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How TROOPS FOILED PRABA'S LAST ATTEMPT TO FLEE:  
**Cowardly leader dies inside a bush in Nanthikadal lagoon**

by Ranil WIJAYAPALA



The entire Sri Lankan nation on Friday marked the dawn of a new era with tens of thousands of people marching along the streets in Sri Lankan capital to pay their tribute to the War Heroes who turned decades-long dream of the nation to unite this country under one flag, into a reality.

President Mahinda Rajapaksa, who was in jubilant mood after this record breaking victory against the most ruthless terror outfit of the world with clear proof to say that its leader was killed, spelled out his vision for the future Sri Lanka addressing the mammoth crowd that thronged into the Parliament grounds to mark this victory.

It was heartening, when he said that each and every citizen of this country should remember the fact that in each and every breath they should pay their gratitude to the War Heroes who sacrificed their lives and limbs to make this victory a reality.

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SRI LANKA

**Field commanders in the Vanni Liberation**

Army's division and Task Forces engaged in the victorious Vanni humanitarian operation which began in 2007.

**Major General Jagath Dias**  
General Officer Commanding 57 Division

**Brigadier Prasanna de Silva**  
General Officer Commanding 55 Division

**Colonel Nishantha Wanniarachchi**  
Commander Task Force - IV

**Major General Jagath Jayasuriya**  
Security Forces Commander Vanni

**Brigadier Chagle Gallage**  
General Officer Commanding 59 Division

**Major General Kamal Gunaratne**  
General Officer Commanding 53 Division

**Brigadier Satyapriya Liyanage**  
Commander Task Force-III

**Major General Nandana Udawatta**  
former GOC of the 59 Division

**Brigadier Rohana Bandara**  
Commander Task Force-II

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Comments and suggestions to Editor

Sunday Observer Graphics: Mahil

And he promised to give `all' what is needed by the families of the fallen War Heroes. The only exception was their loved ones who had sacrificed their lives in the battlefield to make this victory a reality. Even he proposed to name a flower with Sri Lankan identity to remember the fallen War Heroes like the poppy flower.

All what he emphasised was that the sacrifices made by those War Heroes will be remembered in each and every step in Sri Lanka's future.

It was on Monday, the day Security Forces marked their final victory against the LTTE that President Mahinda Rajapaksa felicitated Defence Secretary Gotabhaya Rajapaksa and promoted all three Forces Commanders, Army Commander Sarath Fonseka to the rank of General, Navy Commander Wasantha Karannagoda to the rank of Admiral and Air Force Commander Roshan Gunatillake to the rank of Air Chief Marshal to pay his gratitude to the Armed Forces, Sri Lanka Police and the Civil Security Force as they were the key players to bring this historic victory to the Sri Lankan nation.



THE FINAL RIDE: The monster, who lived by fire and died by fire - Velupillai Prabhakaran is carried in a stretcher by troops.

That was how the Sri Lankan nation marked the victory against the LTTE having fought a war for three decades pumping all the national assets that would have otherwise been used to bring this nation towards prosperity.

Now, prosperity can be brought to the country as the megalomaniac leader Velupillai Prabhakaran is no more. He breathed his last inside the mangroves of the Nanthikadal lagoon when Army troops confronted with his inner circle guard on Tuesday morning.

Although, Tamil Diaspora across the globe was not willing to accept this bitter truth even after Sri Lanka Army produced the body of the Tiger leader killed in combat in Nanthikadal lagoon, the DNA test conducted to identify his body has also proved that it was the body of none other than the leader of the LTTE Velupillai Prabhakaran.

It was after his last attempt to flee from Safe Zone, the Tiger leader Prabhakaran was killed inside the mangroves of the Nanthikadal lagoon.

At least at the last moment this so-called Tiger leader would have realized that it was difficult to face the Sri Lanka Army which has been groomed into an Army with 180,000 troops within the last three years with 3,000 odd soldiers being recruited on monthly basis.

So, Prabhakaran had no chance of escape at the last moment as troops had the freedom to fight with them as they had rescued the last batch of civilians from the Safe Zone by Sunday evening.

