
Sri Lankan troops just 1.5 km short of dominating whole north-eastern coast

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Sri Lankan soldiers have reached the final phase of their hostage rescue mission as they opened up an escape route for the last group of hostages held in the Vellamullivaikkal area last morning (May 14). According to the latest battlefield reports, troops of 58 Division were just 1.5 km short of dominating the whole north-eastern coast of the Island by last night. The expected linkup of the 58 and 59 Divisions, who are merely 2km apart on the coast will mark the total liberation of the coastline in the Island nation from the terrorist hold.

Troops of 53 and 58 Divisions since Wednesday (May 13) started manoeuvring southwards along the western and eastern borders of the newly declared civilian safety zone (CSZ) in order to keep the terrorists engaged on the northern frontage. The 53 Division marched along the bank of the Nanthikadal lagoon whereas the 58 Division crossed the open coastal terrain amid heavy LTTE shelling and machine gun fire. The manoeuvre became a success, as the hostages in large numbers have been able to find their way to the government controlled areas across the southern frontage. Yesterday alone, 3306 civilians were able to wade across the lagoon and seek refuge with the 59 Division soldiers. The group included members of 782 families. The civilians have told the soldiers that they were being fired upon by the LTTE with machine guns and mortars, as they started moving towards the government-controlled areas. According to the sources, four civilians were killed and another 40 injured in the LTTE fire. Meanwhile, infantrymen of 58 Division yesterday rescued another 206 civilians. The latest reports indicate that the same Division soldiers have rescued over 600 others this morning (May 15). Troops during the yesterday's operations collected 19 bodies of the LTTE cadres along with 32 T-56 assault weapons. Among the other items found were one rocket launcher, one "Baba" mortar, one Radar antenna, one 12.7 mm machine gun, one gun mount, 3 RPG launchers, one radio set, one 12.7 mm machine gun barrel and a large stock of ammunition. Courtesy: defence.lk