

Daily Defence Current Affairs

22 July 2026

Operation Southern Readiness 26-2 Commences

- Operation Southern Readiness 26-2, a four-day multinational maritime security training engagement, commenced at Southern Naval Command, Kochi, on 20 Jul 2026.
- Hosted by the Southern Naval Command, the engagement is being conducted under the aegis of the Indian Navy-led Combined Task Force 154 (CTF 154), in partnership with Combined Maritime Forces (CMF), and has brought together 254 participants from 26 countries, supported by 74 facilitators and four International Organisations, and Subject Matter Experts.
- The exercise marks the maiden conduct of Operation Southern Readiness in India and represents an important milestone in the growing engagement between the Indian Navy and CMF.
- CTF 154, CMF's dedicated Training Task Force, is presently commanded by the Indian Navy and is focused on strengthening capacity, interoperability and professional readiness of CMF Partner Nations through multinational maritime training.
- The opening day, broadly themed around the subject of Ship Management and Special Training, combining professional interaction with Subject Matter Experts and practical exposure. A session by the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) addressed maritime security threats in the Red Sea and Western Indian Ocean.
- This was followed by hands-on exposure on Ship Handling, Navigation, Astro Navigation, Maritime Distress Communication Systems, and Damage Control and Firefighting utilising Indian Navy's state-of-the-art simulators and associated training infrastructure.



INS Malvan: Indian Navy Inducts Submarine Hunter

- **INS Malvan: Indian Navy Inducts Indigenous Submarine Hunter to Strengthen Coastal Defence**
- **Introduction**
- The Indian Navy has further strengthened its maritime security capabilities with the induction of **INS Malvan**, the second **Mahe-class Anti-Submarine Warfare Shallow Water Craft (ASW-SWC)**. Commissioned on **22 July 2026**, the warship has been designed specifically to detect, track, and counter enemy submarines operating in India's coastal waters. The induction of INS Malvan comes at a time when underwater activity in the **Indian Ocean Region (IOR)** is increasing, making anti-submarine warfare one of the Indian Navy's highest operational priorities. The vessel also reflects India's growing emphasis on **Aatmanirbhar Bharat** through indigenous warship design and construction.
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- **Background**
- The Indian Ocean has become an increasingly strategic region due to expanding naval deployments by several countries. The growing presence of conventional and nuclear-powered submarines has created new security challenges for India, particularly around its coastline, ports, island territories, and vital sea lanes of communication.
- To enhance coastal defence, the Indian Navy launched the **Anti-Submarine Warfare Shallow Water Craft (ASW-SWC) Programme**, under which **16 indigenous vessels** are being built. These ships are intended to operate alongside larger destroyers, frigates, maritime patrol aircraft, and submarines, creating a multi-layered anti-submarine defence network. INS Malvan is the second vessel of this new generation of submarine hunters.

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- **About INS Malvan**
 - INS Malvan belongs to the **Mahe-class Anti-Submarine Warfare Shallow Water Craft** and has been constructed by **Cochin Shipyard Limited (CSL), Kochi**. The vessel incorporates **over 80% indigenous content**, demonstrating India's increasing capability in designing, constructing, and integrating advanced naval platforms domestically.
 - The ship derives its name from **Malvan**, the historic coastal town in Maharashtra closely associated with the maritime legacy of **Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj**. It also continues the legacy of the earlier **INS Malwan**, which served the Indian Navy until 2003.
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- **Key Features of INS Malvan**
 - **Dedicated Anti-Submarine Warfare Platform**
 - INS Malvan has been specially designed to detect and neutralise hostile submarines operating in shallow coastal waters. Unlike larger warships built for multiple missions, its primary role is underwater surveillance and anti-submarine operations.
 - **Advanced Sensors and Sonar**
 - The vessel is equipped with modern sonar systems capable of locating submarines and underwater intruders. These sensors enable early detection, continuous tracking, and effective engagement of underwater threats.
 - **Anti-Submarine Weapons**
 - The warship carries specialised anti-submarine weapons, including lightweight torpedoes and rocket systems, enabling it to engage hostile submarines at close range during coastal defence missions.
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- **Stealth and Propulsion**
 - INS Malvan incorporates several stealth technologies to reduce its detectability during operations.
 - Its design features include:
 - Reduced radar cross-section
 - Low acoustic signature
 - Reduced infrared signature
 - The vessel is powered by **three 6 MW marine diesel engines** coupled with **water-jet propulsion**, making it one of the largest Indian Navy warships to employ pump-jet technology. This propulsion system provides excellent manoeuvrability, especially in shallow waters, while reducing underwater noise that could reveal the ship's position. It can achieve a **maximum speed of about**

25 knots, has an operational range of approximately **1,800 nautical miles at 14 knots**, and an endurance of around **14 days**.

