporter for the BBC and Reuters, and labeled "personal," witnesses said.

**Zaire, UNHCR reach accord:** The Zairean government and the United Nations have reached an agreement on the repatriation soon of refugees from Rwanda and Burundi who have sought refuge in Zaire, UN High Commissioner for Refugees Sadako Ogata disclosed in Zaire. AFP reports from Kinshasa.

"We have come to an agreement under which together we are very quickly going to begin a well-organised operation to repatriate all the refugees to their home countries," she said before attending an official dinner given by Zaire Foreign Minister Gerard Kamanda Wa Kamanda.

**Hurricane kills 8 in Guadeloupe:** At least eight people died when hurricane Luis roared across the French-Dutch island of St Martin Tuesday, the Caribbean News Agency (CANA) reported on Wednesday. Reuter reports from Base-Terre.

CANA quoted officials of the Guadeloupe rescue centre, who said seven bodies were discovered in a lagoon and that one death had been reported earlier. The report increased the storm's death toll to a total of 12.

**Arafat-Peres meet fails to bridge differences**

TABA, Egypt, Sept 7: Israeli Foreign Minister Shimon Peres and PLO Chairman Yasser Arafat failed in a four-hour meeting to bridge differences over Hebron, a West Bank city at the heart of talks on wider Palestinian self-rule, reports Reuter.

"The first night was dedicated to assessing — positions of the two sides. In effect, we began to discuss the most difficult issue — Hebron," Peres said late on Wednesday.

"I cannot say we reached an agreement," he said. "For the time being, there are gaps between the positions."

Under the 1993 Israeli-PLO peace deal, Israeli forces must redeploy away from Arab population centres in the occupied West Bank in an expansion of Palestinian self-rule now in force in Gaza and Jericho.

However Israel insists it must maintain troops in Hebron to protect 400 Jewish settlers living in the centre of town.

Peres told reporters he would meet Arafat again today

in Taba, an Egyptian Red Sea resort, after the PLO leader returns from talks in Cairo with Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak.

AP adds from Cairo: PLO leader Yasser Arafat met Egypt's President Thursday before another round of Palestinian-Israeli talks on resolving a dispute over the West Bank town of Hebron.

Arafat and President Hosni Mubarak met in the Mediterranean port of Alexandria, and the PLO leader said he would seek Egypt's help in pushing forward talks on a deal for Palestinian autonomy. Egypt has tried to act as a mediator in the drawn-out negotiations.

"I will ask for Egypt's help ... to push Israel to carry out what was agreed upon previously," Arafat was quoted as saying by Egypt's Middle East News Agency before arriving in Alexandria.

Arafat and Israeli Foreign Minister Shimon Peres met in the Egyptian resort of Taba Wednesday in what was described as a major push to resolve remaining differences blocking a deal on self-rule.

**Russia threatens to review relations with NATO**

MOSCOW, Sept 7: President Boris Yeltsin warned today that Russia may review its relations with NATO if the North Atlantic alliance and the rapid reaction force (RRF) continued attacks on the Bosnian Serbs, reports AP.

"How can you talk about an accord with NATO when it is bombing the Serbs? NATO is acting without a UN mandate," Yeltsin said as he went into talks with Spanish Prime Minister and current president of the European Union (EU) Felipe Gonzalez.

Yeltsin told reporters here the views of the EU and Russia on European security

"still do not match," and there was "no concept of European security."

"It is not possible to imagine European security without Russian participation," Yeltsin said.

Implicitly criticising the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation's plans to expand eastwards to encompass former members of the Soviet bloc, Yeltsin warned: "We will have two blocs, and will be divided into two camps."

"Europe will be turned into a state of war," he added.

In a separate statement released today, Yeltsin said the continued NATO and rapid reaction force attacks

on the Bosnian Serbs "are torpedoing efforts to achieve a political settlement."

"By announcing its peace-keeping mission NATO has assigned itself the role of judge and executor."

"If such a policy continues we will have to carefully weigh our strategy according to circumstances, including our approach to ties with the North Atlantic alliance."

