

INDIAN NAVY COORDINATES LARGEST EVER COASTAL DEFENCE EXERCISE TEN YEARS AFTER "26/11"

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Ministry of Defence

Indian Navy Coordinates Largest Ever Coastal Defence Exercise Ten Years After "26/11"

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Ten years after "26/11", the Indian Navy commenced the largest coastal defence exercise off the Indian coast today. Exercise SEA VIGIL, a first of its kind, is being undertaken along the entire 7516.6 km coastline and Exclusive Economic Zone of India and is involving all the 13 coastal States and Union Territories along with all maritime stakeholders, including the fishing and coastal communities.

Exercise SEA VIGIL aims to comprehensively and holistically validate the efficacy of the measures taken since '26/11'. Seaward monitoring during the exercise will entail patrolling off coast, in Offshore Development Areas and off our islands by the Indian Navy, Indian Coast Guard, supported by the State Marine Police. Closer coast, strategic assets, ports, Single Point Moorings (SPMs) will be patrolled by designated agencies. Seaward monitoring will also entail inputs from technical means, including intelligence sources. Shore-based monitoring will entail enhanced vigil by the State Police along the coast; monitoring of fish landing centres by state fisheries departments; as also monitoring of port areas by respective port authorities.

The exercise aims to simultaneously activate the coastal security mechanism across all States and Union Territories. The exercise will cover a wide frontage covering for the first time the entire coast of India, including island territories. The exercise will also go deeper, being spread over seaward, coastal, and hinterland areas. Evaluation of critical areas and processes, including inter-agency coordination, information sharing and technical surveillance will be undertaken. Multi Agency Audit and identification of gaps, shortfalls and incorporation of lessons learnt into SOPs are also the desired outcomes.

While smaller exercises are conducted in coastal states on a biannual basis, including combined exercises amongst adjoining states, the conduct of a security exercise at a national-level is perhaps the first of its kind. It reflects the distance that has been covered since '26/11' and the relative maturing of the organisation for coastal security to take on this large-scale endeavour. Despite, the gains, the challenges are enormous. Exercise SEA VIGIL will provide a realistic assessment of our strengths and weakness and this will certainly help further strengthening of maritime security and in turn national security.

The scale of the exercise is unprecedented in terms of the geographical extent, the number of stakeholders involved, the number of units participating and in terms of the objectives to be met. The exercise is a build up towards the major theatre level tri-service exercise TROPEX [Theatre-level Readiness Operational Exercise] which Indian Navy conducts every two years. SEA VIGIL and TROPEX together will cover the entire spectrum of maritime security, including transition from peace to conflict. All Operational assets of the Indian Navy and Indian Coast Guard are

participating in the SEA VIGIL. The conduct of the exercise SEA VIGIL is also being facilitated by the Ministries of Defence, Home Affairs, Shipping, Petroleum and Natural Gas, Fisheries, Customs, State Governments and other agencies of Centre/ State.

Background

Post '26/11', the Indian Navy was designated as the agency responsible for overall maritime security, including offshore and coastal security. The Naval Commanders-in-Chiefs at Mumbai, Kochi, Visakhapatnam and Port Blair were also designated as Cs-in-C Coastal Defence. The Indian Coast Guard was designated as the agency responsible for coastal security in territorial waters, including waters to be patrolled by the State Marine Police. In the discharge of these very responsibilities, Exercise 'SEA VIGIL' has been planned by the Indian Navy.

Coastal security is complex construct since it involves activities both at sea and at land. The targets of the terrorists could be well inland. In the aftermath of "26/11", a whole-of-government approach to maritime security was adopted and a large number of measures were taken by a host of stakeholders. At the apex level National Committee on Strengthening Maritime and Coastal Security (NCSMCS) with Cabinet Secretary at the helm was established to review important matters pertaining to Coastal Security and for effective centre-state coordination. Likewise committees have also been established at State and District level. At the operational level, it included setting up of Joint Operations Centres (JOCs) of the Navy and Coastal Security Operations Centres of the Indian Coast Guard.

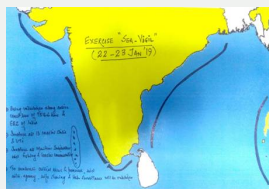
A multi-tiered patrol and surveillance mechanism with focus on technical surveillance and augmenting Maritime Domain Awareness (MDA) through the coastal radar chain and other systems was adopted. Real-time information sharing through the National Command Control Communication and Intelligence (NC3I) Network; greater intelligence and operational coordination were made the focus areas. The sectoral security initiatives in fisheries, offshore, ports and shipping sectors were also adopted. Overall, while there has been significant progress in the past decade, however, there remain concerns, especially in view of continuing threats in the maritime domain.

SALIENT FEATURES – EXERCISE SEA VIGIL

1. Ten years after "26/11" the Indian Navy will coordinate the largest coastal defence exercise off the Indian coast on 22-23 Jan 19, Exercise SEA VIGIL.
2. The exercise, a first of its kind, is being undertaken along the entire 7516.6 km coastline and Exclusive Economic Zone of India and involves all the 13 coastal States and Union Territories along with all maritime stakeholders, including the fishing and coastal communities.
3. The scale of the exercise is unprecedented in terms of the geographical extent, the number of stakeholders involved, the number of units deployed, and in terms of the objectives to be

met.

4. The exercise is a build up towards the major theatre level tri-service exercise TROPEX [Theatre-level Readiness Operational Exercise] which Indian Navy conducts every two years.
5. The conduct of the exercise SEA VIGIL has been facilitated by the Ministries of Defence, Home Affairs, Shipping, Petroleum and Natural Gas, Fisheries, Customs, State Governments and other agencies of Centre/ State.
6. Post '26/11', operational responsibilities for coastal security were entrusted to the Indian Navy and Indian Coast Guard. In the discharge of these very responsibilities that Exercise 'SEA VIGIL' has been planned by the Indian Navy.
7. Exercise SEA VIGIL aims to comprehensively and holistically validate the efficacy of the measures taken since '26/11'. The exercise will entail both seaward and shore-based monitoring.
8. The exercise will in addition to covering the entire coastline, will also go deeper into the hinterland.
9. Evaluation of critical areas and processes, including inter-agency coordination, information sharing and technical surveillance will be undertaken. Multi agency audit and identification of gaps, shortfalls and incorporation of lessons learnt into SOPs are also the desired outcomes.
10. Exercise SEA VIGIL to provide a realistic assessment of our strengths and weakness and this will certainly help further strengthening of maritime security and in turn national security.



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