

SECURITY ROUNDUP

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'Operation Sunray'

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THE security forces who have consolidated their position in the captured areas during Operation Leap Forward are now going on the offensive with Operation Riviresa, which commenced on October 17.

One security forces battalion which was moving to the right of Poonali-Kadduwan, the area which was captured by the security forces during Operation Leap Forward, had a six-hour confrontation with the Tiger terrorists in the Kappilan area for two days, on October 17 and 18.

During this confrontation nearly 100 LTTE cadres died and 300 had sustained injuries.

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Four armoured vehicles have been destroyed.

By Wednesday afternoon the security forces had advanced two kilometres from their earlier position.

On Tuesday, the LTTE which had wanted reinforcements sent from the Killinochchi area to face the advancing troops, was prevented from doing so due to successful attacks launched by

the Air Force using Puccara bombers, which killed a large number of terrorists, according to LTTE communications monitored by security forces.

The Air Force Pukhara bombers had managed to attack and destroy 15 LTTE camps, situated one and a half miles away from the route taken by the advancing troops. The security forces were also able to repulse LTTE guerrilla attacks launched from the adjoining jungles.

The Air Force was providing air cover to the advancing foot patrols engaged in operation Riviresa, according to security reports.

On Wednesday, Minister Anuruddha Ratwatte, Army Commander Gerry de Silva and the Air Force Commander Air Vice Marshal Oliver Rangsinghe, accompanied by senior army officers involved in operation Riviresa, visited the captured areas and spoke to the residents.

During advances on Thursday 18, troops were able to capture several positions held by the terrorists, who initially put up a heavy resistance but later fled the area leaving their dead behind. Fourteen soldiers

were killed and two officers and 40 soldiers were wounded during this confrontation, security reports indicate.

At the security council meeting held on Thursday, it had been suggested to appoint an advisory board, consisting of retired service personnel, to monitor and advise on Operation Riviresa. However, no final decision has so far been made. According to Tiger radio communications monitored by the security forces, twenty LTTE battalions leaders had perished during Operation Riviresa. It has been revealed that some injured Tigers had been transported to an under ground hospital of the LTTE in Killinochchi, as the Jaffna Hospital had been over crowded due to the high casualty rate.

The LTTE has also commenced a wood donation campaign among the civilian population, to treat their injured. Since the LTTE is facing a severe shortage of cadres, they have now started to send to the battlefield Tamils of Indian origin from the plantations, who had been given training in camps in Jaffna during the past two years. The original intention

of the LTTE was to infiltrate the plantation sector and strengthen their activities in the Central Province. However, due to the present emergency situation, they have now been compelled to use these cadres to fight in the North.

The strategy of the LTTE appears to be to block the transportation of food supplies to the armed forces stationed in the North East. With this in view, the LTTE has intensified its sea tiger attack on cargo vessels.

However, the Navy believes that they would be able to repulse these attacks due to their acquiring the latest sonar equipment to detect underwater activity. On the October 16 the Sea Tigers destroyed a cargo ship berthed at the Trincomalee harbour, killing 9 navy personnel including two officers. This ship which was formally owned by the Fisheries Ministry and called *Wennapu Maru*, was used to transport perishable food as it had refrigeration facilities.

On the same day, the Navy managed to repulse another attack by a suicide squad of the Sea Tigers on some navy boats which were berthed at

the entrance to the Trincomalee harbour. One Tiger was killed and the Navy detected a 30kg bomb strapped to his diving gear. According to naval sources, if the Tigers had succeeded, a large area of the harbour would have been destroyed.

Intelligence reports indicate that the LTTE is now strengthening their cadres in Mamaduwa and Chettikulam in the Vavuniya area, to launch an attack in order to divert the attention of the Army who are now moving towards the Jaffna peninsula. Jaffna residents arriving in Vavuniya have told the security forces that they are now planning to urge the LTTE not to attack food ships, as it is creating a food shortage in Jaffna. They have also decided to protest to the LTTE not to recruit children below 13 years, as the LTTE had accelerated their recruitment drive after the commencement of Operation Leap Forward.

In the meantime, on Monday the Army engaged in a four-hour long battle in the Batticaloa district, when they rounded up and destroyed a Tiger camp in the Thamparaveli jungle. One of-

ficer and 27 soldiers were killed during the confrontation and 46 Tigers perished. However, the Army announced that only 13 soldiers were killed and 15 were missing. But the next day the bodies of the 15 missing soldiers were handed over by the Red Cross.

Security forces have reported that the LTTE have now begun placing pressure mines close to areas where the forces used to bathe, in the Trincomalee district. During one incident, 9 police constables were injured. It has been revealed that at present there is a conflict between Prabhakaran and the Batticaloa area leaders. Prabhakaran had recently instructed the three area leaders Karuna, Arul and Karikaran, that everything possible should be done to make Batticaloa a "small Jaffna". However, since they had still succeeded in doing so, he had summoned the three area leaders to Jaffna and had reprimanded them. He has now given them a deadline to complete this mission.

These three leaders are supposed to be now planning to take control of the Batticaloa area and consolidate themselves there, independent of

Prabhakaran. They feel that since Prabhakaran is now leading a luxury life, they should separate themselves and build up their own power base in this area.

With a view to putting this plan to action, this team is now planning to launch a series of attacks on Police stations in the area, according to intelligence reports. In addition they have also deployed two teams from Batticaloa to Amparara to attack the armed forces camps located in this area, reports indicate.

The LTTE is now reported to be in the process of forcing civilians in Jaffna to deposit monies in an account maintained by them at a Tiger bank called Vaippagam, and the deposit receipt to be submitted to LTTE area offices. Withdrawals are only permitted up to Rs 3,000 at a time.

The LTTE has also restricted travel from Jaffna to Vavuniya, and those who wish to travel to Colombo have to deposit with the LTTE one lakh or property to that value. They are also given a deadline to return to Jaffna, or else their monies and property would be confiscated.

Batticaloa area, which is considered by the security forces as an ideal location for the LTTE to launch their attacks.

In the meantime, Prabhakaran has instructed the LTTE operatives in Tamil Nadu to arrest Dominique who had misappropriated Rs 75 lakhs, and who is now in hiding. At a meeting held in Jaffna last Sunday, the LTTE had also informed a group of government servants, professors and high school students that they should support them in the event of any attacks from the Sri Lankan forces.

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Army intelligence reports reveal that the LTTE is now having in their possession chemical bombs. However, the army is of the view that they could successfully face off counter such attacks.

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