



# QUARTERDECK 2022

NAVY FOUNDATION MAGAZINE





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*Disclaimer: The opinions expressed in Quarterdeck magazine do not necessarily reflect the views of IHQ MOD (Navy), the Navy Foundation or the Editor*



# FROM THE EDITOR'S DESK



Greetings, dear readers.

Much has happened since we last met!

The Indian Navy has a new chief at the helm, Admiral R Hari Kumar, PVSM, AVSM, VSM, ADC, and we are privileged to share his vision for the Navy and learn a little about his journey in an exclusive and insightful interview.

Undoubtedly, one of the most exciting events of late has been the commissioning of India's first indigenous aircraft carrier, the mighty INS Vikrant, which combines the legacy of the past with future-ready capability. What's more, the celebrations were heightened by the unveiling of the new Naval Ensign – the 'Nishaan' that has evoked so much pride across the country. We bring you a ringside view of this unforgettable day. Other highlights include the commissioning of Kalvari class submarine INS Vela and Project 15 B destroyers INS Visakhapatnam and INS Mormugao.

Indeed, from the award of the President's Colour to Naval Aviation and technological training institution INS Valsura in recognition of their exceptional service to the nation to the Diamond Jubilee of the Naval Air Operations (Observer) School in Kochi, the Golden Jubilee of INS Dwarka in Okha and the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of destroyer INS Delhi, there has been much to celebrate. Further, let's not forget PFR 2022; the Republic Day Parade 2022, where the Navy won the award for best marching contingent; the Navy Ultra Marathon; and The Indian Navy Quiz – THINQ, which I was fortunate to witness in person. We give you front-row seats to these memorable events.

There are events... and then there are experiences. These chronicles, both professional and personal, are condensed into memories and shared by our broad spectrum of writers. Many of them are on their second innings with divergent paths and new careers but they have one thing in common: their heart still beats for the Navy. Tales of courage and commitment, lessons learnt at sea and on shore, notable moments of naval history, the sweet touch of nostalgia, a dash of humour, a fair amount of soul-searching and self-discovery – you'll find it all in these pages. We also honour our own who have left us but continue to light the way.

That, ultimately, is the essence of *Quarterdeck*. It's not just a bunch of bound pages to leaf through but a repository of memory and emotion to treasure – and a true honour to edit. My sincere thanks to all our contributors, Team DESA for their continued and constant support and, above all, our retired officers, who are the *raison d'être* for this magazine.

Respect. Salute. *Jai Hind!*

- Arati Rajan Menon



# CHANGE OF COMMAND



**Admiral R Hari Kumar, PVSM, AVSM, VSM, ADC**, took over as Chief of the Naval Staff from **Admiral Karambir Singh, PVSM, AVSM, ADC**, on 30 November 2021.



## INTERVIEW

### MEET THE CHIEF!

*Quarterdeck* presents an exclusive interview with Chief of the Naval Staff  
Admiral R Hari Kumar, PVSM, AVSM, VSM, ADC

**Sir, what prompted you to choose the Navy as a career? Do you have a Services background?**

I am the eldest of three brothers, and do not have anyone in my immediate family with a Services background. I studied at Sacred Heart Convent in Thanjavur, Tamil Nadu, till Class 5. Later, we siblings, along with our mother, shifted to Thiruvananthapuram, seeking better education facilities. I pursued my education at Carmel Convent, Mannom Memorial Residential High School and Government Art College in Thiruvananthapuram.

To be frank, I did not nurture an ambition to join the Armed Forces during my school days. My aim was to either secure an IIT seat or join an engineering college in Thiruvananthapuram. But life had something else in store for me. It was my maternal uncle Wing Cdr S K J Nair (Retd), my cousin Capt H Muraleedharan (Retd) of the Indian Army and my friend Major General R P Bhadran (Retd) who inspired me to join the forces. They encouraged me to take the National Defence Academy (NDA) entrance examination.



I cleared the NDA examination and SSB interview scoring a high merit position in the UPSC ranking while I was pursuing my pre-degree course. My parents were initially not keen on allowing me to join the NDA. But I was tempted by the adventurous life the forces provide. It was only after my repeated requests that my parents conceded, and I was allowed to join the NDA.

**The family is regarded as the 'wind beneath the wings' of a person in the Services. Please tell us a little about yours and the role they have played in your personal and professional evolution.**

You are absolutely right when you say that family is the wind beneath the wings. It is truer for Armed Forces personnel, as this noble profession calls for sacrifice, dedication and commitment of the highest order. Without the support of our families, it is impossible to find a balance between our





professional responsibilities and personal commitments. In that context, my family and friends have always supported me in all my endeavours –personal or professional.

My father M Radhakrishnan Nair, an agriculture graduate, worked in the sales department of Fertilisers and Chemicals Travancore Ltd (FACT). While he fully fulfilled the role of provider for the family, he was travelling on work most of the time.

My family has been my biggest pillar of support. I have always looked up to my mother, Mrs B Vijayalakshmi, for her selfless commitment towards family. She not only shouldered the responsibility of all three sons but also oversaw the maintenance of our farmland. She is a well-educated, strong-willed woman with a lot of resolve and dedication, who left no stone unturned towards ensuring that we were brought up in the right environment with the right morals and ethics. My parents encouraged me to shoulder responsibility from the very young age of five onwards, be it shopping, supervising work, looking after siblings or managing the farm activities.



In addition to my parents, my wife has played a very important role in my life. I married Mrs Kala Nair in 1989 and soon after, she had to handle the challenges of being a naval wife – the toughest job in the Indian Navy. It was because of her constant support that I was never tense about family issues. She helped me focus my time and energy on my naval duties. There are some instances that always come to my mind. I was part of the naval team deployed for the United Nations' Operations in Somalia (UNOSOM). I had left home hoping to come back after 45 days, but could return only after six months. When my daughter Anjana was born, I was on a mission at sea. I still regret not being there for her birth, but it was then that I realised that I have a family that can withstand the challenges of naval life. In addition to my family, my friends from school as well as in the Navy have always supported and advised me to take important decisions in my personal and professional life.

While my family and friends have been the wind beneath my wings, my team of motivated men and women in the Navy are my actual wings. Without their contributions, I would have not sustained this professionally and personally satisfying journey.

I have been fortunate to have served with exceptionally good shipmates throughout my career. My watchkeeping skills were gained under Commander R K Rao and Captain Arvind Kumar onboard INS Ghorpad. Tremendous mentoring on fleet work, ship management and conduct happened under then Captain (later Admiral) Madhavendra Singh onboard INS Ranvir. The commissioning crew of INS Ranvir proved a very cohesive and professionally sound team that mentored me in many ways – Lt Cdr (later Cmde) K Chaudhary, Lt (later VAdm) R K Patnaik, Lt (later Cmde)



P Parmeshwaram, Lt Cdr M M Paul, and many others. As a gunnery specialist, I gained immensely under Cdr B W Singh, Cdr (later Admiral) D K Joshi, Capt (later VAdm) S S Byce and Capt (later VAdm) A K Singh. As a Flag Officer, I gained immensely from VAdm Satish Soni and VAdm S P S Cheema on the nuances of higher leadership. VAdm S P S Cheema particularly inspired in me the ability to take bold decisions, caring for the community including veterans and the focused efforts to raise the standard of facilities and housing for our personnel. Finally, the faith, support, hard work and untiring efforts by my shipmates in every unit and tenure have had a significant share in my journey in service without any doubt.

**You have been at the helm of the service for over a year now. You articulated your vision for the Navy on assuming charge. What significant challenges remain as we move into 2023?**

In my first message after taking over as CNS, I had urged naval personnel to keep the outlook of 'Ships First' at the core of all their activities. The idea underpinning this outlook was that all our actions and efforts should be aimed to support the men and women at sea, who are central to the Indian Navy's vision of being a 'Combat Ready, Credible, Cohesive and Future-Proof Force'.

While we have covered considerable ground towards this vision, there are some challenges we need to address as we move into 2023. I will highlight a few issues that require unwavering focus and attention from each one of us.

**Operationally**, we continue to face a multitude of challenges and threats – ranging from possible conventional conflicts to regional instability; natural disasters to climate change; piracy to illegal unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing; maritime terrorism to ensuring freedom of navigation; and so on. These threats coexist and coevolve constantly and, therefore, our combat-readiness has to remain optimal at all times. It will require unwavering attention on full role-worthiness of every operational platform, particularly every weapon and sensor system – with 'ordnance on target' being the continued goal.

**Organisationally**, the biggest challenge is to remain an agile force, promoting a happy work environment and driving proactive actions to achieve credibility and cohesion. Towards this, we must proactively pursue initiatives under the Ships First approach to their logical conclusion.

**Technologically**, we understand that security has been steadily impacted with impressive advances in modern technologies. The role of technology for defence and development has enhanced and there is a more significant interplay between technology and matters of safety, security and stability worldwide. This trend will most likely continue in future as well, with modern technologies being accessible to rich and poor alike, albeit at different levels. Therefore, towards remaining a future-proof force, undiluted efforts are required to ensure that niche and disruptive technologies and new capabilities that we have sought through the 'Swavlamban' Seminar are progressed in a time-bound manner. Our commitment to induct at least 75 technologies by the next Independence Day needs to be fulfilled in letter and spirit.





On the **human resource** front, the Navy and the Armed Forces are implementing the transformational 'Agnipath' scheme, which not only brings down the average age of our Services but also enhances our combat-readiness and operational effectiveness by tapping into a valuable national resource in the form of our technologically savvy youth of today. As part of this scheme, for the first time, the Navy will be inducting women sailors as well – another transformational initiative. In this endeavour, smooth induction and subsequent seamless assimilation of 'Agniveers' into the Navy must remain our collective priority.



**The Indian Navy has been at the forefront of indigenisation for more than half a century. With the technology arena changing rapidly, what are the focus areas for pursuing the 'Atmanirbhar' principle in the coming years?**

The Indian Navy's commitment to 'Self-Reliance in Defence Production' is evident from the fact that all 29 ships and submarines commissioned into the Navy over the past seven years have been built in India. Further, 43 out of 45, nearly 95 per cent, of the ships and submarines currently under construction are being built at Indian shipyards. While these achievements are a reflection of our focused efforts towards self-reliance, we aim to be a 100 per cent Atmanirbhar Navy by 2047.

We have set plans into motion to achieve this. The Navy has already made sufficient progression in the 'To Float' and 'To Move' categories as far as self-sufficiency is concerned. My priority, therefore, is to indigenise the 'Flight' category – which includes weapons, sensors and force multipliers.

Looking at the rapid advancements in technology across the world, and those that will have a significant impact on future wars, my top three focus areas would be:

- Artificial intelligence (AI) and its application to warfighting. I believe there is immense potential here and the possibilities are limitless.
- Underwater domain awareness, because the ambient conditions in the Indian Ocean Region make it very challenging – and knowing what is beneath the sea surface is vital.
- Adopting changes in information communication technology (ICT), especially for communications, data processing and decision support – we are looking to shorten the Observe, Orient, Decide and Act loop by leveraging the resident competence of Indian industry and academia in this field.

**Our Navy is a globally known maritime force. As it takes on a more assertive and cooperative role in the Indian Ocean and beyond, what are the significant challenges ahead?**

The Indian Navy's responsibilities are vast, ranging from readiness to undertake high-intensity



warfighting at one end to rendering humanitarian assistance and disaster relief at the other. We fulfil these responsibilities through four distinct roles: Military, Diplomatic, Constabulary and Benign.

Our primary responsibility is to protect, promote and preserve India's national interests in the maritime domain. In that context, threats and challenges to our interests emanate from traditional as well as non-traditional sources.



Traditionally, while a war with potential adversaries can never be ruled out, we also face security challenges across multiple spheres. Competition at sea is being played out on a daily basis, without escalating into armed action. Lingering traditional security friction points, such as unresolved disputes, are exacerbated by the ongoing great power competition in the region, thereby leading to a possibility of this competition flaring up into a conflict.

On the other hand, in recent years, other security threats like maritime terrorism, piracy, robbery, IUU fishing, human/arms/drugs trafficking, etc, have manifested. Similarly, piracy and armed robbery at sea have also flared up in a few regions over the past decade and remain a significant threat to international shipping and seafarers. At the same time, there has been a higher occurrence of natural disasters over the past decade, necessitating increased deployment of the Indian Navy for HADR operations.

Most of these challenges are fast evolving, transcend boundaries and are beyond the capacity of any one country to address alone. At the same time, there is increased realisation that no single entity may have the capacity or capability to address these challenges by themselves. Therefore, there is a need for coming together based on shared vision and issue-based convergences. The overarching outlook is towards finding regional solutions to regional problems.

**Would you agree that there has been a positive increase in maritime consciousness in our nation? How is the Indian Navy contributing as an agent of support, change and transformation in this aspect?**

India's deep-rooted relationship with the seas dates back across the ages, with evidence pointing to thriving seaborne trade as far back as Harappan times. This bond with the oceans was also evident at the peak of the Chola's maritime prowess, with their maritime footprint extending to the far reaches of Southeast Asia, fostering trade, rich cultural exchanges and driving prosperity. It would also be useful to recall that decline in maritime power was a key contributor to colonial powers (who largely





came by the sea) succeeding in their endeavour to control the country's destiny for many years. Thus, there is an inextricable linkage between the oceans and India's destiny. This principle was true in the past, retains relevance in the present, and will endure into the foreseeable future.

With regard to your question, there is definitely a positive increase in maritime consciousness across our nation, as is evident through a variety of initiatives, endeavours and articulations by our apex leadership. To highlight a few: the institution of the Indo-Pacific Oceans Initiative or articulation of the vision of SAGAR by our Hon'ble Prime Minister; conduct of an 'Open Debate on Maritime Security' at the UN by India as the Chair of UNSC in September last year; NSA Shri Ajit Doval's assertion that maritime security has gained its rightful prominence in India's security discourse as well as international outreach; the External Affairs Minister's articulation on maritime relationships where he says that they are important to India's security interests; and the appointment of a National Maritime Security Coordinator.

While maritime consciousness is on the rise, there is also an increased recognition of the fact that our nation's aspirational trajectory for the future can only be sustained by moving outwards for resources, trade, markets, opportunities and influence. To my mind, it is for the first time since Independence that the maritime character of our nation is shaping our external outlook. And to sustain this outward trajectory for development and growth, the Indian Navy plays a key role towards ensuring security, safety and stability in our areas of interest.

Other than providing an overarching umbrella of security, the Indian Navy is also catalysing and fostering maritime consciousness in the nation. Our approach in this regard is multipronged.

The Navy conducts events such as 'Sagar Manthan' to interact with key policymakers to bring awareness on contemporary maritime issues. In addition, we have regular dialogues with various government ministries, which has helped immensely towards furthering maritime consciousness at the highest levels.



For our citizens, we conduct many seminars, talks and events on maritime issues, which witness active participation from all age groups. For instance, the recently conducted THINQ quiz competition helped us connect with young students from nearly 7,500 schools, spread across the length and breadth of our country. Further, our interactions with the coastal community are aimed not only to increase awareness on coastal security but to allow them to comprehend the importance of seas for growth and development.

We also have various MoUs with universities across the country that allow regular exchange of academia and scholars, allowing our youth to develop a better understanding of maritime matters.



Further, we have established naval heritage museums in many cities, such as Vizag, Goa, Kochi, etc, depicting our historical maritime moorings and thereby contributing towards maritime consciousness.

Our activities every year as part of the Navy Week celebrations are focused on creating awareness on maritime security and its impact on our growth trajectory. In addition, the Indian Navy is also actively contributing to the National Maritime Heritage Complex being built in Lothal.

These efforts, initiatives and activities aptly highlight the role of the Indian Navy as an enabler of maritime consciousness in the nation.

### **What messages would you like to convey to our readers – veterans and serving officers alike?**

As we celebrate 'Azadi ka Amrit Mahotsav' this year, we can look back and appreciate the transformation of the Indian Navy into a potent Blue Water Navy. These include transforming from a 33 ship to 175 ship navy; graduating from a Buyers' Navy to a Builders' Navy; playing a pivotal role in the 1971 war, and during Op *Prakram*; and being the founding partner of the Indian Ocean Naval Symposium (IONS).

To our veterans, none of this would have been achieved without your focused efforts. I have no hesitation in saying that the three-dimensional networked, forward-deployed, combat-ready, credible and cohesive Indian Navy of today is the result of the vision, perseverance and hard work of our veterans. I assure all veterans that the Indian Navy is committed to ensuring your welfare. We are what we are today because of your contributions, selfless service and foresight. On behalf of all naval personnel, I assure all of you that we will do the best to uphold the legacy you have left for us.

To our serving personnel, we cannot rest on our laurels, as we are witnessing a significant geopolitical transformation in our maritime environment and a shift to a multipolar world centred around the Indo-Pacific. To promote, preserve and protect our maritime interests in such an environment, we need to be not just a combat-ready, credible and cohesive force, but also a future-proof navy.

Our *raison-d'etre*, therefore, remains 'Readiness for Conflict', which aims to win across the spectrum of competition by focusing on the pillars of Sustained Operations, Enhanced Domain Awareness, Meticulous Maintenance, Efficient Logistics, Evolving Training and Professional Personnel.

My message to Team Navy is to prepare for the future battlefield, focus on winning every day, reaffirm our dedication to the nation, work hard and train harder to become professionals of the highest order. In short, all of us need to 'Do our Duty and Do it Well'.







## COMMISSIONING: INS VISAKHAPATNAM

### THE BUCK STOPS HERE

By Lieutenant Commander Vipin Kumar Tyagi

**I**NS Visakhapatnam, the Brave Buck, is the first ship of the P15B class of guided missile stealth destroyers designed by the Indian Navy's Warship Design Bureau and built by Mazagon Dock Shipbuilders Ltd (MDL), Mumbai. With a length of 164 m and displacement of 7,500 tonne, these ships are one of the largest surface combatants to be built indigenously. Their predominantly indigenous weapon-sensor-machinery fit and stealth features symbolise the maturing of India's indigenous shipbuilding capability and quest for self-reliance. The ship is a shining example of 'Atmanirbhar Bharat' in all respects.

#### Namesake

The nautical tradition of naming a warship after a city has always vitalised the relationship between the residents of a city and the seafarers serving onboard its 'namesake'. This ship is named after the City of Destiny, Visakhapatnam, and rightly so, as she is the first of the class of Project 15B ships, charting not only her own destiny but also the course for other ships that would soon follow; much like the navigational star Zubenelgenubi, a double and 'Alpha' star in the constellation Libra, known in the Indian pantheon as Visakha.

The city boasts of a distinctive maritime character and is home to iconic lighthouses, which have long played an important role in guiding ships in and out of the city's natural harbour. The ship is a tribute to Visakhapatnam's rich maritime history and nautical traditions and symbolises the special bond between the Indian Navy and the city of destiny. Visakhapatnam and the Indian Navy have had an enduring relationship. The first naval establishment on the Eastern Seaboard was set up at this city by the colonial British Indian government on 12 December 1939. It served as an assembly point for convoys and was subsequently christened HMIS Circars in 1942. During World War 2, the port city



assumed military importance with a handful of small warships being positioned, and the establishment of an ordnance transit depot and boat repair shop for servicing warships. The year 1971 was an eventful one, with a crucial action of the India-Pakistan conflict, the sinking of the submarine PNS Ghazi, occurring just off Visakhapatnam harbour on the night of 4 December 1971. With the christening of the ship, the anomaly of not having a ship named after the city where one of the two operational commands of the Indian Navy is based has been removed.

The Eastern Naval Command, which maintains a constant vigil across the Bay of Bengal and the Southern IOR, is also headquartered at Visakhapatnam. The naval base is base port to a wide array of potent and lethal platforms, including conventional and nuclear submarines, surface ships and reconnaissance and fighter aircraft. After commissioning, the ship was formally affiliated with the city of Visakhapatnam in a ceremony presided by the Hon'ble Chief Minister of Andhra Pradesh.



**Namesake: Visakhapatnam in Visakhapatnam!**

### **Milestones to commissioning**

'Commissioning' is an age-old ceremonial tradition of formally inducting a warship into naval service. It is also the final, and perhaps the most significant, milestone among the many others that bring a ship to life, namely keel laying, launching and delivery of the ship. The construction of the ship, designated as Yard 12704, commenced at MDL on 18 January 2012 and her keel was laid on 12 October 2013. The ship was launched and christened Visakhapatnam on 20 April 2015. After the launch, the ship was put through a comprehensive trial schedule in harbour and at sea. After completion of the extensive systems and machinery trials, the ship was 'delivered', or formally handed over to the Indian Navy, on 28 October 2021.

### **Commissioning**

INS Visakhapatnam was commissioned into Indian Navy by Hon'ble Defence Minister Rajnath Singh at an impressive ceremony held on 21 November 2021 at the Naval Dockyard, Mumbai. He was received by the Chief of the Naval Staff and was presented with a Guard of Honour. The ceremony was witnessed by a large gathering that included several dignitaries and senior officials from the Government and all three services.





Commanding Officer Captain Birendra S Bains read out the Commissioning Warrant, which was followed by the hoisting of 'Colours', which marked the commencement of the ship's service as a warship of the Navy. Following her formal induction, INS Visakhapatnam was placed under the operational and administrative control of the Flag Officer Commanding-in-Chief, Western Naval Command. In due course, the ship will be integrated with the Western Fleet, with base port at Mumbai. After commissioning, the ship participated in the President's Fleet Review off the city of Visakhapatnam as the Flag Ship of the Chief of the Naval Staff.



PFR 22: Flag Ship of CNS

### Crest and logo

The ship's crest depicts a blackbuck leaping in the air against the backdrop of Dolphin Lighthouse, standing tall atop the conspicuous Dolphin's Nose Hill of Visakhapatnam, with the city's shores awash with blue and white ocean waves. The blackbuck is the state animal of the coastal state of Andhra Pradesh and its stance in the ship's crest signifies the quantum leap in technology and capability that has propelled the P 15B destroyers into the league of new-generation warships.



The Dolphin Lighthouse, which features in the crest's background, was built in the mid-1960s as the reincarnation of an older 18<sup>th</sup> century lighthouse at the same spot. The lighthouse reflects the rich nautical heritage and maritime hue of the port city of Visakhapatnam, and the city's journey, over the centuries, towards becoming a port of strategic importance.

The ship's logo depicts the bust of a blackbuck juxtaposed over a hexagonal background, inspired by the shape of the MFSTAR air surveillance radar atop the ship's foremast, being the most prominent feature of the ship's silhouette and combat capability.



The Blackbuck is endowed with stout V-shaped horns, remarkable alertness and incredible swiftness, all of which closely resonate with the intent, capabilities and essence of this formidable destroyer and her stalwart crew.



## Capabilities

The ship is a versatile platform capable of blue-water operations across the spectrum of warfare. Her state-of-the-art weapon-sensor suite, coupled with advanced network-centric capabilities and integral multi-role helicopters, makes her a potent command platform that can bring to bear substantial offensive and defensive capability. Armed with advanced surface-to-surface BrahMos supersonic cruise missiles, she can undertake surface strikes at extended ranges. Her medium range surface-to-air missiles, along with MFSTAR active phased array radar, represent a generational leap for the Navy's anti-air warfare capability. The 76-mm SRGM medium-range gun and four each AK 630 and SRCG close-range guns provide effective surface and anti-air capabilities at closer ranges. The ship has an equally potent anti-submarine weapon fit comprising the latest heavyweight torpedoes and anti-submarine rockets.



## Credible, cohesive, combat-ready

INS Visakhapatnam is not just a warship. It is a testament to the hard work, talent, influence and commitment of 21<sup>st</sup> century India. The ship's prowess and credible capability, when cohesively combined with the resolute will of its crew, will inevitably represent the tip of the spear of India's maritime capability. She is all set for deployments across India's areas of interest to protect the security and economic interests of the country amid the constantly changing global situation.

### ABOUT THE AUTHOR

*Lieutenant Commander Vipin Kumar Tyagi is an alumnus of the 13th NOC of the Indian Naval Academy, Ezhimala, and was commissioned on 1 January 2013. As a non-specialist, he has served on INS Vibhuti and INS Tir and as Flag Lieutenant to FOST. A specialist in communication and electronic warfare, he has served onboard INS Kora as Signal Communication Officer before joining INS Visakhapatnam as Signal Communication Officer.*







## COMMISSIONING: INS VELA

# VIGILANT, VALIANT, VICTORIOUS

By Lieutenant Commander Sachin Dhankhar

The Indian Navy's submarine arm can be traced to the dedicated efforts of over a decade that commenced soon after India attained her Independence in 1947. A modest beginning was made when a team of officers was trained at HMS Dolphin, UK, in 1962. The submarine arm came into being on 8 December 1967 when the tricolour was hoisted for the first time on INS Kalvari, a Foxtrot-class submarine acquired from the erstwhile Soviet Union.

The Foxtrots with their intrepid and determined crews set the arm's proud traditions. Two of these boats participated in the 1971 India-Pakistan war. Subsequently the Vela class consisting of four submarines were inducted as an upgrade of the Foxtrot class in 1973-74. The induction of the 877 EKM (Sindhughosh class) and Type 209 (Shishumar class) brought advancements in technology and fire power. The commissioning of the first Indian built submarine INS Shalki on 7 February 1992, constructed at Mazagon Dock Ltd (MDL) in Mumbai, heralded the country's indigenous submarine construction capability. Commissioning of the nuclear-powered Chakra-I in 1988 and Chakra-II in 2012 leapfrogged the Indian Navy into a select group of nuclear submarine operating navies. Indeed, from modest beginnings, the goal of continually strengthening the submarine arm has been diligently pursued. This journey of 55 years has been a saga of passion, grit, determination and commitment. Since inception, the Dolphins have established a strong tradition of willingly accepting



the challenges of operating in the unforgiving environment that lies beneath, providing both the 'sword and the shield' to the nation.

INS Vela, the fourth of the six Kalvari-class submarines, is the latest addition that has further bolstered the strength of the Indian Navy's submarine arm. The new Vela carries forward the legacy of the erstwhile INS Vela (S40), the Foxtrot-class submarine built in Russia and commissioned on 31 August 1973 at the Soviet seaport of Latvia. The submarine rendered yeoman service to the nation for 37 years and was the longest operational submarine at the time of decommissioning on 25 January 2010. Apart from being a training ground for many submarines, she has had several noteworthy operational achievements during her long and illustrious career. Vela remains a legend in the submarine arm for the operational success she achieved.

INS Vela is based on the French 'Scorpene' design constructed at MDL, Mumbai, under Project-75 (P-75) which involved transfer of technology from the French collaborator M/s Naval Group and the subsequent association of numerous Indian companies under the 'Make in India' concept. The construction of the submarine, designated as Yard 11878, commenced with steel cutting on 14 July 2009. The submarine went through various phases of construction and booting together at MDL. She was launched on 6 May 2019 and put to sea for extensive trials on 17 February 2020, wherein she achieved the maximum surface RPM in the maiden sortie. However, the onset of the COVID 19 pandemic stalled the trials and construction till November 2020. But a resilient crew, backed by the synergy of all the stakeholders, continued its efforts undaunted. Therefore, on recommencement of trials in December 2020, she achieved the fastest pace of completion of sea trials, attaining every major milestone in the maiden attempt. The teamwork between all stakeholders, longer trial sorties and an endeavour to set a tradition of delivering despite challenges resulted in the submarine completing all scheduled trials, reducing the days at sea for trials by 25 per cent and trial sorties by 50 per cent.

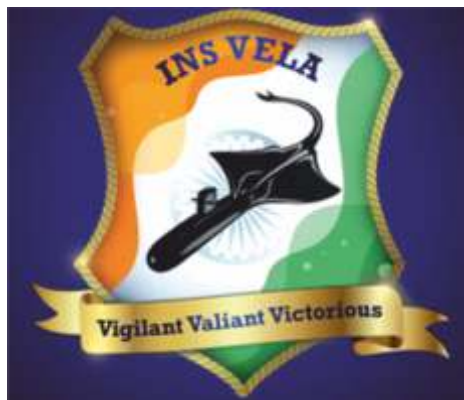
The new Vela is stealthier with advanced stealth features and potent with a state-of-the-art weapon system and sensors suite comprising advanced sonar, radar, electronic surveillance sensor and satellite communication system. Vela has taken the spirit of Make in India a notch higher with the fitment of indigenised main batteries and advanced communication suite. The construction of the submarine under the supervision of the inhouse design overseeing team of MDL, naval engineers from the Submarine Design Group (SDG), Submarine Overseeing Team (SOT) and training of the crew by Indian Training Team (ITT) is a major milestone towards 'Atmanirbhar Bharat'.

The boat's undersea warfare capability comprises a cluster of advanced weapons and sensors integrated into the Submarine Tactical Integrated Combat System (SUBTICS). The sonar suite is low frequency analysis and ranging (LOFAR) capable, enabling long-range detection and classification. After classification, she may choose to engage the enemy by utilising either missiles or torpedoes. She





occasionally returns to periscope depth (PD) to keep a watch on the dangers lurking above using the attack and search periscopes. While at PD she rapidly charges her batteries and refreshes the air inside using snorkel mast, in conjunction with her two diesel engines.



The submarine's mascot is the 'Sub-Ray', which is an amalgamation of the submarine and stingray. It symbolises the metamorphosis of the submarine's character with the qualities of a stingray. The submarine's motto "Vigilant, Valiant, Victorious" epitomizes the submarine's spirit in achieving the tasks detailed, whatever may be the conditions. The motto has been imbibed by the crew and inspires them to remain alert at all times about the challenges surrounding them and be courageous in their actions to triumph each and every time.

On completion of scheduled trials, the formal delivery of the boat to the Indian Navy by MDL was done on 9 December 2021. The submarine with pennant number S24 was commissioned on 25 November 2021 by Commanding Officer Captain Anish Mathew in the presence of Admiral Karambir Singh, the 24<sup>th</sup> Chief of the Naval Staff, in Mumbai. Rear Admiral JMS Sodhi (Retd), the commissioning commanding officer of erstwhile Vela, was also in attendance for the commissioning ceremony.



### ABOUT THE AUTHOR

*Lieutenant Commander Sachin Dhankhar is an alumnus of 84<sup>th</sup> INAC and was commissioned on 25 May 2013. A BTech graduate in electronics and communication and an MSc in electronics and telecommunication, he was inducted in the submarine arm in 2015 and has served onboard Sindhughosh and Kalvari-class submarines. He is commissioning Electrical Officer of INS Vela.*







evening were those who had swallowed the anchor, but richly contributed to the present version while they were in uniform. In essence, veterans who spanned almost five decades were present in one gathering. More than a dozen who had settled abroad had made the trip to Kochi, notwithstanding their age and the geographical expanse – a testimony to the old Vikrant's spirit. The oldest former CO of the erstwhile Vikrant present on the occasion was RAdm Santosh Kumar Gupta (Retd), MVC, NM, who was decorated with the MVC for his gallantry during the 1971 war while he commanded INAS 300. The last CO, Cdr HS Rawat (Retd), presented the soon-to-be Vikrant with a copy of the last signal made by the ship, minutes before its decommissioning in 1997. The last line of the signal was indeed prophetic.



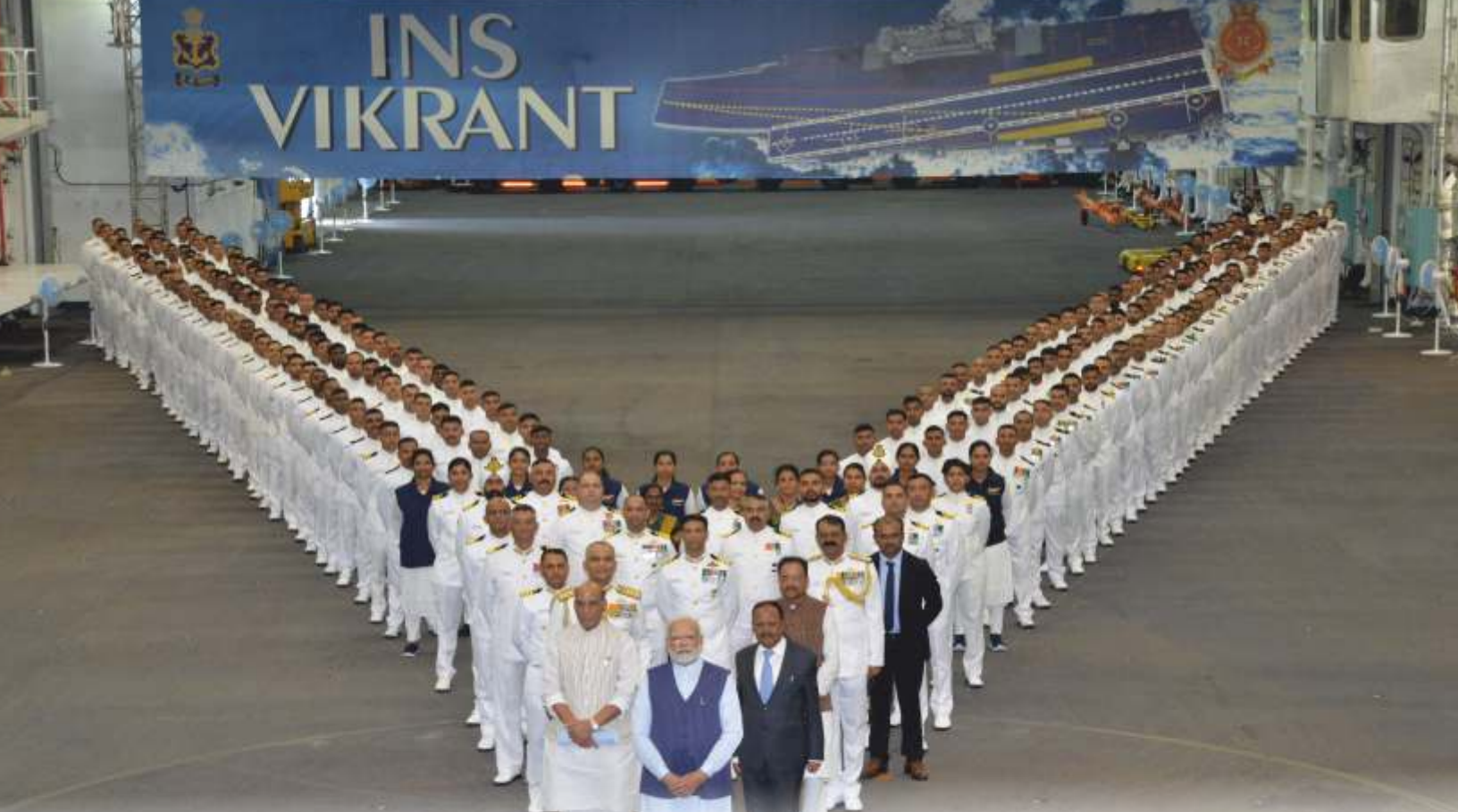
The mood of the evening was one of nostalgia – for the old Vikrant, the 1971 war, bonhomie, the highs and lows that the former crew experienced. Soon enough, the topic shifted to the new Vikrant and how it came to be; and what it will do for India.

Vikrant, in her previous avatar, was an under-construction British carrier launched as HMS Hercules in 1945, commissioned into the Indian Navy in 1961 and decommissioned in 1997. She was the first of three aircraft carriers the Indian Navy operated. The second aircraft carrier INS Viraat (ex-HMS Hermes) and INS Vikramaditya (ex-Admiral Gorshkov of the Soviet Navy) too were hand-me-down imported vessels. For a maritime power of the stature of India and after whom the Indian Ocean has been named, it was but natural to aspire to design and build an indigenous aircraft carrier.

Warship building is an evolutionary process where, much like childbirth, one cannot reach the desired end state without going through the pangs of labour. Building an aircraft carrier whose specifications may have undergone numerous changes over a while, owing to varying geopolitical considerations and the nation's financial constraints, makes this process even more complex and

poses genuine difficulty with inaccurate estimates of cost and schedule. Almost all aircraft carriers, particularly the first of a class in the world, have undergone revisions of initial estimates of time and cost. Despite being armed with a robust military-industrial complex and having designed and constructed over 100 aircraft carriers, including nearly a dozen nuclear-powered supercarriers, the US Navy struggled with the first-of-class





USS Gerald R Ford. Having begun construction in 2005 and launched in 2009, the ship was finally commissioned only in 2017 with cost and time overruns, not to mention numerous operational limitations. It is only in 2021 that the ship seemed to have stabilised, having perhaps overcome almost all her limitations.

With the decommissioning of Vikrant in 1997, the Navy's proposal for an IAC gathered momentum. Accordingly, a Letter of Intent (LoI) was issued to M/s Cochin Shipyard Ltd (CSL) in 1999 to initiate preparatory work. It was around this time that the Russians came up with the ship-based version of MiG-29, called the Mig-29K (K stood for корабли or Korabli, the Russian word for 'ship') and the Navy's designers sought fruition of the short-take-off-but-arrested-recovery (STOBAR) option, wherein the launch would be from a ski jump but recovery would be with the help of arrestor gear. These requirements dictated an optimum launch runway of approximately 200 m with a carrier overall length of about 250 m. As a result, a carrier displacing 37,500 tonne and capable of operating 20-22 tonne aircraft was evolved.



Finally, the design of a full-fledged carrier was approved by the Cabinet Committee on Security (CCS) in 2002. Based on the first government approval, a draft contract on design and pre-production activities of the ADS was forwarded by Naval Headquarters to CSL in





the year 2000. Steel cutting, which signifies the start of production, commenced in 2005 and the IAC was conceived. The keel of the ship was laid in 2009. The ship was ceremoniously launched on 12 August 2013 and christened 'Vikrant'.

The steel for the entire ship is 'Made in India' by the Steel Authority of India. Similarly, various engineering auxiliaries, weapons, sensors, deck and electrical machinery, the entire power distribution system and niche technologies such as the electronic warfare system, the combat management system and their related networking equipment have all been designed and manufactured in India. From public-sector giants like BEL, HAL, BHEL, KELTRON to private industry partners like Tata Power and L&T, to name a few, India must be proud of their contribution.

Even as the ship began extensive harbour and sea trials, it clocked milestones that few others can boast of. On the very first sortie, the ship achieved full power on her propulsion – a rarity even among the most developed warship-building countries and a reflection of the Navy's and the shipbuilder's confidence in their work. The first sortie also witnessed nearly 25 helicopter recoveries and launch, proving crew confidence and the man-machine interface. It has been a steep learning curve for CSL too and it has conquered the challenge. The IAC was the first-ever warship the shipbuilder was constructing for the Indian Navy. While CSL had built commercial vessels of almost 90,000 tonne in the past, and the IAC was less than half of any of those, the fact is that the complexity was unparalleled. In addition, COVID dealt a challenge like no other. When foreign OEMs did not turn up at the crucial period immediately preceding the basin trials, it was Indians – the Indian Navy including its veterans, CSL and Indian OEM representatives – who took the risk of going it alone. And the results speak for themselves.

Propelled by four GE LM-2500 gas turbines, the ship shall operate the MiG-29K fighter aircraft, Kamov-31 air early warning helicopters, the MH-60R multirole helicopter and the indigenously manufactured advanced light helicopter. It will be an incomparable military instrument with the ability to project air power over long distances, including air interdiction, anti-surface warfare, offensive and defensive counter-air, airborne anti-submarine warfare and airborne early warning. To support the 24×7 organic air operations, the ship has her own dedicated weather forecasting facility.

This floating city is not for the faint hearted. If one were to walk around the ship, it would amount to approximately 12 km while the total number of ladders is nearly 700 – together, adequate to keep oneself fit onboard. Spread across 15 decks and approximately 2,300 compartments, the ship has cables running for approximately 2,500 km, which is a little more than the distance by air between Kochi and Kashi. The insulation onboard alone is about a lakh sq m. With over 30,000 internal sensors, extensive optical fibre cable-backed networks with multiple redundancies and remote-controlled valves spread throughout the ship, Vikrant is a technological marvel with no precedent in





the country. The ship is run by eight gigantic power generators – enough to power up a small town. Once at sea, Vikrant is capable of generating over 8 lakh litre of water a day. The auxiliaries onboard range from high-pressure air compressors and onboard oxygen and nitrogen plants to a variety of interconnected, interdependent systems and their subsystems.

While the offensive component of the IAC – its fighter wing – would be the unchallenged prima donna in all discussions, the ship's less glamorous but distinctive support capabilities shall make it an asset to the Fleet. The inhouse repair facilities could often be availed by the ships in company, including two dedicated welding workshops. In its absence, such repairs would have to wait till the accompanying frigate or destroyer pulls up into a harbour. The ship boasts of a dedicated hospital complex, ranging from CT and ultrasound scanning machines (the first-ever ship in the Indian Ocean, not just a naval ship, to have a CT scanning machine) to a digital x-ray machine, two purpose-built operation theatres and even a full-fledged dental complex. One could consider the carrier a field hospital in itself, capable of supporting all fleet ships in the vicinity. Equipped with three sophisticated galleys, the chefs have already been churning out delicious meals, including a staggering 16,000 chapattis and 6,000 idlis... every single day! If one is wondering what happens to all the 'poop' generated by the floating city, the ship has been designed to process the entire human waste in its inhouse sewage treatment plants before discharging it as harmless plain water into the





seas. In fact, so efficient is its sewage treatment plant that its discharge is fit for human consumption.

Across the country, there has been a perceptible sense of jubilation with the commissioning of Vikrant, something akin to India winning the cricket World Cup. Irrespective of whether they had anything to do with the past version of the ship or the present one, Indians in general, and not just those in the Navy, have celebrated Vikrant. There is a sense of achievement. If numbers are any testimony, in barely two months of its commissioning, the ship has had over 30,000 visitors!

The commissioning of Vikrant is indeed a coming-of-age story for the country. That it happened in the presence of the largest gathering of veterans for any new commission ship was a blessing the ship shall cherish. To add icing on the cake, the occasion also included the unveiling of the new ensign for the Navy. Vikrant had the distinction of being commissioned with the hoisting of the new ensign.



While Vikrant is a technological marvel like none other in the Navy to date, what makes it more special is the bonding, association and blessings of multiple generations – spanning those who served the motherland in the ship's previous avatar to all those who were involved in the present one. With such tidings, Vikrant is bound to achieve her motto: जयेम समु युधिस्पृध, which was taken from Rig Veda 1.8.3. Translated, it means, “I defeat those who dare to fight with me.”

#### ABOUT THE AUTHOR

*Captain Gurudeep Bala, an alumnus of the 60<sup>th</sup> Naval Academy Course and US Naval War College, Rhode Island, USA, was commissioned on 1 July 2001. A specialist in communication and EW, he has served as EWO Ranvir, SCO Rajput and Delhi; instructor at Signal School; and FEWO and FCO, Eastern Fleet. He has commanded INFAC T-83, INS Nishank and INS Kora. He is currently the Executive Officer of INS Vikrant.*





## COMMISSIONING: INS MORMUGAO GOA'ING PLACES!

By Lieutenant Commander Paras Sadhotra

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*Every new beginning comes from some other beginning's end.*

- Seneca

**I**t is possibly the Navy's way of signalling that its 'Goa'ing' places! Mormugao, the latest grey Ferrari of the Indian Navy, came to life on 18 December 2022 at a glittering ceremony at Mumbai. INS Mormugao became the second ship of the Visakhapatnam class, and the 8<sup>th</sup> warship in the Project 15 destroyer clan of the Navy.

Even as the guard stood in rapt attention, and the band played the national anthem, amid the expected pageantry of the commissioning ceremony, several substantive and commemorative elements of the ship's formal induction into the Indian Navy stood out. Three elements were of particular import.

First, 18 December – the commissioning date. 18 December was also the D-Day of Operation Vijay, the tri-Service operation in 1961 that led to Goa's liberation. The Indian Navy played a seminal role in





the operation that brought an end to the last vestiges of colonialism in India after 451 years. The operation was also the first time that the Indian Navy had engaged a foreign belligerent at sea, as also the Navy's maiden landing operation to take over hostile territory (at Anjadip Island). Commissioning the latest destroyer, named after Goa, on the day that India launched Operation Vijay to liberate the state nearly 61 years ago has indeed added a historical umbilical to the Navy's connection with the ship's eponymous port city for times to come.

Second, the year – 2022. The year had several milestone markers that made the commissioning momentous. Apart from being the 75th year of India's independence, 2022 also marks the golden jubilee of the first warship constructed by Mazagon Dock Ltd (MDL). INS Nilgiri, India's first indigenous frigate, was constructed by MDL and commissioned in 1972. The christening of the latest destroyer of the Navy in the 50th year of the first warship constructed by MDL is a befitting tribute to the warship-building saga and journey of MDL, the Indian Navy and the country.

Finally, the Goan spirit and endorsement visible at the commissioning. With Shri P S Sreedharan Pillai, Hon'ble Governor of Goa, and Dr Pramod Sawant, Hon'ble Chief Minister of Goa, both present at the commissioning ceremony (Shri Rajnath Singh, Hon'ble Defence Minister, was the Chief Guest), along with several other prominent Goan citizens, there could not have been a more resounding acknowledgement of the pride of place Goa accords to the latest warship. Incidentally, Mormugao had undertaken its maiden sea sortie in 2021 on 19 December, coinciding with the 60th anniversary of Goa's liberation, adding another dimension to a burgeoning connection with the state.

For the commissioning crew chosen to man her (gender specificity unintended!), the journey of commissioning a warship is an exhilarating tale of 'trials' (endless ones at that, putting machinery and systems through their paces) and tribulations, one that involves putting 'mettle' into metal (as one veteran eloquently put it). From cushions and curtains to combat readiness, from mess traps to machinery readiness, from alleyway mats to equipment HATs and SATs, the commissioning crew has a role spanning the entire proverbial spectrum of conflict: lots of 'grey' zone warfare (grey areas, which no previous appointment and experience can prepare one for!); ambushes (unexpected setbacks, policy changes or Murphy's machinations); even low-intensity conflicts (heated discussions amid ship's crew, equipment OEMs, shipbuilder, and WOT teams on the course to chart ahead). But they are all in good spirit, for as Admiral Jim Ellis of the US Navy put it, "If you want traction, you must first have friction."



Of all the responsibilities that the Navy prepares a naval officer for, being the commissioning crew carries its own unique set of challenges, and carrying the weight of expectation is possibly the most exacting of these – and in good measure. A warship is not just 7,500 tonne of steel, as in the case of Mormugao, but also a manifestation of the Navy's collective wisdom spanning decades and millions of man-hours of effort, refining ship design, construction, equipment, and systems integration skills and knowledge, across a plethora of stakeholders, designers and OEMs. The commissioning crew discharges the arduous role, giving an inanimate ship its life form; a culture that can, hopefully, withstand the test of time; and a soul that possibly endures her entire commission.



But it is not yet time to be self-reflective or congratulatory. As Seneca rightly counsels, every new beginning comes from some other beginning's end. Commissioning is the end of one journey but also the beginning of a more stupendous one. For a destroyer, this means training of crew, administrative and operational preparedness, full-spectrum weapons-sensor readiness and, eventually, early integration into the Fleet – a task that tests every nerve and sinew of a new ship and her crew. But, as a 'Gutsy Gaur' – what we plank owners of Mormugao proudly call ourselves – we feel fully up to the task, for the Navy (and we ourselves) expects nothing less than this!

#### ABOUT THE AUTHOR

*An alumnus of the Indian Naval Academy, Ezhimala, Lieutenant Commander Paras Sadhotra was commissioned on 25 November 2013. A specialist in communication and electronic warfare, the officer has served onboard INS Kochi as the Electronic Warfare Officer and on INS Gomati as Signal Communication Officer. He is the commissioning Electronic Warfare Officer onboard INS Mormugao.*





## DIAMOND JUBILEE: NAVAL AIR OPERATIONS SCHOOL

### PAST, PRESENT AND FUTURE

By Lieutenant Commander Deepak Joseph

**R**eunions are always great occasions to cherish. They bring back memories, rejuvenate traditions and help reconnect past, present and future generations. Celebrating 60 years since its inception and commemorating the immaculate service rendered to the nation and the Indian Navy in its various avatars, the Naval Air Operations School celebrated its Diamond Jubilee on 7-8 March 2022. Serving and retired service personnel with families, including the sister services, paid a short visit to the roost not just from different parts of the country but from across the world. Here's a glimpse of the event for all those who were part of it, and those who missed the flight.

#### Take-off run

The Naval Air Operations School, earlier known as the Observer School, was first established in 1960. The Gregorian Calendar pointed to 2020 as the accurate year to celebrate the Diamond Jubilee. Under the aegis of Capt Indrajit Talukdar and his crew, planning – the key tool of an aviator, the bread and butter of an Air Operations Officer (the present-day terminology for Observer) – began with the herculean task of preparing a guest list all the way from the year 1960. Wings strong in the 60<sup>th</sup> year with an exponential growth in the officers of the cadre, we had lost some of them too; a few to old age, a few while discharging their duty and one in the face of the enemy. Stage by stage, event by event, the programme was charted out. WhatsApp and Telegram groups became the messengers and efforts were made to spread the word in every possible way. Guests from different parts of the world booked their tickets, packed their bags and were ready to get together for this once-in-a-lifetime event. However, the Coronavirus had other plans, not just for us but for the entire world. Like a sortie called off at the last moment, all preparations had to be folded and stowed for a period uncertain. Slowly, the members of the WhatsApp and Telegram group withered away.





While COVID-19 still had its grip on the year 2022, there was scope for hope. The effort to roll the ball again was started in the next command, by Capt V Kasiraman. Swiftly, the team had to go through all the process done before. Late-night work, long meetings, discussions, all to ensure that no stone was left unturned and no loose ends remained. The response was once again overwhelming. The alma mater was keen to host its big family – a gathering of 200 personnel – and 7-8 March were the days to be etched in gold in the history of the school.

## Inflight

Day 1 of the celebrations was kickstarted with a seminar on 7 March 2022, themed 'Shaping Maritime Operations - Evolution and Opportunities'. Serving and retired officers from the Navy, Coast Guard and Air Force attended the event. VAdm M A Hampiholi, Flag Officer Commanding-in-Chief, Southern Naval Command, delivered the inaugural address. This was followed by a keynote address by RAdm Philipose G Pynumoottil, then Flag Officer Naval Aviation, and an invitational talk by VAdm Venkat Bharatan (Retd). Session 1 delved into the topic 'Evolution of IN Maritime Air Operations - Lessons Learnt for the Future', Session 2 shed light on the 'Challenges and Options for the Operational Environment for Maritime Air Ops' and Session 3 offered insight on 'The Role of Maritime Air Power in Joint Theatre Operations'.

While the men in uniform were engaged in discussions, the ladies made some new memories to cherish, including an organised tour to the historic Fort Kochi and the Naval Museum in INS Dronacharya. Awash with nostalgia, the guests gathered for lunch at the Naval Officers Institute, the first venue where they could all get together after a long time, savouring the food and each other's company.

Following lunch, it was time for a panel discussion, moderated by RAdm A N Pramod, on the effect of the induction of modern aviation assets in the Indian Navy's warfighting capability going forward. The event culminated with the felicitation of speakers and the closing address by RAdm Antony George, then Chief of Staff, Southern Naval Command. We bid farewell to the first day with a scintillating dinner night to the tune of jazz music. The cheers and clinking of glasses were soon brought to silence as Cdr K S Panwar (Retd), VrC, shared his adventurous flight on an Alize during the 1971 Indo-Pak war, which earned him the gallantry award. A living legend – and one more reminder of being first in and last out in the face of the enemy.



The second day of the celebrations, 8 March, was made even more special as it was International Women's Day. The day commenced with a boat ride in the Kochi channel and a golf tournament for the keen golfers. Once the boats were alongside and the golf clubs back in the kit, it was time to visit the alma mater. All the guests were received at the school and following an address by the Officer-in-Charge observed a moment of silence for the departed souls. They were given a tour of the school, its infrastructure, the History Cell, the advanced simulator STRATA and the WSTF facility in Garuda. Everyone then lined up for an epic photograph, a historical moment when we also realised just how big this family was.



In keeping with tradition, we held a traditional *bara khana* for the guests and the station. The ceremonial cake was cut by Cdr S Gopalakrishnan (Retd), NM, the senior-most among the attendees and Ajay Verma NA I (SE), the junior-most. While the feast was on, the cultural show put up by the officers and men of the station was a treat for the eyes and ears.

Hotel Taj Malabar by the Kochi channel marked the 'threshold point' of the celebrations as we were about to touch down. As they say, "Take-offs are optional, but landings are mandatory" – a party in naval style was mandatory to mark the culmination of a historic event. This was also an opportunity for the guests to interact with the men and women behind each event of the celebrations. The cultural evening stole the hearts of the guests and the fiesta was memorable.

## Touchdown

Robert Frost famously wrote, "The woods are lovely, dark and deep, but I have promises to keep... Miles to go before I sleep." These words resonated in every heart and soul that attended the celebrations when they bid adieu to each other. The diamond jubilee celebrations left a deep impact, underlining the importance of learning from the past and readying for the future.

## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Lieutenant Commander Deepak Joseph was commissioned into the Indian Navy on 1 July 2012. He is an alumnus of the Indian Naval Academy, 12<sup>th</sup> NOC GSES. He is a qualified air operations officer on P-8I aircraft. At present, he is appointed as Staff QNI at Naval Air Operations School, Kochi.







that this year, when the country commemorates its 75<sup>th</sup> Independence Day through the ongoing celebrations of Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav, on the heels of the 'Swarnim Vijay Varsh' (commemorating 50 years of the victory over Pakistan in the 1971 war), INS Dwarka, which played a pioneering role in the 1971 operations, also turns half a century old in November!

After the 1971 operations, the apex leadership, realising the strategic importance of the port of Okha, commissioned the unit at this port as its FOB on 26 November 1972. The base is about 30 km from the Dwarka temple, which continues to attract millions of devotees.

