



# INDIAN NAVY

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## Initiatives to Strengthen Coastal Security

### Initiatives to Strengthen Coastal Security

After the 26/11 attacks in Mumbai in 2008, several measures were announced by the government to strengthen coastal and maritime security along the entire coast. Due to the coordinated efforts of all concerned, all these measures are now in place and overall maritime security is much stronger than before. The Indian Navy has been the lead agency in this regard and is assisted in this task by the Indian Coast Guard, Marine Police and other Central and state agencies.

At the apex level the National Committee for Strengthening Maritime and Coastal Security (NCSMCS), headed by the Cabinet Secretary, coordinates all matters related to Maritime and Coastal Security.

Joint Operations Centres (JOCs), set up by the Navy as command and control hubs for coastal security at Mumbai, Visakhapatnam, Kochi and Port Blair are fully operational. These JOCs are manned 24x7 jointly by the Indian Navy, Indian Coast Guard and Marine Police.

Coastal patrolling by Navy, Coast Guard and marine police has increased sharply over the last few years. At any given time, the entire west coast is under continuous surveillance by ships and aircraft of Navy and Coast Guard. As a result, potential threats have been detected and actions have been taken to mitigate them in good time.

Inter-agency coordination, between nearly 15 national and state agencies has improved dramatically, only due to regular “exercises” conducted by the Navy in all the coastal states. Nationwide, over 100 such exercises have been conducted till date since 2008, and this has strengthened coastal security markedly.

In addition to continuous patrolling by Navy and Coast Guard, modern technical measures have also been implemented for coastal surveillance, by way of a chain of 74 Automatic Identification System (AIS) receivers, for gapless cover along the entire coast. This is complemented by a chain of overlapping 46 coastal radars in the coastal areas of our mainland and Islands. A second phase of coastal radars is also being implemented to plug the small gaps in some places.

As part of the effort to enhance our Maritime Domain Awareness, the Honourable Raksha Mantri, Shri Manohar Parrikar, inaugurated the National Command Control Communication and Intelligence Network (NC3I) last Sunday. This over-arching coastal security network collates data about all ships, dhows, fishing boats and all other vessels operating near our coast, from multiple technical sources including the AIS and radar chain. These inputs are fused and analysed at the Information Management and Analysis Centre (IMAC) at Gurgaon, which disseminates this compiled Common Operating Picture for Coastal Security to all 51 nodes of the Navy & Coast Guard spread across the coast of India. This Nodal Hub for the coastal security of our country, which has been conceptualised by the Indian Navy, is a major step in the establishment of a coastal security shield along the coast.

Issue of ID cards to all fishermen with a single centralised database, registration of over 2 lakh fishing vessels operating off our coast and equipping fishing boats with suitable equipment, to facilitate vessel identification and tracking are some of the other steps taken. Our fishing communities are adept mariners, whose cooperation is indispensable to our maritime security. Fishing communities have become the 'eyes and ears' of our security architecture. This has been achieved by spreading awareness in these communities through coastal security awareness campaigns, conducted by the Indian Navy and Coast Guard, in all coastal districts of the country. In the Western Naval Command itself, nearly 70 such campaigns have been conducted in 2014 alone. During these campaigns fishermen have been strongly advised and warned not to cross the International Maritime Boundary as it is in the interest of their safety. Fishermen today own GPS receivers and are therefore fully aware of their positions at sea.

The Navy and Coast Guard have also provided periodic maritime training to marine police in all coastal states. In WNC itself over 250 police personnel have been trained in 2014. In order to have a permanent police training facility, Marine Police training institutes in Tamil Nadu and Gujarat have been approved by the Government recently. These will provide the Marine Police better facilities and infrastructure for professional training.

In order to be better prepared to prevent a 26/11 incident from the sea, the Indian Navy, along with the Coast Guard and Indian Air Force are currently conducting the annual Defence of Gujarat Exercise for five days. On the occasion of the 6th anniversary of the Mumbai terror attacks, over 30 ships and submarines and aircraft of the Indian Navy, Indian Air Force, Coast Guard and State agencies have been deployed for this exercise off the Western Coast of India. During this exercise, the defence of the offshore oil production areas will also be tested. This exercise will provide an opportunity to fine tune SOPs and test new operational concepts for coastal security.

Since 2008, coastal and maritime security has been strengthened substantially by successful implementation of technical, organisational and procedural initiatives, by all maritime security agencies. Plugging gaps, where identified, is continuous process that is being addressed appropriately.

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