War will be over in 2-3 weeks – Military officials

Tuesday, 17 March 2009
Last Updated Tuesday, 17 March 2009

By Ravi Ladduwahetty- Sri Lanka Editor- Asian Tribune * Prabhakaran should be hiding in limited area if he is still alive * Troops only few kilometers away from beach and 400 meters away from safe zone * Over 1900 civilians cross the borders to liberated areas yesterday and today Colombo (Asiantribune.com): Top military officials in the battlefront are now firmly convinced that the war against the now- battered- and-bruised LTTE will be over within the next two or three weeks.

They also said that LTTE Leader Velupillai Prabhakaran should be within a very limited area if he was still alive as there is no escape route for him now. Troops of the 58 Brigade have now entered Iranapalli town where the headquarters of Pottu Amman lies and the Security Forces personnel are now within a few kilometers away from the beach and 400 meters of the safe zone or the no fire area with the 58 Brigade and Task Force 8 having already cleared over 75% of the geographical area and captured all three bunds which were meant for the LTTE’s protection, they said. Military sources have confirmed that over 32 LTTE cadres have been killed in yesterday’s and today’s operations and a further 15 injured while 13 LTTE bodies have been found by the troops. Troops have also recovered 25 T-56 assault rifles and locally made Baba mortars or launchers and lots of other equipment which was hitherto in Tiger custody. A total of over 1900 civilians in the LTTE trapped areas have crossed over to Pudukudirippu area yesterday and a further 500 today and are under the protection of the Security Forces, they said. These persons have crossed the 2 kilometer trek by foot and they are in safe hands, they said. Meanwhile, an estimated 3238 indisposed men, women and children, including those received injuries in LTTE fire when fleeing, are continuing to receive medical treatment in the Colombo National Hospital, Lady Ridgeway Hospital, and hospitals of Vavuniya, Trincomalee, Colombo, Maharagama, Kandy, Kurunegala, Peradeniya, Anuradhapura, Mannar, Murukkan, Polonnaruwa, Chendikulam and Thambalagamuwa. They also said that of the 3238 civilians who are receiving treatment in these hospitals are not only those who have sustained gunshot injuries from the LTTE when they were fleeing but also pregnant women and others who are suffering from ailments such as viral flu, headaches and common sicknesses. An estimated total of 42,855 Vanni civilians who had so far fled Tiger-dominated areas after March 1, are housed in 22 different centers for displaced persons (Relief Villages) in the Vanni, Mannar and Jaffna Districts. The figure includes the displaced receiving treatment in hospitals with their by-standers outside war-torn areas as of Monday (16) mid-noon, the Army Headquarters declared. The major Relief Villages that have been put up by the government for acceptance of the displaced in the Vavuniya District are the IDP camps at Pariharakandai, Chirukanda and Uyilankulam. Accordingly, a total of 36,186 displaced civilians, including 17,637 females and 17,048 males are resident in the above-mentioned “Relief Villages” as of today. In Jaffna, six IDP centers are functional taking care of a total of 3497 displaced persons who entered the Jaffna peninsula after fleeing from LTTE-held areas in the Vanni. Teachers’ Training Centre, Kopai Old High Court Complex, Gurunagar and Kodikamam Centre, Mirisuvil IDP Centre, Kaiththady Children’s Home IDP Centre and Kaiththady University Hostel IDP Centre in Jaffna house those displaced civilians who have arrived in the peninsula after vacating LTTE held areas. In the Manik Farm Relief Village in Vavuniya, a total of 1318 registered students are following studies in a makeshift school. One hundred and three teachers in the arts and commerce stream are conducting classes for 1-12 grades. Science classes are to begin shortly after receipt of science teachers from the Department of Education at Vavuniya. In the same Relief Village, over 300 young men and women are receiving extensive training in tailoring, electric work, carpentry, information technology (IT), lathe work and welding, etc. with the help of instructors from Moratuwa vocational training authority. In addition, Ministry of Child Development and Women Empowerment has opened a pre-school for kids in the Manik Farm Relief Village. 212 kids are receiving pre-school education in this unit with the support of more than 15 teachers. Facilities for volleyball, cricket, football and other games have also been provided to the Manik Farm Relief Village where the second most number of displaced people is housed in Vavuniya at present. The Poonthottaam College of Education has the highest number of those displaced civilians as at present. Similarly, Department of Information has made arrangements to screen Tamil and Hindi movies inside those centers for their recreation. All government departments and ministries are coordinating welfare and relief work in connection with those IDP centers. Army troops supported by the local Police are providing security to those centers day and night, they added. - Asian Tribune -Courtesy: Asiantribune.com