



INDIA AND SRI LANKA DEEPEN MARITIME COOPERATION THROUGH IN-SLN DIVEX 2026

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India and Sri Lanka reaffirmed their growing maritime partnership through the **fourth edition of the bilateral diving exercise, IN-SLN DIVEX 2026**, conducted at Colombo from **21-28 Apr 2026**. The exercise witnessed participation of the Indian Navy's Diving Support and Submarine Rescue Vessel, INS Nireekshak, alongside diving teams from both navies-**underscoring enhanced operational coordination and professional synergy**.

A specialised engagement **focusing on complex underwater operations**, IN-SLN DIVEX aims to strengthen interoperability between the Indian Navy and the Sri Lankan Navy. The exercise featured advanced deep-sea diving evolutions, including mixed gas diving drills. Divers from both navies undertook extensive harbour and open-sea dives, demonstrating high levels of technical proficiency and operational expertise. **A key highlight was the conduct of mixed gas dives off Colombo over World War-era wrecks - SS Worcester and SS Perseus.**

Marking a significant milestone, divers from both navies successfully executed deep-sea dives beyond **55 metres**- enhancing joint capabilities in underwater search, rescue, and salvage operations, while reinforcing coordination in the Indian Ocean Region.

During the exercise, Rear Admiral SJ Kumara, Flag Officer Commanding Western Naval Area, visited INS Nireekshak and commended the Indian Navy's continued support in advancing the training of Sri Lankan divers. He highlighted the importance of sustained exchange of best practices and professional expertise.

Beyond operational engagements, the exercise fostered camaraderie through a series of joint activities, including a beach clean-up drive at Galle Face, friendly sports fixtures, and yoga sessions - strengthening bonds of friendship and mutual trust.

The Commanding Officer of INS Nireekshak paid homage at the IPKF Memorial, laying a wreath in honour of Indian soldiers who made the supreme sacrifice during the Indian Peace Keeping Force operations in Sri Lanka.

Further extending humanitarian cooperation, two BHISM (Bharat Health Initiative for Sahyog, Hita and Maitri) cubes were handed over under India's Aarogya Maitri initiative, enhancing disaster response and medical preparedness.

On completion of the exercise, INS Nireekshak was accorded a ceremonial send-off - symbolising the strong camaraderie and enduring maritime partnership between the two navies.

IN-SLN DIVEX 2026 stands as a testament to sustained bilateral collaboration, aligned with the vision of **MAHASAGAR (Mutual and Holistic Advancement for Security and Growth Across Regions)**, and a shared commitment to peace, stability, and security in the Indian Ocean Region.







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