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- **Role in Coastal Security**
- INS Malvan has been designed primarily for operations in India's littoral waters, where enemy submarines may attempt to operate close to ports, naval bases, and strategic coastal infrastructure.
- Its operational roles include:
 - Detection of hostile submarines
 - Protection of naval bases and ports
 - Coastal surveillance
 - Escort of naval assets
 - Underwater reconnaissance
 - Maritime security operations
 - Protection of critical Sea Lines of Communication (SLOCs)
- The ship complements larger naval platforms by strengthening India's anti-submarine warfare capability in areas where larger warships may have operational limitations.
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- **Contribution to Aatmanirbhar Bharat**
- INS Malvan represents another important achievement under India's **Aatmanirbhar Bharat** initiative. The project demonstrates the country's ability to design and build sophisticated warships using indigenous technologies and industrial capabilities.
- Several Indian defence companies, including **Bharat Electronics Limited (BEL)**, **Larsen & Toubro (L&T)**, and **Mahindra Defence**, have contributed to the programme by supplying critical systems and equipment. The high indigenous content reduces dependence on foreign suppliers while strengthening India's domestic defence manufacturing ecosystem.
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- **Strategic Importance**
- The induction of INS Malvan comes amid increasing submarine deployments by regional navies in the Indian Ocean Region. As underwater warfare becomes more significant, specialised anti-submarine vessels provide an effective and economical means of protecting coastal waters and strategic maritime assets.
- The Mahe-class ASW-SWC programme will significantly improve the Indian Navy's layered maritime defence architecture by working in coordination with:
 - P-8I maritime patrol aircraft
 - MH-60R anti-submarine helicopters

- Surface combatants
- Conventional submarines
- Integrated coastal surveillance systems
- Together, these assets enhance India's ability to monitor, deter, and respond to underwater threats across the Indian Ocean Region.
- (Advanced Medium Combat Aircraft), Ghatak UCAV, and CATS Warrior.



India Summons Russian Envoy Over MV Golden Leo Attack

- The Ministry of External Affairs summoned Russian Charge d'Affaires Vladimir Ladanov on Tuesday in connection with the attack on the commercial vessel MV Golden Leo, which claimed the **lives of four Indian nationals**.
- The meeting was held at the ministry in New Delhi, where India conveyed its grave concerns and unequivocal condemnation of the incident.
- In its statement, the MEA emphasised that attacks targeting commercial shipping undermine the safety, security, and stability of international maritime commerce.
- The Russian diplomat was asked to convey India's strong concerns to Moscow, stressing that the targeting of civilian vessels and the resulting loss of innocent lives are unacceptable and must be avoided.
- The ministry reiterated that the attack on the Golden Leo on 19 July 2026, while the vessel was departing the port of Odesa, resulted in the tragic loss of four Indian crew members, with one more hospitalised in critical condition.
- At the time of the incident, the vessel carried 17 crew members, including five Indians. India expressed condolences to the bereaved families and assured that

its mission in Ukraine is closely monitoring the situation and providing all possible assistance.





Ministry of External Affairs
Government of India

STATEMENT

On the evening of 19 July 2026, the vessel MV GOLDEN LEO was attacked while departing the port of Odesa. At the time of the incident, there were 17 crew members on board, including 5 Indian nationals.

2. As per information available, four Indian nationals have tragically lost their lives, while one is hospitalized in a critical condition. Our Mission in Ukraine is closely monitoring the situation and is making every effort to extend all possible assistance to those affected. We extend our deepest condolences to the families of the deceased Indian nationals and wish the injured Indian national a speedy and full recovery.

3. India condemns such attacks and reiterates that targeting commercial shipping and endangering innocent civilian crew members, or otherwise impeding freedom of navigation and commerce, is deplorable and should be avoided.

20 July 2026

Captain Shivani Becomes First-Ever Woman Aide-de-Camp to Chief of Army Staff

- Captain Shivani has created history by becoming the first-ever woman officer to be appointed as the Aide-de-Camp (ADC) to the Chief of the Army Staff (COAS), General Dhiraj Seth.

