

EXERCISE VARUNA – 2021

Relevant for: Science & Technology | Topic: Defence related developments

The 19th edition of the Indian and French Navy bilateral exercise 'VARUNA-2021' is scheduled to be conducted in the Arabian Sea from 25th to 27th April 2021.

From the Indian Navy's side, guided missile stealth destroyer INS Kolkata, guided missile frigates INS Tarkash and INS Talwar, Fleet Support Ship INS Deepak, with Seaking 42B and Chetak integral helicopters, a Kalvari class submarine and P8I Long Range Maritime Patrol Aircraft, will participate in the exercise. The French Navy will be represented by the Aircraft Carrier Charles-de-Gaulle with Rafale-M fighter, E2C Hawkeye aircrafts and helicopters Caïman M and Dauphin embarked, Horizon-class Air defense destroyer Chevalier Paul, Aquitaine-class multi-missions frigate FNS Provence with a Caïman M helicopter embarked and Command and supply ship Var. The Indian side will be led by Rear Admiral Ajay Kochhar, Nau Sena Medal, Flag Officer Commanding Western Fleet, while the French side will be led by Rear Admiral Marc Aussedat, Commander Task Force 473.

The three day exercise will see high tempo-naval operations at sea, including advanced air defence and anti-submarine exercises, intense fixed and rotary wing flying operations, tactical manoeuvres, surface and anti-air weapon firings, underway replenishment and other maritime security operations. Units of both navies will endeavour to enhance and hone their war-fighting skills to demonstrate their ability as an integrated force to promote peace, security and stability in the maritime domain.

On completion of exercise VARUNA-21, to consolidate accrued best practices and enhance interoperability, Indian Navy's guided missile frigate INS Tarkash will continue to exercise with the French Navy's Carrier Strike Group (CSG) from 28th April to 1st May 2021. During this period, the ship will take part in advanced surface, anti-submarine and air-defence operations with the French CSG.

VARUNA-21 highlights growing bonhomie and showcases increased levels of synergy, coordination and inter-operability between the two friendly navies. These interactions further underscore the shared values as partner navies, in ensuring freedom of seas and commitment to an open, inclusive Indo-Pacific and a rules-based international order.



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