



In this handout picture released by The Liberation Tigers for Tamil Eelam (LTTE) website Tamilnet on Sept 16, LTTE rebels fire a tripod mounted machine gun during fighting against Sri Lankan government soldiers in the village of Akkaraayan in the rebel held district of Vanni.

PHOTO: AFP

Tigers on defensive amid risk of losing mini-state

Lanka military makes determined push

AFP, Colombo

Tamil Tigers were once regarded one of the world's most ruthlessly efficient rebels, but they risk losing their mini-state as Sri Lankan forces make a determined push after decades of bloodshed.

After months of bitter fighting, security forces have reached the outskirts of the Tiger political capital -- Kilinochchi -- the six-kilometre (four-mile) long township along the main A-9 highway to the Jaffna peninsula.

Aid workers who evacuated Kilinochchi this week -- in line with a government order to leave ahead of an expected military show down -- said bombs and artillery shells were landing just within the political offices of the Tigers.

"The military advance is getting closer to Kilinochchi and the Tigers may simply melt away," an aid official who declined to be named said soon after leaving the north.

Sri Lanka's top brass had said they want to take Kilinochchi before the end of the year, but

defence analysts argue that it must be done sooner as monsoon rains could intensify and render heavy armour ineffective from about October.

For the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE), Kilinochchi is the show piece town where they hosted visiting foreign dignitaries and peace brokers.

The Tigers also maintain their 'police headquarters', their 'high courts' and their 'Bank of Eelam' which functions as the quasi monetary authority of the de facto separate state within Sri Lanka.

The Tigers, who have been fighting for full independence for the island's Tamil minority since 1972, have warned that the vast Wanni region, encompassing 5,000 square kilometers in the northern part of Sri Lanka, could become a mass grave for security forces if they tried to capture Kilinochchi.

There has been ferocious resistance along at least two of the six fronts opened by Sri Lankan forces, but so far the

promised fight back has not materialised. Sri Lankan forces are vastly superior in numbers and fire power.

"Unlike in the past, the army is moving in smaller groups and on a broader front," said retired brigadier general Vipul Boteju. "That is the secret of their success, but they need to take Kilinochchi before heavy rains."

Boteju said downpours could make artillery and armour ineffective and force both sides to engage in close range fighting.

Sri Lanka's top defence official, Gotabhaya Rajapakse, said the military is bracing for tougher battles, but remained convinced it could crush the Tigers.

"The LTTE has never faced this type of pressure from all these fronts," he told the state-run Daily News in an interview last week. "Actually we have still not committed our full strength in the offensives."

The exact strength of the Tigers was never clear, but local and foreign military intelligence agen-

ties had placed the number of hard core Tiger combatants at anything between 5,000 to 15,000.

Sri Lanka's military says it has killed over 6,000 rebels this year alone, while saying it has lost 645 of its own troops during the same period.

Despite steadily losing territory in their strongholds, defence analysts believe that the Tigers may still have a large number of suicide cadres who could be activated to carry out devastating attacks elsewhere.

The Tigers also have their own sea-going outfit and light aircraft that have been used in bombing raids as far south as the capital Colombo.

They have also appeared to be on the brink of defeat in the past.

In December 1995 they lost their hold over the Jaffna peninsula, which Colombo regarded as the fountain head of Tamil separatism in the Sinhala-majority nation.

The army went on to take Kilinochchi, only to face a devastating counter attack in 1999.

US reviewing Afghan war strategy: Gates

AP, London

In an echo of a time when things were going from bad to worse in Iraq, Defence Secretary Robert Gates said Thursday the Bush administration is reviewing its war strategy in Afghanistan amid spreading insurgent violence, rising US and allied military deaths and doubts about winning.

With only a few months left before President Bush leaves office, the administration apparently is attempting to draw a clearer picture for the next commander-in-chief of what needs to be done to stabilize the country, to sustain and increase international support and to make the most of US and allied military forces.

Any changes in strategy now being contemplated would not be as substantial as Bush's decision in January 2007 to take a fundamentally different approach in Iraq, Pentagon press secretary Geoff Morrell said. Bush added more than 21,000 combat troops in Iraq and endorsed an overhaul of military strategy.

"Nothing of that magnitude" is being considered for the war in Afghanistan, Morrell cautioned.

Bush launched the war in Afghanistan in October 2001 in response to the terrorist attacks of Sept. 11, 2001 by al-Qaeda, the extremist network that enjoyed protection there by the country's Taliban rulers. al-Qaeda has since been mostly removed from Afghanistan but remains in sanctuaries in parts of Pakistan. Osama bin Laden, the al-Qaida leader, remains at large and is thought to be hiding in Pakistan.