This article is a narration through my eyes, as I saw this beautiful unit discharge all its responsibilities with elan, compassion and professionalism in the past three decades. In 1990-91, when my ship INS Nishank was forward-deployed in Okha, INS Dwarka provided us with all logistic and administrative support. As the city didn't really have much to offer to personnel who had arrived from the city of Mumbai, forward deployments invariably provided ships with a fair amount of time to catch up with activities that invariably got missed out in Mumbai. We could devote time to our physical fitness with morning PT and evening games. In a way, this also facilitated better bonding between the crew. As the Veer class as well as the Durges were at some point of time forward-deployed, the divisional duties onboard these ships were worthy of emulation. Other highlights of the forward deployments included a trip to the Dwarka and Beyt Dwarka temples, Nageshwar temple, cricket matches and 'rum punches' with INS Dwarka's ship's company and Tata Chemicals Ltd. Even today, when some of us borne on these ships meet, we recall our beautiful memories of the deployment.

In 2006, I received my posting order to this FOB as its Commanding Officer. I was overjoyed as the place reminded me of those happy days in the 1990s. However, I had forgotten that this was about 15 years ago and I was now a married man with school-going children. The city per se had not developed much and basic amenities—such as drinking water, decent schools, shopping malls, cinema halls, air connectivity with rest of the country—were conspicuous by their absence! However,

all of us appointed there decided that the lack of these facilities was not going to deter us from enjoying life. Though the living conditions in Okha City were fairly challenging, our senior naval leadership invariably indulged us if we came up with some constructive proposals.



*Assuming charge from Capt Vinod Kumar*

### **Operational**

On the operational front, the unit took upon itself to get the long pending 40/60 guns installed. These guns had apparently arrived at the unit during the Kargil conflict;





however, the installation had got delayed. The unit also saw an enhanced number of visits of naval ships as the Western Fleet was seen to be more operationally deployed in this area. It was also during this period that India and Pakistan were desperately trying to resolve the Sir Creek issue. Indian survey ships invariably made their Operational Turn Round (OTR) at Okha. It was good catching up with them. The unit was also assigned the task of providing support to the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) team. The team conducted an underwater survey looking for the submerged city of Lord Krishna. When the diving operations were on, we eagerly awaited the arrival of the team in the Officers Mess every evening hoping to get a glimpse of gold bricks from the golden city of Dwarka. Of course, that did not happen!



### **Adventure, sports, games and bonding**

As mentioned earlier, while Okha per se didn't really have much to offer, the scenic beauty more than compensated for the arid town with brackish water. As a team, we decided to explore this natural beauty and organised various walkathons and treks on many of the uninhabited islands scattered off the west coast of Okha, north of Beyt Dwarka island. We also activated the nearly dormant Sea Cadet Corps (SCC). The strength of the cadets grew from just two to nearly a hundred in a span of six months when we reached out



to the vernacular schools in and around Okha. Almost all the wards of naval personnel posted to the FOB were members of the SCC.

### **Aid to civil administration**

The unit was ever willing to take on challenges—operational, logistics or even humanitarian. In July 2007, Okha, a city known for scanty rains, suddenly experienced an outburst. The city was flooded and had almost come to a grinding halt. The local administration requested us for assistance. The diving component of the unit swung into action and we provided succour. This earned the unit, and the Indian Navy, great appreciation from the town and local residents for our professionalism. Like all good things that must come to an end, I completed my two-year tenure and handed over the baton to my relief in March 2008.

### **ABOUT THE AUTHOR**

*Commodore Ashok Rai, VSM, PhD, was the Commanding Officer of INS Dwarka from 2006 to 2008. He can be contacted at ashok.krrai752@gmail.com*



## SILVER ANNIVERSARY: INS DELHI

### EK DO TEEN CHAAR, DILLI HAMESHA TAIYAAR!

By Rear Admiral Sudarshan Shrikhande (Retd)

It is difficult to believe that it is over 25 years since the 'new' INS Delhi was reincarnated to be the standard bearer of a new and more powerful Navy. However, this piece is not about the 'big picture' about which much has been written already. Nor is it written with rose-tinted glasses that gloss over difficulties that face the crew of a 'first-of-class' ship that was also seen as the veritable 'flagship' of a Navy. Rather, it is about the 'small stuff' – to use a nautical term – that makes a ship tick with life, cope with difficulties and is what memories are made of. It is written from a deck-level perspective of an XO about a most educative, eventful and fun-filled tenure. Regrettably, I was not fortunate enough to be part of the commissioning crew. I took over as the XO within seven months of commissioning when my predecessor, a dear friend and course mate, 'Jamy' Jamwal moved to Visakhapatnam in command of a ship. In the process, I served alongside the commissioning crew as shipmates and, as happens, slowly some of them left and new shipmates arrived. In my 15 months there, I served with three fine captains, albeit a fortnight with the commissioning CO and about two months with the third skipper.

The ship I joined was already well-knit with a vibrant, talented and highly professional wardroom and a spirited and very competent ship's company. Many of the systems in the 'New Delhi' class were new to our Navy. These included gas turbines, radars, missiles and some fire-control systems. Given that the Russians were no longer putting in the effort to write and then share documentation for maintenance and exploitation, unlike the case before the break-up of the USSR, it was the crew and the Training Team who were groping their way and putting pen to paper. We were all learning on the job and unlike the case today, a far greater proportion of the 'setting to work' (STW), harbour and sea acceptance trials (HATs/SATs) of individual equipment were ongoing after commissioning and some even more than a year after commissioning. Technical specialists, especially from Indian entities involved in equipment STW and trials, worked long hours in harbour and at sea in difficult monsoon conditions. One can clearly recall a period over a day and night, mainly drifting in rough seas for SATs of the sonar. All of them were very seasick, but most managed to continue working including over the sonar dome compartment with an occasional blue-faced smile! The next morning,



The proud crew in September 1998





I told my Captain that I was thrown off my bunk onto the cabin deck twice at night. He replied that he too had found himself on the deck once that night, recalling that in his long years in submarines nothing like that had happened. It was heartening to see the effort the crew was putting in during those initial months after November 1997.

Finding time for all this or commencing combat-systems training was hardly easy when STW was ongoing, HATs were not yet done for some hardware and systems knowledge was still developing. I mentioned earlier about Delhi being the pride of the Navy. This had a downside, though. After commissioning there were very frequent visits by distinguished Indian and foreign visitors at the home port, Mumbai, sometimes even more than one a day. Quite a few were followed by lunches hosted onboard. In a few weeks I realised this was disrupting the ship's work and routine. While we were very proud to take visitors around, work had to go on. So, we made a few changes. No parts of the ship, including upper decks, were out of bounds for the crew and work was to continue unaffected everywhere, including the visitor's route. With my Captain's concurrence, I went to the C-in-C's office to request that the ship be given a complete break from hosting lunches. (In an article I wrote a year or so later as advice for XO's, I included this line: "XO, yours is a warship, not a floating restaurant!") The C-in-C readily agreed and lunches were hosted in a mess or club ashore after that and a few officers from the 'host ship' were invited for these.

The ship was to sail to a few foreign ports as part of the Eastern Fleet's deployment to the South China Sea and the Western Pacific during the autumn months of 1998. We had made good progress with trials despite the monsoons but there was still a lot of work going on. The men and officers were sweating away all over the ship. We seemed to be having much more to do than the time available. Our endeavour was to secure on time everyday, but work hard and very purposefully through the day while cutting down time-wasting and pointless activities like evening quarters or afternoon both watches.

A day before we were to deploy, we announced a Sunday routine so that the crew, especially those with families in Mumbai, could attend to their needs or simply spend some time at home or out in the city. This proved to be an amazing morale-booster. By putting our minds together, some more changes were introduced that increased efficiency, availability of a larger number in duty watch, surprisingly when junior sailors were changed to a one-in four watch roster as opposed to a one-in-three. This was done by slashing the dozens of personnel excused harbour watches as 'daymen' and aligning senior sailors' rosters to about every seventh day instead of much longer, arbitrary gaps. Some other ideas could also be implemented. One was going to 'Cleanship Stations' in which all closed up and started 'deep' cleaning in action posts, stores, machinery spaces and so on. Departments and sub-departments set their own targets and we had some surprises. For example, bilge spaces and the bowels of the ship were cleared of hundreds of welding electrodes, rag pieces and other detritus that the yard teams had left behind. Incidentally, the same problem was seen in a two-year-old ship I went in command of a year later. It did not speak well of construction-period discipline and hygiene in our yards in those days. Another change was to make work plans for the



next week with daily targets. It was very gratifying to see many officers and regulators overcoming their scepticism and putting their minds to weekly planning and execution. This enabled us to work systematically and also have an idea of how much of the plan was not achieved because of some inevitable disruptions caused by circumstances. The simple logic was that if we don't really plan our work-week, nothing gets disrupted because we had not planned anyway.

We set sail. A few days into the South China Sea after visiting Singapore, an accompanying corvette was very low on water. The weather was such that fuelling from the tanker was going to be difficult for the smaller ship. Having seen pictures of how US heavy cruisers and battleships fuelled smaller ships abeam, I suggested we explore using the light jackstay method. The USN, which pioneered UNREP/RAS, used the heavy jackstay in which mechanical winches maintained the right tension and height for the span wire and pipe loops on the main wire. We did not have that. I found an old photo of the USN fuelling in one of my books and discussed what could be done with the Old Man, some officers and the fantastic Master Chief Bosun's mate, MCPO First Class Rang Rao. The Captain gave us advice and decided on how to hold ships in position for what could be a longish evolution due to low pumping rates for Delhi and even slower for the corvette to receive. We tested various portions separately and realised that up to four garlands would be required and each one would need to be tended manually by individual 'parties' in a very small deck area. Holding the jackstay aloft would be the main challenge, which we imagined to some extent. The next day showed us some surprises about how much muscle-power it would involve.

The next morning, we did connect up with INS Khanjar abeam. In the event, it soon required most officers and men not on essential watches to be piped on deck to run relays handling the main jackstay. The weight of the canvas 'kiwi' hoses attached to each other and the effort of carrying water and the need for the receiving ship to maintain station at a safer 100-120 ft were considerably greater than what we anticipated. But the parts I remember most clearly during the four hours it took us to top up her tanks vividly include the good cheer and laughter as men and officers, shoulder to shoulder, responded to orders of "up jackstay"; the Cdr (Log) and the cooks supplying snacks, water and juices; and some of us manning the ropes without our shirts to fight the heat and sweat! On more than a few occasions, the force required to keep the jackstay aloft also tended to pull Khanjar laterally closer. Her conning team of course did their job deftly and safely. I imagine it was also not easy for "Tanker" Delhi to be conned on a steady course for so many hours.

There were three outcomes from this that may be mentioned here. First, the crew's sprits at what they had achieved were extremely high. I thought of a 'war cry' for our ship that day and once when we had disengaged with Khanjar, we cheered her and our own ship with the words: "*Ek do teen chaar: Dilli Hamesha Taiyaar!*" It was used very often thereafter and the practice caught on with other ships as well in the next few months. 'Delhi-ites' felt flattered at the imitations. The second was that the evolution was repeated for Khanjar after a few days when we improved some procedures and it





seemed a bit easier. Sometime in early 1999, when we were the flagship, a frigate came to dangerously low fuel levels discovered in her morning fuel state report. FOCWF, then RAdm Sureesh Mehta, asked us if we could fuel the Leander-class frigate. We could. For transferring fuel, the challenges were in using even heavier AVCAT hoses. The Engine Room quickly worked out the tanks from which fuel would be transferred and the pumping out arrangement that could be feasible. Every last hose was used up. It took nearly six hours if I remember right, but it enabled the frigate to stay on for another day and then return home because otherwise she would have run dry. Third, Fleet Instructions were issued for all ships to practise this evolution so that logistic sustainability and operational flexibility would be improved. I do not know if the evolution is ordered nowadays.

The main purpose of the 'goodwill visit' (the term overseas deployment or OSD had not been invented then) was for a three-ship flotilla (Delhi was OTC) to represent India at the first International Fleet Review hosted at Chinhae by the Republic of Korea Navy (ROKN). It was a very well organised IFR. In the report that our ship wrote, we had a chapter titled "If the IN were to host an IFR", which mirrored some of what we saw. In January 2001, when the first IFR was organised in Mumbai, all our proposals were incorporated. This included visits to the National Defence Academy in Khadakwasla; IAF transport aircraft taking a few foreign crew members to Agra to see the Taj; naval bands as well as popular music concerts; and liaison officers from IN billeted onboard each ship for the duration of the stay. Unlike for a geographically smaller South Korea, Agra and Pune are at some distance away from Mumbai and the spirit that the Air Force showed to help with a naval review was indeed very good. On the day of the city parade, what stole the show was the aerobatics of a Sukhoi-30 that absolutely mesmerised the people, foreign guests and all present along Marine Drive. From a fleet review, it seemed to have become an IAF review. The pop concert was called off as a mark of respect to those who died in the devastating Gujarat earthquake. The idea of having liaison officers living in each ship with the host navy's concurrence, of course, came from our experience in Korea. My Staff College classmate from the ROK Navy in 1994-95 came over on my request as the LO and stayed onboard. Apart from his wonderful qualities and great enterprise, he damage-controlled a certain 'diplomatic' incident when one of our ships accidentally spilled some diesel into the water while transferring fuel from one tank to another. The harbour police boats immediately surrounded the ship and slapped a serious pollution charge, which required a big fine, among other consequences. Our ROKN friend worked the phones and in a couple of hours the matter was settled with my CO writing a letter of regret as OTC at the drill error by the ship and expressed appreciation at the cooperation and understanding we received.



Bridges of Friendship: Cdr Kim Jae Ung, ROKN liaison officer and a course mate of the XO, at DSSC, Wellington



Early in 1999, while we were busy with FXPs, some SATs and weapon firings, came the Fleet Regatta. We won many of the races including Officers' and the Senior Sailors'. Our MCBM Rang Rao was the oldest cox'n in the Fleet and he helmed not only the Senior Sailors but also the Best Whaler. I had the dubious distinction of being the oldest puller! (That distinction remained when I commanded Kora and pulled as the strokes-man to our victory; and again at almost 50 years' mark as CO Rajput, but did not win.) The celebrations that afternoon and even later on winning were really good about it was that we did not practice excessive sporting event, not some 'life or death' matter that required readiness to suffer if ships adopt the wrong attitude.

## Delhi a clear winner!

## Briefing a foreign delegation during the Kargil conflict

Sometime in the approaching summer of 1999, the nation got involved in the Kargil war. Having completed almost all SATs and weapon firings, the good ship Delhi was ready to sail in harm's way! As it were, before the intruders were discovered in the cold heights of the craggy ranges of Dras and Kargil, we were ordered to start the GRDD (Guarantee Refit and Dry Docking), which for legal reasons could not have been postponed. We defueled, de-ammunitioned, started refit conferences, etc. In a few days we





readiness for a few weeks until the possibility of escalation receded once the Pakistani Army had been routed on the very same peaks. The pre-refit process was once again repeated and we defueled and sent the war loads back to depots.

I handed over as XO sometime in August 1999. It was a sad day for me to leave my shipmates behind and take with me only wonderful memories, including some of the trials and tribulations we faced. As XO, I had the good fortune to learn a lot from the Captains and a few hundred fine shipmates; of the camaraderie of the HODs; a professional wardroom that turned happily noisy and boisterous during some sing-song sessions and had an unending supply of mimics and one caricaturist with plenty of 'targets' within! The tenure prompted me to write an article for *Hands Call* titled "XO No.1", describing mainly what I learnt onboard but also what I had seen of environments in other ships and heard second hand where good and not-so-good XOs left lessons behind. It continues to be used for part of the reading for CO/XO PCTs since then.



Three cheers!

One could have written a lot more for *Quarterdeck*, named several sailors and officers that I recall vividly for their qualities and contribution, but it may suffice to merely remember and salute them all. *Ek Do Teen Chaar....*

### ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Rear Admiral Sudarshan Shrikhande, AVSM, retired in 2016 after 36 years in the Indian Navy. In flag rank, he headed Naval Intelligence; was Chief of Staff, SNC; and served in HQIDS and the Strategic Forces Command, among others. He commanded INS Nishank, Kora and Rajput, and earlier served as ASWO, Ranvir, and XO, Delhi. He is a postgraduate of the Soviet Naval War College (1985-88), Indian Staff and Naval War Colleges and the US Naval War College with highest distinction (2003). In retirement, he teaches several themes in military and civilian institutions. He writes regularly for a few Indian and foreign journals and is associated with some think tanks and academic institutions. He is a member of the adjunct faculty at the Naval War College and Takshashila and the inaugural editor-in-chief of the Indian Naval Despatch. He has participated in Track 2 dialogues with a few countries and in national and international conferences. He is currently studying for a PhD in sea-based nuclear deterrence.





## DECOMMISSIONING: INS GOMATI

### A GLORIOUS INNINGS

By Commander Rajinder Dutta (Retd)

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**T**he proudest man walking the planet after the decommissioning of INS Gomati on 28 May 2022 at Mumbai's Cruiser Wharf must have been the creator of the Godavari class, Captain Mohan Ram, VSM, for not only were these ships heavier, an improved version of the old Leander, but achieved a knot higher during the first sea trial, in which the Godavari's designer was himself present in the mid-1970s. Indeed, Godavari, Ganga and Gomati have had a glorious career in the Indian Navy.

The final commission of Gomati under the leadership of her skipper Capt Sudip Malik left no stone unturned to ensure that all the ceremonies were conducted with elan. Her next avatar will be, aptly, on the banks of the river Gomati! She will be completely dismantled and transported to Lucknow, where the Uttar Pradesh government plans to set up an open-air museum in her honour, titled 'Gomati Shaurya Smarak'.

The ship had arranged for a *bara khana* in the Sailors Institute, Sagar, on 22 May 2022, for the former sailors of Gomati, along with their families. The next wonderful function was the Decommissioning Eve in IMSC on 27 May for the officers and ladies prior to the final function when the Naval Ensign was hauled down for the last time at sunset on its quarterdeck at Cruiser Wharf in the presence of 11 of the 24 COs who had commanded her.

#### INS Gomati

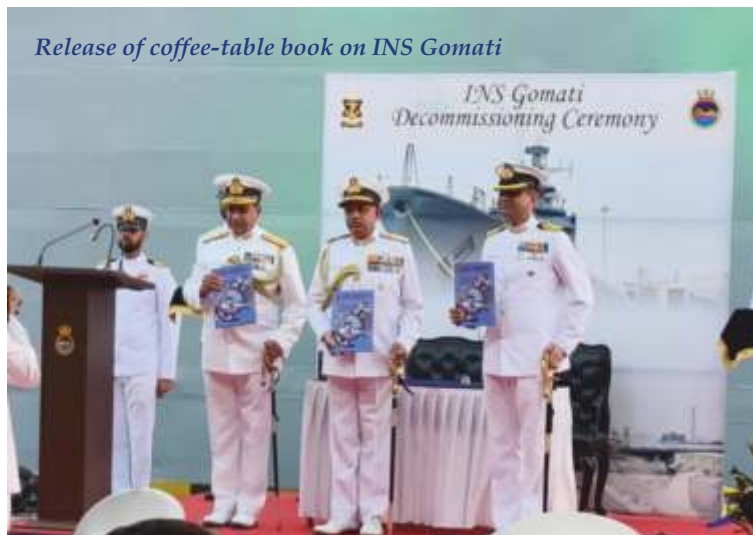
INS Gomati (F-21), the Indian Navy's oldest guided-missile frigate, was decommissioned after rendering 34 years of service. She was built at Mumbai's Mazagon Dock Ltd in 1978 and inducted into the naval fleet on 16 April 1988. With 72 per cent indigenous content, the ship was the first Indian





Naval vessel to have digital electronics in her combat data system.

After her midlife upgrade in 2011, INS Gomati had been fitted with new weapons and sensors, which include the Barak surface-to-air missile system, an Oto Melara 76-mm gun, HUMSA sonar and Advanced Ship Control System for UAVs. Holding the war insignia of Lucknow's Chattar Manzil—the palace of the Nawabs of Oudh—the boat successfully faced technical challenges to integrate the technologies of the erstwhile Soviet Union and NATO allies such as Italy, France, the Netherlands and the US.



### **Decommissioning Eve: 27 May**

All guests were warmly welcomed at IMSC for the Decom Eve by Fleet Commander RAdm Sameer Saxena and Capt Sudip Malik, CO Gomati. The lawns were abuzz with serving officers and veterans who had served onboard the ship. It was a great pleasure to interact with senior veteran VAdm S K Damle, the Harrier pilot who was not only privileged to command Gomati but also the Southern Naval Command later as its Commander-in-Chief. We had served together in Hansa in the 1980s. Like many other senior naval aviators, the admiral has made Goa his *ashiana*! Among the other senior veterans who had served onboard, it was a pleasure to meet and interact with VAdm Girish Luthra, VAdm I C Rao, VAdm M J Singh, Cmde K M Thomas, Cmde U N Chitnavis, Cdr GVK Unnikrishnan, Cmde R Balasubramaniam and Capt Nandedkar with their good ladies, among many others.

CO Capt Sudip Malik took to the stage and welcomed us all, after which officers from the previous commissions showcased their talents, including Capt Brahmswaroop with his harmonica and Capt Nandedkar on karaoke. Later, all the former officers took to the stage to sing a group number. A delicious multicuisine meal was accompanied by live music, much to everyone's delight. Cut-outs of Gomati provided the perfect photo-op at the time of departure.

### **Decommissioning: 28 May**

Fleet Commander RAdm Sameer Saxena welcomed the guests at Cruiser Wharf near Tiger Gate at 6 pm. We were escorted by young Lt Maratha, an education officer, to the visitors' enclosure facing the bedecked Gomati on the jetty. The rear enclosure was abuzz with media personnel.

After the impressive speeches by CO Capt Sudip Malik and C-in-C West Vice Admiral A B Singh, it was heartening to see the Tourism Secretary of Uttar Pradesh sign an MOU with the Indian Navy for





the Gomati museum. The final countdown commenced when the CO invited the former COs, Fleet Cdr and C-in-C on the helo deck for the immaculate guard drill for the sunset ceremony, which was executed with precision. Then, the Naval Ensign was lowered for the last time, followed by the hauling down of the commissioning pendant. What a sentimental moment it was when the CO reported to the C-in-C: “Gomati decommissioned, Sir”! The dignitaries then disembarked for the screening of the movie, *Gomati's Valour*, commencing with a short speech by the chief architect of the Godavari class, Capt Mohan Ram. The movie filled our hearts with pride and patriotic fervour. The serving personnel and proud veterans then interacted over high tea, recounting their past onboard and swapping stories.

It was a memorable event, a fitting salute to a glorious innings of a mighty warship.

#### ABOUT THE AUTHOR

*Commander Rajinder Dutta (Retd) has been a naval pilot and a qualified flying instructor with about 3,000 hrs of flying on various fixed wing aircraft of the Indian Navy: HT-2, HPT-32, Kirans, Islander, Super Connie, Fokker F-27 and IL-38. He is the Hon Secy of NFMC, a master of ceremonies and an avid blogger (<http://rajdutta26.blogspot.com/>).*







## AWARD OF PRESIDENT'S COLOUR: NAVAL AVIATION A HIGH HONOUR

By Commander Rajinder Dutta (Retd)

It was a proud moment for all the Navy men, past and present, associated with Naval Aviation, as President of India Ram Nath Kovind awarded the President's Colour to Naval Aviation in Goa on 6 September 2021, also commemorating its Diamond Jubilee. It was a day that all 'Fly Navy' boys took a walk down memory lane, reminiscing about their times and adventures, and a momentous occasion to recognise the rich contribution of generations of flyers, technicians, support staff and others who made this achievement possible.

Elaborate arrangements had been executed for an impressive ceremony on the expansive Hansa dispersal but the rain gods attempted to play spoilsport. However, this couldn't dampen the spirit of the flyboys and the event was accomplished immaculately in the hangar, as per Plan B.

### INS Hansa

INS Hansa in Dabolim boasted of being the largest naval air station in Asia until the commissioning of INS Rajali, Arakkonam, in 1992. The air station was commissioned as INS Hansa on 5 September 1961 in Sultur, Tamil Nadu, with Vampire, Sea Hawk and Alize aircraft and shifted to Goa in December the same year after the liberation of the state. More aircraft were inducted: Sea Harriers (now replaced by





MIG29Ks), Kirans, Alizes (replaced by Dornier 228), IL-38s, Kamovs-25/28 and the Super Connies (replaced by TU-142s). The TU-142Ms that had shifted to Arakkonam on commissioning of INS Rajali have since been phased out and replaced by the Boeing P-8Is. The Indian Navy's Shore Based Test Facility (SBTF), which is a mock-up of the 283-m INS Vikramaditya deck built on the airfield at Hansa, is used to train navy MIG-29K pilots to operate from the aircraft carrier. The air station also houses a Naval Aviation Museum at the southern end.

### **My days at Hansa**

I was privileged to fly the resilient Super Connie from 1981-83. The Navy's first long-range maritime reconnaissance squadron was commissioned with five ex-IAF Super Constellation aircraft on 8 November 1976 in INS Hansa. In its sunset days, the aircraft would display fatigue with malfunction of hydraulics and misfiring of spark plugs but always brought its crew back safely! We were known as the mighty Albatrosses and I have chronicled some of our experiences and lighter moments in my article "Of Super Connies and Stallions", which was published in the last edition of *Quarterdeck*.

I had the added privilege of serving in INS Hansa on a second tenure to fly the IL-38s (INAS-315 - the Winged Stallions) from 1990-1993. The huge IL-38 was a hunter killer that carried over 200 sonobuoys, 2 Plab bombs and an ATE1ME torpedo to locate and destroy an enemy submarine. The squadron had rendered yeoman service to the Navy with 25 years of accident-free flying. Unfortunately, on 1 October 2002, when it was celebrating its silver jubilee, two IL-38s flying in a close formation collided mid-air over Zuari and crashed, taking along 12 Winged Stallions.

Two decades later, the Winged Stallions are back on their feet with two replacement aircraft from Russia. The squadron has erected a war memorial and commemorates 1 October as Remembrance Day in honour of those it lost. After the 'Sea Dragon' upgrade, the squadron is now capable of long-range strike with KH-35E ASM and is thus more potent, more lethal and a great force multiplier.

### **Future ready**

Indeed, INS Hansa has grown in strength and heft over the past six decades. It is currently home to the Navy's frontline air squadrons: INAS 310 Cobras with Dornier-228 aircraft, the Winged Stallions with the long-range maritime patrol aircraft IL-38SD, INAS 339 Falcons with the airborne early-warning Kamov-31 helicopter, INAS 303 Black Panthers and INAS 300 White Tigers with the supersonic carrier-borne MiG 29K fighters, and INAS 323 Harriers with ALH Mk III helicopters. Last year, it also started operating the Boeing P8I long-range maritime reconnaissance aircraft with the commissioning of INAS 316. As Hansa shines on, from sea to sky, we naval veterans pray that this premier air station continues to scale new heights!





## AWARD OF PRESIDENT'S COLOUR: INS VALSURA

### AHEAD OF THE CURVE

By Commander Amit Ahuja

President of India Shri Ram Nath Kovind awarded the prestigious President's Colour to INS Valsura on 25 March 2022. The 'Nishan Adhikari' Lt Arun Singh Sambyal received the honour on behalf of the unit in an impressive parade. The unit, commanded by Cmde Gautam Marwaha, VSM, paraded a 150-men Guard of Honour for the President. Over 800 officers and men of INS Valsura, looking spectacular in their ceremonial dress, marched proudly to the tunes of the naval band.

Governor of Gujarat Acharya Devvrat, Chief of the Naval Staff Admiral R Hari Kumar, FOC-in-C Southern Naval Command Vice Admiral M A Hampiholi, along with other senior civil and military dignitaries, graced the occasion.

The President's Colour is bestowed upon a military unit in recognition of exceptional service rendered to the nation, both in peace and war. The Indian Navy was the first Indian Armed Force to be awarded this honour by Dr Rajendra Prasad on 27 May 1951.

The legacy of INS Valsura dates back to 1942, when operational necessity mandated the creation of an advanced torpedo training facility to enhance the firepower of the Royal Indian Navy during World War II. After India became a republic, the unit was renamed INS Valsura on 1 July 1950. Thereon, the base has transformed itself into the epitome of professional technical training and has exponentially grown to keep pace with the Indian Navy's modernisation plans.

The unit has always stayed ahead of the curve to equip the officers and sailors of the Indian Navy with requisite skill-sets to maintain and ensure combat-worthiness of the increasingly complex weaponry and electronic systems, besides keeping pace with advancements in information technology. The unit imparts quality training on contemporary and niche technologies through







progressive augmentation of training infrastructure. The establishment of artificial intelligence (AI), Big Data and medium voltage labs in recent years exemplifies its quest for technological excellence in contemporary technology as well as in training officers and sailors. Overall, the establishment conducts more than 262 courses a year and has an annual training throughput of over 750 officers and 4,200 sailors. INS Valsura has also emerged as the preferred training destination for our friendly foreign navies – 1,800 trainees from 15 friendly foreign navies have been trained to date at this premier institution. Further, as part of social outreach programmes in the Saurashtra region, INS Valsura has initiated a number of welfare measures. For instance, the rebuilding of Moda village after the devastating earthquake of 2001 was a commendable effort towards community service. In September 2021, during the floods in Jamnagar, over 400 citizens, including the elderly, ladies and children, were rescued by the teams of INS Valsura.

On this landmark event, the President of India congratulated the personnel of INS Valsura and commended them for their professionalism and dedication to safeguard our maritime borders. A special postal cover was also released by the President to commemorate the occasion.

Indeed, the award of the President's Colour marks a very important milestone in the history of INS Valsura. The President's Colour shall be proudly displayed and carried at all ceremonial parades, in accordance with naval traditions, and is a symbol of yeoman service rendered.

### ABOUT THE AUTHOR

*Commander Amit Ahuja was commissioned into the Indian Navy on 1 January 2007. He is an alumnus of the Naval College of Engineering, Lonavala, Junior Staff Training Institute (Bangladesh) and Naval War College, Goa. He has served onboard Godavari, Abhay and Teg and also had a tenure at Naval Headquarters. He is currently posted as Officer-in-Charge, Training Secretariat, INS Valsura, Jamnagar.*







## AWARD: REPUBLIC DAY PARADE 2022

### THE MARCH TO SUCCESS

By Lieutenant Commander Aanchal Sharma

*"Nausena contingent! Daaine dekh! Ek, do, teen, chaar, paanch, che, saat!"*

On the count of seven, each member of the contingent neatly raised their left foot up to the waist and banged it to the ground in unison, simultaneously looking right in a crisp motion of the head. The platoon commanders in line behind and I flicked and lowered our ceremonial swords in salute to the President, as we confidently marched past the dais to the tune of *Jai Bharati* played by the Naval Brass Band marching ahead. A month later, we were awarded the Best Marching Contingent – Republic Day Parade 2022.

#### The first step

October 2021. "The journey of a thousand miles begins with a single step," in the words of Lao Tzu. I was posted as Staff Naval Air Operations Officer in Porbandar when the annual IG calling for officers to volunteer for the Republic Day Parade (RDP) at Rajpath, New Delhi, was floated. I had volunteered a few years earlier as well, soon after passing out of the Indian Naval Academy, but the dates clashing with our ab-initio training at Observer School meant that I had to wait for another opportunity. This year, six years into service, I was raring to go for it. With the permission of COINAS314, I sent in my name.

#### Team composition

An initial screening held at INS India reduced the large pool of volunteers to a final composition of six officers: two Lieutenant Commanders and four Lieutenants from various naval units. We were joined by six newly commissioned Sub Lieutenants of the 33 NOC (Regular) course, after their passing out at the Indian Naval Academy. Having now been fully inducted into the two-month rigorous journey



towards RDP 2022, we reported at INS Chilka on 1 December 2021 for the first leg of preparation: endurance building.

The Navy contingent for RDP 2022 was to consist of 120 sailors handpicked from the latest batch undergoing induction training at INS Chilka, of which 96 would form the main marching contingent and 24 as standby. Selections and practice of the platoons had commenced in early October at Chilka, with the young and energetic trainees in the age bracket of 17-21 years enthusiastically trying to prove their mettle as the best in drill in their batch of roughly 2,000 men.

### **Training at INS Chilka**

The focus points of the training phase at Chilka were to build physical endurance and achieve coordination. This was accomplished by means of a rigorous regimen that pushed our physical and mental limits. We had two practice routines a day: morning routine from 0500-0900 hrs and evening routine from 1500-1900 hrs. Each routine consisted of an 8-km march along the main road of the unit wearing horseshoe drill boots, preceded by a briefing by GO/MCGI and warm-up, and followed by debrief, stretching and a special stand-easy diet of milk, jaggery, eggs and chana. Sunday's evening routine was excused to give a break to the body. Suitable stretching and oil massage in one's own time was followed by one and all to relieve the exhaustion in the muscles and gear up for the next day.

The training team of the GO and gunnery instructors ensured there was steady progress in the quality and coordination of the drill by continuously and meticulously correcting mistakes. They constantly monitored the entire march from different elevations and directions to leave no stone unturned. They paid painstaking attention to details such as correct grip of the cutlass, positioning of the rifle, back posture, level of elevation of the leg during check step and regular march, level of swing of the hand in forward and backward motions, equal digging of both the heels, and straight-line marching. In pursuit of row and column dressing, individual line and file practice was conducted every day until the GIs were convinced that not more than one person was visible from either end of the line/file.

The first phase of preparation concluded with a review of the parade followed by a high tea address by CO INS Chilka, during which the air reverberated with the young team's tremendously high *josh* to settle for nothing less than a victory on the 26<sup>th</sup>. We were all set to move to New Delhi for the next stage of action.

### **The Delhi chronicles**

We reached Delhi on 25 December 2021, greeted by its typical bone-chilling winter. We were welcomed with an address by CO INS India and a briefing of the plan ahead by GO. We were one of the first teams to start practising on Rajpath, along with the Air Force and Coast Guard contingents. A solemn feeling of pride and purpose washed over us, as we had earned our place on the historical Rajpath after one month of toil.





The shift of setting to the capital entailed quite a few changes: rigs were no longer 8A, 10A or 6B, but No. 1, No. 3 and No. 7. Temperatures plummeted to 7-8°C in the dawn hours. We also received media attention. But most notably, we were now joined by the renowned Naval Band led by Hon SLt Vincent Johnson MCPO II (MUS), which through its tunes and beats exponentially multiplied our energy levels on the fog-covered Rajpath.

The daily practice routine at Delhi is an experience etched in memory for a lifetime. Our day began at 0430 hrs at Vijay Chowk, the darkness being interrupted by the majestic illumination of the South and North Blocks. After an extensive warm-up session by the PTI, which included jogging around the Chowk in drill boots, we stamp-marched our way to the start line to take position for the day's drill, all ears alert and ready for the session's contingent commander to give the order: "*Nausena contingent! Madhya se, tez chal!*"

As soon as the sharp and booming voice pierced the last word into the air, 132 feet slammed the boot metal to the road in synchrony, electrifying the atmosphere and kicking out any ounce of lethargy left in the body. We marched on to the band's beats for 6 km to India Gate and back twice a day, and repeatedly practiced along the presidential dais till the thumbs up signal for the day's performance was given by the GO. The contingent took a break in between for the nutritious stand-easy at 0730 hrs and, after a thorough session of stretching and laughter therapy accompanied by the band finishing with peppy numbers to lighten our exhausted minds, we finally secured at 1130 hrs for breakfast served in the lawns.

An unexpected surprise awaited the team when one such cooling-down session was broadcast by a media house, with the band playing the popular Bollywood number *Monica* in the background. The video caught the attention of millions on the Internet and we immediately went 'viral'.

By now, the standard of drill had reached the requisite level from where fine-tuning and further refinement could be commenced. POC training was given, duration of commands was finalised, sword angle and posture of platoon commanders were coordinated, timing of salutes was matched, spacing with the preceding contingents was practiced, war cries and slogans were devised, diagonal dressing was improved, and the final marching contingent and commanders were chosen.

After the conclusion of the Army Day ceremony on 15 January 2022, all the remaining contingents and their respective bands started pouring into Rajpath for practice, including six from the Army, President's Bodyguard, CISF, CRPF, CAPF, Assam Rifles, Camel and Biker platoons of the BSF, and cadets of NCC and NSS. With contingents attired in ceremonial uniforms of various hues and marching to diverse martial tunes, Rajpath was transformed into an extremely vibrant and lively site.



The contingent's morale was consistently positive, with regular reviews and pep talks by CO INS India and flag officers, including CPS. During the penultimate week, the entire team was invited to South Block for an interaction with the CNS, which further intensified the drive to display an outstanding parade on Republic Day. The Indian Navy's was the only contingent to have practiced on Rajpath during the last two days prior to D-Day, even after the Full Dress Rehearsal (FDR). In the background, tremendous effort was made by Team INS India to ensure quality and timely logistics support in terms of clothing, parade stores, accommodation, provision of meals at practice locations and transport.

### **The final march**

It is said that in the military, you don't rise to the expectations of the occasion, but rather fall to the level of your training. Having complete conviction that we had done all the preparation possible during the past two months in training for this one day, we kickstarted our final march on Republic Day with composed minds and energetic bodies, as we had done hundreds of times by then.

### **All's well that ends well**

Commanding a young and spirited team of such high mettle was an honour and privilege. During the final march, I was aware that my command was being witnessed by millions on television screens across the country but, more important, by the 100-odd uniformed personnel marching behind me with a killer drive, waiting to execute the finest drill of the parade upon my orders. This was an enormous responsibility but we displayed our sharp drill to the President with an unshakeable confidence that was achieved through the grind of extensive training.

As we completed '*Saamne dekh*', we roared with satisfaction:  
*"Nausena ke veer jawan; hum hi hain sabse balwaan!"*

True enough, a month later in the middle of a working day, we were informed about the positive result. We were elated but not surprised, for we knew that nothing short of this outcome was befitting for an effort so comprehensive.



### **ABOUT THE AUTHOR**

*Lieutenant Commander Aanchal Sharma was commissioned on 27 June 2016 and is an alumnus of the 23rd Naval Orientation Course of the Indian Naval Academy wherein she was adjudged the most promising NOC cadet. She was also adjudged Best in Ground Subjects during her Observer Course. She has 1,500 hours of flying experience on Dornier and presently holds Cat 'A' on type. She commanded the winning contingent of the Indian Navy at the Republic Day Parade 2022. She was also mission commander of the first 'all women crew' sortie undertaken by the Navy on 3 October 2022. She is currently undergoing her QNI course from Navigation Training School, Begumpet.*







## PRESIDENT'S FLEET REVIEW 2022

### AN EVENT TO REMEMBER

By Rear Admiral Rahul V Gokhale

**A**t the debrief of two mega events chaired by the FOCINC East, the Chair paid a backhanded compliment to the assembled officers stating, "Success is a very poor teacher." Congratulating the gathering, he directed all units to meticulously compile the lessons learnt so that the planners and executors of the Presidents Fleet Review (PFR) and MILAN 22 could plough forward for similar events that would certainly be organised in Visakhapatnam in the future. The events of the three days of the PFR are now fast receding but some great memories will surely remain with the officers and men of the ENC who ensured the successful execution of the 12th edition of PFR 2022.

In late 2020, we in Vizag heard of the possibility of the conduct of PFR in early 2022 to be closely followed by the MILAN 22 multinational exercise. Having worked on the planning staff for MILAN 2020 (which was cancelled due to the pandemic), the conduct of the two events in quick succession appeared to be a daunting task, especially from the perspective of the Command of the base depot ship. While the planning directive was received from IHQMoD (N) in April 2021, work had begun in right earnest in Vizag well prior to its receipt.

It is to the credit of the then C-in-C and Chief of Staff (COS) that a very clear perspective on the conduct of both events emerged. While chairing the first coordinating meeting, the C-in-C gave a very well-defined direction – a lot of thinking had gone into IFR 2016 and we need not reinvent the wheel. Where precedence existed, one had to only follow it. This provided the core team with a very clear outlook. The COS also took charge of the overall planning for both events. The work actually got underway with the establishment of the PFR Cell.



It may be recalled that all the work for PFR 22 was happening even as the second and third waves of the COVID-19 pandemic were being adroitly handled by the very same units and personnel. To reduce the risk to the core team from an inadvertent spread, the reviews – which are sometimes more trouble than the event itself – were conducted on the Navy's virtual meeting solution. This allowed numerous stakeholders to meet seamlessly without any fear of the spread of the virus.

The sub-allocation of duties was quite simple – a committee was formed under a particular Flag Officer to whom were assigned all units/ personnel who contributed to the execution of that aspect of the execution. For example, Guest, Reception, Invitation and Protocol (GRIP) was allocated to Flag Officer Submarines who oversaw the work of Virbahu who was the GRIP coordinator with personnel from Dega (airport reception), MO (V) for transport and Satavahana (security). Similarly, FOCEF was the Committee lead for the Review Anchorage; PD (SBC) oversaw all accommodation arrangements; ND (V) took on preparation of the Presidential Yachts along with support to participating ships. The CSO (P&A) maintained a bird's-eye view of the Presidential Lunch, PFR Dinner and the *Bara Khana* on D+1. The PFR Cell, along with officers of Circars, was omnipresent. The Cell would share data with all stakeholders on a daily basis and they coordinated between committees in a seamless manner.

The final few months saw every committee and unit working at a frantic pace. Days zoomed past but we always assessed that the team was ahead of the curve. For instance, the menus for all events for the PFR and MILAN were approved at the appropriate level six months before the events and the accommodation plan was approved four months prior to D-Day. This allowed Circars to process the financial cases with adequate time in hand to cater for unforeseen issues. The addition of the VIP floors at the new Shaurya building was further augmented by the refurbishment of the VIP floors of the Dhruv and Eklavya buildings.

The Core Team was also quite lucky when the changes at the C-in-C level in November 2021 saw the COS being appointed as the C-in-C East. This provided the Core Team with much-needed continuity given that only two-and-a-half months were in hand prior to D-Day.

At the working level, the team remained concerned about the review by the CNS on taking over office. This review was delayed due to numerous important events in Delhi, including the sudden demise of the former CDS, but took place in end December 2021 with an onsite visit on 1 February 2022, a few weeks prior to PFR. However, with the detailed and meticulous approach adopted, the CNS approved the plans for the events with a few invaluable additions.

With a thunderous roar announcing their arrival, the MiGs and other aircraft heralded the start of the final phase leading up to D-Day. Concurrently, ships of the Eastern and Western Fleets took up



assigned berths at the review anchorage as per the anchoring plan. For the organisers, every guest was a VIP and we had a flurry of activity with guests being received at the airport and railway station and escorted to their earmarked accommodation. The C-in-C reviewed the anchored ships on 19 February hours before the arrival of the CNS. On 20 February, the CNS reviewed the final preparations and thereafter proceeded to receive the Hon'ble President. The visiting

Chiefs of the Army and Air Force and Cs-in-C of sister services were hosted at dinner by the C-in-C East at the iconic Dolphin's Cove – a facility that has no parallel across the Services.



With the base and surrounding areas shining, the morning of 21 February 2022 dawned. Sixty-three ships of the Indian Navy (57), Coast Guard (3), SCI (2) and one from the NIOT were ready to salute the President with the City of Destiny as the backdrop. The Review was flawlessly conducted and followed by an impressive flypast by 55 aircraft. The Hon'ble President mentioned that he was awestruck by the Review as he disembarked the Presidential Yacht.

The Review was followed in quick succession by the PFR Photograph in the lawns of the ENC Officers Mess. The PFR Lunch was served simultaneously, for about 600 guests, at the Rajput, Arihant and Gharial Halls of the ENC Officers Mess.

Completion of the PFR Lunch signalled the end of the formal part of PFR 2022 but two spectacular events that followed allowed better interaction in an informal environment. The PFR Dinner was hosted for the guests and officers of the ships and air squadrons at the Naval Officers Institute (NOI) on the evening of 21 February 2022.







The *Bara Khana* for about 1,000 personnel was held at the Sailors Institute at lunch on 22 February 2022. This brought the curtains down on an event for which many unsung officers and men had toiled for months. For my team at Circars, it was an unparalleled learning experience and along the way we ensured the creation of infrastructure and facilities that should serve the Navy in Vizag well in the years ahead.

Characterised by the theme '75 Years in Service of the Nation', PFR 2022 coincided with the nation celebrating the 'Azadi ka Amrit Mahotsav'. It showed the Indian Navy once again at the forefront in service of the nation.



### ABOUT THE AUTHOR

*A second-generation naval officer, Rear Admiral Rahul Vilas Gokhale, NM, is an alumnus of the NDA Khadakwasla, DSSC Wellington, NWC Goa, and the Australian Defence College, Canberra. A ND specialist, he has served onboard INS Ranvijay (NO II) and onboard INS Subhadra, Udaygiri, Kirch (commissioning crew), Gomati and Delhi as the Navigating Officer. He has been the Executive Officer of INS Kora and commanded INS Khukri and state-of-the-art destroyer INS Kolkata. He has also held the appointment of Fleet Operations Officer of the Eastern Fleet. His staff appointments include tenures at DNP, DFC, and as Director of Personnel (Policy). The officer has served at the Indian High Commission in Islamabad, Pakistan, as the Naval Adviser. Before promotion to flag rank and assuming the appointment of Flag Officer Sea Training, he was Commanding Officer INS Circars.*





## THE NAVY ULTRA MARATHON RUNNING THE EXTRA MILE

By Lieutenant Commander Devdutt Sharma

**I**t was a full moon night off the Bay of Bengal on destroyer INS Rana with rough seas, incessant rolling and pitching, and a book in my hand. I could never have imagined that a bunch of words could transport me to a different world of experiences. A few pages in and a strange feeling came over me as I read about an accomplished marathoner. I went to the helo deck, lay down and gazed at the stars, wondering how he could run consecutive marathons with such consummate ease.

I tossed and turned much of that night with thoughts whizzing across my mind like stray bullets. At 0400 hrs, I started reading again and completed the entire book. It stayed on my mind and after two days, I asked myself: If this person could run 50 consecutive marathons, why can't I? I challenged myself to run 1,250 km (30 marathons) in 30 days. The second question was: When and where?

After three days of deep thinking, I arrived at a plan, which I discussed with my EXO Cdr Siddharth Raut. "If you can run 30 marathons, you can obviously run 35 too," he said with confidence. We both decided to round it off to 1,500 km, which is 35 marathons, in 35 days. Later, I discussed it with my CO Capt K Srivatsa who made some suggestions, added his suggestions and gave me the go ahead, wishing me 'happy miles'.

I had proposed to undertake this expedition in the Delhi-Haryana-Chandigarh region – this was a unique, first-of-its-kind expedition for the Indian Navy and I believed I would be more comfortable undertaking it in and around my native place. I wanted to do it during my leave period, with no financial implications on the Service and no impact on my primary duty.

Later, it was decided that this would be a team event under my leadership with runners from all commands joining me. Volunteers from all the commands were asked to participate in the



expedition. They were free to choose any dates between 30 October and 3 December 2022 as everyone cannot run a full marathon (42.2 km) consecutively for 35 days.

I planned a day-wise activity schedule and surveyed the entire route. I also involved the Haryana government to make the process smoother and interacted with the concerned officers of all districts. The plan was shared with the IHQ MoD (N)/DAPSA and I finally got approval to undertake the expedition – it took us eight months to finally get a green signal.

However, two weeks prior to the expedition, I got a message from the directorate that the event would not happen due to lack of sponsorship and various other reasons. I was stunned and distraught that the hard work put in during all these months would go in vain. But, as they say, if you have worked hard from the core of your heart for a noble cause, the Almighty always supports you. Indian Oil and Tata Motors agreed to come onboard as event sponsors. We managed other things and on 20 October 2022 it was confirmed that the event would start on the same date as decided nine months earlier. We formed a team of runners as per the dates they selected; on average, every day 10-12 runners from the Indian Navy would run a full marathon.

The team had a sleepless night on 29 October; the Tata vehicles meant to carry our stores were held up for police verification and we waited till 2300 hrs until they reached INS India. By the time we loaded the hydration and nutrition packages, it was already 0130 hrs on 30 October. We went back to our hotels, packed up our stuff and reached the National War Memorial for the flag-off.

A huge crowd was assembled at National War Memorial, including media personnel, relatives and friends. I prayed to God to continue to give me the same power and energy. I would always say that 1,500 km has already been executed successfully in the mind; I just needed to execute it on the ground. I learnt an important lesson from the *Bhagawad-Gita* that if you first win a battle in your mind, it becomes even easier when you actually fight. The run was flagged off by COP Vice Admiral D K Tripathi and CPS Vice Admiral Suraj Berry.



The team reached the first milestone at Rai, Sonipat. We used to discuss the plan for the next day at dinner and generally get up at 0345 hrs to start the run sharp at 0500 hrs. Our endeavour was to complete the run by 1030-1100 hrs and visit schools 10-15 km away. After completion of the run every day, I used to send the entire team back to the hotel for lunch. As team leader, I prioritised my time at the schools with students and decided to skip my lunch. I kept my uniform in the car and would immediately change after the run.





## Here are some personal highlights of the entire expedition:

**Interaction with the youth:** During this expedition, we interacted with school/college children and motivated them to join the Indian Navy and follow a disciplined life. In 35 days, I delivered over 70 talks in schools and colleges as well as about 50 talks to groups of local athletes to strive for major goals and make our country proud by earning medals at the international level. In fact, local athletes from all the districts joined us for a run daily. A few ran for the full duration as well. We got goosebumps when we saw eight to nine year-olds striving to make India proud. The life of a sportsman can be tough – there were people running in torn shoes, chappals and even barefoot but they still aspired to do something for the country. Our team, in their interaction with locals, also spread awareness on the need to keep fit, healthy and maintain an active lifestyle.



**Interaction with veterans:** Throughout the expedition, we got tremendous support from naval and other service veterans. At some places, veterans of all the services joined the team and ran for a few kilometres. In fact, two veterans over 55 ran with the team for a full marathon distance! The team also interacted with the oldest veteran, Sujan Singh, CHME (Retd), in Karnal, when he shared memories of the Independence era. Many veterans also brought homemade sweets for the team. Further, we interacted with Veer Nari Smt Shakila Bano, the wife of Kargil battle casualty Riyasat Ali.



**Experiences enroute:** In the course of 35 days, we had many interesting experiences. On the fifth day while heading towards Panchkula, we sighted a dog lying unconscious in the centre of the road, hit badly by a vehicle. After giving him first aid, I found a



veterinary hospital nearby and took him there. After a 30-minute surgery, when the vet said he was showing signs of recovery and improvement, I communicated with an NGO nearby and handed over the dog. (Post script: I got a call from them after four days saying that the dog was fine and asking me the location where he should be released. A very positive outcome indeed.)

Another highlight was a call from the Superintendent of Police, Kurukshetra Jail, who requested me to give an awareness talk. I got the opportunity to speak to the prisoners, most of whom were youngsters. Interestingly, there was a petrol pump alongside the jail where prisoners with minor offenses were employed. It was apparently the best in the area, with every worker fully disciplined, on time, and doing their duty with pride and passion.

These are just some of the myriad experiences that made our 'Ultra Marathon' so special. What started as an idea was transformed into reality. In author Marie Norfleet's words, "With the three Ds – Determination, Dedication and Discipline – you will succeed further than you ever dreamed." I truly believe this now.

#### ABOUT THE AUTHOR

*Lieutenant Commander Devdutt Sharma is a passionate ultra marathon runner, mountaineer, diver, triathlete, yoga practitioner, poet and motivational speaker. Commissioned on 27 June 2016 in the electrical cadre, he has served onboard INS Kesari and Rana as DLO and ALO (NDC). He is currently posted as Divisional Officer at the Indian Naval Academy, Ezhimala. He has represented the Navy in various running events and is the only uniformed person in the world to complete 75 consecutive full marathons as on 12 January 2023; his mission is to complete 150 consecutive marathons.*



## WHEN ASPIRATION MET INSPIRATION

'Sail beyond your horizon'. There couldn't have been a more appropriate tag line for The Indian Navy Quiz – THINQ, an initiative of the Indian Navy and the Navy Welfare and Wellness Association (NWWA). In late November 2022, the first edition of the quiz culminated in a week charged with excitement and adrenaline that marked many firsts.



Let us first consider the sheer scope and scale of this event, which was the brainchild of Mrs Kala Hari Kumar, President NWWA. To celebrate Azadi ka Amrit Mahotsav – 75 years of Independence – 7,500 schools across the country were invited to participate in this national quiz competition, the largest of its kind. The quiz was open to students from IX to XII grades with two students in each team. Other than the attractive prizes in cash and kind, the biggest draw was the unique opportunity to visit Indian naval establishments and experience operations onboard naval ships.

Registrations for the event began on 1 July 2022 and a total of 6,432 schools registered. Of these, 4,260 schools participated in the first elimination round held on 14 September 22 and 2,113 schools qualified. After the second elimination round held on 21 September 2022, 1,036 schools qualified for the quarterfinals, which were held on 30 September 2002. All these rounds were held online. States were divided into four regions for all online rounds to ensure equal representation from each region. Remarkably, each of the 28 Indian states was represented until the quarterfinals, reflecting the pan-India character of the event. Finally, the 16 best schools (from 12 states) made it to the semi-finals.



The event kicked into high gear on 20 November 2022 when the 32 semi-finalists were welcomed to Goa by committee members of NWWA, led by Mrs Kala Hari Kumar, and representatives from the Navy at a lavish ice-breaker dinner. The next morning, they witnessed naval air operations at INS Hansa, a precursor of the delights that awaited them, before proceeding to Karwar Naval Base, home to aircraft carrier INS Vikramaditya, the venue for the grand finale.

The morning of 22 November began with a visit to INS Vikramaditya, where the students viewed the morning 'Colours', a ceremony that imbued them with patriotic fervour. Later, a tour of the ship and the subsequent draw of lots proved to be further sources of great excitement.





It was D-Day on 23 November, with the flight deck of the mighty carrier transformed into a state-of-the-art quizzing venue. It was a stage like no other for quizmaster Vinay Mudaliar, who later tweeted about becoming the first quizmaster in the world to conduct a quiz on a warship, that too an aircraft carrier.