However, Yeltsin said Russia would work actively to achieve success at a meeting in Geneva Friday between the foreign ministers of the rump Yugoslavia, Croatia and Bosnia-Herzegovina and the five-nation contact group,

consisting of France, Britain, the United States, Germany and Russia.

"It intend to actively pursue efforts to find a political settlement," he said.

NATO planes resumed bombing Bosnian Serb military targets early Thursday as the weather improved, a NATO spokeswoman said.

Planes from Britain, France, Germany, Italy, Spain and the United States were launching the strikes from several bases in Italy, as well as the US aircraft carrier Franklin D Roosevelt off the Croatian coast.

**Lankan govt to explain peace plan to people**

COLOMBO, Sept 7: The government said Thursday it will try to explain to the people about its peace package to end the ethnic war before sending it to parliament for ratification, reports AP.

With misconceptions of this magnitude, the government owes it to the people to explain the proposals," said Lakshman Peiris, justice and constitutional affairs minister. He did not set a deadline.

The government's peace package has been rejected by the Tamil separatist rebels and evoked mixed response from lawmakers.

Hoping to address the demands of Tamils fighting for independence, the government has proposed to make Sri Lanka a federation of eight regions, including a Tamil-dominated region, each with wide powers to rule itself.

**Aspirin helpful to reduce risk of colorectal cancer**

BOSTON, Sept 7: A long term medical study has provided new evidence that regular use of aspirin can help guard against colon and rectal cancer, reports Reuter.

Researchers involved in the 19-year nurses health study concluded that taking four to six aspirin tablets a week — a little more than the half tablet per day recommended to protect against heart attacks can reduce the risk of colorectal cancer by as much as 44 per cent.

But the researchers cautioned that the cancer benefits of aspirin treatment do not appear until after 10 years or more of regular use.

The research will be published in Thursday's New England Journal of Medicine.

**Russia holding Chechen rebels in airless cages**

GROZNY, Sept 7: Russia is holding suspected Chechen rebels in airless cages without enough to eat, according to Russian journalists allowed a rare visit to an Interior Ministry detention centre, reports Reuter.

"They didn't complain. When we went in they stood to attention with their arms up against the bars. It was strange to see. The Chechens are normally so wild and ir-repressible," said freelance reporter Dmitry Kuznets.



Prince William (seated) signs the traditional Entrance Book watched by his parents, the Prince and Princess of Wales and younger brother, Prince Harry (R) at Eton College Wednesday. The prince will begin lessons at the 12,500 pound-a-year school Thursday. — AFP/UNB photo

**France preparing to conduct 2nd N-test amid protests**

PARIS, Sept 7: France, undeterred by world outcry, is pressing ahead with preparations for a second underground nuclear weapons test in the South Pacific, reports Reuter.

Despite the damage to France's image abroad and his own popularity at home, President Jacques Chirac stood "absolutely firm" on his decision to complete a final series of tests to ensure the credibility of the country's nuclear strike force.

"We shall complete this campaign in order to guarantee France's independence,"

Defence Minister Charles Millon told France 2 television.

"Let's complete these six tests," he added in a fresh indication that Chirac, deluged with protests for breaking a three-year moratorium, could cut the number of blasts from the eight originally planned.

General Paul Verice, military commander of the South Pacific testing site, said shortly after Tuesday's first blast under Mururoa Atoll that preparations had started for a second.