Gates did not say the current US approach in Afghanistan is failing. Nor did he explicitly call for a change of direction. He alluded, instead, to the 2007 makeover of US strategy in Iraq and suggested in an interview with a group of reporters that the administration is reconsidering fundamental aspects of its strategy.

"We are looking at it, and I guess that is as far as I would go" in explaining the process, he said.

"You have an overall approach, an overall strategy, but you adjust it continually based on the circum-

stances that you find," Gates said. "We did that in Iraq. We made a change in strategy in Iraq and we are going to continue to look at the situation in Afghanistan."

Gates visited Afghanistan on Wednesday and flew to London for Nato consultations beginning Thursday evening. Afghanistan is not intended to be a major topic for the meeting; the Nato-led International Security Assistance Force is the lead command element in Afghanistan, headed by a US general.

Gates did not reveal whether the White House has launched a formal across-the-board reassessment of its war strategy. But his remarks indicated that the administration sees a need to make some further adjustments.

He said the United States and its Nato partners face "a different kind of challenge" in Afghanistan than just two years ago, when it appeared that the insurgency in the eastern region, which borders Pakistan, was under control. Attacks in that region, as well as in southern Afghanistan, have since risen sharply.

US Congress asked to approve Indian nuke deal this month

AFP, Washington

A senior US senator called Thursday for a fast track endorsement this month of a landmark nuclear agreement with India as lawmakers launched a series of meetings to consider the controversial deal.

"We would be well advised to approve this month... rather than waiting until next year," said Democrat Chris Dodd, who chaired a meeting Thursday of the powerful Senate foreign relations committee on the nuclear initiative.

Although the agreement "is not perfect," Dodd said the "imperfections" could be addressed by lawmakers, vowing that they were "going to utilize every minute of every day available" to endorse the deal.

It is the clearest indication yet that efforts were underway with Congress to rush through with a vote on the deal, probably before it

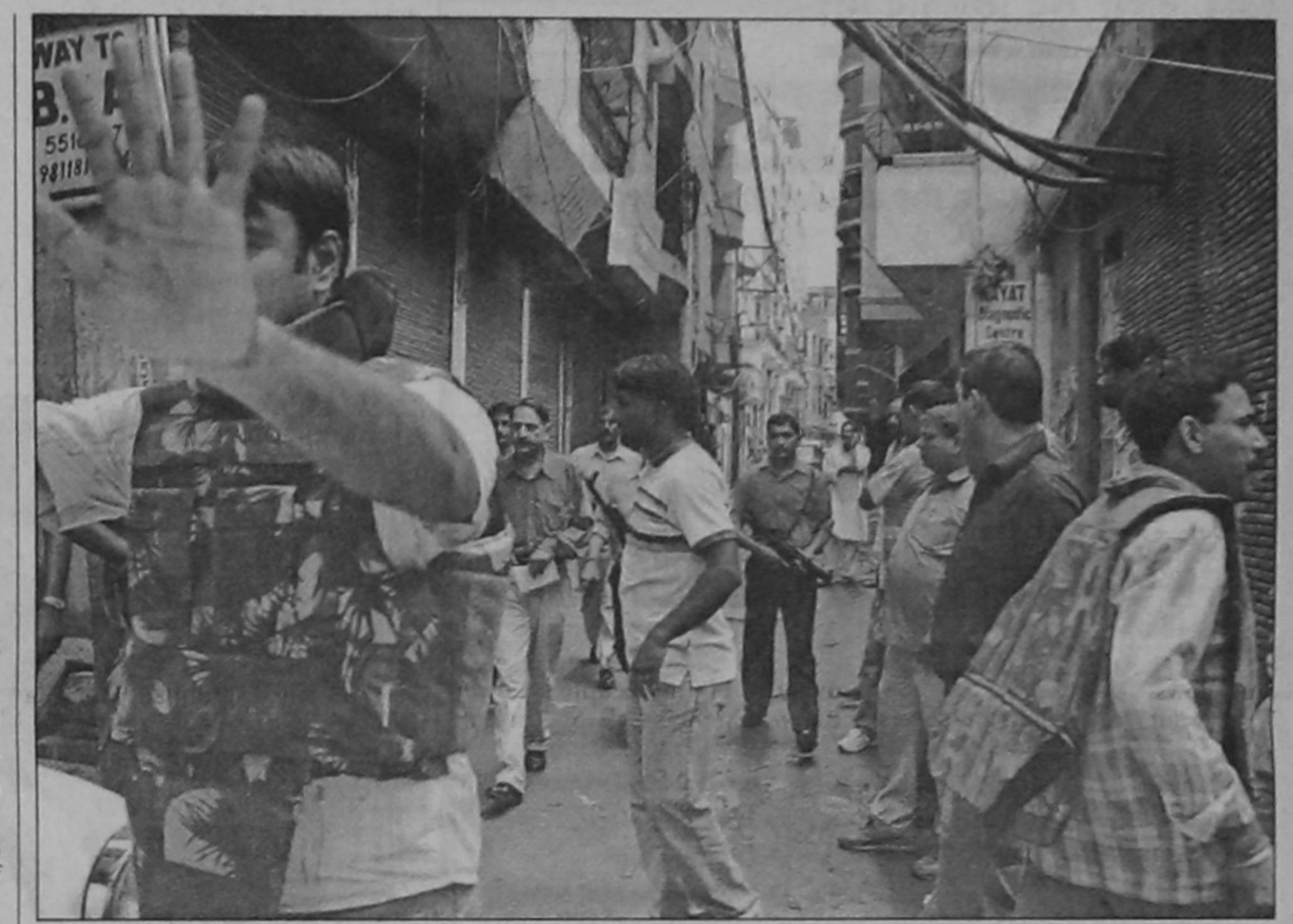
adjourns on September 26 ahead of the November 4 presidential elections.