The semi-finals were conducted at a blistering pace, punctuated by the sound of buzzers and the applause of the audience. Following the first semi-final, DPS - Ranchi, Dewan Public School - Meerut, Navy Children School - Mumbai and Shree Bhavans Bharti Public School - Bhopal qualified for the finals. The second semi-final saw Naipunnya Public School - Kochi, Bhal Gurukul School - Kalyan, Cambridge Court High School - Jaipur and Sunbeam School - Varanasi making the cut.

As the sun began to set over the Arabian Sea and the waters shimmered, the finalists gathered for the epic battle in the presence of an array of flag officers and dignitaries, including CNS Admiral Hari Kumar and Mrs Kala Hari Kumar; FOC-in-C West Vice Admiral A B Singh and Mrs Charu Singh (President NWWA - West), COP Vice Admiral Dinesh K Tripathi and Mrs Shashi Tripathi; and CPS Vice Admiral Suraj Berry and Mrs Kangana Berry. After several heart-stopping moments, a rapidly changing scoreboard and tie breakers (much like the Argentina vs. France World Cup final), Naipunnya Public School - Kochi emerged triumphant. First and second runners up Bhal Gurukul School - Kalyan and DPS - Ranchi put up a valiant fight amid loud cheers from the audience.



The final results aside, every semi-finalist emerged a winner – the next day, all 32 students enjoyed a day at sea onboard destroyers INS Visakhapatnam and INS Kochi, the experience of a lifetime. There was more! To wrap up this memorable week, the students visited the Indian Naval Academy in



Ezhimala, Asia's largest, where they interacted with officer trainees and the faculty. The icing on the cake was the chance to witness the spectacular Passing Out Parade on 26 November 2022. The air was charged with patriotism and pride, suffusing the hearts and minds of the THINQ whizzes with the core values of the Indian Navy: Duty, Honour, Courage.

Indeed, the need to inspire and motivate the youth and kindle their interest in the Services was a major catalyst for the event. Applauding the collaborative effort of NWWA and the Indian Navy, the CNS expressed his confidence that this mega multifaceted event would also enhance maritime consciousness among the youth. And Mrs Kala Hari Kumar, reiterating the hope that the event would inspire the youth to be part of leadership in action and build bonds of camaraderie, announced that THINQ will be back in 2023.

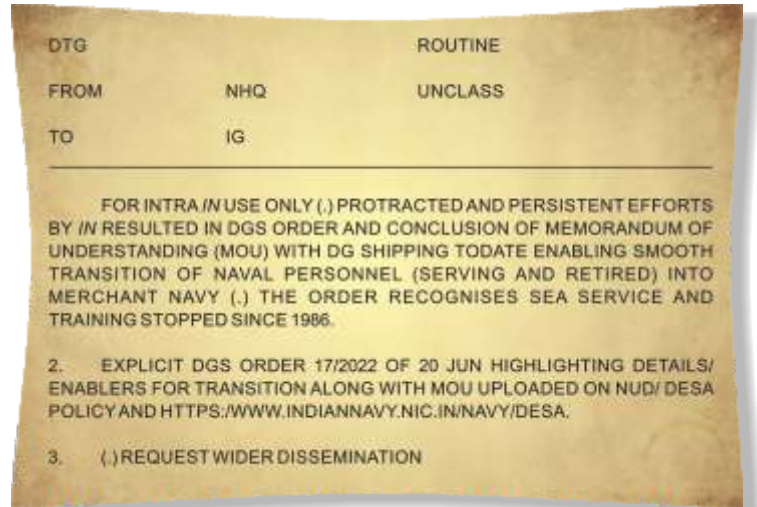


## TRANSITION TO MERCHANT NAVY

### A DREAM REALISED

By Commodore Pankaj Sharma

The Indian Navy was designated as the lead Service for conduct of the 4<sup>th</sup> Armed Forces Veterans' Day on 14 January 2020 and a veterans' tableau for the Republic Day Parade on 26 January 2020. DESA was also mandated to coordinate and conduct the CNS 'Interaction and Lunch' with retired officers and their ladies on 2 February 2020 at Manekshaw Centre in Delhi Cantonment. Thus, three major events – the equivalent of the Commanders' Conference – were upon DESA in quick succession.



It was on 2 February 2020, at the CNS interaction and lunch, that the seeds were sown to chase up the transition of Indian naval personnel to the Merchant Navy (MN), an elusive dream of 34 years for the men in whites.

Lt (now Capt & Master Mariner) P D Yadav attended the lunch with the sole purpose of igniting the fire again. I clearly remember his words, which were a call to action: "Give me an officer with a BSc Nautical Science degree and I will wring their neck to pass an order permitting transition of *IN* personnel to the Merchant Navy." Despite being on our toes for the past several days to arrange the event, among several things, the phrase "wring their neck" resounded loud and clear.

On Monday 3 February 2020, upon reaching the office, the file on 'Transition to Merchant Navy' was sought. The staff's simple question was: "Which one?" They finally lined up a complete cupboard of old files – from 2010 to 2020 – on the table. Four things stood out: STCW 95 and STCW 2010 amendments were in our favour; the Supreme Court's order was in favour of the retired officers who filed the case; the relentless albeit one-sided correspondence from the Indian Navy to DG Shipping; and the unrelenting DG Shipping Directorate.

Armed with the past 10 years' knowledge, DESA approached the CPS and COP to position a Short Service Commission long ND officer in possession of a MSc Nautical Science degree (which ND School has a tie up for) at DESA. The officer was appointed in due course of time.

Thereafter, the nation and the *IN* witnessed a 'pause' during the outbreak of COVID-19. Offices were being handled from mobile phones. The pause also saw hectic activity in the Ministry of Defence – several old reports were dug out and 'action taken' reports were sought from Service HQs. In this process, the report of the Lt Gen D B Shekatkar Committee was also dug out. Transition of *IN* personnel to the MN was one point for which DESA was asked to make a presentation to the VCNS.



While there were reasons for achieving success, the chances (because of the intervening period of 34 years) appeared bleak.

By now, the CNS was regularly attending meetings with the Hon'ble RM to resolve issues emerging from the Shekatkar Committee report. A presentation was, therefore, scheduled for him. He asked succinctly: "*Karna hai?*" The response was in the affirmative. His reply: "Okay". Thereafter, it was a brief/report/letter/presentation every week. The only difference was a slight change in the existing narrative with the Indian Navy's operational requirement being thrown in.

When nothing seemed to move, during the Republic Day Parade 2021, the CNS approached the Hon'ble Minister of State (Independent Charge) for Ports, Shipping and Waterways (PSW) and requested him to chair a meeting to resolve the issues pending between the Indian Navy and MoPSW.

The Hon'ble Minister invited the CNS and COP to his official residence, where the COP made a short and crisp presentation. The Hon'ble Minister readily agreed to a meeting in April 2021. The *IN* team was led by the COP and, during the meeting, the DG Shipping proposed setting up a Joint Working Group (JWG) to resolve the issue. A quick consultation later (on the meeting table itself), the *IN* agreed to this proposal. The Hon'ble Minister's orders were crisp and clear: "Addl DG Shipping is to submit a positive report after conducting four online meetings in a month." He added, "I know a JWG will have disagreements and, therefore, I will give two weeks thereafter for the Ministry to resolve the issue."

A communique quickly followed seeking the names of deck-side and engineering-side *IN* JWG members. An immediate response was forwarded from the *IN*.

Headed by the Addl DG Shipping, the JWG had six members from DG Shipping and two from the *IN*. The determined *IN* team was asked to forward a syllabus (relevant to the MN) of every transition-feasible trade/branch in just two days. It was a herculean task as the *IN* members had to seek the syllabus from the professional schools, such as Chilka and the Indian Naval Academy. There was an occasion when a three-star Flag Officer had to be requested for help at night as the staff's phone was unreachable. The task at hand was completed within the allotted time.

Tough timelines were set by the JWG Chairman. At times, less than 18 hours (nights included) were given to produce a presentation. Immediate inputs became necessary; conveniences were secondary. The *IN* JWG team resorted to 'any-time-day-night calls' to retired and serving officers. The advice of Flag Officers – CPS and COP – was available any time of the day/night, much beyond working hours. Those now in whites, those who were in whites, serving and retired, Naval Maritime Academy office bearers, retired *IN* to MN officers, retired *IN* to MN to DG Shipping officers, retired MN to *IN* to now MN officers and deck-side officers as well as engineers all pitched in to support the endeavour. One particularly significant input came from the CPS: Seek sea service-based transition and not rank-to-rank transition.

Eight VCs later, with transition schemes clear only for a few trades of sailors and without having discussed transition schemes for officers, the JWG, having achieved a stalemate and having missed the Hon'ble Minister's deadline, came to an end. The DG Shipping Directorate was mandated to





complete the minutes of the meeting, which were duly received with notable omissions. Therefore, the Record of Discussions, meticulously maintained on a day-to-day basis, came to good use.

MoPSW prompted a VC with the Secretary Shipping as Chair and both the COP and DG Shipping present. Although, the *IN* point of view was sustained by the Secretary, the draft JWG Report was forwarded as per the DG Shipping Directorate's point of view. After quick consultations on file, a Note of Dissent along with the Record of Discussions was forwarded to DG Shipping. After minor corrections, the JWG report, not signed by *IN* members, was forwarded to MoPSW by the DG Shipping Directorate. In turn, MoPSW forwarded the report to the Defence Secretary and it was thereafter received in the office of the CNS. Despite the COP's punishing calendar, 23 presentations and 50 hours of in-chamber discussions later, with much guidance from him, the presentation was ready. The issue was then presented to the CNS and the Defence Secretary. As directed by the CNS, the issue was escalated to the Cabinet Secretary.

To the uninitiated, the terms and subject itself may be daunting. A Joint Secretary at the Cabinet Secretariat hoisted the issue in a very short time prior to the presentation to the Cabinet Secretary and briefed him just prior to the meeting. The first presentation to the Cabinet Secretary where the CNS was graciously present was also attended by the COP. It was here that the *IN* smelled the first signs of success. Armed with directions of the Cabinet Secretary, the presentation was further spruced up with additions regarding how navies around the world manage to transition their naval personnel to the Merchant Navy. A month later, in May 2022, the Cabinet Secretariat called for another presentation and directives were issued for resolution of matters in one month.

An IHQMOD(N) team led by the COP visited Mumbai and over several days, after intense discussions, the DG Shipping team relented. A DG Shipping order started taking shape. The announcement of the Agnipath scheme was also made at the same time. DG Shipping called for the *IN* members and asked them to thrash out details of the transition of *IN* Agniveers to MN schemes.

By now, the one-month deadline set by the Cabinet Secretary was fast approaching. On 18 June 2022, the DG Shipping Secretariat informed us that a team led by DG Shipping would be in Delhi to sign an MoU with the *IN* on 20 June 2022. A draft MoU was messaged to the *IN* telephonically. The *IN* team, in consultation with JAG (N), redrafted certain portions of the MoU, sought the COP's approval and forwarded the same to the DG Shipping Directorate.

A meeting co-chaired by the COP and DG Shipping was held at the Kota House conference hall. As the coordinator, I was asked to initiate the proceedings. After uttering a few coherent lines, I requested the DG Shipping and COP to address the gathering. On completion, the COP asked, "What next?" The impatient response was, "Please sign the MoU!" Amid laughter from both men, the DG Shipping said, "Let's sign it." He added, looking at the COP, "He's the one who has waited for this the most!" The DG Shipping then handed over DG Shipping Order 16/2022 and



DG Shipping Order 17/2022 to the COP. Thereafter, they exchanged the MoU. Several photographs to capture the historical event later, the gathering proceeded for lunch in the Gold Room of Kota House. DESA was entrusted with the responsibility of proving a test case.

A tweet was drafted by the COP and the PRO (N) tweeted (and DESA retweeted).



For his part, Admiral Karambir Singh (Retd), tweeted: “A truly welcome move. A win-win for naval personnel, the merchant marine and our nation.” (As the CNS when the process began, his account would make another interesting story.)

After lunch, the draft IG was in the COP's chamber. The IG was redrafted completely and released at 2040 hrs on 20 June 22. A new window for a second career had opened for *IN* personnel.

After the IG file was duly forwarded to the CNS Secretariat, the COP called up NA to CNS and directed DESA to brief the CNS in his chamber. As soon as the CNS was greeted with “*Jai Hind Sir*”, he asked with a disarming smile, “Success?” The response was “Yes Sir”. After a quick brief on the DG Shipping's orders, with relief writ large on my countenance, I headed to the CPS's chamber in Sena Bhawan. The SO announced my arrival to the CPS, who was chairing a meeting. Midway through the meeting, the CPS called me and expressed his thoughts on what had been achieved.

The Naval Maritime Academy completed a 2<sup>nd</sup> Mate FG Bridging Course on 12 January 2023. A test case is well underway.

I would like to acknowledge the contribution of several senior officers and officers posted at HQs and field formations in making this endeavour a success. My sincere gratitude to everyone who played a part in making this dream a reality. Together, we turned the tide!

#### ABOUT THE AUTHOR

*Commodore Pankaj Sharma was commissioned on 1 July 1990. He is an alumnus of Naval Academy, Goa; Defence Services Staff College, Wellington; and Naval War College, Goa. After Command of INS Aditya, a tanker of the Western Fleet, the officer was appointed Cmde (ESM Affairs) at IHQMOD(N) on 12 March 2019.*



## NAVAL HISTORY

# TUNES OF YORE

By Commodore Srikant B Kesnur (Retd)

In 1974, the popular German-British record label Polydor Records decided to release a record with the Indian Navy Band to mark the historic occasion of the Silver Jubilee of the Indian Republic on 26 January 1974. It was also just after the 1971 war for the liberation of Bangladesh in which the Indian Navy's exploits had captured the people's imagination. It was an uncharacteristic decision by this international private company generally guided by business interests, but then the Indian Navy Band was famed world over for having enthralled thousands of listeners at parades, beating retreat ceremonies, public performances, and radio and television programmes.

The record that was released by Polydor was titled *A Salute to Our Navy*, featuring 14 songs/tunes performed by this accomplished Navy band under the conductorship of the immensely talented Commander Noel Malcolm Wise, VSM, ARCM, the first Indian and the longest serving Director of Music of the Indian Navy. Almost all the songs contained in this unique LP record hold invaluable historical significance for the nation and the Navy. To name a few, the song *INS Nilgiri* was composed for India's first indigenously built major warship; the song *INS Delhi* for our very first Flagship; *Vijay*

commemorating the decisive 1971 victory over Pakistan; *Deshon ka sartaj*, a soul-stirring martial song in a folksy tune, sung by many old sailors of times gone by; and *Hymn to the Republic of India*, composed as a grand finale to the colourful Beating Retreat ceremony during the Navy Week celebrations of 1972.

Interestingly, the back cover of this unique record also featured a blurb written and signed by Admiral S N Kohli, then Navy Chief, saying, "I am very glad that this album is being released on January 26, 1974, our 25th Republic Day. I am confident that the excellent quality of music within its covers will not only enhance the fine reputation that the Navy Band holds at home and abroad but will also be a continued source of inspiration to officers and men of the Indian Navy."



VAdm Cursetji, FOCINC (W), being presented the LP by Virendra Luther of Polydor in 1974





Fast forward to present day. Information on the existence of this LP had been almost lost in obscurity but was discovered by chance by a team of serving naval officers and history enthusiasts. Then came the herculean challenge to locate this vintage record in a world that has migrated almost any and all media onto the online medium. While some navy veterans and musically inclined people on 'civvy' street had heard about the LP, getting hold of a copy almost five decades later seemed impossible. The laborious search for the missing record spanning various cities, antique shops, collectors, online queries and even with the music giant Universal Music Group, of which the original Polydor Records is part of today, took months. Finally, the team was able to successfully locate and purchase a mint (and perhaps the last surviving) copy of the record from a vintage record shop situated in the recesses of Old Delhi.

The next challenge was to ensure that the best quality of the authentic sound from this vintage record was retrieved and digitised. Initial efforts with local music studios in and around Delhi yielded suboptimal quality of sound being captured, primarily because of the obsolescence of the record and lack of good quality recording equipment. The team needed some luck and got it in the form of Prasad Corporation, Chennai, one of India's most reputed and oldest production studios, who agreed to get the record restored and digitised. On learning about the search for this LP and seeing the enthusiasm of the interlocutors, the management of this iconic studio volunteered to do the digitisation work gratis. The assistance of carefully and quickly ferrying the vintage LP record back and forth from New Delhi to Chennai for the required digitisation work was graciously extended by High Energy Battery Ltd, a firm that specialises in manufacturing batteries at Tiruchirappalli, Tamil Nadu. After the high-quality digitised audio of the LP record was finally retrieved by Prasad Corporation, a video was also made, inhouse, towards better historical appreciation of the Indian Navy Band, to serve as a means of preserving the digitised record online and to share those memorable tunes with the larger naval community.

At this stage, a couple of trips down memory lane are warranted, especially in the light of the launch of the new avatar of the warship Udaygiri and the backdrop of the glorious exploits of the Navy Band and some of its great icons. VAdm SCS Bangara, a navy veteran with great zest for history, recalls the 'famous cruise' of the newly built indigenous warship INS Udaygiri in 1977 with the 23-man band embarked along with their Conductor Cdr N M Wise. For about three-and-a-half months, the ship flew the Indian flag high in foreign waters. The cruise covered 13 ports of 11 countries, including attending the Silver Jubilee of Queen Elizabeth II's accession to the throne. While this cruise was largely aimed to showcase to the world India's capability in building major warships, it also had Cdr NM Wise and the Indian Navy Band as the prize attraction.

During the cruise, INS Udaygiri commanded by Capt (later Cmde) Kersi N Dubhash got the opportunity to attend the 95th Kiel Week annual sailing event from 18-26 June 1977 at the port of Kiel





*Lord Mountbatten, Admiral of the Fleet,  
on the bridge of INS Udaygiri with CO Capt K N Dubhash*

in Germany. This is the largest sailing extravaganza in Europe that attracts millions of visitors every year, from Germany as well as neighbouring countries.

One of the tremendous benefits of a foreign cruise is the friendship created among foreign nationals. In that respect, sailors are true ambassadors of goodwill and contact is established at all social levels. To illustrate, the Captain exchanges views with military and government officials at the highest levels. In this case, Dubash

brushed shoulders with royalty (and history) in the exalted company of the Queen of England, Lord Mountbatten of Burma and Admiral Otto Kreshmer, an ace submariner of World War 2 (he sank 43 ships).

But contact is made at lower levels, too, with the common man. The friendship is spontaneous and the invitations to visit the ship from sailors or locals to visit their homes are freely accepted. For a sailor, the ship is his home and for visitors, especially in advanced countries in Europe, it is an honour to be invited onboard an Indian warship. In each port, many thousands of enthusiastic visitors came to the ship and left with a lasting impression not only of the excellent ship but of Indian hospitality and warmth. And of course, the sailors made hundreds of girlfriends! A popular 'musical festival' is a star attraction of the Kiel Week event, which showcases various bands (including those of the military). That year, towards the end of the music festival, the combined band of all militaries took centre stage for delivering the Concert of Nations, held at Kiel's Baltic Hall and performed before a capacity audience. After much deliberation by the event organisers, Cdr N M Wise was selected over other prominent conductors from other European militaries to be the Chief Conductor for the Concert of Nations, leading over 300 musicians in the combined band performance. This great honour was entirely on account of his genius and great style of 'conductorship' that was on display that day, which made the performance a roaring success. Interestingly, the performance of the Indian Navy Band helped this 15<sup>th</sup> Concert of Nations to once again bring in substantial net proceeds destined for charitable purposes. Indeed, Cdr NM Wise was a central figure in showcasing INS Udaygiri and India. Even in later years, the accomplishments of this cruise were much talked about and still remain an indelible memory among those veterans involved.



*Cdr N M Wise conducts the band in Kiel's naval port in 1977*





Many veterans fondly recall Cdr Wise being a fine, God-fearing, and affectionate officer. Sadly, he suffered a tragedy as a young officer when his two-year-old son died touching a live wire in a naval mess. Despite this heart-breaking personal loss, he remained a doting father to his daughters, and took keen interest in guiding generations of the Navy's young musicians to become proficient. He would teach young sailors the basics by rote and keep a close eye on their progress. Many of these sailors, having joined without any musical talent or early education in music, became able to read and play their musical instruments masterfully under Cdr Wise's watch and care. The Navy Band was soon seen playing and winning competitions in Bombay's popular music venues. It was also embarked on Indian warships on goodwill missions to faraway places such as Rabat, Tokyo, Sydney, Odessa, Istanbul and London.



*Late Commander N M Wise  
1927-2018*

When INS Trishul was earmarked to call at Osaka for attending Expo '70, Japan's first international exposition, the Navy's Central Band led by Cdr Wise also embarked on the historic cruise. Incidentally, during this deployment, when INS Trishul entered Port Blair, one of the bandsmen who had landed ashore broke his ankle. That left Cdr Wise very worried because he was the only player of the euphonium. As VAdm I C Rao (Retd) recalls, "It was there that the ship's crew was educated by Cdr Wise as to how a band cannot perform without the euphonium – the instrument looking like a cross between a complicated trumpet and a saxophone. Motivated by Cdr Wise's passion and call for duty, the bandsman miraculously ended up marching with his plaster on, on the opening of the 'India Day' event at the exposition. The Navy Band, unsurprisingly, drew huge applause from the crowd for their splendid performance at the opening." In a similar incident during the cruise of INS Trishul to Manila, the Navy band performed at the famous Rizal National Park and caused a stampede. One young officer who was present at the venue, reminisces, "Cdr Wise was mobbed by the frenzied crowd; the girls wanted locks of his hair!" Interestingly, when a couple of officers later convinced Cdr Wise to accompany them to a striptease show, he was left scandalised when one of the scantily dressed performers after gyrating on the table tried to find a way onto his lap, leaving Cdr Wise muttering, "Holy Jesus! Lord, forgive me."

Around the same time as INS Udaygiri's historic cruise in the mid/late 1970s, J Rodrigues, Ex-MCPO I, recalls Cdr Wise hearing a rendition of *Jai Bharati* (composed by Michael Diaz) in Bombay and immediately appreciating the greater suitability of using the song for the Navy. Cdr Wise instructed Rodrigues to arrange the song for the military band and, shortly thereafter, was able to convince the top leadership of the Navy on the need for a dedicated song for the Navy. The rest, as they say, is history. While Cdr Wise retired in June 1980, the song caught on and was extensively played by the Indian Navy Bands to become the anthem for the Navy.





Through the past four-and-a-half decades, this song has stood the test of time and is still able to evoke a deep sense of patriotism and love for the white service from naval personnel. It is also loved by the civilian populace whenever it is played. As the signature tune of the Navy played either at the beginning or end of a musical event, *Jai Bharati* elicits huge applause, generates a foot-tapping atmosphere and lifts the spirits of all those present. It is an adrenaline booster invoking the glory of India in all its hues and engendering pride in our profession. Incidentally, for the masterly arrangement of this popular tune, Rodrigues was commended by the CNS in 1978.



To come back to the present, on 12 May 2022, a 'Historical Musical Artefact' was presented to CNS Admiral R Hari Kumar by this team of history enthusiasts containing both the vintage LP disk of 1974 and a pen drive with the restored and digitised audio and video. The artefact will serve as a reminder of the rich musical legacy inherited from forebears like Cdr N M Wise, and preserve the same for posterity. Interestingly, one of the martial songs contained in the LP disk is titled *Deshon ka sartaj*, which incidentally was the Navy's anthem before *Jai Bharati* came into prominence in the late 1970s and is expected to be released shortly in an entirely new avatar. This article, while recording our exhilarating journey in search of a rare artefact, is also a tribute to the Indian Navy's musicians (past, present and future) for their excellent contribution to both the service and the country.

*(This article was written for Sagardhara, the newsletter of the Maritime History Society.)*

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- *Sainik Samachar* (29 Sep 1974, 11 Jul 1975, Navy Number 1977)

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Commodore Srikant B Kesnur (Retd), VSM, is an author and navy historian. Prior to his retirement, he was the Director, Maritime Warfare Centre, Mumbai, and Officer in Charge, Naval History Project. He is a PhD from Mumbai University and holds five other postgraduate degrees in the sciences and social sciences. He has been the Lead Author and Chief Editor of 11 books/monographs for the Indian Navy.

*This article has been co-authored with a history enthusiast who wishes to remain anonymous but to whom the author owes a debt of gratitude.*

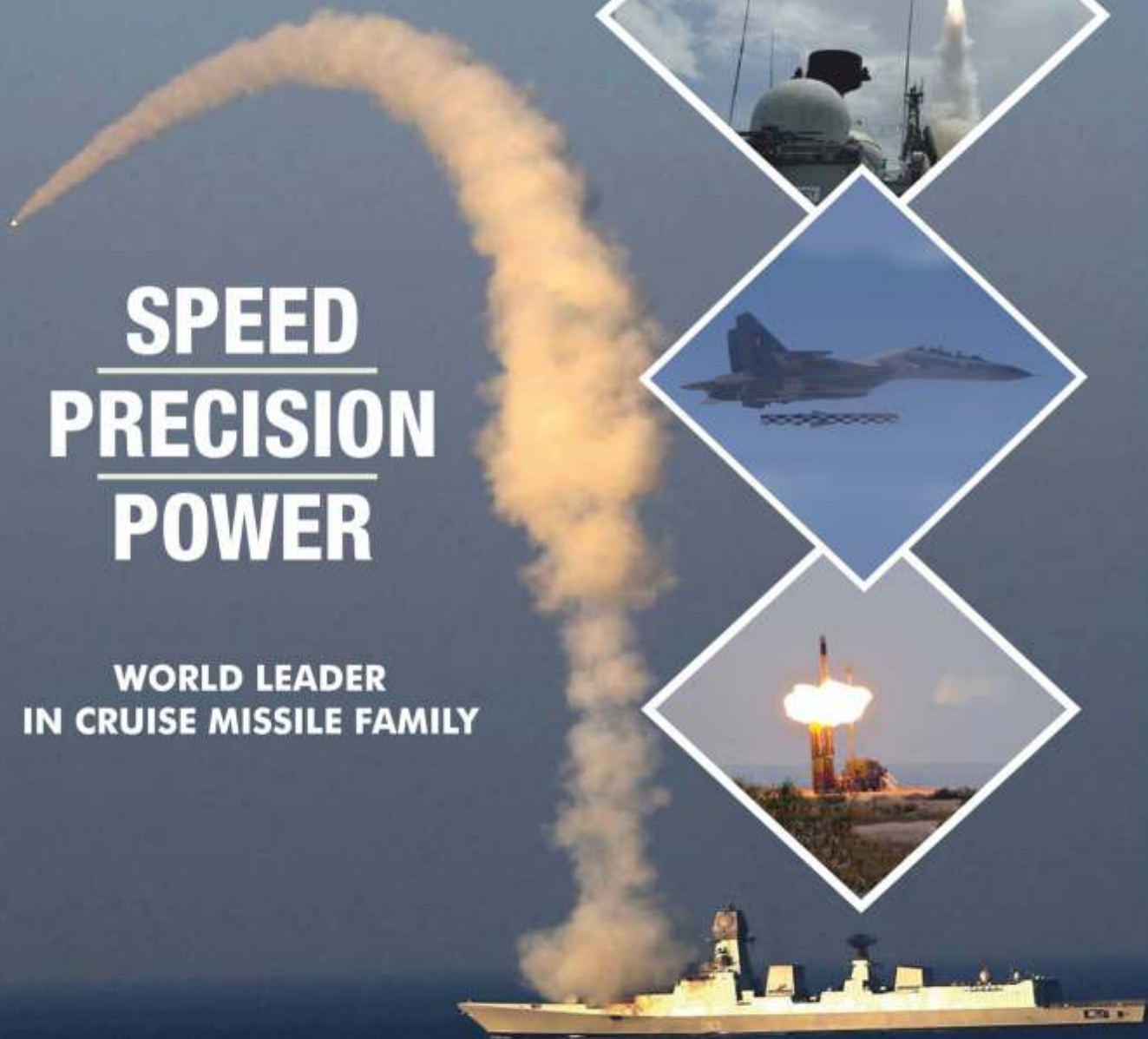


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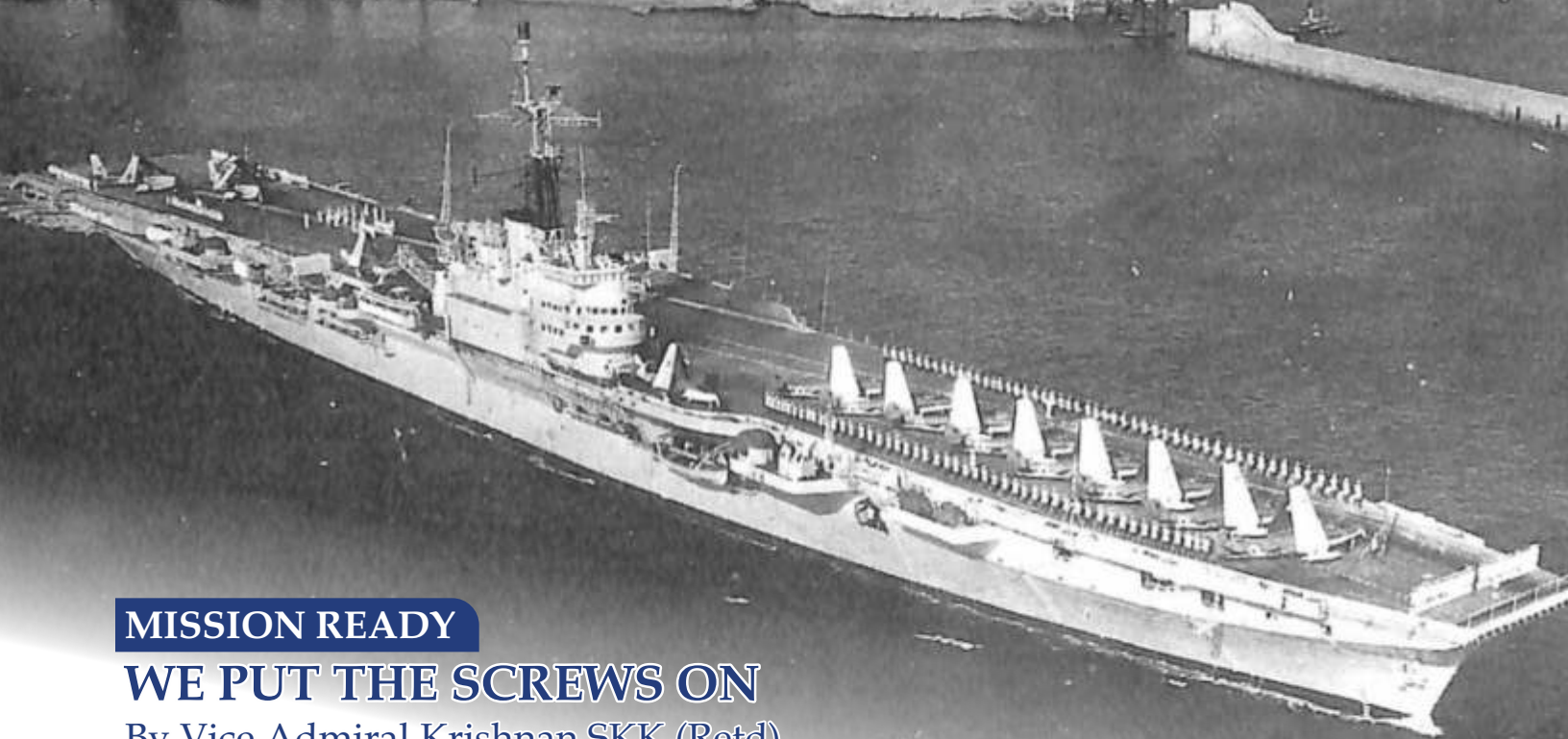
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## MISSION READY

### WE PUT THE SCREWS ON

By Vice Admiral Krishnan SKK (Retd)

**T**he motto of the NBCD school — 'To float, to move, to fight' — comes to mind when I think of the role played by the Engine Room department of Vikrant during the 1971 operations. The performance of that Engine Room team was legendary. They managed an impaired propulsion system so well that flying operations of the ship continued without a glitch and our naval aviation wing excelled at the battlefield.

In March 1971, when the East Pakistan issue started boiling, Vikrant was literally a sitting duck in Bombay with one boiler cracked and all others clearly indicating subsurface cracks. One couldn't believe it when a POME doing his evening rounds located seepage of water from one of the water drums of the A1 boiler. More detailed examination revealed that the drum had a crack along its riveted joint. In those days, the Navy did not have the facility to radiograph such thicknesses of steel and the Bhabha Atomic Research Centre (BARC) had to be brought in. They examined all four boilers and sent their results in strips of films. This author as a Sub Lieutenant was made to sit in the hallowed corner office of the then CSO (Tech) to convert them into pencil sketches, so that the severity of the problem could be understood by all. Although only the A1 boiler water drum had displayed physical signs in the form of slow seepage of water, all other drums had a few subsurface cracks that could propagate anytime.

The effect on the Flagship of the Navy was phenomenal. When Capt Kirpal Singh left in early 1971 after completing his tenure, no new Captain was appointed. The ship was tied up at Ballard Pier Extension (now Cruiser Wharf) for nearly three months as no one seemed to know what would happen. The first sign of life came when the ship was 'cold-moved' to anchorage to avoid any damage to the hull during the onset of the monsoon. An Acting Captain was appointed as all the other senior Captains sought more dashing appointments to command other frontline ships.





Once we were at anchorage, we could sense a wind of change. After being at anchor for 100 days, the ship was dry-docked for some essential repairs and within two weeks of undocking we set sail to the east coast. Capt Suraj Parkash took over command. Before we left, we were told in no uncertain terms what was in store for us at the other end. I vividly remember the thundering speech made by Admiral Kuruvilla, the Fleet Commander, and another one by Babu Jagjivan Ram, our Defence Minister. We knew we were heading in harm's way. However, most of the crew onboard, especially those involved with flying aircraft off the deck, were unsure how we would ever be able to operate with such a doubtful propulsion system.

Only three boilers were available and the A1 Boiler, which was critical for charging steam to the catapult, was out of action. After months of lying idle, all other machineries were also suspect and even a simple snag could make flying operations risky. Moreover, the east coast had no shore support to offer, with only a small 'Binny's' workshop available in Madras. We in the Engine Room department put up a bold front and carried on as if everything would be fine. We went ahead with our jobs with undisguised bravado and fortune, as usual, favoured the brave. Commander E had only one thing to say to all his officers when he called us for a pep talk. "If I am ever to be seen in a boiler suit, shame on you all." That was like a whiplash and we knew our prestige was at stake.

Our defence against possible boiler burst included elementary methods such as placing a protective steel band around the riveted joints of the boiler drums or reducing the boiler pressure by a few PSI. At best, they were psychological buttresses against a possible disaster. These steps might sound rudimentary but the drills we went through were not. Boiler emergencies were practised to perfection and so were other contingencies. An extra watchkeeper was posted near the boiler gauge glass to keep a close watch on level fluctuations especially during catapult charging. The main steam range was cross-connected between both engine rooms, so that the only boiler in the forward engine room was supported adequately, especially when the catapult was charged. All junior engineer officers had to go through a drill of getting completely blindfolded while sitting in the wardroom in the 4R compartment and walking up blindly to the 4M compartment to start the M7 DG. We not only had to walk up there but also locate the starting air valve, start the DG and quickly open the cooling water line.

Even before we left harbour, we had a serious problem. We couldn't make feed water with our evaporators. The water in Bombay harbour was dirty because of monsoon turbulence and we had just enough feed water to last about three watches. However, we set sail as scheduled and kept struggling with the five evaporators as we left harbour. Finally, before we reached Goa, we started making more feed water than what we consumed.

Just as we reached Madras, one of the extraction pumps had a bearing failure. Many officers in the wardroom had that 'I told you' look on their faces. Suddenly everyone seemed to know the role of the extraction pump and how the ship could not move relying on just one motor-driven extraction pump. Well, they had miscalculated the resolve of the Engine Room department. Within a couple of days,



we were back in business with the extraction pump humming as ever. Thereafter, the ship ran like a proverbial sewing machine. Spirits were high and no one realised we were sailing on three suspicious boilers. There were many occasions when major jobs normally undertaken by the dockyard were completed by the ship staff using the limited workshop facility onboard. Problems were plenty but the never-say-die attitude helped resolve them with ease.

The first few launches of aircraft were nail-biting. Over time, the drill of charging the catapult somewhat slowly (to reduce pressure variations of the boilers) and building up the ship's speed delicately to achieve the 'wind on deck' condition was perfected. As the entire ship gained confidence, everyone and everything fell in place and flying operations were conducted with relative ease. Surely it was not the same as the heydays, but it was far better than what the doomsday predictors had anticipated.

Engineers grew in esteem within the ship and were given some minor privileges. Cabins with portholes like 4R 103 and 4R 109 were allocated to E officers. Occasionally, while coming off watch from the hot engine rooms, we were even allowed to grab a beer from the rear door of the anteroom bar. The Engine Room department became a frontrunner in many activities. There was nothing we could not do. Completely charged up and willing to take calculated risks, the spirit of the department was unmatched. We won most interdepartmental competitions, including a famous football match that was decided on a penalty shootout. The departmental concert team was the most popular, with Patil LME of the flight deck section belting out Kishore Kumar songs with ease. Senior Engineer Lt Cdr Bhushan kept the wardroom enthralled with his jokes of Bakshi Ghulam Mohammad and a bawdy rendition of *Dekho dekhoji naa bhool jaana*. The camaraderie in the wardroom was superb.

Among all the busy and nerve-racking activities, there were many fun moments too. As we had left Bombay in a hurry, the welfare officer had not found time to pick up some 16-mm movies from the film library in Angre. So, we were left with just two Hindi movies: *Karwan* and *Mera Sayaa*. The usual drill was to screen a movie on the flight deck in the evening after flying operations and screen it again in the afternoon in the wardroom for officers. That drill continued and all of us saw these two movies time and again. Most of us knew the dialogues by heart. *Monica...oh my darling* from *Karwan* and *Aur phir kya hua* from *Mera Saaya* were adapted suitably during wardroom banter.

Admiral S M Nanda, CNS, visited the ship, to see for himself how well the ship had worked up the squadrons. A shop window was scheduled and the first hawk was on the chocks. Suddenly there was a hush on the deck. The 'Billy' was down. That's when the expertise of Lt Cdr Suresh Soota, the Flight Deck Engineer Officer (FDEO), came out on public display. His sixth sense told him why one particular lamp did not light up in the HOWDAH panel. Lt Cdr Soota ran from his place near the HOWDAH to the fore end of the catapult, opened up a flap and cleaned the lens near the 'snail's eye' lamp with his handkerchief. Before the bridge fully realised what happened, the Cat was up and



ready to launch. Hawks launched in fairly good sequence and fired at the towed target. Lt Cdr Gupta, the squadron commander, was so good that he shot off the towed target entirely on his first run of rocket firing. Later, the CNS remarked in jest that the Squadron CO was perhaps covering up the marksmanship of his other pilots. As far as shop windows go, this was one of the best. Vikrant had finally proved to the rest of the Navy that even a limping ship could put out to sea and perform her intended role if the men behind the machines put their heart and soul into their job.

After this, the CNS went around the ship and came down to the forward engine room. He went straight to the boiler room and wanted to see the A1 Boiler, now lying cold. Before heading back, he had a few words with H Singh, POME, who was controlling the A2 boiler. Enquiring about the welfare of his family back in Bombay, he asked him, "*Ghar se chittiyan aatey hain?*" Prompt came the reply, "*Sir, haftey mein ek baar aatey hain.*" CNS engaged him more. "*Gharwali kya likhthi hain?*" The reply was spontaneous. "*Sir, likhti hain, Dacca jaoge tho zaroor mul mul lekay aana.*" The CNS got a whiff of the spirit down below and must have realised that this ship could win any war.

He was so happy after the visit that he granted permission for the ship to return for a quick visit to Bombay for Diwali. There was much merriment when this was announced and the SRE operator quickly played *Bombay meri hai* on the main broadcast right in the middle of working hours. The trip to Bombay never happened as we were diverted from Madras to Port Blair and thereafter to Port Cornwallis. That was a beautiful lagoon and there couldn't have been a better place for rest and recreation before the balloon went up. The Engine Room crew could not relax, though, as we were at short notice and the three-watch system could not be eased. We left on 2 December and in the evening the Captain addressed the ship's company over the main broadcast to let us know that, for all purposes, we were at war.

After all the rigorous workup, the war itself became easy to endure. Every time a sortie left the ship, there was a pregnant eagerness for their safe return. A few Alizes got back with some bullet holes. Apart from the official debriefing sessions, there was a more light-hearted debrief for the wardroom. Lt Mohan Varghese had some hilarious situations to narrate. The pilots were always a bubbly lot and their enthusiasm always kept our spirits up.

We were blessed to have outstanding role models leading us from the front. Captain Parkash himself was an admirable man. He was a man of very few words, but very clear in his intent when he spoke. His address to the ship's company on the eve of 2 December was very clear and powerful. We knew we were at war and there was no looking back. All HoDs were stalwarts and stood tall among us juniors. Cdr H M L Saxena as the EXO was exceptionally good as a team leader. He had an endearing way of getting things done. Cdr (E) was B R Chowdhury (later VAdm), a quiet man with clear ideas and pragmatic vision. Senior Engineer was Lt Cdr Bharat Bhushan (later VAdm), an outstanding professional with a cherubic smile and unending stock of Punjabi jokes to lighten our hearts. Lt Cdr





Soota as the FDEO was as sharp as a knife. Shepherding us junior officers was Senior Watch Keeper Lt Kulwant Singh Bhasin, whose domineering spirit was dreaded by those who crossed his path. We had a bunch of very spirited sailors led by MCHMECH B R Sharma, a legend by himself. Similarly on the flight deck we had CHERA Mathews, a bundle of energy. Then we had younger sailors like Shaukeen Singh Yadav, Awasthi, Ratra, R P Singh, Vijay Sood, H M Sharma, A K Bhalla, Aurora, Nathan and many others. Looking back, each one was a role model and we youngsters learnt from their collective experience. We were a happy lot and interacted with ease at all levels.

The war came to a rather abrupt end when we had entered Paradip harbour for refuelling. We could have continued forever if needed. The C-in-C, Admiral Krishnan, flew back after participating in the surrender agreement signing and addressed the ship's company to give us a first-hand feel of what a stupendous victory the nation had won. There was much merrymaking onboard and the trip back to Bombay was memorable, with heart-warming receptions at Paradip, Madras and Cochin.

The efforts of the Engineering Department were well recognised. The Cdr (E) was awarded the Vir Chakra, the Senior Engineer and FDEO were awarded the NM and the Senior Watchkeeper and a number of key sailors were awarded Mention in Despatches.

Rarely ever does an Engine Room department get a chance to prove their mettle so demonstratively. Very often, men who run the machines are taken for granted and seldom get any adulatory attention beyond the gangways of the ship. A limping Vikrant gave us a chance to show off our skills and bravado. It might be difficult for the current generation, used to better technology and touch-type controls, to imagine what we went through in the mind-numbing heat of the engine rooms, with so many uncertainties of operating boilers that could have burst anytime. Those moments of danger and elation could only be felt and not described. So today, when some youngster asks me what we did on Vikrant during the war, I just reply "Oh. We put the screws on."

#### ABOUT THE AUTHOR

*Vice Admiral S K K Krishnan joined the Indian Navy in 1969 after graduating from NIT Trichy. He served on INS Vikrant during the 1971 operations. During his naval career, he held many key appointments, including CO Shivaji, ASD Mumbai and Controller Personnel Services. He took premature retirement in December 2005 to join as the CMD of MDL, from which post he retired in July 2008.*





## MISSION READY

### PYTHON EXECUTED

By Rear Admiral N N Anand (Retd)

**H**as anyone ever heard of a seaborne attack on an enemy harbour with a large number of warships at anchorage and shore facilities barely a few hundred yards away?

Such a situation actually occurred on the night of 8/9 December 1971, during the India-Pakistan War of 1971. Codenamed 'Python', under the leadership of Captain (F) 15, onboard Trishul with Talwar and a single missile boat Vinash, it was the most clinically executed operation ever undertaken by units of the Western Fleet of the Indian Navy, which damaged and destroyed ships at anchorage in Karachi Harbour and set ablaze the Keamari Oil installation.

Chief of the Naval Staff Admiral S M Nanda believed that the bombardment of Dwarka by the Pakistan Navy in 1965 had caused great damage to our prestige. He was, therefore, clear that in any future conflict with Pakistan, the Indian Navy would physically go to their main operating base in Karachi and destroy their naval units and shore installations.

After Operation Trident, which took place on the night of 4/5 December 1971, the Indian Navy first tasted blood by destroying Pakistani naval units some 50 nm away from Karachi. Operation Python was then ordered for the night of 5/6 December, but later postponed to 8/9 December. The Pakistan Navy was fully alive to the occurrence of such a development and had planned all countermeasures.

An encounter at sea is an evenly matched operation. But to go to an enemy harbour and launch an attack is a different kettle of fish. The early warning of the hostile force, the retaliatory action by the enemy's air force and engagement by shore defence and other units were all a distinct possibility! The Operation Orders issued by Trishul (Task Force Commander) had therefore clearly indicated that in



the event of any damage incurred by any unit of the advancing force, no survivors would be picked up. In planning the execution of this operation, emphasis was laid on a stealth approach, maximum electronic security and a close-knit compact formation that would deny the enemy knowledge of the Task Group's composition. The Task Group was closed up at action stations from 1730 hrs; ships lined up in battle formation, communication security policy ONE in force, and heading towards Karachi at 25 knots, with the objective of launching an attack at midnight and engaging any hostile element encountered en route. Only one X band radar was to be operated by a single unit of the Task Force in rotation and plots updated accordingly.

During the approach phase, it was not smooth sailing for the Task Group Commander, who faced many nerve-wracking moments in the form of compromise of the position of the Task Group by Pakistani dhows that were stationed 150 miles from Karachi, the detection of the dhows by Trishul and their subsequent destruction by the units of the Task Force, the detection of the Task Force by enemy shore radar 60 nm from Karachi; and, later, an attack on the radar by the Task Force after having determined its position, the occurrence of defect in Vinash's X band radar during the crucial approach phase and its rectification just before the attack, and the speed restriction of Vinash to 5 knots due to its filters getting choked. On completion of the missile attack, the excitement and adrenaline rush continued with the sighting of Karachi ablaze, visible up to almost 90 nm out to sea and the capturing of two merchant ships during the withdrawal phase.

The successful completion of Operation Python was reported to FOCINC West, NHQ (I) and FOCWF two hours later during the retreating phase, breaking radio silence for two minutes. There was deliberately no elaboration of the damage caused to the enemy, as an intercept of a long transmission would compromise the position of the Task Group. Within five minutes of the clearance of the message, NHQ replied: "BRAVO ZULU, THE NATION IS PROUD OF YOU." The Indian Navy had thus established its supremacy on its Western Seaboard. Foreign countries were now requesting the Indian Naval Headquarters to grant them a grace period of 48 hours so that their ships tied up in Karachi Harbour could leave safely. There were many lessons learnt during Operation Python, which will hopefully be analysed for the future by the authorities.

#### ABOUT THE AUTHOR

*Rear Admiral N N Anand, AVSM, NM (G), is an alumnus of the National Defence Academy (8th course) and was the EXO of INS Trishul, the OTC of the Op Python Task Force in the 1971 War. A specialist in communications, he took over command of INS Cauvery after the 1971 War and then commanded Himgiri. An alumnus of the Industrial College of Armed Forces, USA, and the National Defence College, he was advisor to the Nigerian Navy in Lagos, Nigeria. Other appointments include Command of Vindhyagiri and Commodore Naval Barracks at INS Angre, ACNS (P&P) and Deputy Commandant NDA. The Flag Officer retired as FODAG. Further, he was Indian Navy squash champion for two years (1959-60) and participated in inter-services and national squash and cricket championships.*







## MISSION READY

### RAJPUT DIARY

By Kris Tee

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**R**ecently, I read a detailed and gripping account of the heroic and dogged stand by a platoon of 13 SIKHLI during the raid on Jaffna University in Sri Lanka in 1987. The article, published in a recent edition of *Medals and Ribbons*, by Col R V Shirwalkar, who happens to be the brother of one of my schoolmates, brought out the lack of planning, uncertainty, lack of intelligence, communication and ad-hocism that prevailed in those early days of Op Pawan. Sadly, over 1,100 lives were lost and a few hundred injured because the whole gig wasn't planned or thought through clearly. The result was that the Army earned a bad name for no fault of the soldiers involved.

Many of us who were in Sri Lanka at different points in time in various roles also experienced similar uncertain situations in the initial days. We were all engaged in diverse tasks and hardly anyone knew the big picture. Where the Navy was concerned, the uncertainty and lack of intelligence coupled with the absence of briefing were similar to that described by Col Shirwalkar. I will relate my own experiences from the naval perspective.

In May 1987, my ship INS Rajput was based in Bombay and we were sailing off Goa. Having completed our sea inspection, we were engaged in providing night deck landing practice to Kamov (Ka 25) crews. I had applied for leave to get married and when the ship entered Goa, I hopped off and proceeded on leave. A few days later, I tied the knot in Ambala on 23 May 1987. All was well with the world.

By 4/5 June, I was told to report to the ship in Mumbai. They wouldn't tell me why they wanted me back in a rush but one of the officers told me on phone that "something was on". I reached Mumbai but the ship had sailed so I was sent to Chennai (then Madras). I fetched up at the base establishment in Chennai, INS Adyar. My next few days were spent doing bum jobs as ordered by a washed-out



Lt Cdr who seemed to enjoy telling me not to step out of the gate. In the Navy, the 'Waiting Ship Party' is regarded as flotsam and treated just so. Eventually, I was told to move to Vizag, which was a relief. On reaching there, I learned that the ship's programme had changed and I was to go back to Chennai. Clearly, no one had time for a lowly Lt and I ranked at the bottom of anyone's to-do list. Thankfully, I caught up with Rajput around 15/16 June in Chennai. It was a relief to be back onboard, among one's own. Please note, I had no uniforms as I was returning from leave and as I had been constantly on the move for a number of days, my clothes had by then taken on a distinct odour!


On the ship, no one knew anything, except that both fleets were involved in a joint fleet exercise. We left Chennai and started sailing, crisscrossing the Bay of Bengal, in the naval equivalent of what the PT *ustads* in NDA had often made us do: “*Khajji ke left se jaana, right se aana. Go!*” Fleet exercises are long-drawn-out affairs and the lower one is on the hierarchical ladder, the less one knows. It is day after day and night after night of anti-aircraft or anti-submarine drills, deep down in the bowels of the ship. We were engaged in the exercise for the next couple of weeks. By the end of June 1987, we were back in Vizag. There seemed to be a lull so I managed a couple of weeks' leave, went to Delhi/ Ambala and returned to the ship in Vizag by the later part of July 1987.

By then, we'd read enough in the papers to know that things were getting serious in Sri Lanka. The hare-brained 'humanitarian aid mission', comprising a few ships whose main guns had been removed and were converted into load and journalist carriers, had been turned back by the Sri Lankan Navy, and rightly so. We read about the air dropping mission by AN-12s escorted by fighters. Present-day readers should appreciate that in those days, the Internet hadn't entered the milieu, WhatsApp did not exist and we were entirely dependent on newspapers, radio and TV. On an operational warship, even those were luxuries reserved for the moments we entered port.

Around 24/25 July 1987, we found ourselves back in Chennai. We didn't know how long we would be there. There wasn't much to do in the first few days, so we spent time visiting the touristy spots. We saw news of the Indo-Sri Lanka Peace Accord on TV but, again, as no one had thought it fit to tell us anything, we continued our blissful existence. On 28 or 29 July, our sister ship Ranjit also fetched up in Chennai, along with a G class (could have been Godavari or Ganga). By 30 July there were at least four major warships: Rajput (us), Ranjit, the G class, all from the Western Fleet, and a Leander class from the Eastern Fleet, in Chennai. We kind of assumed there was an exercise on but were neither told further, nor did anyone venture to think beyond the next day's tasks.

By 31 July, the galley rumour was that we were going back to Mumbai. Liberty had been permitted and men were already ashore. At 1730 hrs, as I was about to step ashore, I heard the announcement, “Prepare ship for Sea and Action”. While not sensational in itself, what set it apart was that it was the CO, Captain Gupteshwar Rai, who announced it. The Captain taking the mike to announce a regular pre-sailing procedure that usually commenced a few minutes prior to casting off was most unusual.





The gyro was yet to be started, which is normally done some hours prior, so as to be settled before getting underway. Luckily, it could be done quickly in the emergency mode. What were the sailing orders, where were we sailing to, what time were engines required, what time was castoff? These questions remained unanswered.

Immediately, various departments went into a frenzy. The Engineer Officer needed fuel tankers on priority to complete last-minute topping up. Although fuel had been topped up on arrival, as the ship's generators had consumed some fuel in harbour, the same needed to be replenished. The Supply Officer wanted fresh vegetables, meat and bread, and dry rations and other food stocks to feed 350 men over the next few days.

This was the first indication that something was up. Liberty was cancelled and parties were sent to round up those who had gone ashore. By 2000 hrs, everyone was back on board while we waited for the order to start up and cast off, which was a long time in coming. Dinner was served, yet we continued to wait. We observed a large number of Army troops gathering on the jetty. The presence of so many troops was strange and all the more puzzling as there was no landing ship tank (LST) present, which usually carries troops in large numbers. Around 2200 hrs, troops from 1 Maratha Light Infantry (MLI) began to board our ship. Boarding continued past midnight. Destroyers are not designed for troop carrying roles and we had to literally accommodate them all over and anywhere there was space for a man to lie down. A Major Kumar joined me in my cubbyhole-sized cabin. If he was surprised by the cramped living quarters, he kept his views to himself and quietly piled into the upper bunk.

