

Proceedings of a Webinar on

# **Creating, Nurturing and Harnessing India's Maritime Soft Power**

Edited by

**Cmde Srikant Kesnur**  
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Western Naval Command

**Proceedings of a Webinar on ‘Creating, Nurturing and Harnessing India’s Maritime Soft Power’**

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First Published – 2022

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Published by  
Headquarters, Western Naval Command  
Mumbai



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## **FOREWORD**

India inherits a rich maritime legacy that can be traced back to as far as the 3<sup>rd</sup> millennium BC. There are ample evidences to show that India was actively trading with the countries of South East Asia including Java, Sumatra as well as East Africa, West Asia and Mediterranean region. This reflects our rich maritime presence around the world in those times. However, as we turned our gaze landward in the second millennium, we started a slow winding down of our maritime culture. The neglect over centuries not only left us vulnerable to attacks from invaders but also led to eroding of our deep rooted maritime history, traditions and legacy.

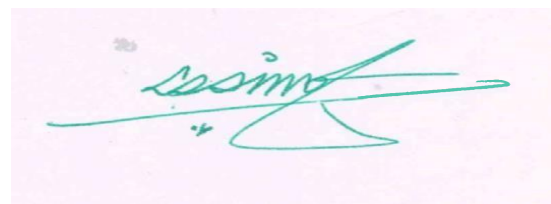
Evolution of life and its very sustenance on our planet Earth has much dependence on oceans and with a growing realisation of the centrality of the oceans in our economic and social prosperity among the political leadership, the last few years have seen an accelerated growth in our maritime infrastructure and capabilities. These include continued investments in ‘Hard Power’, however the domain of ‘Maritime Soft Power’<sup>1</sup> remains untouched. We see traces of Indian traditions and culture being followed in the distant lands of the South East Asia, East Africa and West Asia even today, which indicates the range, scope and effectiveness of maritime soft power.

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<sup>1</sup>*Soft Power* can be termed as a nation’s capacity to favourably influence affairs and policies internationally without use of coercive power.

Accretion of offensive power comprising the Navy can be accelerated by acquiring newer and better ships and its paramilitary/ civilian components such as Coast Guard, Marine police, Merchant marine, fisheries etc. However, building soft power is a long drawn process because it has to be sustained continuously at perception level. While we invest in building maritime infrastructure, we need to focus to inculcate adequate maritime orientation in our masses. Though slowly and steadily some efforts are being put in, to develop the maritime sphere, the singular focus to enhance maritime awareness and consciousness amongst larger cross-section of decision makers of an emerging maritime nation, especially in the hinterland, needs to remain in the fore front.

With this central theme of '*Enhancing Maritime Consciousness*', the Western Naval Command coordinated and conducted a webinar in partnership with the Indian Maritime Foundation and the Nautical Institute, India (West) and other maritime stakeholders. Panels of experts from a wide spectrum of the maritime world – from military to merchant marine, from policy makers to historians and academics – all came together on one platform to strategize and evolve ways and means for '*Creating, Nurturing and Harnessing India's Maritime Soft Power*'. The publication of the proceedings of the webinar is an effort to ensure that a wider audience across disciplines becomes familiar with the relevant issues on the subject and their solutions, rather than it being restricted only to those who attended the webinar. I compliment the Editors of this volume for their efforts and recommend it for reading to all those looking at developing maritime consciousness and the ways and means to nurture our nation's Maritime Soft Power. I hope that this publication serves as a useful reference material to all those interested in matters maritime and our policy makers.

A handwritten signature in blue ink on a light pink background. The signature is stylized and appears to be 'S. Singh'.

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## Introduction

India, since independence has come a long way and has progressed by leaps and bounds over the last 75 years. We have progressed a great deal in varied fields such as economy, military, technology etc. In the maritime domain, we have gained considerable amount of hard power by developing large shipyards, strong Navy, a growing Merchant Fleet, strong fishing fleet and offshore infrastructure. However, our maritime soft power remains dormant and seems to lag behind 'hard power'. Therefore, efforts at every level are required to examine ways and means to bring India's maritime soft power to the forefront.

The Western Naval Command, over a period of time and through several initiatives, has been endeavouring to bring together not only sea going professionals, but also maritime enthusiasts, academics, researchers and historians alike. Maritime Webinar under the overarching theme of '*Fostering Cooperation between Seafaring Communities*' therefore has been a regular affair over the past eight years. While the broad theme has been constant since inception, a new topic of common interest is deliberated every year wherein discussions have been carried out on diverse subjects of maritime interests.

This webinar on the subject of '*Creating, Nurturing and Harnessing India's Maritime Soft Power*', which was conducted along with the Indian Maritime Foundation (IMF) and Nautical Institute India (West) on 12 Nov 21, was one such initiative and was a natural extrapolation of the last year's theme '*Enhancing Maritime Consciousness for Sea Power*'. The webinar brought together Flag Officers, technical experts, maritime enthusiasts, researchers, maritime artists, maritime sportsmen and experienced speakers from the Indian Navy (IN), Indian Coast Guard (ICG), the Merchant Marine, scholars and academics to discuss and study the challenges of creating and nurturing the maritime soft power of India and also various ways and means to harness that soft power.

The event at ground level was coordinated by us at the Maritime Warfare Centre and was attended by professionals from Indian Navy, Indian Coast Guard, Merchant Navy, Maritime Administration, Marine Service Agencies, Maritime Enthusiasts and Academics to name a few. The webinar was a full day event conducted over six sessions and consisted of four sessions of Panel discussions including a special session for the young adults/ students other than the opening and closing sessions. Each session had subject matter experts who discussed and recommended measures to create, nurture and harness India's maritime soft power. All the panel discussions were moderated by experienced professionals. The live Q&A by the viewers on social media during the sessions also generated interesting discussions covering diverse viewpoints. The vibrant debates and the wealth of information generated through interactions and discussions encouraged us to reach out to a larger audience and ensure wider dissemination of the contents of the webinar. Consequently, the audio recordings of the webinar were transcribed to generate the contents of this book, which will find resonance and relevance amongst readers and enthusiasts of matters maritime.

In accordance with best editorial practices any mistake that may have inadvertently crept in, remains the responsibility of the editorial team.

We wish you happy reading!

Editors



## Opening Address

**Capt Anand Dixit, Master Mariner**  
*President, Indian Maritime Foundation*

Vice Admiral R Hari Kumar, officers of the Indian Navy and the Merchant Navy, members of the Nautical Institute and Indian Maritime Foundation, fellow mariners and non-mariners, ladies and gentlemen, a very good morning to you. It gives me great pleasure in welcoming you to the Joint Webinar, organised by Western Naval Command, Indian Maritime Foundation and the Nautical Institute. This is the 8<sup>th</sup> edition of the joint seminar series. The aim of these seminars has been to bring the seafaring communities, the Navy, Coast Guard and Merchant Marine together so that they can understand each other's roles, capabilities and adopt the best practices of each service. The central theme of the joint seminars has been 'Fostering Cooperation Between Seafaring Communities'. Nine years ago the Western Naval Command launched this initiative at the behest of the then IMF President Cmde Rajan Vir (Retd) with the support and participation of the Nautical Institute, India (West). We are thankful to the Western Naval Command and Nautical Institute India (West) for their efforts in organising today's webinar and hope that this cooperation will continue.

Over the years we have covered a number of topics and subtopics of interest to seafaring communities. The fact that we are now into the 8<sup>th</sup> edition of this recurring event is a proof in itself of the relevance and value of this symposium. Until now this forum has been confined to a small section of maritime professionals exchanging views and information among themselves. But now it is felt that we need to move on and do something more while still maintaining our core objectives. The organisers have taken a step in the right direction by expanding the scope of this seminar to make it more inclusive and cover a wider range of topics of maritime interest. Today, besides the main theme, we will be looking at different aspects of the maritime realm like maritime history, maritime archaeology, maritime education and from an academicians point of view at the most neglected aspect of maritime culture, the '*Marine Art*'. If I may add a word here, IMF has set up a separate organisation called SIMA (Society of Indian Marine Artists) to promote marine art in India with the objective of creating maritime consciousness among the people of India. There is also a separate wing called Junior SIMA for the younger age group of below 16 years. You will hear more about SIMA and Junior SIMA in Session 3.

Our main theme today is 'Creating, Nurturing and Harnessing India's Maritime Soft Power'. We have a number of eminent speakers today who will be sharing their knowledge and expertise, so I shall restrict my opening remarks to the broad outline of the theme. Soft Power is a relatively new term in the maritime lexicon. The term 'Hard Power' is easier to understand because obviously it means a country's fighting Navy, ships, aircraft and the weapons, and of course, the ability and the will of the country to project that power beyond its own waters. Soft Power, on the other hand, is more difficult to define, and each country will have its own interpretation of the term, depending on the geopolitical situation and their security needs in peacetime. When the use of hard maritime power to promote national interests is not appropriate or desirable, the Soft Power assumes greater significance. In the case of China, the component pieces of China's maritime power are its Navy, the Coast Guard, Maritime Militia, Merchant Marine, Shipbuilding and Fishing Industry, all of which is backed by China's smiling face diplomacy. It is easy to see the hard and soft components in China's maritime power, but all countries may not possess the wherewithal to build such a vast maritime force and may not even consider it necessary. As for India, our geostrategic location and our unique security requirements dictate what we must do.

First of all, development of our ports and the necessary infrastructure, enhancing shipbuilding and ship repairing facilities, and most important, increasing our merchant shipping

tonnage consistent with our trade volume. These are the bare minimum requirements in our pursuit to become a maritime power. Because of our unique geographical location, our area of interest extends far beyond our own shores. We have to assert our presence in the Indian Ocean region but without seeming to be aggressive, especially to the littoral states and island territories. As we all know over the years, the term 'Indian Ocean Region (IOR)' has been gradually replaced by the new term 'Indo - Pacific Region', and accordingly, our national policy has also undergone a shift and has become '*Act West*' and '*Look East Policy*'. What do we need to do to become a maritime soft power in our neighbourhood? Humanitarian assistance, disaster relief operations, financial aid to the extent we can afford and maintaining peace in the region could be some of the things that could be done and in fact, are being done.

The Navy has done a commendable job in generating goodwill in the nearby countries through its diplomatic and benign roles. So, I think we have already made a good start, but it is important to remember that this is not a purely neighbour business. We must simultaneously act on many other fronts: diplomatic initiatives, enhancing cultural ties, trade and commerce, developing tourism and most importantly, people to people contact. All these are necessary to nurture and harness our Maritime Soft Power. I'm sure our eminent speakers today will give you a better insight into this subject. With that, I conclude my opening address.

# Inaugural Address

**Capt Kapildev Bahl**, Master Mariner  
*Chairman, Nautical Institute India (West)*

Vice Admiral R Hari Kumar, PVSM, AVSM, VSM, ADC, Flag Officer Commanding-in-Chief, Western Naval Command, Vice Admiral Pradeep Chauhan, AVSM & Bar, VSM (Retd), Director General, National Maritime Foundation, Captain Anand Dixit, President, Indian Maritime Foundation (IMF), dignitaries, officers of the Indian Navy, Indian Coast Guard, members of the IMF and the Nautical Institute, fellow mariners and participants; when one thinks of international affairs, what comes to mind is power. We are all familiar with hard power, which is the ability of a nation to coerce another, but with increasing proliferation, one needs to appreciate the immense potential of Soft Power, which is the ability of a nation to co-opt through appeal and attraction rather than coercion. Joseph Nye, who coined the term soft power in international affairs, aptly described it as a means of getting others to want the outcomes that we want predicated on the attractiveness of one's culture, political values and foreign policy. India has tremendous potential to develop its soft power, but the phenomenon has not been well studied and fully appreciated. There are numerous modes of exercising such influence. Culture which is spread overseas by philosophers, traders, and migration, but not through conquest; national values including a strong democratic foundation, secularism, tolerance, and pluralism; the practice of Yoga which has enabled India to spread her vast ancient knowledge systems and of course the more recent development of ecotourism; visual and performing arts including music and cinema, the evacuation of civilians from war zones, humanitarian assistance in times of natural calamities or disasters and assistance to merchant vessels operating in piracy infected areas are just some of the points that come to mind. Whereas military solutions which utilise capabilities are complex but the outcomes are easier to quantify and monitor. Defensive Soft Power projections, on the other hand, with greater emphasis on capacities, can be used for image building and as an instrument to exert influence. However, success or otherwise of Soft Power is more difficult to quantify and monitor.

*Alliance Françoise* and *Max Mueller Bhavan* are fine examples of nations leveraging their soft power through language. India does not have an active policy to spread our language, although Prakrit and Sanskrit are identified as a source among the proto-Indo-European group of languages. Similarly, India does not actively project its political model as an attraction for others. It is important to distinguish all the above aspects from propaganda because once credibility is eroded, the other aspects of soft power will lose their attractiveness. But today I wish to stress the potential of the maritime industry in particular, which as the most economic, cost effective and environment friendly means of transportation is synonymous with globalisation and is thus an ideal means of Soft Power projection for India. Other than the huge opportunities which exist in the mainstream shipping sector of ship owning, ship management and shipbuilding etc., it is in the services sector that India holds the key to enhancing our Soft Power. Our Ship Manning and Management Companies are a success story in this regard, and the thousands of Indian seafarers are Soft Power ambassadors. But Soft Power isn't proportionate to the number of ships or the volume of maritime trade. This is readily apparent when one compares the Soft Power projections of nations with huge trading volumes compared with others which lead the world in Soft Power influence. Imagine the influence on the impressionable mind of a young officer studying an Admiralty Chart, referring to a Brown's Almanac or reading Sailing Directions, no wonder the United Kingdom still maintains primacy in the maritime industry. I wish to particularly draw the attention of participants on the importance of maritime services sectors, which include marine insurance, protection and reminiscence, port terminal, oil pollution, warehouse, liability insurance, etc., brokerage and other maritime service industries, and then financial and banking services, Admiralty laws, arbitration

and litigation. All these are fine examples which we can develop. I would particularly urge mariners to write and publish authoritative works which can be established as reference manuals throughout the world.

Each of these elements support and promote each other and India would do well to concentrate on these aspects as a means to enhance Soft Power. I am presently writing a book titled, '*Archiving the Memories of ex-Dufferin Cadets, Lest we forget*'. The intention is to collate one memoir of each batch starting from 1927, all the way to 1973. In the case of ex-cadets who are no longer with us, I'm reaching out to their family. I never cease to be amazed at the enormous goodwill prevailing among mariners settled far and wide with just one thing in common, Pre-Cadet Training (PC Training). Each one has a story to tell, each is indebted and each considers these formative years as having shaped their future careers, a wonderful fine projection of Indian Soft Power. This then, is the legacy which future maritime training institutes have to sustain. No wonder the very first after this opening session has been aptly allocated to maritime education. Jai Hind.

## Keynote Address

**Vice Admiral R Hari Kumar, PVSM, AVSM, VSM, ADC**  
*Flag Officer Commanding-in-Chief, Western Naval Command*

Good morning, ladies and gentlemen. On behalf of the Western Naval Command, let me welcome Captain Anand Dixit, President, Indian Maritime Foundation, Captain Kapildev Bahl, Chairman, Nautical Institute, India West, Flag Officers, Commanding Officers, Officers-in-Charge of the Navy and the Coast Guard, Senior Officers, Master and Training officers of the Merchant Navy, scholars, academia, members of the media and all distinguished panellists and delegates at the 8<sup>th</sup> edition of the Maritime Webinar/ Seminar being jointly conducted by the Indian Navy, Indian Maritime Foundation and the Nautical Institute to foster cooperation among seafaring communities. My special greetings also to Cmde Rajan Vir, who is the President emeritus of the IMF, the moving force not just behind these webinars, but in the broader realm of the maritime awakening in the country through various initiatives including the IMF.

The objective of the webinar is to get all paradigm historians, scholars and practitioners under one roof to discuss issues of mutual interest and gain from each other's knowledge and experience. It is a step in the right direction for awakening the maritime consciousness of our nation, which had a great past as a seagoing power, and may surely secure a bright future with our collective efforts. As seen from previous editions in the passing years, both the quality of papers and participation has grown substantially. I'm hopeful of a similar outcome for this seminar as well.

So let me begin by acknowledging the stellar role the Indian Maritime Foundation and the Nautical Institute have played in enhancing maritime awareness in our country. In my view, the Navy and the Coast Guard are also doing all they can to further join the cause along with various associated government and non-government agencies. Figuratively speaking, the evolution of life and its sustenance on Earth is dependent on the oceans. It is all the more important with the ever-growing population and the availability of land getting scarce. As such, Mark Twain said clairvoyantly in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century – “Buy land, they aren't making it anymore”. Of course, some amount of reclamation is going on in various places by some countries, excluding that, there really is not any more land being made available. Yet as the vital supplies and resources dry up on land, we'll have to go back to the sea to seek resources be it oil, gas, fish, nutrients, proteins, minerals, etc. with a much greater thrust.

The Indian Ocean region is endowed with the wealth of natural resources which are assets largely untapped, abundant with resources particularly in sectors like fisheries, aquaculture, ocean energy, seabed mining and minerals. Incidentally, there is a saying that in the Indian Ocean region the fish die of old age because of a very limited pursuit of industrial fishing. There is tremendous economic opportunity to develop maritime tourism and shipping. We are all aware that about 95% of our trade by volume and 70% by value is transported over the sea and transportation by sea is going to remain as the most efficient form for a long time to come. It is claimed that with roughly the same amount of energy, we can move about 250 kg on land on wheels, about 2500 kg on rails and about 25,000 kg by sea. That is the type of exponential ability that we can generate when we translate the movement of goods by sea. As the concept of the blue economy gains traction, we see more and more maritime related projects underway. The release of Maritime India Vision 2030 in March this year by our honourable Prime Minister is a significant step in this direction. This involves an investment of over three lakh crores, it generates more than 20 lakh jobs and it unlocks annual revenue potential for major ports worth about 20,000 crores by revamping the port infrastructure in our country. At the same time, terms like sea steading, just like we used to have for

homesteading, are also gaining prominence. Floating cities and cities that sit on the ocean floor are being planned off Tahiti. There is an underwater spiral city which is being worked upon or planned near Tokyo, which can accommodate up to 5000 people at a depth of nearly 16,000 ft. In an article from the Centre for International Maritime Security, I came across this interesting route that is 66-70-80-99 rule, which expands to say that 66% of the global wealth comes from in or near the seas, 70% of the globe is oceanic, just as the human body has water, 80% of the population is coastal, 90% of the goods arrive by sea and 99% of the international digital data goes by submarine cable. Therefore, there is much focus on the centrality of the oceans in our economic prosperity and the development of Blue Economy holds much promise for the IOR. The Indian Ocean is the world's preeminent Seaway for trade and commerce. It is said that the Indian Ocean was the ocean which first witnessed travel, as early as 5000 years ago. In fact, it is said that the Pacific Ocean saw people traveling on it only about 2000 years back and the Atlantic Ocean was used for travel as late as 1000 years back only.

So, while there is accelerated growth in India to develop our maritime infrastructure and capabilities including investments in the hard power in terms of ship building and port infrastructure development, the domain of Maritime Soft Power remains a question mark. So, before we examine the why and the how become part of this statement, let us understand what is a Soft Power and specifically the '*Maritime Soft Power*', and why we need it.

You're all aware that this term was articulated by Joseph Nye in his book on soft power and broadly speaking, it can be termed as our nation's capacity to favourably influence affairs and policies internationally without the use of coercive, like the use of force, financial muscle or diplomatic compelling. It's a positive perception which is to be created in the minds of global audiences through a wide spectrum of constituents like sociocultural, economic, civilisational aspects, etc., through public outreach by the use of media, inclusive of art, literature and movies; the maritime education across a range of disciplines, books, publications, official dialogues; and strategic communication. So, if you apply the prism of maritime power to it, it may mean leveraging our rich maritime history, deep cultural roots or maritime presence around the globe, the various HADR activities, various cooperation that we have with the countries in our neighbourhood along with our growing economic power to favourably shape the opinion of the world for furthering common interests.

Now coming to the second part as to why are we lacking in it. While India inherited a rich maritime legacy which can be traced back to the Third Millennium BC, we had the world's first tidal dock, built around 2300 BC during the Harappan civilisation near the present-day harbour along the Gujarat Coast. There is ample evidence of trade with various countries of Southeast Asia, including Java, Sumatra, as well as with East Africa, West Africa and the Mediterranean region. So, India's maritime prowess over this period of time reflected its standing in terms of wealth, knowledge, culture, and general prosperity of the people on the land. This is the golden era of the maritime history of India, and as a result the places of Indian tradition and culture can be observed being followed in these distant lands even today. This is actually the Soft Power making its presence felt. But then, as we turned our gaze landward in the second millennia, we started a slow winding down of our Maritime Soft Power. The neglect over centuries not only left us vulnerable to attacks from invaders but was also instrumental in eroding the deep-rooted maritime history traditions and legacy finally translating into a continental centric mindset. It is said that King Akbar who had ruled India, had seen the sea only once in his lifetime when he came to the Gulf of Khambhat. So, sea blindness was rampant. I would like to bring out what Rudyard Kipling had to say: 'Nations have passed away and left no traces, and history gives the naked cause of it - one single simple reason in all cases; they fell because their peoples were not fit'. So, though slowly and

steadily efforts are being put in to develop the maritime infrastructure, we still lack the level of maritime awareness and consciousness which is desirable for a maritime nation.

If we have to evolve as a maritime nation, we would need to harness the potential of our country to invest its resources in manpower, building of trade, building of merchant vessels, suitable policies, maritime training facilities, as well as various agencies to progress research and development. We would need an entire maritime ecosystem which synergizes growth in all its integral components as well as motivates its best brains to resolve challenges being faced by contemporary Mariners. So, what are some of the challenges in recent years? Factors such as the rise of countries like China, India, other Asian economies and their increasing economic demands is manifesting in greater trade, and this has meant that the hub of global economic activity has actually shifted from the Atlantic to the Indo - Pacific. It has, on one hand, given rise to increased rivalry for limited resources while also having serious geopolitical and strategic consequences. Not all differences can be resolved by application of force or by signing of treaties. As mostly these differences lie in the grey zone, often we need either goodwill or the fear of reprisal to safeguard our interest. Often it is trade and commerce which takes the first hit. The current crisis of container shortage and exorbitant freight charges is a stark reminder of what can go wrong. Therefore, to tackle the challenges we may need to leverage *smart power* as well, which involves effective use of diplomacy, persuasion, force projection, economic might as well as soft power. The accretion of offensive power comprising the Navy and the Coast Guard can be accelerated by acquiring newer and more capable ships, and its civilian components also, such as the marine police, merchant marine, fisheries, etc. But building Soft Power is a long-drawn process because it has to be done in the mind at the perception level. So, while building maritime infrastructure like ports, warehouses, shipbuilding, etc. we need to inculcate the maritime orientation and maritime consciousness in our society. Simple things like it is stated that the average Indian consumes only 3 kgs of fish a year, while the average Japanese consumes 40 kgs a year.

There is a paradox we face even as we turn to the sea for resources, the human contact or the human experience with the sea is dwindling even faster. In the past, the sea was much more central in our minds because there were only means of long-distance travel, it connected people and that was the only way for goods to travel far distances. It even inspired great literature. If you're aware of the works of people like Joseph Conrad. So, for the past 5 millennia, the sea was very important for humans. But today very few people travel by sea. Maximum goods travel by sea, some part of it travels by air and life at sea is not at all that attractive. I just bring out what Admiral *Alfred Thayer Mahan* had to say. He said that 'he was a sea sick guy' and he himself said that 'what a beastly thing a ship is and what a fool a man is who frequents one'. Similarly, when Britannia ruled in 1773, Dr Samuel Johnson had this to say about life at sea (this was on the cusp of the Trafalgar victory where the Royal Navy was at its zenith). He said that '*No man will be a sailor who has contrivance enough to get himself into a jail for being in a ship is like being in jail with the added chance of being drowned. A man in jail has more room, better food and commonly better company*'. This, of course, has changed, today life onboard is much better. The conditions, the technology, all that is much, much improved. However, today's tankers and containers have very little crew, which further reduces the human experience of going out to sea and working at sea. Therefore, many of us may feel removed from the practical significance of the sea apart from seeing it as a medium for recreational purposes. So, this is also further likely to increase as we move on to unmanned ships, unmanned cargo ships, unmanned warships, unmanned aircraft and so on, which will operate at sea. So just to highlight, in the 14th century, the manning used to be one man per ton of capacity, but by 1600 already the ratio was about one man for four tons of capacity. Today, the Very Large Container Ships (VLCC) have barely a crew of 20 to 30 only.

So our country, as stated earlier, has enormous maritime potential and to convert this potential to power, we all have to contribute towards this endeavour and make the whole greater than the sum of its parts. Just to illustrate, if you take a 1 mm thick piece of paper and fold it over 50 times, how much do you think the thickness will be? As human beings, we normally look at the arithmetic progression. But actually, if you fold the paper 50 times, it will achieve a thickness of 80 million miles, which is the distance from Earth to the Sun. Therefore, what I want to point out is that the human mind is used to arithmetic progression while today we are living in an age of exponential growth where performance is rising exponentially and the cost is falling exponentially. This will make many things possible in unbelievable ways and in unimagined timelines, which were previously considered impossible. This I came across in a book called 'From Leapfrogging to Pole Vaulting' by Mr Raghunath Mashelkar - he says that "leapfrogging is a response to external stimuli and when you talk of growth, a 10% increase in performance is called incremental innovation, a 100% increase in performance is called leapfrogging, while a thousand percent or '10x' increment increase in performance is considered as transformational innovation. So, we have to think as to how we can harness technology to exponentially increase the maritime consciousness in our country?

Just to illustrate, in 1764 when the spindle was invented, it took 119 years for it to reach 50 million subscribers. Coming to 1895, the radio was invented and it took 38 years for it to reach 50 million users. In 1927, the TV took 13 years to reach 50 million users. In 1991, the Internet took four years and in 2004, the Facebook took 3.5 years and in 2016, Reliance Jio took just 83 days to reach 50 million users. So, my point here is that we should look at how we can harness technology to bring-in maritime consciousness in our country at a much faster and quicker pace. We Mariners also see it as an effort to overcome sea blindness through various studies and publications. We need to encourage that, and more and more people have to do research and studies, publish papers and publish books. And we need to convince our people using the power of social proof; let me go to an anecdote in this regard. There was an oil man (an oil prospector) who was met by St. Peter at the gates of Heaven with the bad news that there is no room for him there, although he was highly qualified for it. So, he sought permission from St. Peter to speak a few words to the present occupants. As it seemed a harmless request, St. Peter agreed. The oil prospector shouted out – "Oil discovered in Hell". So, soon the gates opened and all oil prospectors who were inside came out and started moving towards Hell. St. Peter was very much impressed and he invited the oil prospector to move in and make himself comfortable. The prospector then paused for a minute and then he said – "No, I think I'll go along with the rest of the boys. There might be some truth to the rumour after all". So, what I want to say is that this is the power of social proof and we need to use it to advantage to try and generate maritime consciousness.

As you have learned from the past that it has to be through maritime cooperation between various seafaring communities and countries, it must also be based on mutual trust, cooperation, dialogue and respect for each other. The young seafarers in the audience today are the policymakers of tomorrow. You may be faced with the responsibility of solving these challenges in due course. I am confident that over the course of the webinar today as also during informal interactions, the participants will hold comprehensive deliberations on all issues maritime, evaluate and analyse various challenges being faced by the maritime community and come up with viable options that can guide policy formulation for creating, nurturing and harnessing India's soft power in the maritime domain. With these words, I would like to sign-off and I wish the seminar grand success.

Thank you for your time and patience, Jai Hind, Śaṃ No Varuṇaḥ.



## **SECTION 1**

### **Maritime Education – Problems, Possibilities and Prospects**



## Maritime Education: Problems, Possibilities and Prospects

A Panel discussion on the topic was conducted which consisted of the following: -

- Capt Gyanendra Singh, Master Mariner, Nautical Institute India (West)
- Dr Malini Shankar, IAS (Retd), Vice Chancellor, Indian Maritime University
- Dr Anuradha Majumdar, Director, Centre of Excellence in Maritime Studies, Mumbai University
- Professor (Dr) S Shanthakumar, Director, Gujarat Maritime University
- Commodore J Gurumani, Commodore (Hydrography), IHQ MoD (Navy)

The discussion that took place among the panellists is transcribed below: -

**Capt Gyanendra Singh (Moderator):** Honourable distinguished signatories VAdm R Hari Kumar, Cmde Srikant Kesnur, Captain Kapildev Bahl, Captain Dixit, distinguished panelists for the day and learned audience, thank you for being here. I welcome you to the first technical session of the day, which is 'Maritime Education: Problems, Possibilities and Prospects'. Before I set the ball rolling, I have a few questions for the audience, answers for few of which have already been given by the esteemed speakers in the opening session.

For example, how long back are you aware that we have recorded the history of maritime power in India? - *It's about 3000 BCE*. Also mentioned by VAdm Hari Kumar, which is the first dock in the world, where was it and when was it established? - It was at *Lothal in 2300 BCE*. Going to the Chola dynasty and the Mauryan dynasty; are you aware that these were very strong navies of Indian history recognised internationally? And how long back was that? - That was around *300 BCE*. So, that was the power of Indian maritime supremacy long back. Coming to the little more recent 18th and 19th century, are you aware that the ships which were built in India in the 18th and 19th century were stronger and larger compared to the ships which were built in Europe? One more question: Are you aware that the US national anthem was written on which ship? - It was **HMS Minden**, which was built in Bombay in 1810 and acquired by the British Navy. One last recent question: Are you aware there is an Indian who has gone solo non-stop and circumnavigated across the globe? He was just the 38<sup>th</sup> individual to do it - That was *Cdr Abhilash Tomy*. So, I hope that gives you a perspective of what we are and where we come from. How would we come to know these things unless we are educated about our maritime supremacy and the potential? Education has the strength to bring us back into that power which we already commanded many millennia ago.