The 58 Division under the command of Brigadier Shavendra Silva, the 53 Division under the command of Major General Kamal Gunaratne and 59 Division under the command of Brigadier Prasanna Silva had already sieged the last terrain under the LTTE by Sunday evening with the last batch of civilians escaping from the Safe Zone.

According to military, by Sunday evening the LTTE was trapped inside a 400 meters by 300 meters stretch South of Karayanmullivaikkal area and there were strong indications that they were making a desperate attempt to breach the Security Forces defence and flee towards the Weli Oya jungles.

Their first attempt, operation `Anchor I' to escape into Weli Oya jungles was effectively foiled by the 59 Division troops and the Task Force VIII troops on Sunday morning killing scores of Tiger cadres who tried breach the defences in the Western bank of the Nanthikadal lagoon. During that attempt it was evident that the LTTE was trying to clear a path for their leader to escape towards Weli Oya jungles.

There were strong indications that Prabhakaran's elder son Charles Anthony and Sea Tiger leader Soosai had briefed the Tiger cadres who launched the operation Anchor I and were due to escape in the second wave towards the Weli Oya jungles.

With that failed attempt, the Tiger leadership was in a



completely hopeless situation and the Security Forces predicted that they will make a desperate attempt to flee from the last terrain by Sunday night.

Therefore, the Infantry troops led by Special Forces and Commando troops continued their thrust and lay in siege around the last terrain of the LTTE till Sunday evening. The troops stopped their operations as dusk fell as it was dangerous to enter the last terrain during the night. However, all troops were kept on alert since there were strong indications that LTTE leaders would make an attempt to flee from the area.

As they were on vigil the 17 Gemunu Watch battalion under the command of Lt. Colonel Keerthi Kottewatta attached to the 53 Division who were screening the civilians arriving in the 53 Division area observed a number of civilians arriving towards their defences around 2.30 a.m. on Monday.

As troops had been given strict instructions not to take any civilian towards the military controlled areas, civilians were denied access. But there was an attempt by the civilians to forcibly enter through Security Forces defences and then only troops fired shots into the air to stop them. But it was at the very moment the troops realized the fact that it was not civilians but the last batch of LTTE cadres who had arrived there.

With the firing of warning shots to the air, a massive fire was directed at the troops and number of bunkers manned by 17 Gemunu watch and the 5 Gemunu Watch battalion came under attack of the LTTE and Tiger cadres started to enter the military controlled areas through the breached defences.

As this confrontation continued, Special Forces Brigade Commander Colonel Athula Kodippili was reaching towards the Y junction that links the A-35 Road and the Puthumattalan Road and a soldier there pleaded with him not to go beyond that point as the Tiger cadres had already infiltrated their defences.

With that information Colonel Athula Kodippili proceeded towards the 53 Division Headquarters in Puthukudiyiruppu to take precautionary measures to avoid further infiltration of the military defences.

By that time Artillery Brigade Commander Brigadier Priyantha Napagoda, who was monitoring the UAV visuals from Kilinochchi, had observed the way the Tiger cadres were infiltrating through the Security Forces defences and 58 Division GOC Brigadier Shavendra Silva was also informed of the situation.

At the time of the final attempt of the LTTE leader, Army Commander Lt. General Sarath Fonseka, who was on an overseas visit also arrived in the country and instructions were given to strengthen the second and third defences to face any eventuality and 55 Division Acting GOC Brigadier Chergie Gallage was also asked to move to Puthukudiyiruppu area to help the 53 Division to reestablish the breached defences. Brigadier Shavendra Silva took immediate measures to strengthen the defences along the A-35 Road as Tiger cadres were heading towards the beachfront. The 7 Sinha Regiment Commanding Officer Lt. Colonel Kithsiri Liyanage who was closely monitoring the situation along with 1 Commando CO Major Krishantha Gnanaratne, took immediate measures to strengthen the defences along the A-35 road. Commando troops launched a massive fire towards the Tiger cadres who infiltrated towards the A-35 Road through the road from the lagoon front. It was amidst these fierce battles that troops monitored LTTE transmissions that few of their top level leaders were fleeing in an ambulance.

But it was later revealed that the ambulance which had arrived from the Air Mobile Brigade Medical Dressing Station with three Army casualties has been stopped closer to Y junction in the A-35 by two Tiger cadres and set on fire.