"Approval of this agreement will still be a milestone in US-India relations and, approve it, my view, we must," Dodd said.

He acknowledged that several lawmakers had certain "concerns" in the agreement, which needed to be addressed by President George W. Bush's administration to avoid a "perfect storm" that could wreck the deal.

Signed by President George W. Bush and Indian Prime Minister Manmohan Singh in July 2005, the agreement offers India access to Western technology and cheap atomic energy as long as it allows UN nuclear inspections of some of its nuclear facilities.

If Congress endorses the agreement it would lift a three decades-old ban on nuclear trade with India, a non member of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty.



Indian policemen secure the area of a shooting incident at Jamia Nagar in New Delhi yesterday. Indian police shot dead two alleged militants during a fierce gun battle in a Muslim area of New Delhi, officials said, less than a week after the capital was rocked by bombings.

PHOTO: AFP

Sharif warns against attempts to dislodge PML-N govt in Punjab

PTI, Lahore

Pakistan's opposition PML-N chief Nawaz Sharif today warned against any attempts to dislodge his party's government in Punjab and asked the ruling PPP to settle all political issues in the province.

Talking to reporters at the airport here on his arrival from London, Sharif said some people were creating instability for their personal interests and this would dent democracy in the country.

Though the PML-N pulled out of the PPP-led coalition at the centre last month, the latter continues to be part of the PML-N-led government in Punjab province. The PML-N has been urging the

PPP to exit the provincial government to avoid embarrassment to both parties but the PPP has given no such indications so far.

PML-N and PPP leaders have engaged in a war of words in recent weeks over the government in Punjab, the only province ruled by the PML-N.

Sharif asked the PPP to resolve all political issues in Punjab and warned against attempts to remove his party's government in the province, while denying reports that the PML-N planned to forge an alliance with the PML-Q in the state.

If an alliance with the PML-Q had been possible, it would have been formed during the recent presidential election, he added.

India asks Karnataka to halt attacks against churches

AFP, New Delhi

India's government has warned Hindu nationalist authorities in a southern state to halt attacks against churches, the federal Home Ministry said yesterday.

In an official order, the government told Karnataka state leaders to "bring the situation under control," a ministry spokesman said.

More than a dozen churches in Karnataka were attacked over the weekend, following similar clashes in the eastern state of Orissa, which left nearly 20 dead.

The Orissa violence was triggered by the murder of a revered Hindu priest and four followers on August 23. Thousands of riot-hit people, mostly Christians, were forced to flee their homes and many are still living in state-run camps.

Hindu-Christian violence occurs periodically in India, where 2.3 percent of the country's population of more than 1.1 billion are Christians.

Hardline Hindus accuse missionaries of "bribing" poor tribals and low-caste Hindus to convert to Christianity by offering free education and health care.