Thank you so much, dear panellists. I invite the audience to be interactive. May I have the permission to start with you, Dr Malini?

You have been in the DG Shipping and now you are the Vice Chancellor of IMU. Having seen the maritime domain from two different angles, how do you see that you are in a better position to talk about the plan for IMU and take it to the levels that we all expect?

**Dr Malini Shankar:** The role of the DG shipping and the role of the Indian Maritime University (IMU) are actually complementary. While the DG shipping looks at competencies, the Indian Maritime University within the University structure actually goes beyond and looks at developing knowledge base, which can in turn feed into competencies. But in both cases, there is common feedback that comes and which we have to work on, is that our seafarers are very sought-after in the global market – both officers as well as ratings. But what we need to concentrate on to retain our positions in the future is twofold. One is to concentrate on improving our soft skills. This

is all about maritime soft power and there are certain soft skills we need to strengthen among our seafarers, and if I can name a few of them, it would be *communication, better attitudes, analytical skills* and *leadership skills*. These are the four things that we need to focus on while training people for the seafaring profession. The second angle is how much investment in R&D does India do. Because one is competence, as I said and the other side is how much of an influence we have in the global maritime sector and what can we do about increasing that influence. And that boils down to some more investment on both the private and public sector in research and development.

**Capt Gyanendra:** Thank you so much Dr Malini. I have more questions. May I go to Dr Shanthakumar. Sir, you are the Director of two Universities, Law and Maritime. How do you compare the two in terms of demand and future for the youngsters?

**Dr S Shanthakumar:** Thank you so much for that question. Speaking of legal education and legal profession and taking into account the lawyer to population ratio in India, the demand for legal professionals is always there and will be there with lots of specialties and super specialties emerging within the discipline of law. Since this session is on maritime education, please allow me to respond elaborately to the second part of your question on the demand and future for youngsters in the maritime sector. So, if you look at the projections of the United Nations Commission on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), the maritime trade is expected to grow by 3.5% over the period of 2019-24 despite a lot of prevalent uncertainties, and maritime sector is expected to adapt to the changing global trade tensions and uncertainties through the development of landscape operations and inland logistics. So given the paradigm shift that this move is expected to generate demand for skilled professionals who could actually help accelerate the change, we can look into a lot of things. For example, the rise of the increase in the global seaborne trade is expected to rise almost by double by 2030. This is in fact going to act as a key enabler for manpower generation in sectors and economic activities such as marine equipment, manufacturing, shipbuilding and demolition, offshore energy sector, commercial activities such as *insurance, banking, brokering, classification and consultancy* etc. There are certain other key enablers also like increasing containerisation.

If you look into the DNB Shipping report 2020, these offshore support vessels are the fastest growing shifter within the offshore segment and are expected to continue. This will definitely increase demand for highly skilled seafarers and technical manpower under ship brokers and charters. Similarly, you will see there is an increase in automation of ships. The number of Unmanned Missionary Spaceships (UMS) has increased rapidly over the past few years. Shipping functions such as sophisticated navigation systems, dynamic positioning systems, the propulsion control, alarm and monitoring systems are now automated, which reduces the continuous physical interaction with machinery. Similarly, you'll see that there is a growing role of *IT systems* which electronically link port administration, terminal operators, customs, freight forwarders, carriers, ship agents and other members of the Port community. So, with enhanced use of IT systems, the need for more educated and skilled manpower is expected to increase.

Likewise, if you look at the key maritime regulations concerning emissions of sulphur oxides, the particulate matter, greenhouse gasses and ballast water management; all these things will come into effect in this decade and therefore the demand of systems controlling or mitigating these emissions and corresponding manpower in manufacturing or installation is expected to surge as the existing ships and new ships that are built will have to comply with these regulations. So, you will see a lot of things happening and the important development that I would want to see is the outsourcing of the business services. Outsourcing is emerging as a necessity for shipping companies to maintain a competitive edge in the market. Shipping companies are establishing support service centres to cater to the growing logistic needs. Actually, you will see that many ocean carriers have begun their outsourcing journey in low-cost countries such as Malaysia, India, Philippines and

China. Hence, the demand of white-collar jobs in analytical services, logistics, chartering and ship broking, accounts and auditing is expected to increase due to outsourcing. I personally feel that there is a huge demand and future for youngsters in this maritime sector.

**Capt Gyanendra:** Thank you so much, sir. That's interesting. Actually, you mentioned so many aspects including few like autonomous ships, which will actually reduce the manpower and it will shift ashore into IT.

May I request Dr Anuradha to answer the next question? It's interesting that you are not from the marine background and you are heading the Centre of Maritime Studies at Mumbai University, which is at a nascent stage. Could you let us know how it happened, whose brainchild it was and the journey in brief?

**Dr Anuradha Majumdar:** Thank you, Capt Gyanendra for the question. It was actually the university authorities, the honourable Vice Chancellor and honourable Pro Vice Chancellor, who identified that although the University of Mumbai has seven districts under it, in which around two districts are complete coastal districts like Sindhudurg and Ratnagiri, we did not have a dedicated centre or an institute for higher education in Maritime Studies. So a call was taken by the authorities to identify maritime studies as a thrust area, but with a multidisciplinary and holistic approach and focus. Probably the key drivers were the Sagarmala programme of 2015, which again has taken a boost and the recent Inland Vessels Bill and the Deep Ocean Mission which also probably adds to the drivers. The preamble was to create an ecosystem to synergise rather than an ecosystem for higher education and research in maritime studies and to provide a stimulating climate for policymakers, academicians and the scientists who are working in the area of coasts and the oceans. The vision of the Centre was to basically provide high quality higher education in maritime studies with multidisciplinary approach and research along with the intent to provide manpower to international, national and regional entities. This was also with the intent to support the maritime growth and development in the region and in the country. That was the visionary aspect for the initiation and establishment of the Centre of Excellence in Maritime Studies.

I'm happy to announce that this academic year we have started MA (Maritime Studies), MSc (Maritime Studies) and MCom (Maritime Studies), which have a couple of core subjects which are common and some of them very contemporary along with the elective. We have also got permission from the Academic Council of University of Mumbai to start with the doctoral program in maritime studies from the forthcoming PhD cycle. This will also augment research and development in all these verticals under the domain of maritime studies. The journey, despite being a pharmacologist, being the Dean of Science and Technology was incredible and I was privileged to encounter many helpful people. I think the Indian Navy and Naval War College were very critical contributors in the entire designing of our DPR and also gave valuable inputs in our curriculum development.

**Capt Gyanendra:** Thank you so much, ma'am.

Coming to you, Cmde Gurumani. I would like you to explain to us when you talk of maritime education in the forces, what do you focus on? Is it more on military only or there are some other aspects also?

**Cmde J Gurumani:** Thank you for the question, Capt Gyanendra. The Navy maritime education starts at ab-initio level. The navy has candidates from Jammu and Kashmir, Northeast, Rajasthan etc. and some of the Coastal states. So there is a need to create awareness about the sea and bring synergy in their training before they are put out to sea. Here, I would not like to discuss military education. I'm talking about maritime education. At the initial stages only, we teach maritime history, maritime law, maritime strategy, about Hydrography (I'm a Hydrographer), Oceanography and all aspects of marine life. Navy operates, as you all are aware, in four

dimensions i.e., surface, air, beneath the sea as well as in the space. So maritime education forms a part and parcel of the initial training as we progress in service at various stages. Some of the aspects of international laws like UNCLOS, Safety of Life at Sea (SOLAS) and IMO regulations are also a few examples which are always covered as part of the initial training so that there is synergy maintained. As you are aware, life at sea is harsher than land. So, bringing everybody on the common platform and thereafter operating at sea is the primary focus which is given by the Indian Navy as part of the maritime education. So just to give an example of my own experience, before I went to Antarctica, the Navy had sent me for an ice navigation course. Another example, like you talked about Abhilash Tomy, the Navy had sent Tarini with all lady officers who went on a voyage all around the world. So all this is possible only because of maritime education being taught and imbibed at ab-initio level.

**Capt Gyanendra:** True enough, sir. I can relate. That's how it becomes very easy for the Naval Officers to join Merchant Navy either after retirement or even if they retire prematurely, as both you and we are taught the same basic maritime education. Thank you so much, Sir.

Back to Malini Ma'am. Ma'am, the Indian Seafaring community is on the rise like it was around 6% - 7% at one point of time and closing on to 10% now. With this increase, do we also have some influence on the policies and practices globally?

**Dr Malini:** In terms of seafarers, we form about 10% of the global force and the government has set for itself a target in the Maritime India vision 2030 to raise it to about 15% to 20%. So, if we talk in numbers, yes, there are. But it is not just the seafaring community alone. There are a whole lot of maritime related professions which have an influence. If you look at the manning companies, the companies which actually recruit the seafarers and put them onboard a ship, many of them are not only just managed by Indians, whether they're located in India, London or Hong Kong. But quite a few of the critical ones (the bigger ones) are actually owned by either Indians or people of Indian origin. So in that sense we do have some influence. But where we need to increase our influence and what are the impediments - One is our *global tonnage*. Our representation in the global tonnage, in terms of the dead weight tonnage of ships, has actually peaked a few years ago. But depending on where the Shipping Corporation goes, it might just go down and to that extent, it will affect our influence. The second is *R&D*. If you look at the regulations, the conventions of the International Maritime Organisation (IMO), a lot of the conventions come from issues, problems and solutions raised by people from developed countries.

You have newer and newer conventions coming up about pollution (marine pollution). Those are the result of research which is being done in several universities and companies. So that is where we need to increase our presence and our visibility, which is why I said R&D is important. That's very important to increase our influence. The seafarers alone can do only so much.

**Capt Gyanendra:** Absolutely, ma'am. Thank you for mentioning that, actually. And as you mentioned, it comes to my mind that we have discussed this quite a few times in our fraternity. In the IMO meetings, Japan goes with a huge contingent with proper research and study, and they present their papers, when compared to the contingent from India in terms of size or research. It is limited as of now, as per my understanding. It is really very important that we create that kind of an impression at IMO. What do we need to actually do to have that kind of control?

**Dr Malini:** Here, I would mention that we need, first of all, to have a strategy like the Indian Navy has a strategy of protecting EEZ. We need to have a strategy and, in this connection, what the Indian Maritime University has done is, get into a partnership with the Research and Information Systems (RIS) which is an arm of the Ministry of External Affairs. They have a reach which is external. While the IMU has subject knowledge, domain knowledge of maritime and shipping, the RIS has a domain knowledge of the international ramifications of international

partnerships. So I think we need to jointly come up with a strategy of what are the interests of India in the next five years. Where does India stand vis-à-vis IMO in terms of influencing, benefiting from the conventions and promoting partnership with likeminded countries. Those are strategies which need to be worked out. Then whoever represents the country in the IMO meetings, which take place quite regularly, these are the strategies which have to be fed into the delegation that goes there, whether it is a huge delegation or a small one. Japan and Germany (which is not really a seafaring country), forget China and the other countries, you have small island countries which come with a strategy. So I think where we need to project ourselves is a strategy which perhaps can even include Coast Guard and the Navy. It has to be a strategy which involves everybody.

**Capt Gyanendra:** I think that's an important point, Ma'am. Obviously, all these topics would require much longer discussion, so we would just be touching the tip of the iceberg as of now. But we can pick on the points where we need to work in future. Coming back to Cmde Gurumani. You have been in Hydrography more. How important do you think is Hydrography for the maritime sphere?

**Cmde Gurumani:** To start with, I would like to define what is Hydrography, because there are many among the audience who may not be aware of its definition. As per the International Hydrographic organisation, Hydrography is a branch of applied sciences which deals with the measurement and description of physical features of the oceans, seas, coastal areas, lakes and rivers, as well as with the prediction of their change over time, for the purpose of safety of navigation and in support of all other marine activities. So in short, if I have to say what is Hydrography, almost all human activity that takes place on or under the sea requires some knowledge of hydrography of the area, basically the knowledge of the shape and the nature of the seafloor, its characteristics and hazards. Therefore, without hydrography no ship can sail safely, no ports can be built, no coastal infrastructure, marine environment, defending an island or the coast rescue inundations during disasters and maritime boundary issues.

We all know that India has 3.1 million km<sup>2</sup> of land area and an exclusive economic zone at sea of 2.1 million km<sup>2</sup>. But if we add the continental shelf also, it's going to be as good as our land area and there is a need to understand this area better. Hydrography is the best subject to know and plan our future towards the ocean. As per International Hydrographic Organisation report, only 15% of the world within 200 nautical miles from the coast has been mapped properly and just 18% beyond 200 nautical miles. We know about our Moon and Mars better than our oceans. It's time for us to have more knowledge about our sea and Hydrography is the subject to understand it better.

**Capt Gyanendra:** Thank you so much. Makes so much sense and I don't know how many people in the audience caught on to this particular fact that you mentioned that the land area of India as compared to the sea area is almost equal, if we take into account the continental shelf. And imagine the number of people in our country who are working for all the activities on land compared to the number of people who are working for the activities on water. In spite of them being equal in area, the proportion is so minuscule. Thank you so much for bringing that out, Sir.

Dr Anuradha, may I pose the next question to you? I read that so many things were shut down, slowed down, but the government came out with a National Education Policy last year (2020) and their directives. So since the program that we have started at CEMAS is new, how much is it compliant with or what are the salient factors from the NEP that we have taken into the CEMAS structure?

**Dr Anuradha:** I think all universities across the length and breadth of India are bracing for the execution of the National Education Policy. One of the most important factors which is enshrined in this policy is the flexibility which is being given to the learners along with the concept of *Accurate Bank of Credits (ABC)*. An accurate bank of credits means the credits can be added by

students across faculties, departments and institutes. So we will really need to go into a completely digital framework in higher education so that we can track the students' higher education scores and credit points based on a unique ID number and they can move across both faculties and take new courses. With respect to CEMAS, as you know, we are fledgling (we are not even one year old, we've just started off). But being a public university, we have a lot of freedom and autonomy. The University authorities, as you're aware, started with the PhD program immediately now because that kind of advantage is available to university departments and centres. Plus, looking into the factors in NEP 2020, we are planning to have flexibility wherein exit policies will be in place. For example, if a student completes one year of master's and leaves, we can give a PG Diploma and if the student continues for two years, then gets the Master's degree. Those kinds of flexibility are based on student requirements.

We are also going to give a thrust on working professionals when they take sabbatical to augment their educational qualifications. And as I told you earlier, although the CEMAS is new, the University of Mumbai is more than 165 years old. So despite COVID, we have been leveraging it on IT and ICT and Naval War College is affiliated to University of Mumbai. We have collaborated with NIO (Goa) CIFE (Mumbai) and Microtech Global Foundation for Blue Economy. So, we are trying to leverage on our existing collaborations and affiliations. The expanse of Mumbai University is vast and we have more than 850 colleges which are affiliated, which includes few of the best engineering and technology institutions which can give us a thrust in remote sensing, GIS, artificial intelligence, IOT, other aspects and help our students in bolstering the contemporary requirements in higher education and research. We are bracing ourselves and we have been brainstorming on how to implement NEP 2020 for the advantage of our learners and scientists.

**Capt Gyanendra:** Thank you so much, ma'am. Actually, it's a pride for us also, because being seafarers, even our neighbours did not know what we do. They only knew that we are out for six months and we are here for six months, that's all. So, this growth and awareness in itself is a respect to everybody associated with the maritime industry and all the three forces.

Coming to you, Dr Shanthakumar, Gujarat Maritime University is among the youngest maritime universities that we have. Could you just tell us about the journey, how it has been from the first year till now? I understand it was established in 2019, just about one year ago. So how did the numbers grow? Did you actually get enough students to start with? Where do we stand now?

**Dr Shanthakumar:** In fact, we started only in 2019. We are just two year old. We have been discussing the kind of growth that is happening in the maritime sector. The establishment of Gujarat Maritime University is actually an endeavour by the Gujarat Maritime Board, to provide a fillip to this growth by bridging the knowledge gap within the industry. So the prime objective of Gujarat Maritime University is to be a global centre of excellence in maritime education, Research and Development and professional training. It actually aims to enhance and increase the human capital and capacity of maritime industry, both in India and across the globe. The aspiration is to serve the global maritime community by producing educated and well-trained professionals in the maritime domain. The vision of GMU is said to be a global centre of excellence in maritime education. In the first phase, the University started offering programs catering to the commercial aspects of the maritime value chain like maritime law, shipping, finance and economics, maritime management, logistics, ship finance, chartering, ship management etc, just to name a few courses that we teach.

The first phase also has some short-term executive development programs and management development programs, which we are successfully delivering with support and guidance of our knowledge partners, namely the Erasmus University, the STC International, and the Copenhagen Business School. Of course, we intend to focus on the technical aspects in the second phase. As I said, we are a very infant University just established two years back. We started with the School of



Maritime Law, Policy and Administration and started with two Masters programmes, one on international trade law and the other on maritime law. Fortunately, we were able to fill all the seats. In fact, this year we had the luxury of increasing our selectivity and we had the luxury of selecting the right candidates out of the hundreds of applications that we received. So that itself is proved, that there is a big demand for such courses, and people are actually looking for this. If you look at some of the interesting statistics now, we see that the majority of our students at the Maritime University come from landlocked states, more than the coastal states. The second important statistics is that we have more women students, in which very traditionally is known as a male dominated field. But today we have more female students joining our programs. So, I think the journey is good and we are rigorously planning to expand.

**Capt Gyanendra:** Thank you for mentioning that, sir. Actually, it was part of one of my questions about gender equality and maritime studies.

Coming back to you, Dr Malini. We all have heard in the introductory session and a little bit that I mentioned from our rich heritage, which we are actually losing to quite an extent. So what are your thoughts on strengthening it again? What action should we take? You being from the administrative section also, like being the Director General of Shipping for a good two years, your thoughts would actually project India for the next ten years at least, if not more to start with.

**Dr Malini:** I think we go back again to first principles. Like I mentioned, I don't want to keep on mentioning and iterating the same thing. One is do we have a strategy and a coordinated integrated strategy, not just working in silos as to what the DG shipping does, what the IMU does, what the Coast Guard does, what the Navy does? I think the geopolitics today calls for an integrated strategy of how we protect India both in terms of maritime security as well as maritime education and associated sectors. So that strategy is the most important thing. It has to be arrived at in consultation with everybody. But it has to be very specific and lay out the path like what China would do, or what the UK does. Second is the quality of the maritime seafarers. As I said again, attitudes. I think the Director, Gujarat Maritime University mentioned that, and I agree, that most of the students nowadays are coming from landlocked states. They perhaps have not seen the sea. They have never been on a ship; they've not seen a big ship and the International Ship and Port Facility Security (ISPS). For example, when I was a student in a convent school, on one excursion they took the class to a ship and said, this is a ship that the school has adopted. Much later on, I came to know it belonged to the Shipping Corporation of India. They just exposed us to the ship. Even that is very difficult in today's regulated environment. But giving them leadership skills and exposing them to a variety of communication tools is important. Why communication is important, why leadership is important, why attitudes are super important? For example, when I was working in the Special Economic Zone, the companies which would hire students would say we can teach them technology, but we can't teach them soft skills. So the soft skills are as important as the technical skills that they come with.

And the third aspect is that we carry 90% of the trade by volume and 70% by value. But nobody knows what we do. Now, this part is because we are working behind the scenes. And unlike the airline industry, we are not carrying passengers on a regular basis. Maybe now and then a cruise ship and coastal tourism, but the people don't come in contact with us. So why would anybody bother what kind of cargo you're carrying and what problems you have? So what are the possible solutions to actually enhance this visibility? And there are several organisations working on it, but they work in small groups. I have two suggestions if it can be taken forward. One is can we have *Maritime Clubs* in schools? I see questions coming up saying that it should be part of education. I think the school education in India is already overburdened, and I don't think any authority will accept any more additions to this, but there is something called extracurricular activities. You have environment clubs, you have sports clubs and you have trekking clubs. I think we went to schools at

a time when there were Girl Guides and Boy Scouts, and there was an air division and a sea division and a land division and all these scouting methods. Can we say there's a Maritime division, a Merchant Navy division, or strengthen the entire sea scout by including Merchant Navy? That's one observation I have and a second is a possible collaboration with the Coast Guard to promote the Merchant Navy. The Coast Guard is ever present and I think the Coast Guard has a strong potential to position themselves to attract children.

If you ask small children in France (I've lived for two years in France) or even in some parts of India, what would you like to be when you grow up? And they would say, *Pompier*. This is what 90% of the kids would say (*pompier* is the fireman). Because he is the one who is seen. He or she is the one who seems to be present among the communities, helping people, rescuing cats, rescuing pets, rescuing people. And I think the Coast Guard does that all the time. And there is more potential to project this to the young children. Collaboration with the Coast Guard would be possible to actually project not only Coast Guard but also Merchant Navy, alongside that. I think the private companies have to come forward to partner this, if this session can actually culminate in some strong ideas in this manner. Visibility is not an overnight process, but it can be done with some likeminded people coming together and taking this forward.

**Capt Gyanendra:** Excellent ma'am. I think the Sea Cadet Corps is an organisation which is doing it to quite an extent. But still I would say very limited because I understand they have very limited branches and pretty controlled from the location that they are working. As you mentioned, the seafarers work in the background, and if I talk of the Merchant Navy personally, even during the COVID times, we all kept receiving whatever the essentials that we need to live and nobody even came to know how and why it kept coming without any problem or any hindrance.

**Dr Malini:** It's a delivery boy or the delivery girl who is seen by the end user or the customer, not the seafarer. And why would they?

**D. Anuradha:** I think I agree with Dr Malini, that image building is very important and probably there are certain professionals who children look up in awe. Other than the Amar Chitra Katha, which the Indian Navy has been part of in coming out with, the school maritime clubs is a very good idea. Because when we were taking the interview for admissions to CEMAS, some students said that they wanted to come to this field. They were opting for MCom or other MSc because I used to take a ferry to reach from Alibaug to Mumbai for my College and I found it very amusing because that was what drove their love for the sea and the coast. I think what you're seeing is the firemen image in the Western world. I know people look up to them, and if that kind of image building can be done from the school days itself, it can be very beneficial. This has become a very niche field and it has to become more popular.

**Dr Malini:** The fireman is also a niche field, if I may intervene. But we grew up as children in my generation and we were fascinated by the engine driver and the steam engine because the image of that engine driver picking up that shovel of coal and putting it into the boiler and then the boiler would make this huge sound of whoosh with fire and noise. Then we all wanted to ride with him on that engine and they would allow you to ride those days. So it doesn't have to be so glamorous also.

**Capt Gyanendra:** Visibility is important, like we were discussing this in a group a couple of days back. Whenever we have been abroad and we switch on the TV, every second or third channel shows about their defence forces, so that's the kind of visibility we should have in India also on these aspects. And if I just take a minute to mention to you as well as to all the audience that lockdown for us on land was something different that you can't move out of the home. But for those on the ship, it was normal living because for us on the ship we have the cabin, we have our workspace and that is the limited area we can go to. So it was just like we are at home on a contract

so we can only move from the bedroom to the drawing room. And that is it. That's what happens on the ship. So for seafarers, it was not very different. Interesting to those who would not have known this, that's what the limitations on ships are.

Coming to you Cmde Gurumani, what in your opinion is the importance of maritime universities? And what are your suggestions to enhance maritime education? You are not from the universities, so that's the reason why I would like to hear from you about this.

**Cmde Gurumani:** I just heard Dr Malini mentioned that we should not burden children at our school education level, but why not unburden them and remove certain subjects and make them learn maritime education at the grassroots level? That is what I feel to start with, as I saw one of the audience also had put up that it should start at a very early stage. So we need to create awareness for our children. Dr Malini herself mentioned that she saw a ship, when she was in school. So it carries a lot when the child is growing and then they have that consciousness to sell it to the field instead of only thinking about doctors or IIT graduates or chartered accountants, which generally people choose. But once you get exposed to marine life, their ideas will change. The suggestion that came to my mind is every University that is approved by AICTE should have a Maritime Department. If not every University, at least some of the renowned universities must have a Maritime Department. We talked about maritime clubs, why not a dedicated department, where people can contribute towards maritime. Thereafter, they can move to maritime universities like IMU. We had an interaction also with our Department in the Navy that wanted to add Hydrography as part of the IMU curriculum. It's a good initiative and we are working towards it. Also, we have not had any great explorers of late, so we need to have explorers and that will start only when we start maritime education at grassroots level.

One interesting thing which I saw in one of my foreign deployments, I saw a ship called Semester at Sea. So, there are students who have been sailing onboard a ship for one semester. That is the kind of exposure we need from our Maritime Universities. They should have a ship along with them where the students are put and spend one semester at sea. That will give a lot of exposure. It is not only trade, it is not only carrying cargo, but when you talk of maritime, it covers an overall lot of aspects. It's about Marine life, Botany, Zoology, Biology, environment and what not. There's no end to it when you talk of the ocean. So these are two suggestions that we must have dedicated departments in each recognised University. Then we need to have ships where we can put people. One more thing which I want to mention as a passing comment that we talk about is, Look East, Look West and I think it's time for us to look and act towards the ocean. That is one thing that can be achieved only by maritime education and focus on maritime universities.

**Capt Gyanendra:** Thank you, sir. I saw a couple of comments from Cmde Chitnis that also mentioned seafarers who got stuck onboard ships. Sir, I would say yes, those are the difficulties that we see and fear, but it is part and parcel of the profession and more difficult for the Masters who have to inspire and lead them to live in those conditions, even when the sign off is not possible. Even Capt Gosavi mentioned something about having maritime history also as part of the education system. Not only just history, but actually maritime history, because that gives us pride.

May I request Dr Anuradha for a quick touch up on the future of CEMAS, it being at the Centre of Mumbai? What is the future you're looking at? Any particular steps that you have taken?

**Dr Anuradha:** We would like our Centre to become a place for brainstorming and of key opinion leaders in the sector. So, as I said, we have seven districts under our jurisdiction and close to 700 plus kilometers of coastline. University of Mumbai, with the help of the Centre of Excellence in Maritime Studies, would like to create maritime consciousness, awareness and understanding through the centre and in the future, we would like to leverage on our affiliated college systems, our own very strong university departments and economics, commerce, sciences, and bolster R&D

through PhD doctoral programme. We already have an MoU with the University of Western Australia. But because of COVID, the execution has been delayed. We would work on that. UGC has come out with a provision for a policy document which is yet to be executed but is expected soon on giving dual degrees with one top Foreign University in the top 500 US ranked or Times ranked universities. So we would also explore that option. Our advisors, the panel of advisors for Masters projects and PhD projects would be stalwarts and scientists across the radius of maritime law, humanities, history, strategy, science and technology, commerce and trade. So that is our vision. Hopefully we should be able to achieve it with the support of all - the Indian Navy, other stakeholders, our very old associates, etc, and the strength of our faculty, obviously.

**Capt Gyanendra:** Thank you so much, ma'am. I would rather say even universities should sit together and brainstorm as to what we can do together in the future.

**Dr Anuradha:** Yes. What Dr Malini was saying and even I think that in higher education, we need to strategize. Because if the quantum of manpower requirement is going to increase through direct or indirect job requirements by close to 10 million, how do we prepare for it? What kind of skills and knowledge base is required by our learners after completing the program? All these things should be very clear and we should not be giving education which does not make them ready for the industry. So, this is a very key aspect.

**Capt Gyanendra:** Thank you so much, Ma'am.

Dr Shanthakumar, being a very young university, as a business concept how are you advertising so that you get more students to come in? You did mention gender equality and a that lot of girl students as well as international students are interested to join and learn.

**Dr Shanthakumar:** We have just graduated two batches and we did not have any international students as of now. With respect to advertising our programs, in the very first year when this program was launched, we did some road shows and then we went for some newspaper advertisements. But from the second batch onwards, it's by word of mouth. This thing got spread and we started receiving more and more applications, especially because the second year was the COVID year. In spite of the COVID, we are not carrying out any branding activity or marketing activity. Still, we could get enough applications. In fact, if you look at the graph in which we have grown, it's very steep. So we have grown just because of a lot of activities. That is what we have been doing, and that has sent a message across. As I said, we have committed ourselves to address the challenges of the maritime industry and encourage innovation through cutting edge research. So to promote cutting edge research in various areas, we have set up a number of research centres like the Centre for Maritime Security Studies, Centre for Maritime Environmental Law, Centre for Maritime Labour Law, Centre for International Trade Law, where we have set up a trade lab to stimulate the experience. We have a Centre for research on Blue Economy, a Centre for Maritime Dispute Resolution and for example, our Maritime Labour Law Centre. It works very closely with the International Seafarers Welfare and Assistance Network (ISWAN), which is based in the UK.

We have set up a Seafarer Welfare Clinic to help and provide legal and all other possible assistance to the seafarers, especially during the COVID times. We are also currently doing a research project along with ISWAN because we see that due to imbalance in demand and supply of young workers in shipping, many of these seafarers are not able to find a placement at sea. Out of desperation for sea time in order to appear for higher competency, exam and progress in the career, some of these budding young seafarers fall prey to fraudulent agents who charge an exorbitant amount from them for a slot on board a vessel. It has also been reported that sometimes the agents run away after they have paid money and sometimes the agents put the crew on vessels which are substandard. It's a threat to overall safety and security. So with this objective, we have now started working on the field to identify the challenges that young aspiring people perhaps face. So this is

something which we do, and this largely attracts young people to approach us. For example, recently we have created an Arctic Cell with faculty members and research associates to research on the opportunities and challenges the North Sea route opened by Russia in the Arctic. So this cell is being very closely monitored by our faculty. Especially, we are closely watching every move of the Chinese administration taking advantage of the Northern Sea route. We are approaching it from various aspects, including the geopolitical aspects of that. Likewise, we are the first university to set up the Gujarat International Maritime Arbitration Centre at the Gujarat International Fintech City, called the Kip City with the state-of-the-art infrastructure and globally renowned maritime arbitrators as advisors. So we are doing everything possible strategically to emerge as a global centre of excellence. And then just by word of mouth, we get enough applications. And as I mentioned, we are very fortunate to have a good selectivity that we are able to reject candidates and select the right people to be a part of our business.