Sometime that night, we received our sailing orders and cast off around 0200 hrs, heading to Kankesanthurai (KKS), Sri Lanka, 194 nm (360 km) away, along with Ranjit and the others. All ships were carrying troops on a passage that would take about 10 hours. To our simple minds, some of the most potent warships in the Indian Ocean laden with troops heading into foreign territorial waters meant only one thing. We had no notion of national strategy and, to us, the only thing to do was to prepare weapons and follow drills. The question in our minds was: Were we going up against the Sri Lanka Navy (SLN), the LTTE, or was there some third party? I thought of Ratnayake and Kahawatte from the SLN, who had done the Basic Engineering Course (BEC) with me at INS Shivaji. I thought of Senadheera, Rajapaksa, Rupasinghe, Hettigama and others who were our seniors and friends during the BEC, and probably manning SLN ships. Was I expected to blow them out of the water? What kind of roles were we expected to perform, as roles would determine weapon and sensor selection? All these questions remained doubts.

About one hour before entering KKS, the ship went to action stations. Decks were cleared, action posts were manned, AK 726, the 76.2 mm surface gun, the fast-firing 30 mm AK 230s and low-cal weapons (MMGs and LMGs) were loaded and brought to standby. Both Volna (SAM) systems were





ready, with their RZ 61 missiles on the launchers. Were we expecting surface or aircraft attacks? Other weapons, including my own RBY6000s rocket launchers, were on standby. Rockets had been armed and ready to load, given the order. As part of the standard drill, even the SSMs and torpedo tube launchers were readied. Support elements comprising casualty evacuation and damage control teams were also ready.

All fangs and claws were bared. The ship was in the highest state of action and damage control readiness. I remember Nagendra sir, the DLO, who was filling in for the Commander L telling me quietly in the darkened, red-lit ops room that the RBY might be needed to fire for softening the beaches and to clear the passage, in case there were mines, being shallow waters. Nagendra sir, my senior by some seven years, knew his pins, having spent years on Petya-class ships. He and I got married almost at the same time and like me, he had also spent only around 10 days of his entire married life with his wife. Mrs Nagendra had arrived in Chennai the previous day, was onboard the ship on the day we sailed, and was very nearly carried along to Sri Lanka! But that's another story.

I passed instructions to my Senior Chiefs, Kamal Kumar and Narpat Singh, who were fully charged up at their posts, while Perumal and junior artificers were below decks tending to the sonar, which had a problem. All were highly experienced and steady men in whom I had complete faith. Elsewhere across the ship, and indeed in all ships present that day, the scenes were similar – men tensed and waiting for action.

We entered KKS fully alert and anchored in the deserted harbour. Then waited some more. Sometime later, a signal arrived from the Fleet Commander to stand down the SAM systems. The RZs were taken down. Slowly, the ship's company began to relax. There appeared to be no immediate threat. Just as well, as there were troops occupying exposed positions and any attacks or responses would have endangered their lives. I was to transmit continuously on the sonar in short range search mode to prevent any hostile divers from approaching.

After a couple of hours, a Sri Lankan patrol boat approached. It was a boat carrying the Officer of the Guard (OOG). This was the first indication that the SLN was friendly. The OOG from the host Navy provides the formal welcome to a visiting foreign warship.

Later in the day, our own seaward defence boats (SDB) came alongside and we began the task of transferring the Marathas, their weapons, stores and even a couple of motorbikes to the SDB for the trip to the jetty. Now the SDBs are small ships and low in the water. The problem was, if they came too close to Rajput, they came under the rolling ship's flared shipside and risked damage to themselves. Eventually, some seamanship solution was worked out and the Marathas received their first lesson in stepping from one bobbing, swaying platform to another wildly moving platform, with both at unequal levels.





After saying goodbye to the MLI, we sailed out and began patrolling the east coast of Sri Lanka. Thankfully, we received our orders to return to Mumbai after a few days. We had been out since early June and returned some 90 days later.

I stayed onboard for more than a year after our first Sri Lanka visit, going back again for further deployments. For those of us who had served on board Rajput under Capt Gupteshwar Rai's command during those days, it was a matter of great pride that when the call came, as suddenly as it did that day, we were ready. We had responded as a professional fighting unit and had gone in first, as the business end of national will, taking our troops into a war zone, under the shadow of our guns.

Fortunately, the uncertainty of the early days was not seen during our subsequent assignments.

A couple of years later, I was at the Institute of Armament Technology (now DIAT), undergoing my M Tech. A talk by (then) Maj Anil Kaul, VrC, had been arranged. Maj Kaul (now deceased) had lost an eye in action in Sri Lanka. During the course of the talk, he expressed the doubts that had troubled him then in Sri Lanka, which were similar to ours on Rajput at that time: "What did we come here for?"

Such was the situation in those days.

#### ABOUT THE AUTHOR

*Commodore Sanjay Kris Tewari (Retd), who writes under the pen name 'Kris Tee', is an alumnus of the National Defence Academy (58th course). He joined the electrical branch and has served onboard (old) Vikrant, (old) Brahmaputra, Rajput, Rana and Ranvijay. As Fleet Electrical Officer of the Western Fleet, he has seen all types of ships at close quarters. He has served at NHQ, HQWNC, both Dockyards, Valsura and HQODAG and commanded two technical establishments. He has also written three books and frequently writes for various journals.*





## MISSION READY

### TRYST WITH THE BUDDHA

By Commodore Mahendra Dimri (Retd)

Everyone who has flown over or been to the twin cities of Cyberabad wouldn't have missed the Buddha statue in the middle of Hussain Sagar. The tallest monolith of Buddha carved out of a single slab of granite, it took five years and \$ 3.5 million to make. This dream project of former Chief Minister N T Rama Rao was to be inaugurated on Buddha Poornima in 1990. However, a day before Holi in March 1990, tragedy struck when the statue was being towed to its base constructed in the middle of the lake. The 350-tonne statue, which was mounted on a 90-tonne frame on a 100-tonne trailer, toppled over from the pontoon transporting it. Close to 10 people on the pontoon and the towing boats secured to it drowned.

I had recently joined ETS Vizag after my CDO course and was also the Mess Secretary besides Diving Officer. It was a lazy Saturday morning and I was taking stock of the preparations for Holi when I was summoned by the OIC. A VIP Avro was landing in Vizag in 45 minutes. I was to be a part of the diving team to proceed post-haste to Hyderabad. Soon I was sitting on a sofa in the Avro to participate in my first diving ops. The team and the equipment were also onboard.

The state tourism ministry had arranged good transport at the airport and hotel accommodation (unheard of then). However, we decided to proceed directly to the site. The lake looked like a stadium with Dhoni at the crease. Thousands of spectators sat all around, as if expecting the divers to simply lift the statue out of the water! The half-submerged pontoon was still visible.

The diving effort that day could locate one boat that was tied to the pontoon and sunk when the statue toppled. Two missing persons were extracted from the boat, which included the project engineer. The other bodies surfaced in the lake in the next two to three days. However, there was no trace of the statue. In those days without smartphones, we could obtain pictures of what we were searching for only in the night. The less said about the underwater visibility in the lake the better. Besides, it smelled like sewage.





With the political hype surrounding it, the event had created a media frenzy. The focus had shifted from the lives lost to the well-being of the statue. The next morning, the local media had declared the giant statue missing. By the next day, even the partially submerged pontoon had sunk and only our marker buoys were visible. Witnesses were indicating the position where the mishap happened but there was no statue to be found. Could it have broken and disintegrated? A few loose stones had to be retrieved from the lake bottom near the pontoon and shown to the sculptor to verify the same. Could the 350-tonne rock have been submerged in the slushy bottom? Our underwater search expanding outwards from the pontoon location continued till last light.

By the third day, the local media had gone berserk. Police had to be deployed at our diving launch site ashore and at the hotel to keep the paparazzi at bay. We, too, were at our wits' end wondering how such a gigantic structure could just disappear. Everyone was looking at us for the answer. Senior bureaucrats started showing up at the site. The senior Naval Officer in Hyderabad had to be summoned to deal with them. Our search continued to expand, the diving compressor working nonstop. The filthy water, stench and bright sun only made matters worse.

Our packed lunch had arrived from the hotel and I got a call over the Motorola to come ashore. Instead of returning via the direct route, I decided to take the Gemini for a spin. Barely 100 m out, the OBM struck something underwater. A diver jumped in to check and found himself standing in ankle-deep water — it turned out to be the frame holding the statue! The top-heavy contraption transporting the statue had apparently got disbalanced, broken free from the pontoon and tumbled 180°. The resultant thrust pushed the floating pontoon away. The wind then took charge and the pontoon drifted till it first made contact with the bottom and was ultimately more than 100 m away from the actual position of the mishap. After lunch, diving was carried out to check for any perceptible damages to the structure.

A press conference in the evening announced that the statue had been located and all was well. The Navy divers became stars for a day in the local press. A reporter from the *Indian Express* even published an interview with us.

It took another two years for a private firm to salvage and erect the statue.

## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

*A clearance diving officer, Commodore Mahendra Dimri superannuated on 31 July 2022. He is an alumnus of the National Defence Academy and Defence Services Staff College, Wellington. His assignments included command of INS Malpe and INS Kadamba. He was commissioning EXO of INS Betwa. He also served as NOIC Karnataka and CSO, HQKNA, BnCDr/SI Navy at NDA and DACIDS FDT at HQIDS. Besides diving, he's a qualified mountaineer and accomplished yachtsman. An amateur cyclist, he qualified as a Super Randonneur in December 2021.*



An aerial photograph showing the wreckage of a large ship, likely a naval vessel, lying on its side in the water. The ship's hull, masts, and various structural elements are visible, partially submerged. The water is a light greyish-blue, and the sky is overcast.

## MISSION READY

## ON CAPTAIN'S ORDERS

By Commander C T Joseph (Retd)

**L**t C T Joseph, Captain's cabin!" The announcement in the PA system in the early morning of 10 September 1974 reverberated through the decks of the mighty cruiser, INS Mysore, and made me jump out of my bunk. While getting into uniform quickly, my mind went through all activities onboard since I had joined the ship one month before. What mortal sins had I committed? When did I cross his bows? All I could remember was my first encounter with him on the Bridge when he asked me, "Joseph, why do you have a pessimistic moustache? You should have an optimistic one like mine." He said this while twisting the imperial style moustache of his iconic Verdi beard. The next morning, my horseshoe had automatically changed into chevron style.

As I was climbing the stairs, I decided to be contrite – to apologise, ask pardon for possibly offending the Captain with my words, thoughts or deeds – and accept the penance. But to my relief, as I entered the Captain's cabin and saluted, he announced in his attractive and authoritative baritone voice, "Lt Joseph, I hereby appoint you Commanding Officer of MV Poshak, the dockyard oil tanker, for the salvage operations of MV Transhuron. I will give you two minutes to say yes or no." He dramatically lifted his left hand and kept looking at his watch. After two minutes, he asked, "Yes, young man; yes or no?" I blurted, "Yes sir!" He then told me to get briefed by the N2 and take the required items from the ship's canteen and pay on return. He also asked me to keep the ship's company ready for his address at 1600 hrs before sailing. Though I had no experience of salvage operations, I believed I could accomplish the task successfully and gladly accepted Captain's orders.

### Background

In August 1974, a long-range size, Greek-based oil tanker MV Transhuron, carrying about 60,000 mt,





was abandoned by its crew owing to bad weather in the Lakshadweep waters. The ship drifted to Kiltan island and got aground in the northern end coral reef. The ship's bottom plates were cracked and almost half the crude oil was spilled over the island and the waters around it. Soon, the spill reached the Kerala coast endangering the flora and fauna, making headlines in the national media. The Navy took over the responsibility of the salvage of the remaining oil in the wreck, under the coordination of C-in-C South. To augment the effort, the Western Naval Command commissioned dockyard oil tanker MV Poshak, 400 mt.

### **Departure Bombay**

By 1600 hrs, after embarking fuel, water, provisions and stores, including a C11 R210 trans-receiver, Mysore's company was mustered for the Captain's address and sailing thereafter. The Captain addressed the men, giving a brief on the situation, purpose and probable difficulties that might be encountered. He also told them that I was his officer and anyone disobeying my orders would be punished. His speech instilled a lot of confidence in me. As we sailed, I could see a hand ashore displaying the victory sign, which transformed me from a gentle but lazy man to a responsible officer, commanding two officers and 30 sailors, and thereby lifted me from the naval purgatory where I had been languishing for the past four years after an unexpected catastrophe in my initial naval career. That hand belonged to none other than Captain (later VAdm) MP Awati, CO, INS Mysore!

### **Replenishment (of dinner) at sea**

Being a yard craft, Poshak had minimum accommodation, bathrooms and toilet facilities. Available cabins were shared by officers and senior sailors. A few junior sailors were accommodated in the crew dormitory and the rest had to manage on the upper decks and bridge-top. As she was not sea-going, Poshak had no navigational aids—gyro, radar or radio—except a magnetic compass, that too without azimuth circle and deviation card. The ship had two diesel engines, two generators and an economical speed of 6 knots. The galley had an electric cooking range that was probably not frequently used.



After we crossed Bombay harbour, the cook informed us that the cooking range had packed up and dinner could not be prepared.

Fortunately, Captain Awati had foreseen such initial hiccups and arranged for INS Cuddalore to escort us. Immediately, an SOS was sent to Lt Cdr O J Mathur, CO Cuddalore. Later, we took up stations for RAS, to receive our dinner! Cuddalore escorted us till about 2200 hrs and directed me to enter Goa to repair the galley. We entered Goa the next day, INS Gomantak arranged the repairs and the next morning, we sailed to Cochin, hugging the coast.





### **Embarkation of diesel pump**

On arrival at Cochin, I was summoned and briefed by Cmde Andrews, Chief of Staff, SNC. A technical team had already boarded the aground Transhuron at Kiltan. As the engine room and fuel tanks were partially flooded and the electric supply (110v AC) was neither available nor compatible with the Indian system, no machinery on board could be started. Therefore, a high-capacity diesel pump was required to be embarked on Transhuron to salvage the crude oil from its deep tanks. As bigger ships with crane facilities could not go anywhere near the wreck, Poshak, with a 2-m draft, was assigned this task. Accordingly, a huge pump with a wooden base, bigger than the size of a bedroom (15'×15'×10'), weighing about 8 mt, was placed onboard using a shore crane. After refuelling and replenishment, we departed Cochin for Kiltan by evening of 15 September.

### **Arrival at Kiltan**

Kiltan, 213 nm northwest of Cochin, is the second northernmost island of the Lakshadweep Archipelago with an area of 2.20 sq km. There is a lighthouse on either end. The southwest side of the island is deep and the northeast side shallow with coral reefs and rocks extending about 2 nm from the shore and the depth increasing gradually. MV Transhuron was aground on the northern tip near the lighthouse.

As we had fair weather, the ship was on course without much drift. By first light on 17 September, we sighted the lighthouse, gladly announced “Land Ahoy” and dropped anchor one mile from the wreck.

### **Boarding of Transhuron**

By the time we arrived at Kiltan, Southern Naval Command had appointed me 'OIC Transhuron', which gave me the authority to utilise the men and materials onboard. The northern tip of Kiltan is fully exposed to the Arabian Sea and susceptible to frequent bad weather. Even in fair weather, mild waves are always present. As the waves approached the shallow shore, they increasingly gained speed and momentum and broke furiously and vigorously at the wreck side, taking the crest of the waves to Transhuron's upper deck, which was about 25 ft above the water level, making it dangerous, difficult and precarious for small ships to stay alongside for long. On berthing alongside, I boarded the wreck with the bosun and found large quantities of shackles, sheaves, pulley blocks and ropes in her store.



## The task

In the absence of any crane, I decided to lift the pump manually using the available seamanship paraphernalia and nature itself! Transhuron had her bridge-wings extended to the ship sides at a height of about 50 ft from the water. Therefore, the ship was placed under the bridge. The maximum possible number of ropes were rigged connecting the pump and the bridge wing and all available superstructures on the wreck, placing the pulley blocks in between for maximum mechanical advantage. Each rope was manned by four to five sailors supervised by an officer/senior sailor; they were briefed to pull and hold the weight when ordered, as the ship was lifted by the wave and riding on its crest.

The first few attempts failed and the pump came down hitting the deck. Once, I was almost caught underneath the crashing pump but a junior sailor pulled me back on my collar and gave me my second life! With patience, perseverance and better coordination, we slowly lifted the heavy pump and placed it on the wreck, accomplishing the major task.

## MV Jag Jwala

By the next morning, the technical team was ready to pump crude oil to Poshak. Meanwhile, MV Jag Jwala, an oil tanker with 10,000 mt GRT, arrived and anchored nearby to receive the salvaged oil. Soon, we started the operation by loading from the wreck and discharging the same to Jag Jwala and returning for a refill. One cycle would take about 10 to 12 hours and continued round the clock for the next month. After two weeks, MV Purak, a sister yard craft, joined but could not continue owing to a technical problem. However, another small tanker with 1,500 mt GRT joined to augment and expedite the operations.

## Intermission

After a month, Jag Jwala departed to disembark the collected crude and Poshak left for Cochin to rest, recuperate and rejuvenate. However, it was a sad day for me. On arrival at Cochin on 18 October, when I visited my parents, I was pained to see my grandmother dying. The only consolation was that I was destined to be near and attend her funeral the next day before departing for the second phase.

## Fishing and sea swimming

While alongside Jag Jwala and at anchorage, we used to catch lot of fish—abundant in those waters—by simply lowering a vegetable basket and throwing some rice. Schools of fish would rush into the basket. If we raised the basket quickly, some of them would be trapped. Fresh fish brightened our monotonous tin food menu. We caught so much excess that we had to make a tank



on the focsle using an awning and running seawater to keep them alive. Occasionally, INS Godavari would visit and we bartered fresh chicken and mutton for our live fish!

Having been born and raised in the backwaters of Kerala, I liked swimming and used to take the junior sailors for sea swimming and coral watching.

### **Misfortune strikes**

We collected a few mattresses and chairs from the wreck and improved our habitability comforts. However, bathroom and toilet facilities were still a problem. On my request, Jag Jwala's master allowed us to use their facilities and provided a jumping ladder for the same. It was a little difficult and risky to cross over but most of us made use of it.



On a fateful day during the second phase, when the ship's company was mustered before casting off from Jag Jwala, the bosun reported that SEA1 Das was missing. We searched both ships but could find only his slippers, towel and soap box onboard Jag Jwala near the jumping ladder. Ships and aircraft from SNC and WNC and local boats searched for four days but to no avail and Das was officially declared 'missing'. He was a good swimmer and an enthusiastic member of my sea swimming team. Therefore, I presumed he got crushed and fell in between the ships while returning after his bath.

After we returned to Bombay in December 1974, myself and Lt Jose, EXO, met Mrs Das and her three children, aged two to six years. As I sat, all three children came running to us and the infant climbed and sat on my lap, blissfully unaware of the demise of their father, while their mother was wailing inconsolably and cursing us for the loss of her beloved, rendering us mute. I could only hand over some cash we had collected to her along with a grant from WNC. These heart-breaking moments still haunt me. After six months, I was transferred to the Drafting Office (the old CABS) in INS Angre and was able to issue her a 'provisional family pension' as SEA1 Das would be declared dead only after seven years. Meanwhile, with the help of Captain Awati, I got a flat in the Khukri Home in Navy Nagar allotted to her family where they could stay until her oldest son turned 18 years of age. Later, I used to visit the family with my wife and I managed to get Mrs Das a job in INHS Asvini.

### **The finale**

Meanwhile, the operations continued till 15 December and Poshak salvaged about 7,000 mt of the total 25,000 mt crude saved. We returned to Bombay by 20 December 1974. En route, we visited Cochin and made a final verbal report to COS, HQ SNC, and later forwarded a detailed report with a chronological log supported by photos.





### The reward, and the inspiration

It was a pleasant surprise to find my Chief ERA Sakeer Hussain and myself among the recipients of Naosena medals, announced on Republic Day in 1976. The citation, read while I received the medal from CNS Admiral Cursetjee on 2 February 1977 at INS Hansa, Goa, was a brief on all aspects of the difficult operation and was a real confidence booster to me. It stood me in good stead especially during my Merchant Navy tenure after retirement.



After Captain Awati relinquished command of Mysore, I could meet him personally just twice, that too after his retirement. The first time was in 1988 when, as Captain Commandant, he visited FORTTRAN in Port Blair, accompanied by his wife Mrs Sandhya Awati. As FOPO, I organised various functions in their honour. The second meeting was out of the blue and more dramatic. It was an example of one of the traits of his great persona that made him a 'People's Admiral'. In 2010, while I was commanding a passenger ship from Cochin to Lakshadweep, I happened to speak to a tourist group from the Pune area and one of them told me that that VAdm Awati was his neighbour. Thereupon, I sent him a short letter of greetings, gratitude and respect. After about three months, I got a call from the Staff Officer to C-in-C South, extending me an invitation from VAdm M P Awati, PVSM, VrC, for lunch with him at C-in-C's guesthouse!

I remain grateful to VAdm Awati and salute him for the inspiration and impetus he gave my naval career. I dedicate this article to his memory.

#### ABOUT THE AUTHOR

*Commander C T Joseph, NM (Gallantry), was commissioned into the Indian Navy on 9 March 1970 and belongs to the 40th Staff Course. A TAS (ASW) specialist, he has commanded INS Bhatkal and INS Kadmat. He retired on 31 March 1993.*





## MISSION READY

# SALVAGING THE SHIP'S SHAFT

By Commander Kalpak Paranjape (Retd)

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**Date: 2 April 2011**

**Venue: Wankhede Stadium, Mumbai**

**Situation: World Cup Cricket Final between India and Sri Lanka**

**Time: 2330 hrs**

India won the match by six wickets with 10 balls to spare courtesy Captain MS Dhoni finishing off in style with a massive six over the long-on. It was a World Cup victory for India after 28 years, the last being in 1983 when the Team in Blue led by the all-time great Kapil Dev Nikhanj lifted the trophy. While the nation was celebrating, somewhere in the Bay of Bengal a minor war vessel was on transit to Port Blair.

**Date: 3 April 2011**

**Venue: Around 20 nm south of Port Blair, Andaman and Nicobar Islands**

**Situation: A landing craft utility (LCU), IN LCU 38, in transit from Chennai to Port Blair**

**Time: 0600 hrs**

After having safely escorted the J-24 sailing yacht to Chennai, the ship was heading home to Port Blair. At around 0600 hrs, the ship was cruising at 'home revs' with good visibility, light winds and sun at about 20° above the horizon. It was a perfect start to the day.

I was on the bridge having a hot cup of tea and watching the instant at which the upper edge of the sun appears over the eastern horizon during which striking colours and atmospheric effects are visible in all glory. Suddenly, the peace on bridge was interrupted by a loud noise from the Machinery Control Room (MCR). Everything around me shook violently owing to vibrations



generated by the noise. It was clear that something serious had happened. The ship was immediately stopped to determine the damage. Subsequently, it was ascertained that the vibrations were heard from the bulkhead gland of the starboard shaft in the engine room. The IN LCU 38 is a Mark-III variant of LCU. These ships have three shafts unlike most naval warships that have only two shafts.

**Time: 0605 hrs**

I rushed to the MCR, where the watchkeeper informed me that the starboard shaft was broken. I then quickly shifted to the stern gland compartment where the Engineer Officer (EO) was already present amid the thick smoke emanating from the compartment. He indicated that the tail end of the starboard shaft/propeller shaft had sheared off. This had resulted in ingress of a substantial amount of water into the compartment. I was advised to sight the starboard shaft from the quarterdeck. The waters in the Andamans are quite clear and hence with the daybreak and availability of adequate sunlight, I was quite certain that it would be possible to spot the shaft if it were still intact. Amid this chaos, the Officer of the Watch (OOW) announced for the ship's SSFP (Standing Sea Fire Party) to muster on the quarterdeck to assist in damage control activities in the stern gland compartment.

With a lot of mixed thoughts in my mind, I slowly moved to the quarterdeck and perched out from the transom-stern to see if the shaft was still there. Fortunately, I could see it with my naked eye. Consequently, I decided to take a closer look by taking a plunge into the water to settle on the future course of action. Time was running out as the ship was gradually being set south-westerly (SW) at a rate of 1 knot. Nearest land was North Cinque Island at 3.5 nm and depth in the area was over 250 m. Taking into account safety and depth restrictions, only a two-hour window was available to clear the area and avoid the danger of entering shallow waters and subsequent grounding of the ship.

**Time: 0630 hrs**

With damage control activities underway in the stern gland compartment, the ship's ramp door was lowered to launch the Gemini with the ship's diver to establish the position of the starboard shaft. The diver held on to the lifeline, which was tied to me at the other end. To my horror, when I saw the shaft, it seemed precariously hanging about 1 m from the 'A' bracket. Therefore, in the event of the starboard shaft slipping through due to forward movement, it would be impossible to recover it considering its weight (around 3 tonne) and depth of over 250 m in the area.

**Time: 0645 hrs**

On surfacing after the dive, I called the EXO and Master Chief Boatswain Mate to discuss possible solutions to salvage the shaft. In the back of my mind, I always knew that we didn't have enough time to act.





**Time: 0655 hrs**

We decided to utilise the berthing hawsers of the ship by passing them around and under the starboard shaft with the help of the ship's diver and then taking the weight of the shaft on the capstan. LCUs by design have a stern anchor. Heaving commenced with one end of the berthing hawsers on the two sets of twin bollards and other end on the anchor winch, I was pleasantly surprised when the starboard shaft moved upwards and shifted inwards.

**Time: 0755 hrs**

By now, the ship had drifted considerably and was about 1.5 nm from North Cinque Island. The depth in the area had reduced to less than 100 m. The port engine of the ship was prepared to obey telegraph by 0815 hrs and the centre shaft was locked. The Gemini was recovered onboard and the ramp door was raised.

**Time: 0815 hrs**

Flooding in the stern gland compartment was contained wherein the stern tube hole was blanked using a rubber and metallic plate in between the gland and stuffing box. In addition, accumulated water of over 4 ft was pumped out using portable eductors.

**Time: 0820 hrs**

The ship recommenced her voyage to Port Blair motoring on single shaft. Transit speed had reduced to 4 knots. The concerned authorities were informed about the incident and actions were initiated for immediate assistance required from the yard agency, Naval Ship Repair Yard (NSRY), including tug and berthing assistance on arrival at Port Blair.

**Time: 0900 hrs**

A preliminary incident report was prepared and the engine parameters of the port engine were closely monitored by the MCR watchkeeper. During the entire passage from Port Blair to Chennai and until the incident occurred, there were no symptoms that indicated excessive load and vibrations on the starboard engine, as engine parameters were observed to be within limits. The picture of the quarterdeck with the sentry positioned could be viewed on the bridge with a CCTV system. The sentry was positioned to indicate excessive strain on the capstan.

**Time: 1230 hrs**

The ship finally entered Port Blair harbour. On arrival, we were received by the concerned command, yard and naval component staff. The Officer-in-Charge of NSRY



was surprised to see the salvaged shaft and stated that it was the first time he had seen a broken shaft being recovered at sea. The next day, after having undertaken underwater videography of the ship's bottom with the assistance of Command Diving Unit team, the incident report was forwarded to the Naval Component Commander (NAVCC).

The ship was subsequently drydocked at Floating Dock (FDN) for blanking the shaft. Within a week, she set sail for Visakhapatnam on single shaft. It was later indicated that the damage to the shaft was attributed to 'material failure'. This incident highlights the prompt actions taken by the ship's staff to salvage the starboard shaft and avoid sizeable loss to the government exchequer.

### ABOUT THE AUTHOR

*Commissioned on 1 January 1998, Commander Kalpak Paranjape is an alumnus of the Indian Naval Academy. A navigation and air direction specialist, he has done tenures onboard Pondicherry, Dunagiri, Mumbai and Godavari, and commanded LCU 38, besides having undertaken staff appointments in Naval Headquarters at DNO, DNP and DSR from end 2011 till mid-2015. Subsequently, the officer was member of the Strategic Maritime Assessment Team-Pakistan (SMAT- 'P') in the Maritime Doctrines and Concepts Centre (MDCC) at Naval Station, Karanja, Mumbai. At present, he is the Training Programme Officer (TPO) at the National Defence Academy. In addition, the officer is a paragliding and paramotor pilot, sky diver, open sea and lake swimmer, river guide and kayak rescuer, PADI open water diver, bungee jumper and half-marathon runner.*


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## THE EYE OF THE STORM

By Lieutenant Commander Naman Sinha

**S**hips and submarines avoid sailing through storms. That's just an unnecessary risk. Waves can wash something valuable from the deck, the crew would be in danger and it is just a whole different level of a bad day at work. However, in 2019, an EKM-class submarine had to tackle Cyclone Vaayu head on.

Many questions arise when one envisions such a scenario. Is it possible to sneak underneath a storm?

How deep do you have to go until you can't even feel the roll and pitch? It's actually a very interesting question. Cyclones energise a lot of water and it turns into a form of waves.

Those waves crash back into the ocean and start rising again. Of course, the

water underneath is moving too. The crew asked these questions after the submarine's chance encounter with this cyclone. One fact, though, was clear. The deeper you go, the less you feel the rolling and pitching. It is because waves are basically a bunch of water molecules rolling over each other. Half the wave is already above the surface level. Another half is underneath it. The deeper you go, the base of the wave declines. The depth of influence of the storm depends on many factors. The stronger and bigger the storm, it creates stronger and bigger waves and to avoid them going deeper is suggested. For example, in a body of water that's 1-m deep, a 3-m long wave would move the water at the bottom. Meanwhile, a 0.5-m long wave would not cause the water at the bottom to move.

In Indian mythology, Vaayu is the god of the wind. The cyclone was nothing less than an essence of the Almighty with the sheer power of wind and water. The cyclone created waves that were so big that its effect was felt at 50-m depth. Their eyes on the list and trim indicator, the men on watch noted a change of 2° port to 2° starboard of list and no change in the trim at safe depth. Life was not different than usual at 50 m but for how long? The Commanding Officer had to take the decision to come up to 9 m and put up snort. By maintaining forward bubble, the planesman reported the current depth to the command post. As the boat went up, the sound of the storm grew louder. The submarine was being crushed by the waves. The list was now 30° port to 30° starboard at the current depth of 9 m. The equipment was falling out from the ropes meant to secure it. The entire crew was awake and helping





each other face the situation. Towering walls of water driven by powerful winds were slamming on the casing. The sea state was 9. Some of the crew also had sea sickness. As the sea becomes rough, sea sickness gradually starts with dizziness, fatigue and nausea and if the rough seas continue, you start vomiting. The sea was so rough that some people were vomiting blood. The men in the submarine were fighting with nature. The load was taken on the diesels and the Commanding Officer was waiting for the batteries to charge and could do nothing but pray to God to save his men.

The Kilo-class submarine was in the eye of the storm for two days. As the weather improved, the decision was taken to head home. After crossing a predetermined GPS location, the boat surfaced. The Officer of the Watch could see the aftermath of the cyclone; 30-mm deep anechoic tiles were peeled off at various locations. Casing flaps were missing. There were dents on the casing. It appeared as if the double-hulled submarine just came back from a battle it barely escaped. As the submarine entered base port, the staff back at home were relieved and waiting to welcome the brave men who fought the storm and survived. As Winston Churchill said, "Of all the branches of men in the forces there is none which shows more devotion and faces grimmer perils than the submariners." Even without knowing if they were capable of surviving a cyclone, no one gave up and continued to give more than 100 per cent when required. The strength of the EKM class of submarines was put to the test and it proved more than satisfactory.

For young submariners, this incident teaches them to hold themselves to a higher standard. There is little forgiveness for incompetence, mistakes and especially lethargy. I hope everyone carries this lesson forward and builds our submarine arm to be the best among all the navies of the world.





## MY JOURNEY IN MY 36 YEARS

By Rear Admiral Philipose George Pynumootil (Retd) \_\_\_\_\_

**O**n 30 April 2022, I finally hung up my beautiful white uniform (all 18 pairs of 8As; two pairs of No. 1s and 2s; the camos) that I wore with pride over 36 years, not forgetting the one-year cadets and Mids' time where our starched KDs were replaced by cotton 8s.

As I grew in service, I watched with a hidden smile as the old guys ranted, “In my 30 years of service....” It was almost like a qualification that guaranteed amazing wisdom! Now, it's my chance. This is an unplugged, uncensored account of my far-from-extraordinary life in the Navy—the musings of an average guy with a very bad sense of humour. A journey that took me to 45 countries, including Mogadishu, Sri Lanka, Ukraine, Kazakhstan and a 11-month stint in London for the RCDS course. Much of this was typed at flight level 100 (10k feet) aboard a Dornier, listening to Pink Floyd on Bose QC Earbuds. Please fasten your seatbelts.

Ours was a large course, 95 of us of the 67th/29th Integrated Course. My course mates had prepped me for retirement. “When you return your I-card three months before your retirement date, the reality will hit you hard,” I was told. I braced myself as I removed my I-card from the Viraat cord that had been around my neck for the past 20 years but there were strangely no pangs or regrets. I had let go of an international visa, a veritable umbilical cord to all things *fauji* that gives you unlimited access to nuclear plants, VIP lounges and government offices and freedom from traffic challans. Once, a Mumbai cop who stopped me on my bike had said in exasperation, “*Mangalsutra mat nikalna*” as I reached into my shirt to take out my I-card! My love for my uniform was legendary. My friend K C S Rao never fails to remind everyone about our first liberty as Mids where I told him, “Let's freak out” — and then took him to a store that sold uniform items and stripes. (He had clearly anticipated a place full of girls.)



Life hasn't been easy. Two major events shaped the way I decided to take life by the balls and gave 'bash on regardless' a whole new meaning. My elder brother died in an Islander crash in May 1985, seven months before I was commissioned. In 1997, I lost both my parents in a car accident.

Every now and then, friends have hesitantly asked me how I dealt with these events. I thought I'd open up on this so it may help others dealing with their demons. When faced with a challenge, psychologists speak of the 'fight or flee' instinct. That's the crux of dealing with a life-changing situation. You can dig your heels in and carry on with grit and determination or play the victim card for the rest of your life.

When the world crashes around you, your family is your anchor. The Almighty has it all figured out, I've seen. He has you covered. I've been blessed to have an amazing wife and daughter who have been hugely encouraging and shown me the mirror when I've screwed up or thought I was a Mallu Bond! My sister, brother-in-law and niece Amu have always been there as a support system and safety net, in good times and bad. So, invest in family, friends, relationships. Any success you attain would be empty without them to share your joy. The insanely ambitious tend to gloss over relationships in their single-minded quest for that next rank/medal – only to see that, in the end, your rank is just a prefix and your decorations a suffix that nobody really gives a hoot about if you didn't stand up for what was right or lead your teams well. I promise not to speak of “my time”. The truth is that nobody gives a rat's ass about your era, however stupendous you think it was. Also, each generation is smarter than the last and that's a fact.

Here are some other things I've learned along the way:

**Integrity is an amazing quality** that defines all other virtues. Be true to yourself and do the right thing when no one's watching.

**Loving what you do makes all the difference.** Each ship of the same class has the same propulsion, weapon fit, sensors, crew. The X factor is your leadership: 250 guys seeing the almost manic passion you have for your ship and her crew is contagious and even the most cynical guy would put in that little extra bit to ensure excellence on all fronts.

**Look at each assignment as an end in itself and not a means to an end.** Some tend to look at a tenure as a stepping stone to a command/promotion. Give each job your all and success will be a given.

**Loyalty is a two-way street.** You can't expect your crew to be 100 per cent loyal to you if you don't stand by them through thick and thin. When you truly care for your subordinates, it shows. Merely calling them *beta* isn't enough – most don't want to be adopted by a random CO! It's easy to hoodwink a senior but impossible to fool a junior unless you are completely honest and true.





**Place your country, unit and the men you command before your comfort.** For instance, ensuring your men have eaten before you proceed for a meal. Being capable of undertaking anything you have ordered your men to do, albeit better, is the essence of leadership. And always lead from the front.

**Take calculated risks and a super-fast mental operational risk assessment in your mind.** As they say, a good decision taken now is better than the perfect decision afterwards.

**Praise in public, chastise in private.** Don't play favourites. Be fair and be seen as fair in all your dealings. Make merit count, always.

**All assignments are undoubtedly important but some are sacred, such as command tenures of fighting units.** If you are not ready to give your very best and devote every minute to your command, make way for someone who does.

**Your unit deserves a totally committed and passionate CO, regardless of where you stand careerwise.** They don't know that you have missed your promotion or op streaming. There is no ship or unit that is second to any. Your disappointment at not getting a top-notch ship shouldn't translate into your dealings with your officers and men. For them, their ship is the best and you better be worthy of leading them.

**The truth about life is that it isn't fair.** Our selection procedures are more or less as fair as they can be. However, nothing is foolproof. Missing the bus may not always be so bad, at whichever stage it may happen, as I saw for myself. However, the four years I spent after this were the most fulfilling. I was in my comfort zone, in the field, interacting with the guys on the frontline and second line, with the roar of jet engines, the whirl of rotors and the smell of aviation turbine fuel. If you reach a dead end in your career, find your niche where you can continue to contribute doing what you love or move on.

**It's the small things that matter.** Big issues look after themselves. Add value to whatever you do. If someone comes to you with a problem, give them inputs to add finesse to the task. Your experience should amount to something. Whether it's a weapon firing or choice of chairs for a conference hall, add value.

**Work-life balance is all important.** Take time to follow your passion—whether it's biking, swimming, cycling or hitting a small white ball around a huge green expanse wearing strange-looking shoes. Get the most out of each day and each moment, at work and after work.



**Work on your sense of humour if you aren't born witty!** A sense of humour is perfect to diffuse tension or put people at ease. And that's not a joke.

**Traffic lights have no place in a workspace.** Ensure a conducive work environment and cut out the red tape and the red/ green lights outside your office. An open-door policy ensures that people know they can reach out to you.

**Connect with juniors.** Don't get isolated in your fancy car and Antarctic AC office. In four years, I had lunch with over a thousand people. The lunch hour gave me the time to really connect while a five-minute call-on is pointless. Acknowledge each salute smartly with eye contact and respond to *Jai Hind* with equal fervour. Lower your windows as you cross gates and respond to the salutation with gusto.



**Never miss a funeral.** Whether it was a parent of a sailor or officer or the infrequent times we lost one of our personnel, nothing has been more important to me than being with the bereaved and squeezing their shoulder as the pyre was lit or the grave filled with earth. I have had the sad experience of burying both my parents at once. An IAF three star and naval two star attended the funeral and left without so much as speaking to me. I still remember.

All considered, I have lived my life with simplicity and a naivete that's almost childlike. Blame it on the fact that I am the youngest of three siblings! But I'd gladly take this journey all over again given a chance. I leave with amazing memories, friends and colleagues who have become family. The personal send-off by the CNS, VCNS and each of the three Cs in C made the journey super special. As Jim Morrison famously said, "When the music's over, turn off the lights." Switching off for now – but tomorrow is a brand-new day!

#### ABOUT THE AUTHOR

*Rear Admiral Philipose G Pynumootil, AVSM, NM, a Seaking pilot, is an alumnus of the 67th Course, National Defence Academy. He has commanded INAS 330 and was the commissioning CO of INS Shikra. His surface tenures include command of Nashak, Kirpan and Brahmaputra, besides doing a tenure as Executive Officer, INS Delhi. He has undergone the Staff Course, Higher Air Command Course and the Royal College of Defence Studies course in London where he obtained a MA (International Studies) from Kings College. He was the Flag Officer Naval Aviation & Goa Area at the time of his retirement in April 2022.*





*Chilka, June 1981: Lt Sudip Kumar Chatterjee, Div Cdr Angre, receiving C-in-C shield from Orissa chief minister*

## MY JOURNEY

### SEA, SAILING & SERVICE

By Lieutenant Commander Sudip Kumar Chatterjee (Retd) \_\_\_\_\_

**A**t the very outset, let me pay my deep gratitude and rich respect to my first love, the Indian Navy.

While in my final year of my MSc in mathematics at the University of Allahabad, I received a call from the Services Selection Board for permanent commission in the Indian Navy. Having cleared the SSB and opting for the Graduate Special Entry Scheme (GSES) as a cadet in the executive branch, I arrived at the Cochin Harbour Terminus railway station bound for the Indian Naval Academy (NAVAC), Cochin, on 19 August 1974, exactly at the age of 20. Due to service requirements, the curriculum for this graduate entry course was condensed such that one year of training was to be completed in six months. Hence, our batch was to pass out with the previous 9th (10+2) cadet course, which was on its final leg. My military background (and very brave parents by my side) impelled me to stay the course. The training period at NAVAC was no cakewalk but I was good at cross-country runs. Also, there was no need for the swimming instructor to push me in — the pool was cool for me!

Amid the Navy's healthy environment, training and dynamic career opportunities, I grew from a cadet to a seagoing cadet, midshipman, Ag. Sub Lt and Sub Lieutenant. On 27 December 1977, I was awarded the naval watchkeeping and helicopter controller 'operational' certificates from the Captain of INS Nilgiri. Interestingly, the Commanding Officer, Training Officer and the other watchkeeping certificate awardee later rose to C-in-C, CNS and C-in-C respectively! Then came the time to serve onboard INS Vikrant, whose Commanding Officer would become CNS and later the Governor of a state. On completion of the missile gunnery officers' course, I served onboard an OSA class (203 ER) missile boat. Here, too, the Commanding Officer retired as CNS. Some rare associations indeed!





I moved on to be part of the commissioning team of INS Chilka, the premium training centre for sailors, and then served two appointments as specialised Signal Communication and Electronic Warfare officer onboard a Petya and INS Dunagiri. My tenure at TACT(B) from July 1984 to February 1986 was very educative, during which I cleared the Command and Staff College Entrance Examination on my debut attempt.

A memorable stint was in the Andaman & Nicobar Islands, where I was entrusted with the command of a major war vessel, an LST – a command that was earlier held by two reluctant senior officers. This grand old lady was on her extended last leg in a mostly turbulent Bay of Bengal. Defying her age (that too with a large number of doublings and stiffeners all over the ship), she floated, sailed and met all her commitments. She was also the lifeline of Port Blair (base port), Car Nicobar (with an air base) and Nancowry Islands. She sailed long distances, including twice to Visakhapatnam port. In fact, between June 1986 and October 1987, she was operating most of the time before she was decommissioned.

Fortunately, I had another command of a brand-new Coast Guard ship on deputation. Extensive patrolling and two severe cyclones are what come to mind! The first of the two severe cyclones was during 15/16 November 1988, when the ship was making her way towards down south, to Nancowry. The sea was rough to begin with. And as we approached east of Car Nicobar, the sea state shot up to 5 with waves 3-4 m high and the barometric pressure drastically fallen. The whole area turned pitch dark in daytime. Rightly, the CGHQ (A&N) directed the vessel to take refuge in the safe waters of Hut Bay harbour. Encountering a hostile harbour entrance, she passed her lines ashore with great difficulty and had to wait for four days before continuing her intended passage.

The second cyclone was more severe in terms of wind speed and the loss of many merchant vessels. On 25 November 1988, the CG vessel had a commitment to handle men and logistics at Narcondem and Landfall Islands. Having satisfactorily completed her commitments at Narcondem, the ship started making her way towards East Island (near Coco Strait), encountering a drop in barometric pressure and the sea turning hostile. The vessel approached Landfall, completed her task and turned south to head towards Port Blair. All hell broke loose with rolling of more than 30 per cent on either side and the forecastle submerging completely into sea while pitching. Directed to take refuge in the nearest harbour, the ship bulldozed her way into Diglipur Harbour. She passed her lines but kept increasing her lines as they parted. With six lines each bollard, the vessel held on for some time. But then the forecastle bollard got uprooted from the base, leaving no option but to leave harbour or go to anchorage. In the absence of suitable anchorage, she closed to harbour entrance but found it extremely difficult to make headway. In fact, the vessel was falling back. In a split-second call, we decided to take help of the protection of the hills from a rampaging wind up to 110 KMPH and go for anchoring. It took four attempts for the vessel to finally get her anchor. After six days, we set sail for



Port Blair, witnessing massive devastation all around us with battered and grounded merchant and auxiliary ships on the way.

Otherwise, I had a very satisfying one-and-a-half year Coast Guard command, with record hauls of illegal foreign trawlers, dhows with contraband and media coverage, which included print and television news. I must mention here that working amid such hazardous situations, it was a boon to have a wise and brave lady alongside. Her presence was a balm for me operating so far from the mainland in the remote waters of the A&N Islands.

Back in the Indian Navy, after a long and professional tenure at WATT(B) from May 1989 to 31 October 1993, I bid goodbye to my first love. Having been selected by the Shipping Corporation of India (SCI) and cleared by NHQ, I reported to SCI on permanent absorption in February 1994. With a 'certificate of service as the master of a foreign-going ship', I had to learn and perform all jobs of a Deck Officer, i.e., 3rd, 2nd and Chief Officer. Work related to cargo, duties related to crew administration, navigation, keeping watches, duties of the ship's medical officer, store and fund accounting, harbour and custom formalities were just a few tasks that had to be simultaneously learned and performed!

Sailing for 365 days and more at a stretch without a break was the order of the day at SCI. I sailed extensively to almost all the sea ports on the planet onboard mainly tankers (product, crude carriers including the OBO super tanker) as well as bulk carriers and a research vessel. Soon I had my own command and my role changed further. Subsequently, I cleared the Mercantile Marine Department's prestigious Master Mariner examination. Another proud moment came in 2004, when my ship MV Goa was the recipient of the Fleet Award. The ship got a letter of appreciation for her excellent efforts during PSC at Portland, USA.

As a Master of merchant ships, I always felt the need to keep the ship's crew in good health and humour during prolonged sailing. Timely onboard meetings to solve crew grievances, occasional meals together and tambola and other games were of great help. Satellite communications (paid by individuals) with families ashore proved to be a big morale booster. These measures were applied earlier onboard Coast Guard ships during prolonged patrolling duties at sea.



*Onboard MT AK AZAD, 2007:  
Crude transfer ship to ship off Singapore*




Sadly, every good thing must come to an end. While onboard a crude tanker cruising from Sudan to Singapore, an accident back home compelled me to cut short my command and say goodbye to seafaring. Thus, I ended a 34-year professional connect with the sea on 5 February 2008.

I began a new innings in April 2009, when I was selected as Officer-in-Charge for the Ex-Servicemen Contributory Health Scheme (ECHS) in Lucknow, a two-year stint. In 2010, Lucknow Polyclinic was adjusted the best in Uttar Bharat area. I also had the privilege to serve ECHS PC, Faizabad (for one-and-a-half years) and ECHS PC, Unnao (for more than five years) as OIC. It was a grand finale for me as PC Unnao was adjusted the best in the region.

When I look back at my career, I realise that the Indian Navy gave me sea legs and confidence; the Indian Coast Guard gave me command; the SCI offered me endless sailing and globetrotting and ECHS taught me extensively about health services and compassion. Though age is catching up, my desire for an active life continues.

## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

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## ADVENTURES & LEARNINGS

### TEMPORARY DUTY TALES

By Commodore Srikant Kesnur (Retd)

**I**n the Navy, most of us remember our postings and tenures with a certain degree of nostalgia and affection. I was the SCO of 'ABC' ship, or I commanded 'IJK' destroyer, I was the Head of 'OPQ' directorate or I was the Director of 'XYZ' unit is the common refrain of veterans or senior officers indicating a certain kind of association that has lingered long after the tenure.

However, all these are assignments tenanted on permanent duty, with the appointment formally intimated by the P branch of Naval Headquarters. For some strange reason, we do not seem to set much store for the temporary duty jobs we are assigned. It's understandable—these tenures are usually short (not longer than six months as per official rules) and they are regarded as chores or 'bum jobs' (BJs) that we undertake with greatest reluctance after all attempts to get out from them prove to be of no avail. However, given that the Navy is always short of personnel, some officers (and sailors) regularly need to be reassigned to fill emergent gaps and everyone ultimately has their share of temporary duty attachments. (Here, I am not alluding to temporary duties on courses or very short ones for attending meetings, conferences or other taskings related to our current job.)

The same sentiment also holds true for short duration permanent duty postings that seem like temporary duty deployments and therefore, for the purposes of this article, are considered as such. In fact, such short tours of duty get designated by the grand acronym of Officer on Special Duty (OSD), especially if you are Captain or above. It is, of course, a different matter that OSD actually implies 'Officer in Search of a Desk', a truism that reflects the predicament of such officers. Fortunately, I have never been OSD but have had my share of 'ty' duties (as we call them) or TD (as the Air Force refers to them) and one short duration appointment on permanent duty. These short duration assignments taught me a lot and I believe that acknowledgment of the same is due before they get lost in the mists of memory.

My first ty duty was in May 1989. In the previous month, I had just got my watchkeeping ticket on INS Ranvir and was deputed to INS Amba, which was short of watchkeepers. In those days, the intimation of award of watchkeeping ticket to the P branch was by snail mail through proper channels (Fleet, Command, NHQ); hence, there was usually a gap of three to four months between



*Onboard INS Ranvir after obtaining watchkeeping certificate, circa April 1988*



getting the coveted ticket and being informed about the next appointment. Amba was in long refit and had only two executive watchkeepers; so my job was to ostensibly keep the roster maintained at 1:3. However, on landing there I was told by the EXO – Cdr Kanwar – of a 'sweetheart' deal where, in addition to my day of duty, I would have to be on duty from 1800 hrs on the remaining evenings too and, in return, I would not be given any other tasking and be free to go out and gallivant around Mumbai, during the day, on the days I was off duty. Essentially, this meant I would be on night duty on all days; this was a favour on 'passionate grounds' to 'MLR' Officers. Having had no choice in this matter, I reconciled to it. One *chakkar* of the ship and I realised it seemed like a wreck, a mass of tangled wires, equipment in a mess and numerous compartments where hot work was in progress. The AC was not working, the deck and ship side had been scraped and the place was hot as hell, almost infernal. Coming from a brand-new INS Ranvir, which was 'fully ops and ticking', this was a culture shock.

But it was also a blessing in disguise. Given those conditions and continuous hot work through the night, there was a minor fire or scare almost every day and what I learnt about practical firefighting and NBCD on Amba, I would never have learnt on Ranvir. Ships in prolonged refit have their own problems. It's something obvious now but was not realised then by a greenhorn like me. Resources are scarce, teams seem disjointed and the Navy those days didn't have the extremely well-organised firefighting drills, concepts, framework arrangement and equipment we have now. The practical experience of interacting with dockyard hands, preparing for hot work or taking rounds of potentially dangerous compartments was something I learnt on Amba. It was theory put to good use, and often with some egg on the face when I didn't respond in time or didn't know where the compartment was or injured my hands or feet when scrambling to respond. The month-long stint on Amba held me in good stead through the rest of my career as an executive officer, especially where it came to firefighting safety and understanding of refit ships.

In July that year, I got appointed to LCU 37, then based in Port Blair. The drill, those days, was simple. You reported at INS Adyar and awaited your turn to board the ship to A&N. This was regulated by Adyar and was unpredictable depending upon how long the system wanted a person to be on the mainland before going to 'Kaala Paani', an exercise in which the individual concerned also took active part. Those were the days of Op Pawan and Chennai wore the air of a 'Military Headquarters of War'. The usual resource constraints, less people and searing heat gave the mess a shabby look. I wanted to flee but I was co-opted to do duties in the MOR (what MOC used to be called those days). I don't think I contributed much but the 20-odd days there made me understand some nuances of the massive Peace Support Operation (PSO) we had undertaken. The three main things I absorbed deserve mention. First, the enormous role played by platforms like LSTs, LCUs and SDBs, which normally don't figure in the 'sexy list' of any navy. Second, the constraints and problems when small headquarters are suddenly tasked with a large mandate and all the many issues arising out of having



interim HQs. Third, the many challenges and travails involved in tri-service and civil-military cooperation.

My next such assignment happened in June 1991 when I had completed two years of being the Navigator of INS Alleppey. I had been nominated for Long C (a long story there, which bears recounting some other time) but that year the Long Courses were to be in two batches and, thus, I was to report at Kochi only in end December. My relief had already been appointed and it was a tailor-made situation for Headquarters to grab such 'loose electrons'. RAdm (later Adm and CNS) Sushil Kumar had just finished his stint as FOMA and had moved as COS, WNC. He had seen me as FOMA and desired to have an additional Staff Officer, so a slot had to be created at HQWNC for a junior Lt. Thus, I found myself the Officer-in-Charge, Command Photo Section, the first (and possibly last) non-aviator appointed in that job.



*Relaxing and enjoying the privileges of WNC Mess stay as OIC Command Photo Section*

This assignment gave me several fringe benefits that were the envy of my contemporaries. A cabin in the WNC mess with a phone to boot (by virtue of being an OIC) was the stuff of dreams. An airconditioned office desk with a phone, access to Headquarters and being the inspecting authority of the photo sections of Kunjali and Viraat gave me some more brownie points. And remember in the pre-cellphone, pre-computer era, the Command Photo Section photographers were the only ones who did the photo-documentation of any (and every) activity, so the section and indeed the OIC were much sought after.

Even as I revelled in the 'thrills and privileges', I learnt a fair bit. Three things stand out. First, my exposure to a domain—the naval photography branch—that was completely alien to me until then. Second, a bit of understanding of how Headquarters functions. Considering that I never did a tenure at NHQ or Command thereafter, this was my only limited exposure to the 'method behind the madness'. Third and most important, Adm Sushil Kumar was a man of eclectic tastes. He would involve me in procuring and arranging music for functions in WNC Mess or elsewhere, getting books on esoteric subjects or doing research on something he was writing. It was fun, it was creative and I got exposed to certain aspects of western music, cuisine and décor that informed his sensibilities. The duty lasted for five months plus and I felt sad when it finished.

