

## Tigers set ablaze HK cargo ship, kill 5 soldiers

COLOMBO, Sept 9: Tamil Tiger rebel gunboats attacked and set ablaze a large Hong Kong-owned cargo ship anchored off Sri Lanka's northeastern coast early Tuesday, killing at least five soldiers, military officials said, reports AP.

The 60,000-ton "MV Cordial," owned by China Ocean Shipping Company of Hong Kong, was on fire one kilometre (half mile) off Pulmodai after the predawn attack, said Commodore Mohan Wijewickrema, the navy's operations director.

Five of the 32-member Chinese crew were missing, and naval gunboats and air force helicopters were searching the surrounding seas, said Commodore Wijewickrema.

Five Sri Lankan soldiers, who were guarding the ship, were killed in a gunfight with the rebels. Their bodies were recovered by naval gunboats. Eight other soldiers were missing.

ing, and air force helicopters joined navy gunboats searching for them.

Naval sailors and soldiers later boarded the Panamanian-registered MV Cordiality and were fighting the blaze, said Commodore Wijewickrema. The ship had been loading il-

menite, a metal mined in Sri Lanka.

Naval gunboats patrolling near the port near Trincomalee, 250 kilometres (155 miles) northeast of the capital, Colombo, fought a 3-hour battle with 15 rebel boats that attacked the vessel at 2 am.

Six guerrilla boats were sunk and three damaged, said Commodore Wijewickrema.

Rebel casualties were not immediately known, but each guerrilla boat usually carries at least four fighters. The surviving guerrilla boats withdrew northward to a rebel-held stretch of the coast.

MOSCOW, Sept 9: The Mir's crew restarted the space station's computer on Tuesday, a day after it mysteriously shut down and forced the Russian-American team to turn off most of its equipment, reports AP.

The crew quickly handled repairs Monday night, installing new software before going to bed. Vera Medvedkova, a spokesman for the Mission Control.

Despite the breakdown of the third computer malfunction in as many months, the crew was not any danger, and Russian space officials played down the problem.

Unlike previous breakdowns, the station was able to maintain its orientation toward the sun, and its power supplies were in much better shape this time.

"Why do these malfunctions happen?" Vladimir Solovyov, the chief of Russia's Mission Control, said Monday. "Do you know why your car breaks down?... It's hard to say what the reasons might be."

The crew said Monday afternoon that it had enough power for normal operations.

## Israeli intelligence under fire over botched raid in Lebanon

JERUSALEM, Sept 9: Israel's intelligence agencies, already embarrassed by the failure to identify the perpetrators of the latest bombings in Jerusalem, are now also being scrutinised over a botched raid in Lebanon control since 1994.

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mandate unit off the face of the earth."

Shalev referred to growing speculation that the failure of a raid in Lebanon early Friday, which cost the lives of 12 Israeli commandos, was due to either poor intelligence about the target of a leak to Lebanese guerrillas about the mission.

Yossi Melman, an Israeli intelligence expert, said all of Israel's intelligence agencies — the Mossad, Shin Bet and military intelligence — have declined in quality over the last few years.

"Israel seems to have lost its magic touch. Its security services are no longer a wonder child," wrote analyst Chemi Shalev in the Ma'ariv newspaper.

The Palestinian terrorists are so sophisticated that after a month's intense investigation we know nothing about them, and their colleagues in Lebanon have the needed knowledge and courage to wipe an elite com-

mander by the transfer of the population centres of the West Bank and Gaza to Palestinian control since 1994.

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