The three wounded soldiers had managed to escape from the ambulance and troops had killed the two Tiger cadres with two claymore mines in their back closer to the ambulance. Another bus ambulance which had a tyre puncture has also been taken out of the A-35 Road towards the 681 Brigade Advance Dressing Station.

Now it is believed that the LTTE had tried to mislead the troops through psychological operations pretending that Tiger leader, who had tried to escape in an ambulance, was burnt into ashes so that they can easily take him out towards a safer location diverting the attention of the troops towards another direction.

By that time scores of Tiger cadres and the top level leaders had been surrounded and killed by the troops. It was in the first wave of attack LTTE IT Wing leader and elder son of Prabhakaran, Charles Anthony was killed at the hands of the Security Forces.

LTTE Political Chief Nadesan and Peace Secretariat Chief Puleethevan and Military Wing leader Ramesh who had arrived as a separate group were killed in the crossfire. Although there was speculation that they had expressed their willingness to surrender, there was no such indication as they had engaged in fierce fighting and killed.

By Monday morning troops collected scores of Tiger bodies including that of the Tiger leaders and many of them were identified by the military intelligence officials. There were many disfigured bodies after being caught in the massive fire. Although it was announced that LTTE Intelligence Wing leader Pottu Amman's body was recovered later it was found that it was not his as the body was shorter than the real height of Pottu Amman.

By Monday evening troops collected more than 400 bodies from the lagoon area and fierce fighting continued as troops intensified search operations in search of Prabhakaran, Pottu Amman and Sea Tiger leader Soosai that was the main concerns of the troops to prove that the LTTE leadership had been totally eliminated.

As these search operations continued in the lagoon front, the Special Forces troops under the command of Colonel Athula Kodippili captured the last few hundred metres under the LTTE killing more than 130 Tiger cadres.

It was under these circumstances the three squadrons from the 1, 2 and 5 Commando battalions launched a special search operation along the Kadolana stretch of the Nanthikadal lagoon as they strongly believed that Tiger leader Velupillai Prabhakaran was still alive inside.

As they continued their search operations they were faced with heavy resistance from the LTTE who were hiding inside the Kadolana stretch in Vellamullivaikkal area.

After this fierce battle which was in the early hours of Tuesday, commando troops had removed a belt order and personal weapon of Tiger cadre killed inside there, but without any knowledge that it was the body of the Tiger leader Velupillai Prabhakaran.

It was after the Commando troops conducted their operations 4 Vijayaba Infantry Regiment troops under the Command of Lt. Colonel Rohan Aluvihare conducted a search operation in that area. It was around 10.30 a.m. they found the body of Tiger leader Velupillai Prabhakaran.

The bodies of the inner ring defence of the Tiger leader were also found along with his body. The dog tag bearing 001 and his identity card, personal weapons and his personal belongings were found from his pack.

The message was passed to 53 Division GOC Major General Kamal Gunaratne and in turn he tried to convey the good news to the Army Commander Lt. General Sarath Fonseka.

But it was after great difficulty the message was passed onto him as he was attending the inauguration of Parliament sessions by the President, and later it was announced through the media by the Army Commander.

That was how the saga of the most ruthless terror leader Velupillai Prabhakaran ended in such a way inside a bush in the Nanthikadal lagoon from which the LTTE tried their best to build up Tamil Eelam keeping the Tamil people as his hostages.

The bodies of all top level leaders were recovered by the troops as of Wednesday including that of the Sea Tiger leader Soosai.

The only challenge before the Security Forces today is to find the body of LTTE Intelligence Wing Leader Pottu Amman although there are strong indications that he had also been killed during the final battle.

The body of Balachandran the younger son of Prabhakaran was also found closer to the Nanthikadal lagoon. Therefore, it is strongly believed that Prabhakaran's entire family was killed during the last battle although bodies of Prabhakaran's wife Madivadane and Dvaraka were not identified.

So the LTTE is no longer a problem for Sri Lanka, but it would be a problem for the Western nation who made a last minute bid to save the life of Prabhakaran in the guise of safeguarding

the lives of civilians.

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