

Anti-terrorist drive in EP

by Leon Berenger

At least 2400 people were rounded up in joint police and security force anti terrorist sweeps across several villages in the Batticaloa district over the past two weeks.

53 persons suspected to have links with the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) were later detained for further questioning. They were released after preliminary investigations, senior police and military officials told "The Island".

They said the operations which commenced in mid June were conducted in Chenkaladi, Paravar, Thalawaya, Pannakudah, Eravur, Komathurai, Wemba, Valachchena, Kalkudah, Pasahur, Kaluwankerni and Nasvanthu.

Among those currently being detained are two LTTE activists who had participated in an

attack on a TELO office on June 9. The two men are also believed to have attacked an army patrol three months ago in which a captain was critically wounded. Both attacks occurred in the Batticaloa district the officials said.

The officials further quoted Tamil fishermen rounded up in the operations as saying, that the LTTE was carrying out a massive extortion campaign in several far flung fishing villages in the district.

The LTTE demand rupees 50 per day from each canoe operator that goes out to sea, the fishermen told officials. If this fee was not paid the LTTE would take nearly 40 percent of the day's catch, the fishermen had further alleged.

Officials added that anti terrorists operations were continuing in several other parts of Batticaloa.

24.6.93
24.6.93