

New naval base set up to curb LTTE traffic. (1993, November 08) *The Island*.

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# New naval base set up to curb LTTE traffic

by Shamindra Ferdinando

A special air and sea operation has been mounted to intercept and destroy boats crossing the disputed Jaffna lagoon highly placed military officers said.

A Naval base with radar facilities has been established at Elephant Pass to launch operations against LTTE and civilian boats crossing the lagoon, they said. This base would considerably improve the Navy's ability to intercept LTTE and civilian boat traffic they said. This base has been set up in addition to the base at Nagathivanthurai.

Officers said fixed-wing aircraft and helicopters have

been stationed in northern and eastern airfields to support the Navy operations against LTTE boats.

"It is a joint operation," they said while claiming a huge convoy was intercepted and attacked in the early hours of last Saturday. Both the Navy helicopters and the planes swung into action when security forces radar picked up the boat convoy they said. Several boats were believed to have been sunk in the attack.

"We want to deny terrorists their main supply route," a senior military commander said. The lagoon route better known as the Kilali sea route was vital for the LTTE supply

lines, cadre movements as well as civilian traffic between the mainland and the peninsula.

Late September, 118 officers and men were killed and over 250 wounded in an operation to destroy Kilali sea facilities.

However the subsequent withdrawal of the military from Kilali resulted in the quick resumption of boat services.

Officers claimed the new methods adopted to weaken LTTE supply routes have been successful so far. "We are watching the current situation closely," they said.