9 die as major flood threatens Mahanadi system in Orissa

PTI, Bhubaneswar

Nine persons lost their lives as the mighty Mahanadi river rose menacingly and other rivers were in spate today, triggering a major flood situation in Orissa as a high alert was sounded in four coastal districts, official sources said.

With other rivers such as the Subarnarekha, Baitarani and Brahmani in spate, one person was feared drowned in flood waters of the river Tel in Sonepur, while two flood and rain related deaths each were reported from Mayurbhanj, Bhadrak, Jajpur and Kendrapara districts, official sources said.

"We are apprehending a major flood in the Mahanadi system as a huge volume of water is heading downstream," Chief Secretary Ajit Kumar Tripathy told reporters here.

Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh

Bureau of Manpower, Employment and Training
89/2, Kakrail, Dhaka

Invitation for Re-Tender

1	Ministry/Division	Ministry of Labour and Employment.
2	Agency	Bureau of Manpower, Employment and Training.
3	Procuring entity name	Bureau of Manpower, Employment and Training.
4	Procuring entity code	3101
5	Procuring entity district	Dhaka, Bangladesh.
6	Invitation for	(1) Tender for procurement of vehicle (microbus) Tender for procurement of equipment and tools. (2) Catering trade. (3) Architectural drafting with Auto CAD Trade BMET/PIU/DEV/12TTC-156/2004(Part-7)/7041
7	Invitation Ref No.	15/09/2008
8	Date	2008-2009, (GOB).
9	Procurement method	5420
10	Budget and source of funds	
11	Project/program code (if applicable)	
12	Tender package No.	(1) Vehicle (microbus). (2) Catering trade, 2 lots. (3) Architectural drafting with Auto CAD trade, 1 lot.
13	Tender last selling date	(1) Tender for procurement of vehicle (microbus) Tender for procurement of equipment and tools. (2) Catering trade, (3) Architectural drafting with Auto CAD trade.
14	Tender closing date and time	07/10/2008
15	Tender opening date and time	08/10/2008, 12:00 noon.
16	Name & address of the office	08/10/2008, 2:00pm
17	-Selling tender document -Receiving tender document	Project Director, BMET (3 rd Floor), 89/2, Kakrail, Dhaka. Additional Director General (Training), BMET (1 st Floor), 89/2, Kakrail, Dhaka.
18	-Opening tender document Place/date/time of pre-tender meeting (optional)	'Do' Project Director, office, 25/09/2008 at 11:00am.
19	Eligibility of tenderer	As per condition of STD.
20	Brief description of goods or works	As per schedule.
21	Brief description of related services	As per schedule.
22	Identification	Location of delivery
23	Price of tender document (Tk)	Package No.
24	Group	Lot
25	Tender security amount	Completion time in weeks/ months
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Hundreds of new species found on Australia's coral reefs

AFP, Washington

Hundreds of new marine species have been found on Australia's coral reefs, surprising an international team of biologists who announced details of their findings here Thursday.

The three expeditions to Lezard and Heron islands, and Ningaloo Reef, included a first systematic scientific inventory of spectacular soft corals, named octocorals for the eight tentacles around each polyp.

Researchers located some 300 soft coral species, half of which are believed new to science; dozens of small crustacean species; and an unusual amphipod of the Maxillipidae family. It has a whip-like back leg almost three times the size of its body.

Also found were "new species of tanaid crustaceans, shrimp-like animals, some with claws longer than their bodies; and a beautiful, rare Cassiopeia jellyfish."

