



Navy Day Press Conference at New Delhi: Opening Address by Admiral Sunil Lanba Chief of The Naval Staff

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Ladies and Gentlemen, we are all well aware of the prevailing security scenario in the maritime domain. The continued presence of both traditional and non-traditional threats in the maritime domain demands constant attention and robust mitigating actions. The Indian Navy is accordingly, actively engaged in ensuring safety and security in India's maritime areas of interest. We have adopted several new measures to effectively fulfil our commitment to the nation. These are aimed at making our processes and structures more efficient and outcome-oriented.

On the operational front, we have re-oriented our deployment philosophy to Mission-Based-Deployments. We have maintained continuous presence off the Horn of Africa for anti-piracy operations since Oct 08. Indian Naval Ships deployed on anti-piracy patrols have been actively involved in foiling piracy attempts in the Gulf of Aden. In addition, regular deployment of naval ships and aircraft is being maintained in the North Arabian Sea, Gulf of Oman, Persian Gulf, the Andaman Sea and the approaches to the strategically important straits of Malacca, Lombok and Sunda. In short, our ships and aircraft are deployed from the Gulf of Aden to the Western Pacific on an almost 24 x 7 basis.

Waters beyond this geographical expanse are also frequented as part of our international maritime engagements in the Pacific and the Atlantic Oceans. This deployment philosophy has ensured a high degree of presence, visibility and situational awareness in important maritime regions across the globe.

The overall combat capability of the Navy was tested during our annual Theatre Level Operational Readiness Exercise, TROPEX, conducted in Feb-Mar this year. The exercise saw participation of 45 ships, 05 submarines and more than 50 aircraft from the Navy as well as 11 ships from the Indian Coast Guard. In addition, about 20 aircraft and the Garud Special Forces of the Air Force and Airborne Special Forces and Amphibious units from the Indian Army participated.

I must highlight that the exercise provided a great opportunity for progressing jointness among our three Services in planning and execution of combat operations. Jointness was also honed through the annual Joint Disaster Relief Exercises conducted by the three Services in Hyderabad, Shillong and Karwar.

We also recently conducted the Defence of Andaman and Nicobar Exercise from 20 -24 Nov 17 Off Andaman and Nicobar Islands (ANI). In addition to the units at Andaman and Nicobar Command, a large number of troops/ ships and aircraft from mainland also participated in the exercise. Special Forces from all three services undertook joint operations to exercise their inter-operability.

The Indian Navy has participated in about 20 exercises with friendly foreign countries this year. Exercise Malabar, which was widely covered by the media, saw participation of aircraft carriers from India, USA and Japan as well as other ships, submarines and a large variety of aircraft.

The tenth edition of Exercise INDRA, which was held in Russia last month was indeed unique as it involved elements of all the three Services of both nations exercising together for the first time. In addition, we also undertook Joint EEZ patrols of Maldives, Seychelles and Mauritius as well as Coordinated Patrols (CORPATs) with Myanmar, Thailand and Indonesia. These activities help enhance interoperability and ensure security in our maritime neighbourhood as well as in the 'Global Commons'.

Ladies and Gentlemen, you will appreciate that the Indian Navy continues to be at the forefront of Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief efforts in the Indian Ocean Region and beyond. Besides actively participating in disaster relief efforts within the country, the Indian Navy has also been a prompt responder in undertaking relief efforts in Sri Lanka, Bangladesh and Myanmar this year. Naval ships were also deployed for carrying relief material meant for Rohingya refugees to Bangladesh. Our warships, while on deployment in the Western Pacific, were also called upon to provide Search and Rescue assistance off Papua New Guinea, which was carried out successfully.

The Indian Navy has continued to strive towards fostering the spirit of maritime bonding through various multilateral initiatives such as the Indian Ocean Naval Symposium (IONS), Goa Maritime Conclave and MILAN.

Since its inauguration in 2008, the IONS has grown in strength to 23 members and nine observers. This year, the first ever IONS Multilateral Maritime Search and Rescue Exercise (IMMSAREX) was conducted last month off the coast of Bangladesh. Four Indian Naval ships and an aircraft participated in this event.

In order to bring together like-minded maritime nations of South and South Eastern IOR, the Indian Navy recently hosted the Goa Maritime Conclave.

10 countries participated in the inaugural edition of this initiative. This conclave helped in promoting the spirit of cooperative solutions to contemporary maritime security challenges. We intend to hold this event once every two years.

MILAN has been another successful initiative by the Indian Navy for promoting engagements at the regional level. It is conducted biennially at Port Blair. Last MILAN saw participation of 17 countries. The next edition of MILAN is due in March 2018 and the schedule includes a joint multi-lateral exercise at sea for the first time, under this construct.