**Capt Gyanendra:** Thank you so much for that explanation. It brought few points to my mind. One you did mention which the audience were listening would understand that not everybody who gets trained in Merchant Navy is getting a job. So, though they are listening to this, it is a caution so that they don't fall into wrong hands. But at the same time as policymakers, we do need to think how to change the situation, because I think in the coming years, the need for seafarers is going to rise. There was a drop in the last decade or so, but there's a certain rise as suggested by the researchers that I have read recently. And another thing that came to my mind is that all the University heads are here. Since you have so many studies and workshops and research centres, can it be opened kindly to the general public so that they can come and have a look so that will again create an awareness?

**Dr Shanthakumar:** Certainly. In all our programs, whatever we do, we try to bring in as many stakeholders as possible so that we get a complete holistic perspective of the problem. That is what we are discussing or what we are researching. So everybody is welcome to be a part of our activities. That's how we try to progress.

**Capt Gyanendra:** Thank you, Sir. Coming to you, Dr Malini. Indian Maritime University is also close to my heart because it is nothing but change of name for my college. Just wanted to hear from you, as you also chair the National Shipping Board, what is the global or Holistic plan for the growth of shipping or of the university per se in terms of international students? Today, I am not sure whether we are training international youngsters.

**Dr Malini:** Yes, that's a fact. And that's a very important fact. But first thing we have to ask ourselves, Capt Gyanendra, is why would a foreign student come to India? Why would a foreign student come to Bombay University or to Indian Maritime University if they can get something else in their own country or in a country which is closer to them? They look for a couple of things. One is, I will start with the academic part of it. What is the content? What is the substantive content? Is there going to be a value addition to their knowledge or skills, or is there going to be a value addition to the employability position? Second, of course, is what would be the cost. I think we would compare cost wise, but in terms of content, we have to introspect a lot more, in my opinion, for a majority of the institutions, I do not speak for everybody. So given this and the third aspect that the students do talk about is the ease of doing business. The ease of transacting the procedure from application, from getting information to applying, to getting a visa, to coming and studying here. I think our information dissemination is fractured, it's disparate. We have to go as a whole and say, if you want to study or do studies in maritime education, then these are the options available to you and you can apply for these universities. The application forms are not easy to download, and cannot be done online. Our ease of doing business is quite abysmal. Even today, we ask for too many documents and we ask them to come and put it and it's not very easy to load it online. We have to work through our embassies and high commissions. And the last part, which I have taken up

as the Chairperson of not only the National Shipping Board, but as the Vice Chancellor also, is the ease of getting a Visa for many countries. There has to be a lot more clarity on that and the Ministry of External Affairs is working on it.

The Government of India is actually promoting education. India is an education destination, that is very clear. We'll have to work on it. But something that the IMU has already started working on is how do we invite experts in the maritime sector to come to the university and spend a certain period of time so that there is interaction between these foreign experts, international experts and faculty as well as students. Perhaps they can take a few classes here, stay here for a week and in the process interact and see what kind of knowledge exchange and skill exchange can take place. So these are two aspects. Up till 1980s at least, I'm very sure, but post liberalisation I'm not very sure, the Indian government gave quite a few scholarships to neighbouring countries. I've had classmates from Sri Lanka, Malaysia, Singapore, Thailand, etc who would come to India for studies. And these were scholarships under the cultural regulations. Whenever I meet these classmates after so many years, they have very great fondness for India because they say this is what gave us the basic education foundation for our career. So perhaps we have to prevail upon the powers that we institute certain colleges for maritime studies in India, and that could perhaps help students from certain countries.

**Capt Gyanendra:** Thank you so much, ma'am.

**Dr Malini:** There was a question, a suggestion which came in from someone, talking about taking sailing as a sport. And I think that's an excellent suggestion, at least in Coastal States and even in hinterland States where you have freshwater Lakes, you have other kinds of water bodies where sailing should be actively promoted, and that's perhaps the entry point for them to understand water and the connection between water and human beings. Because replacing curriculum in schools or colleges is not really feasible. It's idealistic, but it's not very practical at this point of time. It might serve to be perfunctory, because seeing and experiencing is what we should look at. When I shared my experience of visiting a ship, imagine if they had spoken about a ship in the classroom and it would be an exam paper and if I liked it, I would pass it. If not, I'll just say, what a pain. Let me just get through with this.

Compare it with environmental education in India, which has been made mandatory by the courts up to a certain grade. And this tends to be just a checkbox item in schools and colleges. And if you ask a student anything about environment or even ethics, they will just say, oh, that was for the exam. But what I remember after four decades is actually being on that ship and being fascinated by it. So I think extracurricular activities, Maritime Club, Sea Scouts, these are the ways to go. There were some suggestions about how to expand the curriculum, I think Dr Anuradha spoke about it. We in the Indian Maritime Universities are taking baby steps in this direction to introduce very niche subjects in the form of microcredit courses, and I think that will introduce students to a variety of topics which are not in the normal curriculum. And the curriculum, however autonomous, goes through a certain process and takes time to modify and to be reviewed. But we think that the microcredit courses would slowly pick up and it can give a window of opportunity for the students to look at subjects that they would otherwise not look at. So that is about education, then awareness and strategy. These are the three arms that I spoke about.

**Capt Gyanendra:** Thank you so much, ma'am. I think it was a splendid session. Personally, I have gained so much listening to all of you and we have a consensus that all the wings of the maritime fraternity must join hands and work together to showcase the importance of maritime as well as the future potential of maritime. I think there is no further emphasis required to show that only maritime strength can make a country strong. On land, we are limited as 70% of the Earth is covered by water. So the more we have power on water, the stronger we will be as a nation. So I think that is it from my side. It was a pleasure moderating this session.

## **SECTION 2**

**Past is the Present – Maritime History, Memorials, Museums and Exhibition Spaces**





## Past is the Present – Maritime History, Memorials, Museums and Exhibition Spaces

A Panel discussion on the topic was conducted which consisted of the following: -

- Cmde Ajay Chitnis, SC, NM (Retd), Vice President, Indian Maritime Foundation
- Cdr Mohan Narayan (Retd), Maritime Historian and Ex-Curator, Maritime History Society
- Ms Batul Raaj Mehta, Museum Planner, National Maritime Heritage Museum
- Mr Bharat Gothoskar, Heritage Evangelist and Founder, KHAKI Tours
- Dr Rukshana Nanji, Archaeologist and Maritime History Scholar

The discussion that took place among the panellists is transcribed below: -

**Cmde Ajay Chitnis (Retd), Moderator:** Welcome to Session II of today's seminar, which is titled '*Past is the Present: Maritime History, Memorials, Museums and Exhibition Spaces*'. It is an honour to chair this session and I must begin by thanking the organisers for giving me this opportunity. We have an extremely interesting panel to discuss the subject. Before I invite the panelists to make their opening statements, I feel it appropriate to bring out a few facts about the state of maritime museums and memorials in India. Maritime museums are among the 'Cinderellas' of the museums of the world nowhere more so than in India and the Indian Ocean region where they are conspicuous by their absence. Yet this is a startling double paradox, for the sea has always been of great importance to human affairs and especially to the lives of the people of India. The low status and skewed distribution of maritime museums is even more of a paradox for 95% of the merchandising trade in our globalised world moves by sea and 40% through the Indian Ocean.

Consider this - Denmark has a population of 5.5 million, which is approximately 0.4% of our population. There are 23 maritime museums in that country. Yes, you heard that right - 23 Maritime Museums. Our first officially acknowledged Maritime heritage Museum, is still at the tendering stage at Lothal. Is it because we don't have a long and glorious maritime history that we can be proud of? Or is it the fact that the maritime museums are not in the forefront of anyone's list of cultural must haves, not even those who supposedly think salt water flows in their veins? 99% plus of our population are land lubbers, and what is more proud to be so; to them, the sea is okay off a beach from the deck of a cruise liner or on the other side of the TV screen. Otherwise, it's an alien element populated, as Dr Johnson observed and the FOC-in-C (West) mentioned, by members of a literally outlandish tribe anxious to risk death by drowning while living in conditions closely akin to a prison cell. Ships, Shipbuilding, Navigation, Sea and sailors remain, for the most part beyond the social and cultural tale so far so indeed, that recovering the maritime histories of nations of non-European societies before the mid to late 19<sup>th</sup> century is a significant challenge. Given the maritime community of which any maritime Museum is a part, its role is to collect, preserve, and display objects from the past and present maritime life of society in a way that educates and informs the visitor. In short, the role is to illuminate a given society, a corner of maritime history. History has assigned to it the office of judging the past and of instructing the present for the benefit of future ages. The Maritime Museum may not rise to such high offices but seek only to show the past as it really was. The place of the maritime world is not at top of the table, but if the pun may be forgiven, if matters maritime are often below the salt, they are at least still at the table as an accepted participant at the feast.

But that is not true in all cultures and it's not unfair to say that for the most part it is not true in today's mainstream Indian culture. The theme of the session is appropriately 'past is the present'. To help you understand the importance of the maritime world now and as it will continue to be for the foreseeable future, it is worth engaging for a moment in what historians call a counterfactual and philosophers again, an experiment. You are in the delicious spirit of half wakefulness just before it's time to wake up in the morning. You have not yet opened your eyes. Now imagine that at the moment you do finally decide to get moving and open your eyes. Suddenly, everything that is in your immediate and local world, that has spent any part of its product cycle from raw material to usable item on the sea disappears. Now describe your circumstances. I think it's fair to say that what you will be describing is an embarrassed, stark naked human being standing amongst raised mud flats of a vanished city with everything we have and use in our lives today includes in its makeup something that has at some stage spent some time on board a ship being taken from some A to some B, where it is processed into something that constitutes a part of our everyday world. Some two-thirds of the contents of container liners that carry so much of the world's merchandising exchange are but partially completed goods on their way from some B to some C for additional processing. The chances of anything escaping spending time at sea are accordingly diminished and hence the importance. There are bright spots though and for that, we have to thank some of our visionary naval personalities like *Admiral Awati*, *Admiral Nadkarni for the Maritime Heritage Society* and *Admiral Pasricha*, the creator of the only submarine Museum in Asia and the Naval Aviation Museum at Goa. I would be amiss if I did not mention the redoubtable Cmde Rajan Vir, President Emeritus of IMF for setting up the Maritime Museum, as well as two memorials dedicated to seafarers at Pune.

The Maritime Mumbai Museum Society (MMMS) is also another laudable effort. I'm extremely happy that a beginning has been made with the proposed National Maritime Heritage Museum at Lothal, of which we shall hear more as we go along. I firmly hope that all these efforts will go a long way in curing the land lubbers of the sea blindness. Now I'd like to invite Cdr Mohan Narayan to make his opening statement. It's over to you, Mohan.

**Cdr Mohan Narayan (Retd):** Please let me thank the Western Naval Command, the Indian Maritime Foundation and the Nautical Institute India (West) for the invitation to be part of this event, it's indeed a privilege. The Maritime History Society, which was in the bank of the Navy's formal study and dissemination of our maritime history and heritage, came into being by some work of faith. Or, let me put it a little more bluntly because of an indictment in the media. The Times of India, Citylight Column of 8 May 1978 castigated the Navy for a ramshackle of a Museum in the erstwhile Bombay Castle, today's INS Angre. The article further went to bemoan the fact that there was not a single institution in the city which celebrated its connection to the sea. The piece ended with a near plea that somebody ought to do something about it and that somebody happened to be Admiral Manohar Awati, the then fleet commander of the Navy's Western Fleet and something that he set up precisely five days after this piece appeared in the newspaper is the Maritime History Society (MHS). And one of the first things that this society did was to set up a maritime Museum on the Middle Ground Island off the Gateway of India. This Museum came out because of the active collaboration and support of every maritime institute in the country, the academia and the industry. It's a bit unfortunate that the Museum had to close down in 1984, but as long as it stood, it served a purpose and proved a very important point that it was feasible for maritime professionals, the academia and the industry to come together on a maritime platform. Though set up by a naval Admiral and backed by the Navy, it was always open house at the Maritime History Society, and we had the only thing the MHS insisted on was that all its members have matters maritime and heart. The MHS has greatly benefited from this association with people from different walks of life.

Cmde Chitnis just told you about the various activities which were taken out by the Navy, in fact, spearheaded by the MHS. Whether it be the conservation of the Bombay Castle, the introduction of the Heritage walk, the setting up of the Museum onboard INS Vikrant, the Naval Memorial at Cooperage in honour of the naval uprising of 1946 or the Pilot Bunder Museum came up because of active participation and cooperation of maritime professionals, the academia and the industry. And to my mind, that is the way forward if we have to tackle a Museum. Before these opening remarks turn out to be panegyric towards an institution, let me add a word about museums and museology. The very idea of a Museum is a Western concept, and the Indian audience has not yet been primed to fully assimilate the concept of a Museum. The idea of showcasing, which remains central to a Museum, has seen a steady tenor toward the evolution of museology. But what has changed over a period of time is the quality of display, the very idea of an object and the reaction and the mentality of an audience to a Museum. In this age of changing technology, our minds have been conditioned to accept and assimilate rapid doses of information. And in this context, the idea of interacting with a static object seems to be something of an alien concept. In fact, the very idea of an object has undergone a change of time, a change of process, and it is much beyond its physical dimensions and it stands before an audience that is increasingly getting accustomed to interacting with intangible experiences. The object, because of its genuineness and provenance, might attract the viewer. But look at it this way, if you can simulate an experience around the artifact on a real time basis, instead of putting it behind the glass case, then what you get is a package, a package and an experience that the viewer will remember long after. Maritime museums must concentrate on creating experiences.

**Cmde Chitnis:** That was a nice introduction. I would now like our next panelist Ms. Batul Raaj Mehta to make the opening comments. It's over to you, Batul. We are eager to hear your opening remarks.

**Ms Batul Raaj Mehta:** Thank you very much, Sir. It's a pleasure and a privilege to be here today as part of the Navy Week and I thank the Western Naval Command for inviting me for this webinar. I'm going to just have a short, quick presentation because as sir just mentioned before, we all get excited a lot more with visuals, if we can think more rather than see somebody's face.

Maritime museums, as sir mentioned, and I'm going to talk more about it. Just to give a little bit of background on what we do, our firm is not an architectural firm. What we really do is, we look at soft power and how do you make museums really interesting by harnessing those soft marks. Exactly the topic of this webinar, we look at it in terms of how do we have a Museum which functions operationally or in a management jargon efficiently and sustainably, but also how does it get its visitors really excited about what the topics are within it, using a current, very contemporary management jargon that we look at storytelling and we look at engagement all through our museums. Sir has already covered most of the museums I've mentioned and which we have worked on. One of the museums which we are working on now, which is very relevant to this webinar, is the National Maritime Heritage Complex. I'm going to refer to it as NMHC all through the webinar so that it's quicker. So this heritage complex is coming up in Lothal. The architects for it are Hafeez Contractor and Associates, and it's a fairly large site of about 375 acres, and it's less than 2 km away from Lothal, which all of us know as a Harappan site. But very few of us know that it's one of the first known tidal docks of the world. And we all know Harappan civilisation as a time where cities were developed, very urban civilisation, great water management, sewage systems and spread across a large area. What we do not know enough is that they were the pioneering seafarers of civilisation of the world at that time. And, some of the technologies, techniques and the way they use the waterways and the sea is completely amazing and way ahead of what we expected something which was four and a half thousand years ago to be. This entire Museum is focused not just on the Harappan period, but it covers 14 galleries. These 14 galleries begin from the Harappan

period to contemporary ports and an entire account of development of maritime history and heritage across the last 4500 years.

One of the largest galleries in this Museum is dedicated to the Indian Navy. We're talking about mythology, different regions, what climate change has done in terms of maritime heritage and more about these areas. But what kind of stories can maritime museums tell us? We all know that you can talk about technology and innovation, but there's also about understanding how navigation was undertaken over the period of 4500 years and how things have changed, and yet so many things have remained the same. While we all know about the technology and the economy part, which is about trade, about power, about changing political boundaries. A very important aspect is the soft power of this maritime history and heritage, which is about how new communities have come across and how new townships develop. How cuisines develop mythologies, shared history and traditions, and also how a lot of cultural memory still continues in the way we have our phrases. A museum cannot be flat in the sense that they can't be just artifacts or just panels any longer. And, we know from the last two years that everybody is so used to now working and looking at things from the screen, but also the challenges that are there with the screen is that it's never really immersive and that's something which a Museum can provide us.

So we look at immersive exhibitions and at effective use of technology so that you can interact, bring in personal anecdotes and stories, because it's always good to relate to somebody who we can see ourselves in. It's not about just bigger epics and wars and personalities who can be as big as Kings and Queens, but also look at what an individual or a layperson goes through a certain period. The previous session we heard about how important it is about education and application. If there's a hands-on mind on public programming, it's extremely interesting, because you can have children learning about things we heard. We all know about the fact that there are maritime museums around the world. Some of them are very interesting, and they belong to countries which have a much shorter maritime history than ours. But the fact that the storytelling comes across so strongly, whether it's the Merseyside Maritime Museum in Liverpool, where it's claimed to be famous that it's where the Titanic was constructed. Each country has a Maritime History Museum, and most of them are interactive.

The interactivity and the immersive environment ensure that the soft power sustains beyond reading something or seeing something. Because of the bombardment of information that all of us are facing, we tend to forget a lot more. But the moment we do things or we experience things, that remain and that's the entire aspect that we look at. How do I think maritime museums participate in civil society and what is the outcome of all of that? We do have a lot of maritime museums in India, but they do not have the central location or they are not built-in tourism itinerary, which Bharat will be talking more about. So in terms of creative thinking, it helps us to connect and understand how we are connected across the world and yet we are different and same. So it does reinforce identity and community. It makes history very accessible because all of us are now aware of history channels or YouTube or WhatsApp forwards, which may not necessarily be authentic. But a Museum always brings that authenticity and we can participate, walk through something, be in a cell of an individual who has gone through a certain journey. We understand the scale, what it means to spend three months at sea, and of course, it helps preserve heritage. But all of this also leads to an application outside the Museum where it sustains and stimulates the knowledge economy. Lateral thinking definitely helps in cognitive behaviour and cognitive application. There is a multiplier effect on the tourism and craft sector, and you've seen cities around the world transforming. But even cities in India, with our experience of the Bihar Museum and what it has done in the last ten years to Patna especially in terms of hotel rooms, restaurants, people coming and spending an extra night to be in Patna. We're seeing that multiplier effect. Then it forms a global community of lots of collaborations and lots of soft collaborations, which need not necessarily be at the level of government or diplomatic collaborations, but also in terms of

communities (whether it's online communities, Instagram communities, all of that comes together and it leads to a very meaningful exchange). It has got its pros and cons, but it still allows one to be aware of every other aspect of it. Thank you very much and I'm going to hand it back to Cmde Chitnis.

**Cmde Chitnis:** Thank you, Batul for enlightening all of us on what is happening. We'll come back to you a little later, but now I have Bharat Gothoskar who has studied Mechanical Engineering and Business Management, but actually he wanted to be a conservation architect. Please hear more from Bharat.

**Mr Bharat Gothoskar:** Thank you, Commodore. It is such an honour to be invited for this initiative because technically speaking, I don't have any qualifications to speak here. But I'm going to talk about how I am making a difference about things. The word KHAKI stands for Keeping Heritage Alive and Kicking in India. And why did we choose a name like this? I'll speak about it slightly later, but in the last seven years that we have existed, we have been able to generate interest in Mumbai's heritage amongst visitors as well as locals. I always used to feel that whenever I would attend talks at Asia Tech or any other venue, the Grey hair overpower the black hair (there's nothing against age that people have). I just feel that younger people are not being attracted enough to history and heritage culture. You have to make it a bit cool for people to be interested in these things. One of the lines that I loved was by *Charles Mingus*, who was a famous musician, about creativity. He said that '*when you make simple things complex, it is commonplace. But when you make complex things simple for people to understand, that is creativity*'. And hence, we are in the initiative of making history heritage simple for people in bite size format. Today, everything is about Twitter, Instagram, people's attention spans are lower. Government has taken all the initiative to make Hindi popular as a language. But I think Bollywood has contributed more for awareness of Hindi than the government, and that's all because of soft power. That is exactly what we are discussing today. So probably when I was much younger, there were serials like *Fauji* or movies like *Top Gun* that would have attracted people of my generation to join the armed forces.

So how do you make it cool? I think maritime tourism (I'm using the word at a far wider area, not just from a naval perspective, but all aspects of how we interact with the sea) has a huge potential in India in general and Mumbai in particular. I don't think that we are even scratching on the surface of the potential that this tourism has and the impact that it would have. When I did my MBA (I passed out in the year 2000), my final year project was about heritage marketing, which essentially means that heritage has to generate money to maintain itself. Government doesn't have enough money to conserve everything which is there, and tourism is something that will pay for the upkeep. But the problem at most of the places in India is mismatch between hardware and software. Hardware, as I say, are static museums, buildings and things that you can see. Software is somebody making it experiential. I love the way Ms Batul presented that they are not looking at just a traditional Museum, the way Museum used to be in the past. Now museums are totally different. They have to be more interactive. They have to be out in the open where people can interact. So interaction is something which is very critical.

Let's not look at this only from the point of view of history. When we talk about maritime tourism, we have to look at nature. You have to look at people's interaction with the sea. The fisher folk in Mumbai keep on talking about the fact that the *Kolis* are the first people of the city. But where can you interact with *Kolis*? Where can you understand their culture, history, tradition, and how they fish? What are the celebrations that they have? There's nothing in the city which tells you right. All this is part of that. So, whether it is the sea or island forts or coastal forts, lighthouses, coral reefs etc, there is so much which we need to take out to the people. And I feel Mumbai's harbour has the potential to be really huge and whether it's the Oyster Rock, the Middle Ground

Battery, Cross Island, there is so much. At the expense of sounding very overstepping, I would love to see some day that the Bombay Dockyard and the Bombay Castle become the largest naval interpretation centre. I wouldn't use the word park or amusement park, but it has to be much more than what it is, as a dedicated place where we will inspire generations of Indians as well as people coming from abroad to show greater respect and better understanding of what the Navy has to do for India. When I say experiential tourism here, it doesn't only mean about having static stuff. I'm looking at walks, sailing tours, enactments etc. I was in a Castle called Warwick Castle in the UK, where twice a day they have a war, where two sides come to fight and there are cannons blasted. Why can't we recreate the Dutch attack on the city? I feel bad that when I go to Hong Kong, I see Chinese sampans and when I go to Dubai, I see Arab history. But why can't we see locally made wooden ships which will recreate the grandeur of what local shipping was about?

The interaction makes it simple and cool. Also, I feel that we have to rope in influencers for something like this and as we chat along, we'll do that of course. People like Cdr Mohan Narayan always guide us in terms of getting the right information that we need to know about that. I hope more and more people from the Navy keep on guiding people like us who then interpret and make it simple for the masses to appreciate.

**Cmde Chitnis:** Thank you Bharat, we'll come back to you with many questions, but right now we will invite Dr Rukshana Nanji, who is a double postgraduate and has a doctorate in Archaeology. She has worked at several excavations in Gujarat, Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra and Karnataka. Welcome to the show, Dr Rukshana, and it's over to you for introductory remarks.

**Dr Rukshana Nanji:** Good morning, everyone and before I start, I should thank the organisers for thinking of me and including me in such an august panel. I hope I can bring something to the table that hasn't been said before because almost everyone has covered everything I need to say. Let me start by saying that my interest in the maritime aspect of archaeology started almost instantly when I joined up to do my Masters in Archaeology at the Deccan College. I was lucky to go to Kuntasi and work with Professor Dhavalikar, one of the most eminent Harappan archaeologists at the time. Kuntasi, being a Harappan Centre for maritime trade, opened up a whole different aspect of archaeology for me because here we were talking about ships leaving perhaps from this little Gujarat Port town and sailing all the way across to the Middle East to West Asia. The very fact that we were looking at anchor stones, beads and shells, suddenly opened up this whole possibility that there is a world which very few archaeologists at that time were really looking at. Maritime archaeology in India is relatively young, and I heard people use terms like sea blindness. I agree with that.

We as a nation are more tuned towards looking at the Himalayas and landlocked histories. All our narratives are epics and are almost all land based, and unless you are living on the coast or you belong to a coastal community, very few people actually bother to look at the sea or decide to work in it. More so, when I started working on the early medieval period in Archaeology, I discovered that up to the early 2000s, almost nobody was working in medieval history. Everyone thought that medieval history started with the mobiles. So, there was a whole rich body of work and no one was looking at it. When we look at archaeological sites, we have thousands of archaeological sites to look at along the coast of India. However, the quantity of work is so little. You look at the other countries and you have them claiming a kind of ownership of the ocean, which we in India, surprisingly, although we have a whole ocean named after us, still don't give it the importance that we need to. The first thing that we need to do is to acknowledge that we are a part of the ocean, and that will come when we take pride in the history of our archaeological sites on the coast. Some of these sites face very large problems like erosion, human degradation of the sites, human activity, etc. But all of these can be handled if there is a little more awareness.

It's very heartening to know that in the last few decades there has been an interest in maritime history, and yet there's so much that needs to be done. The first thing is that we need to look at these sites, not just as sites where people from other littoral countries or from other parts of the Indian Ocean or from across the world have simply been coming, and we have been the hosts who have simply been receiving them. We have to look at ourselves as people who have also taken the initiative to sail out. You do have records of Indians who have sailed to Southeast Asia or to West Asia or even to the Mediterranean and yet we don't do anything about it. We have not been able to tap into this. It's wonderful to hear that the Museum at Lothal is going to include everything that you could possibly want. Also, the other panellists spoke about harnessing this power at a very early age. I think the phrase I can use as an excuse to borrow from marketing phrases is 'catch them young'. Our school textbooks and our history lessons need to include at least some interesting aspects of maritime history. It doesn't have to be a completely separate subject or a completely separate field of study. Children are burdened with it, but it is possible to include it. We can make it far more interactive and interesting. Let me give you an example. I have a friend, a fellow archaeologist who's a pre-historian, lives in Chennai and has her own little small Museum and an interactive Museum for children where children go and spend the day at the Museum and interact with craftsmen and people. They simulate an entire excavation and get the children to actually work hands-on on an archaeological excavation. It is an amazing experience for the child because they're never going to forget this. I'm sure this can be done at several other places, and I do hope that some of the museums that are being developed now will include some of these aspects. But we need more research as well, we need higher research, and we need particularly underwater research.

We have almost no shipwrecks. We have made no effort to harness the living communities at some of these archaeological sites, which may still be carrying on the traditions from the past. Let me give you an example. At Mandvi, you have a shipbuilding yard and you have beautiful dhows being constructed in wood, and yet you don't hear of too many people being able to sail on a dhow from Mandvi, although Kutch tourism is doing very well. You have the songs of the sea and the sea pairs. If you hear alarms and you hear the ship builders sing their traditional songs, particularly as I was lucky enough to experience on a full night on the beach at Mandvi, trust me, you will come away fascinated. And yet, these are the things that we almost never look at. So, I believe that along with the archaeology of the site, you need to be looking at the ethnography, including all these people. Not only are you giving them a livelihood, you're encouraging a certain pride in a heritage which along the way is going to really hold us in good stead if we want to attract younger people to maritime studies. I think that's where you start, and I think the romance of archaeology and the romance of folklore, the romance of the sea is what you need to bring into it before you thrust hardcore, very serious scientific research upon them.

To give you an example, you have the stories of *Sindbad* and you have the stories of pirates, you have all these stories which have always fascinated us as children. Certainly, a lot of it is fantasy, we all know that. But if we can tap into that imaginative interest with children, not about fictitious stories but about real time people about how they sail, how they read the stars, how they used to read the stars and navigate, how they sailed despite the harshest conditions through storms and seas; I'm sure you're going to be able to catch many more young people and get the interests that we want. At some point of time perhaps we will look at the sea with a certain amount of pride and then claim it. We have had experiences like this when we were working at sites like Sanjan or at Padri in Gujarat or even at Kuntasi again, where local people, once they knew their own historical backgrounds, were so fascinated that there were children who were very keen to learn more and follow this up, even at a higher level, trying to choose that as a career and asking us how they could go about it. I think that is the kind of interest we need to generate, and we need to

generate it across the board everywhere in the country. I think I will leave the discussion at this point and hope that we will interact a little more as we proceed.

**Cmde Chitnis:** Thank you very much, Dr Rukshana. I was pleased to hear from you that you studied your masters at the Deccan College in Pune. You might know that the Deccan College (Archaeology Department) was the site where we set up the Maritime Museum of the Indian Maritime Foundation (IMF), initially. Of course, we had to leave that place, and now we've set it up at the Anantrao Pawar College of Engineering, Pune. That makes a connection with the IMF, so I'm recruiting you also to become a member of the IMF. Moving ahead, Bharat highlighted experiential tourism and Bombay Castle and the Bombay Barracks becoming central to the naval interpretation. Actually, Cdr Mohan Narayan was solely responsible for this Heritage Walk. Starting after that, we had the Sound and Light show at the Bombay Castle. If you remember Mohan, it was a very interesting event. You said that two people warring against each other were shown in the Light and Sound Show. I don't know why it died a natural death at some point of time, but I wish you could revive these kinds of things. So, we need to really look at this.

So Mohan, can you add a little more as to where we lost out on the Sound and Light show and then the Heritage walk, etc? Are they still continuing? Or are we going to revive them? Are there any plans like that?

