INTERNATIONAL

Tigers flee to jungle as troops advance

Many civilians killed in Lanka clashes: UN

AFP, AP, Colombo

Sri Lankan government troops yesterday pushed into the last pockets of jungle still held by the Tamil Tigers after capturing the rebels' last urban stronghold and military headquarters.

Soldiers overran Mullaittivu, a north- will definitely win, "Fonseka said. eastern coastal town held by the Tigers for a decade, on Sunday -- three weeks after taking Kilinochchi, where the rebels had their own courts, police force and a bank.

Army chief Lieutenant General Sarath Fonseka said the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) now controlled just a "small strip" of land in the northeast and were completely cornered.

"We have cleared 95 percent of the work (to defeat the Tigers)," Fonseka said, as the island's government expressed confidence it would soon win one of Asia's longest-running civil wars after a conflict zone had become a crisis. massive military offensive.

positions outside Mullaittivu after troops had taken control of the town, the defence Monday. ministry said in its latest update.

rebels, and the battlefield claims cannot be verified as independent journalists are

barred from travelling to the conflict zone. The United Nations said Monday that

"many" civilians have been killed in recent fighting in Sri Lanka's civil war and said the situation for thousands of displaced people trapped in the northern

With the war zone shrinking and a "The end of terrorism is near and we huge population of civilians in the area, the situation has grown desperate in Helicopter gunships attacked Tiger recent days, UN resident coordinator Neil Buhne told The Associated Press on

"There have been many civilians killed There has been no comment from the over the last two days," he said. "It's really

> Buhne said that until recently both sides have worked hard to avoid civilian casualties.

Bicycle bomb kills 5 in northwest Pakistan

AP, Dera Ismail Khan

A bomb rigged to a bicycle exploded in a northwest Pakistani city yesterday, killing at least five people and wounding 20 others in the latest attack to rattle the volatile region, police said.

The explosion occurred on a major road in Dera Ismail Khan, and most of the victims were either walking by the parked bicyle or travelling in nearby vehicles, area police chief Saeed Ullah said.

Dera Ismail Khan lies in a region that neighbours the Waziristan tribal areas, where Taliban and al-Qaeda militants have strong sway and where the US frequently strikes with missiles from across the border in Afghanistan.



Members of the non-governmental organization Oxfam protest outside the venue of the High Level Conference on World Food Security in Madrid yesterday. Representatives from 95 countries are taking part in this two-day meeting hosted in Madrid and co-sponsored by the UN Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) and Spain.

Israel vows to back soldiers accused of war crimes

AP, Jerusalem

Special legal teams will defend Israeli soldiers against potential war crimes charges stemming from civilian deaths in the Gaza Strip, the prime minister said Sunday, promising the country would three-week offensive.

The move reflected growing concerns by Israel that officers could be militants caused the civilian casualties violently took over Gaza in 2007. by staging attacks from residential

Minister Ehud Olmert said. "The soldiers and commanders who were sent on missions in Gaza must know that including three civilians, were also killed. they are safe from various tribunals."

meeting, Olmert said Israel's justice minister would lead a team of senior officials to coordinate the legal defence of anyone involved in the offensive.

tries to pursue their efforts through legal means," Palestinian Foreign Minister Riad Malki said at talks with European Union foreign ministers in Brussels. "So there is no immunity even fully back those who fought in the if the decision was taken by the Israeli government."

Malki is a member of moderate Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas' subject to international prosecution, government, whose authority extends despite the army's claims that Hamas only to the West Bank after rival Hamas and do not talk to each other, relying

Israel launched its 22-day offensive to try to halt Hamas rocket fire on "The state of Israel will fully back southern Israel. The assault killed 1,285 those who acted on its behalf," Prime Palestinians, more than half of them civilians, the Palestinian Centre for Human Rights counted. Thirteen Israelis,

Speaking at the weekly Cabinet solidifying the truce, Hamas official Ayman Taha said the Islamic group offered a one-year truce to Israel, including the reopening of border crossings to allow vital supplies into Gaza. He said

attach his properties.

surrenders to the court.

The court handed down the

ACC Assistant Director

sentence in his absence and his

punishment would take effect

from the day he is arrested or

Farid Ahmed Patwary, also

the investigation officer (IO)

of the case, submitted the

charge sheet before the Chief

Court of Dhaka, showing 39

people as prosecution wit-

nesses November 2 last year.

case against Babu with Ramna

Police Station on April 29 last

year. Special Public Prosecutor

Syed Mizanur Rahman repre-

ACC Deputy Director

"That decision is not going to pre- Israel offered an 18-month truce, which vent all these organisations and coun- Hamas rejected. Israeli officials refused to

> A low-level delegation from Abbas' West Bank government was also in Cairo for talks, but was not expected to meet with Hamas.

