



# ‘Fully Capable and Always Ready’

## VAYU Interview with

## Admiral Sunil Lanba, Chief of the Naval Staff

**VAYU:** *Observing the current defence preparedness scenario, analysts have pinpointed the existence of ‘critical hollowness’ as regards deficiencies in weapon systems, ammunition and equipment. Force structure and modernisation constantly come up against fiscal challenges, especially with a shrinking defence budget (in real, if not absolute terms) and increased pension burden. What steps are being taken to overcome this in the context of the Indian Navy?*

**CNS:** The Indian Navy remains committed to translate its modernisation plans into action in a time-bound and effective manner. While doing so, we also remain prepared to respond to the present and emerging challenges in the maritime domain. The fiscal constraints

in the modernisation process, if any, are addressed jointly with all concerned stakeholders. More emphasis is being laid on prioritisation, rationalisation and economy of expenditure. Greater value for money is being achieved by encouraging procurements from indigenous sources. Manpower requirements are also being rationalised through automation of platforms and outsourcing of non-core functions. The government has recently delegated certain financial powers to the Service Headquarters for procurement of critical ammunition and spares. These would help us in overcoming some of the existing shortages. Let me take this opportunity to assure your readers that the Indian Navy is fully capable of tackling all the existing and emerging challenges in the maritime domain.

**VAYU:** *The Indian Navy currently operates only 13 old conventional submarines, 10 of which are older than 25 years, and with low availability rates reported for the fleet. What are the key goals for Project 75 (India) with regard to timely induction of new boats, and how will the programme be managed to minimise the delays and escalations that plagued the preceding Project 75 (Kalvari-class)?*

**CNS:** As on date, the Indian Navy operates 14 conventional submarines including the first submarine of Project-75, *Kalvari*, which was delivered recently. Trials of the second submarine under this project, *Khanderi*, are also progressing well. We have imbibed correct lessons in the process and I am certain that the subsequent deliveries will materialise as per schedule. *INS Chakra*,