

Three explosive-laden Tiger boats destroyed. (1994, November 08).
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By Panduka Senanayake

THREE EXPLOSIVE-laden boats of the LTTE (Liberation Tigers of Tamil Ealam) were destroyed in an abortive attack on a Naval craft at Vettalaikerni on the north east coast in the early hours of today.

Seven Sea Tiger suicide bombers were reported killed in the failed 1.30 a.m. attempt at ramming the navy's Landing Craft 'Pabbatha' which was unloading cargo for the army on the beachhead at Vettalaikerni.

According to a navy spokesman, the rebel boats had hugged the coastline to approach the

naval craft but were met by the combined firepower of army ground troops and other naval craft deployed in the area.

"The attack was directed by their leader Soosai and deputy Gadaffi, but we are not sure whether they perished during the confrontation which lasted for well over two hours" the spokesman said.

He said that several Tiger boats which attempted to move into the area from the seaside were also engaged by two naval craft which were providing 'cover' to the landing craft.

The LTTE also carried out a deception plan by pretending to carry out a simultaneous attack on the naval base at Karainagar, the officer said.

One sailor was injured in the encounter at Vettalaikerni.

Early last month, the LTTE launched its first attack on a civilian cargo vessel off Vettalaikerni by sinking the merchant ship 'Ocean Trader'.

Prior to that the rebels sank the Naval gunboat 'Sagarawardena' off the Mannar coast also last month.