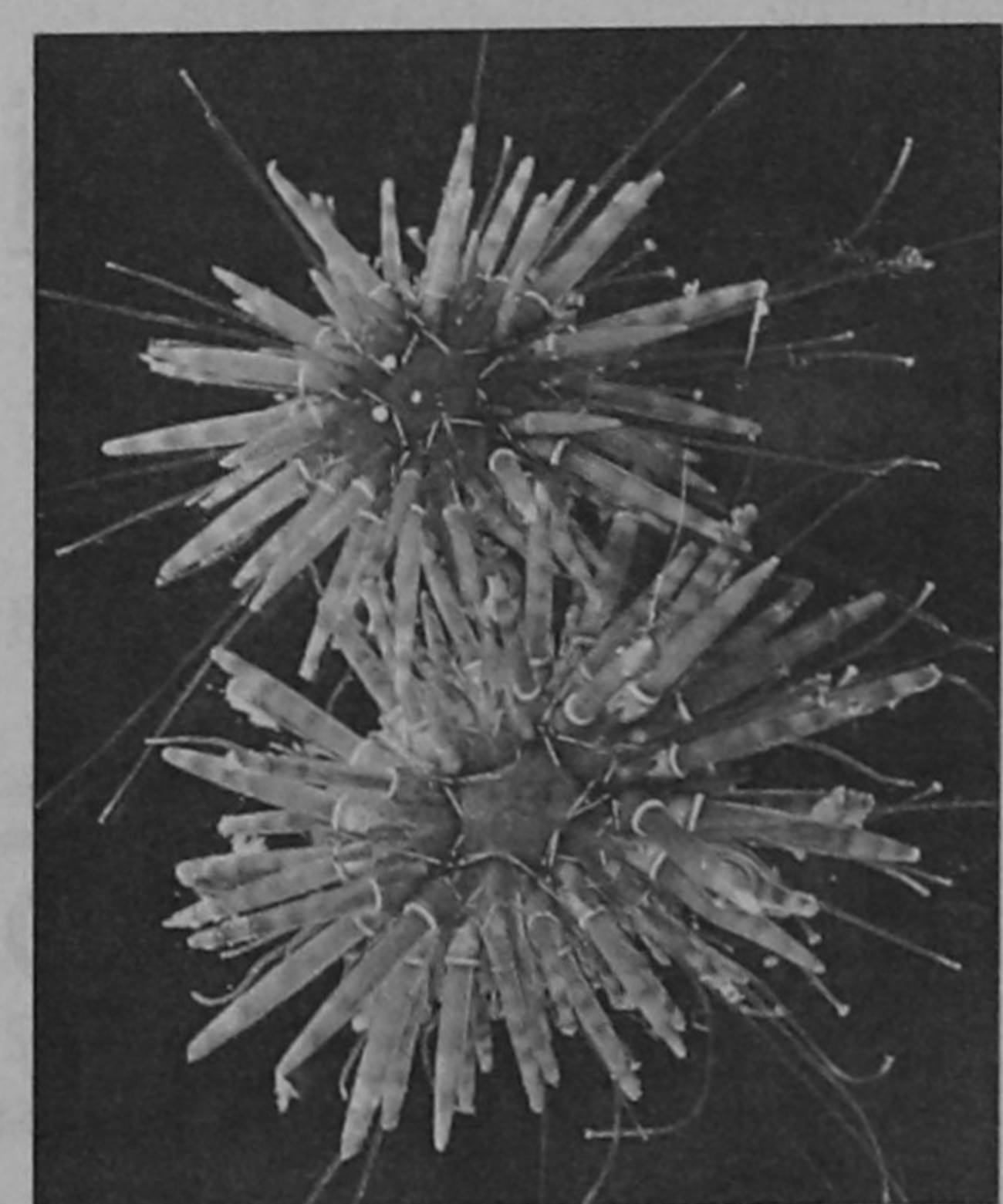
Between 40 and 60 percent of the tiny amphipod crustaceans listed, the "insect of the marine world," will be

formally described for the first time, researchers said.

"We were all surprised and excited to find such a large variety of marine life never before described 'most notably soft coral, isopods, tanaid crustaceans and worms' and in waters that divers access easily and regularly," said Julian Caley, Principal Research Scientist at AIMS and co-leader of CoML's CReefs project.

"Corals face threats ranging from ocean acidification, pollution, and warming to overfishing and starfish outbreaks," says Dr. Ian Poiner, Chief Executive Officer of the Australian Institute of Marine Science (AIMS), which led the research.

"Only by establishing a baseline of biodiversity and following through with later censuses can people know the impact of those threats and find clues to mitigate them," he argued, so expeditions to the three sites will be repeated for the next three years to follow the species and monitor climate change and other factors.



An undated handout photo obtained September 19, shows Pohls sea urchins. Hundreds of new marine species have been found on Australia's coral reefs, surprising an international team of biologists who announced details of their findings on Thursday.

PHOTO: AFP

Second top Muslim officer suspended by London police

AFP, London

The second most senior Muslim policeman in Britain has been suspended, officials said yesterday, days after the country's top Muslim officer was forced to take leave after alleging racism by bosses.

The move against Commander Ali Dizaei, which comes in the wake of Assistant Commissioner Tarique Ghaffur's suspension, prompted claims that London's Metropolitan Police has a problem in handling ethnic minority officers.

The pair both work for the city's force, which declined to comment on the latest developments.

Dizaei, who is president of the National Black Police Association and seen as close to Ghaffur, is reportedly alleged to have advised defence lawyers on how to undermine a prosecution involving the Metropolitan Police.