

## Tamil Tigers attack Sri Lankan navy post in Mannar

A group of guerrillas of the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) carried out a pre-dawn assault on a naval post in the northwestern coastal town of Mannar Monday, the rebels said, even as the advancing government troops and the rebels were locked in fierce fighting elsewhere in the region.

'The LTTE mounted a raid on a coastal point of the Sri Lanka Navy (SLN) in Koanthaippiddi in Mannar city in the early hours of Monday around 2.00 a.m. and seized arms and ammunitions from the point, killing three SLN personnel,' pro-LTTE website Tamilnet quoted rebels' military spokesman Irasiah Ilanthiarayan as saying.

'The LTTE unit which engaged in the attack has recovered the body of a slain SLN trooper,' the rebel spokesman claimed, adding that the arrangements were being made to hand over the body.

The Sri Lankan Navy, however, denied the claims by the rebels and said that 'the army and navy personnel manning the Kondampiddi fishing marshalling point in Mannar have thwarted a pre-dawn landward offensive by LTTE Monday'.

'Troops in a combined effort, immediately retaliated the LTTE attack and chased away the rebels while taking evasive action to shield fishermen from the LTTE attack,' a top naval official told IANS by phone.

'A soldier has received injuries and was rushed to the general hospital in Mannar, while another was reported missing. Search operations are now underway to locate the missing soldier,' the official said, adding that there were no civilian casualties due to this fighting.

The LTTE attack on a naval post came barely hours after Sri Lankan Air Force supersonic fighter jets bombed a suspected 'LTTE storage depot' in the rebel heartland of Puthukkudiyiruppu in the Mullaitivu district Sunday evening, according to a Defence Ministry report.

There was no immediate reaction from the LTTE in this regard.

*P. Karunakharan ( © IANS / India eNews)*