

Troops captured LTTE base, 40 rebels killed: Sri Lanka

Sri Lanka Wednesday said its troops battling the Tamil Tiger rebels had captured a rebel base in the northwestern Mannar district after fierce clashes killed 40 rebels.

The defence ministry here said the advancing troops backed by artillery and aerial bombardment had 'captured the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam's (LTTE) 18-Base in Vepankulam area and brought the entire area under control' in the north-west of Giant Tank in Mannar.

'Due to the confrontations LTTE has recorded many casualties and reported at least 40 LTTE carders, including an LTTE leader, have perished,' it said. It added that six soldiers had suffered injuries.

There was no immediate reaction from the LTTE in this regard.

In the northeastern Weli-Oya area, the LTTE and the government troops were locked in heavy artillery exchange early Wednesday.

While the defence ministry said that a 66-year-old civilian was injured in a LTTE attack, the Tamil Tigers in a statement said a 52-year-old man was killed and a 32-year-old woman was wounded in the military attack.

Independent verification of the battlefield casualties is not possible as journalists are barred from visiting the area.

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