

Raksha Mantri virtually flags-off 'Samudra Pradakshina', first ever Tri-service all-women circumnavigation sailing expedition, from Mumbai

10 women officers to sail onboard indigenous Indian Army Sailing Vessel Triveni over next 9 months covering approx. 26,000 nautical miles

This voyage is a glowing symbol of Nari Shakti, Armed Forces unity, Aatmanirbhar Bharat & India's military diplomacy & global vision: Shri Rajnath Singh

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Commemorating *Nari Shakti* and the vision for *Viksit Bharat*, Raksha Mantri Shri Rajnath Singh, on September 11, 2025, virtually flagged-off a historic Tri-service all-women circumnavigation sailing expedition *Samudra Pradakshina*, the first ever in the world, from the Gateway of India in Mumbai. In his address from South Block, Raksha Mantri described the voyage as a glowing symbol of *Nari Shakti*, the collective strength, unity & jointness of the three Services, *Aatmanirbhar Bharat* and its military diplomacy & global vision.



Over the next nine months, 10 women officers will sail onboard the indigenously-built Indian Army Sailing Vessel (IASV) Triveni on an easterly route covering approximately 26,000 nautical miles. They will cross the Equator twice, round the three great Capes - Leeuwin, Horn & Good Hope - covering all major oceans and some of the most dangerous waters, including the Southern Ocean & the Drake Passage. The team will also make four international port calls before returning to Mumbai in May 2026.



Shri Rajnath Singh termed *Samudra Pradakshina* as not only a voyage onboard a ship, but also a spiritual sadhana and a journey of discipline & willpower. “During the expedition, our officers may face numerous challenges, but their flame of determination will pierce through the darkness. They will return home safely, showing the world that the valour of Indian women is beyond any limits,” he said.

Raksha Mantri recalled the recent extraordinary feat achieved by two Indian Women Navy officers - Lieutenant Commander Dilna K & Lieutenant Commander Rupa A - who successfully circumnavigated the globe onboard another indigenous vessel INS Tarini in double-handed mode, overcoming a number of challenges with courage and dedication. He exuded confidence that IASV Triveni will set another global benchmark in maritime adventure, writing another golden chapter in India’s maritime journey.

Shri Rajnath Singh described the Tri-service expedition as a shining example of the Government’s commitment towards jointness among the three Services. “We believe that when there is a feeling of jointness among the Armed Forces, even the biggest challenge seems small,” he said.



Dubbing IASV Triveni, a 50-foot yacht indigenously-built in Puducherry, as an embodiment of *Aatmanirbhar Bharat*, Raksha Mantri asserted that the vessel reflects India’s confidence in defence innovation and technology. Every nautical mile of IASV Triveni is a journey towards India’s strategic autonomy and self-reliance, he added.

On the port calls at Fremantle (Australia), Lyttelton (New Zealand), Port Stanley (Canada) and Cape Town (South Africa), Shri Rajnath Singh stated that the team’s interactions will be an introduction to the strength of the Armed Forces to the world, along with Indian culture, tradition and values. IASV Triveni is not only a vessel of endurance, but also a vessel of diplomacy, he said.

Chief of Defence Staff General Anil Chauhan, Chief of the Army Staff General Upendra Dwivedi, Chief of the Naval Staff Admiral Dinesh K Tripathi and Chief of the Air Staff Air Chief Marshal Amar Preet Singh

were present with Raksha Mantri in South Block during the virtual flag-off. Flag Officer Commanding-in-Chief, Western Naval Command Vice Admiral Krishna Swaminathan and other senior officials were present at Gateway of India.



About the crew

The 10-member crew includes Expedition Leader Lieutenant Colonel Anuja Varudkar, Deputy Expedition Leader Squadron Leader Shraddha P Raju, along with Major Karamjeet Kaur, Major Omita Dalvi, Captain Prajakta P Nikam, Captain Dauli Butola, Lieutenant Commander Priyanka Gusain, Wing Commander Vibha Singh, Squadron Leader Aruvi Jayadev and Squadron Leader Vaishali Bhandari.



The team has undergone three years of rigorous training, beginning with smaller offshore expeditions on Class B vessels and advancing to IASV Triveni, a Class A yacht acquired in October 2024. Their preparation included progressively challenging voyages along India's western seaboard and a landmark international expedition from Mumbai to Seychelles and back earlier this year, which validated their seamanship, endurance, and self-sufficiency.

About Samudra Pradakshina

The circumnavigation will follow the strict norms of the World Sailing Speed Record Council, requiring the crossing of all longitudes, Equator crossings and completion of over 21,600 nautical miles under sail alone, without use of canals or powered transit. The most formidable phase will be the rounding of Cape Horn in the Southern Ocean during December 2025 - February 2026.

Crossing the Southern Ocean with massive swells, freezing winds, and unpredictable storms is regarded as the ultimate test of seamanship. Crews typically work in watch systems (Eg: 4 hours on/4 hours off), handling

sails, navigation, maintenance, and cooking, while managing sleep deprivation and harsh weather.

During the expedition, the team will also carry out scientific research in collaboration with the National Institute of Oceanography. This includes study of micro-plastics, documentation of ocean life and raising awareness about marine health.

Background

Sir Robin Knox-Johnston (UK) was the first to complete a solo non-stop circumnavigation in 1969. In India, Captain Dilip Donde (Retd) completed the first solo circumnavigation (2009–10) and Commander Abhilash Tomy (Retd) was the first Indian to circumnavigate non-stop in 2012–13. Navika Sagar Parikrama (2017–18) and Navika Sagar Parikrama-II (2024-25) by Indian Navy on INSV Tarini have been previous successful circumnavigation expeditions.

VK/Savvy

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