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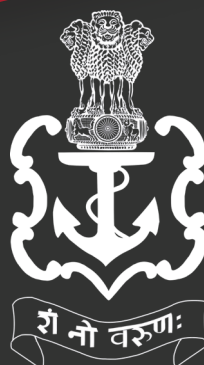
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ECONOMIC SLOWDOWN AND ITS IMPACT ON NAVAL EXPANSION



Interview with Chief of Naval Staff,
Admiral Sunil Lanba
PVSM, AVSM, ADC





MISSION

We endeavour to sound **ALERTS** and create **AWARENESS** about the myriad dimensions and manifestations of **DEFENCE** and **SECURITY** in India and around the world.



The power of a King lies in his mighty arms...

Security of the citizens at peace time is very important because State is the only saviour of the men and women who get affected only because of the negligence of the State.

- Chanakya



DSA IS AS MUCH YOURS, AS IT IS OURS!



Karachi, 4 December 1971, set the stage for Navy Day to become an annual event in India's military and national calendar. For it was on that date and the attack on Karachi harbour which announced the arrival of the Indian Navy on the military scene. It wasn't a support operation and it wasn't a supply operation either. In fact, it was an independent assault operation that took Pakistan by surprise owing to the sheer audacity of its scale. Until then the Indian Navy had been restricted in its operational role to harbour protection or denial, but the 1971 Indo-Pak war changed its status.

Which doesn't mean that the Indian Navy is now a service on par with the other two. Far from it, for it continues to be denied the attention and investment that it rightly deserves. It continues to lag behind its sister services in terms of the monies invested and long term vision plans. The Indian Navy is totally unlike the other services for it operates, well, beyond the horizon, in a literal and metaphorical sense. Since it isn't seen in the line

of duty, it doesn't catch the attention of the nation that it deserves. And then its roles are such that they prove well nigh impossible to comprehend at the pedestrian level.

The ones that catch all the news space are the anti-piracy operations conducted off the Somalia coast. It is a catchy subject so it grabs attention, even if the citizens cannot see the operations, merely the line of villains arrested. This fits in nicely with the good versus evil narrative. But the Indian Navy is lot more than that. It has a significant military as well as diplomatic role and which it performs with aplomb, around the world.

In a real sense, the Indian Navy performs the greatest political – diplomatic outreach service for the country. It doesn't appear so to the people since friendly port visits, distant search and rescue operations, transoceanic carriage of the tricolour, joint exercises and exchanges, are just some of its myriad tasks performed with great sophistication, globally.

A lot more needs to be done, however. And for that to happen, the country needs to invest a lot more on its navy, in terms of manpower as well its all important hardware. Naval training is already regarded as world class in many ways and its establishments match with those anywhere in the world. It is in the expansion of the fleet that a lot more needs to be done. Some naval equations are very simple even to the untrained. The most secure platform in a nuclearised environment is a nuclear powered submarine capable of launching intercontinental ballistic missiles. Making one, or the many that are needed by India, takes a lot of time and a lot of money. A long term vision for the oceans, complemented by an audacious budgetary plan, can make that happen. All that it requires is the will to take the decision. The Indian Navy deserves the decision.

Manvendra Singh



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MARITIME BULWARK

Since time immemorial whenever man sought to find out what lay on the other side of the ocean cataclysmic events occurred. The New World was discovered; the United States of America created; the Bull (Edict) of Pope Alexander the Sixth divided South America between Spain and Portugal. Those eager to find India via the west route bumped into the Caribbean islands and they named them West Indies on realising their mistake. The Brits came eastwards and found the real India (where it had always been) and colonised it. No matter which direction one travelled it seemed that even then India was central to their endeavour. France and Portugal have left spoors of history on its shores.

Before this, Indian culture had already left its imprint on what is now known as Southeast Asia ranging from Thailand, Singapore and Indonesia in the near horizon to the "Indochina States" of Kampuchea (Cambodia), Laos and Vietnam bordering the Pacific Ocean as is evident in the ruins of the temples of the Angkor Wat genre and the living, vibrant performing arts in which the enactment of the Ramayana is a central theme. Now, in the twenty-first century the words of US military strategist Alfred Mahan have a familiar ring. He had said: 'Whoever controls the Indian Ocean will dominate Asia, the destiny of the world will be decided on its waters.' This is being vividly underscored by the current struggle for maritime influence in the region.

India which is surrounded by seas from three sides has the most pre-eminent position in the Indian Ocean littoral. Its long coastline leaves it vulnerable to infiltration by terrorists and smugglers as witnessed in two attacks on Mumbai. The nation has celebrated Navy Week to mark one of the most audacious operations executed by the Indian Navy with its attacks on Karachi harbour in 1971. We took the opportunity to interview the Chief of Indian Navy Admiral Sunil Lanba and Director General of Indian Coast Guard Organisation Rajendra Singh. I am sure you will appreciate the candour of their responses.

So happy reading, dear readers!

Jai Hind!

Pawan Agrawal



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Sailing Towards Transformation

Pawan Agrawal, CEO & Publisher of DSA

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