**Cdr Mohan:** Yes, Sir. The Sound and Light Show has a very interesting history to it. In February 2001, we had International Fleet Review, and that is the time we said that we have to restore the Bombay Castle and introduce the Heritage Walk. The Navy, of course, had no expertise in making a movie. So we started going to trade and they said it's going to cost you ten lakhs to make a movie. Ten lakhs was quite an amount in 2001. So we made that movie in-house, and it was about a two to three minute video clip after the restoration of the Castle. That video is still there with the Maritime History Society (MHS). I think it should have been made more popular and put on YouTube. So what we actually did was that the Bombay Castle is telling its own story, and most people don't realise that it's the Bombay Castle and the Bombay Dockyard, where the history of modern Bombay actually began. It should have been very popular. But I suppose in 2001, we were bathed in the woods when it came to marketing ourselves. Because if you look at these two things (Bombay Dockyard and the Bombay Castle), if these two institutions were to tell their own story in their own words, they could very justifiably say *Coram Pass Magna Full*, which is Latin for 'we too played a great part'. The Castle and the Bombay Dockyard is where the plans of Bombay were made by the English East India Company. Yes, we should have put it away and we should have circulated it amongst various people, but we lost out. The *Dockyard Walk* when we started in 2001, was hugely popular. Somehow after 2008 (after what happened in 2008), there was a problem to have it open and it was closed down because of security reasons.

The issue is that part of heritage is still very much in use, so it becomes a tight rope to open it. But yes, I believe there are plans to keep it and to revive it. And I think that will be a great gesture by the Navy if they can do it. But yes, of course there are security considerations.

**Cmde Chitnis:** Let's keep our fingers crossed that such a thing actually happens. But Batul, while you were speaking and thereafter Bharat was speaking, something flashed on the screen. They said we should try and co-locate water sport activities or some such activities with the Museum so that the Museum gets more popular. First of all, we've chosen Lothal as the site. Though Lothal has got history of 2500 years, how will you be able to attract people is a question. I myself have been to Lothal along with Cmde Rajan Vir. We went there, we were researching some material for another book being written by someone in the UK. We found it pretty difficult to get there first of all and then when we went there, we saw that Lothal is supposed to be a heritage site, it was a real



disappointment. So, how are you planning to attract people to Lothal? Are there any other associated things? Are there any plans for the site.

**Ms Batul:** The site is actually 365 acres and the Museum is just one part of it. As the name says, it's the National Maritime Heritage Complex (NMHC). It has an amusement park which is themed around understanding not water sports, but about what is the experience of being in water, and it will be in the amusement section. There are various other tourism components to the site also. The site is about 2 km away from Lothal, so it's not exactly at the heritage site, but there will be a way going to the heritage site if you want. But there is enough attraction for people to spend a full day, including hotels which are coming up there. So, it's a very integrated approach. And as Dr Rukshana had mentioned that maritime heritage is not just about the physical aspect of it, but also like whether it's the *Malam* singers or literature of that period. So, lot of that is being planned to bring that alive so that it can become a one stop destination for somebody who wants to get an introduction to what maritime heritage is, but it's also entertaining in a very engaging manner. While the current situation of Lothal is that it's not easily accessible, but by road it's just about 1½ to 2 hours from Ahmedabad, Baroda and Mehsana. So once it's a full day destination, visitors will learn things by becoming involved by experience and by recreation. There are sections which are going to recreate different locations and sites, and in terms of the actual seafaring vehicles, parts of that are also going to be recreated. But there are also things to do for people who do not want to get into a very conventional Museum setup, because this Museum is not going to be a Museum, which will have static displays or just panels. It is going to be an interactive Museum. But even if that is something which people do not want to spend time on, there are sound and light shows that have been planned. So, everything is themed around maritime heritage and the soft power related to it, whether it's the culture, food culture, crafts or shipbuilding. There is something for everybody in that and for all the age groups.

**Cmde Chitnis:** Thank you, because it puts a lot of things in perspective there, because it's not only a Museum. As you said, it's a whole complex and it has all the infrastructure in it. As Bharat was saying that we need to make it 'cool' for the people to go there. That's a very good idea. Dr Rukshana, you suggested to involve school children in everything. We partner with a concern in the US called the Ocean Conservancy. They do coastal clean-up and we involve children because there's no sea or ocean in Pune, but we do it at Mumbai. In Pune, we clean up the river banks of the Mula and Mutha, and now we've taken it one step further. The person who's looking after it (Cmde Malhotra) has taken coastal clean-up to the river banks of Punjab. He goes and does it on Beas and all the rivers over there. So that's where we're involving children. Step by step, you have to keep involving children, like you said. And I'm sure, Bharat, you got some points on this, how to make it cool for the children. How are you going to attract really young people who are blank in their head?

**Mr Bharat:** I feel it's very easy to attract children. The most difficult segment to attract is young adults between the ages of 15 to 25 years. That's the age bracket, which is the most difficult to attract to anything which is cultural, which is about history. Our experience in the past seven years shows that you have to make things which attract them. So one of our most popular walks that we do is called *Grisly Girgaon*, which is a ghost walk that happens at night. It starts at 11:00 pm and ends at 01:00 am. That has attracted the maximum number of young adults and once they attend, they realise that the heritage box is not something that is boring. This is something interesting and then they started coming for other things. So, I love the way Ms Batul has planned this Museum because what happens is, if a family is coming and if one person is interested in heritage and other people are not, there are other entertaining things which will then push those people towards taking interest in the history, heritage, culture or whatever is to be projected. So that's the way we should look at it, that if somebody comes tomorrow to Bombay Castle and the Dockyard, how can they spend an entire day where they will be engaged? I see that Cdr Mohan

mentioned about how he used the film. Now I believe getting people involved who can make a difference and communicate to a wider section is very, very important. I think the Korean government is doing an amazing amount of work to use the soft power of Korea by making what is called K - Pop and K - drama cool with a lot of young adults across the world. And that's why even my daughter knows all the details of what is happening in Korea as compared to what she knows probably in our own country.

We have to incentivise by involving other people who can make a difference. And if there are influencers like Cdr Mohan Narayan, how can we help him to reach out to a wider section of society so that people start appreciating what is there? There is this book named *Ocean of Churn* and the way the author has written it, it opened up the eyes of a lot of people who looked at maritime traditions of the Indian Ocean beyond the colonial perspective. This is something that is important for us to do, because if we are only going to come up with white papers and serious articles which are important, the role of somebody like Dr Rukshana is very important, but the role of others, what she does to take it to a wider section and in a more palatable way is something that both sections have to work together. I always feel that movies like *Mughal - e - Azam* and *Bajirao Mastani* did more to generate interest in those eras than what any history book would have done. So it is important to comprehend how you use pop culture to make information easy for people to understand. I just want to talk about one more point which Cdr Mohan Narayan and all of you are mentioning, that something was started at Bombay Castle and then it didn't sustain. What happens is, when one particular official is very enthusiastic about heritage, something starts. But sensitisation of the entire organisation is something very important. We currently curate walks inside the BMC Headquarters. But what is important is to sensitise even the person who is the sweeper there. That is why this is important. And once you do that, it becomes sustainable for the organisation to do. We do a lot of free walks for BMC employees, including the sweepers, to make them realise what is heritage in that area. Sadly, heritage in India is a very elitist kind of initiative. You have to take it to the masses and that's where I feel a platform like KHAKI can take it to the masses.

**Cmde Chitnis:** Thank you, Bharat. I agree with you that we need to popularise the place. We don't need to have a small series of small museums, etc. But the local concept is something different and as Batul said, it will popularise the place itself. It will popularise Lothal because Lothal is a very important site in the Indian context. So, to have a Museum there is also a very good idea.

Dr Rukshana, I would like to ask you as to what kind of sites you are looking at for the future? I know there's a lot of excavation going on like underwater excavation for the lost Dwarka city. Where are we? At what stage now?

**Dr Rukshana:** I have not been really working at Dwarka, so I'm not an authority on the site. But I can tell you that Dwarka has been studied, since Dr SR Rao and a number of archaeologists have been working both on land as well as underwater excavations. The material is still under study, so it wouldn't be fair for me to speak about that. But I think in the last 15 to 20 years, there has been an increased awareness that we have to look beyond just Harappan sites and Harappan cities in India and start looking at other aspects of our history as well. So a great deal of interest is being generated on the time period that so far had been completely neglected, which was the early medieval period from approximately the 16th century up to about the 13th century. And, this is particularly true when we are talking about maritime archaeology.

In the past we've had the focus on land archaeology and on the Harappan. In Indian archaeology, I think we need to compensate for the loss of Harappan sites that went to Pakistan

during the partition. We have expended a very large amount of our time and effort in looking at Harappan sites on our own soil, and justifiably so because we have a wonderful area of sites in India. But in the last 20 years, it's very heartening to know that what were very dark, unknown periods of history which had not been studied, are the sites that are now being looked at very carefully and with a great deal of interest from the international community as well. So sites along both the West and the East Coast (maritime sites), West Asia at one end and Southeast Asia all the way up to China, cover almost the entire part of the Indian Ocean. And sites are now being looked at as much more than just archaeological sites. As Bharat said, it's great that we are going there and digging it out, but it's not just to dig up and write in specialised books that barely three and a half people are going to read. The idea is to take it to the public, and more and more people are now becoming aware that it's not just what you're digging up, but it's also how you are now going to make it known to the public in a far more palatable form than just a dry, boring textbook.

I can give you one example. You have a program called the *Return to Roots* program that was started by an international group of expatriate *Parsis* who are living abroad (and I don't mean to be community based in this conversation), but that the program is very interesting. These are expatriates who are sending youngsters in the same age group that Bharat was talking about (15 to about 25-30 years). A group of about 10 or 15 from across the world are brought to India and taken through a cultural circuit in Gujarat and Mumbai, and I have been working with them (rather I have been consulting with them). I take them on a short trip down to Sanjan, which is the place where the *Parsis* first arrived, supposedly. I actually take them to the site that was excavated. Although there's almost nothing to see there, just taking them to the site and explaining what they are looking at is an amazing eye opener for all of them. So, if that kind of work we are doing can be brought to the public, would be an amazing thing. I think it can be done across the board everywhere.

**Cmde Chitnis:** Thank you for that very interesting point. We are all talking about museums now and another thing that we were supposed to talk about is memorials. Memorials are something that we really lack and that shows a total disrespect to our forefathers. The *National War Memorial* has just been inaugurated about a year and a half or maybe two years back in Delhi. It's a very fancy looking Memorial that has been built and I'm glad that the government is doing something about it. For the seafarers, it's Cmde Rajan Vir who thought of a Memorial. His first memorial was very simple. It was just an anchor that belonged to *INS Kuthar*, which he managed to procure from the Navy and put it in the middle of an island at Pune (it's a pretty busy island). It's in memory of all the people who lost their lives at sea; people from the fishermen, Merchant Navy, Indian Navy, Coast Guard, etc. It's called the *Seafarer's Memorial* and was inaugurated by Admiral Arun Prakash many years ago. Thereafter, he thought of this War Memorial for Seamen. Many of us don't know that about 7982 seamen lost their lives in the two World Wars and they were sailing onboard allied merchant ships. So this war Memorial is built at the Bund Garden in Pune and we lay a wreath there every year. Of course, for the last two years, we haven't been able to do it because the Bund Garden itself has been taken over by the Metro construction. The Metro has been constructed over there, and so we can't access that place. But we will revive it soon. So I really feel the need for making these memorials more. So are any of you in any way involved with memorials? Batul, have you been contracted for this? As per my understanding, you've done these projects overseas. But have you been approached by anything like that in India?

**Ms Batul:** Unfortunately, not yet. We hope that it can be done and even in terms of memorials (which Bharat and Dr Rukshana also spoke about), it's about bringing that history alive. A Memorial can be an interpretation centre, but that storytelling aspect is important. For example, Dr Rukshana spoke about taking youngsters to Sanjan and telling them the story of Sanjan, even if there is nothing existing. I think that if that can come through in a Memorial, it will be a beautiful piece of architecture where you can walk through and there can be some kind of a performance or a

sound and light show. The human connection which can come through by telling personal stories is what makes a memorial alive and brings that history and heritage alive for a visitor. I would look at that aspect coming through whenever there is a memorial and whenever we can work on one. A lot is happening just now, so I would hope that these aspects are also brought in, of living history, of a life connection, of personal stories etc, where it's much more relatable.

**Cmde Chitnis:** I agree with you totally. You've got to have a memorial. You have to have a physical building, some kind of a memorial, but along with that they should be alive. Like in Pune, the National War Memorial of the Southern Command has a beautiful exhibition centre on one side, a display of tanks, an aircraft and a ship model. So, anyone going there is seeing all these things which attract people more than memorials. I think that we need to create more such memorials in various places. Maritime memorials are almost non-existent. We have to make a memorial in Pune. Mumbai has a so-called Maritime Memorial, but it is tucked away in one corner of Colaba, where most people don't even know where it is, unless you really look for it. What do you say?

**Cdr Mohan:** Yes, I will tend to agree with you, but if you ask Mumbaikars about memorials, most of them will not know that there are already three memorials in the city that I know of. There are a couple of more too. The Naval Uprising Memorial with the Navy was set up in 2001. Naval Uprising or the Royal Indian Navy Mutiny, whatever you may call it without going into the politics, was one of the factors that actually acted as a catalyst for the freedom movement. And we just celebrated 75 years of it. I don't think many people are even aware that a mutiny had taken place in Bombay, started off in Bombay, became a pan Indian mutiny, and it was in the heart of Colaba. Older than that, there is a Memorial for Seafarers at Masjid which goes back to 1932 and it has just been restored by Vikas Dilawari. It's a tribute to seafarers who lost their lives in the First World War. Later on, they added to all seamen, whether they were serving on merchant ships or on warships. Only once a year on National Maritime Day (05 April) some sort of a ceremony is held there with the DG shipping and people from the mercantile marine coming. There's a Memorial for all personnel of the fortress who lost their lives in World War I. Now three memorials, not many people are aware that these memorials even exist, and that's a pity because they are at the heart of this city. It's not in a distant corner of the city, but yes, have we done something about it to popularize it? I'm afraid I must admit that when we set up the Naval Uprising Memorial in 2002, it was visited by many people across the city. After that, it died a natural death and not many people are even aware that such a memorial exists.

You were talking about the sound and light show. It's the right place to set up a sound and light show as it belongs to the Navy, but it is not accessible to everybody round the clock. Similarly, the Seamen's Memorial at Masjid or the Memorial at Ballard Bunder. Now there are plans afoot to make a maritime Museum in the Bombay Port Trust area. And there is the timeball which is in quite a dilapidated state. That's an ideal place to put up a memorial, because memorial already exists there for all those people who lost their lives in the infamous Bombay Dock explosion. But not many people are aware because it's not accessible to the common people. But yes, Congratulations you made a very relevant point, as Bharat also said, that if you popularise it and sensitise people, only then these memorials can be more meaningful. But memorials do exist in Mumbai.

**Cmde Chitnis:** Would you like to add to that, Bharat?

**Mr Bharat:** I just want to give an example. We took a trip to Turkey and we took people especially to Gallipoli, where Indians participated in a War in Europe. Around the same time there were celebrations which are called *Anzac Day*, and large amount of young people had come from Australia and New Zealand to celebrate their ancestors' participation. The local guide said that this is the first time some Indian group is coming to see this. He had never seen an Indian group coming.

We got a wreath and we laid it at the memorial. The memorials were spectacular, the locations and the cemeteries were immaculately maintained. The Commonwealth War Grave Commission (CWGC) maintains it. There is an Italian War Memorial in Shudi, where Italians come and lay wreaths. But there are Indian cemeteries which are in Italy and there are no Indians who go there. I was speaking to one of the travel operators who is one of the largest in India. I said that so many of people you take, why can't you just take them to see one of these places which will inspire them that Indians have made a difference in Europe. But we are only interested in seeing the Eiffel Tower and are not seeing beyond, and what is our connection with some foreign land and vice versa. People like Batul can contribute towards making this more interactive and not a static memorial the way traditionally it used to happen.

Cdr Mohan Narayan mentioned about the museum, which is planned in Mumbai. I'm a member of the *Maritime Mumbai Museum Society*, and they have been allocated a space where they will be coming up with a lovely museum soon. They're planning to make a very interactive museum, which I'm looking forward to. There's another memorial located in Khareghat Colony dedicated to Parsi people who participated in World War I and II and people staying in the localities also are not aware about it.

**Cmde Chitnis:** Capt Kaustubh Gosavi in the YouTube comment section is asking - could the upcoming Shivaji statue in Mumbai seas include a small Gallery for Maratha Seafarers and Admiral Kanhoji Angre? I couldn't agree more with you Kaustubh, but you all are in the say of things. We are slightly outside the realm of that. But what is the Navy doing about this? Doesn't the Navy have any part to play in this? I mean, I'm not asking you for an official opinion, but maybe you can add some of your views to it at some point in time. But can any of the panelists say that Shivaji Memorial could be used for something else beyond just the Shivaji statue like the Sardar Vallabhai Patel statue at Kevadiya? It has got many things around it. So can we develop that? Bharat, do you feel that you can do something about it?

**Mr Bharat:** Yeah, I always believe that whatever memorials are coming, like the upcoming memorials for Dr Babasaheb Ambedkar and Chatrapati Shivaji, should be beyond statues. The Sardar Patel statue, which was created in Gujarat, is a great template because they have created an amusement park nearby, there's a butterfly garden and there is interaction. We should look at it not only as symbolism but also how that is going to help the local economy. I remember Dr Rukshana giving a presentation in Kama Institute where she talked about different communities. If we are able to involve the different communities which are based at a local level, their history, their legacy woven into the experience, it would be fabulous. Just imagine having a Jewish Museum at Alibaug, a Parsi Museum at Sanjan and a museum dedicated to the Konkani Muslims at Shekhadi. Instead of looking at it from a very narrow prism, you have to look at it at multiple levels. And of course, Mangrove Interpretation Centre should also be part of this. We shouldn't just look at it from a history point of view. Nature should be a very important part. Shipwrecks are something that India should be looking at. Places like Angria Bank (I think there is some issue going on and it is not accessible now), but these are places which will make a huge amount of difference in attracting people. How many Mumbaikars actually interact with the sea? The whole Eastern front is not open to us. So it is very important that visitors as well as the locals have more access to the sea and use it more actively.

**Cmde Chitnis:** Thank you, Bharat. Cdr Mohan Narayan, you said earlier that after 2008, security considerations have prevented people from going into the Dockyard as it is very sensitive area. But nowadays you see virtual tour of ships on the the Navy Channel. You can see INS Vikramaditya virtually. So to start with, why don't we start coming up with these kinds of virtual tours of the Dockyard, Bombay Castle etc? Without going into any sensitive information whenever

the security situation improves or we can ensure tighter security for people to go inside the Dockyard to do the heritage walk, etc. But the work you had done at that time, can it be converted into a virtual tour kind of a thing?

**Cdr Mohan:** Yes, of course it can be done because not many people are aware about the importance of the Bombay Dockyard. And you rightly said that we can make a video or have a virtual program or a virtual tour for which technology does exist now. But where I wanted to come and serve was, there are plans afoot as I understand, that the Khanderi Island, now renamed as the Kanhoji Angre Island, is going to be used as a tourist spot. Many people might not be aware that it was a master stroke of Shivaji to occupy Khanderi Island, and it acted as a choke point for his fight against the English East India Company. Khanderi Island was totally Shivaji's brain child and that's the right place for a Shivaji memorial to come up, because that is where Shivaji showed his maritime strategy. Now, when you have something on Khanderi Island, there are many things which will come up simultaneously because the access is by boat, which means you have boats which ply from Gateway of India or from the ferry spot, which is going to be the new domestic terminal. This means that you see the entire dock vista, like from the Manhattan skyline of Mumbai you see all the lighthouses. You spend a day on Khanderi and end with a sound and light show on the Navy and its maritime history. It is the right place to have it because you are going to popularise the place which is now hardly being visited upon and it has got its own history. So, that's what I wanted to say about the Kanhoji Angre Island or the statue of Shivaji. But yes, you are absolutely right about the Bombay Castle and the Bombay Dockyard. We have the technology now to conduct a virtual tour and let people be aware of what lies behind those walls which separate the city from the dockyard.

**Cmde Chitnis:** Thank you very much, Mohan and before I thank all my panelists, there are some people in the audience whom I wish to acknowledge, who have been posting very interesting messages here. There's a lady with name Priyanka who says that lighthouses are very interesting places and we should make them into interpretation centres. I want to ask her as to how many lighthouses she has visited. They are perfectly nice places to go to, I assure you and it's very interesting to see the Lighthouse working in itself. People should be taken to the Lighthouse to see what a Lighthouse is, what it does, how it works, etc. Then there is Adil Desai. I want to acknowledge his comments. He has been making very sound suggestions and I thank you very much for your suggestions, Adil. So all it remains for me to do is to thank my panelists personally. Thank you, Cdr Mohan Narayan, Batul, Bharat and Dr Rukshana. We have had a good meeting virtually, but I hope we do convert this virtual meeting into physical meetings sometime, maybe next year. We'll have a seminar, not a webinar seminar. For the last two years we've done this webinar thing, but before that it used to be a physical seminar. So thank you very much once again, all of you. I hope that the organisers will pardon us if we've gone away from the subject or we've done justice to the subject.

### **Section 3 (SESSION FOR YOUNG ADULTS/ STUDENTS)**

#### **Looking into the Future – Fostering Maritime Curiosity in Young Minds**





## Looking into the Future – Fostering Maritime Curiosity in Young Minds

A Panel discussion on the topic was conducted which consisted of the following: -

- Ms Meera Bhadre, Faculty at SNDT Women's College, Mumbai
- Master Adhvait P Menon, Young Yachting Medallist
- Surgeon Lieutenant Commander Swati, Young Maritime Achiever
- Mr Pratekk Tandoan, Society of Indian Marine Artists (SIMA)
- Ms Deepshikha Saxena, Society of Indian Marine Artists (SIMA)
- Ms Tiya Chatterji, Young Maritime Author, Researcher and Diver

The discussion that took place among the panellists is transcribed below: -

**Ms Meera Bhadre (Moderator):** As we move to the next session, I thank all our viewers for joining us from their homes, offices and universities. This webinar keeps getting exciting. I'm looking forward to hosting and moderating this special session today. When I read the theme of my session - *'Looking into the Future - Fostering Maritime Curiosity in Young Minds'*, I decided to ask a few of my students, some of whom are postgraduate students. What do they think about it? A barrage of replies came - Ma'am it's easy, just take us on a visit to the coastal belt, travel, cuisine, maybe a visit to a museum, a port or a dock and best would be if we go scuba diving and take a picture. I thought to myself, such a narrow, limited understanding of the maritime needs to be changed and more importantly how we do it also mandates a rethink.

The concept of hard and soft power has dominated the global power politics narrative. The maritime dimension of soft power is gradually getting its due with the increasing role of maritime industry and agencies in Humanitarian and Disaster Relief roles and also the indispensable role of maritime industry in global trade and commerce. However, the wide-ranging aspects of the maritime domain remain elusive to the young minds. For many youngsters, Navy, Coast Guard, Merchant Navy and Shipping constitute the scope of maritime domain. But with this special session, I hope to showcase the diverse avenues within the maritime domain that are potent maritime soft powers of the future, if nurtured and harnessed consciously. I would like to add that the United Nations General Assembly had declared 2021 as the International Year of Creative Economy for Sustainable Development, which if holistically examined has a critical maritime dimension and can add value to the discourse on maritime soft power. When Vice Admiral R Hari Kumar discussed the plight of fisheries in India in his keynote address, I was reminded that the UN General Assembly has declared 2022 the International Year of Artisanal Fisheries and Aquaculture, another reminder of the indispensable role of oceans in livelihoods and cultural exchanges. This session is dedicated to young maritime enthusiasts and achievers with the aim of promoting in youth a vision of maritime India's future. I hope with this session we can cultivate love for the sea among the young minds.

With a young and diverse panel on my side, there is a lot of energy, ideas, talent and inspiration going into this session. And I am sure there will be ample takeaways to share and points to reflect upon at the end of the session. We have Adhvait Prashant Menon, a dashing and ambitious 15 year old with a penchant for yachting. Adhvait is a Class X student of NCS, Mumbai. Adhvait started sailing at the age of nine years and has received several awards at state and national events. He has sailed Optimist, Enterprise, Laser Standard and Laser 4.7 classes of boats. His hobbies also include debating and essay writing and he also enjoys running. So welcome Adhvait, I hope you are comfortable.

From school going to a post graduate researcher, Author, Archaeologist and Museologist, Tiya Chatterji likes being called a 'Maritime Enthusiast'. She is passionate about Underwater Archaeological and Maritime History studies and is a PADI certified diver. Her goal is to aid the dissemination of knowledge about the maritime domain and bridge the gap between laymen and professionals. She is currently working as a Research Associate for the Indian Naval History Division, New Delhi, and as a freelance writer and editor for academic and non-academic platforms.

Lt Cdr Swati, a naval officer and a doctor who with her sheer grit and gumption has embarked on a sailing adventure of a lifetime. She is the golden girl of sailing on our panel. She has done her basic sky diving course and represented the Navy in Ocean Sailing. She has pushed the envelope to live her dreams and pursue her passion. We'll hear more about you. Welcome.

Our next panelist is a dynamic duo from the Society for Indian Marine Artists (SIMA) - Pratekk Tandoan, a passionate artist and a polymath who is also SIMA's active secretary. He has been a key asset for SIMA in promoting awareness on marine art including seascapes among the general public. He has been part of many art shows. His solo art exhibition was held at Nehru Centre, Worli. The other artist on the panel is Ms Deepshikha Saxena, a self-learnt artist cum teacher and nature lover who has played an instrumental role in encouraging young students at SIMA to take up marine arts.

I think I will begin with the youngest achiever on the panel. Adhvait, please tell us about your journey. What attracted you to the sea and later drove you to pursue such a challenging sport? Please go ahead.

**Master Adhvait P Menon:** My journey of yachting actually started with a hilarious incident when I was seven years old. My father took me on a sailing boat. It was actually a one-man boat, but as I was small, I could also fit in. I just sat and watched him sail the boat while he told me how the boat works. The funny part was that when a strong gust came, he miscalculated the rudder angle and fell in the water. Unaware of how dangerous this predicament was, I started laughing and managed to handle the boat all on my own till he could swim back. This normally is difficult for a person who had got in the sailing boat for the first time. This was where my father found my love for water and encouraged me to set off on this life changing path. I would take every opportunity to be in the water, whether to swim, kayak or simply jump from the jetty. My father would always permit me to do all these things under his watchful eyes. He would never let me get close to the water without me having a life jacket, a precaution that is now fully imbibed in me. When I was nine, we were posted at NDA Khadakwasla, and a scintillating speech by Cdr Abhilash Tomy further inspired me to learn sailing. This is where I started sailing competitively for the first time. NDA used to host Enterprise Class Sailing Championships (It is a boat handled by two sailors). Two years down the line, I, along with my partner, won the under 21 shield. Interestingly, during this time I was only twelve years old.

**Ms Meera:** Adhvait, did you meet Cdr Abhilash Tomy?

**Master Adhvait:** Yes, I did meet him. I even took a photo with him and that photo I still have to this day. I met him later also after I eventually started sailing. So he has been a role model for me.

**Ms Meera:** That's so nice to hear. And even a role model would now know the kind of influence they have on young minds like you. But any word of advice that he gave you when you met him?

**Master Adhvait:** Recently, when I met him, I had already started sailing, so we usually have little chats about how my sailing was going and his attitude really had a deep impact on me. That's how it motivated me to continue sailing and I surely will continue even after I grow up.

**Ms Meera:** Tell me the memory of the sea. Of course, we know that you have a background in the Navy, but when you go home, where would home be? Has that had any influence on the native?

**Master Adhvait:** My father is from Kerala. Where we lived, there are a lot of backwaters. So, the sea has always been something close to my heart. I grew up near a backwater and there's a beach, very close to the place where I stay. So that is maybe one of the reasons why I started sailing.

**Ms Meera:** That's great to hear Adhvait. My next question is for you, Tia. Can you explain the world of *Maritime Archaeology* to our audience? I know it's a niche domain and I'm sure that there are ample opportunities for research in it, but, well, we are the layman here.

**Ms Tiya Chatterji:** If I have to broadly explain what Maritime Archaeology is, I would say it is basically the reconstruction or the study of man's interaction with the oceans and the seas over time and how it began, how it developed and evolved and how it actually impacted human life. The reconstruction is done via material culture. That would be the easiest definition of Maritime Archaeology. The terminologies are very different in different countries and different universities. For example, *Marine Archaeology* is also the most widely accepted terminology for Maritime Archaeology and then it has a lot of specifications. Like you have *Underwater Archaeology* where we are dealing only with submerged archaeological sites or artifacts. Then we have *Nautical Archaeology* where we are studying only the shipwrecks. Then we have sites which are located along the coast. This is just a tangible part of it. You also have the intangible cultural heritage like the culture, traditions and all of that of these coastal communities. So, all of this actually falls under the ambit of *Marine Archaeology*. So according to me, there are so many fascinating avenues of research and also with the background of the vast amount of maritime heritage that India has, there are immense possibilities for research in this domain.

**Ms Meera:** Tia, I have a picture with me. Let me know exactly what you are doing here.

**Ms Tiya:** This is an archaeological field in Rajasthan. It's close to Mount Abu and is called Chandrawati. The site belongs to the 'Parmar' dynasty. I actually found the top structure of the temple which was buried inside. As I didn't have anything to clean it up, I was just using my hands.

**Ms Meera:** That's wonderful, I guess your research chronicles have quite a lot of filling experiences.

My next question for Lt Cdr Swati. At the outset congratulations, I have heard you qualified for your post-graduation exam, another feather in your cap. You are a valley girl who became a doctor, joined the Indian Army, then moved to the Indian Navy, a doting mother to a three-year-old and a sailing champion. There are 'Roles Galore'. Take us down memory lane and tell us about this beautiful journey from Jammu & Kashmir to Mumbai.

**Surg Lt Cdr Swati:** First of all, a very warm good afternoon to all my fellow panelists and all the viewers who are watching us live on YouTube right now. Secondly, I would like to convey my gratitude and thanks to those who found me capable of being a part of this webinar, I'm really grateful and delighted to be part of this webinar for the next one hour. Thirdly, the question you have asked me is not a one question. Actually, there are questions in the question. So, I'll first start with my journey of being a doctor and then I'll come to how I came into the Indian Armed Forces and then as a sailing medalist.

