

INDIAN NAVY
MONTHLY NEWSLETTER
MAY 2026



Published by - INDIAN NAVAL STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION CELL, NEW DELHI

INTRODUCTION



May 2026 marked a significant transition in the Indian Navy's leadership, with Admiral Krishna Swaminathan assuming charge as the 27th Chief of the Naval Staff, Vice Admiral Ajay Kochhar taking over as Vice Chief and Vice Admiral Sanjay Vatsayan assuming command of the Western Naval Command.

The month also reflected the Navy's operational readiness, with INS Kolkata swiftly responding to a suspected piracy threat in the Western Indian Ocean. The successful culmination of IOS SAGAR 2026 and progress in indigenous warship construction further underscored the Navy's focus on maritime security, regional cooperation and self-reliance.

Admiral Krishna Swaminathan Assumed Charge as the 27th Chief of the Naval Staff



Admiral Krishna Swaminathan, PVSM, AVSM, VSM, assumed charge as the 27th Chief of the Naval Staff. A distinguished officer with nearly four decades of service, he has held several key operational, staff and command appointments, including command of frontline warships and major naval formations. Prior to assuming command of the Indian Navy, he served as the Flag Officer Commanding-in-Chief of the Western Naval Command. His extensive experience in maritime operations, force development and strategic planning is expected to further strengthen the Indian Navy's pursuit of operational excellence.

Vice Admiral Ajay Kochhar Assumed Charge as the 48th Vice Chief of the Naval Staff



Vice Admiral Ajay Kochhar, PVSM, AVSM, NM, assumed charge as the 48th Vice Chief of the Naval Staff on 29 May 2026. A specialist in Gunnery and Missile Systems, he brings with him over 37 years of distinguished naval service encompassing key command, operational and staff appointments. Prior to his current appointment, he served as Commander-in-Chief, Andaman and Nicobar Command, where he played a significant role in strengthening jointness and operational coordination among the three Services.

Vice Admiral Sanjay Vatsayan Assumed Charge as the 35th Flag Officer Commanding-in-Chief of the Western Naval Command



Vice Admiral Sanjay Vatsayan, PVSM, AVSM, NM, assumed charge as the Flag Officer Commanding-in-Chief, Western Naval Command, on 30 May 2026. With specialisation in Gunnery and Missile Systems, he brings over three decades of service experience marked by extensive command, operational and strategic appointments. Prior to this appointment, he served as the Vice Chief of the Naval Staff, overseeing capability development and future readiness of the Indian Navy.

INS Kolkata Thwarts Piracy Attempt in the Western Indian Ocean



Demonstrating the Indian Navy's commitment to maritime security, INS Kolkata responded swiftly to reports of suspected pirate activity near the merchant vessel MV Mashallah 1 in the Western Indian Ocean. The warship promptly investigated the situation and successfully deterred the threat, ensuring the safety of the merchant vessel and preventing a potential piracy attack. The operation highlighted the Indian Navy's role as a preferred security partner and first responder in the region, safeguarding global shipping lanes and promoting secure seas.

IOS SAGAR 2026



INS Sunayna, deployed under IOS SAGAR 2026, visited Bangladesh, Myanmar and Sri Lanka. The port calls were marked by professional exchanges and maritime engagements, aimed at strengthening interoperability and regional maritime cooperation. The deployment reflected the Indian Navy's continued commitment towards fostering partnerships and enhancing collective security in the IOR. The mission concluded with a Flag-In Ceremony at Kochi on 20 May 2026, where Vice Admiral Sameer Saxena, AVSM, NM, Flag Officer Commanding-in-Chief, Southern Naval Command, commended the crew for their professionalism and exceptional teamwork throughout the deployment.

INS Sindhukesari's Visit to Colombo



INS Sindhukesari visited Colombo, Sri Lanka, further strengthening the growing maritime partnership between India and Sri Lanka towards ensuring a safer and secure Indian Ocean Region. The visit aimed at enhancing interoperability and operational synergy between the Indian Navy and Sri Lanka Navy through professional interactions and engagements. The submarine and crew received a ceremonial welcome by personnel of the Sri Lanka Navy and the Indian Defence Advisor in Sri Lanka, reflecting the strong bilateral maritime ties between the two nations.

PASSEX between INS Sharda and HNLMS De Ruyter off Kochi



INS Sharda conducted a Passage Exercise (PASSEX) with the Royal Netherlands Navy frigate HNLMS De Ruyter off Kochi on 07 May 2026. The exercise included tactical manoeuvres, communication drills, flying operations and a traditional steam past, demonstrating seamless interoperability and professional coordination between the two navies. The engagement highlighted the shared commitment towards enhancing cooperation and operational synergy at sea.

Launch of 'Sanghmitra' and Delivery of 'Mahendragiri'





Another milestone in India's indigenous warship building programme was achieved with the launch of Sanghmitra, being constructed under the Next Generation Offshore Patrol Vessel (NGOPV) project, at (GRSE), Kolkata on 20 May 2026. Construction of the NGOPVs is being undertaken concurrently at Goa Shipyard Limited and GRSE.

Further strengthening the Indian Navy's combat capability, Mahendragiri, the sixth ship of the Project 17A Nilgiri-class stealth frigates and the fourth built by Mazagon Dock Shipbuilders Limited, was delivered to the Indian Navy at Mumbai on 30 April 2026. It is equipped with state-of-the-art weapons and sensors.

