

INDIAN NAVY – SRI LANKA NAVY MARITIME EXERCISE SLINEX-20 OFF TRINCOMALEE

Relevant for: International Relations | Topic: India - Sri Lanka

The Eighth Edition of annual Indian Navy (*IN*) – Sri Lanka Navy (*SLN*) bilateral maritime exercise SLINEX-20 is scheduled off Trincomalee, Sri Lanka from 19 to 21 October 2020. The Sri Lanka Navy will be represented by *SLN* Ships **Sayura** (Offshore Patrol Vessel) and **Gajabahu** (Training Ship) led by Rear Admiral Bandara Jayathilaka, the **Flag Officer Commanding Naval Fleet, Sri Lanka Navy**. Indigenously built ASW corvettes **Kamorta** and **Kiltan** under the command of Rear Admiral Sanjay Vatsayan, **Flag Officer Commanding Eastern Fleet**, will represent the Indian Navy. In addition, Indian Navy Advanced Light Helicopter (ALH) and Chetak helicopter embarked onboard *IN* ships, and Dornier Maritime Patrol Aircraft will also be participating. The previous edition of SLINEX was conducted off Visakhapatnam in September 2019.

SLINEX-20 aims to enhance inter-operability, improve mutual understanding and exchange **best practices and procedures for multi-faceted maritime operations** between both navies. In addition, the exercise will also showcase capabilities of our indigenously constructed naval ships and aircraft. Surface and anti-air exercises including weapon firing, seamanship evolutions, manoeuvres and cross deck flying operations are planned during the exercise, which will further enhance the high degree of inter-operability already established between the two friendly navies.

SLINEX series of exercise exemplifies the deep engagement between India and Sri Lanka which has strengthened mutual cooperation in the maritime domain. Interaction between the *SLN* and *IN* has also grown significantly in recent years, in consonance with India's policy of 'Neighbourhood First' and Hon'ble PM's vision of 'Security and Growth for all in the Region (SAGAR)'.

Synergy developed during SLINEX exercises resulted in seamless coordination of joint *SLN* – *IN* efforts in September 2020 to render assistance to MT New Diamond, a Very Large Crude Carrier (VLCC), which had caught fire off the East Coast of Sri Lanka.

The exercise is being conducted in a non-contact 'at-sea-only' format in the backdrop of COVID-19 pandemic.

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