

# Security of Coal Power Plant in Kalpitiya peninsula

Where a large power source like the coal power plant 300 MW expanding to 900 MW is to be sited in the Kalpitiya Peninsula, is it not imperative to pay special attention to its security aspects? When security is being dealt with one must remember the disastrous consequences posed by suicide bombers in the ongoing internal conflict and be aware of the constant threat to Sri Lanka from the separatist sympathizers in Tamil Nadu in the new Indian government.

'The Island' editorial 'Lanka and Indian general election' (9th Oct. 1999) gives some important conclusions to be drawn security-wise from the recently held Indian election. Some relevant excerpts from the editorial are:

"In Tamil Nadu, DMK of Karunanidhi who once considered the Sri Lankan terrorist Velupillai Prabhakaran as 'his son' has won Lok Sabha poll and is a member of the NDA."

"An ominous development was that George Fernandes, the former Defence Minister is likely to play a dominant role in the next coalition government. A report in The Hindu yesterday said that the 'Fernandes Club' had gained greater bargaining power in the NDA with his party having performed impressively in the State of Bihar. It will be recalled that Fernandes openly declared his support for the LTTE when the last BJP led government of the Premier Vajpayee took office. Later it was reported that he as Defence Minister had

instructed the chief of the Indian Navy not to intercept a ship carrying armaments for the LTTE. What role he will play in the new government will have to be watched carefully." Now George Fernandes has been re-appointed Defence Minister.

For some time the security threats to the 4 kilometer long coal unloading jetty of the power plant in the Kalpitiya open sea have been pin pointed in *the Island* by knowledgeable writers.

Why is the CEB so strongly sticking to Kalpitiya with an open sea, very badly exposed to suicide bombing attacks, when a far better secure site and superior in all respects like Mawella, in the South is available. From what I have read in the articles which have appeared in *The Island* even the Negombo site is definitely better than Kalpitiya.

Often I read in the news papers, the large number of atrocities which have been carried out by the terrorist suicide bombers. It is necessary to remind the authorities and the public about these incidents because they conveniently forget the acute threat terrorist attacks pose. They are published in order that we take

suitable precautionary measures so as to avoid such crisis situations.

The news media which publishes anti-coal propaganda should realise their printing machines too will cease to operate when 12 hour power cuts are introduced due to absence of coal power - the cheap reliable source of power for Sri Lanka.

So far the destructions caused by terrorist attacks are localised ones. But the disruption of the power supply from a large power plant like the coal power plant will be catastrophic.

I am told by certain CEB engineers in the power generating business, that we will have the power cuts sooner than the predicted 2004 because the recently installed oil burning power plants are already breaking down.

I shall end this letter with a very appropriate statement made by the Prime Minister Lee Kuan Yew of Singapore some time ago - "Sri Lanka is a country which ruined itself."

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## Opinion