Coastal security to be revamped in light of LTTE infiltration threat

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NEW DELHI: With the conflict in Sri Lanka entering the final stages, the government has asked the Navy and the Coast Guard to maintain a high state of alert to thwart any bid by LTTE cadres to enter India through the sea route.

Defence minister A. K. Antony on Monday chaired a meeting, attended by Navy chief Admiral Sureesh Mehta, defence secretary Vijay Singh and home secretary Madhukar Gupta, among others, to review coastal security.

Though the government has backtracked from constituting an apex federal maritime agency, which was on the agenda of the Cabinet Committee on Security in wake of the 26/11 terror strikes, it has taken a series of decisions to revamp the country's coastal security architecture. Antony, on his part, asked all agencies concerned to "plug gaps" within "a definite timeframe".

The meeting on Monday discussed the proposals for "coordinated arrangements" for the security of offshore platforms, vessel identification system, identity cards for fishermen, the project to install a chain of coastal radars and intelligence-sharing.

Under the new maritime security plan, Navy is now the "designated authority" responsible for overall maritime security, with both coastal and offshore security under its control.

The force will, of course, be assisted by the Coast Guard, state marine police forces and other central and state agencies for the nation's coastal defence. Towards this end, both Navy and Coast Guard are going in for a major augmentation in their force-levels, manpower and intelligence apparatus. Courtesy: timesofindia.com