In yet another path breaking initiative, we conducted 'Operation Sambandh' in Oct 17, wherein 19 officers from ten littoral countries of the IOR embarked Indian Naval ships to witness the full range of blue-water operations.

Information sharing among countries in order to enhance maritime domain awareness at the regional level has been accorded renewed impetus. India has already operationalised White Shipping Information Exchange agreements with eight countries and is working to extend it to several other countries.

Coastal security continues to receive its due impetus. Several exercises and operations were conducted through the year which helped in bringing multiple government agencies together and consolidating on best practices. As a result of these efforts, our readiness to secure our coastal and offshore regions has improved considerably.

Force Level Planning and Acquisitions

I will now change tack from operations to force level planning and future acquisition plans.

Induction of new assets are being progressed in consonance with the Indian Navy's perspective plans. As on date, we have 34 ships under construction and it is a matter of great pride that all of them are being constructed in Indian shipyards. The war-fighting capability of the Navy's surface fleet has been augmented by induction of three indigenous Anti-Submarine Warfare Corvettes, two Water-Jet Fast Attack Craft and two Landing Craft this year.

Work on Indigenous Aircraft Carrier, IAC 1, is progressing well and I am hopeful that the ship would join the Navy by 2020. Two Naval Offshore Patrol Vessels have been launched at Pipavav in Gujarat. In addition, Survey Vessels, Shallow Water Anti-Submarine Warfare Craft and Diving Support Vessels are in various stages of procurement.

Modernisation of the submarine arm is also well underway. We have accepted the delivery of *Kalvari* and we will formally commission her very soon. Trials of *Khanderi*, the second of the *Kalvari* Class, are also progressing satisfactorily. Measures are also underway to bolster the aviation arm of the Navy by induction of new fighters, surveillance aircraft and ship-borne helicopters.

It gives me great pleasure in informing you that the Indian Navy is at the threshold of joining a select league of navies capable of providing Submarine Search and Rescue in the IOR with two Deep Submergence Rescue Vessel Systems scheduled for induction next year.

Policy reforms by the Government, such as the Strategic Partnership Model and the Technology Development Fund, have emerged as catalysts for the Navy's goal of self-reliance.

Indigenous development of sensor suites such as Next Generation SONAR, Combat Management System and Torpedo Fire Control System is indeed encouraging.

Our Navy is progressing its indigenisation efforts in accordance with the 'Indian Naval Indigenisation Plan 2015-30', which has been augmented further by the 'Naval Aviation Indigenisation Roadmap 2017-22'.

We have also identified about Rs 40,000 Crore worth of projects for participation by private shipyards. It is indeed heartening to note that

23 Indian private sector shipyards have qualified for participation in indigenous shipbuilding projects on the basis of their capacity, capability and infrastructure.

A key focus area for the Indian Navy this year has been on infrastructure development and I am pleased to inform you that we have made significant progress in developing Karwar as a futuristic naval base on the West coast of India. The execution of the next Phase of Project Seabird has commenced. Creation of a full-fledged Naval Dockyard and associated infrastructure to accommodate more number of ships, submarines and yard-craft will be undertaken during this phase.

Ladies and gentlemen, due to the high levels of professionalism and commitment displayed by our men and women, the Navy is resolutely marching ahead on the path of progress. In addition to safeguarding our national maritime interests and shaping a positive maritime environment in the IOR, our personnel are also excelling in various other fields to keep the national flag flying high. Our sportsmen have brought laurels at both national and international levels.

Six women Officers have embarked on the *Navika Sagar Parikrama*, wherein they are circumnavigating the globe in the ocean-sailing yacht INSV Tarini. This effort stands testimony the resoluteness of our women. The Indian Naval Mountaineering Team successfully scaled Mount Everest to commemorate the Golden Jubilee of the first Indian Everest expedition in 1965 that was led by a Naval Officer Capt MS Kohli (Retired).

This year also marks the Golden Jubilee of the Navy's submarine arm. Since its inception in Dec 1967, the Submarine Arm has evolved into a formidable force. To commemorate the occasion, 2017 is being celebrated as the 'Year of the Submarine Arm' by the Navy. In recognition of their exemplary service, the Hon'ble President of India is due to award 'President's Colour' to the Submarine arm on 08 Dec 17.

Ladies and Gentlemen, on behalf of all the service and civilian personnel of the Indian Navy, I would like to convey our warm greetings to all of you, and our countrymen on the occasion of Navy Day. I would like to assure the nation that our Navy continues to remain a strong and combat ready force, committed to safeguard our national maritime interests anytime, anywhere and every time.

Śaṃ no Varuṇaḥ. Jai Hind.



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