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## Civilian influx into safe areas continues

Dhaneshi YATAWARA

A group of 307 Tamil civilians, had reached the 53 division area seeking protection, amidst the troop movements to the east on the A35 road. This group which included 85 children, 122 women and 100 men, reached the areas of security forces yesterday during the wee hours, the Army sources stated.

Officers of the division, under the supervision of the Division Commander Major General Kamal Gunaratne have made all arrangements for the welfare of the escapees and later to hand them over to the Civil Authorities.

Another group of 135 civilians reached the 58 division area on the same day. Earlier, on last Friday, 58 people including 22 children reached the 58 division where a 15-year-old boy was killed when the LTTE fired at them injuring several others.

Among the civilians there were several LTTE cadres identified themselves as the members of 'Makkal Padai' an auxiliary force of the LTTE.

As the tide was rising high in the Nanthikandal lagoon and the sea, people faced difficulties in crossing over to safer areas. However, the escapees reached the Security Forces of the Vanni Defence line amidst the thick battles.

In the meantime, the 58 division troops, commanded by Brigadier Shavendra Silva in their advance towards the east of Kombavilkulam, 4 km North of Puthukuduyiruppu, discovered a well-equipped hospital of the LTTE, named 'Ponnambalam Hospital'.

According to the ground troops the hospital was exclusively reserved for the LTTE leadership.

LTTE had fought a hard battle to secure this hospital from the advancing troops, the intercepted LTTE communications revealed.

The LTTE is at present cornered to a less than 35-square- kilometre area of which the 'no war zone' is approximately 16 square kilometres.



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