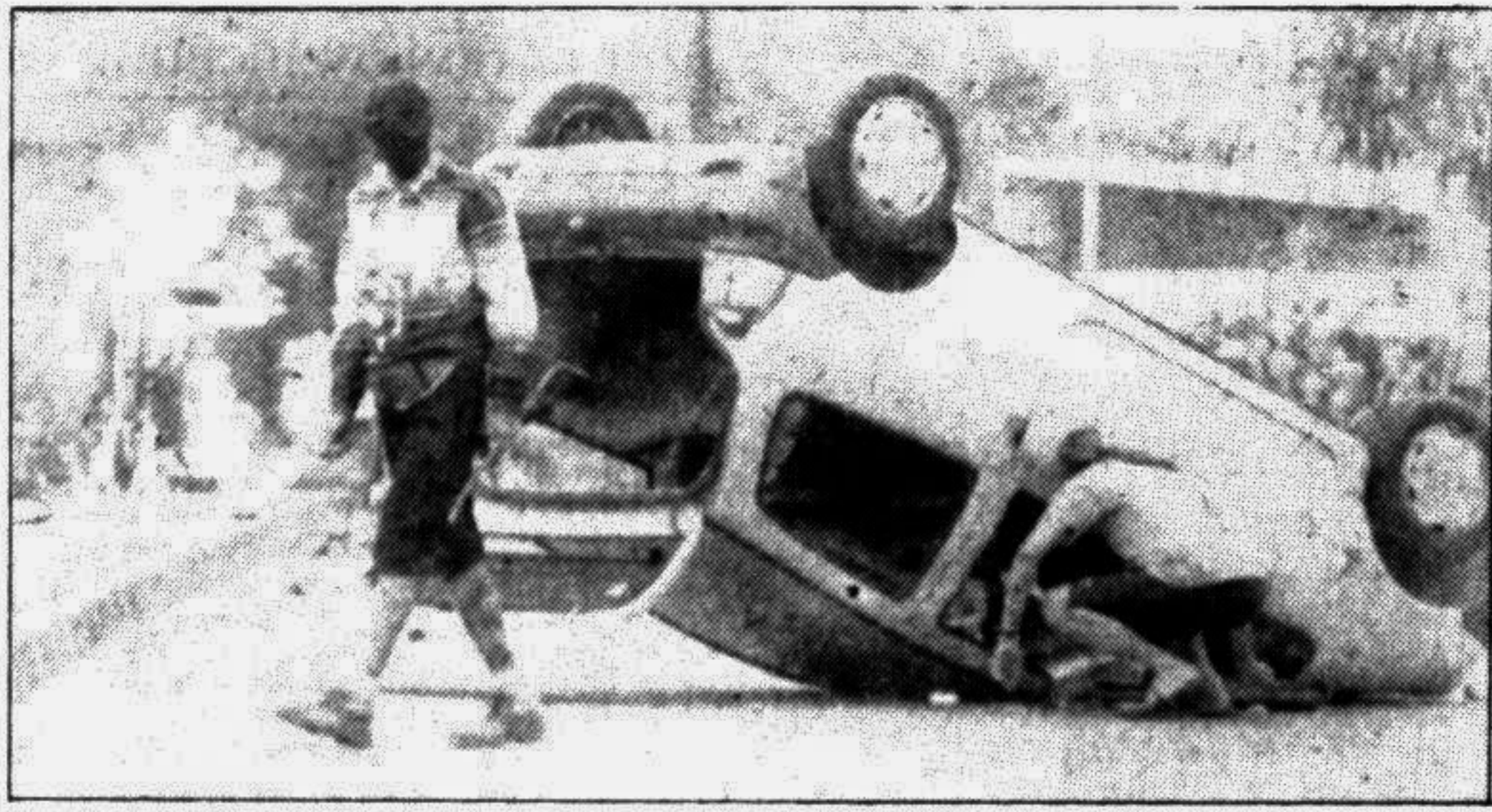
There was no indication

as to when it could be set off.

Technicians say they need at least three weeks to prepare a testing site between two blasts. But France has another testing site ready at Fangataufa Atoll, near Mururoa.

Meanwhile, Tahitian anti-nuclear protesters smashed their way into the island's international airport terminal with a bulldozer and set fire to the building packed with hundreds of passengers.

French authorities raced to evacuate the passengers from the smoke-filled terminal on Wednesday.



A hooded demonstrator walks away from burning and overturned cars outside the Tahiti Faa International Airport Wednesday. Hundreds of Polynesian protesters and union workers attacked the airport setting fire on the terminal building and barricading the runway in protest against the resumption of French nuclear testing in the South Pacific. — AFP/UNB photo

**China criticises 'unwarranted' remarks at women confce**

BEIJING, Sept 7: After two days of tough talk from the United States on human rights at an international women's conference, China on Thursday in effect replied: Mind your own business, reports AP.

Until now, the Beijing government had maintained a stony silence on Hillary Rodham Clinton's strongly worded remarks Tuesday at conferences at the Fourth World Conference on Women.

