
Sri Lankan troops poised for big breakthrough

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B. Muralidhar Reddy “No shelling on New Safety Zone” COLOMBO: The Sri Lankan military is hopeful of neutralising the military capabilities of the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam inside the new safety zone (NSZ) in the next 48 hours and paving the way for the release of civilians being held hostage, even as the United Nations characterised the heavy casualties inside the zone in the last two days as a ‘blood bath’ in which over 100 children are believed to have died.

“On the basis of reports from the military commanders, I can say that the troops are poised for a major breakthrough in the next 48 hours. The LTTE would soon lose its wherewithal to offer organised resistance and the troops expect to repeat a feat like on April 20 when the military succeeded in breaching the three-kilometre Tiger earth wall-cum-band and facilitated the escape of 1.16 lakh civilians from the LTTE clutches,” Defence Secretary Gotabaya Rajapaksa told Doordarshan in an interview here on Monday. The Defence Secretary denied reports of shelling on the NSZ by the military and dismissed them as propaganda by the LTTE to coincide with Monday’s U.N. Security Council meeting. He charged the Tigers with indiscriminate firing at a group of 1,000 fleeing civilians. The military said 250 of them were either killed or injured in LTTE firing and released purported transcripts of intercepted communication among the Tigers forcibly stopping civilians. It said the LTTE suffered heavy casualties as the troops pushed deeper into the NSZ. Military spokesperson of the LTTE, Rasiyah Ilanthriyan was among those killed. On Sunday, it was announced that the second in command in the Sea Tigers wing died in fighting. Sri Lanka Government doctor V. Shanmugarajah, who works at a makeshift hospital in the war zone, said 393 people were either brought to the hospital for burial or had died at the facility on Sunday, while another 37 bodies were brought in on Monday morning. More than 1,300 injured came to the hospital, he said.Courtesy: hindu.com