- Her appointment marks a significant milestone in the Indian Army's evolving journey towards greater inclusion and expanding leadership opportunities for women officers, while reaffirming the institution's enduring emphasis on merit, excellence and professionalism.
- The prestigious appointment places Captain Shivani among a select group of officers entrusted with one of the most distinguished responsibilities in military service.
- The Indian Army's approach towards expanding opportunities for women officers has consistently been guided by the principles of merit, capability and professional excellence.
- Captain Shivani's selection for this prestigious assignment exemplifies this institutional commitment and reinforces the Army's emphasis on recognising talent and dedication irrespective of gender.



Shaurya Squadron Signals Armoured Corps Shift To Tech-Led Warfare

- The Indian Army is in the midst of a sweeping modernisation program aimed at reshaping itself into a more agile and technologically empowered fighting force.
- This transformation is being driven by the need to adapt to evolving forms of combat, where speed, integration, and precision are critical to success in multi-domain operations.
- Among the changes already underway are the formation of Integrated Battle Groups, which are designed to provide faster and more flexible responses to

battlefield challenges. The infantry has seen the creation of Ashni platoons, which combine surveillance and loitering strike capabilities.

- The artillery arm has been strengthened with the Shaktibaan Regiment, focused on swarm drone operations and long-range strikes, and the Divyastra Battery, which integrates UAV-assisted targeting for enhanced precision.
- The Shaurya Squadron is expected to play a role in integrating these counter-drone measures directly into armoured formations, ensuring survivability and effectiveness in future conflicts.



REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. Operation Southern Readiness 26-2 is a military exercise conducted by which Indian Armed Force?

- A) Indian Army
- B) Indian Air Force
- C) Indian Navy
- D) Indian Coast Guard

Answer: B) Indian Air Force

2. The primary objective of Operation Southern Readiness 26-2 is to:

- A) Conduct humanitarian assistance abroad
- B) Enhance operational preparedness and combat readiness in Southern India
- C) Test India's nuclear deterrence capability
- D) Conduct joint exercises with QUAD nations

Answer: B) Enhance operational preparedness and combat readiness in Southern India

3. INS Malvan, commissioned into the Indian Navy in July 2026, belongs to which class of warships?

- A) Nilgiri-class Frigate**
- B) Kamorta-class Corvette**
- C) Mahe-class Anti-Submarine Warfare Shallow Water Craft (ASW-SWC)**
- D) Visakhapatnam-class Destroyer**

Answer: C) Mahe-class Anti-Submarine Warfare Shallow Water Craft (ASW-SWC)

4. INS Malvan has been built by:

- A) Mazagon Dock Shipbuilders Limited (MDL), Mumbai**
- B) Garden Reach Shipbuilders & Engineers (GRSE), Kolkata**
- C) Cochin Shipyard Limited (CSL), Kochi**
- D) Goa Shipyard Limited (GSL), Goa**

Answer: C) Cochin Shipyard Limited (CSL), Kochi

5. India summoned the Russian envoy following an attack on which merchant vessel?

- A) MV MSC Elsa**
- B) MV Golden Leo**
- C) MV Suez Canal**
- D) MV Arabian Star**

Answer: B) MV Golden Leo

6. The attack on MV Golden Leo highlighted concerns regarding the security of:

- A) Arctic shipping routes**
- B) Indian Ocean Region and maritime trade routes**
- C) Panama Canal**
- D) Mediterranean Sea**

Answer: B) Indian Ocean Region and maritime trade routes

7. Captain Shivani created history by becoming the first-ever woman to serve as:

- A) Commanding Officer of an Armoured Regiment**
- B) Aide-de-Camp (ADC) to the Chief of Army Staff**
- C) Director General of Military Nursing Services**
- D) Commander of the National Defence Academy**

Answer: B) Aide-de-Camp (ADC) to the Chief of Army Staff

8. The appointment of Captain Shivani as Aide-de-Camp reflects the Indian Army's commitment towards:

- A) Privatization of defence production**
- B) Gender inclusion and women's leadership in the Armed Forces**
- C) Expansion of overseas military bases**
- D) Compulsory military service for women**

Answer: B) Gender inclusion and women's leadership in the Armed Forces

9. Shaurya Squadron is associated with which arm of the Indian Army?

- A) Army Aviation Corps**
- B) Corps of Engineers**
- C) Armoured Corps**
- D) Regiment of Artillery**

Answer: C) Armoured Corps

10. The induction of Shaurya Squadron primarily signifies the Indian Army's transition towards:

- A) Mountain warfare only**
- B) Amphibious warfare**
- C) Technology-driven and network-centric armoured warfare**
- D) Space-based military operations**

Answer: C) Technology-driven and network-centric armoured warfare