Becoming a doctor was my childhood dream. It was very clear from the beginning that I wanted to be a doctor. Secondly, when I was doing my graduation and when I was in my internship, I got engaged to a naval officer. So that time only I decided that once I finished my graduation, I'll take up armed forces as my further career option because that would be the best option for me and my family and my husband as well. Thirdly, how I actually came to the army and then to the Navy - it all started once I finished my internship. Advertisement came in the newspaper that there are vacancies for doctors in the Indian Armed Forces. So I filled up that form and I was called for the interview. I got selected in that interview, cleared my medical and eventually made it to the merit list. That is how my journey to the armed forces began. Although I wanted to be in the Navy since my husband was in the Navy, initially I was made to join the Army. So initially I felt like why Army? Why not the Navy? Because I wanted to join the Navy. But today I can say that was a blessing in disguise. That is how I could experience the Army as well as the Navy.

In the army, I was posted in Jammu and after that I was posted in Udhampur, which is a CI Ops area. During my tenure in J&K, I got to know that we have an option of switching over to the Navy (the doctors have that option). So, I took up the case and I put up the application. It was accepted and with the grace of God and with the help and guidance of my seniors, I got seconded to the Navy within one year of my service. So that is how my journey from Army to Navy began. While working in the Navy, my initial posting was in Visakhapatnam at INHS Kalyani. There I got to know about Skydiving. As I like adventures, I thought why shouldn't I grab this opportunity for something new? And my husband also wanted to do it. So my husband and I both volunteered for it and luckily we got this opportunity. Then I went to MP where I did Skydiving course. I completed all five jumps successfully and that's how I got the badge. I was always crazy about putting this badge on my uniform and perhaps I would be the first lady medical officer in the whole Navy who has done Skydiving. Thereafter, I was transferred to Naval Dockyard (Visakhapatnam) where I got to know about a bunch of lady officers who had gone on circumnavigation of the world. It was a group of six lady officers. So that is how my interest towards sailing developed. Then I thought that I should also try this new sport. I have done skydiving, why not take up sailing now? The Sailing club was near my home and on every weekend or on holidays, I used to go there and started practicing different kinds of boats. After some time, an advertisement came that volunteers are required for Inter Command Sailing Championship and I grabbed it. Then professional practice started once I volunteered for that and I represented Eastern Naval Command in the Inter Command Sailing Championship, and this is how I came into sailing.

**Ms Meera:** That's a great story. I just heard Adhvait, he mentioned that he was inspired by Cdr Abhilash Tomy and you said that you were inspired by the Navika Sagar Parikrama crew. So, I'm sure the Indian Navy has a very strong community to inspire each other. And I guess there are more laurels ahead in store for all.

Now I'm going to move to Pratekk. Could you take us through your personal journey towards this creative pursuit? You're an artist. How did that start?

**Mr Pratekk Tandoan:** Good afternoon, everyone. This is indeed an honour for SIMA and me to be a part of this event. I would also like to congratulate Admiral Hari Kumar for being elevated to the post of CNS. I have been drawing and painting since infancy. I also write poems and articles on nature and spirituality. I have been attending art classes while in school. I won some prizes in art in school and at a competition for design in the Maharashtra's elementary art exam. While studying computer engineering, I would do the State Declaration for my college in 2009. After I had resigned from my IT job at Pune, I started working towards art and then one day I decided that I will do it full time. Then I started learning from my art teacher at his house and participated in the Brook Art exhibition. My fantasy art paintings were also sold at Jehangir Art Gallery in February 2012. Then I joined SIMA and studied Fine Arts for a year at Bharati Vidyapeeth. I then learnt a lot about art under Sachin Nimbalkar at his studio *Art Impressions*. December 2017 was a watershed moment for me. I started selling paintings and also gave a talk on my visit to the Art Institute of Chicago. I accepted Cmde Rajan Vir's offer to be the Secretary of SIMA. My solo art exhibition was held at Nehru Centre, Mumbai in August 2018, and it was well received. In April 2020, I was offered a seat to study for the regular classroom bachelor's degree at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago.

**Ms Meera:** Pretty commendable, Pratekk. I have to share the screen here. I have a few paintings of you that I would like to share with our viewers as well (few pictures are shown on the screen) and maybe you could pick one and tell us a little about it.

**Mr Pratekk:** Yes, this is a cartoon that I have created on my own. That's a pirate and this is my imagination. It was a commissioned order from Kolkata. The picture presented on the screen currently has a lot of symbolism. This is the flying horse. This is the microphone breaking itself of limitations of narrow thinking and gaining freedom. It has a lot of spiritual meaning as well that this is being born twice. They say that people who gain enlightenment are born twice as they break the limitations of the world and gain freedom. So, this is symbolic of that enlightenment. This was selected for a national level exhibition in Pune. Another picture presented by Ms Meera Bhadre is Mount Matterhorn, the famous mountain of Switzerland. I created this when I was in college and this won an award as well, this is pencil shading on paper.

**Ms Meera:** Wonderful. It's great to see your art works and thank you for sharing them with us. Now I'm going to move on to Ms Deepshikha. Tell us about your foray into the marine art.

**Ms Deepshikha Saxena:** I started *Marine Art* in the year 2013 where I was introduced to SIMA by Mr Pratekk Tandoan and slowly as a member I started participating in various activities of SIMA, looking around at so many great artists depicting marine art as a symbol of the ocean. The respect and the ocean values that I could see in SIMA were great. So, I got very inclined towards the art form and started making seascapes. Eventually it was just not me making the seascapes. I already had classes so I wanted my children also to learn that art form. I started teaching marine art specifically to the kids and eventually got permission from Rajan Vir Sir to exhibit the same in the venues, and fortunately enough it was appreciated a lot. My kids actually went to various parts of the country and they have sold their paintings and they are appreciated by so many people. I'm really glad to see that kind of achievements. I myself am a nature person and I love doing nature more. So there is an inclination towards marine art too.

**Ms Meera:** I have a few pictures with me which I want to share with our viewers (few pictures are shown on the screen). Can you help us and describe the picture displayed on the screen?

**Ms Deepshikha:** Yes, ma'am. This is a pencil sketch done by me. Since I love corals and fishes a lot, I just picked up this betta fish and drew it on a gray scale paper, and it is a totally

coloured pencil on paper. Another picture that you have displayed is the painting of a very joyful fish, the clownfish. I really love the colours in them and the *Reef* is one of the most powerful things in marine life. It gives so much nutrition and hideouts to these fishes. This is oil on canvas painting. In the next painting displayed, if you can relate, this is Kerala backwaters. A few years back, I had been to Kerala and I was mesmerised by the scenic views there. The whole impact was different, so I had just made a sketch. One of my known people saw this and he said that he wanted a painting in this. So, this is a self-created Kerala view of painting where a houseboat is sailing. The next one shown is one of my unique artworks. This is a mixed media and the background is done in pencils, pastels and pastel colours, whereas the tortoise is purely done in pencil. When you do a sketch with some paints, you call it mixed media. All these paintings showcase their love for the sea and the groundwater, the animals and all the animals prevailing in the sea.

**Ms Meera:** I can feel the warmth, and I'm sure you're very passionate about what you do. We'll hear more from you, thank you.

Adhvait, coming back to you, I would really like to know about your training sessions and I'm sure that is something that everybody wants to know. How grilling, how easy, how difficult? What does a typical day in the life of a yachting champ look like?

**Master Adhvait:** Enterprise class is more of a boat for seniors and I wanted a boat for my age. So, I did some research on the Internet and found out that there's a boat called the *Optimist Class*, which is ideal for under 16. There was one *Optimist boat* in NDA that became my Maruti. I would take the boat myself, rig up sail and on return, wash it and park it back. From there, I participated in the National Optimist Class Sailing Championship in 2016. Although I finished last, I neither felt ashamed nor regretted. My father saw the certificate where it was written that I finished 53 out of 53 participants. He jokingly said, Congratulations, Adhvait, you've got full marks. But frankly I enjoyed every moment that I was in water. I knew that this was my calling and the only way from here is up. My father's transfer to Mumbai in 2017 was a blessing. That was when I really started to step up my game. I got a coach and started doing practice seriously. A typical day of my life is morning fitness, including endurance and strength. I would reach from school at 02:15 pm and be at the sailing club by 02:45 p.m. My mother would accompany me and remain at the club till I return back to home. My practice would be till 05:30 p.m. I would leave the club after washing and keeping my boats. I would sail with my coach on Saturday and Sunday. He would brief me on my short calls that I had to correct by next week. This routine has continued. Also, now I've added a few more stretching sessions before my class starts. These days due to my 10th standard exams, I am not able to visit the sailing club daily, but when I am close to a Championship, the intensity in training increases. Running, stretching, core exercises and hiking on a bench is done for a longer duration. For the recently concluded nationals, my coach Lieutenant Madhu used to push me to undertake physical training for almost 10 hours daily.

During the time before my Championship, basically two weeks in advance, he started really pushing me to my limits. So he started with less and every day it kept increasing. But every time I came back from sailing, I was immediately in bed (I was that tired). I used to just sleep most of the time in my free time. Whenever I wasn't doing anything, I used to sleep. It was tiring at times, but that actually helped me a lot because during the Championship, I didn't feel any physical strain on my body. I was able to compete at my best. So, it is good to have a coach who can push you to your limits.

**Ms Meera:** There's something to say. Despite whatever you've been through, we have a comment in the chatbox saying 'Full Marks Adhvait'.

Moving on to Tia now. Tia, you have two Masters and extensive research experience. How easy or how difficult do you find maritime research?

**Ms Tiya:** We spoke about how niche this domain is. My first Masters is in Archaeology and the second is in Museology. While pursuing Archaeology, I realised that I'm doing something unconventional because it would take extra effort to make people understand and that's okay. Archaeology is also something that normal people do. It is not as niche as marine archaeology, but it is also not something mainstream as being a doctor or an engineer. So at least I had to be prepared that way. Maritime research, I think, has always fascinated me and it continues to do so. But I think the biggest challenges for me, which of course do remain and will remain further also, are the lack of domain experts in our country and also research material in terms of books, papers etc., because we really have a handful of them. When we compare with the West, right from the inception of marine archaeological studies across the globe, the gap is really a lot. It's not that India has not done good work. It really started with a lot of enthusiasm in India, but somehow it just did not continue. And I think apart from all of this, definitely encouragement and finding likeminded people who want to do something similar in the domain and who are willing to guide you in the right direction (like what Adhvait said to have a coach who really pushes you) is also important to stir your research. So, I think all of these constraints were definitely there, but somehow, I made it to the finish line and I'm happy about that.

**Ms Meera:** We are also very happy hearing about that. Tia, I'm sure we have viewers who could be aspiring marine or maritime archaeologists would want to do something similar. Any particular book that you would like to recommend? Something that you yourself gleaned data from, maybe some papers or something that you could suggest?

**Ms Tiya:** I think when you're talking about studies which have happened in India, Dr Alok Tripathi is a pioneer and he's done a lot of research. So, if people just google Dr Alok Tripathi, they're going to find a lot of material about the different studies that he has undertaken. Also, one of the best repositories is to just go to National Institute of Oceanography (NIO), Goa. Just go to the website, click on the repository, and you'll find all the papers regarding whatever research that they have done throughout the years. Visiting NIO website is great for gathering some data.

**Ms Meera:** That's great. I'm sure that will be helpful. Thank you, Tia.

Moving on to Surg Lt Cdr Swati. I imagine a girl from the Himalayas would probably opt for mountaineering. I know I'm sounding prejudiced, but I would definitely want to know why sailing? Probably because of some inputs from friends or mentors? Or was it just the thrill of it?

**Surg Lt Cdr Swati:** Well, mountaineering is one of the sports that has been on my bucket list for quite a long time. In fact, I got an opportunity also to do it towards the end of 2017. But by that time, I was already with my family so I couldn't do it. But I'm sure I'll be fulfilling this dream of mine. Also, pretty soon I'm really looking forward to that. Regarding my interest towards sailing, it was definitely a thrill of doing something new because as I earlier told, I'm a person who always loves exploring new things, be it at home or outside. So, as I said, I got to know about circumnavigation and that is how it inclined me towards sailing. Why not try different kinds of boats and venture into the sea? So that is how I actually made to sailing and I have sailed on few types of boats like Enterprise class, Laser Radial, Laser Bahia. Also, initially I sailed on J-24 class of boat in which I received gold medal as well.

**Ms Meera:** I'm going to share a few pictures of Surg Lt Cdr Swati at her sailing best and she could throw some light on those pictures (few pictures are shown on the screen).

**Surg Lt Cdr Swati:** This is a J-24 class of boat, which I recently did in Mumbai in the month of September. The next picture you displayed is the Enterprise class of boat. This was also added in INWTC Mumbai recently and I also won a gold medal. I would like to share an experience with you. When I started practicing in 2017, I was practicing on Laser Radial. That's a small boat and only one person sails that boat. I was not well versed with it, so sometimes what used to happen is that I have taken the boat into the sea, and the boat is on me. But still, I was not scared at all because I know I'm with my life jacket as our master athlete Adhvait said that a life jacket is your saviour. You should not venture into the Sea without putting on your life jacket. So that was a different kind of experience.

**Ms Meera:** That's heartening to hear because you're talking about a very challenging sport here. You're getting injured and still you admire it. We want to hear more. What has the sport taught you? But we'll come to that later.

Pratekk, Let's talk about "Flight of Fantasy", your award-winning art that was exhibited at Jehangir Art Gallery and yes, sold to the rightful owner. What is it about and how did that all transpire?

**Mr Pratekk:** The painting displayed on the screen is an acrylic on canvas, it is a painting of Switzerland. I used a photograph as a reference. This painting has a size of 18 inches X 24 inches. This has a very interesting and unique story behind it. I submitted this photograph to the Bombay Art Society for the annual art exhibition in February 2012 and I forgot about it. Then one day I got a call from my art teacher who informed me that it had been selected. He was over the moon and so was I. Then I travelled to Mumbai with a friend and submitted this painting. Now on the last day of this exhibition, it was still unsold, so I had made preparations to transport it back to Pune. However, the office manager of the Bombay Art Society asked me to wait for some time. I was hanging around out there. Then later on I saw a gentleman staring at it. So I went up to him, and described it. Finally, he bought it at a little higher price than the minimum that I had quoted.

**Ms Meera:** Brilliant. So it seems that an artist has to be patient, has to show perseverance and needs to be a good negotiator too. That's great. Now a question for you, Adhvait. You have participated in championships and there are so many things to learn. Any particular event that you remember would be your most memorable or it could be most challenging?

**Master Adhvait:** To be frank, I carry fond memories of every sailing experience. They have really made me learn more and more about sailing. I have also made new friends. There are a few moments of lasting memory that I would still like to share. My performance as a twelve year old rookie at the Nationals in 2018, competing at the top with the best of the sailors almost three years older, was memorable. This was the first time I made an impact among the sailors of my group. This performance also helped me in securing my place in the national squad, which was a matter of great satisfaction at an International Invitational Regatta in Spain where I was the only participant from India. Still, the organising authority hoisted India's National flag and that was a moment of pride. Recently, I represented India at the World Optimist Class Sailing Championship 2021 at Riva del Garda, Italy in July this year. It was a singular honour bestowed upon me that I can never forget. As you know now, I have shifted to a larger boat. Last month I was practicing for the Nationals at Marve. The location has strong tides. While entering the channel, the wind suddenly dropped and my boat drifted and got entangled with the underwater ropes of a mooring buoy. My boat capsized and my sail got damaged. I did not have a sail for the competition. While I had nowhere to go, one of my partners at practice who was not competing got to know and he offered me his sail. What I



want to say here is that the sailing community has a great camaraderie and friendship that lasts lifelong.

**Ms Meera:** Those are some really worthwhile takeaways and I have to say, you're a 15 year old and you are giving us some pearls of wisdom there, and we'll probably hear a little more about your mantra later in the session.

Tia, the next question is directed towards your book, '*Underwater Archeology in India, The Lost Enigma*' which was released on 02 October 2020. Congratulations for that. Tell us about this journey from research to producing a book, what went into the making of it and anything special that you would like to share about it.

**Ms Tiya:** It has actually been a very interesting journey because I was actually working as a documentation assistant on a digitisation project in Deccan College at Pune when I had this chance to encounter with Dr Arnab Das, the Director of Maritime Research Centre (MRC), Pune. He proposed this idea of research in Underwater Archaeology and I was actually sceptical because I thought that I'll have to learn how to swim. I did not know how to swim and I did not even know someone who had done something like that. But then it was definitely something very interesting and new. So, I thought okay, why not? The initial arrangement, the initial contract between me and MRC was only for six months where I was supposed to figure out potential areas of research in the domain and come up with some good interesting papers. But as we got more into the research, Dr Das and I thought that this has so much of potential. It is so interesting and right now not much is being done about it. So how do we take it ahead? And right then, IMF Pune was very kind to award me with a Fellowship of a year to expand my research and write the book, because they also agreed with me that this knowledge needs to go out in the public domain in the form of a book so that more people are aware about it and more students can also possibly take help from and also get inspired to research in the domain. Like I said, because of the paucity of material and relevant domain experts, it was pretty challenging. I think we all have our highs and lows, but it's been a great learning experience and it has been so enriching. I've met so many people now I have great contacts and a lot of people motivated me. I think there's no turning back. It definitely happened because of the good. About the Lost Enigma, this is my view, so I don't want anyone else to get offended by it. We also need to understand that there are actually a lot of constraints involved in researching, primarily when you're talking about underwater archaeology and nautical archaeology. There are a lot of resources, diving equipment, and hence it's not something easy to do. But though we are in a stagnant state, we have a lot of potential and we also have this vast amount of maritime heritage. So, in my eyes, I thought it is something which is lost, but it's definitely enigmatic as well.

**Ms Meera:** Yeah actually, I can't help thinking of the animation movie called '*The Lost Atlantis*'. Maybe we'll see something more entertaining coming from you, but we'll talk about that. But tell us about any experience from your archaeological research, some trip underwater or beyond that was particularly memorable. I have some pictures with me, but of course, you could share your experiences and in the similar vein, I'm going to share these pictures (few pictures are shown on the screen).

**Ms Tiya:** I think there are some things which are really etched in my memory because of my field in archaeology and also diving. I think some of the most important things that I've learned is to conquer your fear when you're on your field visits. I used to be creeped out by insects, snakes, etc. I would like to share this interesting experience in my first exhibition. I was there and it was my birthday. I was just sitting on the bed and my feet were dangling and we didn't have connections and no electricity. Somehow, I was saving up the battery to talk to my family and relatives because it was my birthday and I was just happily talking and telling them. I saw two to three scorpions

crawling very close to my feet. That very moment it made me actually appreciate nature more and also get over that fear that if we don't get in their way, they're not going to harm us. So much of that learning came from these visits. Also, when diving, I was underwater, I just looked around and there was just water everywhere with marine life. It just made me feel really tiny in this vast nature force. But it also made me feel that a small existence can be made significant, if you really can carve out a niche for yourself. If you're passionate about something, if you have that drive, you can do something and make that thing matter, your existence matters. So, I think these are some of the things that have passed on because of my experiences in archaeology and writing.

**Ms Meera:** That was pretty deep and I know from where that comes, your research aptitude, of course, years of experience in research, working with so many organisations and your passion to do or to make a difference to the maritime domain. Great Tia, we'll hear more from you.

Coming to you Lt Cdr Swati, the pandemic was particularly taxing for doctors across the world. The medical fraternity within the Indian Navy was no exception. And to say the least, they have braved the belly of the beast where quiet was not always peace and yet you somehow managed to fulfil your duties and pursue your passion and emerging triumphant no less. So please tell us how you navigated through these different roles. You trained, you practiced and participated in one event. So, take us through this transition from one role to the other.

**Surg Lt Cdr Swati:** Before answering this question, I'll do a little retrospection. In 2018, I moved from Vizag to Mumbai. At that time, I just delivered a baby girl and I was on maternity leave. So I had to come back to my form and back to my shape. After around two to three months, I started gym and diet process. So, I was back in shape in another seven to eight months. In 2018 and 2019, I couldn't do much because of my baby because I had to fulfil my motherhood duty as well. And, in the beginning of 2020 the COVID pandemic happened. So all the adventure activities were actually put on hold by the Navy which recommenced only in 2021 after the second wave subsided. In the last one year, I was actually preparing for my post-graduation entrance exam. I was totally dedicated towards that. Then during the pandemic time, I was not getting much time because I was made to go to INHS Dhanvantari which was a kind of joint venture by the Central Government and defence forces. Hence, I went to Ahmedabad and I was posted there in the ICU for one month. I finished off that duty and then focused on my studies. I used to do 24 hours duty on every alternate day once my exam got over. So, I thought now I should give myself a break and start doing what I love the most. Then suddenly one day, I got to know that the Sailing Championship was coming again and I decided to volunteer for it. I participated in the Sailing Championship which was held in the month of September in Mumbai. Luckily, I got three medals in that and I'm really looking forward to more adventures in the coming future as well.

One thing I would like to say to younger people: *The Navy is an ocean of opportunities*. The only thing is that you should be really passionate to do something new, to try something new and to grab these opportunities and I can vouch for that. No other organisation will give you such opportunities.

**Ms Meera:** Very well said Swati, I know that you'll be able to navigate these different roles because of cooperation from your peers, your subordinates and your seniors. So, I know what you mean when you say that the Navy provides you with ample opportunities.

**Surg Lt Cdr Swati:** One more thing I would like to highlight here. My husband has got a big, big role in my achievements. He's not a typical stereotypical husband and he is the one who always pushes me to do something new. So even if he couldn't do these things, he pushed me to do them.

**Ms Meera:** Let me remind the viewers that Lt Cdr Swati's husband is also a naval officer.

Now coming to Adhvait, you've been sailing for a few years now. Has sailing affected your personality and your attitude? You might be getting something from your friends, your relatives, the parents of your friends. Tell us about that.

**Master Adhvait:** Sailing isn't just a sport which helps in keeping you physically fit, but it also makes you stronger mentally. Physical strength has its limits, but it is your mental strength that can help you break those limits. Mental strength is something people usually forget. Like I told you before, sailing is a sport that requires you to multitask. You need to be aware of the natural forces around you. Make your own boat move fast. You are thinking and doing many things together, sometimes repeatedly. The twelve races over a period of three to four days means that every sailor has ups and downs over that period. Hence, one develops the confidence to bounce back. Another interesting aspect of sailing is that it is a self-disciplinary sport. That means that if you make a mistake, say your boat touches a Mark, you have to do your penalty on your own. No referee will remind you. After the race for the day in case you feel that a fellow participant has not been self-disciplined, you have the right to protest. A jury hears your case. Sometimes you also hear false allegations of perceived charges. The hearing is like a small courtroom. These peculiarities in this court of sailing have really helped me in the development of my personality. Multitasking is one self-discipline being the next and also the confidence in putting up your side of the story irrespective of the person's stature. A regatta is not over till the last race is over, so it is in your life. If you fail once, you can still bounce back. And last but not least, a sportsman does not pass nor does he fail. One should not be depressed too much nor should celebrate too much. I have lost more races than I have won, so with it comes humility. Sailing shouldn't be seen as a sport that takes up time and distracts you from studying but it should be seen as a sport that empowers your ability to adapt and develop.

**Ms Meera:** After listening to you, I can only say there's always light if we are only brave enough to see it and if we were brave enough to do it. You are truly a prodigy and you are truly an inspiration and we are so proud of you. What you said, it's not just about the race and so many other elements go into it.

Pratekk, next coming over to you, you shared details about your association with the Society of Indian Marine Artists (SIMA) and I would like to ask you that since you are the Secretary there, do you see a growing maritime consciousness among students and the general public through art, or do you think more could be done?

**Mr Pratekk:** Well, the sea has its dazzling and brilliant colours, beautiful fishes, sun drinks and sandy shores, boats and ships. Is it not beautiful? Then how can a landscape artist not fall in love with the sea? This was the reason why I took to painting. Now I'll tell you my history and my Association with SIMA. Around eight to nine years ago, I joined SIMA as I wished to be part of the landscape art group. The category of seascape is part of landscapes and there I met my mentor Cmde Rajan Vir and I started participating in the events and art exhibition. Later on, he invited me to be on the management committee. SIMA invited me to give a talk on my visit to the Art Institute of Chicago in December 2017. My presentation was highly appreciated other than offering me the post of the Secretary, which I accepted. So, I have been a secretary since February 2018. I have conducted many events and annual art exhibitions. In response to the second part of your question, I would like to say - Yes, in maritime organisations, media and fine arts there is a growing maritime consciousness.

**Ms Meera:** Thanks a lot, Pratekk.

Deepshikha, since we're talking about art here, I have a five year old son and he loves the beach. He was recently stung by a jellyfish and after an antihistamine dose just a few hours later, he demanded to be taken back to the beach. He wanted to play with the waves, with the rocks, and explore the shells. So, I know that's the power of the sea on a child. However, how do you encourage marine art among children? Because I know there are challenges.

**Ms Deepshikha:** Sure, ma'am. Every art has challenges and therefore marine art also has. The biggest challenge is to inculcate that culture between the kids who have not visited a beach or a shore. I have a few students who have not visited. As Ms Tia is a scuba diver, she knows what a coral looks like. But if I have to explain the same to a kid, it would be just by pictures or by the help of some animations. So, the challenge that we face is that we have to not only make them understand the value of sea, oceans and rivers in our country, but also the effect of pollution on these things. So, to make them realise that it has to be conserved, it is a water source to us, I make them understand the value of water. And, then with the help of pictures and guidance of other artists, we make them talk to each other and then we come to a picture. We select a picture, either a real-life picture or inspirational picture. Definitely some kind of modification is done to those pictures because kids cannot inherit the same kind of values which a picture has. So, some kind of modifications are done, then the colour scheme is decided and so many things are involved in it. It definitely takes months to get one picture together. So, when it is a group of 10 - 15 children together and each making one different sea scape or depicting sea life, it becomes a challenge to me that they should present the essence of the sea and the prevailing life in the sea. As you said, your son saw a starfish and got excited. So, my kids also do that when I have made one or two pictures. They definitely go beyond that and sometimes I get so many expressions from them to include extra element in the picture, and we definitely include all those and make a picture.

**Ms Meera:** I would love if my son can enrol in your class. I hope that the Management of SIMA is listening to this. We can have something up in Mumbai.

**Ms Deepshikha:** I would like to add here that in SIMA, we have a junior section also. We encourage kids to become members and participate in various activities throughout the year. Me being the head of it, I take special precautions that children literally learn how to conserve water energy in our country. We'll be talking about it more later.

**Ms Meera:** That's great. So you mean to say that, you are also promoting awareness on eco-friendly measures, right? That's wonderful.

Coming back to you Tia, I recall that when I read about you, and this is very fascinating and motivating, you were suffering from *thalassophobia*, that's fear of the ocean. And now you're an advanced level Professional Association of Diving Instructors (PADI) certified diver. This is phenomenal. Can you share this spectacular transition with our viewers because I'm sure that they have similar apprehensions or some other apprehensions in pursuing maritime related careers?

**Ms Tiya:** Actually, good question and I get asked about it a lot. Firstly, I also read a comment, so I would like to give a little bit of clarification as well. Many people say that it's not necessary for you to be a scuba diver to be able to do marine archaeology. It is partly correct if your research area is about a site which is land based or it is about intangible cultural heritage. But apart from that, I think if your research areas are underwater archaeology, nautical archaeology etc., then it is a must for you to be a scuba diver. Plus, it's such a fun thing to do. So why not? My book is based on secondary and tertiary sources. At that time I did not know how to dive. I only learned

swimming while I was writing my book, and when I was in the last stages of writing my book or finishing my book, I actually had that realisation that I'm so interested in Underwater Archaeology, and I don't want this thing to just get over by finishing the book and I want to pursue it further. But for that, I'll have to get over my fear and I'll have to learn to dive. Once the book was released last year in October, I spoke to my parents about it. I'll also use this platform to thank three people who are actually solely responsible for this. So, I was having a conversation and my parents said that okay, if you want to do it, you like it, then why not? You've always done unconventional things (I've always been someone out of the box) and so just go for it. Thirdly, my dear friend Col Anand Swarup (Retd) who is also a diver, told me that just go for it. This discussion took place in October and in November, I was in Goa. I was doing my training and also got stung by jellyfish within first five minutes that I was in the water on the very first day. It was really painful, but I did not give up. I thought that now I have to do it and I was instantly in love. After my first session, I thought that this was addictive and I cannot stop this and at the end of my training, when I had that diving license in my hand, I actually realised that apart from the motivation that I got from my parents and my friends, there were so many people who told me, you're afraid of the oceans and the seas and that you're not a great swimmer. How are you going to go diving? But then I converted all of that into positive affirmations and once I finished it, I thought that's okay.

If I can do it, anyone can do it. I think I would like to give this message to everyone that if you really want to do something, any advanced sport, be it maritime studies or scuba diving or sailing, just go for it. Of course, you will have inhibitions and people will try to infirm you. I don't think they try to pull you down, but it's their half knowledge. Like Adhvait, he has association with the seas and the backwaters, whereas people like me who are born in the mainland, and they're always in the plain areas. They have no connection to the sea, even the family side, like nobody likes to ever encourage you to take up swimming as a sport. They'll say, go learn dancing. So, if you have any such passion and if it gives you an adrenaline rush, just go for it. I mean, that's what I did and I'm so happy that I actually did it. It's a great experience.

**Ms Meera:** Thank you, Tia. I think you summed it up and I can't help thinking of Plato. I have a political science background. Plato said that the sea cures all ailments of a man. I heard all of you, you all have had your challenges, but it seems the sea has cured you of all these ailments, all the impediments and challenges that you face. So it looks like we have certainly run out of time and looking at the comments, those are very encouraging for all of us, and there are comments for Pratekk asking him as to when the next SIMA exhibition in Pune will be? Swati, everybody expects you to do a solo type of navigation and more. I guess we did very well and thank you very much. We've covered up many questions. You shared your stories and experiences. With that we come to the end of this special session with the young achievers. We had an eclectic mix of panelists for this session. Recognising their dedication, ambition and contribution to maritime, this session is an acknowledgement of their achievements and most importantly to foster maritime curiosity in young minds. One can join the Navy, Merchant Navy or the shipping industry, one can take up diving or sailing as a hobby, one can nurture the love of the seas through art, literature or the research. At the beginning of the session, Cmde Kesnur discussed the story behind the choice of "maritime soft power" as the key theme for this year's webinar. With my political science background, I can't help but revisit the contested concept of Power in International Relations before presenting my closing remarks.

