

Navy blasts LTTE boats carrying suicide bombers. (1994, November 09). *The Island*.

Navy blasts LTTE boats carrying suicide bombers

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The armed forces yesterday repulsed an LTTE attempt to launch a suicide attack on one of Navy's landing craft at Vettalaikerni east of Elephant Pass military officers said.

The 33 metre long vessel had beached at Vettalaikerni to off-load some vehicles and other supplies for the troops deployed there and at Elephant Pass they said.

"The attack had commenced at 1.45 a.m.," an authoritative Navy official said.

Officers claimed that at least three explosives laden boats which approached the Navy vessel were blown up when security forces opened fire. The Navy gunners on board the targeted vessel and soldiers on shore had fired at the Sea Tiger boats when they were moving towards the Navy vessel, officers said.

One sailor suffered injuries in the incident.

The Navy vessel was not damaged in the attack, officers said.

Before the boats approached the Navy vessel, a sentry on board had detected a frogman swimming towards the vessel with a barrel like object and opened fire. Military officials said that the barrel exploded blowing up the LTTE frogman to pieces.

Military officers said that they intercepted LTTE communications and there was indications that the LTTE lost at least seven personnel in the abortive attack.

Officers said that the attack was launched by sea Tigers and Black sea Tigers who had destroyed four vessels, two belonging

to the Navy and two civilians since the last parliamentary elections day.

A Navy surveillance command ship, Ports Authority vessel, patrol boat 'Sagarawardene' and bulk carrier 'Ocean trader' were sunk in Sea Tiger attacks.

Military officials said that yesterday's attack was launched despite the presence of one Israeli built Fast Attack Craft (FAC) and one Chinese gun boat off Vettalaikerni.

The targeted vessel could carry 100 tons of supplies. It was the first Navy landing craft which came under attack.

Officers said that Air Force helicopter gunships engaged some other boats which were in the area. "The fight came to an end at about 4 a.m.," one officer said.

Officers declined to identify the type of the 'vehicles' which were on board the vessel at the time of the attack. Sources refused to comment whether the vehicles were armoured cars or tanks.

They said the LTTE High Command had been making plans for further attacks on the security forces. "They are getting ready," source said. While accusing the LTTE leadership of trying to gain time by having talks with the People's Alliance (PA) government.

Officers said that they have noticed a significant increase in LTTE boat traffic in the recent past.

They said that there was evidence to suggest that the LTTE highcommand may launch some massive operations against forces just after the Presidential election.