INS Sudarshini Deployment



As part of the ongoing Lokayan 26 expedition, INS Sudarshini entered Mindelo, Cape Verde, on 04 May 2026, marking the eighth port call and final African stopover before commencing her trans-Atlantic crossing. The visit featured professional interactions, training exchanges and engagement drills. Following the successful completion of the port call, INS Sudarshini embarked on a historic trans-Atlantic passage from Mindelo to Antigua and Barbuda, the longest leg of the expedition, lasting 19 days. On 27 May 2026, the ship arrived at Antigua and Barbuda, successfully completing her first-ever Atlantic crossing.

Visit of INS Sagardhwani to Malaysia and Vietnam



As part of her South East Asia deployment, INS Sagardhwani, the Indian Navy's Oceanographic Research Vessel, undertook successful port visits to Cam Ranh, Vietnam and Port Klang, Malaysia. The visits featured professional interactions, training exchanges, cross-deck visits, sports fixtures, joint yoga sessions and Subject Matter Expert Exchanges (SMEE) aimed at enhancing maritime cooperation, scientific collaboration and interoperability with partner navies and research institutions.

Joint Commanders' Conference 2026



The second edition of the Joint Commanders' Conference, themed "Military Capability in New Domains", was held in Jaipur on 7–8 May 2026. The conference brought together the senior leadership of the Indian Defence Forces and the Ministry of Defence to deliberate on future warfare and emerging domains, including cyber, space and cognitive warfare. Coinciding with the first anniversary of Operation Sindoor, Raksha Mantri Shri Rajnath Singh attended the conference and released a documentary film on the operation. He also unveiled Vision 2047 and the Joint Doctrine for Integrated Communication Architecture and Air Defence, highlighting the commitment towards greater jointness, integration and future-ready military capabilities.

Inauguration of Naval Sailing Node



Admiral Dinesh K. Tripathi, Chief of the Naval Staff, inaugurated the Naval Sailing Node at Bhojtaal, Bhopal on 17 May 2026, aimed at promoting watermanship, discipline and sporting excellence. The facility will support both recreational and competitive activities including sailing, rowing, kayaking and canoeing, while also encouraging NCC cadets and youth of Madhya Pradesh to actively participate in water sports and pursue opportunities in the Defence Forces.

The inauguration ceremony featured a spectacular sail parade along with kayaking, canoeing and rowing displays by Indian Navy personnel, showcasing the Navy's emphasis on adventure, physical fitness and maritime skills.

CNS Visit to Myanmar



Admiral Dinesh K. Tripathi, Chief of the Naval Staff, undertook an official visit to Myanmar from 02 to 05 May 2026 aimed at strengthening the growing maritime partnership and defence cooperation between the Indian Navy and Myanmar Navy. During the visit, the CNS held bilateral discussions with senior military and naval leadership of Myanmar, focusing on enhancing maritime security, operational engagements, interoperability, capacity building and training cooperation under the vision of MAHASAGAR.

As part of the visit, the CNS embarked Myanmar Navy Frigate UMS Kyan Sit Thar and visited the Naval Training Command at Yangon, where discussions were held on professional exchanges, Mobile Training Teams and future avenues of collaboration.

CNS Visit to Mumbai



Admiral Dinesh K. Tripathi, Chief of the Naval Staff, visited Mumbai from 18 to 20 May 2026, during which he embarked INS Vikrant and reviewed the operational readiness of the Western Naval Command. The CNS witnessed advanced multidimensional combat drills conducted by surface, aerial and subsurface assets, and commended personnel for their professionalism and steadfast commitment towards safeguarding national maritime interests.
During the visit, he also interacted with Naval personnel and Defence Civilians at the Indian Naval Sailors Institute "Sagar" and during a Fireside Chat at Mulla Auditorium.

Passing Out Parade – Spring Term 2026



The Indian Naval Academy conducted the Passing Out Parade for Spring Term 2026 on 28 May 2026 at the Pereira Parade Ground, marking a significant milestone in the training journey of future naval officers. The parade was reviewed by Vice Admiral Sameer Saxena, AVSM, NM, Flag Officer Commanding-in-Chief, Southern Naval Command, in the presence of proud parents and families of the graduating cadets. The ceremony reflected the Indian Navy's enduring commitment towards grooming future leaders dedicated to service, discipline and excellence.

Appointment of Surg VAdm Shankar Subramanian as Director General Medical Services



Surgeon Vice Admiral Shankar Subramanian assumed charge as Director General Medical Services (Navy) on 11 May 2026. An alumnus of Armed Forces Medical College, Pune and a Gold Medalist from Pune University (1988), he is a specialist in Medicine with advanced training in Rheumatology and Clinical Immunology from AIIMS, New Delhi. Prior to assuming the present appointment, he served as Deputy Chief of Integrated Defence Staff (Medical).

A distinguished physician, academician and researcher, the Flag Officer has held several key appointments including Head of Department (Medicine), AFMC Pune; Commandant, Command Hospital Air Force, Bengaluru; and Principal Medical Officer at Headquarters Eastern Air Command.

Appointment of RAdm Sameer Sanjay Pote as the 19th Flag Officer Submarines



Rear Admiral Sameer Sanjay Pote, YSM, assumed charge as the 19th Flag Officer Submarines on 01 May 2026, succeeding Rear Admiral Chetan C. Chandegave. Commissioned into the Indian Navy on 01 January 1996, the Flag Officer is an Anti-Submarine Warfare specialist with extensive operational and staff experience. Prior to assuming the present appointment, he served as India's Defence Adviser to the United Kingdom at the High Commission of India, London. His distinguished career includes command of INS Sindhuvir and professional education at the Defence Services Staff College, Wellington and the College of Defence Management, Secunderabad.

NEWSLETTER



MAY 2026 NEWSLETTER