Today as we are discussing maritime soft power, we must remember that the concept of power has been a contested one across disciplines. It is slightly oxymoronic resonance in the traditional discourse of my field and might make people think again about their assumptions when they speak of power. When we think of the concept of Power in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, we need to get away from the idea that power is always a zero-sum – my gain is your loss and vice versa. Power

can be a positive sum too, where your gain can be my gain which was the impassioned plea made by Nye in his books. That is precisely what we should aim to comprehend when we talk of maritime soft power.

The most important and critical narrative of power is that of transforming societies for better. Hence, maritime soft power is about tackling issues social, cultural, economic, political and even environmental. This session has made it abundantly clear about the vibrant facets of maritime through sport, hobby, research and art and clearly, they are making a difference to the lives of people - inspiring young minds, disseminating maritime knowledge through research, exploring the unexplored maritime, encouraging and promoting awareness. There are many bright kids and youngsters curious about different aspects of the maritime domain. From pursuing a maritime hobby to understanding the wealth and depth of the maritime realm or even aiming to join maritime profession, young minds need to be an integral part of the maritime narrative. Even if we help a handful of these bright kids foster maritime curiosity and discover maritime consciousness, we would've given back something significant to maritime India.

The young, dashing and dynamic achievers who have, in my opinion, a good amount of Vitamin 'Sea' in them have certainly made an impact on the people around them, and after today's discourse, they have helped widen the understanding of maritime. Adhvait has shown us how at a tender age, he developed a love for seas and sailing. It is said that in youth we learn, in age we understand. But Adhvait here proved it wrong. His thoughts are articulate, mature and he seems to be learning and understanding very well the joys and challenges of his passion. It is quite commendable for him to walk the tightrope, studying for his X<sup>th</sup> boards while keeping sight of his maritime strengths. He has truly embarked on a great adventure through this challenging hobby, however it is heartening to see how he multitasks and keeps up a brave face. I can't help admiring Adhvait for his disciplined and productive regimen at an age where one can be easily distracted, due to the overexposure to social media leading them astray in many cases. And the yachting sensation credits sailing for helping him be a responsible and mindful teenager.

Tia's research chronicles were thrilling, to say the least, what surprised me is her lone ranger attitude! Academic proficiency, rigour of research and most importantly personal fears were all overcome by this archaeologist cum historian cum diver. The research potential in the maritime domain is tremendous. What has been published and projected as the maritime discourse is often maritime hard power and that is just the tip of the iceberg. The extant research and scholarship on Indian maritime soft power is indeed scanty - Blue economy, marine ecosystem, underwater domain awareness, Maritime history and literature. And Tia did talk about her challenges while exploring and researching for her book.

Lt Cdr Swati was another surprise package like Tia, so many roles rolled into one. And she is doing justice to them all. I think it was humbling to see you navigate each role with a sense of duty and determination. And, I want the viewers to know that the Indian Armed Forces, they do that to you. Your journey from the mountains to the seas will inspire the young minds to not be limited by environment, upbringing, or even gender. I will wish you more laurels ahead.

Pratekk and Deepshikha brought a kind of calmness and restraint into our otherwise high on adrenaline session. I imagine art does that to you. Art is that common denominator which enables artists from different spheres of life, to come together and display their creative work. A sense of tranquility and composure prevailed when we discussed marine art and its details. But I guess that's how one feels when at sea it lets you retrospect, introspect and contemplate the future. Marine art is a splendid way to reflect on one's maritime linkage and by deconstructing his seascapes for us, Pratekk simplified 'abstract art'. Deepshikha, it's creditable that you have quite a challenging job at hand teaching art to students but what is commendable is your approach to it. Marine art among

children is creativity at its best and you encourage them to be eco-friendly, and most importantly remind them to reflect on their actions towards the seas and other water bodies.

The session has also raised some pertinent questions about: -

- 1) Modalities and Efficacy of dissemination of maritime research.
- 2) Possibility of building a market for Maritime Art to ensure that Marine Art flourishes and prospers in India.
- 3) About sailing and yachting, how to make popular these sports in schools and tap into the rural schools, project and promote local talents.

Adhvait, Lt Cdr Swati, Tia, Pratekk and Deepshikha have taught us that oaks grow strong in contrary winds and diamonds are made under pressure and certainly not overnight.

A warm thanks to all the panelists here, Maritime Achievers in diverse ways and that in a way also suggests the nature and scope of maritime. From hobby to passion, from passion to glory, from glory to reflection and research. These achievers braved and endured many challenges yet today have contributed in their own different ways to maritime consciousness. Maritime India needs young visionary enthusiasts - a community that would create, nurture and develop unexplored opportunities in the maritime domain to take the country ahead.

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## **SECTION 4**

### **Panel Discussion: Creating ‘Maritimity’ – Ways, Ends and Means**



## Panel Discussion: Creating 'Maritimity' – Ways, Ends and Means

### Speakers & Domain Expertise

- Moderator, Cmde G Prakash (Retd), Distinguished Senior Fellow, Defence Research and Studies (DRAS)
- Rear Admiral RJ Nadkarni (Retd), Council Member, IMF
- Ms Richa Pant, Documentary Filmmaker
- Comdt Kulpreet Yadav (Retd), Retired Coast Guard Officer and Military Author
- Mr Vishnu Som, Senior Journalist and Executive Editor, NDTV

**Ms Meera Bhadre (Host):** I hope the audience is ready for some more action because we now come to the concluding session for the day which is on 'Creating 'Maritimity' – Ways, Ends and Means'. It will be moderated by Cmde G Prakash, NM (Retd). Cmde Prakash has had a long illustrious career in the Indian Navy. He was awarded the Nao Sena Medal for his distinguished service in 2018. With his vast experience, he has been delivering lectures for over fifteen years at various Armed Forces institutions offering professional military education. Post retirement, he published a book of short stories and continues to contribute to services and civil publications. He has been mentoring select students of Government Colleges in Kerala, through an initiative called '*Walk With a Scholar*'. We'll wait for Cmde Prakash, but we are very excited to see him commence and moderate the concluding session. Thank you, Sir.

**Cmde Srikant Kesnur:** I would like to welcome an eminent panelist again and I think while we await Cmde Prakash and Comdt Kulpreet, I just like to tell those who are here, Admiral Nadkarni, Mr Vishnu Som and ma'am Richa Pant, that this is a perfect build up. I don't know if you've been watching the previous sessions, but we had a wonderful inaugural session and two great technical sessions and one special session for the young adults. And, it's all building up very beautifully to this theme because I think there is a general agreement that one way to create maritime soft power is to ensure that it has greater resonance amongst the people and public and I think we have some great practitioners here. We've got a person who has been active in the field of television for many years, well known face, Mr Vishnu, Richa, you've been doing lots of wonderful documentaries about the armed forces and the Navy, you know where to pitch the ball, as they say. Kulpreet Yadav is a retired Coast Guard officer who has written books, but he's written about the Battle of Rezang la. Of course, we are inspired by Rezang la, but I am keen to ask him if you would like to write about maritime themes too. And, he's written novels, but none of them with the maritime theme and we got Admiral Nadkarni, who was wearing several hats. I mean, he had a long session in the Navy, training in maritime history as a speaker, lots of wonderful appointments and operations and several other staff verticals and now he's playing a very important role in the Indian Maritime Foundation as a Council member. So we got him to give us the perspective, both from the services as he saw it and now from the think tanks as he sees it. How do think tanks play a very important role in all of these? So I think we've got some wonderful deliberations and discussions coming up.

Meanwhile, so as to not sort of, we have lots of people watching on YouTube. Before Cmde G. Prakash joins, may I request our three panelists who are here to make your initial comments for a couple of minutes - I'll begin with Admiral Nadkarni, and then go on to Richa and then come to Vishnu Som. Make your initial comments for about a couple of minutes, two or three minutes about this subject in general and about your views. And till then, we will wait for Cmde G. Prakash and Comdt Kulpreet. Over to you Admiral Nadkarni.

**Rear Admiral RJ Nadkarni:** Thank you Srikant for giving me this opportunity to take part in this Webinar and I'm very happy to take part and share my views. Also, it's a little disadvantage because I think this is the last technical session of this webinar. But the three sessions, I think which have preceded this, have been so stimulating that I can see on YouTube that the attendance is still quite high, though perhaps it's a little lower than what I'm viewing it.

**Cmde Srikant:** Sorry, allow me to interrupt you, Admiral Nadkarni. Cmde Prakash has just joined. Good afternoon Cmde Prakash, I began in your absence, made brief introductions of all our eminent panelists as well as yourself. We've introduced you and I've asked all the panelists to begin with a couple of minutes of initial comments beginning with Admiral Nadkarni and he just started so you can take it over from here and I'll be happy to recede into the background, thank you.

**Cmde G Prakash (Retd) (Moderator):** Good afternoon, everyone and apologies, in Kerala, we do things differently. I am very glad to be back at this Navy - IMF webinar on maritime soft power. On behalf of our panelists, I thank everybody for this opportunity. It's great to see maritime affairs figuring increasingly in our discussions. It is not easy to get the feeling into people's blood. In 2007, fourteen years ago when I was doing the higher command course (one year when we go away from our wives), we stayed at Karanja and had the Army and the Air Force officers too with us. We had a Colonel from my course, who, after listening to naval lectures for one full year, breathing Navy air, eating Navy food and drinking Navy water, at the end of the course asked me as to what we actually do in the Navy. It is very difficult to explain to someone what we do in the Navy because what is not seen is difficult to believe. During the last part of my 36 years in the Navy, I have heard and bothered about the very basic ideas of increasing awareness of the sea, my awareness as well as the awareness of those who make the mistake of listening to me. But thinking about talking of deeper things like maritime consciousness came only when I reached higher ranks. Now two years into the retirement, it's gotten deeper and more remote with maritimity.

Maritimity is sublime like anthropology. Maritimity is the relationship of different entities like land, sea and the people who use it. Maritimity gets combined with the coastal environment, coastal society and their practices which emanate from these two. But the word 'coastal' is very special for India because of India's engagement to the world by way of trade and other political engagements of our two millennia. Our navigable Rivers have reached deep into the hinterland and therefore hundreds of river ports and landing points as well as numerous ports of the coast have all actually made the saving for maritimity to really emerge. If it happened, did it wither away? Or does it look unseen somewhere, unnoticed in the way we think we talk and we act? Maritimity of it is how much the seas figure in the bloodstream of those on land and it is a manifestation of past physical engagement, could be tangible and intangible, not translated to action. It is unlike maritime consciousness which is desirable among people at large but essential among policymakers and statesmen.

Maritime consciousness can be engineered and through it maritimity can develop over time. So, if maritimity exists, it would be tapped to speed up the creation of maritime consciousness. It's right to say that maritimity and maritime consciousness actually feed off each other to bring out awareness about the oceans. Amongst the larger public of India, it is difficult to bring out awareness to its wider public. Hence, it's easier in little Islands. I have been to an island nation so dependent on imports that if ships get delayed due to bad weather, shops run out of essentials. I have been reading '*Dawn*' for 15 years and from the year 2000, every day in *Dawn* they would publish ships' arrivals with crude oil and products in port market because they were facing up to 18 hours of

blackouts in those days, and the arrival of the ships was essential to assure the public that they may actually have fuel to fire their factories.

But since such things don't happen in India, it's difficult to bring maritime consciousness and awareness about maritimity because of the size. In a similar vein, we must try. All my panelists have been involved in the sea or matters related to sea in their lives and are perfectly capable of discussing today's theme - *Creating Maritimity: Ways, Ends and Means*. First, I will start closer to my heart and home, the Navy and begin with the panelist belonging to the Navy - Admiral Nadkarni. You know about him and we have been associated for a very long time. In his second last appointment for about two and a half years, when he managed the affairs of Southern Naval Command, I was the head honcho in Kochi. As mentioned before by Cmde Kesnur, Admiral Nadkarni is a man beyond all those things in his biodata and is a man especially involved in deep literature, western music, history and the genuine love of academics. With such an eminent and diverse background, Admiral Nadkarni, what does maritimity mean to you?

**RAdm Nadkarni:** When I saw this program, which came to me for the first time, I was not sure what this term 'Maritimity' actually was because I had not heard it before, which comes to mind these days when one is placed with the unknown, and that is to Google it. And, I saw a number of articles which dealt with maritimity and two definitions in particular came to my attention. The first definition that I came across was of maritimity as the conceptual process whereby the sum of cultural adaptations made by the coastal population becomes improved with meaning. It was a little confusing at first, but the more I read it, I think the more it became clear. And the second definition, which I found is an entity grounded in perceived or imagined shared traits deriving from community relationships with the maritime environment, which I think is clearer to me. If I have to give my own interpretation of maritimity, it is clearly a word that is a combination of more familiar words, or if the first one is certainly maritime, but the second one could be either affinity or identity. Essentially, I feel it defines character, culture, affinity, and entity that the people have developed over a period of time based on the relationship with the maritime environment.

There are a few nations which actually come to mind, of which I think two are more obvious that is the UK and Japan, which (one can say) do possess this maritimity. Both are Island Nations. Both have close linkages to the sea and are dependent on the seas for the trade, commerce as well as livelihoods, and both in the past have had very sizable and very impressive navies that have contributed to the expansion of the empire, though the British empire lasted much longer than the Japanese empire. Sadly, I feel that India despite having a long coastline of more than 7500 km and strategically located island territories on most sea routes as well as being very advantageously located in the centre of the Indian Ocean, does not possess maritimity, except for a few who are dependent on the sea for their livelihood. The majority of Indian citizens have little knowledge or interest in the oceans and seas around us, and I think this has also been brought out by previous speakers during their sessions. Most people understand the importance of the sea for our trade and almost all energy security as also having a significant bearing on our national security.

So, though we are all now talking about petrol and how important it is for us, most of the petrol and the food we use comes from overseas. Also, my perception is that most Indians do not have a sense of history and interest in the preservation of our heritage, and which is why so many of our historical monuments, such as coastal forts, are in the sorry state of neglect. You all know the story of *INS Vikrant* and *INS Viraat*, which the Indian Navy for many years tried hard to convert into maritime museums, but unfortunately had to ultimately send away to the scrapyard because they were just too costly to maintain and it was possible that the steel was corroding so badly that it may well have sunk alongside in Dockyard. If you were to go to beaches in countries which are

considered to have a high degree of maritimity, especially on the weekend, you would find hundreds of people surfing, sailing, jet skiing or participating in any other water sport, which they may find entertaining. However, if one were to go to a beach in India, most of the people would frankly be fully clothed, and a few perhaps gingerly treading water and may be one or two adventure sports, trying to go out a little deeper. But you would find a lot of fresh coconuts or giant wheels, as they call them in our country, merry go rounds and many such other activities. How can we develop this maritimity if we have to? This is also the theme of this particular session and I feel that there are several ways. But since this is my opening, I will just summarise some of them and perhaps discuss this more later.

As I brought out earlier, we have to start with education that is the foundation in any country or anything that the country can or will do, whether it is economic development or the military capability or the science and research and development and so many other things. Maritime history and heritage, as well as the importance of the seas in our economic development and national security, must be an integral part of the syllabus in all the primary school, which also has been reiterated in many of the previous sessions and which I am also reinforcing. Also, there needs to be a similar movement towards getting an interest in marine sports and I'm specially talking about two sports that are *swimming* and *sailing*. In the last session we saw Adhvait on what he has achieved and even in this year's Tokyo Olympics, we had four sailors who went to participate in three classes, two participated in the 49er men's class, one lady participated in the Laser Radial and another man participated in the Laser Standard. But despite that, I'm not sure how many of you actually watch the sailing specifically on TV. They may have watched athletics, shooting, archery or some other sport, but how many of you may have watched sailing? And these sailors did quite well when compared to some of the results that we had in the past.

The next step I feel that needs to be taken is to create awareness and generate interest in maritime activities, which is largely a function of the media, whether it be traditional media such as print or electronic, or present prints of social media, cyber and especially YouTube, which I think is a great medium for spreading this message. And as regards a historical model which as I mentioned earlier, we are suffering from neglect. I think this is the responsibility of both the central and state governments, which have to not only preserve but also restore many of these neglected edifices and make them have proper tourist places which many citizens of our country have a lot of interest in. I would like to end my opening remarks at this stage my opening remarks and look forward to some interesting discussion to follow.

**Cmde G Prakash:** Thank you very much, sir. Few days back, I had spoken to Richa for the first time in my life. It was a great experience as Richa shared with me her past experience of working with NDTV for 10 years and filmmaking where she has made a lot of interesting movies about the Navy. Surely that was covered in the introduction by Cmde Kesnur. Richa, I will straight away come to your question. So, having covered a lot of stories about life at sea and human experiences, what does *Maritimity* mean to you?

**Ms Richa Pant:** I am a land lubber and I am from Uttarakhand. I am also a land lubber because of the army background that runs largely in my family. What does maritimity mean to me? Very little. I am not a person who will be doing any activities in regards to oceans or seas. Considering our history, I believe that India has a very uneasy relationship with waters even if India is surrounded by the oceans from three sides. And, how did it all change for me? I started working on one documentary on the Indian Naval Academy for National Geographic Channel. And what's interesting while doing that was to see how the first boys and girls out there struggle most with swimming as most of them can't swim. When we go to seas, apart from not being equipped with swimming, our clothing doesn't work for this, actually putting us through discomfort. After this, I

worked towards a four-part series for Discovery Channel on *Submariners and What it takes to be a Submariner*. But what was changing for me was meeting this wonderful man, a rare breed of men - Admiral Awati, who was the main hand behind *Tarini* and an encouraging hand behind making the circumnavigation of women around the world and seeing these women do it and to be able to understand what it means when sea and we come together, plus the magic with the wind and the kind of adventure that it takes. That is what my idea really constituted, centring around the sea at that time.

I think we are having this comprehensive conversation around maritimity at a very good time, 2021. Even if we did not win anything, participating at the Olympics, reaching at that level was something of great significance to India's maritimity. 2021 was also the year where Padma Award was given to *Ali Manikfan*, the old man from Lakshadweep, a sailor with paramount knowledge of sailing, boats, ropes and deeply knowing seas and water. 2021 was also the year where World's biggest traffic jam was created at the Suez Canal, which made us realise how important seas are for trade and how important it is for us. So, what are my points that I want to make and I want to say that the Navy has a lot of stories to tell? The Navy for a long time has been a silent service. If it wants to dominate the narrative, it has to be open to the media, as they have stories to showcase for you and heroes representing the Navy.

I grew up with a mother who would love telling stories and I grew up maybe having to be open to telling such fascinating stories. These stories are not out there on the public platform. The Navy, every year goes out to conduct rescue operations, as in 2021, *Cyclone Tauktae* came where hundreds of people were rescued by the Indian Navy. But I think what needs to be done is that the Navy has to be open to tell its heroic stories. There is a time to tell the story - old story and new stories. This year the Indian Air Force asked us to tell them they wanted to talk about their role in the 1971 war. We've been working with them for the last six months, and I wanted to tell the naval story also. We reached out to the Navy about six months ago because I knew that the museum was supposed to be built. I also saw the videos of INS Viraat taking off at that time and the great role it played in the liberation of Bangladesh, but the Navy wasn't interested. There is a story we need to dominate the narrative. We need to share your version with the people that you can, whether there are people like Vishnu Som, people like me and whether the people in print. 2021 is the wake-up year. After bringing up this conversation, let's see where this takes us and hopefully, we will be telling you that it is created out in the ocean, stories of naval strategy, whether it's stories of humanitarian rescues, whether it's stories of Somali pirates, there are loads of stories to tell, if you want to make a strategic difference, if you want to be able to talk about the third carrier, the Indian Navy has to create a foray where it can share its stories and experiences within the media. The new generation has to wake up and think about what they want to know and how to tell these experiences, that is where I play a key role.

**Cmde G Prakash:** Thank you, Richa. Now next panel is someone I'm truly envious of because he is a strange man from Haryana, was born in Chennai, graduated in science, post graduated in mass media and communications, and then after two degrees from an IIM, joins the Coast Guard, spends 23 years there and checks all that and withdraws up north to start writing books because he thought that was a calling. I am jealous of him because I could not pull myself off like that with any inner calling. And, he did not have it easy. In that tough life of his, he has converted into motivational lectures and some relatable ones are there on the internet for everyone to see. So here we have Comdt Kulpreet Yadav (Retd), who is about to be an actor and his latest book, *'The Battle of the Rezang La'* has just been published and he has now gone right from the seas to the mountains. Kulpreet, great to have you on the panel. With all your background, what does Maritimity mean to you?

**Commandant Kulpreet Yadav (Retd):** Thank you, sir. Thank you very much. First of all, it is such a pleasure to be speaking alongside these outstanding participants and speakers. I'm really very excited and I've been looking forward to this particular webinar. As far as this question is concerned (Maritimity), just as Admiral Nadkarni was speaking earlier, I heard about this term just now when this invite came, and since then, of course, I've spent some time understanding and deconstructing and interpreting maritimity versus maritime consciousness. If I can break it down and make it very simple (I may not be hundred percent right), I think maritimity basically means taking action and maritime consciousness means being aware. So, when it comes to taking action, I personally believe that all the stakeholders, whether it's the Navy or it's the Coast Guard or the Merchant Navy or the Maritime branches of the Police or the Customs, state police, local fishing communities, shipyards, etc., all these have to cohesively work together and improve the situation in the maritime waters. So, these are my initial thoughts. I would also like to say that yes, I've spent 23 years in the Coast Guard. I'm very fortunate to have been a part of it. And also, I have had wonderful friends in the Coast Guard and did some great missions, great operations, not just with the Coast Guard but also with the Indian Navy and the Indian Air Force, to a small extent with Indian Army and whatever I have become today and I'm trying to become, I think the foundation of that was actually laid down while I wore the white uniform. So, these are my initial thoughts and I look forward to having a fruitful conversation on this. Thank you.

**Cmde G Prakash:** My next panelist needs no introduction. You can see him everywhere you go, left, right or centre. You'll find him on one of my most favourite channels, NDTV. I remember 2006 when I was commanding INS Tarangini in the Western Fleet, he had taken a ride on a Sea Harrier, and I remember his interviews then and his stories. Later when the decommissioning happened, I remember him interviewing people - the Commanding Officers and the people who have served onboard earlier and thereafter. I also remember last year his last effort to save INS Viraat from being scrapped and being made. But surely the government of India would have taken a decision on that anyway. And he's been embedded in a lot of wars, of military action, even earthquakes and that's one experience. Vishnu considering the past experience you had with the sea, what is Maritimity according to you?

**Mr Vishnu Som:** Understanding our maritime heritage or our maritime traditions has always been something that has interested me greatly. I've actually tracked the Indian Navy for more than 25 years now, and the experiences which I have had with the Indian Navy have enabled me to actually understand what exactly the force does. This is particularly important in a dynamically changing strategic environment. But in terms of preserving the sense of maritime heritage or naval heritage, it is essential to develop the soft element of our naval traditions by trying to establish these credentials and inform people at large of this history. Have we done that well enough? The simple answer is absolutely No.

I've always been a passionate advocate of Aircraft Carriers. I believe the future of the Indian Navy in this part of the world lies partly, to a large extent, on having a large Aircraft Carrier fleet. I've had the incredible opportunity, courtesy Admiral Arun Prakash and some others before him as well, to get a firsthand experience of INS Viraat itself and I was actually fortunate enough to get a sortie on INS Viraat, certainly the only journalist and perhaps one of the few civilians anywhere in the world to get an opportunity to fly on a Sea Harrier, that too, off the deck of the INS Viraat. It was an incredible opportunity, and it enabled me to get a firsthand perspective on where aircraft carrier operations actually are and the potential thereof. It was nothing but a sense of extreme sadness that I had to report the news of INS Viraat literally being killed, being broken up by a ship breaker in Alang and it struck me that we as a nation and this government or previous governments have done nothing to actually try hard enough to save her. And, what I thought I would speak about today are the 11<sup>th</sup> hour plans which actually fell through and how we could have saved INS Viraat



and how it wouldn't have cost a cent to the centre because the plans, which were actually afoot, were very pragmatic. And, so in a two-minute or three-minute summary of what the situation is or was as far as INS Viraat was concerned, she was decommissioned in 2017. There was a plan to try and convert her into a maritime museum, adventure centre, etc. off the coast of Mumbai that didn't work. The cost was too high and the state government abandoned that plan. The government decided that she needed to be auctioned because they felt that our Hull would give away sooner than later. So, there was an online auction in July 2020. She was procured by the Shri Ram ship breakers at Alang for a cost of 38.5 crores. And, here's where it gets really interesting. At the 11th hour, a company called Envitech, working alongside the government, came up with very serious plans to take the ship after refurbishing her, parking her off the coast of Goa and transforming her into a living Museum of the heritage of the Indian Navy over the last several decades.

They got into an agreement with the Shriram ship breakers in Alang who actually agreed and the amount they agreed on was 100 crores. Remember, the Shriram Group bought the ship for 35 crores. But the Shriram Group came back to Envitech and said that there was a problem. Unless you get a no objection certificate from the government, we cannot sell this to you and that no objection certificate never arrived. Envitech as a group went from pillar to post in the Defence Ministry. They were not given meetings with the Defence Minister at a time when they sought, there was no progress over there of the files at all. They ultimately had to go to the High Court and then to the Supreme Court as well. Throughout this entire period, I made a personal effort in getting through to the Shriram group and I told them that look, the matter is now before the High Court and later the Supreme Court. So, don't break the ship. But after initially waiting for a short period of time, they felt that they couldn't delay it any further. So justifiably they started breaking the ship. It was sad in a sense, because while the matter was being heard in the Supreme Court, this group chose to go ahead and still break the ship.

Nonetheless, at the same time, Aditya Thackrey from the Shiv Sena got in touch with me and we spoke about how the Maharashtra government, a new government at that stage, actually could have done something. The earlier plan under a different government didn't work out and he said that our government in Maharashtra presently were willing to put in a very sizable amount of money to ensure that the ship could be parked off the coast of Mumbai. Then there was another plan as well. This was perhaps the most ambitious plan that if everything else failed in India, then there was a UK based trust named *Hermes Garage Trust*, which, after checking or inspecting the condition of the hull of the ship again involving Envitech and some of the finest naval engineers of this company, many deployed in the Middle East and operating out of the Middle East, would take a decision and if possible, at their own expense, tow INS Viraat back to Liverpool. Remember, INS Viraat had a glorious tradition in the Royal Navy as HMS Hermes winning the British or doing a large amount to win the British the Falkland Islands War in 1982. They actually managed to get into an agreement, admin signed, but they would have to park Viraat at the centre of Liverpool and transform her into a world class Museum, very much like what the Americans have done with their Aircraft Carrier. It is nothing but shocking and sad for me that the want of an NOC is what prevented the ship from being transferred.

This was a proper plan with a detailed engineering plan. There was a financial arrangement which was reached, but without the permission of the government, this could not go on. This never happened without breaking. The pictures were coming to me every two days. A living part of our maritime heritage destroyed for no rhyme or reason - my first comments for today.

**Cmde G Prakash:** Thank you, Vishnu. I would like to bring one point here from literature that Winston Churchill once complained that Royal Naval officers didn't have to read a single book on strategy in their entire career, and they complained that no major work of literature had come out

of the Royal Navy despite their 450 years of being in existence. Was Winston Churchill comment fair to expect people from the Royal Navy to produce literature? But also considering that people who actually experience the sea must shoulder share of the responsibility for spreading the romance around, what do you think? What do you think we have done? And, where do you think the future will be?

**RAdm Nadkarni:** Thank you, Cmde Prakash. Of course, in literature, I think there are two parts to it. The first is non-fiction which is essentially a count of what has happened in the past and in this case specifically with regards to maritime and naval history. And I have not heard this comment of Churchill earlier, but I can tell you that there are innumerable examples of literature which are both fiction as well as non-fiction, which have been produced not only by the British that is the Royal Navy, but also countries such as the US and various other European countries, which have also been made into movies. For example, we have '*Greyhound*' which was written by C.S Forester, and this was in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century about fictitious sea captain called Capt Bonesia. I'm sure that many of you who are watching this would have read the stories. I not only read them, but I read and reread them several times, and they are fascinating books. Actually, they start with the ship of the line, which is when Honzo was the captain, and they go until when at the end they go back to the time that he actually joined the big ship, went ahead and then went back. But I remember reading one of these and in the preface, I think I saw Churchill's comments where he said that I found this admirable. So maybe his remarks were about some other literature. In addition, you all would probably remember about Austin Commander, which is based on the stories of Capt Aubrey Maturin Practico Bryan. In fact, there was a film also, made about him. And then there are more which cover more recent sea incidents, for example '*The Cruel Sea*' by Nicholas Monsarrat.

Similarly, *HMS Victorious* was the first book actually written by McCart Neil and he went on, of course, to write several more. Then the other books which have been written by the Americans, for example *The Caine Mutiny*, the first book which was written by Herman Wouk, and again he went on to write thereafter. There are also a number of nonfiction books, and these are actually sometimes more interesting than fictional books. I recently actually read some books by an American author called James D. Hornfischer, and these are primarily on the Battles for the Pacific campaign. For example, we have a book called '*The Last Stand of the Tin Can Sailors*', which is based on the Battle of Samar as part of the overall Battle of Leyte Gulf, which was the biggest naval engagement in the history. And this was where few American destroyers called the might of the Japanese battleships, which were trying to attack the invasion force which was landing in Philippines at that time, and they were actually successful. They managed to turn back the Japanese fleet. Then you have books written by historians like *Max Hastings*, one of which I can remember is called *Operation Pedestal*, which is when Malta was under siege by the Germans being so close to Sicily and Italy, which actually the Germans had occupied by launching air strikes. The British had to actually send a convoy to replenish Malta, otherwise they would have either starved to death or surrendered. And in the end, finally from the convoy which initially consisted of 22 ships, five ships managed to reach. But the most important thing was that the tanker managed to reach Malta, and that was the reason why the Royal Air Force was able to continue operations flying from Malta and not only defend Malta but also threatened excess efforts in North Africa. So, these are some fascinating stories which I told in books of nonfiction, and these have all been written by British authors. I think many more exist. Also, like I said many of these have been translated into films as well. For example, *The Caine Mutiny* has been made into the film starring Humphrey Bogart. *The Cruel Sea* has been made into a film which stars Jack Hawkins.