My next *chotta* assignment happened, many years later, in early 1999. Having finished my tenure on INS Delhi as her commissioning SCO and awaiting the Staff Course, I was appointed to the Project 15





Training Team, then located at the Noorbhai building in Fort. Being ashore after a hectic 30 months in an afloat tenure is a big relief. I was the first and last communications specialist to be appointed there and thus my role was cut out: to prepare the books and training material on C and EW fit on the Delhi class of ships. I hope the material and documents we made were useful to the Schools that took up the mantle of training subsequently. My four months in the small informal organisation, first headed by Cdr (later VAdm) Ajit Kumar P followed by Cdr (later Cmde) SVR Murthy, was fun and learning in equal measure. We were fired with a mission about the Delhi class of ships and wanted the rest of the Navy to share our enthusiasm. At the same time, we lunched together on the humble *thaali*, had 'beering' sessions on weekends and watched World Cup cricket on TV. Towards the end of that phase, the war in Kargil had begun and there was a sense of seriousness and solemnity as we went about our jobs.



*Author with sailors of Command Photo Section  
on his last day there, circa December 1991*

There were no more such ty duties in my life later. Despite the fact that we are all constant rolling stones in the Navy, we learn to gather moss in our unique ways. Our many tours of duty in different stations enable us to have new experiences, make new friends, be exposed to new vistas. We are left richer by these rollercoaster rides and frequent moves, no matter how irritating they seem at the beginning. While temporary duty assignments don't carry the same amount of traction in our memory bank, it can be argued that they too can be valuable learning experiences. They certainly were in my case.



## ADVENTURES & LEARNINGS

### ROUNDING OFF PESETAS CAN DRIVE YOU ROUND THE BEND!

By Commodore Aspi Cowasji (Retd)

The setting was a long overseas deployment in the late 1980s touching the port of La Coruna in Spain for three days of rest and recuperation. As customary, submarine crews would be accommodated at hotels ashore arranged by our Indian Defence Attaché. Prior to entering harbour, the Captain nodded to me and asked if I had ever dealt with the Government of India's foreign currency account, to which I had replied in the negative. "Never mind," he said, "You will learn on the job. Actually, it is very simple. You just have to receive the total allowance money from the visiting Defence Attaché and disburse the amounts due to each officer and sailor as per their entitlements taking their signatures on an acquittance roll." It sounded quite easy to me and in the absence of a logistics officer onboard, I merrily went about getting the acquittance roll typed.

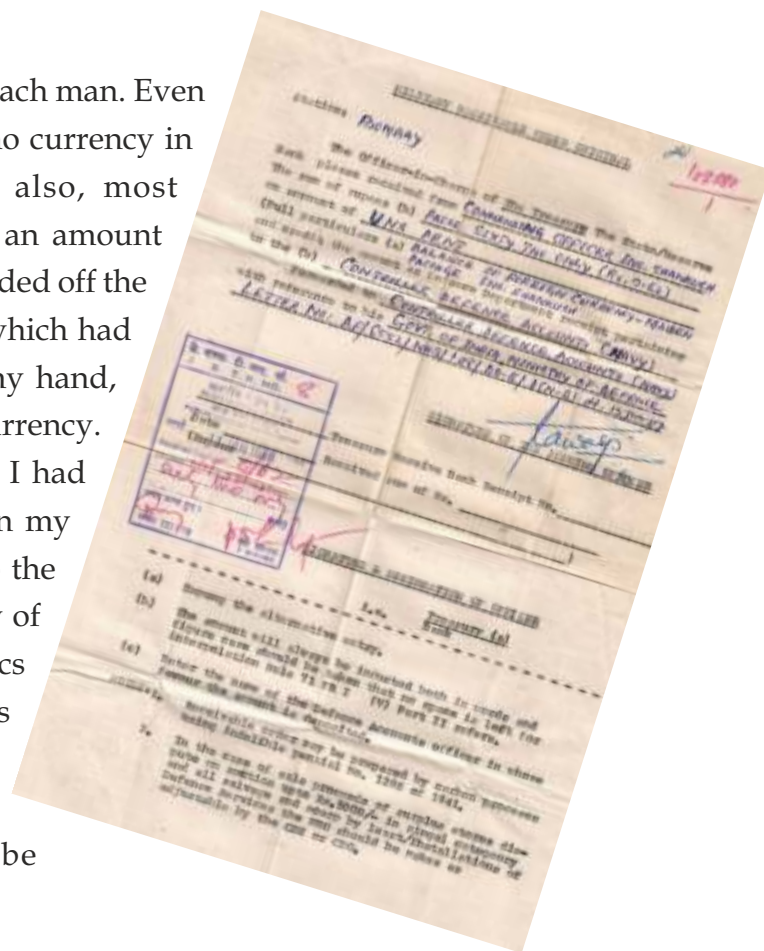


As our submarine came alongside, we were met by a large contingent from the Spanish Navy as well as our Indian Defence Attaché and his staff. After the preliminary courtesies were exchanged, he handed me a bundle of money in Spanish Pesetas which was the currency of Spain prior to the formation of the European Union. I quickly went below decks to stack the money entitlement wise. Soon I realised that our foreign allowance that was entitled in US dollars had to be converted to Pesetas at the foreign exchange rate for the day and then disbursed to the crew. This was going to be a herculean task as the equivalent of USD in Pesetas was resulting in fractions of a Peseta known as centimos, a denomination that was not in circulation at that time in Spain. Being the honest officer I was, not wanting to make men sign for what they did not receive, I decided to round off the amounts to the nearest Peseta on the advice of the Captain. This somewhat got equalised in the grand total, leaving a few Pesetas extra in my hand in the end, seven to be precise, to which I gave no thought. And so, life went on as the crew and I spent three eventful days in port, taking in the sights and sounds of the city, enjoying flamenco dancing and spreading goodwill, which was our mission at that point of time. The high point of our stop was the bliss of being able to take hot baths in our hotel rooms, especially after such a long sea sortie.

A month or so later, we reached our home base in India and I was told that it was time to settle the foreign currency account by making a fair copy and submitting the same to the auditors of the Navy. A week or so after submission, I got a message from one of the auditors handling the account that there was a discrepancy that required my explanation. I was asked how was it possible that I had



rounded off the decimals of Pesetas entitled to each man. Even after explaining to the auditor that there was no currency in Spain smaller than a Peseta in existence; also, most particularly, not wanting the men to sign for an amount more or less than their disbursement, I had rounded off the fractions of Pesetas to the nearest one Peseta, which had resulted in a total remainder of 7 Pesetas in my hand, which was merely sixty-two paise in Indian currency. The auditor dug in his heels and insisted that I had Rs 0.62 of the Government of India's money in my possession that I should rightfully deposit into the Indian Naval Estimates account of the Ministry of Defence. A powwow with some naval logistics experts and my Captain ensued, where it was decided that I should resolve this uncomfortable audit objection in the quickest possible time, using my initiative, ingenuity and maybe some *jugaad*.



Now mind you, this was a hilarious instance where our allowance entitlement in USD, which was a meagre \$ 15 per day for Spain, had been converted to an equivalent amount of Pesetas. The sum total of the remainder fractions being 7 Pesetas now had to be reconverted to INR 0.62 and then deposited as a Military Receivable Order in the Reserve Bank of India. Careful to carry a one-rupee coin in my pocket, I went to the RBI and enquired if I could make this Military Receivable Order (a clone of the common demand draft) to be deposited in the Indian Naval Estimates. I moved from desk to desk within the RBI and then from clerk to supervisor to manager level, who all appeared dumbfounded and bewildered at the absurdity of such a deposit into the mighty RBI. This resulted in many visits to the RBI where I had to meet different officials trying to explain the audit objection and the need to deposit this money to liquidate this outstanding objection.

Finally, after numerous visits, the auspicious day came when the staff of the RBI after checking their rules finally accepted my deposit of ₹ 0.62 into their treasury. Now there was another problem as I had taken the ₹ 1 coin to deposit. They objected that they did not have the balance change to return and urged me to go outside and tender the exact change. To be rid of the obnoxious auditor breathing down my neck, I swallowed my pride, went outside the RBI, purchased some peanuts and finally deposited exactly sixty-two paise into the RBI bringing the Military Receivable Order back to my submarine as my war booty. The outstanding audit objection was finally liquidated and I was a free man once again.





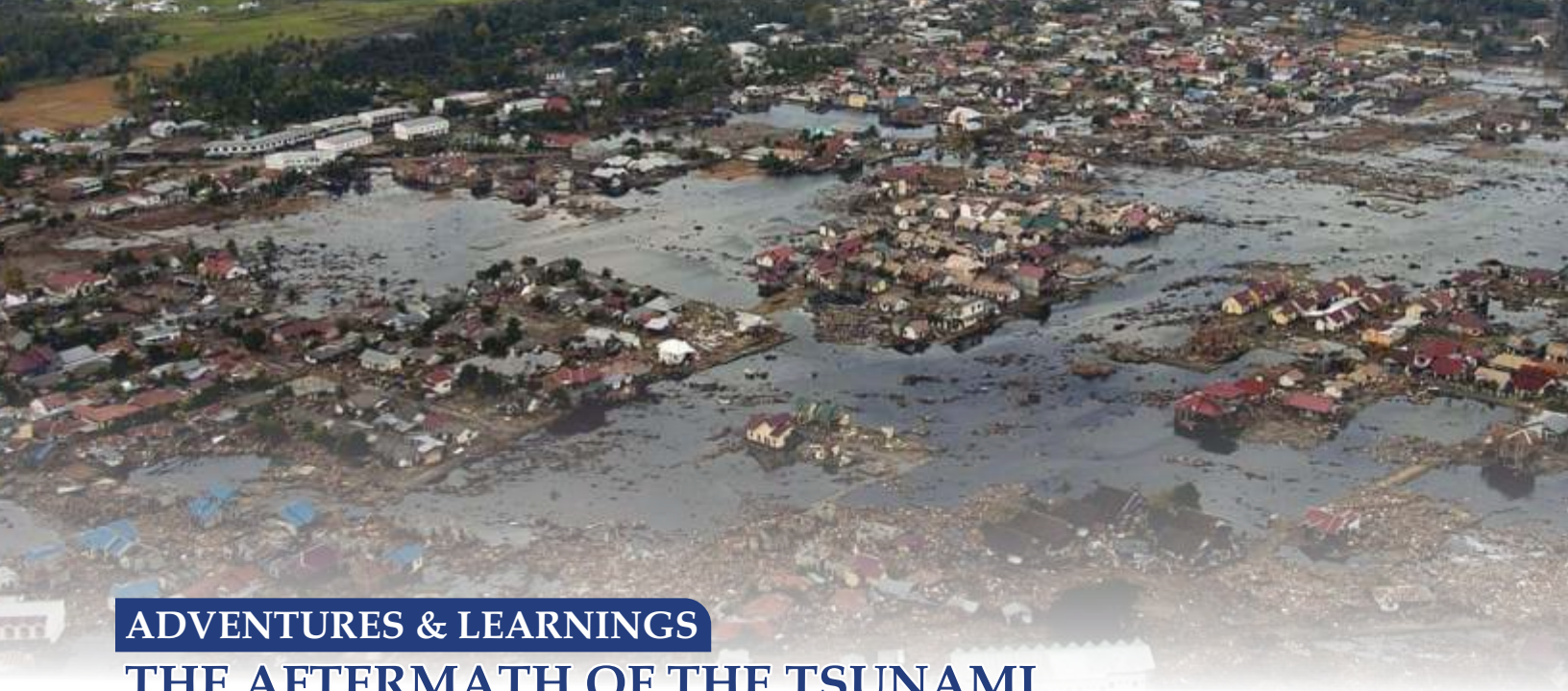
I wouldn't term it careless but rather an ignorant rounding off of foreign currency in Spanish Pesetas. Some had advised me that I should have shown the decimals in the acquittance roll taking the signatures for the full amount but only disbursed the whole figures to the crew. This action did not appeal to my sense of right and wrong, arguing that I would only take the signatures of the men when they got what they signed for. As per my logic, I had done the right thing, especially when there was no smaller currency of centimos in circulation in the country. The auditor just did not see reason, though, obstinately sticking to his point that I had incurred loss to the Indian Government. The whole episode resulted in a wastage of nearly two months of my time in harbour with repeated visits to the RBI and auditors' offices just to regularise a sum of ₹ 0.62.

All this sounds amusing in hindsight. Rounding off Spanish Pesetas nearly drove me round the bend but I derived immense satisfaction from the fact that I had done the correct thing and not resorted to *jugaad*, another name for bribery and corruption using Roger Uncle Mike!

#### ABOUT THE AUTHOR

*Commodore Aspi Cawasji, NM, VSM, is an experienced submariner who has held important command and staff assignments. He has been awarded the Naosena Medal (1996) and Vishisht Seva Medal (2013) and has jointly authored a book titled Strategic Vision 2030: Security and Development of Andaman & Nicobar Islands.*





## ADVENTURES & LEARNINGS

# THE AFTERMATH OF THE TSUNAMI

By Commander Ashish G S Srinivasan (Retd)

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**T**he tsunami of 26 December 2004 was both a great leveller and a great classroom. Along with three other dear colleagues, I was lucky to have been spared by the waves on the sandy strip of the Rameshwaram Spit on that fateful day. By early afternoon that day, INS Sandhayak had been tasked to extend humanitarian assistance and disaster relief support to Sri Lanka, which had been far more seriously affected than us. Being the floating naval unit closest to Lankan waters, we were diverted to Trincomalee, where we spent about a week supporting a shocked nation but a heroic people. On 31 December 2004, we were relieved of our duties at Trinco and tasked to render similar support to our outlying islands on the Eastern Seaboard: the Andaman and Nicobar Islands.

New Year's Day, 1 January 2005, saw us entering Chennai harbour where we saw for ourselves the damage caused by the tsunami to the ships. By now, extremely heart-breaking news about the Air Force Station in Car Nicobar had trickled in. The enormity of the devastation we were witnessing emotionally affected us all. However, the sense of security Sandhayak gave us was more than reassuring. What held us together was the strong bond we had developed in the wardroom. We complemented each other in our daily life on board, thereby providing practical solutions to every problem we had to face. We loaded up with relief material and sailed off to the Andamans, destination Campbell Bay. On our way down, we diverted to look for survivors at Kabra Island where Master Chief Ghosh and I were winched down onto the island from our bird. The island was devoid of any sign of life. We walked around the whole island calling out at the top of our voice and waiting to hear any responses. There was a lighthouse at the centre of the island located atop a small hillock. We climbed up to the base of the light tower for an overview of the island. We

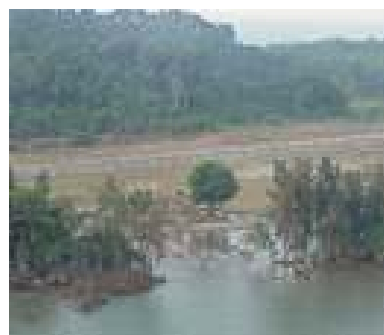


observed that the light tower had been soaked up to halfway its height in water, the waterline still wet and clearly discernible. This meant the whole island might have been under water for at least two hours or so. After having convinced ourselves that the entire area of the small island had been scoured, we reported to the ship that there wasn't any sign of life whatsoever. We were winched up after about an hour and a half, as the bird was circling around nearby areas as well, looking for any signs of life.



We propelled ahead to Campbell Bay to witness ghastly sights. While entering harbour, we did not seem to sight the Sunk Rock but noticed a dark object at its approximate location that was awash. This created some doubt in our minds as we wondered whether the rock had got dismembered. In a few hours, we would find out that the water depths in the Campbell Bay area had increased by 1.51 m, or in other words, the land had subsided by a metre and a half. We observed that the breakwater on the east of the channel was being battered by waves with

water fountains projecting up through the cracks and holes in the walkway with each wave that hit the breakwater. The Coast Guard facility on the east of the bay was half immersed in water and there was no sign of any human movement anywhere. The jetty structure had been split into two with the berthing face isolated from the approach path as a major portion of the trestle had broken and fallen off. The landing practice areas close to Naval Air Station, Campbell Bay, located on the northwest of the bay, were inundated. The transit poles were misaligned and seawater had encroached onto the landing strip with landings being affected during high tide. There was one boat with relief material sent from Port Blair fastened to the berthing face of the broken jetty. We anchored in the bay at a safe distance and our Gemini with divers went to check out the area.



proceeded as an advance party to meet the officials at Campbell Bay and to visit the Coast Guard office there to find out how business was being conducted at the island in the aftermath. As our boats approached the berthing face, we could see the concrete structure swaying and therefore we decided to go to whatever was left of the trestle to secure our SMBs. During our interaction with the Coast Guard survivors, we came to realise the horrific nature of the devastation that befell them.







While Lt Cdr Vivek Prabhu was ascertaining the state of affairs and figuring out ways and means to safely disembark stores, our Captain went on an aerial recce to observe the Indira Point area and the Shastri Nagar village to its south. He came back with photographs that spoke of destruction on a completely unimaginable scale. The entire settlement at Indira Point that housed the lighthouse staff and the local village had been wiped out without a trace. The



lighthouse, which stood on solid dry ground, was now standing isolated at a distance from dry land, surrounded by the sea. Buildings were razed to the ground. Buses and vehicles looked as if they were lifted and thrown away to large distances. No sign of life, whatsoever. The road from Campbell Bay to Indira Point had been washed away at several places. The remaining portion was strewn around with huge trees that had been uprooted.



Once the photos were downloaded in the Survey Chart Room, the surveyors crowded around to see them in shock and awe. A few were visibly upset. Over a year ago in November 2003, they had gone on a picnic to Indira Point where the lighthouse keeper and his staff had given them a very warm welcome and provided them with splendid care and hospitality. My men could not believe that not a single soul had survived the devastation at Indira Point. It was a



burden of sadness they would carry with them for the rest of their lives. Commander Ravi Nautiyal, our Captain, who always remained stoic and balanced, could be seen struggling to keep himself calm. In the days that followed, he led us through several such challenging operations including the post-tsunami surveys of Campbell Bay, Nancowry Harbour and Sombrero Channel.



After conducting a recce survey and having offloaded relief material at Campbell Bay, we set course for Mus, Hut Bay, Car Nicobar, PULLOW-MILLOW and Nancowry Islands to conduct surveys as well as to assist the relief operations spearheaded by the Navy from INS Kardip, assisted by the Indian Air Force. By the time we had completed our tasks at Campbell Bay and headed to



Nancowry, we had only 1.5 diesel alternators (DAs) – the half DA refers



to the EDA – operational out of the 5.5 fitted onboard. Two DAs, F1 & F2, were down because of lube oil contamination and OPDEFs ('operational defects') had already been raised and pending action. We now had only G0, G1 & G2, out of which G0 had load limitations due to high vibrations, so we ran that only for evolutions.



Now, that particular day was bad for us as both G1 and G2 were down. One was a case of burnt stator winding (G1). Therefore, there was nothing that could be done onboard. In the case of the other (G2), the field winding had been found to be broken. Our LO, Lt Cdr A Sreeram, went to the Captain and informed him that we now had only G0 and that both the other DAs had been rendered non-operational requiring OPDEFs to be raised. He also apprised the Captain that there was a rare chance that he could open the G2 DA and attempt repairs to the field

winding by crimping! In the normal course of action, ship's staff were not supposed to open up DAs because of alignment issues. But here, we were caught between the devil and the deep sea! Lt Cdr Sreeram wanted to make that attempt only after OPDEFs were released. The Captain agreed to issue OPDEFs on G1 and G2 DAs. Once they were released, LO and his team set out to open the G2 DA and carried out crimping of the field winding. Once they had completed their attempt, they started the DA praying to all the Gods they knew! The voltage developed on the switchboard and thus we got back one more DA to complete the passage.



At Nancowry, we witnessed devastation of a higher degree. The first sight was the complete geomorphological change that had been wrought on Trinkat Island that acts as a natural guard for Nancowry. The island seemed to have been cut in half with all vegetation in the middle swept away and the middle ground being covered with a thin sheet of sea. A narrow

stream seemed to have formed splitting the island into two parts. At Nancowry, we saw that the Queen of Nancowry's yacht had foundered and her palace encroached by seawater, creating a marshy patch around it with its interior covered with slush. The Kamorta jetty had cracked into two with the weaker section swaying, thus making it unsafe for berthing. The trestle was intact but was submerged in about knee-deep water making it quite precarious to move from the jetty to





the landward end in high water. Water went as far as the chowk beyond Kamorta jetty during high water. Our bird undertook several flights across Nancowry, Trinkat and Katchall islands as several people had been reported missing from Mayo village in Kamorta. I remember our helo rescuing a pregnant lady from Katchall Island who had sought refuge at higher ground and was in her last trimester. Lt Cdr Shashank Gupta and Lt Vikram Banta along with the air crew diver brought her to INS Kardip where an Air Force helicopter transported her to the safety of Port Blair.

While at Nancowry, our Captain undertook several aerial sorties to capture the geomorphological changes that had occurred in the landforms of Nancowry, Katchall, Trinkat and Kamorta. On the last



sortie, the Captain took a very beautiful picture of INS Sandhayak, anchored in Nancowry Bay, its white hull reflecting in the still blue waters of the bay. This



photograph went on to become our most coveted image of the ship. It adorned the screens of our personal computers onboard and also became the face of Sandhayak that year on the ship's greeting card. It has since been found across the Internet too.

Soon after the Captain had landed on deck, the base radio room requested him to come over to the office of the Commanding Officer, INS Kardip, to attend an important phone call from Vizag. He quickly changed and went over from anchorage to Kardip by boat. He returned after about an hour or so, visibly upset. He did not speak but went straightaway to the Captain's chair on the Bridge and sat down, motionless and stoic. We knew everything was not well. We were speculating on the reason when our LOGO broached the subject. It transpired that his wife had hurt herself in a fall on the stairs of their home in Vizag and was hospitalised at INHS Kalyani with fractures to her leg. This had happened a couple of days ago and their children were being looked after by their neighbours. We had left Vizag about a month ago and had not returned to home port since then.



Very soon, we received orders to return to Vizag. On our voyage back home, we embarked a contingent of BSF personnel who had been mobilised by the Ministry of Home Affairs (MoHA) to provide rescue and relief support in Nancowry. For the soldiers, it was a novel experience to be





sailing onboard an Indian Navy ship. After they disembarked at Port Blair, we set our destination to Vizag, where we entered harbour on 26 January 2005, coinciding with Republic Day.

After a well-deserved break where the ship's company spent some meaningful time with their families, we were tasked with new high-priority hydrographic instructions that were aimed at determining the changes in water depths and coastline in key harbours and bays in the Nicobarese islands. Our new tasks were to resurvey the areas of Campbell Bay, Nancowry, Mus, Sawai Bay and Hut Bay harbours and record the changes that appeared to have happened to the landforms so as to publish new nautical charts.



We sailed out from Vizag on 19/20 February 2005 with our hands full of challenging tasks and headed first to Campbell Bay, followed by Nancowry Islands and Sombrero Channel. Our Flight Commander had changed. Lt Cdr Shashank Gupta had left ship on transfer and Lt Cdr Chirag Gupta had joined onboard. By the time we completed our surveys, we could confirm beyond any doubt that the water depths at Campbell Bay had increased by 1.51 m and at Kamorta/Nancowry by 1.34 m. The coastlines had changed drastically, especially on the east-

facing lands, with the high-water line now extending almost about 100 m inwards at places, thus requiring the relevant navigational charts to be redrawn. We undertook extensive helo coast-lining using the Kinematic 'On-The-Fly' technique, which was the only feasible option as a walk-over was considered too risky given the hostile terrain. I remember clocking as many flying hours as our pilots as in most helo coast-lining sorties, I was onboard the bird delineating the coastline from up in the air. We undertook walk-overs only at critical areas such as ports and harbours where large-scale charts were required to be produced.

During the survey operations, we had made a couple of operational turnarounds (OTRs) to Port Blair. As is customary for all survey ships, the passage planning was always done so that the arrival at survey grounds occurred at first daylight. Being an ageing ship, our primitive Anschutz 4S gyro was always prone to problems. It was expected that the gyro might topple at any time, without any warning. On completion of one such OTR, the ship was preparing to leave harbour, returning to survey grounds in the Nicobar Islands. Just as we were ready to leave, as luck would have it, the gyro toppled. The Captain did not want to lose any daylight and he refused to let LO have sufficient time to let the gyro settle down. In an unexpected move, he asked the NO at that time, Lt Prachit Mangrulkar, to leave harbour with the aid of the ship's magnetic compass. This was a perfect alternative as far as the Captain was concerned, but much to his chagrin, the NO wasn't quite prepared for this last-



minute change. The NO was well aware that the ship's magnetic compass was horribly erratic. He barely had time to recalculate his leaving harbour course offsets, let alone have the chance to speak up. All he could do was to give meaningful looks to the LO and pilot the ship out of the channel on an ancient magnetic compass. The gyro was settled after leaving harbour and then on steady course for half an hour by quick settling. By the time we were out in the clear, the NO was quite relieved that the rest of the passage could be undertaken on the ship's gyro.

The exposure to the tsunami itself and later to the several relief and rescue missions that INS Sandhayak undertook in the Andaman and Nicobar Islands made my fellow shipmates and me aware of the brevity of life as such. We witnessed first-hand the massive devastation that erased lives, material and structures. The enormity of the disaster weighed us down every moment and each day we spent in the disaster grounds. As officers, we were also awestruck at the selflessness of our men and the lengths to which they went without ever considering their own safety and comfort. It was a privilege to lead them in those challenging times, and under the Navy's efforts. The exposure only made us stronger in body and mind and better human beings. Personally, I consider my tenure onboard Sandhayak one of the most important learning curves in my life.

*(Note: Ranks and appointments of officers and men used here are as of the period of reference of this memoir. The author wishes to thank the officers and men of INS Sandhayak who served onboard during 2004-05 for their valuable inputs during the making of this memoir.)*

### ABOUT THE AUTHOR

*Commander Ashish Srinivasan, MRICS, was commissioned into the hydrographic cadre of the executive branch of the Indian Navy as a short-service commissioned officer on 14 September 1996. He served as WKO and SHS on INS Sutlej, INS Sandhayak, INS Darshak and as Executive Officer of INS Sarvekshak. On completion of his afloat tenures, he served as Joint Director in the Naval Academy Project, Ezhimala, until his release on 14 September 2010. He underwent the Long Hydrographic Specialist Officer's Course at the National Hydrographic School, Goa, in 2003-04. The officer is an alumnus of the Indian Institute of Management, Bengaluru. Upon release from active service, he continues to pursue a career in offshore surveying and also has several technical papers to his credit. He was inducted into the Royal Institute of Chartered Surveyors, UK, as a full professional Member in 2018, becoming the first Indian hydrographer to be so honoured. He currently works in Abu Dhabi for the Abu Dhabi National Oil Company (ADNOC) for Offshore Oil and Gas Operations as a Staff Hydrographer.*





## NOSTALGIA

### THE CUSTOM OF CEREMONIALS

By Vice Admiral Pradeep Kaushiva (Retd)

It is customary in the Indian Navy for command appointees to exchange courtesy calls among themselves. So, on assuming command, one makes a signal, “Request time convenient to call on you”, to seniors, and juniors make similar signals likewise. The call on may be formal or informal, entirely at the discretion of the senior officer, and every call is returned at the earliest opportunity. If the response to the signal seeking the convenience is date, time and place, the call on would be a formal one with full naval ceremonials. Otherwise, the signal response would be “Consider calls paid and returned. Would be delighted to see you informally at ... (time) on .... (date) at ... (place)”. As a general practice, the calls exchanged between seniors and juniors in direct chain of command are formal and with others are normally informal. This, however, is not binding.

So, when I took over command of the Eastern Fleet of the Indian Navy on 8 October 2001, I made an appropriate signal to my C-in-C, and all commanding officers in Visakhapatnam made similar signals to me. After formally calling on my C-in-C and him returning the call, I sequentially gave time slots to the Commanding Officers of the Fleet ships under me, in order of their seniority, to call on me formally in ceremonial dress wearing full medals and swords; received them on my Flagship with the Guard paraded and Band in attendance; and thereafter returned their calls. A similar procedure was followed with all other Commanding Officers in station thereafter, albeit informally, i.e. in working dress without Guard and Band – with one exception.

The exception was the Commanding Officer of Indian Naval Hospital Ship Kalyani, who was given a date, time and name of the Flagship. As expected, Staff Officer to CO Kalyani rang up my staff to politely suggest that there had probably been a mistake. As my staff had been fully briefed in anticipation, they were able to confirm directly that there had been no mistake and the call on was indeed intended to be a formal one with full naval ceremonials.





At the appointed hour on the due date, I received Surgeon Captain Mrs Nirmala Kannan, VSM, at the gangway on my Flagship and escorted her to the ship's helicopter deck where the Guard and Band were paraded. Once there, I told her I would be very happy if she inspected the Guard. After the full ceremonial procedure, we repaired to my cabin. There, over a chilled glass of tender coconut water, I asked her if she had been surprised at being given a formal call on instead of the more common informal one. She readily admitted to having been taken completely by surprise at first, whereafter the full homework was done by her staff to get fully genned up on all details of the procedure.

I took great pleasure in explaining to her my reasons for having done so. First, I wanted to, within the boundaries of service customs, and indeed with them as tools at my disposal, establish the unity of command function in that one Commanding Officer is no different from another. Command responsibilities and functions remain constant across the spectrum of branches, specialisations and expertise or, for that matter, afloat, ashore, operational, training or administrative. Second, more than a decade after the induction of women in the service, it was only a matter of time before they too would rise to command levels. So, even if it was through a lady medical officer, I wanted to establish in full visibility my own conviction of gender neutrality of the command function, professional ability being the only rightful determinant. And, third, if there was anything spectacular or even futuristic trendsetting in the event, I wanted to be the one doing so.

If Nirmala felt good about the experience, I invited her to feel free to talk or write about it as she went along her own very distinguished career. I have no idea whether she did so but looking back two decades on, I still feel it was not a bad idea after all. I recently sought the reflections of Surg RAdm (Retd) Nirmala Kannan on the event and was gratified to learn that she felt honoured, considered it a milestone moment and fondly remembered most of the details mentioned by me.

#### ABOUT THE AUTHOR

*An alumnus of the National Defence Academy, Vice Admiral Pradeep Kaushiva was commissioned in the executive branch of the Indian Navy and specialised in communications and electronic warfare. He holds an MSc (telecom) degree and is a Fellow of the Institution of Electronics and Telecommunication Engineers. He commanded four ships and was Fleet Communications Officer, Western Fleet, Fleet Operations Officer, Eastern Fleet, Director Naval Signals & Electronic Warfare and Director Naval Operations at Naval Headquarters. After promotion to the flag rank, he has been Assistant Chief of Naval Staff (Information Warfare and Operations); Deputy Commandant and Chief Instructor, National Defence Academy; Flag Officer Commanding Eastern Fleet; and Chief of Staff, Southern Naval Command. He retired as Commandant of the National Defence College, New Delhi. After retirement, he was the Founder-Chairman of the Oceans Beyond Piracy - India Working Group and the Director, National Maritime Foundation, New Delhi.*



## WHEN I NEARLY DIDN'T MAKE IT TO THE WAR

By Commodore Mediona Bhada (Retd)

Events trigger memories, some of which bring a smile to your face. And that's precisely what happened during the recent live webcast of the show, *1971 War – Indian Navy's Finest Hour*. A casual query by Cmde Srikanth Kesnur brought back a flood of memories of an innocuous event on board Vikrant, two score and 10 years ago. An event that nearly prevented me from actively participating in the war.



But this needs a short preamble to correctly appreciate the situation I had landed myself in, just a few hours before we were to go to war.

I had joined the NDA in 1956 with an unperceivable, undeclared physical disability. I was suffering from a recurring dislocation of my left shoulder. This happened while in school and continues to plague me to this day. I had, however, mastered the art of setting it right within a few excruciatingly painful seconds. And it is with this 'sleight of shoulder' that I managed to go through my entire training at the NDA and subsequently in the Navy. Not that it went unnoticed. All my colleagues in the NDA and subsequently throughout my service career were aware of my physical drawback and I must admit, in praise of them all, none ever thought of bringing it to the notice of the authorities. Yes, I had many harrowing experiences during physical training, swimming, horse riding and boxing. I still remember the boxing bout I had with my colleague Shivpuri. In the middle of the bout, I dislocated my shoulder and moved back and so did Shiv as he realised what had happened. Within a few seconds, it was 'box on', with me turning southpaw, to the astonishment of the referee.

Just a few days before the war, INS Vikrant, along with her escorts, was anchored off Port Cornwallis in North Andaman Islands, eagerly awaiting orders for the commencement of hostilities. And that's when it all happened. I dislocated my left shoulder during a friendly brawl with my fellow squadron mate at the bar late one evening. Fortunately, as was my wont, I set it right and it was all back to normal. However, this discomfiture was witnessed by the new Air Force doctor, Flt Lt Nair, sitting in a corner. He immediately brought this incident to the notice of his superior, Surg Cdr Christian, the ship's Principal Medical Officer (PMO), who summoned me to his cabin that very evening. I had no



option but to admit that I had dislocated my left shoulder and tried to convince him that it was an old defect and had thus far not affected my performance in the cockpit or outside it in any way. I even brought it to his notice that this had happened earlier and that I had been cleared to fly by the senior advisor in surgery at INS Asvini. He remained unconvinced and was adamant on grounding me.

Thus began my tryst with destiny.

It was quite late in the evening when I knocked on the cabin door of my Squadron Commander, Cdr Santosh Kumar Gupta, affectionately called Gigi, and apprised him of what had transpired. He seemed worried, not because I was to be 'grounded' but because he would be deprived of a fully operational pilot just a few hours before the war was to commence, with absolutely no hope of getting a replacement at this late stage in the middle of the Bay of Bengal. He had only 15 fully operational pilots on board and could ill afford to lose one of them. Cdr Grewal (Garry), the Cdr (Air) responsible for all flying operations onboard, was informed and the four of us trooped up to the doc's cabin. Regrettably, all our pleading and cajoling could not move him. I was reminded of the line from Omar Khayyam's *Rubaiyat*: "The moving finger writes and having writ moves on, nor all thy Piety nor wit shall lure it back to cancel half a line."

He stuck to his earlier decision. The panic button had now been pressed. It was late at night but the situation warranted the Captain's intervention. Capt Swaraj Prakash was woken up and apprised of the serious situation but even his request to the doc to temporarily allow me to fly during the period of the operations did not move him. Finally, RAdm S H Sarma, Fleet Commander and the officer in tactical command of all the naval operations in the Bay, who was flying his flag onboard Vikrant, was approached. The ramifications of this decision by the ship's PMO on the overall operational capability of the Naval Fleet and the aircraft carrier in particular were highlighted by Capt Prakash. The Admiral then took the doc aside and had a long chat with him at the end of which he agreed to clear me to fly, only for the duration of the war and on the explicit understanding that I would have myself appropriately treated at the first opportunity thereafter. He also wanted to be convinced that none of my actions in the cockpit would cause a dislocation of my shoulder. The next morning, I was strapped in the cockpit of the Seahawk aircraft in his presence and made to perform all the movements a pilot would be required to do, under various situations. The PMO was convinced and I was finally cleared to fly during the operations.

It was just a few hours later that the Fleet received orders to weigh anchor and proceed to the area of operations. I was fortunate to be included in the first wave of four aircraft, led by our Squadron Commander Gigi Gupta, for an attack on Cox's Bazar. I flew many sorties thereafter, including





Chittagong Harbour. Soon after the war, the squadron returned to Dabolim, Goa, our shore base. In the euphoria of the success of the war, all promises of getting myself treated for the recurring dislocation of my shoulder were forgotten and I continue to live with my 'Achilles heel' even after retirement.

## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

*Commodore Mediona Bhada, an alumnus of the National Defence Academy, was commissioned in the Indian Navy in 1962. A fighter pilot by profession, he participated in the 1971 Bangladesh Operations as a pilot in INAS 300 from INS Vikrant. He was a flying instructor at the Air Force Flying Academy and also served on the faculty of the Defence Services Staff College in Wellington. He has commanded a naval air squadron and two naval air stations and was Director Naval Air Staff at NHQ. He has also commanded two Indian naval warships. He retired from the Navy on superannuation in 1994. On retirement, he joined the corporate world and held multifarious senior assignments, including director of a private air taxi operator, CEO of a chain of hotels and head of administration of a group company.*

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## NOSTALGIA

### MYSORE MUSINGS

By Commodore Neeraj Joshi (Retd)

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This is an ode to the 22<sup>nd</sup> Integrated Course to commemorate the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of its commissioning, on 1 July 2022

Brought together, that momentous day  
on rusty old Mysore;  
They stumbled, fell got up again,  
with lusty wills to soar!

Greeted on arrival by C Singh and Arraiya  
with pizzazz and verve;  
The ship's barber's close katori cut  
though quickly hit a raw nerve!

Some simpletons, some smarties,  
some good, bad, ugly and the CAT;  
Settled quickly to the humdrum of  
their port and starboard chest flat!

ID numbers 'one' to '87',  
allotted as per line;  
'88' naturally fell to the last,  
Their dear old canine!

Adding much to the mirth and laughter,  
Cadet Kaul then joined from shore;  
Being late cooked his bacon,  
for '88' was taken!

Kaul's ID they then allotted,  
at '89' he slotted;  
Though great and very clever,  
He was '89' forever!



Days, weeks and months just melted,  
they hardly realised;  
Service subjects were tough,  
or so they surmised!

They grappled with the gyro,  
sails, anchor and the sheet;  
Stumbled, fell and got up,  
on baby nautical feet!

And lo! Six months had flown by,  
leaving memories galore;  
A glimpse below gives an idea,  
of their unfolding lore!

French leave ashore, swollen  
arms and furore;  
Their wavering gait,  
under 6-inch shell weight;  
Slept under 'B' gun, no fun  
did they shun!

Both watches fell, no one could barge;  
Some worthies though, still at large!  
Plungers went down, chipping hammers out;  
Be done with it, went up the shout!

Their chores were really draining,  
they did 'em without complaining;  
The worst of the lot, they really loathed,  
was (un) Holy Stoning!

Clean ship and Brasso polish,  
they did, and they were brisk!  
Being slammed by fearsome 'Chopsy' (RIP Sir!),  
Was forever a risk!

And who can ever forget, Great 'Chaaai Haaai' Admiral Awati;  
what joie de vivre, what fateful tryst,  
what a role model... top of their list!  
(RIP Sir! They broke the mould with you.)

Packed off later on Amba, for sailing waters deep;  
pristine beaches, hillside above, of lovely Anjadip!  
They all did lug a few cannons, from Dighu to Hari Menons!  
Restoring the war memorial, decaying and in the dumps,  
was truly satisfying, and gave them all goosebumps!





When jobs had all been done, 'twas time to have some fun;  
campfires lit and lasted long, all joined in Nanndu's lilting song!  
(RIP buddy! You are missed each day.)

Unbathed and little bit dirty, most were even unshaven;  
Did that but really matter, for them it was just heaven!  
The rainbow shores of Male,  
Which hungrily they lapped;  
At Sri Lanka's Colombo,  
their adventures just capped!

Mysore vignettes won't beam,  
sans gratitude to their training team;  
who trained, groomed and polished them,  
until the very end;  
But who, in turn, this perky lot;  
just drove around the bend!

Difficult to recount each memory,  
may this much serve as a link;  
Take a moment, try to recall,  
they'll flood back in a blink!

#### ABOUT THE AUTHOR

*Commodore Neeraj Joshi (Retd) was commissioned into the executive branch of the Indian Navy in 1982. Given the command of a pocket sized TRV A-71 when he had just become a lieutenant, and thereafter sea commands in every rank, he thinks of himself as an example of the Navy's patience and readiness to invest in HR. He also commanded IN ships Ajay, Himgiri and Brahmaputra and the Killer Squadron. He had the opportunity to learn from the brightest young minds during his tenures as Directing Staff at the National Defence Academy and Defence Services Staff College (Wellington), where his learning curve continued as HOTT and SI in subsequent outings. He learned the ropes of practical staff work as CPLO at HQWNC, and as JDSR and DSR at NHQ. To round off his naval experience, he was entrusted with the depot ship INS Angre, before being called in to lead the Navy's intelligence efforts as PDNI. A bibliophile and a great believer in human values and leadership, he has tried to lead by example and is grateful to the Navy for the prodigious teams and the people he had the privilege of serving alongside. At present, he is indulging his passions of reading, physical fitness and writing. He can be contacted at neeraj60joe@gmail.com.*





## NOSTALGIA

### 14 YEARS, 14 STEPS, 14 MONTHS

By Captain Raghu Nair

---

**Y**ou could have knocked me over with a feather when I heard that I would be taking over as Commanding Officer of INS Kirpan. My joy knew no bounds, my heart raced a bit, and the news also served to inflate my ego – just a wee bit. These emotions flowed not just from the privilege of being selected to command a great ship but also from events of over a decade ago. Kirpan had accounted for most of my non-specialist time in the Navy – a rather long stint as a young Lieutenant – with the attendant memories that one creates. As we got married during that tenure, Kirpan was also the first ship that my 'army brat' wife saw, leaving an indelible imprint in her landlubber heart and mind as well. It was apt, then, that my chest was swelling with pride on receiving the news – and I eagerly got onto the telephone with the wife to tell her the news (maybe boast a mite too).

My bubble, however, was burst with surgical precision by my rather sensible and no-nonsense better half. While congratulating me for the appointment, she queried in mock innocence: So it took 14 years to climb 14 steps, from the JOM (Junior Officers' Mess) to the Captain's cabin? A reality check, if I ever experienced one, which swiftly got me back to terra firma with a distinct thud, and echoes of my ego shattering reverberated for quite some time.

Thus, it was with a great amount of humility to temper my excitement that I took over the fine old lady in 2016, just a few days after she completed 25 glorious years in service. The feeling was, frankly, unparalleled. Stepping into that cabin – bearing a simple plate (yet with enormous meaning) that read quite simply 'Captain' – sitting on that somewhat formidable looking chair, my illustrious predecessors peering down at me from framed hand-sketched caricatures on the bulkhead: Expectantly? Conspiratorially? Benevolently? I guess it depended on the time of the day and the matter at hand.



Then, of course, the question – was I good enough for this? Memories of my own Captains on Kirpan from over a decade ago came rushing back. The first, a tall, stern looking Sikh, whose piercing gaze could turn water to ice, but softened frequently (along with a wry chuckle) to reflect a subtle understated sense of humour. The second, an equally tall and imposing figure with the most jovial outlook I had ever come across – he had a witty one-liner ready for every occasion, even when (particularly when) stress would be running high at sea. The third, once again a tall (is it a prerequisite for Kirpan?) and impressive personality brimming with energy and josh and a self-effacing smile for all occasions. To my mind, these were titans and I a mere mortal having the temerity to think I could fill their extra-large shoes. Thankfully, the Navy gave me a team that was the stuff of dreams and also reflected the 'happy and lucky spirit' of Kirpan. Hopefully, I lived up to the expectations of the stern faces in the caricatures and my team.

Fast forward a few years, I stood on a jetty in Visakhapatnam, a lump in my throat, a little heaviness in my heart, and a deep sense of nostalgia. A farewell ceremony for Kirpan. In the gathering I saw some of the towering stalwarts who had been at the helm of Kirpan, some serving, many retired, including the jovial boss (still witty), still a treasure trove of one-liners. Each one of them still quite clearly a giant to me. But as the colours were hauled down, there came a brief moment when I felt a sense of kinship and equality with them – all of us misty eyed – thinking back to the honour Kirpan bestowed upon us, bidding farewell to one of the best parts of our respective lives; frankly, a large slice of my life. For each of us, cherished memories, exciting adventures, deep satisfaction and eternal gratitude coming to the fore in that everlasting moment.

Maybe 14 is my lucky number as, while it took me 14 years to climb 14 steps to the Captain's cabin, I was also fortunate to command Kirpan for 14 months.

#### ABOUT THE AUTHOR

*Captain Raghu R Nair is an alumnus of the 54 Naval Academy Course, 68 Staff Course, Defence Services Staff College, and Naval War College, USA. As a non-specialist, he served on INS Tir, Sharabh and Kirpan. As a long navigation and direction specialist, he served on INS Delhi, Tabar, Talwar and Mysore, as well as an instructor at ND School. He has commanded INS Veer, Kirpan and Khukri. His staff appointments include IHQ MoD (N) - DNO/DSCT, CSO (CS)/ENC, Training Captain/INS Chilka, Directing Staff/DSSC, as well as Adviser to the United Nations Mission in Somalia.*

**Note: INS Kirpan is awaiting further instructions while she continues to operate in the Eastern Fleet.**





## NOSTALGIA

# THE MYSTERY BEHIND THE PAINTING!

By Captain Raj Mohindra (Retd)

**O**n 17 June 2022, Sunil Ahluwalia received a mysterious forwarded email from the Director of the Baltimore International Seafarers Centre.

The email was from a Ms Kate Braun, Curator (Archives) at the National Museum of the Royal Navy in Portsmouth, England: *I am trying to contact one of your board members on behalf of The National*

*Museum of the Royal Navy in Portsmouth, England. We are interested in communicating with a Mr. Sunil C Ahluwalia about his presumed relation Commander Suresh Chandra Ahluwalia. I made the link through an obituary for Commander Ahluwalia which led me to the Baltimore Seafarers Institution and then Mr. Ahluwalia. We have a painting in our collection of a Sub Lieutenant Ahluwalia of the Indian Navy, seated at a desk, painted by an I A Chowdhury in 1955. As part of some research we are conducting on the painting we found in the Navy List for 1955 an acting Sub Lieutenant Suresh Chandra Ahluwalia (and again in 1958 as a Lieutenant) of the Royal Indian Navy. This could be a long shot, but we wondered if the man in the painting was the late Commander Suresh Chandra Ahluwalia and we were hoping that Mr. Ahluwalia could confirm this one way or another. If you could pass this on Mr. Ahluwalia I would be extremely grateful.*

It is worth mentioning here that Sunil is on the Board of the Baltimore International Seafarers Center in Baltimore, Maryland, USA, and his father, the late Commander Suresh Chandra Ahluwalia, was a volunteer member in this organisation for nearly seven years while he lived in Baltimore, until his passing in November 2017.

Sunil felt the painting had a definite likeness to his father. He contacted his brother Captain Nikhil Chandra Ahluwalia, a resident of Dubai (Nikhil is a captain in the Merchant Navy), who has maintained close contacts with his father's term mates and he forwarded the email and the picture of the painting received from Ms Braun to them. Their responses are given below:

**Capt Raj Mohindra:** “Full marks to Ms Braun for her brilliant research. All details are correct except a minor one that the Royal Indian Navy should read Indian Navy. Inam Chowdhury was a pilot of the 310 Alize Squadron that was working up at Hyres, a French naval base south of Toulon. Unfortunately, Inam fell seriously ill and was admitted to a French naval hospital in Toulon, where



he died of natural causes in 1961. He was buried in France. Inam was a much admired and daring pilot. Also, after passing out from the Joint Services Wing, National Defence Academy, Dehradun, in 1951, the naval cadets were sent to the UK for further training, which started from the Royal Naval College, Dartmouth. This painting was possibly done in Portsmouth where Suresh Ahluwalia and his term mates I A Chowdhury, M P Singh and R N Ghosh were doing their Subs courses in 1955."

**Cdr M P Singh:** "Inam was fond of painting. I was close to him and joined Inam and his girlfriend Rezia for a holiday in Ireland. Suresh later helped Rezia in obtaining a pension as a naval wife."

**Capt R N Ghosh:** "It is likely that the painting was done at the Royal Naval College, Greenwich, where Inam used to attend art classes. We had spent a lot of time together prior to commissioning of the squadrons. He was an outstanding aviator."

Sunil and Nikhil forwarded a few photographs of their father from the family album. On 5 July 2022, Ms Braun responded back to them. Extracts: *Everyone at the museum is so excited you have confirmed that the man in the painting is indeed your father and to learn of his connection to the artist Inam Chowdhury. To give you a bit more background – the painting was donated to the museum from the Royal Navy in 1985 (it had possibly been on display in one of their buildings up until then). Other than this, we unfortunately know very little about it. So, the fact you think it could have been painted in Portsmouth has given us a possible new lead! We had recently re-discovered the painting again when embarking on a community-led research project by a Group called Chat Over Chai. The Group, working alongside us and as well as members of the Royal Navy, wanted to do a bit more research on the painting with a view to displaying it in the museum's galleries. Since then, they have also been producing a short film with their thoughts and feelings around it. Many of them felt that your father reminded them of their own male relatives and the mystery of the painting has meant that they have formed a strong connection to it.*

This article does scarce justice to the brilliant investigative work done by Ms Jo Valentine, Community Producer, Ms Braun, and the voluntary group Chat Over Chai assisted by Mr Graham from the Royal Navy, for production of the film. Their minute research led to the discovery of the painting that had been lying around at some unknown destination from 1955 onwards and then at the Royal Navy Museum Gallery at Portsmouth since 1985. It was mislabelled. The labels had also faded over time. One researcher observed the name 'Ahluwalia'. Her research led to the conclusion that the Ahluwalias fought for the Mughal Army and later for the British Army but were not associated with the Navy! The letters RIN alongside Lieutenant Ahluwalia's name, however, hinted that he belonged to the Royal Indian Navy. A quick reference to the Navy list (perhaps through the Admiralty) showed the name of one Sub Lieutenant S C Ahluwalia in 1955 and later as Lieutenant S C Ahluwalia. Rezia, the late Inam's wife who could have shed some light on the painting, settled down in Bangladesh after his death. We knew that Inam's twin brother Murad, a noted architect, had settled down in Noida, Uttar Pradesh. I sent my investigator to Murad's address where he was told that Murad had



passed away in January 2022 but he was able to provide the telephone number of Murad's wife Mrs Meena Chowdhury. I contacted Mrs Chowdhury who told me she had been out of touch with Rezia for the past two decades or so. Mr Graham of the Royal Navy Diversity and Inclusion Team was convinced of the naval background of the painting's subject as the title, *Appreciating the Situation*, is "a naval term that refers to ultimately understanding where you are within navigation as to where you think you are". Mr David of the group was responsible for producing the excellent film, *The Mystery Behind the Painting* ([www.youtube.com/watch?v=10lxiRqAmBM](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=10lxiRqAmBM)). Ms Braun wrote to Sunil and Nikhil that the 28 July 2022 launch of the film was a huge success. A member of the group, Ms Allison, even created a postcard that features the painting with two other artefacts being explored as a part of the project – an Indian propaganda poster and HMS Trincomalee, an Indian built ship.



*The postcard showing Sub Lt Ahluwalia with two other artefacts was inspired by a member of the Chat Over Chai group*

Commander Suresh Ahluwalia had a bright future and would have gone far in the Navy had he not taken premature retirement on medical grounds. He was married to Patricia, a captain in the Army Medical Corps, and later a voluntary worker in a social service organisation. I had once asked Suresh about his duties at the Baltimore Seafarer Centre and he had replied: "I am a volunteer bus driver and also man the centre. I collect the seamen from ships on the quayside and drop them back after their visit to the centre and malls around the city! On occasion, I'm intrigued when they offer me tips!"

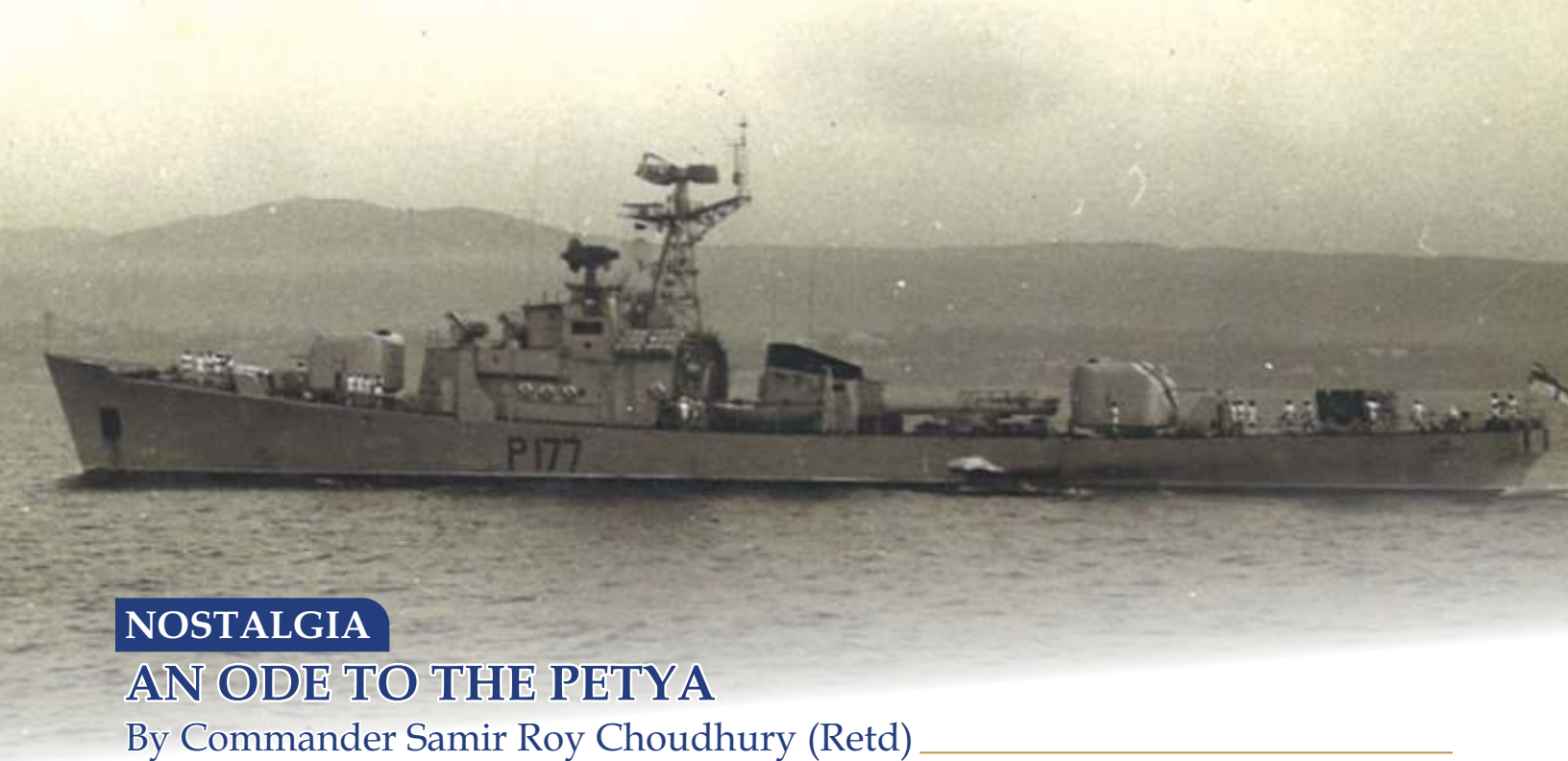
An impressive ceremony was held in end July 2022 at the National Museum of the Royal Navy in Portsmouth to unveil the painting. Little did Inam Chowdhury know that, one day, his painting of Suresh Ahluwalia would be displayed in the prestigious art gallery of the Royal Navy at Portsmouth, an honour for any artist!