China also said nothing publicly about even more pointed comments about human rights the next day from the US delegation chief, Madeleine Albright.

On Thursday, though — hours after Mrs Clinton had left for Mongolia — a Foreign Ministry spokesman was asked point-blank about what she had said.

"Some people from some countries have made unwarranted remarks or criticism of other countries," said spokesman Chen Jian, adding that such criticism was not in the spirit of the UN gather-

ing.

"We would like to caution these people to pay more attention to the problems in their own countries," he said, without mentioning Mrs. Clinton or others by name.

In her speech, Mrs Clinton championed human rights worldwide and chastised the Chinese for heavy-handed security at a gathering of private women's activists outside Beijing.

She called China's surveillance and shadowing, confiscation of literature and denial of visas to some activists "indefensible."

Human rights has emerged as a major theme at the women's conference, with speaker after speaker insisting they are inseparable from women's rights.

Some, though, think it is counterproductive to embarrass or offend the gathering's Chinese hosts, who are extremely touchy on the topic.

British delegation leader Baroness Lynda Chalker, for one, criticised Mrs Clinton's "full frontal attack" on China.

"I don't think that helps to change things. We work by quiet diplomacy," Chalker said in a BBC radio interview.

Meanwhile, the private women's gathering whose woes prompted Mrs Clinton's criticism of China was winding down.

Activists at Hualou, 50 kilometres (30 miles) outside Beijing, said they had scored some successes despite logistical problems, run-ins with Chinese security, and their muddy, primitive meeting site.

The private activists came to China to lobby and work with delegates to the main UN conference.

At that gathering, conferences were making progress in resolving some thorny disputes, but acknowledged Thursday that a lot of hard negotiating lies ahead.

More than 5,000 delegates have tackled an ambitious platform meant to help women achieve equality and overcome obstacles such as poverty and lack of education.

While participants agree

on most overall goals, the specifics get sticky. As of Thursday, about one-fifth of the conference's 120-page draft platform remained in dispute, according to negotiator John Mathieson.

Women's health — encompassing questions like abortion and artificial contraception — is "clearly the area where there is the most negotiation required," he said.

Conference spokeswoman Therese Gastaut said common ground has been hard to find on the sensitive subject of sexual orientation.

Conservative critics question whether the conference document should include a call to end discrimination against lesbians. Gay activists say the proposed protections don't go far enough.

Conference participants agree that translating the gathering's paper promises into real-world results will take money and lots of it. A key goal, they say is convincing governments around the world that women are a good investment.

**Pak Embassy officials in Kabul return home**

ISLAMABAD, Sept 7: Dozens of Pakistani government workers injured in a savage attack on their embassy in the Afghan capital a day earlier stumbled off a military aircraft that brought them home Thursday, reports AP.

Many of them wore bloodied bandages wrapped around their heads. Some had blackened eyes and swollen noses. Many of their faces bore gashes caked with dried blood. Several were wearing dirty, bloodstained *shalwar kameezes*, the traditional Pakistani dress. Others were wearing hospital *pajamas*.

In all 29 employees of the Pakistan Embassy, including the body of one government worker killed in the attack, arrived in Islamabad from Kabul Thursday.

Less than 24 hours earlier a mob of several thousand Afghans had ransacked their

embassy, attacking Pakistani employees cowering inside with sticks and steel rods.

The more seriously wounded, including Pakistan's Ambassador to Afghanistan, Qasi Humayun, were taken off the Pakistan Air Force C-130 aircraft on stretchers and put in one of six ambulances parked on the tarmac.

It was originally believed Humayun's injuries were minor, but as he was carried off the aircraft doctors said he was barely conscious, and the extent of his head injuries still were not known.

And finally the coffin carrying the body of Byari Masih, the Pakistani employee killed in Wednesday's assault, was taken off. As it left the aircraft, Foreign Secretary Nahnuddin Sheikh, who had hugged the wounded employees as they disembarked,

**Off the Record**

**Daughter of Thai Airways**

BANGKOK: A baby girl born Tuesday on a Thai Airways International flight from Tokyo to Bangkok may have landed herself some valuable perks from the airline, reports AP.

"Management is considering giving her a scholarship or free flights," said an airline public relations officer on Thursday.

