

Sri Lanka troops advance

■ COLOMBO – Sri Lankan government troops advanced to within 6 kilometres of the Tamil rebels' stronghold yesterday, pushing an offensive that has sent 500,000 civilians fleeing. Jaffna, a city of 125,000 where the Tamils have based their 12-year fight for an independent homeland, has almost emptied since the military launched a campaign two weeks ago to capture it, a relief worker said. Authorities said they did not know how many rebel defenders are left in the city. The government's chief administrator in the region warned of a refugee crisis and appealed for international help.

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