

Troops close to retaking Jaffna. (1995, October 29) *The Island*.

# Troops close to retaking Jaffna

THE ISLAND 29.10.95

by Prabath Sahabandu

The security forces fighting in the north are now in a position to recapture Jaffna within three days, Acting Defence Minister Col. Anuruddha Ratwatte told a gathering of diplomats on Friday.

But the Minister said that the government would not hasten the pace to do so because it wants to minimise loss of human life and damage to property.

He said the group had

been given special orders to free Jaffna from the LTTE with the least possible loss of life and damage to property even if it took a little longer than three days.

Therefore he said that the government would not rev-up the military thrust to capture Jaffna town, and would allow the field commander at the front to set a time frame.

He said that the morale of his troops was high and that they were well looked after. The

civilians and the LTTE cadres who surrendered to the forces were being treated well.

Minister of Housing, Construction and Public Utilities, Nimal Siripala de Silva explaining the reconstruction and rehabilitation programme to the diplomats said that every possible step had been taken to restore civil life in the areas liberated by the government forces.

In answer to a question by a diplomat whether there were any

food supplies and medicine in the north, Minister de Silva said that despite the false propaganda spread by the LTTE there were stocks of food and medicine in the north.

Minister of Justice and Constitutional Affairs Prof. G. L. Peiris said that the governments devolution proposals were ready and would be presented to parliament at the appropriate time. However, it would take a while because of the forthcoming budget.