Similarly, there's a play 'Caine Mutiny Court Martial' based on the play actually written by *Herman Wouk*, and also probably many of you may know this has been performed in India where Naseeruddin Shah played a leading role. Also, there have been several films on very epic battles,

*The Battle of Midway*, and for example the battle action film *Tora! Tora! Tora!* Then there's a German film, one of the best films on submarine operations called *Das Boot*, which many of you would have seen. So like this, many of these books and films gain a large readership as well as viewership. This also contributes to generating interest among the population of the country in maritime matters, and that is actually the influence due to which people feel that they must join the Navy and serve the nation. Similarly, we have many TV series covering battles and operations.

Coming to the second part of the question, as far as the books about the Indian Navy or about naval history or naval matters or maritime matters are concerned, there are books of nonfiction. For example, you have the *Official History of the Indian Navy*, which in fact is published in a fixed volume, and each volume generally covers a decade, except for the first, which covers only five years which is from 1945 to 1950. But the other books cover a much longer period, and they are also well written. But unfortunately, I think the readership is limited. Initially, this readership was restricted only to certain libraries where these books were distributed. But recently the Indian Navy has in fact put PDF copies of these books on its website, and they can be accessed by anyone from the general public. But maybe not many people know of this. That is why perhaps people may not have even read these books as such. And these give a very realistic and pretty actual account of all the activities that have been undertaken by the Indian Navy right from independence to almost the present day.

Cmde Srikant Kesnur is the author of the next volume of *The Indian Naval History*, which I think will come out in a year or two. Also, there are various biographies written on great Indian leaders of the past. This is unfortunately, only post-independence. We don't have any biographies or many non-fiction books, for example, Kunjali Admirals and Kanhoji Angre who fought under leadership of Balaji Viswanath under Maratha Flag, are little lacking. But there are biographies, there's one on Admiral Ramdas, Admiral Christian and book on Admiral Nanda, *The Man who Bombed Karachi*. Lastly there is one on Admiral Pereira, it was written by Cdr Thomas. And these also are very fascinating to read and give a lot of insights into these great leaders and how they are able to take the Navy to great heights. Then there are books on the 1971 War such as '*We Dared*' by Admiral S.N Kohli, the Flag Officer Commanding-in-Chief Western Naval Command during 1971 war and '*War in the Indian Ocean*' which is written by Cmde M.K Roy, who later on became Vice Admiral and the Director of Naval Intelligence. More recently a book on '*Operation X*' which is written by Capt M.N.R Samant on the core operations undertaken by the Indian Navy during 1971 War. There are many other books like one written on *INS Khukri* written by Maj Gen Ian Cordozo, then there is a book written on *Maritime Strategy* by Rear Admiral Raja Menon.

Unfortunately, I think the problem is that fiction captures the public imagination. Nonfiction, people tend to think of it as being rather dry and not very interesting. So perhaps most people don't even attempt to read nonfiction even though, they're actually superior to many fiction books. I think there is a possible need to write about not only recent naval leaders, but also about the historic naval leaders. There are books actually, which have been written by some people on Peshwas or Bajirao and they are largely fictionalised. But the point is that they capture imagination and that imagination thereafter generates interest, which makes people take up these professions whenever they grow up and want to join whichever service they want to join. I think there is a need to write more of fiction.

Coming to movies, now that I mentioned books about the Indian Navy, as far as Indian Naval films are concerned there are very few and there are more on Indian Army and Indian Air Force. There is one film made on *PNS Ghazi* which was largely fictionalised based on Bollywood norms. We have to give them a little bit of sensory license. But I find that there's no movie which has been made on 1971 attack on Karachi. Similarly, no movie has been made on *INS Khukri* even

if there is one book written on it. If such movies are made, they can overall significantly contribute to maritime art and culture, thank you.

**Cmde G Prakash:** Thank you, Sir. Definitely, we need much more fiction and we are lucky to have a lot of Malayalam fiction written by people who have been at sea. Now coming over to you Richa, you dealt with the Tarini ladies closely and they came from different parts of India and from different backgrounds. Did you find any evidence of lingering maritimity in them? What do you attribute their success to?

**Ms Richa:** It's interesting that of the six young women from different parts of the country, only one came from a location which was close to the sea. Swati was the only one who lived in the surroundings and environment of the sea. Otherwise, they were all people who had grown up far away from the oceans. However, I think before they left, we started meeting with them (before they sailed with Tarini). We went around the organisation and I went to different channels asking to document this, the reaction was like 'women on the boat? No guns, No action? However, because I was fascinated because we worked with the Tarini girls and we put Go Pros on the camera. We talked about basic shooting and eventually at the end of the journey, nine months later, we did come out with a documentary which has done very well on the National Geographic. The big things don't happen because every day small things don't get done. You are not in the public consciousness on a regular basis and somebody within the Navy has to be thinking about that – 'What is our storm? How are we coming out?' When the Army is out in the North East, they're engaging with locals and funding the local football matches to engage with the local population. What are we doing? How do we engage with the people who engage with the water / sea in a limited way? We have wonderful clubs that the Indian Navy runs which are not really accessible to everybody out there. And is there a greater thinking which is happening? How do you encourage a whole lot of youngsters to get into water sports? It's very interesting that the national sailing school does this in a country that is actually no closer to the sea. It runs out of Bhopal on the big Lake of Bhopal and because of the Tarani girls, I got fascinated. The Tarini girls infused me with great passion and enthusiasm that I wanted my daughter to have an experience of sailing. But I had to go to Bhopal so that she can figure out what it means to feel to be on a little boat and use a sail to go out.

So, I think a lot needs to be done in terms of dominating the storytelling. Yes, there are very few fiction films which have been made and fiction does take liberty with storytelling. But I agree with Admiral Nadkarni that you have to carefully give creative license. But there are a whole lot of other stories which have to be done at the moment. I wanted to tell the story of the *MARCOS*. It's a file which I was building three years ago and it hasn't gone out anywhere. There are lovely stories that the Army allows us to do about little operations which have already happened. The Navy decides to keep silent on it. For example, just take the case of Pulwama, everybody afterwards spoke about what the Army was doing and what was happening post Pulwama. But what we were not told about was how INS Vikramaditya sailed and how all the ships spread around her prevented commercial ships from entering Karachi and what it means to blockade Karachi. *MARCOS* are currently working at so many places, my cousins who are posted there tell me. But these stories are not coming out and the Navy has to speak up for itself to create romance, drama. There is enough magic. And if you tell me a tale, it might create a space within the common people within India, for more people to join the Navy. But also, decision makers - why should a file not be signed? Why should it take for the lack of a signature? That's awful. And it must never, ever happen again. But to be able to do that, there has to be continuity in storytelling to create maritimity from media to the larger population of India.

**Cmde G Prakash:** Thank you, Richa. Now coming to you Kulpreet, you've spent 23 years on the border, you have written romance, crime and even back in the mountains, but nothing as of yet on sea. Is there something on it that we're going to see in the future?

**Comdt Kulpreet:** I was expecting this question. Yes, 23 years at the Coast Guard and the experience that I was speaking about in my introductory notes. Why haven't I chosen to write a book on the waters is perhaps because I think for anybody to write a book, it's a very solid commitment. It is something that needs to come from the core of your heart. It has to be something that you really believe in. It has to be something on which, in a way, your life depends on. After leaving my job, I'm someone who's always been very keen and very interested in espionage. So, during my childhood, my college days, even as a service officer, I spent a considerable amount of time reading espionage. But at that time, of course, I was not aware that I'm going to become a writer one day. So, my initial books obviously were on espionage themes. Romance, I wrote just to be very frank and honest with all the people listening, perhaps because I was at that time around 47 or 48 years old and now I am 53, and one day I just mentioned to my wife that I'm going to write a romance book now. To which she said, don't, please don't and I said, why? And she said, for anybody to write a romance book, you should be romantic at heart. So, I took this as a kind of a challenge and I thought, let me try to write a book about human relationships in which actually there is no villain, because more often than not, unless in romance books, it's all about internal conflicts and internal struggles. It's about people, nobody's bad there. And I thought when I started writing that perhaps it would be a chapter, but it ended up turning into a book. And it has become one of my bestselling books.

Anyway, coming back to my latest book, Battle of Rezang La. As you said, I hail from the State of Haryana. My father was in the Indian Air Force and I grew up in different parts of the country. Whenever I used to go on summer vacation to my parents at my village in Haryana, everybody used to talk about these Rezang La Warriors, because out of these 120 people, rather all 120 people, they came from South Haryana and two of them were related to me and women used to sing songs (their *Raginis*, the local folk songs) of their Valor and I used to come back to school in Chandigarh and tell my friends that this is what happened in the Battle of the Rezang La. They used to look at me and ask me, what is the Battle of Rezang La? Later, when I went to college (Nowrosjee Wadia College), it was a very interesting and very impressive college that continues to exist today. There too they said, what is the Battle of Rezang La and even in the office cabin, with due respect, the libraries which are there and the offices that I interacted with, absolutely, I did not come across a single person who heard of the Battle of Rezang La. Now here I was with two of my relatives who sacrificed their lives and so many people from that part of India, and only they actually ended up becoming heroes for those small villages and I thought, the time has come now I should write this book. So, when I was 49, I was about twelve books old at that time, I started researching about two years ago and finally the book came out. I'm very satisfied because it's been almost one and a half month and it has been published by Penguin House. They believed in this story and the fact is that from 1962 till now nobody has written a book on the Battle of Rezang La. There are at least a dozen books in which the mention of Battle of Rezang La is just about a page or page and a half. So here is the reason for me to write this book.

Whether I will write a book on waters or not, probably I would, because I left the Coast Guard on January 6, 2014 and it's going to be eight years in January. I've been part of some very exciting operations and just like the Navy, the awareness of the Coast Guard is absolutely zero in our country. For example, when I go to my village or I go anywhere in India, apart from Peninsular India, perhaps in the Northern parts when I say I'm from the Coast Guard, they have no clue and they just turn and ask me what the Coast Guard is and then I have no option but to say something like Navy. And then they turn back and say, okay, Indian Navy, then you are a very rich man because people in the Navy are rich because they obviously think the Navy is a Merchant Navy. So yes, apart from the books that we were discussing earlier in this session, the other panellists, I think these are all about World War I and World War II. The recent stories are probably not out there and we have to make books interesting. In nonfiction also there is a category known as creative non-

fiction. You can add dialogues, you can add context, you can make it friendly for younger people. It need not be academically oriented as they are today. Most of the books that I pick up on defence are subjects when I go to the USI Library, whether they are about battles or special operations, they are so academic in nature that even as an officer who's researching, I find them totally, totally not interesting. So, if you have to write books on the Navy and take this term that we're talking about today 'maritimity' forward, I think we have to write interesting books about the Navy. Perhaps I would at some point in time in the future pen down a real story of a lesser-known story.

**Cmde G Prakash:** I also will read it with a lot of interest, and I hope that you actually end up writing some more stories. In addition, if you get a chance, please do read Sandeep Unnithan's '*Operation X*', a real lesser-known story of 1971 that is wonderfully written. Now coming towards you, Vishnu Som, if I turn to you in your 20 years of experience in journalism, how much matters maritime really figure in the media, of what figures, of what nature does it really contribute to enhancing maritime consciousness among the common citizen as well as the policy makers?

**Mr Vishnu:** I think it's a very important question, and I think one needs to look at this from a larger standpoint and the standpoint is that of the relative exposure and education of a large number of people in our country. Are people actually exposed to the high-tech environment that the Navy is all about today? Is it something that is easier to understand than, say, a Jawan with an AK-47 or an INSAS rifle in his hand? We were in Kargil covering the war soldiers charging up, it was so much more dramatic and so much more basic than the sophisticated nature of what naval operations are all about. Every single naval officer is trained as an engineer; the trigger is not the trigger of an AK 47. It's actually a button push in an air-conditioned battle operation centre. That's not necessarily something that people quite easily understand, but it's the sophistication of the nature of what the Navy is all about, how this is very much a high-tech battle. If it were ever to happen upon the Seas, that is something that needs to be introduced at a much more basic level, which I mean school books where you talk not only about India's naval prowess or our maritime history in very simple terms, but also about what the modern Indian Navy is all about.

As far as journalism and the Indian Navy is concerned, quite frankly, nobody is interested in the good news. That's not the way a lot of journalism works. A lot of the mass journalism that you see is if there's an accident, like what we saw on INS Sindhurakshak or some of the other Kilo class, which becomes a huge thing. It becomes a scandal. There is a lot of light and at one level it's not just sensationalism, it's also because it's much easier to understand. But if one were to do a program or a story on the deep integration of sensors onboard the Visakhapatnam class of destroyers, which in my mind is one of the most profound achievements of 'Make in India' in the last several years; the integration of sensors and consoles and bringing together Israeli weapons, Indian sensors, Russian missiles, etc. into one consolidated platform which operates on Ukrainian engines. It requires a great deal of skill and understanding that may not be something that necessarily appeals to people. It's when they see pictures or they see videos of neighbour ships in action or the 'Malabar' type of exercises. That's when things start becoming more interesting.

There is also another very basic problem that people in the electronic media face. There are simply too many of us. Now, if there is a journalist taken aboard INS Vikramaditya, there will be a riot in South Block. When I flew on the Sea Harrier, we (NDTV) were the only people around. It's also been an area of specialisation for me. It's not been an area of specialisation for more than three or four journalists in this country, Sandeep certainly being one of them. We are peers in this sort of profession. So it is very much a difficult battle, more for the Navy than for the Army. But I will say and I want to reemphasise this - the Navy has had some of the brightest and best PRO spokespersons over the last many years, and I say this over the last ten years, they have been absolutely intent in sending the message of the Navy across and they've been absolutely superlative.

In terms of access to information, if I was to call up the Navy and say that I want to do this story, is this correct? The answer would be 'Yes, Vishnu, this is correct and we can help' or 'No, Vishnu, sorry, we can't' or 'Sorry, Vishnu, you cannot ask that because it's classified' but the answer comes within minutes, if not hours. The other services are not as efficient in terms of providing news. And there is a deep hunger, it's a smaller service and a very professional service in trying to get the message across. But there will be challenges. It's never going to be the same as Jawan fighting terrorism in Jammu and Kashmir with an AK-47 in his hand, which is what Richa was talking about. And the story of the MARCOS is much more amenable and easier to understand.

**Cmde G Prakash:** Thank you, Vishnu for the great insights. Before we take on questions from the audience, I have more questions from the other panellists in case we don't get good questions from the audience. Admiral Nadkarni, you have a very special relationship with the Maritime History Society (MHS), and you've been linked to it and now you are part of the Indian Maritime Foundation. How much do you think that the MHS and the Indian Maritime Foundation (IMF) have actually contributed to enhancing maritimity or maritime consciousness?

**RAdm Nadkarni:** Thank you for the question. Well, I think there has been considerable work which has been done by both these organisations in spreading maritime awareness. However, I think in the past they have been restricted by the media by which they were spreading this awareness. Now, as far as the MHS is concerned, of course, we have had Cdr Mohan Narayan, who has been more closely associated with the MHS, or he's been part of the MHS for much longer. I think he would be the right person to shed more light and maybe if he's still watching, he can put a comment or two. MHS was started way back in 1978 by the Rear Admiral Awati, later he went on to become Vice Admiral and the Flag Officer Commanding of the Western Naval Command. MHS in 2021 was in its 43<sup>rd</sup> year. MHS was supported, of course, by my father, Admiral JG Nadkarni, and these two were the driving force for at least 30 years or maybe longer of its existence. But there was one more person that was Professor Arunachalam and he was the one who has written numerous books on various aspects, primarily of navigation of various seafaring communities around coastline, whether it be the Lakshadweep Islanders or the people from Kerala who are occupying present day Kerala, whether it was people from Orissa or people from Tamil Nadu from present day Tamil Nadu. So, a number of books have been written by him and in addition to that, there have been other authors also like Sachin Pendse who have written books, Wing Commander Naravne (father or present Army chief) who also wrote books.

The three key people - Admiral Awati, Admiral JG Nadkarni and Professor Arunachalam have significantly given a strong foundation to MHS as curators. It also has consequential contributions by Cdr Unnithan, Cdr Mohan Narayan and Cmde Odakkal Johnson who has recently retired and now we have Cmde Roby Thomas who has taken over as the Director, MHS. In addition to that, I think presently they have at least seven to eight research associates who do research pertaining to maritime domain. They have to publish papers, they have to present them in various forums, and I think they do marvelous work. MHS has published a number of books, they have conducted lectures, they conduct seminars, workshops, exhibitions, essay competitions as well as visual arts competitions.

As far as the future plans are concerned, I think there are a number of plans which they have in mind, such as digitising all these various artifacts that they possess. Then after they're very much involved in the memorials and museums, most of this awareness has been spread through in-person kind of forums, whether it be a seminar or a lecture. Of course, they bring out compendiums or seminars also, but then the readership will not be all that much. But now, especially, I think the pandemic has helped us considerably because since the pandemic started, most of these interactions

have been held online and then online, you would get a far greater audience than you would get through in-person meetings. So, while in-person meetings do have their advantages, online webinars, for example this one that we are having now, are definitely reaching to a far greater audience than what we possibly would have done if this was conducted in Asvini Auditorium, where only a limited number of people and that too mostly naval officers, merchant navy officers, coast guard officers or, various other stakeholders from the maritime field would have been present. We also have many students, and I'm very heartened to see so many questions being asked by any of these people who probably do not have exposure to the maritime arena.

The other thing which I think will greatly help in spreading awareness is this medium called *YouTube*. I've always found that whenever I require to know about something which I have little knowledge of, the first thing which I do is go to YouTube. As regards the Indian Navy itself, when I searched on YouTube, of course, the Indian Navy has its own YouTube channel, which is mainly, I think, for recruitment. They tell people how to apply for recruitment and how to get through the process and so on like that. But there are very few actually which tell the general public what the Navy is all about, and even the Indian Navy channel. If I would be a little critical, the videos are very well made in terms of visuals, but there is very rarely a commentary on what is actually being explained. So, I think it would be great if that also could be included. And more than that, I think many people if they could somehow get the title that has to gather the attention, and then only I think he/ she will be able to see the video and once he/ she sees the video, whatever is being talked about in the video and shown during the video, both the narrative as well as the visual, should be so appealing to the person watching that he sees through the entire video. I think YouTube would be a very good medium for spreading greater awareness, but it should not be only limited to the webinars. It could even be lectures. It could be any topic which you would like to know about the different types of neighbourhoods, for example, or what the Navy is all about and of course these are talked about by various other experts as such. But generally the next day people will forget about it. So, you have to have a channel which regularly shows us bringing out videos at the rate of maybe twice or thrice a week. That is the best method I feel that can spread awareness.

Coming to the Indian Maritime Foundation (IMF), I think this also is a very old organisation. The President is Cmde Rajan Vir, and I hope that he is watching this. And as mentioned, it has been mainly headquartered in Pune. But of course, we have chapters in Delhi and Chennai. I am a very recent entrant, having just joined about a year back, so probably have seen the President and the Vice President talk about it earlier. I think they would be more comprehensive, but I can speak a little bit about what I know, and it's primary aim is to again, as you mentioned, raise awareness of the ocean and to rekindle maritime consciousness and pride in our people and make them sea minded. In the past, IMF's primary means of getting the message has been through its flagship Journal, which is called, *Seagull*, which is presently, I believe, in the 105<sup>th</sup> edition, which we are very proud of and in fact, it has continued right without a break and has got some excellent articles as well as news about the maritime world written by a number of people from merchant navy and various other organisations. And we have got a viewership in excess of almost 500 subscribers and these 500 subscribers ensure it is disseminated to many other people. So, I'm sure it has got a very large population. But again, this is a traditional medium and if it has to change with the time, then I think even here we have to probably transition at some stage to the digital medium, especially in this case, through YouTube and also social media platforms such as Facebook. The advantage in YouTube, Facebook, Twitter, and so on is that once it is there on YouTube, we can see it anytime, whereas in Facebook or Twitter it is there for one or two days, and thereafter it will scroll down or up and thereafter people may forget it. So, I think on social media, WhatsApp or whatever it is, we have links to YouTube videos which are informative, interesting, and I think they can really spread the message much better than what the traditional means of propagating information has been so far. Thank you.



**Cmde G Prakash:** Thank you, Sir. I would like to pose the next question to you, Richa. We have heard from Vishnu's perspective about how much the maritime figure matters in our own media. You have been with the BBC for ten years and you live abroad. How much of maritime India is heard outside? Because perceptions matter and if maritime India is important for India's stature, then it matters as to how much of maritime India is heard outside. What are your comments?

**Ms Richa:** Thank you for the question, Sir. On the BBC, you will get to hear about the exercises the Indian Navy does. In fact, as the exercises are with Americans, French, they do make international news. Also, I do remember when they were getting there and I'm going to get the name wrong. The Americans have acquired the T-2 Buckeye, the new planes for their armed forces and they're getting the latest technology. But technology for a whole bunch of young audience is very exciting, to be able to play with the kind of radar systems that you have, the kind of technology that you have. I think there are stories there that you need to get out. Every time we have these exercises, you will hear stories about it on the business channels. I'm not so sure how much we hear about it in mainstream media. Yes, we do hear some amount of news on the BBC about the Indian Navy and its activities because I think the world appreciates the Indian Navy's role in policing the waters and what they did to curb the Somali Pirates.

**Cmde G Prakash:** Thank you for this comprehensive answer. So staying with what you mentioned earlier, you did speak about the difficulties of getting permissions to shoot and to do stories that need to be told. But then every story doesn't have to be action like MARCOS and all that. Surely, there are lots of nuanced stories of personal experiences, human life and just not the Navy. There are the Mariners, the Merchant Marine, which have an equally tough time. The sea is equally tough on anyone who sails on the medium and with piracy and dangers like that, I can surely imagine that the mariners do go through difficult things. I have personal friends who told me those stories. Imagine the consternation of fishing boat crew when a merchant ship is coming past them, they can do nothing. So, there are lots of stories and finally, maritime India, it's not just the Navy. There's a whole lot of other people wanting to go to the oceans. Now, don't you think there's a lot of potential in tapping those stories too?

**Ms Richa:** I think you're right. I do understand why permissions get stopped. The Ministry of Defence and the Navy have their own security reasons. I do understand why sometimes it's hard to get permissions because these are defence establishments' permissions. The Navy and the MoD have very good reasons very often not to give access. Besides, there are other coastal positions, whether it's the Merchant Navy or the Coast Guard, these stories have to be told and they are quite magical in that sense, because they have to be told so that you can build a consciousness also. Not simply because there is a purpose to build a consciousness, but because these stories are exciting. With the Border Security Force (BSF), we've done something on what they do when they are patrolling places which are delivering water at Sundarbans for example, and the kind of problems that they have because their waters are not deep and the kind of boats that they have and what do they have to do about it. You talked about audience liking action. That has something to do with MARCOS becoming extremely exciting and also because somehow the MARCOS is far more exciting than even the Special Forces of the Army, which we've done a lot about because of the Special Forces and there is the great attraction that we as storytellers have in wanting to tell your tales. And then, of course, when all these *INS Kolkata*, *INS Kochi* and the great work they did right now in the rescue operations during the cyclone, when everybody battens down the hatches, they bravely carried out vital disaster relief operations. Further, just to complete what I was saying, because the Navy has these amazing ships which control so much of the ocean. The Navy has technology, the Navy goes and works with many more foreign military services than the Army and

the Air Force. The Navy has these fliers, who can land on ships and the Navy has MARCOS that can work on land and on water and in the air. So, the Navy has a rich opportunity to tell the experiences to people like me who want to tell their story and that's why we keep coming back to you. And of course, the Navy also does a lot of work in peace, signalling the humanitarian work that it does, the diplomatic work that it does, which makes it an exciting place for us to work on. And that's why we're always hovering around people like you.

**Cmde G Prakash:** Comdt Kulpreet, I will come to the last question for the day. You are spreading your activities into the world of movie making, screenplay writing and even acting, and now that you're considering writing something about the oceans, would you also consider doing short films or movies based on the Coast Guard themes? It may be easier for you to get access and discuss projects with people whom you know. Do you have anything like that in your plan?

**Comdt Kulpreet:** I'm going to be very frank here. It's a great idea to make a short film or a film on any of the themes later with the Navy or the Coast Guard. But the question is, will I get access to the information? Will it be easy for me to relate to and contact Senior officers? My experience has been no, it's going to be extremely difficult. So I'm going to be taking an easy way out and trying to make a film on a subject which is close to my heart and also where I can muster all the resources far more easily. We were talking about cinema earlier, we were talking about great cinema in the west and about the Navy. We do not have such cinemas in our country. I'm going to be completely frank here because even as a producer, I'm just a short film producer tomorrow. If things do go well with me and I become a big film producer, the question that is always going to linger in my mind is if I make a larger-than-life entertaining story about the Navy, will I get information? Will I get access to the naval resources or the Coast Guard resources, or at the moment, let me write a police story. I'm writing about a true police case at the moment after the Battle of Rezang La. It is so difficult to interact with police officers and get information from them, which I'm probably not going to do unless there is an initiative and there is an interest from the organisation, and someone approaches me and there is an interaction and I feel that some path has been legit for me. I might still walk on that path because at the end of the day, I'm a retired officer and my heart beats for my organisation, but in certain circumstances, probably no.

**Ms Richa:** Mr Yadav, I'll say that 2021 is a good year. Look, we are having this conversation that means there is an interest and there is an awakening within the Navy itself. I think it's a good year to put forward and think about it. I don't think we should give up.

**Comdt Kulpreet:** We never give up, Richa, our training is right from the Naval Academy, never ever give up. So, an officer is never going to give up. I'm just trying to say whether I'll do it or not. So, if the situation is conducive, definitely yes.

**Cmde G Prakash:** Surely for the system, there are lots of takeaways from this panel and what was discussed here, that there are people willing and there are stories to be told. Their stories need to be told and they get refined by the media to let it happen. Now, coming back to maritimity, in my concluding remarks, I would say that the Portuguese, I think, have a great lesson for us. In the 15th and 16th century, what they did was extremely important. Before that, the Portuguese had no great maritimity or maritime consciousness. They were known as the last part of Europe, the end of Europe. But then when a great need came to them because of geostrategic, geo economic reasons in the 15th century, they actually organised themselves. They engineered maritime consciousness and actually created capabilities and taught themselves not to view themselves and the seas as frontier but as gateway to the control of the world. I think there's a great current narrative. The current narrative is basically a narrative of a glorious past and then our land simplicity and sea blindness in the Middle Ages and how we got engulfed by European colonialism 450 years ago, and then we got

impoverished. And now we are coming out and the questions are extremely important to us. But we need to somehow get that into our consciousness and into policy making.

K.M Panikkar says that *'If India decides to enable power, it is not sufficient to create a navy, however efficient and well mannered, well manned. It must create a naval tradition in the public, a sustained interest in oceanic problems and a conviction that India's future greatness lies at sea'*. I'm tempted to say that to be a maritime power, you need three things - you need a good fighting Navy, you need a good Merchant marine, and you have good ports, infrastructure and laws. 500 years ago, we had excellent ports and infrastructure, good merchant marine but we had no fighting Navy. And today we have a fantastic fighting Navy, and it's for us to introspect as to what else we do to build on that? Because they say that outside your shores, there'll always be a Navy if it is not yours, it's somebody else's. And finally, I'll say that this engagement is important, however we need much more. Today, these discussions are driven entirely by people who actually directly deal with the oceans or have interest in the oceans. It's going to go beyond that and we got to create space for a lot of other people. Maritime battles are beyond fighting the Navy and its exploits. It is a net result of the sweat and blood of millions of people who have something to do with the oceans. And those stories will have to be told for the greater benefit. They have to acknowledge, they appreciate it, otherwise they will lose the plot. One last comment is that in 2005, I gave a lecture at a College in Jogeshwari, Mumbai, which at 74 acres is the largest College in Mumbai. After I spoke to about 1000 children there, I was amused to find that in Jogeshwari not a single student had gone to Colaba and seen a Ship. Now I really went back and thought about it. Maybe it is because much more information needs to go into the vernacular place and into the vernacular modes of communication.

I remember about Cmde Gurumani in the first session talking about a semester at sea. I have met those students in Mauritius on an American ship, which is not a Mauritian thing. It's an American concept and they spend one semester of their university time on a ship and they're going around the world. I happened to be there on a Mauritius ship and I also had a student. Actually, we don't call it the Semester at Sea. But in the Navy and the Coast Guard, I think everybody goes through the Semester at Sea, but it is a wonderful experience and I don't think the sea would have really gone very deep into the students, really feel envious of them. I thank my panelists for the wonderful perspective and on behalf of them, I thank the organisers for the wonderful opportunity. Thank you very much. Śaṃ No Varuṇaḥ, Jai Hind!

## Summing up of the Proceedings

**Cmde Srikant B Kesnur, VSM, PhD**  
*Director, Maritime Warfare Centre, Mumbai*

I sat transfixed through the entire webinar inclusive of discussions and deliberations as it was absolutely fascinating. Because it was so great in its scope and depth and the things that were spoken and exchanged, it is difficult to cull out everything. Therefore, I hope the audience and all of you will indulge me as I go through the notes that I have made.