### ABOUT THE AUTHOR

*Captain Raj Mohindra retired voluntarily in 1977. His naval appointments include Staff Officer to FOC-in-C (W), SO to CNS, Deputy Naval Advisor, the High Commission of India, London, and Cdr (S) INS Vikrant. As General Manager (Commercial), Shipping Corporation of India, he ran the SCI's tanker fleet during the 1980-88 Iran-Iraq War and the 1990-91 Iraq-Kuwait War. Subsequently, he served as Chief Executive of Indian Express, Mumbai. He worked for 14 years for the UWC movement and established the Mahindra UWC as its founding Chief Executive and Director. Leaving MUWCI in 1999, he set up Raj Mohindra Consultants Pvt Ltd, helping to establish some of the nation's top international schools, including the Dhirubai Ambani International School. In 2016, he won a Lifetime Achievement in Education Leadership Award and was inducted into the EW Hall of Fame of Indian Education.*







## NOSTALGIA

### AN ODE TO THE PETYA

By Commander Samir Roy Choudhury (Retd)

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**N**ow that the Petya-class ships have sailed into the sunset, one is impelled to write about them. With the advent of the sixth decade of the last century, after more than two decades of Independence, the Indian Government tilted towards the Soviet Union for defence equipment and the Army, Navy and Air Force started boosting their individual inventories. Thus came the Petya class, Kilo-class submarines, submarine mother ship (Amba), deep diving vessel (Nistar) and AK boats for the Navy.

The Petyas were a class of ship the Indian Navy had never handled till they were procured. The Navy was used to cruisers, ASW frigates, AA frigates and destroyers, all in separate groups and classes and roles. The Petyas had an all-in-one identity: anti-aircraft, anti-submarine, fast attack, search and rescue (SAR), all combined.

Having served twice on two different Petyas on two different occasions under two separate Flags, these ships are very close to my heart. Before joining a Petya-class corvette, I had served on INS Betwa, Type 41 Leopard-class frigate (launched in 1959). The difference in sensors and weapons between the two classes of ships was astounding. The Petya-class ships were a masterpiece of warship design, very compact and designed to deliver a punch and operate in squadrons as force multipliers. They were armed to the teeth. No more than 90 m in length and 9 m wide with 1,000 tonne displacement, these ships packed a punch of weapons and sensors.

With the combination of a diesel and two gas turbine engines, these ships could go up to 28/29 knots, unheard of in those days. Also because of the Povorots (active rudders), they had a high degree of manoeuvrability even at low speeds in harbour, and the ship could be rotated like a toy around an



axis. Because of power steering, the steering wheel was only about 4 inches in diameter compared to over 30 inches in other ships. Of course, there was a secondary conning station below deck with the standard wheel should the power steering fail (which I never came across except during exercises). Electrical power was provided by a 400 kw, 200 kw and 100 kw generator, each with its own prime movers. This equipment was so standardised that these prime movers were also used in tractors and agricultural machines in the Soviet Union.

Starting with their anti-air role, for surveillance and detection these ships had an 'S' band radar whose antenna could be physically tilted up and down and locked, so that the radar coverage could be shifted in the vertical plane. Remember, these ships were to operate in squadrons (mostly of five ships); hence, if the antennae inclination were set from the lowest and increasingly upwards; for example, instead of getting a 25° beam, the squadron could get a 35° beam to detect both high and low flying aircraft. In those days, when beam splitting and solid-state radars were not in vogue, this offered a tremendous tactical advantage. For target tracking, there was a rotating scan radar that could lock on to targets beyond visual range and follow. This was backed by two 76-mm gun turrets (two guns each) and two twin-turret 30-mm guns with very high firing rates.

For the anti-submarine role, there were three torpedo tubes for 21-inch torpedoes (electric and steam) and four rocket launchers to take care of any adversary that planned to sneak in under the surface. There were sonars for underwater target search/detection and tracking. The search sonar staves were fixed with a 360° view. The tracking sonar staves could be tilted and rotated so that they could lock on to the target and follow. The sonar sensors were fitted inside a hull outfit, located under the keel, which had 36 tonne of fresh water for emergency use. This was a new design where underwater sensors were not required to be lowered and raised and the ship also had an additional water bank.

The computers for future position calculations of air, surface and subsurface targets were all 'mechanical' and a marvel of design. There were 'problems' to set and 'answers' to get for 'tuning' them and it was a pleasure to do that job. For optimum exploitation of the sonars, an expert team was formed by Eastern Naval Command Headquarters with officers drawn from the Staff, Fleet and Petya School. The findings and recommendations of this team were documented in Kamorta Sonar Evaluation Team (KSET) pamphlets.

For navigation, the ships had an all-purpose 'X' band radar whose data fed into a number of displays. A non-strategic design feature, but a very important one, was that all the wood used in the ship was treated so it was fireproof, as were the curtains used, reducing the chances of fire even after a hit. All cabins, except for the Commanding Officer's, had two or more bunks. The focus was on utilising space for housing sensors and machinery, not physical comfort. The cabins had foldable washbasins



and tables. There was only one head and shower. The CO was requested to keep his slippers outside when he was in his cabin but otherwise it was free for all! The dining table in the officers' wardroom doubled up as an operating table in case of medical emergencies at sea and hence had operating lights fitted on the deck head above. Though modified to cater to the Indian needs of chapattis and deep frying, the ship's galley was all electric. Sailors' accommodation had dormitory bunks. In the Soviet version, there was always a cabin for a 'Political Officer', who reported directly to the Politburo. In the Indian ships, this cabin was the Supply Officer's office.

In the Soviet Union, when the Petyas returned to harbour, all crew left the ship and went to their shore accommodation as the ship's accommodation was not meant for overnight stay in harbour. Thus, before any sailing, the crew had to come and ensure all the equipment was in working condition. Hence, there was a system of 'Sea and Action' activity before any sailing. This was a 45-minute ritual where all equipment, sensors and weapons were switched on and operated as per drill to check that everything was in working order. This was conducted either by the Navigating Officer or EXO from the bridge. The last of the drill was 'Start Povorots' for checking the Povorots, both directed outboard; the first to be switched on was the one away from the jetty. This is because if the jetty side Povorot was started first, the ship's stern would swing outwards and the gangplank (as the gangway would have been removed for sailing) would be most likely to fall in water. This was always a tricky problem as the high-power Povorots were electric motor-driven and while starting, the motor would often trip the first time owing to the very high starting current. So, the Electrical Officer was always on his toes at this time in the MCR (machinery control room).

During sailing when the ships were not participating in exercises, SAR or other duties, the FUT-B (tracking radar) antenna platform was a good place for a clear view of the ocean far ahead. This was also a preferred site for HoDs, when they were not attending to other duties, to brainstorm about improvement of performance of weapons, sensors, machineries and other equipment.

The stability of these ships was much better than that of ships of western design, especially in bad sea states. They could withstand very high degrees of roll and pitch. However, the hull needed regular upkeep as the steel was thinner to get lower weight and hence higher speeds. In fact, the amount of weapons and sensors on this 1,000-tonne ship was much greater than what was available in the Navy's 2,200-tonne Leander-class frigates at the time.

The Navy had a total of 10 Petyas at one time. Five were in Visakhapatnam (the Kamorta class) and five in Mumbai (the Arnala class). The first of the Petyas was commissioned in November 1968 (Kamorta) and the last in December 1974 (Amini). The Ks – Kamorta, Kadmatt, Kiltan, Kavaratti and Katchall – were known as the 31 PVS (Patrol Vessel Squadron) and the As (Arnala, Androth,





Anjadip, Andaman and Amini) were known as the 32 PVS. All these ships were decommissioned between 1986 and 2003 after providing great support to the Navy for well over three-and-a-half decades. Two of the ships took part in the Western Sector in the 1971 war, towing and escorting missile boats, and great men have served on these ships.

All considered, the Petya experience is a unique one. As everyone lived in close quarters, a very close bond developed between officers and men, which remains despite the passage of time. While the old Petyas have sailed into the sunset, their names remain alive in the new Project 28 class of ships: Kamorta, Kadmatt, Kiltan and Kavaratti. Indigenously built and commissioned between 2014 and 2020, they are doing the Indian Navy proud!

#### ABOUT THE AUTHOR

*Commander Samir Roy Choudhury joined the Indian Navy in July 1968 as a technical graduate in the Electrical Branch under the University Entry Scheme. He completed his Special Weapons Course from IAT, Pune, in 1971 and did sea tenures on both Western and Eastern Fleet ships, including Kavaratti and Katchall. He also did shore appointments in HQENC, ND(V), NHQ(DWE) and WESO (now WESEE). The officer took premature retirement in December 1988 for permanent absorption in Bharat Electronics Ltd (BEL), from where he retired on superannuation in February 2007 as GM, BEL-Pune.*



## NOSTALGIA

# THE MAHARAJA CONNECTION

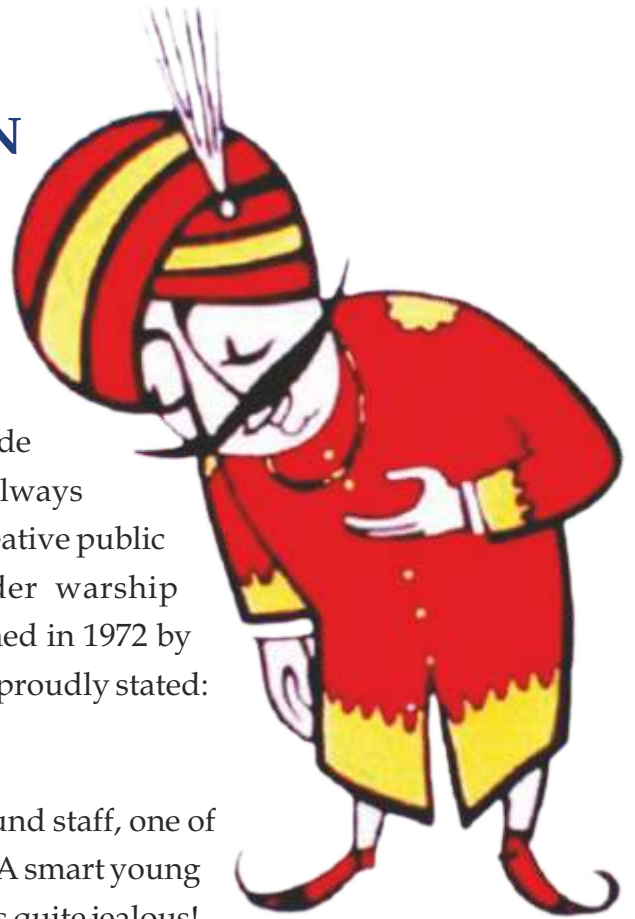
By Commander Arun Saigal (Retd)

**H**earing about Air India's reversion to the Tata fold brought back some indelible memories. It was an airline we all loved to fly. I always looked forward to the weekly humorous hoardings outside its Nariman Point building at the end of Marine Drive. I always mentioned to my friends that Cdr Jimmy Martin was its creative public relations director. When the first indigenous Leander warship INS Nilgiri, built by Mazagon Dock Ltd, was commissioned in 1972 by then Prime Minister Indira Gandhi, the Air India hoarding proudly stated: "Nilgiri, you are my cup of tea!"

Air India's ticketing office was manned by glamorous ground staff, one of whom I had befriended. She always made my heart flutter. A smart young naval officer was always welcome and made her colleagues quite jealous! Indian Airlines shared the space with Air India. *Malaji*, the gracious wife of one of my seniors, worked there. I always made it a point to meet her first — she was my alibi for being there and always helped me catch my friend's eye.

Many years later, one Saturday evening when Dolly and I entered the main bar of my favourite watering hole at the Delhi Gymkhana Club, there was no place to sit. A kind old gentleman, with a walking stick discreetly parked behind his sofa, gestured that the remaining seats at his table were unoccupied. We thanked him and sat down. When I introduced myself as a former naval officer, his eyes lit up and he started sharing his fond memories of seeing the navy grow from strength to strength over the years. Over our second scotch and soda, I mustered up enough courage to ask him what his profession had been when he was young. "I am still young at heart," he replied with a twinkle in his eye!

Mr Thadani had worked for many years with Air India. He told me that when Air India decided to fly on international routes, it realised that its discerning clientele — especially first-class passengers — would expect quality hospitality, courtesy and service. There was not enough time to train existing cabin staff. A crisis was looming. During one brainstorming session, it emerged that the Indian Navy followed many western customs and had very well-trained stewards and cooks. INS Hamla helped identify suitable staff who were quickly seconded to Air India. They not only



saved the day but received many compliments for their excellent service, knowledge of western customs, the sequence of serving main and side dishes and the knowledge of which wine to suggest. Air India started to attract many international travellers thanks to its courtesies on ground topped by gracious onboard hospitality.

Many years later, on New Year's Day 1978, when the ill-fated Air India plane Emperor Ashoka plunged into the sea soon after take-off from Mumbai airport, I had the sad and unforgettable experience of being one of the few officers who rushed to board INS Dunagiri. Though the ship had just entered a self-maintenance period (SMP), we quickly flashed boilers and sailed for the search-and-rescue mission. Though I was the ship's Communications Officer, I was also entrusted with the duty of navigating the ship. Upon arrival at the scene of action, we conducted the operation. I recall that the Flag Officer Commanding-in-Chief (FOC-in-C) West, VAdm Rusi Gandhi, sent a personal signal to my Captain 'Tony' Jain, who had seized a gold-laden dhow in 1971. "For Man with the Golden Touch: Find Jumbo!"

Once the black box, many parts of the aircraft's fuselage and many human remains had been recovered, the operation was declared complete. I was pleasantly surprised to receive a commendation from the FoC-in-C West for my own role. For its part, Air India hosted a 'thank you' event one evening at the Sailors' Home for all officers and sailors who had participated in the operation.

In 1981, I was part of an official inter-services delegation to Seychelles to explore areas of mutual cooperation. Being a Lt Cdr, I was not entitled to fly on domestic routes. Air India came to my rescue by simply ticketing the entire delegation from Delhi to Mahe with the Delhi-Mumbai leg offloaded to Indian Airlines. From Mumbai, we flew by Air India after an overnight halt at Centaur Hotel. On our return trip, the Foreign Minister of Seychelles was travelling on the same flight. Air India upgraded the team leader, a naval officer, to first class to give him due respect and importance. I understand that it made an impact on our hosts and resulted in sowing the seeds of a good friendship.

Air India has a special place in my heart and whenever possible, I have flown the airline after retirement. My good wishes Mr Ratan Tata. I look forward to the return of the Maharaja's glorious days under your watch!

#### ABOUT THE AUTHOR

*Commander Arun Saigal was commissioned into the Indian Navy in 1969. After retirement, he lives in New Delhi and can be contacted at [saigal.arun@gmail.com](mailto:saigal.arun@gmail.com)*







## IN A LIGHTER VEIN

# A RUSSIAN INVASION

By Captain Susheel Menon

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**T**he news channels have almost relegated the Russia-Ukraine conflict to the 'Also Happening' section of their newscast... as the conflict has been raging for seven months already (at the time of writing this article).

This took me back to events two decades past, to the spring of 2003, when the crew of Talwar was preparing to mount their second expedition to Russia. The crew had already spent three months in India after a temporary repatriation due to a technical delay in the delivery of the ship. We earnestly prepared to head back to St Petersburg for the final phase of trials and ultimately commission the ship. This being our second movement to Russia, I, along with my compatriots, thought we were well prepared! Days later when we finally did reach the wintry lands of Russia, we almost understood the feeling that must have engulfed Napoleon who, as history tells us, had attempted to gain a foothold in the Russian lands.

They say that those who don't know history are condemned to repeat it. And so it was that much against historical precedent, the *joshed* up Talwar crew were determined to invade Russia in her most unforgiving winter of four decades. The first batch of 15 crew members were tasked to nonchalantly arrive at our destination with only 1,000 kg of excess baggage.

This story needs to be told, lest the Talwar crew be accused of narrating only victories and not their foibles!

The plan was perfect. Timelines, baggage lists, rendezvous points, contact details — all calculated and all Is dotted and all Ts crossed. The team movement to objective started on a hot, dusty afternoon in the streets of Mumbai where our convoy converged and rumbled off to the airport.



Then Plan met Real Life!

The journey to the airport was marred with the usual problems: Missing persons who had promised not to be missing. Local cell phones that refused to connect to local numbers. Drivers who insisted on bypassing flyovers to take the longer route around. Unknown arrangements of persons who promised to reach the airport on “own arrangements”.

The ladies at the airlines check-in counter were sweet, cooperative and accommodating and the team managed to board the designated flight with self-esteem, sanity and luggage intact. The flight to Delhi was uneventful and disembarkation was even smoother; the luggage came in on the correct conveyor belt and there were trolleys at hand for all. There were smiles all round – this was going well! The transit to the international terminus from the domestic one was smooth and Murphy stayed out of sight. Our bus driver bent the transportation rules a teeny bit to let us load our oversize and overweight baggage national style and we were off. Still going well!

As the international terminus came into sight, we saw the largest congregation of people ever seen outside an airport. Had we missed a festival notice, was there an airlines strike, had pilots once again felt impoverished by their six-figure salaries? Our wise driver was totally unperturbed and explained away the congregation by explaining that the flight to “Kaneda” was scheduled to leave in a few hours. And as he helpfully told us all this, he managed to: Scrape the bumper of the vehicle on the right. Scare the wits out of the driver on the left. Explain the genealogy of the cop who tried to stop him. Give his opinion on law and order and the government. And park the 50-seater bus in the space vacated by a jeep.

The bus parked firmly in place, some of us unloaded the luggage while another detachment foraged successfully for trolleys. Patience and perseverance paid off and we reached the Aeroflot check-in counter to hand over our baggage and ourselves to the airline staff and fate. The clerk grudgingly (but completely in character) complied but not before he called the manager to report that we had in all probability tampered with the excess baggage tickets and for good measure invoked his god for help after he surveyed our misshapen and strange assorted baggage.

After some charming smiles, invoking patriotism and love for the nation, our ordeal was soon over, baggage checked in and an uneventful (even pleasant) emigration check followed. The aircraft was thankfully large and comfortable and there were no major complaints except for the loud gentleman from Ludhiana who was constantly thirsty and rang for service every five minutes. (His thirst was quenched more by the sight of the stewardess, not the beverage.) Now, those with the good fortune of having flown Aeroflot will fully comprehend how the better part of the flight was spent staring at a large screen on the bulkhead that alternated between a colourful map depicting the flight plan (if the pilot knows, why should we?) and an English movie that had something to do with twins. We were



all very disappointed with the insipid movie till we sampled the next one: a black-and-white rendition of the life of lumberjacks in the snow-capped mountains of Siberia!

Touchdown at Moscow international airport was 'smooth', notwithstanding the terrible grinding noise that the undercarriage made while being lowered, making us all wonder whether the pilot had pressed the jettison button by mistake. Upon disembarking, we were soon herded into the customs and immigration section and after the usual customary greetings by the straight-faced Russian officials, we were let into the luggage claim area. We were to quickly reach the domestic terminus for our connecting flight. Luggage in hand, shoulder and luggage carts, we headed out through the exit passage.

The customs official at the x-ray counter was the first man in the entire span of our transcontinental journey who actually wanted to know what was in our misshapen excess baggage cartons and sacks. Countless questions and attempted replies later, when nothing could convince him to let the baggage through, we unleashed our well-practised *Brahmastra*. In other words, the 'Blank Look' — just like we have all learnt from our children, it never fails! Picture 15 adults in winterwear standing next to a ton of baggage looking like they were in a scene of the wrong movie. Thankfully, the customs official probably had a few kids of his own and 10 minutes later we were on the way to the domestic terminus to board our flight to St Petersburg.

The Gods, they say, wait, watch over us, guide us and then enjoy a good joke. This truth hit us like a brick wall when Mr Rajuswamy, the airline liaison, appeared at the terminal to help us with things. To the uninitiated who have not followed the travels and travails of the Talwar crew, the 'well-meaning' Mr Rajuswamy, during our movement on repatriation the previous year, had achieved the dubious distinctions of: Vanishing for six hours after promising to return in five minutes. Repeating the vanishing despite all exits being guarded by our strongest and biggest. Speaking Russian with an American accent and confusing the locals.

So, we should be excused for failing to greet a fellow Indian with our traditional warmth. True to reputation, Mr Rajuswamy continued to excel at his chosen style of obfuscation and minimal effort, causing us to miss the connecting flight — and the next one! In our present encounter, Mr Rajuswamy managed to better his previous performance by: Replaying the vanishing act. Alternating plans of shifting the luggage in and out of the terminus till, at one point, three of us spent five minutes with one leg in and one out of the airport door with cardboard cartons on our shoulders. Sending hungry souls to the cafe with the promise of a free lunch, which we then paid for.

It all came to the proverbial happy ending when we finally saw the interiors of a nice hotel and managed our first bath in 24 hours. A warm meal later, we all prepared for the second onslaught. Onwards to St Petersburg. The lady at the check-in was most helpful and considerate, but not to us! She refused to let baggage weighing more than 30 kg pass through the luggage conveyor. "Rule is rule," she told us officiously.





Thirty minutes, several litres of sweat, 1,000 roubles and 10 BP points later, the luggage had been configured to her wishes. Rules had been adhered to. Well, all except a coil of rope. No effort was spared to sneak in the coil, including explaining that we needed it for the 'Great Indian Rope Trick' at the 300<sup>th</sup> year celebration in St Petersburg! But the battle was lost and we had to leave the offending coil with Mr Rajuswamy who hastily (not happily) accepted it, faced with the alternative of suffering our hostile stares till the next flight.



The plane rattled and shook and jarred. The retraction of the undercarriage brought back the uneasy doubt of the previous flight. But we did not care. Soon, the airfield of St Petersburg was sighted from the air and we heaved a sigh of relief. Three hours later, we were safely and snugly in bed, luggage in store rooms, and sleep beckoned even as the events of the past two days flashed before our eyes. It all suddenly seemed worth it — our Russian invasion was a success!

*- As experienced by Lt Cdr Susheel Menon, Gunnery Officer-II, INS Talwar*

#### ABOUT THE AUTHOR

*Captain Susheel Menon, VSM, is presently commanding INS Vikramaditya. An alumnus of the National Defence Academy (80th course), he was commissioned in July 1992. He is a gunnery specialist with specialist tenures onboard INS Ranvijay and INS Talwar. He has previously commanded IN TRV-71, INS Kirpan and INS Kolkata. His early non-specialist tenures were on board INS Kakinada and INS Gharial. His other operational tenures include that of Fleet Gunnery Officer, Western Fleet, Executive Officer, INS Mumbai, and Commodore (Operations), HQENC. He is a graduate of the Naval Command and Staff College, Indonesia (2006), and Naval War College, USA (2013). His staff tenures have been in the Personnel Branch and as NA to VCNS. He has also been a Directing Staff at Naval War College, Goa, and Commodore, Strategy, Concepts and Transformation, at Naval Headquarters prior to assuming his present command. He holds an MPhil degree in Defence and Strategic Studies.*



## IN A LIGHTER VEIN

### CNS, NO SOAP SALESMAN!

By Captain N S Mohan Ram (Retd)



Sometime during 1972, the Indian Navy was preparing a detailed case to the Government asking for a major increase in manpower to cater for the larger fleet and increased maritime responsibilities. Chief of the Naval Staff Admiral S M Nanda was planning to make a presentation on the issue to Raksha Mantri Babu Jagjiwan Ram, Defence Secretary P V R Rao and other senior officials. The task of preparing the presentation was entrusted to Captain (L) K R Menon (later Admiral Menon). He co-opted Cdrs I C Rao (E) and NS Mohan Ram (E/NC) as his aides for the task.

After extensive brainstorming, we identified three overarching themes for the chief's presentation: vast growth; widened diversity; and increased complexity of the Indian Navy. Our thesis was that the Indian Navy had grown in number and variety of ships and had huge diversity of equipment of increased complexity that required a large increase in maintenance and operating manpower.

We had to make do with flipboard hand-prepared charts. Those were the days before PowerPoint and computer graphics made life easier. After careful deliberation, we zeroed in on three visual indicators for the themes: Numbers and variety of ships to showcase the sheer “growth” of the Navy; different kinds of engines for the ships and installed horsepower to portray increase in “diversity”; and total installed electric power in ships that had grown exponentially, despite lower power consumption of individual equipment, to stress “complexity”.

We made attractive posters on these themes with pretty pictures of ships' silhouettes, engine outlines and generators/ distribution towers as the visual cues for the three themes. We prepared a detailed script, which was vetted and redrafted by the staff branches and PSOs and finally cleared by the CNS. Before presenting to the Raksha Mantri, Admiral Nanda decided to have a practice run with all directors present. Though junior, Rao and I were invited to the rehearsal as we were involved in preparing the presentation.

The dais carried a huge poster behind the speaker's podium with the three words “Growth”, “Diversity” and “Complexity” written in big, bold letters. While Admiral Nanda was making the presentation, the NA to CNS, Captain Duggal, was standing behind, pointing out the relevant theme for each statement of the CNS. As the CNS was speaking, this ended up in his dancing around, waving the pointer like a whirling dervish. I felt this was unnecessary, distracting and even a trifle comic. After finishing the rehearsal, Admiral Nanda asked everyone present for frank feedback. As



expected, everyone said it was great, outstanding, impressive, etc. Admiral Nanda saw me sitting quietly in a corner looking thoroughly miserable. “Hey, Mohan Ram, you do not look happy at all,” he remarked. “Tell me what worries you.” I had two choices, either to fall in line and applaud the routine performance or come out frankly with what I felt. I decided I was not commissioned by the Navy to hide the truth from my Chief.

I got up and asked him if I could offer my frank opinion. He did not hesitate and told me, “Go right ahead!” I said, “Sir, you are making a presentation to Shri Jagjiwan Ram, a sharp, experienced and brilliant minister and other senior people. They will be able to grasp your theme in no time. You should soft sell and not belabour your idea. Also, having each idea pointed out by a gentleman behind you is distracting, almost comic.” NA to CNS was glaring at me. One could hear a pin drop. I had done enough damage and should have stopped there. But being a congenital and loose-tongued idiot, I added, “Sir, you are conveying an idea to a sophisticated audience, not selling soap!”

After that final and stupid salvo, I sat down, biting my lip over my idiotic remark. There was a deathly hush. Everyone thought this was the end of the career of an impertinent pup of an acting commander. I should be sweating for confirmation and instead had the temerity to describe the CNS as a soap salesman!

Nanda paused for a little while. A few agonising seconds later, he laughed heartily and said, “I am not a bloody soap salesman, am I! Duggal, take the bloody placard off. I will have another go without the prop, all by myself.”

The second time round he was brilliant. It was a gripping performance that bowled everyone over. I nodded when he asked me if I were happy. After he left, everyone came round and congratulated me for my bold inputs! I was still bathed in cold sweat, having flirted with stark ruin.

Indeed, Admiral Nanda was bold, calm and could take honest criticism from junior officers. I remain in awe of him.

*(This is an edited extract from the author's naval memoir, My Ships Sailed the Seas but I Stayed Ashore.)*

#### ABOUT THE AUTHOR

*Captain Mohan Ram, an early IIT graduate, was commissioned in 1959 and retired in 1980 on absorption in Mazagon Docks. A naval architect, he worked on modifications for indigenous equipment in INS Nilgiri and was project officer of INS Godavari. He worked in senior positions in the private sector, finally retiring in 2020. His naval memoir was well received. A prequel, A Small Town Boy, has been released recently.*





## THE KING AND I

By Captain Raj Mohindra (Retd)

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I was the founding Chief Executive of the Mahindra United World College of India (MUWCI). On 6 November 1992, I represented the MUWCI at the inauguration of the Li Po Chun United World College of Hong Kong. King Charles III, then the Prince of Wales, was the Chief Guest as he was then President of the United World Colleges (UWC).

A few members of the UWC community, including me, had sought an audience with the prince. His secretary had informed us that he had formed four groups that Prince Charles would meet. He had also stressed at length that the prince was an informal person and we could talk to him and address him in a friendly manner, even call him Charles. And some witty banter would not be out of place. Prince Charles met the first three groups for 8-10 minutes each. However, almost all the groups did not heed the secretary's intense briefing. The ladies bowed before talking to him, and the men addressed him as "Your Majesty" or "Your Highness".



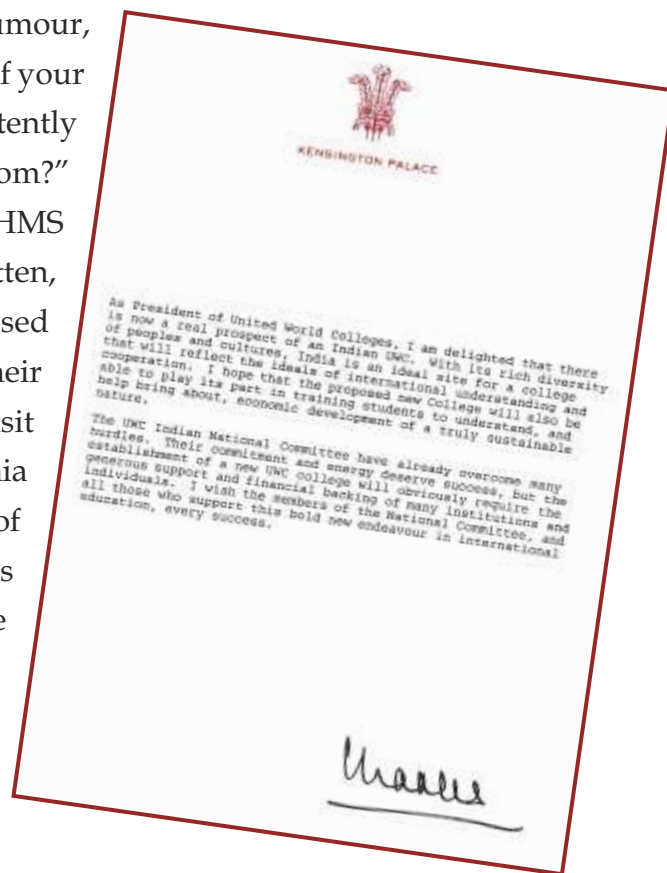
Approaching the fourth group, Prince Charles said, "Good morning, Captain Mohindra!" (His secretary had clearly given him my name.) I responded with a cheerful "Good morning, Sir," and gave him the naval salute. "So, how is the Indian UWC faring?" he asked. "Sir, as they say in the Navy, it's on top of the ball!" I responded. "We have a distinguished chairman of the national committee, Mr Harish Mahindra, an alumnus of Harvard. He is in the top echelons of Mahindra & Mahindra, a global enterprise headquartered in Mumbai and renowned for its integrity and business ethics. Sir, the wonderful news is that the Board of Mahindra & Mahindra is considering Mr Harish Mahindra's proposal to meet the entire cost of the project."

Prince Charles was delighted to hear this. He then enquired about the Government of India's approval. I replied that we hoped to receive it soon, as we never give up! I should add here that he was taking a personal interest in the Indian UWC and much credit goes to him for finally establishing it. As he was leaving, he said, "Well done; keep it up." After thanking him, I added that a minor issue needed to be resolved. I told him that we anxiously looked forward to receiving his message for publication in the first brochure of Mahindra UWC.

He looked at me quizzically and said, "I don't write messages for brochures, do I?" I then pulled out a



photograph from my pocket and told him, in good humour, "Sir, in that case, I will reproduce this picture in lieu of your message." Prince Charles looked at the photograph intently and then asked me, "Where the hell did you get this from?" I replied that, in 1953, I was a midshipman on board HMS Gambia, the flagship of Vice Admiral Lord Mountbatten, Commander-in-Chief of the Mediterranean Fleet, based in Malta. The Queen, the Duke of Edinburgh and their children had been invited by Lord Mountbatten to visit Malta on a holiday. Her Majesty's yacht HMS Britannia was tied up to a buoy in Valletta harbour, just aft of Gambia. One of the items on the programme was 'Prince Charles and Princess Anne play with the midshipmen onboard the Gambia'. The boats in which you and Princess Anne are joyfully sitting were built onboard by the midshipmen. I took this photograph with my box camera."



Prince Charles had a hearty laugh. "Oh, we have a blackmailer here!" he told his secretary. "Send him a message." He departed, wishing me and the Indian UWC the best of luck! The message from the Prince of Wales was duly received and published in the first brochure brought out by Mahindra UWC.





## IN A LIGHTER VEIN

### SERVICE, WITH A SMILE!

By Commander S Harikrishnan

When I joined the submarine arm, I knew that we were called 'the silent service'. But I did not know that the activities of the service were so unheard of and silent that all submariners were asked all sorts of interesting and inquisitive questions! Hence, the life of a submariner is not only challenging at sea but also in harbour answering these intriguing questions. The ENT specialist checks our ears thoroughly during annual medicals and has an observation every time. How do we explain to him that our ears don't get affected from the pressure down below but from hearing questions from others above?

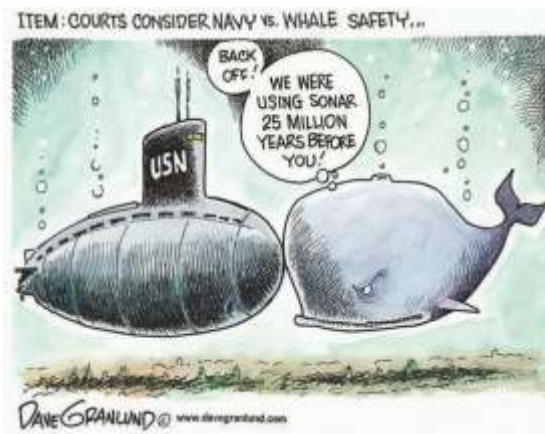
Let me give you some examples from my own experience. When I joined the submarine arm, a young friend asked me, in all earnestness: "Do these submarines really exist or are they just shown in Marvel movies?" It was just the beginning of a never-ending list of questions that I would answer over the years. How do we breathe fresh air when we stay at deep depths? Do we carry oxygen bottles or set up ventilators near our bed inside the submarine?

People would say we were so lucky to be able to see sharks and starfish in the deep ocean when we sail and watch dolphins dancing. I wonder what made them think we had portholes or transparent glass windows! Others have assumed that we eat only packed food and drink only bottled water. Sometimes, it can be difficult to make people understand how a reverse osmosis (RO) plant works underwater or how food is cooked beneath the sea.





Don't be surprised if anyone compares your routine to jet lag as we remain underwater for numerous days – and no one knows if it is day or night underwater. Or asks how we navigate underwater. After all, what's the use of a GPS onboard as you don't get satellite feed down below? Some more favourites: How do you sidestep an underwater mountain? How do you avoid a collision with a blue whale? And do you have underwater tunnels for movement of the submarine? For those who ask this last one, I can't resist saying, "Yes, and we have tea shops at certain pitstops too!"



Once, when we were in dry dock, someone saw the torpedo tube from outside and asked me whether we required so many headlights in front of the submarine to navigate. And another time, when I was giving instructions to one of the sailors about the quantity of soda lime to be loaded onboard before the next sortie, my inquisitive wife asked me whether we were going for operations or a party at sea. I thought it was better to tell her that we had a party during the sortie rather than explain the difference between soda lime and lime soda!

These are just a few instances; every submariner has their own long list. When submariners get together for a drink, they raise a toast and say, "Health, wealth and stealth!" These stories only deepen the bond between us. And we are best off this way – undetected and silent. The only thing we want to tell the world is that there is no reason to thank us because we don't exist. You never saw us. This never happened. Over and out.

### ABOUT THE AUTHOR

*An alumnus of the National Defence Academy (113th course), Commander S Harikrishnan joined the submarine arm in 2010. He served as a non-specialist onboard the Sindhughosh class of submarines. The officer is a communication and EW specialist and did his specialist tenure onboard Sindhughosh and Khanderi. He served as Executive Officer onboard INS Khanderi and underwent the 77th Staff Course at the Defence Services Staff College, Wellington.*



## IN A LIGHTER VEIN

# THE SHORE CALL

By Captain A R C Varma (Retd)



I was posted onboard INS Sharabh for my engine room watchkeeping certificate. Though I was supposed to be working in the engine room, my Captain asked me to spend one month on the deck and the balance three months in the engine room. On the deck, I would be assigned the duty of the Officer of the Day (OOD), who generally mans the gangway along with the Quartermaster. In those days, there would be only one landline telephone on board, which was kept next to the Quartermaster, who would attend all phone calls. On receiving a call, he was supposed to announce on the main broadcast: "So and so" required gangway for a shore call, in case of sailors, and "so and so" requested gangway for shore call, in case of officers. Even for the Captain, the announcement was "Captain requested gangway for shore call".

One day, the Flag Officer Commanding Eastern Fleet (FOCEF), a rear admiral, called the ship. Without introducing himself, he commanded the Quartermaster, "Call your Captain." When the Quartermaster asked who was speaking, the Admiral shouted, "I said, call your Captain." As the Captain was standing a little away from the gangway, the Quartermaster called out to him, "Sir, *aapka phone hai.*" When the Captain asked who it was, the hapless Quartermaster, neglecting to cover his speaker, replied, "Sir, *patah nahi koun hai, kambakt naam hi nahi batata.*"

Needless to say, when the Captain picked up the phone, the Admiral summoned him and the Quartermaster immediately to his office!

### ABOUT THE AUTHOR

*Captain A R C Varma joined the Indian Navy in July 1977 and retired in Aug 2007. He served onboard INS Sharabh, Vidyut, Godavari and Dunagiri as well as ND(V), Shivaji, NHQ DME and DND.*

## Cheers!



The Chief of the Naval Staff (CNS) was visiting an Indian Army regiment. In his honour, a *bara khana* with beer was organised. During the drinking session, the CNS was moving around, exchanging small talk with the soldiers. He asked one of them, "Army *ke* soldiers *aur* Navy *ke* sailors *meh kya* difference *hai?*". Pat came the reply, "Sir, Navy *ka* sailor drinking *ke pehele* English *bolta hai aur* Army *ka* soldier drinking *ke baad* English *bolta hai!*"



## LIFE POSITIVE

### FROM FRAGILITY TO PEAK FITNESS

By Rear Admiral S S Rao (Retd)

*"Health is wealth, peace of mind is happiness; yoga shows the way."*

*- Swami Vishnudevananda*

**W**ay back in the mid 1990s, when I was serving at NHQ as DSAQ, I was nominated for a two-week course at the National Institute of Advanced Studies (NIAS), Bangalore. In his opening address, Director Raja Ramana, the father of our atomic bomb, said, "Gentlemen, the first class of the day starting at 6 am, which happens to be yoga, is compulsory." It came as a rude shock to everyone, particularly to those staying outside the campus. Grudgingly, all of us attended the yoga classes; that was my first brush with the age-old Vedic practice. But within a few weeks of returning from the course, I put it behind me, having been submerged back into the daily routine of naval life.



#### Price paid

Looking back, I realise I paid a very heavy price for not following the path for the lifetime fitness and well-being shown to us by the illustrious Dr Ramana. I always thought I was fit as through my entire 36-year naval career, I remained S1A1 throughout and spent only three days in hospital for a minor gastritis ailment and a neglected dog bite.

About two years after I retired in mid-2005, one day I accompanied my father-in-law, a three-star army veteran, to R&R Hospital in New Delhi for a medical check-up. After a physical check-up, the old man was put on a treadmill and he came out clean. But when I was on the treadmill, the doctor stopped it after a few minutes saying something was wrong with the machine and put me on another. The result was the same. He said in a serious tone that I had arterial blockages and recommended I undergo further tests and treatment at the soonest. The best medical advice that followed after consulting several medical specialists was open-heart surgery and it was done at Max Hospital in Delhi. As luck would have it, I was among the 1 per cent to develop deep sternum wound (DSW) infection. Owing to various complications that followed, I had to be hospitalised and treated at AIIMS for about nine months, which took a toll on my physical and mental state. On discharge, I was advised to wear a broad chest belt to prevent hiatal hernia owing to the removal of the lower half of my sternum and take blood thinners and heavy doses of antibiotics for a lifetime.





## Embracing yoga

Don't do *kapalbhati*; no forward bends; no sun salutations and inversions — these were just some of the instructions from my doctor when I consulted him about joining a yoga class. However, my yoga teacher told me to do whatever I could comfortably do. And soon enough, I was doing basic *pranayama*, sun salutations and asanas, except the headstand. This physiological and psychological revival made me so confident that a year later I enrolled for a Teachers Training Course (TTC) at International Sivananda Yoga Vedanta Ashram in Neyyar Dam, Thiruvananthapuram, and graduated with a 'Yoga Shiromani' certificate. Having gained more confidence, two years later, I completed the Advanced Teachers Training Course (ATTC) from the same institution and qualified as a 'Yoga Acharya'. Early last year, I did my Sadhana Intensive Course from Sivananda Tapaswini Ashram in Andhra Pradesh and added another title of 'Yoga Bhaskar' to my credit. I now have 11 years of teaching experience, including training the teachers and underprivileged children at NGO Harmony House and Kamala Puri Library in Gurgaon. These earnings help me support a home for the elderly and an orphanage.

Yoga is an invaluable gift of India's ancient tradition. It embodies unity of mind and body; thought and action; restraint and fulfilment; a holistic approach to health and well-being. Yoga focuses on strength, flexibility and breathing to boost physical and mental health. The practice, which originated in India about 5,000 years ago, has been globally adapted, including by the armed forces of major military powers, to combat stress caused by galloping technological advancement and changing social and environment dynamics.

Courtesy the efforts put in by our Prime Minister Narendra Modi, the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) recognised that yoga provides a holistic approach to the health of mankind and declared 21 June as the International Day of Yoga in a resolution supported by 175 countries, the largest ever for any UN resolution.

## The five pillars of Sivananda Yoga

The five pillars that support Sivananda Yoga are:

- Proper exercise (asanas)
- Proper breathing (*pranayama*)
- Proper relaxation
- Proper diet (*satvik food*)
- Positive thinking and meditation

In early 2017, the Sivananda Yoga Board graciously offered 12 scholarship nominations each year for the Teachers Training Course (TTC) for naval personnel for five years.



Officers and sailors are regularly being sent to Sivananda centres in Thiruvananthapuram, Madurai and Uttarkashi. I happened to be part of the teaching staff in one of these courses attended by Vice Admiral Ajit Kumar and Captain Parsad. I am sure this gesture would go a long way in making yoga popular in the Navy and help improve overall mental and physical well-being, enabling naval personnel to cope with the increasing stress levels caused by multifaceted demands in maintaining the highest standards of the service.



### **The immense benefits**

With my personal experience of recovery from fragility to peak fitness and seeing hundreds others in my classes bounce back from various ailments like hypertension, cervical pain, backache, carpal tunnel syndrome, joint pains, stress and anxiety, I feel it's my duty to share this wonderful journey.

Here are some of the main benefits that have accrued to me:

- The yoga pill is the best medicine to keep yourself physically and mentally agile and healthy. I am completely off medication for many years now and feel calmer, stronger, more flexible and healthier than before.
- Yoga reduces your chances of developing heart disease – even if you have risk factors. It also reverses heart conditions (refer to *Reversing Heart Disease* by Dr Dean Ornish).
- Age is no bar to start a yoga practice.
- It improves balance in older adults and significantly cuts their risk of injuries.
- It improves immunity and helps cure or provide relief from various ailments and diseases.
- It retards ageing and helps us keep active.
- It is shown to help reduce age-related cognitive decline and even slow dementia.
- It boosts our capacity to deal with anxiety and stress.
- Yoga brings much needed peace of mind.

I hope my own experience will be a beacon to attract veterans and other men and women in white and their families to this way of leading a healthy and purposeful life. Start your yoga journey today!

### **ABOUT THE AUTHOR**

*Commissioned in the Indian Navy on 30 September 1968 in the Supply & Secretariat Branch and an alumnus of Defence Services Staff College, Wellington, Rear Admiral S S Rao, NM, VSM, held various important assignments such as Deputy Naval Attaché in Moscow during the Cold War era, CMP (V), DGM (Personnel) in ND(V), DSAQ at NHQ, MS(B) and CSO(P&A) in HQWNC (Mumbai) before his promotion to the Flag rank. He also served in the ATV project and retired as Assistant Chief of Logistics in May 2005. After retirement, he headed a BPO and a deemed university in Haryana. He is also a Yoga Shiromani, Yoga Acharya and Yoga Bhaskar, with over 12 years of teaching experience, particularly with underprivileged children. His current hobbies are numismatics, playing the piano and trekking.*



## A TOUGH NUT TO CRACK

By Lieutenant Commander Arvind Kumar (Retd)



**H**umpty Dumpty had a great fall and all of his friends couldn't put him back together again. Here goes another version!

While flying a kite on 16 February 2020, I fell off a hillock in the new Chandigarh area while visiting the farm of an NDA course mate. I landed on the road below with accelerated force on my hands with my full body weight of 110 kg. In terms of physics, it was mass multiplied by velocity landing on the hard road below. In an instant reaction, I turned on my back. My friends came running to pick me up but I restrained them, telling them to place some cushions under my back. So far, so good. Now, I started evaluating the damage I had sustained.

Like a boxer hit by a sledgehammer blow, I found I could not take a deep breath. As trained, I started taking short breaths. The pain of the injuries had not yet overtaken my senses but I knew that the lungs in the chest cavity were being obstructed from breathing by a rib. So, I continued to take short rhythmic breaths. By now I knew the damage would need hospitalisation.

Lt Gen Shankar Ranjan Ghosh, who was constantly observing me, could read this from my face. My action of handing over my gold *kadha* and rings to him probably confirmed his worst fears. He immediately requested Col Ashok Kumar Bajaj to bring his car with chauffeur. I did not allow anyone to pull me up knowing that most injuries are aggravated when an individual is forcibly lifted. With assistance, I was then helped into the front seat of the car—from my experience of driving my 90-plus mother, I knew it is easier to get in and out the front seat. Ensuring my safety belt was tied, I requested the chauffeur to drive gently and minimise any bumps. I tucked myself in great pain against the car door. Thanks to Gen Shankar's standing as a former Army Commander, Command Hospital Chandi Mandir and the Commandant were informed. The hospital was ready to receive me at the emergency department when we reached after about 50 minutes of an agonising drive. I remember getting out of the car on my own but I collapsed. Next, I found myself on a stretcher with attendants trying to remove my clothes. I had the presence of mind to tell them to cut them off instead of removing my undergarments as I knew it would aggravate the injuries to my chest. Thereafter, I went into a coma.

The lessons learnt as a boxer from my coaches, right from the RIMC and NDA days, helped me evaluate my injuries. I had nine fractures with all the ribs on my right side and three on the left broken with both shoulders (still under repair) and my right wrist badly sprained. If I had been lifted when I had fallen, my right lung, which was already damaged by the fall, injured left lung and ribs would





have got further severely damaged. Other key lessons were 'never say die' and believe in the blessings and good wishes of one's loved ones.

Every day that I live, I thank my course mates, friends, well-wishers and dedicated doctors who cared for me so that I live to write this with deep gratitude. At one point on 27 February 2020, my condition was so serious that the doctors told my sons and all my friends and relatives that it was just a matter of time before I kicked the bucket. My elder son told the doctors that, as per my will, all medical help and support could be removed. But the doctor in charge of the ICU said that eventuality had not yet arisen and continued me on the ventilator with medicines through drips. The next morning, I started showing some signs of improvement. But word went around that I had died and some friends sent RIP messages on my course mates' group.



*On the day of discharge from the hospital*

They profusely apologised when I got well and sent them a message confirming that I was well enough to kick their butt! That same day, learning there was zero chance of my recovery, someone phoned the crematorium to book a slot for my cremation. The person at the crematorium told him they booked slots for only the dead, not the living, and that he should hold his horses till I was confirmed dead.

Through all this, another NDA course mate Col Tejinder Singh kept vigil and kept everyone informed about my well-being. Many Rimcollians, NDA and Indian Navy course mates came to visit, including the RIMC Commandant, my course mate Col Arun Mangain and IMA Commandant Lt Gen R S Sujana. Many of my naval course mates travelled from their respective stations to visit me in hospital, totally disregarding COVID-19.

I can still recall some of the scenes when I was in ICU when I was totally conscious with my eyes open, though I could not talk. I could see the door to all rooms. When there was an emergency, the doctors and staff would rush into the patient's room. And if the patient died, I saw the doctors slowly coming out, emotionally shattered. After a while, the dependents would come and the body would be wheeled out, with a priest offering prayers before this. A doctor would then sit and complete the documents outside the patient's room. The room would be cleaned and fumigated and made ready for the next patient. During my two-and-a-half months in ICU, I saw this happen four or five times.



I also experienced hallucinations at times; according to the doctors, I got two brain seizures. At these times, I was unaware of my actual surroundings but felt as if I were travelling on a bed with wheels in a corridor. On my left was a beautiful garden full of greenery, fantastic white and pink flowers and magnificent white geese with long necks and pink beaks. On the right, a delicious display of fruits and food was laid out. I remember asking for permission to go to the garden and sample the fruits but I was told a firm 'no' and the path closed up. I also remember being very happy with no pain or sadness, even while I was craving to experience the delights of the garden and being told 'not yet'.

The cliché goes that when we are not well, we see a doctor and when we get well, we thank the Lord. I thank everyone in my life and leave it to them to thank the Lord, whose lead was followed by the doctors. That said, I attribute all to the Almighty; all others do as he directs.

#### ABOUT THE AUTHOR

*Lieutenant Commander Arvind Kumar (Retd) is an alumnus of the National Defence Academy (38th course). He joined the Navy in July 1972.*





I remember meeting an officer at a social gathering and asking him, “How do you cope with your everyday stress?” He replied, “I try to live in the present moment, not worrying too much about what could go wrong (as in the negatives), but focusing my attention to what I could do to make it better (the positives).”

What a profound thought, yet most of us fail to follow that advice. Having said that, the officer probably learned the art of living in the moment; what about many others who need support?

A state of wellbeing is when individuals realise their own abilities to thrive and flourish to their full potential and contribute productively for the larger good. But this state of wellbeing is often difficult to achieve and like any other skill needs to be put into practice. As part of my profession, I counsel many clients on how to manage their emotions so that they can cope with the normal stresses of life. Staying positive, for example, isn't as easy as it sounds. We as humans go through a range of emotions and dealing with them can be challenging. It is said that thinking negatively can drag down our moods, our actions and even our health. And hence learning how to stay positive is key to our overall health.

### What does research say?

- People who were involved in maintaining a gratitude journal regularly were more positive in their outlook towards life and could cope with challenges better.
- Pessimistic people have a 20 per cent higher risk of dying early than those who stay positive and optimistic.
- People have the capability to change their behaviours by constant support and positive affirmation from being negative to staying positive and optimistic.
- Positive people are happier in comparison to people who are always complaining or have negative thoughts.

### Ways to stay positive

Let's understand the four 'Happy Hormones'

1. **Dopamine** – Our reward chemical, it is produced in the body whenever the brain perceives a reward and therefore reinforces behaviours that lead to rewards. Some ways to activate it are:
  - Taking time out to watch a movie, or a nice nap.
  - Mindful eating by focusing on the food on our plate, its colour, shape and size, texture and smell, and taking time to relish the taste.
  - Completing a task and getting a Bravo Zulu for it.
  - Celebrating small wins like completing a successful sortie or completing a report.
2. **Oxytocin** – The love drug is released in the body when we love and care for others or we are cared for. Some ways to activate it are:





- Maintaining a gratitude journal, sharing our thoughts and even actively listening to others – course mates, spouse, children – can boost connections.
- Giving and receiving hugs, holding hands while walking with our loved ones.
- Giving a compliment.
- Spending time with loved ones, including our pets.

3. **Serotonin** – Our mood-o-meter, this feel-good hormone dictates our sleep cycle, mood fluctuations and calls for rest and recuperation. Some ways to active it are:

- Practising meditation and mindfulness. Ten minutes of daily meditation and deep breathing will help us relax, bringing focus and concentration.
- Being physically active – hitting the squash court, playing golf or a few laps in the pool will do the needful.
- Getting Vitamin D from sun baths, taking a walk on the beach, going outdoors for a trek or even sitting in the park.
- Spending time amid nature – visiting green patches helps reset our mood. Sitting in silence surrounded with trees and birds from time to time soothes our mind and body.

4. **Endorphins** – Our natural painkillers, they are released in the body when we are engaged in physical activity. We may activate them by:

- Achieving the 2.5-km run, participating in marathons and indulging in adventure sport.
- Volunteering and being of service – supporting not-for-profit organisations using our professional skills and expertise or volunteering our time at camps for a cause we feel connected to.
- Laughing out loud, going for comedy nights, enjoying the joyful company of friends, watching a comedy movie.
- Affirming positive thoughts, things we wish to do, listing things that make us happy, remembering all the successes we and our team have achieved.
- Reading a good book for inspiration or watching motivational movies.

