

War games to hone anti-submarine skills

The Navies of India, Japan and the U.S. will enhance their anti-submarine warfare skills in this year's Malabar naval war games to be held off the coast of Guam from June 7 to 16.

For the first time in a Malabar exercise, all three Navies are deploying their maritime reconnaissance (MR) aircraft to sharpen those skills.

"Each side has aircraft which can lay sonobuoys and we will also monitor each other's sonobuoys. We will cross-attach people from all three countries," the Deputy Chief of the Naval Staff, Vice-Admiral G. Ashok Kumar, said.

While the Indian Navy is deploying a P-8I long-range MR aircraft, the U.S. is deploying two P-8A aircraft and Japan is sending a Kawasaki P-1 MR aircraft. In addition, Japan and the U.S. have anti-submarine warfare helicopters on board their helicopter carrier *JS Ise* and aircraft carrier *USS Ronald Reagan*, respectively.

The U.S. has one nuclear attack submarine, *USS Pasadena*, and Japan for the first time is deploying a Soryu class conventional submarine.

However, the Indian Navy does not have any anti-submarine warfare helicopter in the exercise. Indian effort would be limited to P-8I and the sonars on ships. The Navy's anti-submarine warfare helicopter fleet is dependent on the ageing Sea Kings and is in urgent need of new helicopters. "The exercise contributes towards increasing the level of mutual understanding, interoperability and sharing of the best practices between the three navies," the Navy said.

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