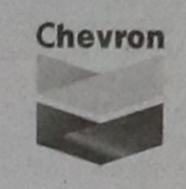
> The European Union, Egypt, Jordan, and Turkey appealed to Hamas and the Palestinian Authority to form a unity government.

> Israel and Hamas are bitter enemies instead on Egyptian mediation.

In addition to the civilian death toll, Israel has faced international criticism for its use of white phosphorous, and for shelling attacks that struck United Nations schools and installations that were serving as shelters.

Although the use of phosphorous At talks Sunday in Cairo aimed at weapons to light up the night or to create smoke screens masking troops is permitted by international law, Amnesty International has accused Israel of committing a war crime by firing the munitions in densely populated areas.

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Ill-gotten wealth and fined Tk five lakh for hiding

Jesmin Anwar found Babu guilty of amassing Tk 13.85 crore through illegal means and concealing information of wealth worth Tk 1.2 crore to run consecutively. Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC).

Of the total ill-gotten wealth, Babu accumulated wealth worth over Tk 6,24,61,292 illegally and amassed Tk 7,60,31,000 beyond his real source of income. He had also concealed wealth information ofTk 1,27,94,453 to the ACC.

Babu was also finedTk 15 lakh also published asking Babu Sharmin Ferdousy filed the in default of which he will have to serve two and a half years' jail term more. The court also ordered the illegally amassed wealth to be confiscated.

wealth information and another 10 years with a fine of Tk 10 lakh for amassing illegal wealth. The punishment would

The ACC served a notice upon Babu to submit his wealth statement on October 18, 2007, but he sent a letter by post from Malaysia instead.

The court earlier recorded Metropolitan Magistrate's statements of 21 prosecution witnesses, including complainant of the case. An advertisement was

to surrender before the court to face trial, but he did not comply with the court order. Earlier, the court had also

issued an arrest warrant sented the state before the He was jailed for three years against Babu and ordered to court.

Nepal bans dowry system

AFP, Kathmandu

Nepal's Maoist Prime Minister Prachanda on Sunday banned the dowry system and criminalised caste-based discrimination in a bid to win public support for his faltering government.

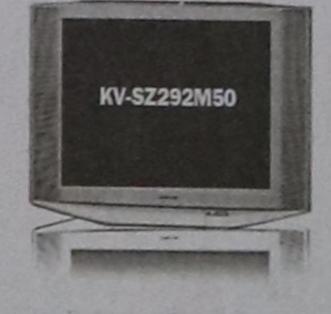
In a thirty-minute national televised address, the prime minister expressed dissatisfaction over his government's performance and called on all parties to forge a new political understanding.

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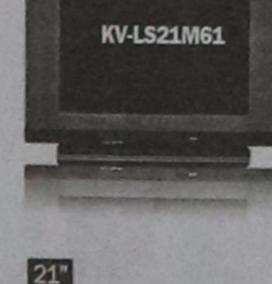
[Grand Display at Pavilion-10, DITF '09]

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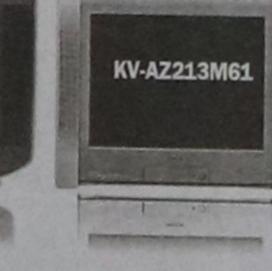


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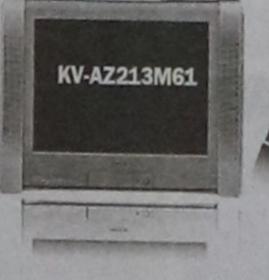




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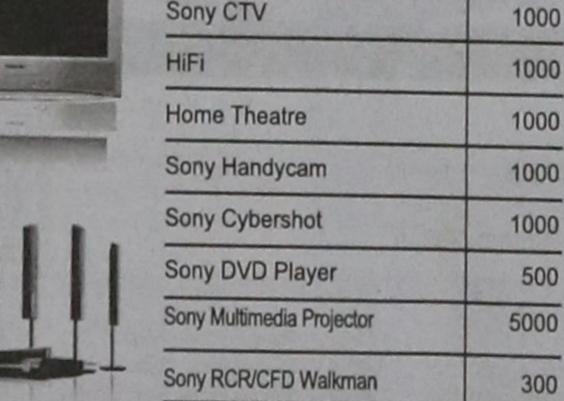




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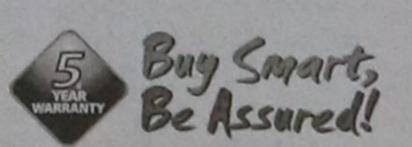
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