Life is messy and we can't always stay happy or ignore our troubles. However, fostering optimism will help keep us focused on the positive as much as possible. And not to forget, everything comes with practice. As His Holiness Dalai Lama said, “Just one small positive thought in the morning can change your whole day.” And I truly hope it does.

#### ABOUT THE AUTHOR

*Sweetlana Ranjan, wife of Commander Paul S Ranjan, is a woman entrepreneur and founder of i-Behind The Ink Foundation, a not-for-profit working to create awareness on mental health and well-being with a focus on designing and facilitation using expressive art therapy to build an inclusive, healthier and compassionate world through their outreach and programmes. She has 20 years of professional work experience with 12 years in the development sector focused on youth development and five years as a meditation and mindfulness practitioner. A Vedic Mandala therapist and Certified Life Coach, her hobbies include creating dot mandalas, nature walks and trekking.*



## **WARDROOM TO BOARDROOM**

By Jayadevi Vivekanand and Dr Seema Sant

*Retired does not mean tired!*

**D**ay-to-day life in the military varies depending on service branch, career choice and location. However, there are several experiences service members have in common. Preparation for basic training, taking care of a family on base or deploying for the first time are just a few examples.

Military service is difficult, demanding and entails occupational hazards like multitasking with uncertainties.

However, returning to civilian life also poses limitations and challenges for the men and women who have served in the Armed Forces.

Making the transition to civilian life can be both exciting and challenging and takes an enormous amount of preparation. Here are some tips for career transition from the wardroom to the boardroom:

- **Maximise your individual transition plan (ITP):** The ITP is a transition roadmap that guides an individual on decisions like the next career move, meeting financial goals, continuing education, etc. Develop your plan with care, considering goals and objectives for any areas of life affected by the transition. Update and refine your action steps to increase focus on goals in order to obtain that civilian career/job.
- **Stay motivated:** Bring your zeal, enthusiasm and 'can-do' attitude to the next step in life. Approach civilian life with the same strength, curiosity and courage with which you carried out military missions. Compile your strengths, efforts and skills to accomplish desired civilian life/standards.
- **Practise networking:** Transition assistance programs like pre-release course (PRC) will enhance the significance of networking towards job search and career development. Networking simply means talking to people about occupation goals and improvement. Seek out people who may be able to help with their advice, job leads/contacts and resourceful links that will help maximise your military skills and growth.



- **Show confidence:** Take time to recognise and appreciate the scope of knowledge, skills and abilities that you have acquired in military life. When an individual presents oneself high in confidence with a massive military experience, any prospective employer would be impressed. Further, with exceptional technical skills and training, veterans have mastered the military traits of good discipline, teamwork, leadership and the ability to execute a mission. Employers value these qualities in applicants regardless of the nature of the work and recognise a true soldier.

Apart from employability assets, other assets you have for managing this change are the ones you gained from your service, such as:

- The friends you made
- The skills you learned
- The discipline you mastered
- The leadership you demonstrated
- The path of integrity you chose to walk.

Use these assets whenever possible in your transition to civilian life. After all, you've earned it! Ultimately, the more an individual prepares, the smoother things will work in the transition to civil life. Practise these simple steps to help boost your personal and career development. Learn how to incorporate these characteristics into career transition preparation to emerge victorious. *Jai Hind!*

#### ABOUT THE AUTHOR

*Jayadevi Vivekanand* is a doctoral scholar with a focus on the career transition of Indian military veterans, possessing a master's degree in business administration and with a decade of industrial experience in human resource management. Current research interests include career management, transition of life, second careers, and career success. **Dr Seema Sant** is a Professor and Associate Dean, Human Resources, at Vivekanand Education Society Institute of Management Studies and Research (VESIM), Mumbai. A behavioural certified trainer with extensive academic and industry experience, she has done her MBA (HR), PhD in business administration and diploma in training and development (ISTD). A certified trainer for the Saville Consulting International Accreditation Programme, she has 22 years of experience working with corporate and academic institutions and is a PhD guide (management) for SNDT Women's University and University of Mumbai.





## AGE

By Rear Admiral S S Rao (Retd)

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Why brood and worry when you age,  
It's the best time to once again engage,  
In discovering what you could never find,  
And build up on so much you undermined.

When your role on stage is over,  
And you have had your share of grandeur,  
You ought to lie back in a spectator's seat,  
And enjoy the play, not browbeat.

It's the time to look at your bucket list,  
Fun ignored and passions missed,  
Childhood friends lost in the rat race,  
Forgotten relations awaiting embrace.

It's not the end but a new life just begun,  
You are wiser and richer than you had begun,  
A free-flying butterfly out of the cocoon,  
A tortoise without a mythical earthly pontoon.

Let not wrinkling skin and aching joints,  
Slow you down and make you disappoint,  
Fight them the best you can and unwind,  
My gateway to your body is only through your mind,

Spiritual horizons, once distant, now within reach,  
Walk the ocean of bliss on its lovely beach,  
Bring laughter in life of those distraught,  
You are beyond the painful nets I cast.

With everyone, my secrets I share,  
A few practise but most don't care,  
Serve, love, empathise and meditate,  
And live happily for five scores and twenty-eight.



## TRIBUTE

### CLINICIAN PAR EXCELLENCE

**S**urgeon Vice Admiral O P Chawla, PVSM, AVSM, former Director General Medical Services (DGMS) Navy and a senior veteran of the Armed Forces Medical Services, passed away on 3 March 2021 at Army Hospital R&R, Delhi Cantonment, from cardiac arrest. He was 92 years old.



There are charismatic personalities in every branch of the defence services. Surg VAdm Chawla was one such personality in the medical branch of the Navy.

I saw Surg V Adm Chawla (then Surg Cdr) for the first time in December 1972. He was posted on board INS Delhi as PMO. I was MO onboard INS Darshak and had accompanied the Commanding Officer for the annual medical examination. Admiral Chawla's pleasant and courteous disposition made a deep impact on me. He was a friendly soul who never got ruffled or upset. He dealt with everyone with courtesy.

I served under his command at INHS Dhanvantari (1975-76) and later at INHS Kalyani (1984-85). He was always calm, collected, receptive, witty, trusting, accessible and ready to come to our rescue when he was convinced that our objectives and intentions were good and honourable. Patient care was uppermost in his mind and irrespective of rank he spared no efforts to involve himself in patient management. He was always there for advice and discussions.

We grew up during a time when clinical acumen was essential in managing a patient as facilities for advanced investigations, biochemical or imaging, were non-existent in small stations. Under the circumstances, most clinicians practiced their specialities based on clinical acumen and delivered excellent results. Surg VAdm Chawla was one of them. His keen sense of observation and practical approach to the problem at hand were amazing.

Surg VAdm Chawla assumed many important appointments and retired as DGMS (Navy). Despite his seniority, he was a friend and guide to each one of us. He was indeed a clinician par excellence and I will remain indebted to him for his advice and support at crucial moments.

May his soul rest in peace.

- Surgeon Vice Admiral V S Dixit (Retd)



## TRIBUTE

### A GIFTED LEADER

Vice Admiral Mauli Bhushan Ghosh, PVSM, AVSM, NM, graduated from the 9th course of the National Defence Academy (JSW) and was part of the last batch of engineering branch officers who were trained at the Royal Naval Engineering College, Plymouth, UK.



He served at sea in the commissioning crew of INS Vikrant in 1961 and later as Engineer Officer of three Indian Navy Fleet ships, Gomati, Talwar and Deepak. He was awarded the Naosena Medal for his participation in the missile attack on Karachi Harbour during the 1971 war as EO, INS Talwar. In the early part of his career, he was deputed to the Ethiopian Naval College in Asmara. Later, he was deputed to head the Frigate Project Team at Hindustan Aeronautics Ltd, Bangalore, for the manufacture of Allens steam turbine auxiliaries for the Leander project.

Vice Admiral Ghosh will be remembered for his contribution to higher policy, having held key appointments at Naval Headquarters in the Directorate of Fleet Maintenance, and as Director Logistic Support and Director Marine Engineering. After promotion to Flag rank, he served as the Admiral Superintendent of Naval Dockyard, Visakhapatnam, from March 1989 to April 1991, and thereafter as Admiral Superintendent of Naval Dockyard Mumbai in the rank of Vice Admiral till November 1992, when he was appointed Controller Warship Production and Acquisition. He took over as Chief of Materiel in March 1993 and finished his naval innings in January 1994.

Those who were privileged to work under him benefitted from his intuitive foresight, professional composure, jovial sense of humour, support of his team's decisions and gifted leadership qualities.

He married Sulapa (Uma) in April 1960. Their son Maunish was born while they were in the UK and daughter, Moushimi, was born two years later, in Mumbai. Fond of cricket, he was a proficient spin bowler and batsman, and later played golf.

After retirement, he lived a settled life in Chittaranjan Park, New Delhi, where visits from his grandchildren Diya, Meera, Ben, Adin and Abishai gave him much pleasure. His health deteriorated over the last two years; his prolonged illness was alleviated by the support of his family, a few dedicated veterans and with invaluable support from the 'Serving Navy'. May his noble soul rest in eternal peace.

- Vice Admiral I C Rao (Retd) and Vice Admiral B S Randhawa (Retd)





## TRIBUTE

### A TRUE VETERAN

**R**ear Admiral G T Wadhwani, NM (G), or Gullu as he was popularly known, passed away in INHS Asvini on 29 September 22, very close to his home in Colaba. Like a true veteran, he chose this familiar naval hospital to the number of super-speciality hospitals in Mumbai. The doctors and nursing staff at Asvini acted spontaneously to help his respiratory condition stabilise, but despite their heroic efforts he slipped away in the early hours of the morning of 29 September.



I had known the Admiral since my college days when he was the Executive Officer of INS Mysore and he invited the Mysore HOD family to TS Dufferin at anchorage, off Ballard Pier wharf. I can never forget that luncheon party as it was my first experience of being on a merchant ship converted to a cadet's training ship, and I walked around the decks trying to imagine the thoughts and aspirations of those young men who chose the sea as a career.

The Admiral did his schooling at the prestigious St Columba's School in Delhi and excelled in his studies. He played all games but showed particular promise in swimming and diving. At a very young age, he was selected to join TS Dufferin where he was selected to join the Indian Navy as a result of topping his batch. He entered the Navy being conjoined with the 3rd JSW course on 28 December 1949 in Dehradun. He graduated in end 1951 and was sent to the Basic and Divisional School in Cochin where he underwent a basic naval course. In April 1952, he boarded a ship to take him to the Royal Naval College in Dartmouth. After a six-month course, he and his batchmates were sent for sea training on HMS Devonshire, which incidentally replaced HMS Suffolk where many batches of Indian officers did their afloat training during the Second World War in the biting cold of the North Atlantic. Onboard Devonshire he sailed extensively in the Mediterranean. The training was tough and required grit. They had to do all the chores of sailors but were treated as officers and had to accustom themselves to standard British meals.

In August 1953, he was promoted to midshipman, where he did short stints onboard various ships. After his sea training, all the executive midshipmen were sent back to India for further training. After being commissioned on 1 September 1954, he was back in the Royal Naval College in Greenwich, UK.

In time, he specialised in navigation and direction and the greatest challenge he faced was as the navigator of INS Vikrant in 1969. Soon after, he found himself in command of INS Kuthar. Thereafter it was INS Mysore, where he was the EXO to Capt (later VAdm) Rusi Gandhi. It was there that he



met my dad, Surg Cdr Frank O'Leary, who was the PMO, with Cdr Prakash Lamba the Electrical Officer and Cdr R R Sood the Engineer Officer. The Supply Officer was at first Cdr Jimmy Martin and later Cdr Pramod Sharma. The team was very cohesive and they went into action in the 1971 war with the Fleet Staff embarked. Rear Admiral Kuruvilla was the Fleet Commander and Commander (later VAdm) Hiranandani was the Fleet Operations Officer. The ship operated on the Western Seaboard and it was then that so many notable actions took place, which included the loss of INS Khukri and the attack on Karachi harbour by missile boats in two separate operations.

After the war, Gullu was appointed CO of INS Deepak and subsequently Naval Officer in Charge, Kathiawar (Okha). Between 1977 and 1978 he underwent the National Defence College course in New Delhi, following which he was appointed as the CO of INS Agnibahu, with charge of the missile boat squadrons.

In 1982, he was promoted to Flag rank and his first appointment in this rank was the Chief of Staff of the Eastern Naval Command, under VAdm Micky Roy. Then, he held the hot post of ACNS (P&P) between 1983 and 1984 before being transferred to DSSC, Wellington, as Chief Instructor (Navy), a post he held from 1985 to 1986. He then applied for a deputation and was selected as CMD of Cochin Shipyard from 1987 to 1989, from where he retired.

On leaving the Navy, he first settled in Versova with his wife Kasturi. Fifteen years ago, he moved to his flat in Shangrila, located near the entrance of the Military Station in Colaba and very close to INHS Asvini. He and his good lady formed a bridge team and spent many happy hours in the US Club. His sons Alkesh and Hiresh, who have charted their own courses in the corporate world, also live in Mumbai.

His remains were cremated at the Chandanwadi crematorium with full naval honours as he was a gallantry award winner. Au revoir, Sir. May your soul rest in peace.

(My thanks to Admiral I C Rao and Gullu's coursemate Capt Raj Mahindra, who painstakingly helped me get this piece together, as well as Cdr Ranendranath 'Ronnie' Ghosh.)

*- Rear Admiral Alan O'Leary (Retd)*



## TRIBUTE

### THE PIONEER



I met Surgeon Commodore B N Sharma sometime in end September 1971. I had just joined INHS Asvini and was waiting in civil dress near the MI room. An officer called me out and asked whether I had graduated from Cambridge University. I told him that I had graduated from KMC and enquired why he thought I was a graduate of Cambridge. He laughed out loud and said that the tie I was wearing looked like the university tie. That was our introduction. Shortly thereafter, I was attached to the Radio Isotope Centre for a short training and found that he was a jovial and friendly person who would make everyone comfortable with his light banter.

Born in 1925, Surg Cmde Sharma hailed from a village in erstwhile Jodhpur state and graduated from Grant Medical College, Mumbai. He was commissioned on 1 February 1953 and after various appointments, he was deputed to the UK for a course in nuclear medicine at the University of Birmingham. He completed his MSc and obtained a doctorate, returning to INHS Asvini to establish the Department of Nuclear Medicine in 1965. He was a pioneer in the country in the speciality of nuclear medicine and the centre in Asvini was the sole one in the Armed Forces Medical Services. It became a state-of-the-art diagnostic centre and a therapeutic centre for thyroid disorders.

He was awarded the Vishisht Seva Medal (VSM) in 1974. After 24 years of distinguished service in the Navy, he joined Bombay Hospital in July 1977 to establish the Department of Nuclear Medicine and built up diagnostic and therapeutic capabilities in the hospital. Later, he was an honorary consultant to Bombay Port Trust Hospital for over a year.

Surg Cmde Sharma was a pillar of support for the Bombay Medical Congress, a unique society bringing Armed Forces medical professionals and civilian consultants together to exchange their experiences. Along with the late Surg RAdm D R F Pinto, he was instrumental in getting INHS Asvini recognised as a postgraduate centre in several disciplines. An active member of the Society of Nuclear Medicine, India, he served as its President in 1982. He was awarded the Rajasthan Shree in 1996 for his yeoman service.

Surg Cmde Sharma remained very much in the proximity of the Navy as he resided in an apartment complex on Pilot Bandar Road in Colaba, Mumbai. He stayed active even after his gradual withdrawal from active practice. I had the privilege of meeting him often after July 2002. Anyone calling on him enjoyed the hospitality, warmth and affection of Mrs and Cmde Sharma. Sadly, he became unwell and passed away on 8 August 2020. He leaves behind Mrs Sharma and Prof Arun Sharma, a renowned dental professional at the University of California, San Francisco.

We will miss Surg Cmde B N Sharma. May his soul rest in peace.

- Surgeon Vice Admiral V S Dixit (Retd)





## TRIBUTE IN MEMORIAM

**L**t (SDS) R K Moghe, VSM, expired on 18 August 2019 after a brief illness. He developed abdominal pain and was admitted to a local civil hospital in Bilaspur. He was over 90 years old.



He remained a bachelor and had settled down in Bilaspur after retirement. I used to speak to him at infrequent intervals to know about his health.

I met Lt R K Moghe during the first week of January 1975. He was my neighbour in the mess in Naval Park, Port Blair. He was an elderly person and generally reserved.

He served in Port Blair during 1974-76. If memory serves me right, he was posted to INS Jarawa as ASO (Vict) and tasked to establish the Base Victualling Yard. He then moved to Delhi sometime in 1976. He later retired from Headquarters Western Naval Command.

News of his sad demise may not have been known to many of his friends and colleagues. Though delayed, I thought it appropriate to pay my respects through these pages. May his soul rest in peace.

*- Surgeon Vice Admiral V S Dixit (Retd)*



# OBITUARIES

RANK	NAME	NOK	DoD	CONTACT DETAILS
Lt Cdr	Ravindra Shriniwas Albal	Lt Cdr Sachin Albal (Nephew)	02 Aug 20	Lt Cdr Sachin Albal ND School INS Vendurthy.
Lt Cdr	Gandharv Singh	Mr Rajesh Kanwar & Mr Rakesh Tanwar (both sons), Ms Rita Thakur & Ms Neelu Thakur (both daughters)	29 Nov 20	Mr Rakesh Kanwar, HNO 164, Tower 1, 6th Floor ATS Golf Meadows Lifestyle, Dera Bassi, Dist Mohali PB 140507 Mob: 7087629164 Email: rakeshanar1961@gmail.com
Lt Cdr	Basudeb Nag	Mrs Shyamulee (wife) Mrs Abhishek Nag & Mr Abhijit Nag (both sons)	15 Dec 20	Mrs Shyamulee Nag F/14, Maitree, Apartment 28 Jogen Roy Road, PO Talpukur Barrackpore 24 PGNS (N) West Bengal 700123 Mob: 9903787223 Email: shyamuleenag@gmail.com
Cdr	Anil Kumar Gulati	Mrs Anju Gulati (wife), Ms Nehu Gulati & Ms Megha Gulati (both daughters)	10 Jan 21	Mrs Anju Gulati 34, Urban Chimes, Pracruthik Vihar Phase 3, Yaprul Secunderabad 87 Mob: 9970803012 Email: gulati65@gmail.com
R Adm	OP Sharma	Mrs Usha Sharma (wife), Mr Sunil Sharma (son), Ms Naney Pandit & Ms Bindu Sharma -Sitaraman (both daughters)	25 Jan 21	Mrs Usha Sharma, E-7/11, Vasant Vihar Behind Modern School, New Delhi 110057 Mob: 9818436003 Email: bindumani2@gmail.com
Cdr	Shafi Sayed	Mrs Mamta Sayed (wife), Mrs Suhaile Azavedo (daughter)	02 Feb 21	Mrs Mamta Sayed, D9, Ashoka Apartment, 3 Naylor Road, Off Mangalas Road, Pune 411001 Mob: 9823026033, Email: mamtas@yahoo.com
Cmde	THR Iyer	Mrs Sasi Iyer (wife), Mr Rangarajan Sridhar (son) & Ms Hema Iyer (daughter)	05 Feb 21	Mrs Sasi Iyer c/o Mr Rangarajan Sridhar, 110/ 12, RS Nagar Near Sri Raansaramam, PO Chengam Road, Tiruvannamalai, Tamil Nadu 606603 Mob: 9952034292 Email: rj.sridhar@gmail.com
Surg V Adm	BK Rakshit	Mrs Suchitra Rakshit (wife) Two sons (residing In UK)	10 Feb 21	Mrs Suchitra Rakshit G 162, Jalvayu Vihar Sec 25, Noida Dadri Gautam, Buddha Nagar 201305
Cdr-At-Arms	Joseph Varughese	Mrs Sherly Varghese (wife), Mr Aaslesh Varghese (son)	11 Feb 21	Mrs Sherly Varghese Abhilash, Murickkethu House Maliakkal Roa, Thevara Kochi 682013, Mob: 8547304106 Email: sumathonduparambil@gmail.com
Cdr	KK Kandappu	Mrs Beena Krishnakutti (wife), Mr Vinod Krishnakutty (son) & Ms Latha Krishnakumar (daughter)	14 Feb 21	Mrs Beena Krishnakutty Mennabhavan, Vill Mayamkulam PO Elapully, Dist Palakkad Kerala 678622 Mob: 9387969350 Email: vinod1976@gmail.com
Lt Cdr	KL Sharma	Mrs Rama Sharma (wife), Mr Sanjeev Sharma, Mr Rajesh Sharma (both sons), Mrs Sushma Nair & Ms Vineeta Sharma (both daughters)	18 Feb 21	Mrs Rama Sharma Bldg, No D-1, Flat NO 14, Prem Park Ajmera Colony Pimpri, Pune 411018 Mob: 9822409304 Email: sharma.vini@gmail.com
Cmde	VK Kapur, VSM, YSM	Mrs Kusum Kapur (wife), Ms Preeti Khattar, Ms Pooja Kapur & Ms Tina Kapur (all daughters)	25 Feb 21	Mr Kusum Kapur, Lotus Boulevard Espacia, Sector 100, Tower 38, Flat No 103, Noida UP 201304 Mob: 9810462805 Email: vinod_20145@yahoo.com
Cdr	Swapnil Joginder Shelly	Mrs Smita Shelly (wife), Ms Freyah Shelly (daughter)	02 Mar 21	Mrs Smita Shelly, C804, Pluto Vasant Galaxy Complex Bnagar Nagar, MG Roa Extn Goregaon West Mumbai 400104 Mob: 9702003065 Email: smitashelly@gmail.com
Surg V Adm	OM Prakash Chawla, PVSM, AVSM	Mr Sanjay Chawla (son)	03 Mar 21	Mr Sanjay Chawla G 81, Jal Vayu Vihar, Sector 25, Gautam Buddh Nagar, Noida UP 201301 Mob: 9833088191 Email: sanjaychawla67@gmail.com
Cmde	GN Sreekumar	Mrs Nalini Sreekumar (wife), Mrs Priya Govin & Mrs Sandhya Sankar (both daughters)	07 Mar 21	Mrs Nalini Sreekumar, Block V109, 'Srivastava' First Floor, 6th Main Road, Anna Nagar Chennai 600040 Mob: 9840155681 Email: cnnalinisreekumar@gmail.com



RANK	NAME	NOK	DoD	CONTACT DETAILS
Cdr	Ashok Kumar Sharma	Mrs Meena Sharma	18 Mar 21	Mrs Meena Sharma, 111 E/9 Kishangargh Near MCD Chool Vasant Kunj New Delhi 110070 Mob: 9953226456 Email: meenajisharma07@gmail.com
Lt	Ghanisham Gandhi	Cdr AG Gandhi (Retd) (son), Mrs Usha Gulati & Mrs Lalita Minocha (both daughters)	19 Mar 21	Cdr AG Gandhi (Retd) F 1002, Jal Vayu Vihar Near SMM Shetty School Powai Mumbai 400076 Mob: 9867754537, Email: aashok.gandhi@gmail.com
Cdr	Arthur Joseph D'Cruz	Mrs Laurina F D'Cruz (wife), Mr Alan R D'Cruz (son)	23 Mar 21	Mr Laurina F D'Cruz, A 601, Green Palms Unri, Pune 411060 Mob: 9823095574 Email: laurindaftd@gmail.com
Lt	Sunny Jacob	Ms Vinia Nelliatt (daughter), Mr Sures Jacob, Mr Dennis Jacob & Mr Sherin Michael (all sons)	01 Apr 21	Ms Vinita Nelliatt, Anugraha, Chilimbi 3rd Cross Ashok Nagar Mangalore 575006 Mob: 9845693210 Email: vininelliatt@yahoo.co.in
Lt Cdr	Avadhesh Prasad	Mrs Sudha Prasad (wife), Mr Rahul Prasad (son), Ms Ila Chaturvedi Sarkar (daughter)	05 Apr 21	Mrs Sudha Prasad, L 256, Jal Vayu Vihar, Sector 25, Noida 201301, Mob: 8527486621 Email: sudha256@hotmail.com
Cdr	Suneet Ramachandra Paranjape	Mrs Anuprita Suneet Paranjape (wife), Ms Sheetal Joshi & Ms Neha Paranjape (both daughters)	06 Apr 21	Mrs Anuprita Suneet Paranjape B 602/603, Regalia, Deshmukh Residency, Ashok Van Behind Sawrashtia Patel Samj Hall Borivalli (East), Mumbai 400066 Mob: 9821399332 Email: anupritaparanjape@hotmail.com
Lt Cdr	Bharat Rao Ji Bhai Patel	Mrs Sheetal Bharat Patel (wife), Mr Neel Bharat Patel & Mr Moon Bharat Patel (both sons)	09 Apr 21	Mrs Sheetal Bharat Patel 9, Ravi Nagar Society Opposite ISKCON Temple Gotri Road, Vadodara Gujrat 390007, Mob: 9898220074, Email: sheetal1949@gmail.com
Cdr	Sushil Syal	Mrs Sneha Syal (wife), Mr Yash Syal (son), Ms Poonam Sharma & Ms Monica Gugnani (both daughters)	13 Apr 21	Mrs Sneha Syal, D-14, Green Park Extn, Hauz Khas South West Delhi New Delhi 110016 Mob: 9650413974 Email: yashsyal@rediffmail.com
Cdr	Nand Jee Upadhyay	Mrs Manju Upadhyay (wife), Mr Dushyant Upadhyay (son)	17 Apr 21	Mrs Manju Upadhyay, A 304, The Orien, Plot 12/13, Sector 20, Road Pali Kalamboli, Navi Mumbai Maharashtra 410218 Mob: 7020085579 Email: upadhyay.duhyant@yahoo.com
Cdr	Prakash Mehrotra	Ms Madhu Mehrotra & Ms Preeti Mehrotra (both sister)	19 Apr 21	Ms Madhu Mehrotra, Madhu Kunj KN Mehrotra Marg (Near JP Residency hotel) PO Bariowganj Dist Dehradun Mussoorie 248122 Mob: 03152631632 Email: madhum3@yahoo.co.uk
Capt	Sandeep Malik	Mrs Santosh Kumar Malik (wife), Mr Arnav Malik (son) Ms Aparna Malik (daughter)	20 Apr 21	Mrs Santosh Kumari Malik O-603, Jalvayu Towers (AFNHB), Sunny Enclave Sector 125 Kharar, SAS Nagar Mohali, Punjab 140301 Mob: 8860626185 Email: arnav.bits@gmail.com
Capt	Inderjit Singh Gandhiok	Mrs Harinder Gandhiok (wife), Ms Bineeta Malhotra & Ms Gitanjali Gandhiok (both daughters)	21 Apr 21	Mrs Harinder Gandhiok Flat No 9071, Sector C, Pocket 9, Vasant Kunj, New Delhi 110070 Mob: 9650638128, Email: hgandhiok@gmail.com
R Adm	Arun Auditto, AVSM, NM (G)	Mrs Ranjan Auditto (wife), Mr Debashish (son), Ms Mondira & Ms Gayatri (both daughters)	21 Apr 21	Mrs Ranjan Auditto, "White House", Gol Craft 91, Walkeshwar Road, Malabar Hill Mumbai 400006 Mob: 9821095923 Email: ranjanaarunauditto@yahoo.co.uk
Cdr	VK Kalra	Mrs Sunita Kalra (wife), Mr Dinesh K Kalra (son), Mrs Jyoti Kalra (daughter)	23 Apr 21	Mrs Sunita Kalra 4/28, Mehar Bagh, Sikanderpuri Dayalbagh, Agra, UP 282002, Mob: 9826965554 Email: jkalra1980@yahoo.com
Capt	Mohammed Sherfudeen	Mrs Suriya Begum (wife), Ms Nargis Banu & Ms Praveen Banu (both daughters)	25 Apr 21	Mrs Suriya Begum, 30 Tholkappier Street, 1st Floor Ashok Nagar Lawspet Puducherry 605008 Mob: 9372235554 Email: nargis.cumminsit@gmail.com
Cdr	Arvind Kumar Wilson	Mrs Nomita Wilson (wife), Amit Kunal Wilson & Mr Karan Wilson (both sons)	25 Apr 21	Mrs Nomita Wilson, 6-Bishop Rockey Street Faizabad Road, Lucknow 226007, Mob: 9936311177 Email: nomitawilson@gmail.com





RANK	NAME	NOK	DoD	CONTACT DETAILS
Cdr	Sudershan Kumar Jain	Mrs Savita Jain (wife), Mr Ankur Jain & Mr Amit Jain (both sons)	25 Apr 21	Mrs Savita Jain, 500-B, Beverly Park 1, MG Road DLF, Phase 2, Gurugram Haryana 122009, Mob: 981167XXXXXX
Cmde	Arun Kumar Sachdeva	Mrs Mridu Sachdev (wife), Mr Puneet Sachdeva (son), Ms Shikha Sachdeva (daughter)	26 Apr 21	Mrs Mridu Sachdev G-23, Sector 25, Jalvayu Vihar, Noida Mob: 9810727154 Email: mridu@asmlawoffices.com
Lt Cdr	Arun Kumar Mehra	Mrs Romi Mehra (wife), Ms Gauri Malhotra & Ms Radhika Mann (both daughters)	28 Apr 21	Mrs Romi Mehra, E 178, Naraina Vihar 1st Floor, New Delhi 110028 Mob: 7503291010 Email: arunm9807@gmail.com
Cdr	KC Kaushal	Mrs Kusum Kaushal (wife), Mrs Puja Ratra (daughter), Capt Ankush Kaushal (son)	28 Apr 21	Mrs Kusum Kaushal C 310, Vardhaman Apartment, Mayur Vihar Phase I Extn, Delhi 110091, Mob: 9818089420, Email: ankushkaushal23455@gmail.com
V Adm	Shriniwas Wamanrao Lakhkar, PVSM, NM (G), VSM	Mrs Pushpa Shriiwas Lakhkar (wife), Mr Prakash (son)	29 Apr 21	Mrs Pushpa Shriiwas Lakhkar 61, Juhu Shalimar Gulmohar Cross Roa 10, JVPD Mumbai 400049 Mob: 9930015591 Email: plakhkar@gmail.com
Cmde	Sukhjinder Singh	Ms Romal Ashit Suri, & Ms Komal Sethi (both daughter) Mr Harjinder Singh (son)	29 Apr 21	Mr Harjinder Singh Baba Ganganath Marg, HNO 15, Munirka Vihar South West Delhi 110067 Mob: 981882365 Email: harry_niran@yahoo.com
Cdr	Dwarka Dheesh Chopra	Mrs Neelam Chopra (wife), Mr Vishal Chopra & Mr Vikas Chopra (both sons)	05 May 21	Mrs Neelam Chopra Q213, Sector 21, Noida UP 201301 Mob: 9810994491 Email: vis.chopra@gmail.com
Lt Cdr	Ram Uar Sinha	Mrs Shanti Sinha (wife), Mr Prashant Kumar Sinha (son), Ms Pratibha Sinha (daughter)	05 May 21	Mrs Shanti Sinha, L 164, Sector 25, Jal Vayu Vihar, Noida Mob: 9868402560 Email: prashantkumarsinha@yahoo.co
Cdr	Govind Goel	Mrs Rachana Goel (wife), Mr Prateek Goel (son), Miss Pragati Goel (daughter)	07 May 21	Mrs Rachana Goel, H 1202, affoil, Jalvayu Vihar, Phase 1, Sector 20, Kharghar Navi Mumbai 410210, Mob: 9869688064 Email: rachanagoel7@gmail.com
Lt Cdr	Kalanidhi S	Mrs Kalavathi K (wife)	07 May 21	Mrs Kalavathi K C/o Cr A Selvarajan, NM (Retd) 51, Jal Vayu Vihar Madambakkam Chennai 600126 Mob: 9821920852
Cmde	Hari Mohan Lal Saxena	Mrs Indira Saxena (wife), Mr Ravi Saxena (son), Mrs Gita Saxena & Mrs Sangeeta Darbari (both daughters)	07 May 21	Mrs Indira Saxena, B 25, Mehdauri Colony, Telliarganj, Allahabad Prayagraj UP 211004 Mob: 9335153675 Email: 41gita@gmail.com
Lt Cdr	Amarjit Singh Natt	Mrs Gurmail Kaur (wife), Mr Ravinder Singh(son) & Ms Bhavishya Deep (daughter)	07 May 21	Mrs Gurmail Kaur A 98, Sector 23, Dist Gautam Buddh Nagar, Noida 201301 Mob: 9810538367 Email: ravinder.singh2202@gmail.com
Cdr	Rakesh Pandey	Mrs Chitra Pandey (wife), Capt Akaash Pandey (son) Ms Aakriti Pande (daughter)	09 May 21	Mrs Chitra Pandey, F-5, 50 Arjun Nagar Safdarjung Enclave, New Delhi 110029, Mob: 9868957562, Email: chitrapandey@mountcarmeldelhi.com
Capt	Arun Kumar Nandy	Mrs Ruma Nandy (wife), Ms Chanrima Bhattacharya (daughter), Mr Arijit Nandy (son)	09 May 21	Mrs Ruma Nandy 312, Manchahat Apartments Plot 42, Sector 10, Dwarka, Sector 10, Dwarka New Delhi 110075 Mob: 9818713150 Email: rumanandy58@gmail.com
Cdr	Devashish Chatterjee	Mrs Rinku Chatterjee (wife), Miss Swagata Chatterjee (daughter), Mr Utsav Chatterjee (son)	09 May 21	Mrs Rinku Chatterjee 90 Manhar Park, Opposite Novino Battery Novino-Tarsali Road, Vadodara 390010 Mob: 972657026 Email: gub.uts@gmail.com
Capt	Kailash Nath Zadu	Mr Om Bhardwaj (son)	11 May 21	Mr Om Bhardwaj Himgiri HNo 48, Behind Apple Valley Resorts Village Jarad, Tehsil, Bhunter, PO Shamshi HP 175126, Mob: 9816099032 Email: ombhardwaj@gmail.com
Capt	Shishir Kumar Bhatnagar	Mrs Anshu Bhatnagar (wife), Mr Somil Bhatnagar (son), Ms Somya Bhatnagar (daughter)	11 May 21	Mrs Anshu Bhatnagar, 1201, Tullip B Tower NO 13, Omaxe Residency R-1, Near Shaheed Path, Arjunganj, Lucknow Uttar Pradesh 226002 Mob: 8830606381 Email: sbhatnagar481@gmail.com



RANK	NAME	NOK	DoD	CONTACT DETAILS
Surg V Adm	Mahendra Vikram Singh, AVSM	Dr (Mrs) Archana Singh (wife), Ms Abhida Singh & Ms Alankrita Singha (both daughters)	14 May 21	Dr (Mrs) Archana Singh Flat NO B 215, (T2-2H), Rura Aakriti, Naini Post Allahabad, UP 211008, Mob: 9335113128, Email: singhabhiha06@gmail.com
Cdr	Inder Pal Singh Pantle	Mrs Gulshan Pantle (wife), Dr Rana Samuel (daughter), Capt PS Pantle (son)	16 May 21	Mrs Gulshan Pantle 322, Sector 37 Noida 201303 Mob: 7675953417, Email: pspantle@hotmail.com
Capt	Inderjit Singh Sandhu	Mrs Preet Sandhu (wife), Mr Zorawar Singh (son), Ms Anumeet Roy & Ms Upneet Hillebrand (both daughters)	17 May 21	Mrs Preet Sandhu Vihnaharta Enclave CHS, Rowhouse 12, Phase IV, Shilottar Raichur New Panvel 410206, Mob: 9821570198 Email: preetsandhu42@hotmail.com
Cdr	JP Shrivastava	Mrs Mamta Shrivastava (wife), Mr Aditya Shrivastava (son), Ms Nupur Shrivastava (daughter)	18 May 21	Mrs Mamta Shrivastava G-13, Sector 25, Jal Vayu Vihar Noida UP 201301 Mob: 9355133188 Email: adityashrivastavaa81@gmail.com
Lt Cdr	Chand Makandar	Mr Noorjahan Makaar (wife), Cr MA Makandar (Ret) (son), Mrs Nek Parvin Bandwal, Mrs Meharunisa & Mrs Shabana (all daughters)	19 May 21	Mrs Noorjahan Makandar, Makandar Villa At Post- Nainglaj Tah Chickoi Dist Belgavi, Karnataka 591238, Mob: 9423248228 Email: masifmakandar@gmail.com
Cdr	Bishan Singh Thapa	Mrs Kusum Thapa (wife)	24 May 21	Mrs Kusum Thapa, 13 Panditwari PO Prem Nagar Dehradun Uttarakhand 248007 Mob: 9820389924, Email: thapashanker@yahoo.com
Capt	C Stanley Joseph, VSM	Mrs Stanley John (wife), Ms Teresa Varman (daughter)	30 May 21	Mrs Stanley John, 8/316, Ferry Road, Cheranellor Kochi 682034 Mob: 9847806850, Email: marysjohn@gmail.com
Cdr	TK Sen	Mrs Shaswati Sen (wife), Dr Sushobhan Sen (son), Mrs Sushmita Sen (daughter)	08 Jun 21	Mrs Shaswati Sen 6-3-787, Flat No 507, Royal Pavilion, Ameerpet, Hyderabad Telangana 500016 Mob: 9392455267 Email: shaswatisen26@gmail.com
Cdr	P Jayaprakash	Mrs Mini Menon (wife), Mrs Namrata Prakash (daughter), Mr Nikhil Prakash (son)	22 Jun 21	Mrs Mini Menon, J-401, AFNH Enclave, Athipalayam Pirivu, Ganapathy, Coimbatore, Tamil Nadu 641006 Mob: 9487601263, Email: miniprakashmenon@gmail.com
Cdr	Kuldeep Singh Sumbria	Mrs Reeta Sumbria (wife), Ms Nandita Sumbria Singh & Ms Rachita Sumbria Kulkarni (both daughters)	27 Jun 21	Mrs Reeta Sumbria , A 1003, Chaturbhuj Plot No 61/ 62, Sector 21, Navi Mumbai 410210 Mob: 9820280764, Email: sumbriareeta59@gmail.com
Lt	NGK Nair	Mrs K Sathiabhamma (wife), Capt Haridas M (Retd) (son), Ms M Radhika & M Sreedevi (both daughters)	28 Jun 21	Mrs K Sathiabhamma Mathilakath House Adat PO Thrissur Kerala 680551, Mob: 8086240857, Email: mathiklakathradhika@gmail.com
Surg R Adm	Indru Karnani	Mrs Marlene Indru Karnani (wife), Mrs Nisha Narula & Mrs Shalini Gurnani (both daughters)	28 Jun 21	Mrs Marlene Indru Karnani C 2/5, Salunke Vihar Army Welfare Co-Op Housing Society Pune 411022 Mob: 8605647664 Email: marlenekarnani@yahoo.com
Cmde	Man Singh	Mrs Madhu Man Singh (wife), Mr Manmeet Singh (son)	10 Jul 21	Mrs Madhu Man Singh, M-304, Jasmine Building Jalvayu Defence Enclave, Phase 1, Sector 20, Near Ship Chowk Kharghar, Navi, Mumbai 410210 Mob: 9892253014 Email: manmeet.singh24@gmail.com
Cmde	Makarand Sitaram Joshi, NM, VSM	Mr Parag Makaran Joshi (son)	22 Jul 21	Mr Parag Makarand Joshi B-3, 1103, Parsvanath Exotica, Golf Course Road Sector 53, Gurgaon 122003, Mob: 8698227111, Email: paragjoshi11@rediffmail.com
Cmde	MVS Kumar, VSM	Mrs Moparthy Bharati Devi (wife), Mr Jhashanka Meka & Mr Hareesh Meka (both sons)	23 Jul 21	Mrs Moparthy Bharati Devi, 7-126/1, Tarang, Near Sai Baba Temple Beside Agapa Church Tekallapadu Village, Pedkakani Mandal Guntur Distrcit 522509 Mob: 9652240460 Email: jhashanka@gmail.com
Cdr	Surinder Singh	Mrs Paramjit (wife), Lt Col Manpreet Singh (son), Ms Simran Singh (daughter)	27 Jul 21	Mrs Paramjit 15, The Mall Opp DC Residence, Karnal Haryana 132001, Mob: 9896082894 Email: surinder249@gmail.com
Surg Cdr	Parthasarathy Gopalan	Mrs (Dr) Shailaja Parthasarathy (wife), Ms Shruti Parthasarathy (daughter)	28 Jul 21	Mrs (Dr) Shailaja Parthasarathy, G 55, 5th Floor, G Block, D & K City, Minnie Bay Port Blair, South Andmans A & N Island 744103 Mob: 9868224824, Email: pshailaja@gmail.com





RANK	NAME	NOK	DoD	CONTACT DETAILS
Lt Cdr	Kailash Prasad Singh	Mrs Shakuntala Singh (ife), Col NK Singh & Col SK Singh (both sons), Mrs Sulakshna Shahi (daughter)	01 Aug 21	Mrs Shakuntala Singh 155, Defence Colony, Kalarheri Roa Kalarheri Ambala (HR) Mob: 9671302963 Email: cooldudeadventure@gmail.com
Cdr	Sam Vazeer Mohamed, NM	Mrs Zeenath Vazeer (wife), Ms Farzana & Ms Reehana (daughters)	02 Aug 21	Mrs Zeenath Vazeer Argent 905, PBEL City Thaiyur OMR Chennai 603103, Mob: 9600020794 Email: zeenathvazeer@gmail.com
Surg Capt	Amiya Chandra Rath	Mrs Gayatri Rath (wife), Mr Ratan Rath (son), Ms Kanchan Rath (daughter)	04 Aug 21	Mrs Gayatri Rath Plot No 37, Aryapalli 37, KIIT Square, Patia, Bhubaneswar 751024 Mob: 8826688067, Email: ratanrath56@gmail.com
Cmde	Anil Dabir	Mrs (Dr ) Saral Dabir (wife), Ms Surabhi Dabir (daughter)	05 Aug 21	Mrs (Dr) Saral Dabir, 501, Shri Mohanraj Apts, Wing B, Kharetown Dharampeth, Nagpur 440010, Mob: 9820926125 Email: dabirsurabhi@yahoo.com
Lt Cdr	AVM Nambiar	Mrs Saroja Nambiar(wife), Ms Rema Nambiar & Ms Latha Suresh (both daughters)	06 Aug 21	Mrs Saroj Nambiar NO 11, Megha Homes, Nirman Shelters, Koppa Road Jigani, Bangalore 5600105 Mob: 9740650295 Email: mohandasrema@gmail.com
Cmde	KP Gopal Rao, MVC, VSM	Mrs KP Radha Rao (wife), Mr KP Vinay Rao (son), Ms KP avita Rao & Ms Tara Rao (both daughters)	09 Aug 21	Mrs KP Radha Rao, NO 1, Sriram Nagar North Street TTK Road, Alwarpet, Chennai 600018 Mob: 9884974498 Email: motherssavita@gmail.com
R Adm	Kirpal Singh	Mrs Manjit Kirpal Singh (wife), Ms Prabha Chanran, Ms Kamal Malhi& Ms Sunita Maclaren (all daughters), Mr Satpal Singh & Mr Navpreet Singh (both sons)	10 Aug 21	Mrs Manjit Kirpal Singh, The Laburnum LCG03PHA, Sushant Lok, Block A, Sector 28, Gurgaon 122002 Mob: 9820285018, Email: kirpal1925@gmail.com
Lt Cdr	VK Nair	Mrs TP Karthie K Nair (wife), Mr Vinod Varapravan & Cdr VK Manoj (Retd) (both sons), Ms Leena VK (daughter)	12 Aug 21	Mrs TP Karthie K Nair 28/ 2858 Malvika Vikas Nagar, Chilavanoor, Kadavanthra Ernakulam, Kochi Kerala 682020 Mob: 9746422277 Email: veekay.karthie@yahoo.co.in
Cdr	S Krishnamurthi	Mr Ravi Shankar, Mr Shiv Kumar and Mr Mohan Raj (all sons)	16 Aug 21	Mr Mohan Raj Krishnamurthi B 1503, DNR Atmosphere 231/ 66, Varthur Main Road Ramagondanahalli Bengaluri 560066 Mob: 9962051478 Email: mrkg3sd@gmail.com
Capt	PP Soman	Mrs Smita Soman (wife), Mr Bhaskar Soman (son), Lt Cdr Gauri Soman (daughter)	24 Aug 21	Mrs Smita Soman, Flat No 302, B Block Perfect Kalakruti 301 V, Goyal Vihar Khajrana, Indore Madhya Pradesh 452016 Mob: 9158330556, Email: gauri1290@gmail.com
Cdr	Mohammed H UR Ramhan	Mrs Tanveer Rahaman (wife), Mrs Waseem UR Rahman (son), Ms Humairah Rahaman (daughter)	09 Sep 21	Mrs Tanveer Rahman Flat No 405, Harmony Prestige 10-3-314, Masab Tank Near NMDC, Asifnagar, Vijay Nagar Colony, Hyderabad Telangana 5000
Capt	SS Sathyanarayana	Mr Kavitha Sathyanarayana (wife), Ms Vibha SS & Ms Vismitha SS (both daughters)	23 Sep 21	Mrs Kavitha Sathyanarayana A401, Veracious Vanivilas Doddaballapura Roa Opp CRPF Campus Yelahanka New Tow Bangalore 560064 Mob: 9886576879 Email: kavithasn18@gmail.com
Lt Cdr	Jaya Krishna Joshi	Mrs Kalyani Joshi (wife), Capt Sanjit Joshi & Mr Sambit Joshi (both sons)	05 Oct 21	Mrs Kalyani Joshi HIG 32, Kanan Vihar Phase 1, At PO Patia Bhubaneshwar 750031 Mob: 9437356500 Email: jkalyani2016@gmail.com
Cdr	Arun Rao	Ms Anjali Desai (daughter), Mr Taej Mundkur (son)	15 Oct 21	Ms Anjali Desai Flat 401, 124/9 Varija Building Phatehlal Path, Erandwane, Pune 411004 Mob: 9049050806 Email: sava4@hotmail.com
Capt	Suresh Bahadur	Mr Anjali Bagadur (wife), Mr Devashih Chanra (son)	22 Oct 21	Mrs Anjali Bahadur, G 247, Jal Vayu Vihar Plot -08, Pocket P4, Builders Area Greater Noia UP 201308 Mob: 7702355227, Email: devashish.chandra@outlook.com
R Adm	Harish Chand Malhotra	Mrs Pamela Malhotra (wife), Mr Sharad Malhotra & Sanjay Malhotra (both sons)	22 Oct 21	Mrs Pamela Malhotra, 14-A, Green View Apartments, Sector 15-A, Noida UP 201301 Mob: 9953525252 Email: 7.sharad@gmail.com





RANK	NAME	NOK	DoD	CONTACT DETAILS
Cdr	Sanjeev Kumar Boparai	Mrs Manisha Boparai (wife), M Anaaya Boparai(daughter), Master Kabeer Singh Boparai (son)	22 Oct 21	Mrs Manisha Boparai Lily 401, Jalvayu Vihar Phase I, Sector 20 Kharghar, Navi Mumbai, 410210 Mob: 9971546200 Email: manisha.boparai@gmail.com
Lt Cdr	HS Hira	Mrs Harbhajan Kaur Hira (wife), Mr Jyotipal Singh Hira (son), Ms Esha Dorwani & Ms Harpeet Kaur Hira (both daughters)	04 Nov 21	Mrs Harbhajan Kaur Hira 103-A, Matrudeep, Parshwa Nagar Behind Old Petrol Pump Mira Bhayandar Road Mira Road (E), Thane, Mumbai 401107 Mob: 9892180124, Email: jpsh_12@yahoo.com
Cdr	Mohan N Nair	Mrs Vineeta Nair (wife), Ms Anahita Nair and Ms Malvika Nair (both daughters)	05 Nov 21	Mrs Vineeta Nair 1904, 2/D, HDIL Dreams Co-Op Housing Society OFF LBS Marg, Bhandup West Mumbai 400078 Mob: 8200992678, Email: vidanair@hotmail.com
Lt	Shivashankar Srinivas Karnad	Mrs Mukta Karnad (wife), Mr Sharadkumar S Karnad (son), Mrs Sadhana S Bailur (daughter)	27 Nov 21	Mrs Mukta Karnad, A 201, Meadows, Paitona, Salvador Do Mundo Goa 403101 Mob: 8600860123 Email: sharadkarnad@gmail.com
Cdr	Gulshan Kumar Malhotra	Mrs Kamal Malhotra (wife), Dr Varun Malhotra & Mr Tarun Malhotra (both sons)	27 Nov 21	Mrs Kamal Malhotra, J117, Sector 25, Gautam Budh Nagar, Noida 201301, UP, Mob: 9810515888 Email: tarunmalhotra24@gmail.com
Cmde	Sarvadeo Sharma	Mrs Santosh Sharma (wife), Ms Shalley Dash & Ms Harshita Mahajan (both daughters)	14 Dec 21	Mrs Santosh Sharma G 49, Sector 25, Jal Vayu Vihar Noida 201301 Mob: 9971888226, Email: sarvadeo_sharma@yahoo.com
Lt Cdr	RM Sundaram	Mrs Rajeswari S (wife), Dr Mini Sundaram (daughter) & Mr Rajasimman Sundaram (son)	20 Dec 21	Mr Rajeswari S, No 17, II Cross Street Bassi Reddy Layout (Near Hoodi Railway Station) Mahadevapura Post (KR Puram) Banalore Karnataka 560048 Mob: 9443670285 Email: sminibala@yahoo.com,
Cmde	Hem Chandra Joshi	Mr Vikram Joshi (nephew)	23 Dec 21	Mr Vikram Joshi B-7, Flat No T1, Ramprasth Colony Ghaziabad 201011 (UP), Mob: 9560075128 Email: vikram.joshi@gmail.com
Surg Cdr	Suresh Kumar Arora	Mrs (Dr ) Janki Arora (wife)	25 Dec 21	Mrs (Dr) Janki Arora 27/1, Gokhale Marg Jopling Road (Next to Hotel Sagar International) Lucknow 226001 Mob: 9335209092 Email: rskarora@gmail.com
Cdr	KV Subbarao	Mrs Kurga Pravali (wife), Ms Madhurima Rao Kallakuri & Ms Anupama Rao Kallakuri (both daughters)	01 Jan 22	Mrs K Durga Pravali D-804, Mandavi Emerald End Point Road, Manipal Udupi Karnataka 576104 Mob: 9910839690 Email: anurao78@gmail.com
Cdr	MA Somana	Mrs Waikam Somana (wife), Mr Siddhartha Somana & Mr Sudershan Somana (both sons)	01 Jan 22	Mrs Waikam Somana, 62/6 10th Cross, Emerald Enclave, Hoogalli, Mysore 570018, Mob: 9880651619 Email: waikamsomana@gmail.com
Cmde	AR Ravindra	Mrs Chitra Kumari Ravi (wife), Dr Praveen Arany (son), Ms Sapna Khadilkar (daughter)	03 Jan 22	Mrs Chitra Kumari Ravi M10, Royal Heritage, Old Madras Roa Bangalore 16, Mob: 9880256875 Email: sapna.khadilkar@gmail.com
V Adm	Sri Harilal Sarma, PVSM	Mr Navin Chandra Sarma & Mr Dinabandhu Sarma (both sons), Ms. R Nirupama Mishra & Dr Manoraman Hermon (both daughters)	03 Jan 22	Mr Navin Chandra Sarma , Navy House A-9, Nilkanth Nagar, Bhubaneswar Odisha 751012 Mob: 9861263499/ 933823260 Email: navinsarma@hotmail.com
Lt	Suvesh Kumar Mitter, VrC	Mrs Manjira Mitter (wife) Mr Sayak Kumar Mitter (son)	04 Jan 22	Mrs Manjira Mitter 10/D, Puddapukur Road, Bhowanipur Kolkata 700020, Mob: 8777765148 Email: manjiramitter1954@gmail.com
Cdr	Teck Sharma	Mrs Sharma Sharma, (wife), Mr Tarun Sharma (son), Ms Deepa Thakore (daughter)	04 Jan 22	Mrs Sharda Sharma, 201, Beach Haven II, Juhu Mumbai 400049, Mob: 9920830283 Email: ttsharma@gmail.com,
Cmde	Madampath Suresh Menon	Mrs Vimala Menon (wife), Mr Ashwin Menon & Mr Satyajit Menon (both sons)	07 Jan 22	Mrs Vimala Menon, 286, Vakil Satellie Township Muthanallur Post, Gopasandra Gate Bangalore 560099 Mob: 988644748 Email: veemenon@gmail.com