Darramee Thongcharoen was born prematurely as flight TGO41 touched down at Don Muang International Airport. Her mother, 22-year-old Wanna Thongcharoen, was seven months pregnant, but had a doctor's note saying it was safe for her to fly, said the airline spokesperson who asked not to be named.

She named her baby girl, Darramee, after the name of the airplane. Darramee means starlight in English. Most Thais are known by their nicknames, and Darramee's is Moo-Daeng, which are the nicknames of the flight attendants who delivered her. Moo means pig, and Daeng means red.

Both mother and daughter are in a local hospital and doing well.

Darramee is the third baby born on a Thai flight during the airline's 35-year history, and the first Thai child.

"Darramee is now considered a daughter of Thai Airways," said the spokesperson.

**10 metres high dinosaurs fossils!**

JOHANNESBURG: Fossils of dinosaurs which stood eight to 10 metres (26 to 33 ft) high and dating back about 210 million years have been discovered in South Africa's Kruger National Park, the national parks board said on Wednesday, reports Reuter.

The board said in a statement the fossils, of the Herbivore Euskelosaurus, were discovered by a game ranger in the north of the park.

"They lived about 210 million years ago and developed from the prosauropod family. They were approximately eight to 10 metres (26 to 33 feet) tall with a long tail, big body and small head," the statement said.

**Sacked Sikh police officer killed Beant Singh**

NEW DELHI, Sept 7: The suicide bomber who assassinated the Chief Minister of the Indian state of Punjab was a police officer sacked last year, newspapers reported today, reports AP.

Dilaawar Singh, a Sikh in his early twenties killed Punjab Chief Minister Beant Singh and 15 other people by triggering a bomb attached to his body on August 31 in the Punjab capital Chandigarh, according to the police.

The Indian Express and other papers said Dilaawar Singh, who was dismissed from police last year, had apparently worn a police uniform to slip through the tight security ring surrounding the Chief Minister.

The Sikh separatist group the Babbar Khalsa has claimed responsibility for the bombing, the deadliest attack by Sikh militants in more than two years, and said Beant Singh a Sikh was targeted for "betraying the Sikh community".

Police have arrested two alleged members of the Babbar Khalsa Gurmeet Singh and Lakhvinder Singh.

Gurmeet Singh an electrical engineer allegedly built the belt bomb used to kill Beant Singh while staying at the home of Lakhvinder Singh, a government driver, according to police.

Police have issued arrest warrants of two other Sikhs in connection with the attack.

**LTTE frees 121 passengers, still holding 23**

COLOMBO, Sept 7: Tamil separatists have freed 121 passengers who were aboard a ferry the guerrillas captured last week, but were still holding 23 people Thursday, including the eight-member crew, the Red Cross said, reports AP.

The rebels suspect that the 15 passenger captives are members of a pro-government Tamil group, but it was not clear why the eight crew members are being held at an undisclosed location.

Deputy Defence Minister Anuruddha Ratwatte said Tuesday the guerrillas had made no demands for the release of the captives.

The 121 freed passengers were taken from the ferry on small boats and driven to the rebel stronghold of Jaffna in northern Sri Lanka where they were visited by Red Cross officials.

They are free to move about in the peninsula and the Red Cross is planning to transport them to their homes on islands off the peninsula that are under military control.

"But first we want some assurance from the LTTE (rebels) that they will allow this," said Paul Fruh, acting director of the International Committee of the Red Cross in Sri Lanka.

It has been negotiating with the rebels since they seized the ferry on August 28 and used it to lure and sink two Sri Lankan gunboats, reportedly killing 21 sailors.

This week, the ferry was slightly damaged by a mortar shell fired by Sri Lankan forces that fell close to the vessel, but no one was hurt, Fruh said. For several days, the military shelled rebel boats moving between the coast and the ferry.

The ferry was still controlled by the rebels Thursday and was being monitored by Sri Lanka's navy and air force, off the coast of Mullaitivu, 280 kilometres (175 miles) northeast of Colombo.

The rebels have been fighting for a homeland in the north and east for 12 years to redress discrimination by the majority Sinhalese, who control the government and the military. More than 36,000 people have been killed in the fighting.