

CNS Navy Week Press Conference - 02 December 2016

1. Members of the media, Flag Officers, colleagues, ladies and gentlemen,
2. It is my privilege this morning to welcome all of you to this year's Navy Week media interaction. The Indian Navy appreciates the role that our media plays in keeping the public informed on military and naval matters of national importance.
3. I thank all sections of the media for this significant contribution and acknowledge that media is indeed our 'fourth estate' and a force multiplier for our nation.
4. Media professionals and friends! You are well aware of the security scenario in our immediate neighbourhood today. Even as we are assembled here in these peaceful environs of Delhi, there are thousands of valiant soldiers who are standing guard on glaciers, mountains, deserts, plains, and patrolling our seas and our national air-space, for our nation's security and ensure territorial integrity.
5. In light of the prevailing security scenario, the Indian Navy has holistically reviewed its deployment philosophy to proactively deter any menace that may threaten our sovereignty. Even as of today, the Indian Navy has over 40 ships, 04 submarines, and 12 aircraft deployed in waters near and far around the Indian peninsular and island territories. The operational philosophy, war-fighting capabilities and combat tactics of both our Fleets have also been tested recently through a series of sea exercises.
6. While on one hand, it is Indian Navy's prime responsibility to safeguard our national maritime interests, we also remain acutely aware

of our duty to shape a favourable and positive maritime environment in the Indian Ocean Region, in pursuance of our national foreign policy initiatives.

7. Towards this end, our ships have established a wide operational footprint carrying the nation's Tricolour to the ports of almost every country across the Indian Ocean Region, and even beyond over the last year.

8. Our diverse missions in far-flung seas include hydrographic surveys by *Darshak* around Tanzania and Mauritius, anti-piracy patrols by Frigates and Offshore Patrol Vessels in the Gulf of Aden, environment rehabilitation support to Fiji and participation in International Fleet Review at New Zealand by *Sumitra*.

9. Our core naval engagements have included exercises by Western Fleet ships with navies in the Persian Gulf, East Africa and IOR island nations, and by Eastern Fleet ships in the Western Pacific including participation in the multi-national exercise RIMPAC at Hawaii.

10. Notwithstanding these distant deployments, the Indian Navy has accorded the highest priority to India's neighbourhood in keeping with our Government's 'neighbourhood first' policy. Our ships have visited various ports and engaged with navies of countries in the Bay of Bengal, Southeast Asia, Sri Lanka and Maldives in 2016.

11. The Indian Navy's endeavour to promote maritime partnerships for common benefit of the global community was achieved with tremendous success during the International Fleet Review at Visakhapatnam in February this year. This event of national significance enabled us to bring diverse nations on a common platform to engage meaningfully for securing the maritime domain.

12. The Navy has also advanced its capacity building and capability enhancement initiatives with navies and maritime security agencies this year. We have trained almost 1,000 personnel from over 40 navies in our training establishments, continued to deploy our ships and aircraft for EEZ patrols off Maldives, Seychelles and Mauritius, and provisioned ships, aircraft, helicopters and simulators, to friendly regional navies. Herein, I must highlight that our Advanced Light Helicopter deployed to Maldives with our crew, has undertaken multiple missions, including medical evacuations and Search and Rescue in Maldives.

13. Ladies and Gentlemen, you would appreciate that these endeavours of the Indian Navy complement and strengthen our Government's policy initiatives, including SAGAR, Mausam, Sagarmala and promotion of Blue Economy.

14. Our proactive engagement policy is resulting in India emerging as the first port of call and a Net Maritime Security Provider for countries in the Indian Ocean Region. In many ways, these initiatives set the course for India's maritime resurgence in the 21st Century, and the Indian Navy is determined to carry them forward with due vigour and focus.

15. Our growing national security needs dictate that we embrace jointness and respond more effectively in a composite manner to address present and future challenges. With this foundational principle, the Indian Navy, along with the Indian Army and the Indian Air Force, has conducted series of joint exercises this year, involving several aircraft from the IAF as well as Indian Army units.

16. The three services also conducted the first series of three Joint Disaster Relief exercises at Guwahati, Visakhapatnam, and Bhuj this year. These joint HADR exercises have accrued significant benefits and

have highlighted important areas that need attention for improving our national HADR efforts.

17. As far as Coastal Security is concerned, with support from the National Committee for Strengthening Maritime and Coastal Security (NCSMCS), we have brought multiple agencies of the government together. This has enabled consolidation of our combined capabilities. Consequently, our operational readiness to secure our coastal and offshore regions has significantly improved.

18. Ladies and Gentlemen, while the Indian Navy remains ready, prepared and vigilant to meet challenges each day, we are also constantly reassessing our present capabilities and emerging threats to develop our perspective plans for the future.

19. The year 2016 has witnessed significant capability accretion through induction of a number of state-of-the-art combat platforms into our force. These include the Anti-Submarine Warfare corvette, *Kadmatt*, which has more than 90% indigenous content, the Water Jet Fast Attack Craft, *Tihayu* and several Fast Interceptor Craft.