RANK	NAME	NOK	DoD	CONTACT DETAILS
Cdr	RS Sharma	Mrs Usha Sharma (wife), Mr Manish Shama & Mr Mohit Sharma (both sons), Ms Mridula Joshi (daughter)	10 Jan 22	Mrs Usha Sharma, D92/93, 6th Floor Jaynagar Building Near Jan Kalyan Nagar, Off Marve Road, Malad West Mumbai 400095 Mob: 9892815570 Email: usha@erponweb.com,
R Adm	Rajendra Rai Sood, NM, VSM	Mrs Sheila Sood (wife), Col Sudhir Sood (Retd) & Mr Sunil Sood (both sons) and Ms Poona Sood (daughter)	10 Jan 22	Mrs Sheila Sood, L 701, Ambience Lagoon Apartments NH8, Gurugram 122002 Mob: 9811445921 Email: sdhrood@yahoo.co.in
Cdr	RS Pillai	Mrs Jyothi S Pillai (wife), Ms Abhilasha Narasimhan (daughter), Mr Anand Pillai (son)	12 Jan 22	12 Jan 22 Mrs Jyothi S Pillai 298, 9th Road, Defence Layout Viaryanapura Bangalore 560097 Mob: 9538955889 Email: anand.pillai@icloud.com
Cdr	VP Vijayaraghava	Mrs Shyamalam Vijayaraghava (wife), Mr Anand Vijayaraghava & Mr Avinash Vijayaraghava (both sons) Ms Padmini Sanjay (daughter)	20 Jan 22	Mrs Shyamala Vijayaraghava, 104, Challenger -3, Thakur Village Kandivli (E), Mumbai 400101 Mob: 8056195818 Email: shyamala.vijayaraghava@gmail.com
Cdr	Virendra K Mohan, VSM	Mr Vipul Mohan (son), Ms Vinita (daughter)	27 Jan 22	Mr Vipul Mohan, D5, 601-602, Krishna Kaveri CHS, Yamuna Nagar, Andheri West Mumbai 400053 Mob: 9819074601 Email: vipulmohan18@gmail.com,
Lt Cdr	Hari Narayanan Vazhayil	Mrs KP Usha (wife), Ms Deepthi Narayanan & Ms Deepa Narayanan (daughters), Mr Dheeraj Narayanan (son)	05 Feb 22	Mrs KP Usha 111, Harshada Puzhakkarpadam Lane, Allinchudvadu, Vennala, Cochin 682028 Mob: 9847082913 Email: kpusha159@gmail.com,
Cdr	Suresh Chand	Mrs Vidya Chand (wife)	08 Feb 22	Mrs Vidya Chand, 3 Guruprasad Kunj, 112/6, Anand Colony, Erandawana, Pune 411004 Email: gaurika1@hotmail.com
Cdr	Prem K Behal	Mrs Kanta Behal (wife)	09 Feb 22	Mrs Kanta Behal Sector 107, Great Value Sharnam, Tower R Flat NO 603, Noia 201304 Mob: 9873245787 Email: behalprekanta@gmail.com
Cmde	Probir Kumar Mukherjee	Mrs Prema Mukherjee (daughter), Mr Rajat Pritam Mukherjee (son)	10 Feb 22	Mrs Prema Mukherjee, C 29, Jal Vayu Vihar Salt Lake, Sector 3, Kolkata 700106, Mob: 9769006118 Email: prema.mukherjee@gmail.com,
Cdr	Harish Kumar Sharma	Mrs Anju Sharma (wife), Mr Arjun Sharma (son)	10 Feb 22	Mrs Anju Sharma Flat 114, DDA SFS, Pocket 4 Sector 12, Dwarka New Delhi 110078 Mob: 997162292 Email: anju.sharma6403@gmail.com
Cdr	Anup Prakash Das	Mrs Sutapa Das (wife), Mr Abheek Anustap Das & Mr Surjodeep Anustap Das (both sons)	10 Feb 22	Mrs Sutapa Das, Europa B 1703, Casabela Gold Palava City, Near Xperia Mall Dombivli East, Dist Thane Mumbai 421204 Mob: 9869731036 Email: abhidods93@gmail.com
Cdr	PM Arif	Mrs Sahana Arif (wife), Mrs Taania Rizwan & Ms Tammana Arif (both daughters)	13 Feb 22	Mrs Sahana Arif A1/804, HEM Portal Opposite Talab Factory Kondhwa Bahruk Kondhwa Pune 411048
Lt Cdr	Shankar Nath Banerjee	Mrs Nandini Nandy & Mrs Chandrani Chatterjee (both daughters)	14 Feb 22	Mrs Nandini Nandy Flat H3, Aparna Apartments, 24, Baishnab Ghata Road Kolkata 700047 Mob: 9051177780 Email: nandininandy@yahoo.co.in
Cmde	KN Tandon	Mrs Pratima Tandon (wife), Mr Depesh Tandon (son) and Ms Ruchika Mehrotra (daughter)	16 Feb 22	Mrs Pratima Tandon, A-7, Sector 21, Jal Vayu Vihar Noida 201301, Mob: 9999619194 Email: tandondepesh@yahoo.com
Lt Cdr	Ashutosh Balichwal	Mrs Santosh Balichwal (wife), Mr Anubhav Balichwal (son)	17 Feb 22	Mrs Santosh Balichwal, Flat No 1101, Tower No 1, Sagar Darshan CHS Sector 18, Nerul (West) Navi Mumbai 400706 Mob: 9820035851 Email: sbalichwal@yahoo.com
Lt Cdr	PNKG Pillai	Mrs Komalam Pillai (wife), Ms Divya Pillai (daughter)	18 Feb 22	Mrs Komalam Pillai, 3-285/4, 3rd Cross Hastinapuri, Sainikpuri Hyderabad 500094 Mob: 7799993968 Email: hvannadil@gmail.com





RANK	NAME	NOK	DoD	CONTACT DETAILS
Cdr	Sankar Dasgupta	Mr Satyajit Dasgupta & V Adm B Dasgupta, AVSMM, YSM, VSM (both sons)	28 Feb 22	Mr Satyajit Dasgupta, 261/ 11 Prince Anwar Shah Road Kolkata 700033 Mob: 9477040213 Email : shottojeet@gmail.com
Cdr	SC Dua	Mrs Usha Dua (wife), Mr Ankush Dua & Mr Adesh Dua (both sons)	06 Mar 22	Mrs Usha Dua, HNo 383, Sector 23, Gurgaon 122017, Mob: 9811559383/ 9899102871 Email: subhashchanddua@gmail.com
Cmde	Vijay Chaturvedi	Mrs Nilu Chaturvedi (wife), Mr Vipul Chaturvedi (son) Ms Richa Chaturvedi (daughter)	12 Mar 22	Mrs Nilu Chaturvedi, D 304, Kaveri Apartment Alaknanda New Delhi 110019 Mob: 9811955588, Email: nilu.chaturvedi55@gmail.com
Capt	Virendra Singh	Mrs Denise Singh (wife), Ms Anisha Singh (daughter)	19 Mar 22	Mrs Denise Singh, 902, Near IFFCO Chowk, Sector 17-B, Gurugram Haryana 122007 Mob: 9871427111 Email: dsingh4521@yahoo.co.in
Cdr	BG Noronha	Mrs Claire Noronha (wife), Mr Nitin Prabhu (son), Ms Malti Prabhu & Ms Meghna Prabhu (both daughters)	21 Mar 22	Mrs Claire Noronha, B 255, Greater Kailash – I, New Delhi 110047, Mob: 9811550720 Email: clairenoronha@gmail.com
Cmde	Jai Nath Misra	Mr Rohit Misra (son) & Ms Nirvana Misra (daughter)	24 Mar 22	Mr Rohit Misra, 464 D, Jal Vayu Vihar Kalyan Nagar Bangalore 560043 Mob: 9880462655 Email: rohit.misra.mail@gmail.com
Cmde	Beni Madhav Saha	Mrs Sipra Saha (wife), Mr Eshan Madhav Saha (son)	27 Mar 22	Mrs Sipra Saha, Idea Apartments, 152 Raja Rajendra Lal Mitra Road Block A, Flat VI-C, Kolkata 700010 Mob: 9051358584 Email: eshanmsaha@gmail.com
Cdr	Ram Singh	Mrs Varinder Kaur Parmar (wife), Mr Manu Parmar (son) & Ekta Parmar (daughter)	30 Mar 22	Mrs Varinder Kaur Parmar Tower 13-104, Shriram Chirpingwoods, 12th Main, Shubh Enclave Off Harlur Road, Bangalore 560102 Mob: 8968584473 Email: kaurvarinder1952@gmail.com
Cmde	PK Ramaswamy	Mr Murali Ramaswamy & Cmde Sridar Ramaswamy (both sons)	07 Apr 22	Cmde Sridar Ramaswamy Logistics Officer-in-Charge, Naval Pension Office, C/o INS Tanaji Sion Trombey Road Mankhur Mumbai 400088, Mob: 8800712395 Email: sridarramaswamy@gmail.com
Capt	Joginder Singh	Mrs Surinder J Singh (wife), Ms Simrat Preet Kaur, Ms Aditi Preet Kaur (both daughters)	07 Apr 22	Ms Simrat Preet Kaur Joshi, Indian Institute of Art & Design, B 26 Okhla, Estate, Marg Pocket B, Okhla Phase 1, Okhla Industrial Estate New Delhi 110020, Mob: 9810660491, Email: simratjoshi@gmail.com
Cdr	Vinod Kumar Chadha	Mrs Indira Chadha (wife), R Adm Manish Chadha & Mr Rohit Chadha (both sons)	12 Apr 22	Mrs Indira Chadha, M 311, Sector 25, Jalvayu Vihar Noida 201301 Mob: 9871233176 Email: chads2001@hotmail.com
Cdr	Harpreet Singh	Mr Samir Singh & Mr Gaurav Singh (both sons)	24 Apr 22	Mr Samir Singh, 1 Stephan Crane Way Morristown, New Jersey (NJ) 079960 USA Mob: 9310768634 Email: samir.singh@gmail.com,
Lt Cdr	Rajender Singh Bajwa	Mr Jasbir Singh Bajwa (son)	13 May 22	Mr Jasbir Singh Bajwa, E 179, Jalvayu Vihar Sector 21, Noida 201301 Mob: 9845718469 Email: jsb1964@gmail.com
Cdr (SDG)	AS Minhas	Mrs Kuldeep Kaur (wife), Cdr Manjeet Singh, Mr Gautam Singh & Mr. Bawa Singh (sons)	13 May 22	Mrs Kuldeep Kaur, 23 Panch Rattan Colony, PO PAP Lines, Jalandhar Cantt, Punjab 144006, Mob: 8146964942 Email: gene_in@yahoo.co.uk
Cdr-At-Arms	Puran Chandra Bisoi	Mrs Rita Bisoi (wife) Mr Praveen Bisoi & Mr Prashant Bisoi (both sons)	16 May 22	Mrs Rita Bisoi K423, Raghunath Vihar (AWHO), Sector 14, Kharghar Navi Mumbai, Raigar 410210 Mob: 9867611473 Email: Praveen.bisoi@gmail.com
Cdr	Rakesh Kapahi	Mrs Renu Kapahi (wife), Capt Rohit Kapahi & Capt Romit Kapahi (sons)	22 May 22	Mrs Renu Kapahi B1-903, Uniworld City, Sector 30, Gurgaon, Haryana 122001 Mob: 9810409373 Email: rohitkapahi@yahoo.com





RANK	NAME	NOK	DoD	CONTACT DETAILS
Cdr	P Lakshman	Mrs Revathi Lakshman (wife), Mr Anil Bahuman (sons)	27 May 22	Mrs Revathi Lakshman, 1029, Panchmantra Road, Kuvempunager, Mysore 570023 Mob: 9833864989, Email: anil.bahuman@gmail.com
Lt Cdr (SDC)	Jagbir Singh	Mrs Prabhjit Kaur (wife), Mr Harinder Singh (son), Ms. Harvinder Suri & Ms. Harjinder Kaur (both daughters)	29 May 22	Mrs Prabhjit Kaur HNO 2106, Jal Vayu Vihar, Sector 67, SAS Nagar Mohali, Punjab 160062 Mob: 9419835524 Email: prabhjit@gmail.com,
Lt Cdr	Umed Singh	Mr Jai Singh (son), Mrs Vijaya Kothari, Mrs Meenu Kadian & Mrs Banita Kothari (all daughters)	29 May 22	Mrs Banita Kothari Flat No 416, Block E, Jalvayu Towers, Sector 56, Gurugram 122011 Mob: 9757437539 Email: kotharibhi@gmail.com
Capt	Bakshish Singh Bhinder	Mrs Karamjit Kaur Bhinder (wife), Mrs Amandeep Bhinder & Mr Harshdeep Bhinder (sons)	30 May 22	Mrs Karamjit Kaur Bhinder, 501, Essen Whispering Willow, Chicalim Goa 403711 Mob: 9420213971 Email: harshdeepbhinder08@yahoo.com
Lt Cdr	Santosh Kumar Sanyal	Mrs Tapasree Sanyal (wife), Mr Indrajit Sanyal (son)	04 Jun 22	Mrs Tapasree Sanyal F-1/4, Sector 5, CBD Belapur Navi Mumbai 400614, Mob: 9869397030 Email: oceanent73@gmail.com
Cdr	AP Narasimha Rao	Mrs A Anuradha (wife) Mr Saikishore Annamaraju (son) & Ms. Sharada Annamaraju (daughter)	05 Jun 22	Mrs A Anuradha Rao, H No 57, Jal Vayu Vihar, Kukatpally, Hyderabad 85 Mob: 9966651375 Email: raoanuradha1962@gmail.com,
Cdr	RK I Narayanan	Mrs Ratnam Ramakrishna Iyer (wife), Mr Vaidyanath Ramakrishna (son) and Ms Ramya Ramakrishna (daughter)	11 Jun 22	Mrs Ratnam Ramakrishna Iyer, B1202, Komarla Brigade Residency, 51 Utarahalli Main Road, Bangalore 560061 Mob: 9483204018/ 9243195049 Email: ratnam_iyer@yahoo.com
Surg Cdr	KV Suryanarayana	Mrs Rekha Suryanarayana Kallakuri (wife)	19 Jun 22	Mrs Rekha Suryanarayana Kallakuri, A 601, Kaveri, Lok Upvan P1, Majiwada, Thane (W) 400610 Mob: 9819796511 Email: opalrekha46@gmail.com
Lt	Ashok Madhav Soman	Mrs Aparna Soman (wife), Mrs Archana Deshpande (daughter)	28 Jun 22	Mrs Aparna Soman Building No. 83, Flat No 502, Prism Society, Aundh Pune 411007 Mob: 9850525845 Email: jyoti554@rediffmail.com
Cdr	BM Dimri	Mrs Dr Asha Dimri (wife), Mr Mohit Dimri and Mr Shobit Dimri (both sons)	12 Jul 22	Mrs Dr Asha Dimri, M 234, Sector 25, Noida 201301 Mob: 9968097088 Email: dimri061@gmail.com/ mohitdimri40@gmail.com
Capt	Vijay Kumar Patel	Mrs Chitra Patel (wife), Ms Meghmala Tyagi an Ms Shakuntala Patel (both daughters)	20 Jul 22	Mrs Chitra Patel Plot 428/658 PO Sasan Near Amruta Nursing Home Debeipali, Sambalpur, Odisha 768200 Mob: 8830875764 Email: shakuntalapatel@gmail.com
Cdr	Ashok Kumar Pillai	Mrs Seema Pillai (wife), Lt Cdr Anushka Pillai (Retd) (daughter)	02 Aug 22	Mrs Seema Pillai, 5D White Waters, PK Road, Thevara, Kochi 682013 Mob: 7907591048 Email: seemapillai30@gmail.com
Lt Cdr	Rajendran Swaminathan	Mrs Shobhana Rajendran (wife) Mr Girish Rajendran (son)	05 Aug 22	Mrs Shobhana Rajendran P1, 101-102 Oxford Village Premiums, Wanawadi Pune 411040 Mob: 8407917707, Email: klmpklump@yahoo.co.in
Cdr	Raja Shekar Kumar Ratnam	Mrs Rita Ratnam (wife) Ms Rosita Ratnam, Ms Anita Ratnam & Ms Junita Fernandez (all daughters)	08 Aug 22	Mrs Rita Ratnam, Sector D, Pocket 3, Flat No 3602, Vasant Kunj New Delhi 110070 Mob: 9910767549 Email: rratnam31@gmail.com
Cmde	Mahesh Chandra Goel	Cdr Piyush Goel, NM (Retd) & Mr Vivek Goel (both sons)	08 Aug 22	Cdr Piyush Goel, NM (Retd) L200, Sector 25, Noida UP 201301 Mob: 9968467986 Email: ppgl26feb@grediffmail.com
Cdr	Trilochan Singh Bhatia	Mrs Kuljeet Kaur Bhatia (wife), Ms Srijan Kaur Bhatia & Ms Kudrat Kaur Bhatia (both daughters)	08 Aug 22	Mrs Kuljeet Kaur Bhatia A 913, Jalvayu Towers Sector 47, Noida Near Jagran Public School Uttar Pradesh 201301 Mob: 8826204003/ 7738269095 Email: kuljeetk3011@gmail.com,



RANK	NAME	NOK	DoD	CONTACT DETAILS
Cdr	UK Pisharody	Mrs Madhavikutty Pisharody (wife), Cmde Vijay Kumar Pisharody & Capt Vinod Kumar Pishardoy (both sons) Ms Usha Pisharoy (daughter)	14 Aug 22	Mrs Madhavikutty Pisharody, Arakavpisharam, Cherpal, Cheri Palakkad, Kerala 679503 Mob: 0466-2282361
V Adm	MB Ghosh, PVSM, AVSM, NM	Mrs Sulapa Ghosh (wife)	19 Aug 22	Mrs Sulapa Ghosh, H 1459, 2nd Floor, CR Park New Delhi 110019 Mob: 9871800397
Cdr	Ajay Kumar Sud	Mrs Manjula Sud (wife), Mr Saurabh Sud & Mr Nipun H Sud (both sons)	29 Aug 22	Mrs Manjula Sud, D 702, Sector15, Sai Raiance CB Belapur New Mumbai 400614 Mob: 9920920999 Email: manjulasud@gmail.com
Cdr	Shivanand Purvimath	Mrs Uma Purvimath (wife) Ms Namrata Purvimath (daughter)	27 Sep 22	Mrs Uma Purvimath B 310, Oasis Nine Apartments 7th Cross, 1st Main ISRO layout Bangalore 560078 Mob: 9481745961 Email: umap1864@gmail.com, nams2594@gmail.com
Surg Cmde	Asok Kumar Chatterjee	Mrs Lali Chatterjee (wife), Surg Cmde Kaushik Chatterjee and Capt Kaustuv Chatterjee (both sons)	08 Oct 22	Surg Cmde Kaushik Chatterjee, HoD, epartment Psychiatry Armed Forces Medical College Sholapur Road Pune Mob: 981949114 Email: kaushikchatterjee14@gmail.com, chatterjee.kaustuv@gmail.com
Lt Cdr (SDM)	Baikunth Nath Mishra	Cdr PK Mishra (Retd) & Dr Pramo Mishra (both sons) Kanjur Marg (W),	25 Oct 22	Cdr PK Mishra (Retd), A 601, Gudecha Heights LBS Marg, Mumbai 400078 Mob: 9769932394
Lt Cdr	Ram Chand Chopra	Mrs Bina Chopra (wife), Mr Ajay Chopra (son) & Ms Anu Verma (daughter)	18 Nov 22	Mrs Bina Chopra J 230, Sector 25, Jalvayu Vihar NOIDA 201301 Mob: 6352525434 Email: ship965266@gmail.com
Lt Cdr	Rajinder Tanwar	Mr Pradeep Tanwar (son) & Ms Sonia Verma (daughter)	20 Nov 22	Ms Sonia Verma, C9/48, Sector 8, Rohini New Delhi 110085 Mob: 9818569494/ 9818320016 Email: pradeep.tanwar@gmail.com
Surg Cdr	Ramakanta Panda	Mrs Sarojini Panda (wife) & Mr Rakesh Panda (son)	03 Dec 22	Mrs Sarojini Panda, N2/58, IRC Village, Nayapalli, Bhuaneshwar Odisha 751015
Cdr	Manjeet Singh	Ms Savita Hanspal (daughter) & Mr Manmeet Hanspal (son)	05 Dec 22	Ms Savita Hanspal, L 77, Sect 25, Noida 201301, Mob: 9811170260 Email: hanspalsavita@gmail.com
Capt	Arvind Singh Raghuvanshi	Mrs Anupama Raghuvanshi (wife), Ms Aakriti Singh & Ms Aishwarya Raghuvanshi (both daughters)	27 Dec 22	Mrs Anupama Raghuvanshi, A 501, Tower A, Icon Apartments, Sect-Chi3, Greater Noida Uttar Pradesh 201310 Mob: 8800850054/ 8826850054 Email: aakritiraghuvanshi@gmail.com
Cdr	T A J Koreth, VSM	Mrs Maria Koreth (wife), Ms Mira Koreth & Ms Sonia Borthakur (nee Koreth) (both daughters)	30 Dec 22	Mrs Maria Koreth, 10, Jal Vayu Vihar Kammanahalli Main Road, Bangalore 560043 Mob: 9880696609 Email: korethmaria@gmail.com



## NAVY FOUNDATION BANGALORE CHAPTER

NFBC has a total strength of 360.

During COVID19 lockdowns, physical meetings/ social activities were restricted at NFBC. Proactive steps were taken to regularly update members, through email, on various COVID-related advisories and protocols issued by ECHS HQ, Government of India and Government of Karnataka. Necessary assistance was provided to the members in need.

After the lifting of lockdowns, various get-togethers have been held where members have been updated about SPARSH, ePPO, pension, OROP, ECHS, CSD and current naval activities. NavDett/NOM, Bengaluru, has provided necessary support and extended naval hospitality for the smooth conduct of various events.

### Highlights:

- NFBC contributed ₹ 50,000 to the Armed Forces Retired Officers' Welfare Association (AFROWA), Bengaluru, for procurement of a ambulance for ESM.



- A CDA(Navy)/NavPen staff interaction was arranged for ePPO and pension on 31 October 2021. This opportunity was used to conduct a NFBC Special GBM for the approval of balance sheets and the release of a book, *Escape from Pakistan*, by Mrs Deborah, daughter of late Cmde Shea.



- On 10 April 2002, octogenarians were felicitated with a crest at a get-together.
- President NFBC attended the 29<sup>th</sup> GCM/AGM NF in Goa on 22 May 2022 and RGC in Mumbai on 12 July 2022.



- The NFBC AGM was held on 26 June 2022 where the activity report was read out and audited balance sheets approved. The existing NFBC Management Committee was re-elected.





- On 21 Aug 2022, FOCinC (W) hosted a lunch for ESM at Navy Mess, Bengaluru. About 50 members of NFBC attended the event.



- NFBC plans to arrange the fifth Admiral Pereira Memorial Lecture (APML) in early 2023.

## NAVY FOUNDATION DELHI CHAPTER

### Annual Veterans' Day Celebrations

The annual Veterans' Day celebrations, comprising wreath-laying ceremonies at the National War Memorial and the Raksha Mantri's Veterans' Day Rally, were scheduled to be held at Air Force Auditorium, Subroto Park, on 14 January 2022. However, owing to a sudden spurt in COVID-19 cases, all events had to be cancelled at the eleventh hour.

### Interaction with CNS and Reunion Lunch

After a lapse of four years, the annual Interaction with CNS and Reunion Lunch, a flagship event



for NFDC members and other retired naval officers and their spouses, was held on 27 March 2022. We were most grateful to CNS Adm R Hari Kumar and his magnificent team who, in deference to our persistent requests over the years, had most magnanimously extended invitations for the event at Naval Officers' Mess, Varuna.



The warm hospitality, excellent arrangements and a sumptuous spread of delicacies were way beyond our expectations. Further, these fabulous arrangements were augmented by individual briefings by the Principal Staff Officers, and finally by the CNS himself. These briefings gladdened our hearts and we got an overview of the growth and steadfast development of the Indian Navy, which were succinctly described to highlight its growing global eminence.



### **Anubhavi 2022**

After a lapse of two years owing to the pandemic, the Anubhavi get-together was held on 31 March 2022 at Navy House. The ambience was warm, welcoming, festive and beautiful with every aspect planned with great attention to detail. The Udyogika stalls were a huge attraction. Moreover, the opportunity to meet old friends after a long time and chance encounters with those one had lost touch with made the event even more nostalgic and poignant. The lively games, sumptuous high tea and fun on the dance floor added to the magic of the evening.



### **AGM**

After a lapse of three years, the NFDC's AGM was held on 6 August 2022. Although the proceedings had to be adjourned initially for lack of quorum owing to low attendance, the AGM was reconvened and a large number of issues were covered as stipulated in the agenda, as well as other matters raised outside it. Deliberations, interaction and discussions as recorded in the minutes of the AGM were shared with our members via WhatsApp and email. Follow-up on the decisions reached is a work in progress.

### **Election of NFDC Honorary Secretary**

Consequent upon resignation by the incumbent Honorary Secretary, NFDC Managing Committee, the election process for his replacement was initiated vide Notice of Tuesday, 5 July 2022 for tenure of 2022-2024. After due process of scrutiny of nominations papers and election, Cdr Ajay Panwar (Retd) was declared elected as Honorary Secretary, Managing Committee, Navy Foundation, Delhi Charter for tenure 2022 to 2024, as approved by the General Body.



## NAVY FOUNDATION HYDERABAD CHAPTER

### AGM 22

The AGM of the Hyderabad Chapter was held on 19 June 2022 after a gap of two years. The enthusiasm of meeting erstwhile shipmates and course mates was palpable and members turned up in large numbers. The gathering paid homage to departed members and also completed the formalities of passing the accounts for the previous and current financial years. As the president and secretary had expressed their desire to step down from their respective posts, elections were held for both posts and new office bearers elected. The bonhomie continued during the lunch that followed the AGM.



*Preceding office bearers Adm K A S Z Raju  
and Cmde L M Khanna*



*Elected office bearers Cmde Sudheer Parakala and  
Cmde Pravin Rajpal flanking V Adm R S Sharma*



*Veterans enjoying lunch*

### COP's visit

Chief of Personnel VAdm D K Tripathi visited Hyderabad and interacted with the veterans over tea on 5 August 2022. Various issues pertaining to Sparsh and ECHS were discussed and the COP assured the veterans that he would personally ensure that all niggling issues are resolved at the earliest.



*COP with NFHC veterans  
and RAdm Sanjay Datt, Cmdt CDM*



*COP with Cmde Sudheer Parakala,  
President NFHC*





### **Inauguration of NFHC office**

Since its inception over two decades ago, NFHC has been operating without an office space. With the initiative from our predecessors and active support and assistance of Director DMDE, the NFHC office was inaugurated by Mrs Lakshmi Raju (wife of VAdm K A S Z Raju) on 20 August 2022.



### **Veterans lunch**

To celebrate the festive season, veterans and their ladies met over lunch on 9 October 2022. In the presence of live music, many veterans and their ladies joined the band to enthral those in attendance with their singing talent.



## NAVY FOUNDATION KERALA CHAPTER

### **Anubhavi lunch**

On 19 March 2022, President NWWA Southern Region hosted a lunch for the wives of members and honorary members of NFKC at SNCO Mess. A briefing on various aspects of NWWA was followed by a sumptuous lunch.

### **Lunch for NFKC members hosted by C-in-C**

Vice Admiral M A Hampiholi, FOCINC (South), hosted NFKC members and spouses for lunch on 20 March 2022 at SNCO Mess. The members were also briefed on the activities and modernisation plans of the Navy.

### **NFKC get-together**

After a long hiatus owing to the restrictions of the pandemic, a get-together of NFKC members and their spouses was organised at NOI, Kochi, on 31 March 2022. The live band added extra fizz to the event. Another get-together was held at Grand Hotel on 8 July 2022.

### **Outreach activities**

The outreach activities of NFKC included provision of scholarships for meritorious students and charity activities such as assistance to old age homes/destitute homes. Four scholarships amounting to ₹ 10,000 were awarded on the basis of merit to the children of two schools – SRV High School and Girls Higher Secondary School – in Ernakulam on 17 November 2021 by Capt Paul Abraham, Executive Member of the Management Committee of NFKC.

Further, a cheque of ₹50,000 was donated to Mridula Sparsham, Thrippoonithura, for its facility to rehabilitate special children. A cheque of ₹ 50,000 was also donated to Sai Trust for its free dialysis programme provided to the poorest of the poor at the Indira Gandhi Cooperative Hospital.



## AGM 2022

The Annual General Body Meeting of NFKC was held on 7 August 2022 at the SNC Officers' Mess, with 88 members in attendance. President NFKC, VAdm M P Muralidharan (Retd), AVSM & BAR, NM, chaired the meeting.



### *Reef Knot*

The annual publication of NFKC, *Reef Knot* was released during the AGM by VAdm M P Muralidharan (Retd) and Mrs Lakshmi Ramachandran, the chief editor.

## Independence Day 2022

Members along with their spouses got together at the NFKC office on the morning of 15 August. President NFKC led the celebrations by hoisting the national flag. This was followed by a morning walk to Birdies (the Golf Course Annexe of NOI) for breakfast.



## Onam celebrations

The Onam celebration was held at NOI, Kochi, on 18 September 2022. The entertainment programme included three forms of the traditional *Thiruvathira* group dance and one *Vallamkali* song besides a few solo songs, duets and a group song. The beautiful *pookalam* at the entrance to the NOI, the traditional decorations at the venue and the presence of Mahabali added colour and flavour to the celebrations. The programme was followed by pre-lunch drinks and the traditional *Ona Sadya*.



## Farewell

The Management Committee of NFKC got together for dinner at Grand Hotel on 29 August 2022 to bid farewell to its outgoing members. A lunch was also organised at Birdies on 26 September 2022, by the Management Committee for members, spouses and children who participated in the entertainment programme at the Onam celebrations, to thank them for their efforts.





### Visit to INS Vikrant

A visit to INS Vikrant was organised for members and families on 30 September 2022. The visit commenced with a briefing and presentation about the ship after which the 175-member group toured the hangar and flight deck and enjoyed breakfast on the quarterdeck.



## NAVY FOUNDATION MUMBAI CHAPTER

### Veterans Day cricket

The 2<sup>nd</sup> Veterans Day cricket match between the C-in-C XI and NFMCI XI was held on 2 January 2022 at Kohli Stadium. The C-in-C XI won the trophy by eight wickets. The man of the match was Cdr H Subramaniam (Retd) from the Veterans XI.



### Veer Naris get-together

Under the guidance of President NFMCI, the NFMCI committee members organised a get-together for 37 Veer Naris on 27 March 2022 at Sea Lounge. Highlights included games, a catwalk and a post-lunch karaoke session. The guests present to honour the Veer Naris included Cmde Sridar Ramaswamy (LOIC NAVPEN), Cmde Ranadeep Bose (LOIC NAVPAY), Mrs Rupali Bose and Lt Cdr Abhimanyu Shekhawat. Dr Kanta Mukherjee was presented with the NFMCI Veer Nari Shakti Award by President NFMCI.



## Sunday Street

The Sunday Street event was held at Juhu Society Area-161 on 17 April 2022. It was organised by residents of the area, spearheaded by Dr Kanta Mukherjee. Veterans in Juhu participated in the morning revelry.



## AGM

The AGM was held on 8 May 2022 in IMSC, followed by lunch. It was attended by 187 members and Veer Naris, apart from 125 spouses. Cdr Vijay Vadhera (Retd) was re-elected for a second term as President while Lt Cdr Farokh Tarapore (Retd) was elected as Treasurer for the fifth term in succession.



## Interaction with Raksha Mantri

Shri Rajnath Singh visited Mumbai on 17 May 2022 for the launch of two ships, Udaygiri and Surat. He also visited the Naval Uprising Memorial after which he interacted with naval personnel and ESM in Sagar over lunch. President NFMC briefed the Raksha Mantri about the first Veterans Day Parade in Mumbai and requested him for a pan-India parade on the Sunday preceding Veterans Day on 14 January. The Raksha Mantri was appreciative of the proposal and said it would be taken up in the next meeting with the service chiefs.



## Time for Africa!

NFMC organised a tour of South Africa for 48 members, including 10 Veer Naris and six members above the age of 75 (the eldest being 83 years young) from 5-16 September 2022. This was the 4<sup>th</sup> international tour planned and executed by NFMC in coordination with Mr Veer Vikram Singh from Travel Edge Tours and Travels. The tour included visits to Cape Town, Johannesburg and Mabula

Game Reserve as well as adventure activities like bungee jumping and boat rides.





## NAVY FOUNDATION PUNE

Members of NFPC believe in giving back to society wholeheartedly. They individually contribute to various charitable trusts and collectively to different social causes, including the marine environment. They are involved in activities like visiting schools to inculcate maritime consciousness among the younger generation; the Indian Maritime Foundation (IMF), Pune; the Rashtriya Life Saving Society (RLSS); guest lectures covering maritime subjects at Pune University in collaboration with IMF; coastal and river bank clean-ups with schoolchildren and corporates in collaboration with IMF and Rotary; the Maritime Museum in collaboration with IMF; memorial services (Seafarers' Memorial/Seamen's Memorial) in collaboration with IMF; resolving pension issues, especially those of Veer Naris; and naval-oriented training (Sea Cadet Corps).



In a bid to inculcate greater maritime consciousness, NFPC arranges seminars, memorial lectures and quarterly interactive sessions, maintaining a close liaison with serving officers of NHQ (DESA), HQ WNC, CH(SC), AFMC, ECHS, INS Shivaji, NDA, PCDA (N) and Naval Pension Cell, as well as local Army authorities.

The activities of NFPC, after the pandemic restrictions were lifted in Pune, include:

- First-ever interaction between any Navy Foundation chapter and officials of CDA (N) on 3 October 2021
- Navy Week Professional Interaction with Commandant National Defence Academy and officers at Peacock Bay, Khadakwasla on 26 November 2021
- Wreath laying at Seafarers' Memorial on 30 January 2022





- AGM held at AFMC auditorium on 8 May 2022
- Interaction with FOC-in-C (West) and serving officers on 10 September 2022
- First clean-up post monsoon on 23 October 2022
- Third Admiral Nadkarni Memorial Lecture at Hotel Central Park on 29 October 2022 with FOC-in-C (West) VAdm A B Singh, PVSM, AVSM, VSM, ADC, as keynote speaker.
- Felicitation of octogenarian ESM of Pune
- Seminars by IMF:



- IMF-NMF joint webinar on 'Developments in Marine Propulsion Systems' on 18 September 2021
- WNC-IMF-NI joint webinar on 'Creating, Nurturing and Harnessing Maritime Soft Power' on 12 November 2021
- Lecture by VAdm Pradeep Chauhan (Retd), PVSM & Bar, VSM, on 'Historical and Contemporary Development of Warships: Types, Classes, Projects and Inherent Characteristics of Warships' on 27 December 2021
- IMF webinar on 'Marine Insurance and Beyond' on 23 March 2022
- Inauguration of Naval Museum by Deputy Chief Minister on 27 May 2022
- NMF-IMF joint webinar workshop on 'Collapsing Marine Biodiversity and its Implications for Blue Economy' on 20 July 2022
- IMF seminar on 'Present Challenges of Shipbuilding in India and Way Ahead', with chief guest VCNS VAdm S N Ghormade, PVSM, AVSM, NM, ADC



## COMMAND ACTIVITIES

### EASTERN NAVAL COMMAND

#### Visit to Sahara Homes at NSB and SVN Colony

The Group Coordinator of Sahara (NWWA Eastern Region), Coordinator and Command Regimental System Office (CRSO) staff visited the Sahara Homes at Nausena Bagh and SVN Colony on 24 March 2021 and interacted with the occupants. Meetings with administrative staff of both colonies were also conducted to ensure the upkeep of Sahara homes.

#### Vaccination for Sahara ladies

Under the aegis of the Sahara team, a vaccination camp was conducted in INHS Kalyani on 19 April 2021 and 1 June 2021 to vaccinate the Sahara ladies with the first and second dose respectively. Fifty-five ladies were vaccinated with both doses of the Covishield vaccine.



#### Sahara Virtual Milan

The Sahara team conducted a Virtual Milan from the conference room of Navy Children School, Nausena Bagh, on 20 July 2021. President NWWA ER was the chief guest. The main aim was to interact one on one with the Sahara ladies in a safe, virtual environment, keeping the prevailing COVID situation in mind, and discuss topics of interest. Fifty-five families of Sahara ladies in Visakhapatnam and adjoining areas attended the Milan. On-the-spot support was rendered by staff of CRSO, ECHS (V) and INCS (V).

#### 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Independence

A special felicitation of ESM born in or before 1947 was conducted at ENC on 15 August 2021 to commemorate the 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Independence. The events were conducted at the Parade Ground, Circars, and HQENC Lawns. Eleven senior ESM accompanied by their families attended the function. FOC-in-C East presented them with souvenirs, including sea caps embroidered with '75 years of Indian's Independence' and coffee mugs embossed with 'Azadi ka Amrit Mahotsav'.



### **Felicitations of Bangladesh war ESM**

The 50<sup>th</sup> year of the Liberation of Bangladesh was celebrated on 2 September 2021 by the war veterans who had taken part in the 1971 War. They greeted the arrival of the Victory Flame in Visakhapatnam at a formal function conducted at the Victory at Sea - War Memorial on RK Beach. They were felicitated by FOC-in-C East and the Home Minister of Andhra Pradesh. This was followed by high tea at the Naval Coastal Battery.

### **Care during the pandemic**

ESM and Sahara members were kept at the forefront while tackling the second wave of the Coronavirus. The establishment of dedicated field hospitals at INS Eksila and INS Kalinga to cater for the large population of ESM at Visakhapatnam ensured an alternative helpline for the families. Personnel not being admitted at empanelled hospitals due to various reasons were admitted at the field hospitals and successfully recuperated after quality care from the naval medical teams.

### **Sahara Milan**

The Naval Sahara Ladies Milan was conducted by the Sahara team at Community Hall, Nausena Baugh, on 5 October 2021. Mrs Sapna Pradhan, Group Coordinator, Sahara, was the chief guest for the event, which was attended by 39 ladies. After a thought-provoking lecture on 'Introduction to Sahaj Yoga Meditation' and a 'Talk on Happiness', the CRSO team, ECHS and INCS addressed the issues of the ladies on the spot and representations were noted for further resolution.

### **Visit of Bangladesh warship**

#### **BNS Somudra Avijan**

The 1971 war ESM from the Visakhapatnam region interacted with the High Commissioner of Bangladesh during the visit of BNS Somudra Avijan on 5 October 2021. A grand lunch was hosted onboard the ship for the ESM where they were presented mementos in honour of their services during the Liberation of Bangladesh.



### **Outreach programme of PCDA (Navy) and visit of LOIC, Navpen**

An outreach programme for ESM was conducted by PCDA (Navy) at Samudrika on 21 November 2021 to highlight issues faced during generation of the new Electronic Pension Payment Orders (ePPOs). LOIC, Navpen, also addressed the meeting, resolved grievances related to pension and collected representations for further resolution.

### **High tea with C-in-C on Navy Day**

FOC-in-C (East) interacted with ESM over high tea during the Navy Day celebrations at Sailors Institute (Tarang) on 7 December 2021.





### **Annual Navy Day lunch and Sahara Milan**

The annual Navy Day lunch and Sahara Milan were conducted on 14 December 2021 by the Sahara team (East) at Samudrika auditorium. President NWWA ER Mrs Sarbani Dasgupta was the chief guest. Various activities, games and a quiz were conducted. FOC-in-C interacted with the Sahara ladies during the lunch and on completion of the Milan.



### **GBM of VSF and Navy Day lunch**

The General Body Meeting (GBM) of the Veteran Sailors' Forum (VSF) was conducted on 22 December 2021 at Samudrika auditorium. It was chaired by RAdm Sandeep Pradhan, CSO (P&A) and attended by over 500 ESM and Sahara ladies residing in and around Visakhapatnam. The event concluded with lunch, where FOC-in-C interacted informally with ESM of the Vizag chapter.



### **First reunion of DE 1/79 batch of INS Circars**

The first reunion of the DE 1/79 batch of INS Circars was held in Visakhapatnam on 7 January 2022. The ESM visited ships, the Naval Dockyard and Circars.

### **Visit to Hindustan Shipyard Ltd (HSL)**

The CRSO staff visited HSL and met Cmde G Khatri (Retd), CMD, on 19 January 2022 to enhance job placement opportunities for ex-servicemen in the defence sector shipyard.

### **Sahara Virtual Milan**

A Google meet was conducted for Sahara ladies on 2 February 2022, President NWWA ER, the Sahara Group Coordinator and NWWA team interacted with the ladies and lectures on 'Spoken English' and 'Yoga' were delivered.

### **Renovation of Sahara Home 104 Area, SVN Colony**

Mrs Sarbani Dasgupta, President, NWWA ER, along with the Sahara Group Coordinator and CRSO staff, visited the Sahara Home in 104 Area, SVN Colony, on 25 February. She handed over the keys of the renovated porta cabins to the occupants. Subsequently, there was a meeting with administrative staff to ensure the upkeep of the homes.



## **Felicitation**

Surya Prakash Singh, Hon Lt, was felicitated on 10 March 2022 upon attaining 80 years of age.

## **Participation of ESM in International City Parade**

ESM participated in the International City Parade at RK Beach on 21 March 2022 with full *josh* and enthusiasm. Dressed in Modi suits and Andhra Pradesh turbans, their platoon impressed everyone with its coordinated marching.



## **Sahara Milan**

The Naval Sahara Ladies Milan was conducted by the Sahara team in Nausena Baugh on 29 March 2022 with the intent to include these members of the NWWA family to celebrate International Women's Day. Mrs Sapna Pradhan, Sahara Group Coordinator, was the chief guest. Forty-nine Sahara ladies were in attendance for the event, which included a thought-provoking lecture on 'How to Empower Yourself' and a 'Talk on Happiness'. The CRSO team, ECHS and INCS thereafter addressed the issues of the ladies and representations were noted for further resolution.

## **Annual GCM & GBM of VSF**

CRSO attended the 12th Annual GCM and GBM of VSF in Mumbai on 3 April 2022. Various welfare measures for ESM and Sahara members were discussed during the meeting.

## **Implementation of SPARSH**

A Google meet was conducted with all concerned for the implementation of SPARSH on 26 May 2022.

## **Sahara Milan**

The Naval Sahara Ladies Milan was conducted in Nausena Baugh on 5 July 2022 by the Sahara team for interaction with NWWA and CRSO staff. Families of over 55 Sahara ladies attended the Milan, which included a lecture on 'Naturopathy' by Mrs Sowmaya Upadaya, followed by a Q &A session where the healing benefits of nature were explained in detail. Thereafter, Capt S Sreekanth, CRSO, presented a brief on the Agnipath scheme for recruitment of youth in the Armed Forces. He also explained the procedure for applying for 64KB ECHS Smart Card to avail medical benefits.

## **SPARSH outreach programme and Pension Adalat**

A SPARSH outreach programme and Pension Adalat were conducted on 6 July 2022 at Samudrika auditorium for retired officers and sailors.



### **Independence Day celebration**

The Independence Day celebration was conducted at Circars Parade Ground on 15 August 2022. Thirty ESM with their families attended the event, where they interacted with FOC-in-C over high tea.



### **Visit to INS Dega**

ESM visited INS Dega, the naval aviation base, on invitation by its Commanding Officer Cmde Vishal Bishnoi on 7 September 2022. They were felicitated with shawls and mementos.



### **Sahara Milan**

The Naval Sahara Ladies Milan was conducted at Nausena Baugh on 29 September 2022 by the Sahara team to facilitate their interaction with NWWA and CRSO staff. Families of over 52 Sahara ladies attended the event. Following her welcome speech, Mrs Sanchitha Dutta, Sahara Coordinator, invited the Arogya team, led by Mrs Sridhar, Group Coordinator, on stage. The team along with the first-aid team from INHS Kalyani presented a lecture-cum-demonstration on 'First Aid and CPR'.





## COMMAND ACTIVITIES

### SOUTHERN NAVAL COMMAND

#### Interaction with FOC-in-C

FOC-in-C (South) VAdm M A Hampiholi, AVSM, NM, interacted with members of the Navy Foundation Kerala Charter (NFKC) on 20 March 2022 over lunch. The event was attended by a large number of retired officers, flag officers and other senior officers of the command. The ESM were apprised of major naval activities undertaken by the command. On behalf of his fellow members, VAdm M P Muralidharan (Retd), President NFKC, expressed his gratitude to FOC-in-C for all his support.

#### Honouring of NoKs of battle casualties

Consequent to the dedication of the National War Memorial to the Nation, the MoD has promulgated that the NoKs of Battle Casualties, whose names are inscribed at the Tyag Chakra of the Memorial, be honoured. Mrs Aruna Dharman, daughter of late M K Vijayan, MCPO II, laid the wreath on 1 April 2022 and Mrs Santhakumari V, sister of late V Venugopal, SEA I, who had served onboard INS Khukri, laid the wreath on 1 October 2022.



#### AGM NFKC 2022

On 7 August 2022, NFKC held its AGM, followed by lunch, where FOC-in-C (South) interacted with members of the foundation. Eighty-one members and 25 officers of SNC along with their spouses attended the event. FOC-in-C assured his committed support to all ESM and shared the various initiatives the command had undertaken for them. For his part, VAdm M P Muralidharan, President NFKC, complimented the command for the unstinted support extended to ESM.



### NFKC Onam celebrations

On 18 September 2022, FOC-in-C (South) was the chief guest for the Onam celebrations of NFKC and attended the event with President NWWA (SR) at NOI, Kochi.

### Sahara get-together

A Sahara get-together and lunch for Veer Naris was hosted at Sailors' Institute, SMA(R), Kochi on 21 October 2022 by Mrs Madhumati Hampiholi, President NWWA (SR). The event included a cultural programme and games presented by the NWWA ladies, followed by information on health, entitlement and benefits for Veer Naris and ECHS schemes. The event was attended by about 130 people, including 70 Veer Naris and their dependents.



### INS Dweeprakshak

On the occasion of Independence Day, INS Dweeprakshak hosted a *bara khana* for tri-service ESM and their families. Further, a movie on the history of the Indian Navy was screened on 15 August 2022.



### INS Hamla

As part of the Azadi ka Amrit Mahotsav celebrations in INS Hamla, two ESM born in 1947 cut a cake to commemorate 75 years of freedom and their birthdays. Both AN Tiwari (Retd), CPO, and Mahadev Sawant (Retd), PO, expressed their gratitude to the Navy and shared their experiences of the 1971 War during an interaction with officers and sailors.



### INS Shivaji

To recognise the bravery and sacrifices of the unsung heroes of the Indian Navy, a new Station Store Complex was inaugurated by Narayan Attimarad, CHMECH (Retd), Shaurya Chakra. He was also felicitated by FOC-in-C (South) VAdm MA Hampiholi.



### Visit to ZSB/districts in Kerala

Monthly/yearly visits to various Zila Sainik Boards (ZSB) have been promulgated by HQSNC till March 2023. The visits are conducted by CRSO and Regimental State Units (RSUs) at various ZSB located in each district in Kerala to interact with naval ESM and Veer Naris to address issues pertaining to pension, ECHS, various grants from INBA, etc. The event is advertised in local newspapers at least a week in advance so that maximum people are aware of the programme. The problems projected are noted and actions initiated for early resolution.





## COMMAND ACTIVITIES

### WESTERN NAVAL COMMAND

#### A special gift on Veterans Day

On 14 January 2021, NFMCC couriered 140 boxes of almonds along with a card felicitating all octogenarians, Veer Naris and medical officers of the four ECHSs of the Mumbai region. This gesture was repeated in January 22.

#### Soman Memorial Lectures

The 18th edition of the Admiral Soman Memorial Lecture was conducted online on 14 January 2021.

Cmde Srikant Kesnur, VSM, Director Maritime

Warfare Centre, spoke on the topic, 'Memory & Remembrance - Ties that Bind Veterans with Navy and Nation'. The 19<sup>th</sup> edition was conducted virtually on 14 January 2022 in which VAdm Pradeep Chauhan, AVSM & Bar, VSM, spoke on 'China's Maritime Missteps'.



#### Veterans Day

The 6<sup>th</sup> Tri-Services Veterans Day was celebrated at HQ WNC on 14 January 2021. Wreaths were laid at Gaurav Stambh, Naval Dockyard, by serving personnel and ESM. A high tea was organised at HQ WNC where FOC-in-C (West) VAdm R Hari Kumar, PVSM, AVSM, VSM, ADC (now CNS), was the chief guest.

#### Safety education by ESM

Drawing on their rich experience in health, safety and environment (HSE) in the commercial maritime sectors, Cdr Ankit Vaishnav (Retd) and Cdr Rajiv Kubal (Retd) have undertaken safety education workshops/capsules in several afloat/shore units of WNC in the past two years. These encompassed concepts such as Risk-Based Thinking (RBT), Behaviour-Based Safety (BBS) and Hazard Identification/Risk Assessment (HIRA), along with practical exposure to various models and practices to enhance safety in respective units.



### Invitation from Bangladesh consulate

Md Lutfor Rahman, Deputy High Commissioner of Bangladesh, invited a few ESM and Veer Naris on 21 February 2021 to celebrate the International Mother Language Day and Martyrs Day at Taj President, Cuffe Parade, followed by an invitation to the celebration for Mujib Anniversary and their Children's Day on 17 March 2021. The Dy High Commissioner also



felicitated 20 Armed Forces veterans, including Lt Gen Brar (Ops Blue Star fame) and 15 NFMC members on 9 October 2021, as part of the Golden Jubilee celebrations of the 1971 Liberation of Bangladesh.

### COVID vaccination

INHS Asvini vaccinated ESM, their families and Veer Naris at the ECHS clinic on 22 March 2021.



### Governor's felicitation

Maharashtra Governor Shri Bhagat Singh Koshyari felicitated five NFMC ESM and Veer Naris with the 'Matrabhumi Bhushan Samman' on 18 August 2021 at Raj Bhavan, Mumbai. Cdr Vijay Vadhera, NM(G), President NFMC, Veer Naaris Dr Kanta Mukherjee and Karzin Mogal, and ESM Cmde Biman Mistry and Capt K P Hiridasan also received awards.



### The Victory Flame

To celebrate Swarnim Vijay Varsh, the Vijay Jyoti arrived at the Gateway of India on 1 September 2021 and was received by the Maharashtra Chief Minister in the presence of senior officers from the three services, veterans of the 1971 war and other dignitaries. On 2 September 2021, the Victory Flame was received by FOC-in-C (West) VAdm R Hari Kumar at Gaurav Stambh in Naval Dockyard, who paid homage to the bravehearts who laid down their lives during the war.



*FOC-in-C (W) felicitates the Guest of Honour Commodore I J Sharma (Retd), AVSM, VrC*



The Victory Flame was paraded to the 22<sup>nd</sup> Missile Vessel Squadron, the Killer Squadron, which has inherited the legacy of courage from the boats that played a pivotal role in the 1971 war, and veterans from this squadron were felicitated.



The Vijay Jyoti also visited the residences of the gallantry award winners on 4 September. Veer Chakra awardees Cmde Inderjeet Singh (Retd), Cdr Ashok Kumar (Retd) and Wing Commander B B Soni (Retd) received the flame in a solemn ceremony attended by family members of the war veterans and officers of the three services. Cmde Sanjay Sachdeva, Naval Officer-in-Charge, Maharashtra, presented a memento to the gallantry award winners.

### **Mementos to octogenarians**

NFMC presented the CNS and NFMC mementoes to senior ESM who turned 80 and commenced drawing 20 per cent enhanced pensions.

### **Welcome to INS Tanaji!**

The INS Tanaji Officers Mess facility has been extended to all naval ESM and their dependents on all Sundays from 1100 to 1500 hrs. An inaugural event was conducted on 17 October 2021, attended by 20 ESMs with their spouses.



### **Lunch for ESM**

VAdm R Hari Kumar, FOC-in-C (West), invited all ESM of Maharashtra, Gujarat and Karnataka with their spouses for lunch on 7 November 2021. He presented a cheque of ₹1 lakh to NFMC and lauded the foundation for the welfare measures undertaken for ESM and Veer Naris.





### **Indian Navy Band concert**

The Indian Navy Symphonic Band Concert was conducted in Mulla Auditorium on 11 November 2021, organised by INS Kunjali. Twenty-five ESM with their spouses received an invite for the same.

### **Sahara lunch**

The Sahara lunch for Veer Naris was organised in New Navy Nagar, Colaba, by NWWA (WR) on 31 March 2022. FOC-in-C (West) Vice Admiral Ajendra Bahadur Singh, PVSM, AVSM, VSM, ADC, was the chief guest for the event, which was attended by 70 Veer Naris. NAVPEN, ECHS, bank (SBI) and Angre (Dependent Card) help desks were set up to assist the Veer Naris to resolve pending issues.

### **AGM of Veteran Sailors Forum**

The 12<sup>th</sup> Annual General Meeting (AGM) of the Veteran Sailors Forum (VSF), Mumbai Chapter, was held at the Sailors' Institute on 3 April 2022. Vice Admiral Suraj Berry, AVSM, NM, VSM, Controller Personnel Services, and President VSF chaired the meeting, which was attended by 194 ESM. NAVPEN, ECHS, banks (SBI and PNB) and Angre (dependent card) help desks were set up for assistance.

### **Visit of Raksha Mantri**

Raksha Mantri Shri Rajnath Singh, accompanied by CNS Adm R Hari Kumar, visited Mumbai on 17 May 2022 and visited the Naval Uprising Memorial in Colaba. He laid a wreath in homage to the sailors who had participated in the 'Last War of Independence', the Naval Uprising of 1946. He later interacted with officers, sailors and ESM at the Sailors' Institute.



### **Vikrant Memorial**

A model of the Indian Navy's first aircraft carrier, INS Vikrant, was dedicated to the city of Mumbai by Maharashtra Governor Shri Bhagat Singh Koshiyari on 10 June 2022 in the presence of FOC-in-C (West) Vice Admiral Ajendra Bahadur Singh PVSM, AVSM, VSM, ADC, veterans who served on INS Vikrant and other distinguished guests. The 10-m-long model, which was made inhouse by Naval Dockyard, Mumbai, and placed at Regal Circle, Colaba, is open to the general public.



# READY RECKONER

## Indian Navy Information Website

[www.indiannavy.nic.in](http://www.indiannavy.nic.in)

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IVRS : 1800-113-999

Blog : [www.desanavy.wordpress.com](http://www.desanavy.wordpress.com)

Website : <https://www.indiannavy.nic.in/navy/desa>

HANDSHAKE : <https://esmhandshake-navy.in>

## NGIF

For issues related to claims under PRDIES

Fax No. : 022-22020772

(Post Retirement Death Insurance Extension Scheme)

E-mail : [dnpf@navy.gov.in](mailto:dnpf@navy.gov.in)

## IHQ MOD (Navy) / DPA

Tel : 011-21410542

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## NAVPEN

For all issues regarding pension

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Naval Pension Office (NAVPEN)  
C/o INS Tanaji, Sion Trombay Road  
Mankhurd, Mumbai 400 088

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## INDIAN NAVAL PLACEMENT AGENCY (INPA)

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