



Appa, how are you feeling? - a soldier and an escapee having a small chat

‘Operation Puthumattalan’ True Liberation...



A little child, injured during LTTE attack, after getting treatment from the SL troops.

Day and night, irrespective of the Tiger threats looming large, more and more civilians continue to gush across into troops-held areas from the ‘No Fire Zone’ in Puthumattalan, even at the time this report was going to press. Until the early morning hours of last Friday around 108,000 people from the ‘No Fire Zone’ have reached the safe areas.

Sri Lanka Army continues to shrink the areas under the LTTE cornering them to less than 10 square kilometre enclave of coastal land. With an intention of liberating 15,000 - 20,000 hostages held in the ‘No Fire Zone’ troops continue with their calculated multi-pronged manoeuvres amidst stiff resistance from the terrorists.

According to reports from the Vanni, terrorists still keep obstructing free movement of both civilians and patients and continue to mount small arms fire at civilians including a large number of patients awaiting safe passage with ICRC under Naval escort to Pulmodai.

The national program has been launched islandwide to facilitate fleeing civilians with essential items and in order to do so Government and the private media institutions were informed and instructed to cooperate with this effort.

The Air Force has airlifted over 238 sick and wounded civilians from the NFZ to the Anuradhapura hospital. The SLAF played a crucial role in the hostage rescue operation by keeping a close surveillance of LTTE activities and civilian movement in the NFZ, as well as air transport.

Naval personnel and vessels have been deployed in the North-Eastern seas to facilitate the mass exodus of civilians. Sri Lanka Navy has rescued around 6,000 civilians made special arrangements to treat and provide essential requirements at two naval points in Point Pedro and Pulmodai to cater to displaced civilians.

Pix: Thilak Perera



A tasty meal after a long time, one old man telling the 58 Division GOC Brig. Shavendra Silva



Food parcels for the IDPs sent by the President Mahinda Rajapaksa



Soldier treating a gun shot wound of an escapee



Mass exodus of civilians still reach the cleared areas