20. The commissioning of Chennai, the third ship of Kolkata Class last month, was an important milestone in our indigenous shipbuilding programme. We also launched the second ship of the P15B destroyers 'Mormugao', this year. The impending inductions of ASW Corvette *Kiltan*, Water Jet FACs and Landing Craft Utility ships will further boost our combat potential.

21. The construction of our first Indigenous Aircraft Carrier *Vikrant* is progressing well at Kochi. We are also finalising our plans and design for our next Indigenous Aircraft Carrier and moving to seek Government's approval for the project.

22. Ladies and Gentlemen, the Indian Navy's Submarine Arm is completing 50 years of Glorious Service next year on the 08th of December. On this day in 1967, the first Indian Submarine Kalvari was commissioned. To commemorate this landmark year, the Indian Navy is celebrating 2017 as the 'Year of the Submarine Arm', with many events scheduled all over the country.

23. This year would also witness the reincarnation of the new Kalvari which will be commissioned shortly. To retain a credible underwater edge and combat worthiness of our existing submarines, we have also commenced their medium-refit-cum-life-certification (Mid-Life Upgrade). Having said so, I am sure our mature and responsible media would understand that the subject of strategic platforms would not be discussed this afternoon for national-security reasons.

24. In order to enhance our Navy's capability to keep India's maritime areas under constant surveillance, we have concluded the contract for purchase of four additional P8I aircraft. Simultaneously, the contract for upgradation of Ka-28 helicopters has been concluded which will give a boost to our integral aviation capability. Procurement cases for other aircraft, including Dorniers, multi-role and utility helicopters, and Unmanned Aerial Vehicles are being actively pursued by the Navy.

25. A key focus area for the Indian Navy this year has been on ensuring full operational and combat readiness of our platforms through comprehensive maintenance and quality upkeep of our ships, submarines and aircraft. In this regard, the successful and timely completion of Vikramaditya's refit, including her maiden docking at Cochin Shipyard, was a momentous achievement. This maiden feat has enhanced our collective confidence in indigenous capability to maintain and build complex platforms.

26. Members of the media and friends! Our Navy's indigenous ship and submarine building programmes, as also ambitious aircraft and helicopter induction plans, are in complete synergy with our Government's Make in India initiative. The Indian Navy seeks to optimise every resource, nurture innovation and maximise indigenisation to generate credible combat power. We are confident that we will enhance our high degree of self-reliance in the years to come.

27. Having spoken of material issues, I shall now speak of our Navy's most important and greatest asset, i.e. our men and women in white and our civilian work force. Ladies and Gentlemen, the strength of the Armed Forces lies in motivated, well-trained and professional men and women.

28. Realising fully well that training is the bedrock of any force we are augmenting the training capacities of our officer and sailor training establishments at Ezhimala and Chilka. Providing quality accommodation and support facilities are important measures for our officers and sailors, and these remain high in the Navy's priority.

29. Skill-mapping of retiring sailors and certification during in-service training are important initiatives by the Indian Navy in pursuance of the Government's Skill India mission. This initiative seeks to nurture the intrinsic talent of our personnel and has received significant appreciation, both from within and outside the Navy. The pilot batch of 70 sailors, trained in collaboration with the National Skill Development Corporation, was awarded Skill Certificates by the Hon'ble Raksha Mantri last month. 58 of these sailors have already secured their placement in companies of repute.

30. The Navy's growth is hinged on development of effective leadership at all levels and generation of highly motivated and skilled professionals. These together make the Navy an efficient, happy and combat ready force. In this regard, the Navy's dedicated focus has been

towards better grooming of young officers. The Navy is also exploring options for greater opportunities and enhanced role for women officers in the Indian Navy. This is being progressed with due consideration and deliberation over multifarious factors that impact their employment in combat roles.

31. Ladies and Gentlemen, we celebrate the 4th of December as the Navy Day to commemorate the Indian Navy's invaluable contribution in achieving victory at sea during the 1971 conflict. On this day, we pay homage to our martyrs and remember the sacrifices of our sailors, veterans and war widows.

32. This year, six of our personnel were honoured with Naosena Medal for exhibiting exceptional gallantry and courage, in the face of daunting challenges. On the occasion of Navy Day, I salute them and their families, for their contributions and sacrifices, in service of our nation.

33. On behalf of the gallant men and women of the Indian Navy, I take this opportunity to reiterate our Navy's steadfast resolve to remain the bulwark against every form of maritime threat or challenge.

34. The Indian Navy is capable and ready to safeguard our national maritime interests anytime, anywhere, every-time. As a professional force, Your Navy has overcome all challenges at sea with utmost professionalism in the past. I assure the citizens of our great nation that the Indian Navy will continue to strive for excellence to anchor our nation's stability, security, well-being and prosperity, in future as well.

35. On behalf of the Indian Navy, I wish all of you and the people of our country, warm greetings and good wishes on the occasion of Navy Day.

36. Thank You. Jai Hind.