

'Anchored On Indigenisation'

On eve of Navy Day 2016,

VAYU Interview with Admiral Sunil Lanba, Chief of the Naval Staff

VAYU: *Although a formidable force in the region, the Indian Navy's combat ships have in the recent past attracted criticism for being 'under-equipped'. For example, modern frigates and destroyers are being commissioned without adequate integral helicopters or towed sonar available, and new submarines due to enter service without torpedoes. How are these pressing issues being addressed?*

CNS: The Indian Navy presently has a force level of over 135 ships and submarines, and more than 230 aircraft for ensuring maritime security of the country. Induction of suitable platforms and equipment, as also regular review of deployment patterns, are also being undertaken by the Indian Navy towards ensuring combat capability. However, there are certain capability shortfalls pertaining to multi-role helicopters, submarines, Mine Counter Measure Vessels (MCMVs) and certain weapons, which have been delayed due to unforeseen developments. The Government is seized of the issues and steps are being taken to ensure that capability shortfalls are overcome at the earliest.

Notwithstanding, I can assure you that the Indian Navy remains fully prepared for the defence of the nation. The present force levels, coupled with the quality of training, sound professionalism, resilience, innovativeness and leadership qualities of our personnel, provides us with a definitive edge.

VAYU: *The Indian Navy's submarine force remains an area of some concern. While Project 75 (Scorpene-class) is on the cusp of fructification the Navy still operates a disproportionately small number of submarines, particularly given the challenges of the IOR*



and the maritime activities of nations such as China and Pakistan in the region. Kindly elaborate on status of critical future programmes such as the Project 75(I), and follow-on Scorpene-class orders.

CNS: As you would be aware our induction plans are driven by the need to acquire desired capability as is dictated by the Indian Maritime Strategy. The Indian Navy is progressing its submarine induction plan as envisaged in the 30-year submarine building plan. While there have been delays in certain projects, the Indian Navy maintains