Ladies and gentlemen, let me begin by highlighting the importance of timing of this seminar. It is, of course, one of the key events of the Navy Week in a year that is celebrating 50 years of the 1971 war in which the Navy played a big role and that also led to a certain amount of maritime reawakening. At the same time, it also coincides with the 75<sup>th</sup> year of independence when the nation is celebrating 75<sup>th</sup> year of Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav with several great national initiatives and I think the maritime canvas there certainly deserves lots of attention. Closer home, yesterday or rather today is 24 years since INS *Tarangini* was commissioned. *INS Tarangini* itself has done a great deal in terms of spreading India's and Indian Navy's soft power. Some of you spoke about memorials and people who have fallen. 11<sup>th</sup> November, yesterday was the 'Remembrance Day' where we commemorate and remember all those from India who took part in World War I and World War II. There were discussions on memorials in the second session, and it brings into sharp relief some of what they spoke regarding Remembrance Day and whether this figures in our memory. Therefore, there is both a military aspect and a maritime component and we must remember that Merchant Marine played a big role in World War I and World War II and thus, they are a part of this story too.

I think we set the stage in many ways for the discussions that happened. In the first session, we had three outstanding talks. We began with Capt Anand Dixit, who brought out very quickly how this topic has been enhanced in its scope over the last few years, the Maritime Seminar and how when we talk of maritime soft power, we are referring to maritime culture of a country, and though it is a new phrase, he said, it has differing interpretations, but it has significance beyond those interpretations. He also mentioned maritime art and how the IMF which he is heading has given lots of importance to maritime art through the SIMA and later, if you remember, we had two artists from SIMA. After his quick talk, we had Capt Bahl, who talked again of the difficulties of recognising between hard power and soft power. Interestingly, he also brought out several components of the soft power and he specifically brought out two issues, medical and piracy assistance. Piracy assistance is an interesting example, because when you talk of piracy assistance, it could combine several elements. There is a hard power assistance when you attempt to chase away pirates. Similarly, soft power will come into play if you were to give medical assistance, do counter piracy patrol, if you are a part of a global coalition against piracy/ counter-piracy exercise and do other collaborative ventures with likeminded nation states.

Capt Bahl also highlighted the UK maritime industry. The fact that it still is a global hub and so long as we continue to read publications from the UK, referring to the Pilot and their various books on navigation, they will continue to be maritime leaders. Therefore, he urged us to write and publish, whether it is history, memoirs, books of navigation or operations. I think that was a big cry from him to everyone in the marine community, naval and merchant to write more and getting it published.

The Flag Officer Commanding-in-Chief, Western Naval Command, in his Keynote Address, talked of many things. It was a very large canvas. He talked of floating and underwater cities. Who knows, where the future might go? The important point he made was that, when the Navy talks of synergy, it is much more than mere strategic consideration and it is largely with a view to have collaborative partnerships to generate win-win solutions for all. He said that we need to do a lot more and referred to a phrase called the maritime ecosystem, which requires the best brains. I think this came later on, when we talked about maritime education and other things. How do you encourage? How do you get the best brains? How do you become a magnet for attracting some of the finest minds in the country to the maritime industry or the maritime sector? He also talked of the container crisis and the use of smart power as a combination of hard power and soft power. He brought out an interesting thing that ironically, even as the sea continues to become more and more important, human contact itself to the sea has dwindled. Therefore, as we have more and more of unmanned vessels or Vickers, we more and more get the feeling that the milk or the fuel is delivered from the petrol pump and not from their places of origin. The sea itself may be losing the charm to the people. I think that's a big challenge that people like us have to face today. How do we make the sea and life at sea more attractive? He further talked of use of technology, particularly for pole vaulting rather than leapfrogging and therefore, here is a question that all of us must consider, can we use technology, for example, maritime games apps on phones? Can we have ship handling simulators at airports and other places or smaller simulators at various museums to bring in technology in a way that maritime activities become attractive to younger generation? I think this is what we need to consider.

Our first session had some wonderful speakers, people who are in the vanguard of maritime education. Dr Malini Shankar brought out, and I think that's an important point she made, that our seafarers are very good and regarded professionally very highly, but we also need soft skills. She talked about communication, attitude, leadership and analysis. She also focused a great deal on Research and Development (R&D) and I think that's again, another very important point that she has made. Unless we put in money into R&D, we are not really going to become leaders and we are not going to get cutting edge. Prof. (Dr) S. Shanthakumar, who followed, talked about knowledge. In fact, it was a perfect following from Dr Malini, as he says, how knowledge will always have a market and even if there is outsourcing of business, there could be several sectors in the maritime field, which have a huge demand, particularly in the white-collar job and other sectors. Whether the autonomous will reduce, I think Capt Gyanendra had asked an interesting question, whether as is commonly pursued, will autonomous vehicles and other autonomous entities and automatic vehicles reduce employability or seek to re-engineer people in different ways to continue to keep people engaged and employed. I think that is an important point.

Prof. Dr Anuradha talked about how the Mumbai University has taken this initiative, recognising that if you have 8 to 9 districts in which two are on the coast, you need a centre dedicated to maritime studies. She also talked about the doctoral programme starting in CEMAS soon and that's good news for all of us. Seafaring - there was an increase of 10% and we are looking at 15% by 2030; that would make us a very important player globally. However, the reduction of tonnage was also brought up by Dr Malini. Now, one of the important points that Capt Gyanendra made was the size of delegation in the IMO meetings and how different countries come with big delegation with multiple expertise. That's exactly what happened when I was in Nairobi, attending Piracy conferences and saw that why we had to make do with the people who were there. Yes, we were just 2 - 3 people in several conferences. Countries like USA, China would have 10-15 people, who are experts in domains like language, maritime law and shipping. The number of brains put into this delegation was much more and I think that is an important point again. Therefore, IMU's involvement with RIS certainly is a good step and I think that all think tanks and universities must have greater exchanges as CEMAS is having with the Indian Navy. The point Dr Malini mentioned

again was a grand maritime strategy and vision where all maritime stakeholders need to think about do we go and what it is that we want to imply. Cmde Gurumani nicely brought out how Hydrography in some ways is very important. Without hydrography you cannot have navigation, coast and coastal cities. Saraswati Vidya Hydrography has been established by the Indian Navy is amongst one of the best Hydrography institutes. We also teach hydrography to several countries; 30 to 34 countries have been represented at the National Institute of Hydrography. Compliance with National Education Policy (NEP), leverage with existing collaborations, many of these things have been brought out by all the speakers.

One of the interesting things that I found was the larger percentage of women students; and I think that is very good because it asserts that the maritime sector in future would have women making breakthroughs in the Navy, Merchant Marine and rise to become Captains of the ship. Last year, in fact, we had one female Captain as a panellist. As we now have women in several maritime sectors, it is making the domain more diverse and equitable. Several other ideas were discussed as to how do we educate? The challenge is, does it come through formal education processes or through maritime institutions such as Scouts, NCC and Sea Cadet; which is actively pursued at few places. Whether something like this can be adapted; as it would be a great model. As Dr Malini said, these activities cannot be created overnight. Future - Presence building has to be thought of from the present and we have to see how we go about it.

Popular culture, which came in both Session II and Session III was also reflected here - how do students take to maritime studies? Someone said that a ferry from Alibaug to Mumbai. What is the thing that fascinates us? Can we have comic heroes? Can we have live education as this was brought out again in the session like Sinbad the Sailor. So, should we be having certain equivalent ways in which we can bring romance in the maritime sector (an important point made)? Can we bring sailing into the schools, of which Cmde Gurumani said that instead of burdening students, lets unburden them with increasing their interests in Maritime sector. There should also be more grassroot level initiatives as you have to make students educated about it instead of making 'Education' a checkbox item. Dr Malini set forth how we do not have ease of doing business in maritime education, although all four spoke about the issues, I will quote Dr Malini Shankar here. One, there must be ease of doing business and second is there must be greater interface between professionals and educational institutions. Between think tanks and private - public collaboration should be there. And, I couldn't of course wonder at the irony when I was told or I heard that it is more difficult to get admission in maritime universities in India than abroad. While we have a whole lot of people who are interested, we need to give it much more thought that foreigners should come and study in India. And, these are the key takeaways of Session I.

In Session II, Cmde Chitnis began the session very well where he called maritime museums the 'Cinderella' amongst museums as they are hardly there. Cdr Mohan Narayan who has the rich experience dealing both with maritime history and maritime museums, talked of the difference that history may be didactic but museums create experiences. How museums can be differently designed and communicated was taken by Ms Batul Raaj Mehta in her excellent presentation on the Lothal Heritage Maritime Complex where she spoke about tourism potential of the museums and the multiplier effect. She made an interesting point that this itself can make a global community of interactions via online, Instagram, Twitter and meaningful exchanges. So, she suggested growing such communities and interactions that the government can have. She mentioned and hinted that this way you can have maritime tourism and museums, a global set of communities as well that can create virtual circles. Two years ago when 24X7 electricity was given at Gharapuri or Elephanta Island, the tourism profile there has completely changed. So, that in a way can be an answer to the future to tap into the tourism potential of museums. And, that takes us to what Bharat said that grey hair overpower the black highlighting the challenge of roping in the interest of youth. He talked

about Bollywood movies on historical events that had reached more public than through Rashtra Prachar Samitis. He made an interesting point that it is the young adults of 15 – 25 years age bracket which are the most difficult audience and I think this is important as the Navy and Merchant Marines seek their leaders from this 15 - 25 target age group. So, this makes us wonder what we are missing out on and the same shall be communicated with the marketing people, brand strategists and others to see how we can make the maritime domain and discipline attractive so that we get the finest minds. He also talked of making heritage cool and museums experiential. One of the things that comes to my mind is that some students last year were upset that they did not get to go to Essel World Amusement Park. I wondered why a school at Colaba wants to go such a far distance? When the fishermen community park is nearby, why don't they think of getting experiences at such locations? These are certain aspects which make us think why the youth showcase less interest in such things. On our mobile apps we do see Narali Poornima but what if the same we can experience in real life? That is how a fisherman celebrates the festival that would make us much more educated about rites and rituals obtained among seafaring communities.

Lot of ideas and things were discussed in the session comprising Heritage walks, sailing tours, light & sound shows, dhows and more. I think it's very important that we talked about dhows as this was mentioned by Dr Rukshana as well talking about dhows of Mandvi and sailing. I have seen that some of the great tourism advertisements are done via restaurants, hotels and dhows. It is sad if India does not advertise dhows because Indians went all over the Indian Ocean region through dhows and in addition, one of the most famous book in East Africa talking of Indians coming was, '*They came on Dhows*' written by Mr D'souza. Therefore, India should represent experiences of dhows, shipbuilding experiences at Mandvi or Kerala. This will be a great aid to increasing maritime consciousness and I hope the Lothal committee takes this into consideration. Another point was made about roping in influencers and digital marketing. So, how do we do that? In lieu of that, Dr Rukshana said that very few decide to work at Sea or on Sea and our history has been continental. She made another interesting point that we don't have ownership over oceans. This point was also later made by Cmde G Prakash while moderating technical session IV that we tend to see the coast as a barrier or border rather than a vital territorial area or important space. One of the questions also focused on Water Sports Complex Museums and I think that is a very important aspect. Dr Rukshana Nanji said that mix ethnography with archaeology so that romance of folklore and seas are stitched together, only then you can make it interesting. There were later more questions on Bombay Castle, plans for Bombay Dockyard walk which were answered by Cdr Mohan Narayan with lots of gusto. The point made is very important but security concerns are there, which cannot be ignored. The Navy has maintained this place very beautifully and we have to see and take a call on some of these issues.

*Coastal cleanup* being extended to rivers, was a very key point made by Cmde Chitnis. So now how do we get marketers, brand strategists and incentivise them? We have to consider pop culture through movies and avoid making heritage and maritime issues elitist and take them to the masses. Memorials as key maritime consciousness enablers were importantly discussed and how we don't seem to know enough about memorials in terms of recognising their value. Mention was made of Gallipoli by Bharat that how important it is for people from Turkey, Australia and New Zealand to know about their ancient historical ties but Indians don't recognize it even though so many Indians were part of the Gallipoli campaign. Even though I am a Naval officer, for many years I used to write about Gallipoli and thought in the same vein how we have not recognised India's contribution at Gallipoli. So is there any case or opportunity for us to visit these places abroad and for people abroad to visit memorials in India and to visit places with maritime significance. In this case, Khanderi Island is considered to be a great tourist destination for people to visit. The common thing that came out from the session was lesser elitism, more access to sea, make it more popular, consider taking in expertise from people who understand the pulse of young people. Sometimes,

people in the maritime world stay in their silos and ivory towers and if we want to reach, I think we need more expert advice. Ladies and Gentlemen, I hope you will indulge me for 10 minutes more as we have some more time before I call upon our next speaker, Admiral Chauhan.

Session III was very interesting because it had young people and this was the first time that we were seeking to rope in young people, and I think it was fantastic. This session actually happened after lunch time and ironically, had the highest viewership. I think when Adhvait talks of Abhilash Tomy that makes you realise how role models are important for people to take your interests further and take to some profession. Tia and Swati brought in what determination and motivation means and when motivation and determination intersects with one's interests then you can scale really great. I was quite interested and took up how Pratekk spoke on his certain fascination for pirates in his drawings and Deepshikha about how she said I simply love Fish. And, I think these are little things that keep you interested like visual motives and something in your imagination for the maritime world and tell a lot of stories. Adhvait again mentioned something interesting about how he uses his boat as a Maruti. The same thing we have observed in Seychelles, Mauritius is that people bring in boats in Marina Park and many ordinary people own them (reasonably middle class people) and take the boat out as we do take out our cars when we go out for a drive. So, we can still create such a culture or it remains elitist, I think we have to consider that. I like the way he describes his time with water and sea and how he learned to take care of his boat. That is a very important thing which we learn in the armed forces as well - *care for your weapon and weapon will care for you*. Adhvait brought out one of the key factors in understanding the ownership.

Tia brought out encouragement and enlightenment amongst people and Swati focused on *learning to fall*, I think that was a vital point said by her which she learned from her sailing experience. Adhvait also mentioned the same. You must learn to fall; you must learn to get back after falling. While sailing, taste the sea water and don't bother about those little injuries and bruises, they will happen. Adhvait also said don't feel bad to lose, you will succeed at some stage and the pride of representing your Nation, there can be nothing better than that. Camaraderie and friendship was also very nicely discussed by the young panel. I am really taken up by the maturity that these young panels showed in their discussions about overcoming your fears like Tia mentioning insects and Thalassophobia, Swati handling multiple tasks like her motherhood, COVID issues, other passion, self-discipline and mental strength. All of these are there to develop one's personality. So it's not over till the last race is over, your passion is not the distraction but a part of you and how can I not fall in love with the sea? As Pratekk said, once you start, you will gain momentum. So what all these people brought out is, it's the fun thing to do and fun thing to be.

Admiral Nadkarni in the Session IV started off well with Cmde G Prakash joining us a little late due to technical glitch. Admiral Nadkarni discussed an important issue in relation to previous Session III about winning in Sailing and increasing interests of youth in water sports. We make so much about some sports getting more attention and that's true. In a similar vein, will Sailing not get attention? I don't think so as you create world beaters. Sports like 'Shooting' is not very pleasant to the eyes, you don't get running commentary but there are lots of Indians participating in Shooting at Olympics and similarly, in the game of golf everybody was hooked as they wanted to see Aditi Ashok win a medal. I am sure in the future when our Sailors emerge to win more medals, Sailing will also become a sought after, TV viewership sport. The point later was carried forward by Richa Pant who said Navy has lots of stories to tell and it must talk of the narrative. However, storytelling has the deadline and timeline issues, that people's attention span is limited and hence, we must know when to tell the story. Again, this is the matter of expertise. Kulpreet Yadav talked of taking action and he defined maritimity as moving from awareness to action. Vishnu rued the loss of INS Viraat and covered the expedition that went from 50 meters below sea to the Everest, from



Submarine which flagged off as the 'Everest Expedition', he was part of that wonderful expedition too. Then Admiral Nadkarni mentioned lots of literature, listed out many books, biographies and movies written about the Navy. India has been slow in covering various genres involving Indian Navy and military non-fiction. He discussed encouraging more great work like Sandeep Unithan's '*Operation X*' and suggested how a great movie can come out of that and same with *The Caine Mutiny*. Good books can result in good theater and good cinema and much more. I think when it comes to other realms of literature, we have done some outstanding cutting-edge work at global level like Amitav Ghosh's book '*Innocence*' can be talked about as maritime literature.

If we talk specifically about fiction, I think a lot more can be done there. Again encouraging water sports was brought about by the Navy. I think a whole lot of understandable angst in this section dealt with the Navy being a silent service though of course Vishnu Som acknowledged that we have the best PROs who have always been on the top of the game. I think there was largely a consensus that it is far more interesting and attractive to tell the story of the man in a valley, a trigger and a gun and the sophistication of the Navy goes against it as mentioned by Vishnu. I think that's a point very well made. People want more thrilling stories and it may not be easy as Cmde G Prakash said *not all stories have to involve thrill, blood and action*. There are lots of human oriented stories and experiences that can be covered. I think it's very important to underscore that the Navy is called *Silent Service* because we operate beyond the gaze and horizon of the common person. Therefore, it's always difficult to bring out our stories and that's the nature of the medium. The role of think tanks, the difficulties and problems they face was brought out by Admiral Nadkarni again.

I think one of the issues that think tanks need to ask is whether we reach to the commons or we get more for only a particular set of audience. One of the tests is, are we having new members? Are we having new audiences, getting more footfalls and are we getting more eyeballs for our seminars and webinars? I think that in some way could be a test to see if our messages are going across and while we must influence policy and a whole lot of things, we must also reach out to larger section of our countrymen to enhance maritime consciousness and maritime knowledge. Similar action related point of view was also discussed by Kulpreet Yadav. Ladies and gentlemen, sometimes such a large amount of burden is placed at the Navy's door that we must do think tank activities, we must do heritage walks, we must enable maritime cinema and documentaries that people forget that the core job of the Navy is fighting against the enemies when required. A whole lot of these things are done by the Navy. It is doing the heavy lifting in a whole lot of maritime domains through organisations like NMF and MHS and through outreach programmes like the Navy Week. Now we have think tanks, universities and education institutions actively working as key maritime stakeholders and we shall further make a combined effort.

As a summator, I would like to present some points from my side. Some of things that could be considered, one of the points that was brought out was the military literature festival that has been going on in Chandigarh and more recently in Lucknow. Is there a time now to have a maritime literature festival where we can discuss many of these things and maritime books, periodicals to sell and buy? Is there time to do this and bring maritime thoughts under one umbrella? And if so, who would take the lead in it? Again, one of the points that comes ahead is that to be a leader, you need to start taking initiatives and to start with that, you need to start generating your own thoughts and literature. With books we have done that, Cinema we can try in many ways and Bollywood & Cricket are great examples of soft power that can be imbibed in the maritime sector. Non-maritime education also attracts a huge amount of people from various parts of the world and the Navy is a great example of a hard power that beats lots of soft power. The work done by the Navy is attractive to foreign countries and others, for a range of activities. The recent *International Solar Alliance*, for example where in the USA has joined as the 101<sup>st</sup> member, is the classic example of what happens

when you take the initiative and take the lead. I think one of the things we could do in the maritime sector is to start taking the leadership role. How do we ensure the exposure of the sea through a whole lot of landlocked people? Do we design ship replicas using technology? And how we make people aware is the most important question discussed that keeps coming.

Time and again, semester at sea was talked about, adopting a ship was talked about and making museums experiential was talked about. I think one of the biggest challenges, just as we tell people at land to look at seas as vital areas and on similar lines, we as maritime domain, shall look at how we can reach the people at hinterland and educate them about maritime issues. Can maritime history and culture be at least an elective subject at IMU, GMU and a whole lot of maritime institutions? Lots of maritime institutions focus on maritime security and law, again sort of harder subjects. What gives these subjects foundation and identity is understanding maritime history and culture. Soft skills above all is something we need to consider because soft power requires soft skills and some of us who are in the business are not going to get different enablers of soft power. Many times soft power has to be inherent in our own activities. All of us in the maritime domain and profession need to see how we can imbibe soft skills, if required, as it is about language skills, knowledge skills, law, comfort with diverse culture and multilateralism as people in the Navy talk about.

With those thoughts ladies and gentlemen, I would like to appreciate all the speakers and moderators giving us an excellent overview. It was a fascinating debate and a fantastic webinar with wonderful discussions.

## Valedictory Address

**Vice Admiral Pradeep Chauhan, AVSM & Bar, VSM (Retd)**

*Director General, National Maritime Foundation*

Thank you very much. First of all, let me explain to our viewers that one of the reasons Cmde Srikant has been quite so generous to me in his comments is because I owe him money and he is always in a hope that I might return it one of these days (in humour). Now let me be more serious, let me say thank you to start with and you know when one gets called to deliver a valedictory address, one thinks that perhaps it's because one has not only been there and done that as it's so kindly said, but perhaps one is pretty much done. Flag Officers, General Officers, Air Officers, Commanding Officers, Officers, Excellencies, Ladies & Gentlemen, Captain Dixit, President of the Indian Maritime Foundation, Captain Kapil Dev Bahl, Master Mariner and Chairman of the Nautical Institute India (West); Cmde Kesnur presenting with such competence, the Western Naval Command in particular, and the Indian Navy, and our very distinguished and extraordinarily impressive members of the various panels that have sat in session today, plus the very, very, very tight members of the audience virtually attending today's webinar.

Good afternoon, let me begin with a somewhat unequivocal statement. You know, we are now into the first two decades of what will be at least two full centuries of the sea. Hence, I would like to put it to you that over these, not after over these 200 years, India will either be a maritime power or India will not be any kind of power at all. Does that mean Military Maritime Power? Naval Power? No, of course not. As has been repeatedly mentioned today, the Naval power is, after all, a subset of maritime power itself. As Ms Meera Bhadre so correctly mentioned just a little while ago, the very concept of power remains a contested one, and she was absolutely right in saying that Power per se is certainly not a zero sum game involving two categories, one winners and one losers. It is entirely possible, particularly in the maritime domain that you have all winners, that is the underpinning rationale of the Prime Ministerial concept, maritime concept of India, encapsulated in the acronym SAGAR (Security and Growth for all in the Region). It is really important for us to understand that India believes firmly that all boats rise with the rising tide and that the Indian economy cannot, in some magical fashion, ride on some wonderful crest while the economies of our neighbourhood are wallowing in some dismal trough. Either we all rise or none of us rise.

So when we talk about all this stuff, about the maritimity with which we ended today's session and the maritimity with which we began today's sessions, if we put it to the test, then what might be the find? Let me ask you a simple question. In your mind (since I cannot hear you in your mind) I would like you to complete the sentences. How many of you manage to get it right? Here's the sentence and it says *khoob ladi mardani voh toh Jhansi wali rani thi*. Let's take another one, *khub ladi mardani voh toh, Abbakka Chowta* and the guys are wondering about *Abbakka Chowta*, same to you. So, we have a problem in our folklore. We have a problem in the ability to actually provide consciousness to the maritime segments of our struggles over the centuries, every country struggles. So how many of us actually are familiar with *Rani Abbakka Chowta* of the 16th century? She fought the Portuguese for 40 years, and suppose she had been on a football team and suppose Jhansi Ki Rani had been on a football team, then Jhansi Ki Rani would have played one, won one, drawn zero and lost one. *Rani Abbakka* would have played for 40 years continuously, 117 times against the Portuguese Navy, the Portuguese Army, the Portuguese irregulars, the Portuguese amphibious forces - drawn zero, lost one in the last and that too by backstabbing. What about *Rani Kittur Chennamma* who fought the British in 1824 against the doctrine of lads? What I'm trying to get at is when we study history, ladies and gentlemen, we study the history of Delhi and we think that we are studying the history of India. This is a huge problem and this is where the problem actually begins. So consequently, it is entirely appropriate that nurturing a maritime culture has

been the most striking life motive of this entire webinar. I am suffused by a special sense of belonging this evening, this afternoon, and was so this morning as well. As Chief of Staff of the Western Naval Command, I had a series of very rewarding interactions with the then President and now President Emeritus of the Indian Maritime Foundation, Cmde Ranjan Vir, and that resulted in the launch of this annual engagement whose current edition we have just enjoyed all day today.

As the Director General of the National Maritime Foundation, which is the strategic knowledge partner of the Indian Navy and a peer partner of the Indian Maritime Foundation, I am deeply invested and interested in every endeavour that seeks to further the development of maritime India. I am completely short on this. So the National Maritime Foundation, I am very proud to say, is the foremost Resource Centre for the development of strategies for the promotion and the protection of the maritime interests of India. What is the maritime interest of India? It was simply stated at the Prime Ministerial level in 2008, that *it is freedom, freedom from threats arising in the sea or from the sea or through the sea*. These threats could be man-made, geopolitical construction, state of conflict, natural tsunamis, earthquakes, sea quakes, cyclones and they could be combinations of both. Climate change, ocean acidification, the challenges of biodiversity beyond national jurisdiction, the challenges of areas beyond national jurisdiction, all of these constitute challenges and when we have freedom from them, we are secure. So the point I wanted to therefore underscore for you is that our effort to make this particular freedom a reality cannot be done by having only a small number of needles of excellence. It is true that a small number of needles of excellence can indeed support a large mass, but it is also true that mass will never be stable. So for it to become stable, we have to increase these needles until they are no longer seen as needles, but constitute the foundation of this mass as a whole, and I would therefore particularly like to express my admiration for the choice of the themes that have been explored in the four technical sessions that have constituted this particular webinar.

Now I know that Ms Krishna Kataria has already succinctly summarised the main takeaways of each session and then Cmde Kesnur as with his characteristic standard and charm, summated the entire day and I have no intention of trying to compete with the excellence of either of these presentations, nor giving you or subjecting you to some second rate kind of repetition. However, I must state quite unequivocally that I was delighted to see that the webinar began by squarely addressing the foundational weakness of our country's education. Let me give you an example of what the challenge actually is. Unlike any other scholastic or academic subject, take science, not all of you are scientists, not all of you are physicists, not all of you are chemists, but everyone has done some form of general science, increasing incrementally over school. What about English or Hindi or Sanskrit or Tamil or Malayalam? Everyone has studied this incrementally, first from home, then with your friends, then in school, then parents, then teacher, then parents again. What about subjects like Geography, History, Mathematics? Everyone has done arithmetic. If I said what is  $3 + 4$ , it's easy, it's 7. Because you have learned it incrementally, it has been repeated. You have been tested, you have been reexamined. What about maritime subjects? - Zero. Not one subject in any year of your entire schooling.

There was a lament made by Malini when she said that, you know, these are tick marks of checkboxes when we talk about environmental studies. That's true, but there are tick marks in some checkboxes. In the maritime domain, there are no ticks, there are no checkboxes because the teachers don't know, they can't teach. The students have no idea whether they want to know or not, because the subject lies outside their scope. Therefore, how is all this to be tackled? It's all very well to say that, yeah, we have this problem here, we have that problem and misery certainly loves company, so perhaps we'll all remain friends forever. But how is this to be tackled? This particular session that we witnessed focused upon tertiary and professional education in this regard, I must say that the National Maritime Foundation has been working closely with the Gujarat Maritime University and the GNLU, and the efforts of Professor (Dr) Shanthakumar deserves particular

praise and continued support. Dr Malini Shankar is always delightful to listen to and she and the Indian Maritime University are going to be the next port of call for the outreach efforts of the National Maritime Foundation. And I'm very taken, of course, by the Centre of Excellence in Maritime Studies (CEMAS) that the University of Mumbai has recently launched and Dr Anuradha Majumdar is now leading. But what about schools? What about undergraduate studies? What about the kids who didn't manage to go to school? This is where the centrality and the criticality of the Indian Maritime Foundation needs to be appreciated by all of us.

We made much talk about coastal cleanup, whether they are on the beach or they are related to drivers. I want to tell you that unless we are able to generate a full system, this is going to be an exercise in futility. We will clean up the beach, we will put all that *kachra* into wonderful bags and the media. We'll wear those wonderful shirts and we'll get our photographs taken. Our parents and our friends will say, good job and then what? Where will all those bags go? And if you consider a place like Ezhimala where they don't have a Municipal Corporation, the Panchayat has no idea what to do with it. So when nobody's looking, they pitch it black into the back water and it winds up back into the sea, and then we have a full-fledged job all over again. We need a full-fledged system and I'm very happy to say that the Indian Maritime Foundation is embarked on just such a system. That's why it needs support and that's why it merits support. So the problem otherwise, which has been lamented a great deal, is that we're not able to create and disseminate the romance of the sea, the romance of the maritime domain. Our teachers who teach these lessons are to put it pretty bluntly, they are really boring. You know, I often say that there's no boring history and there are only boring historians. There's no lousy mathematics, there are just crap mathematics teachers. There is no horrendous physics, there are just very poor physics teachers.

We know the names of all our heroes. Yes, those ones who enabled us to regain our freedom. We know all their names - Shivaji Maharaj, Kanhoji Angre, Rani Lakshmi Bai, Mangal Pandey, Bhagat Singh and Chandrashekhar Azad. How do we know? Because our teachers taught us, our friends told us, we sang songs about them. We listened to poetry about them. We had all of that and did anybody tell us how we lost our freedom in the first place? The one for which all these people had to sacrifice life, limb, property to regain? How did we lose that? Anybody told us that? In 1509 and 120 odd years before the British even arrived, there was a battle. It was the Battle of Diu we fought. How many ships did we have? A Quad? Yeah, we had the Quad. We had Zamorin of Calicut, we had the Sultan of Gujarat, the Doge of Venice and we had Mamuluks of Egypt. We had 123 ships. The Portuguese came with 22 and we lost. How did we lose? Were we not brave? Of course we are brave. Did we not understand? Did we not have big rivers in which we fought? Yes, we did. We brought our riverine strategy and tried to put it out to sea.

In 1510, we lost Goa in a single day. When we lost these two, we lost control over the littoral and when we lost control over the offshore coast, we lost control over the ability to stop people from coming in. How do you think Robert Clive came in, ladies and gentlemen? Do you think he just said beam me up Scotty and arrived on the battlefield of Plassey? No, that didn't happen in that way. So what is our problem in this? Our problem is not that we have a lousy boring history. So what I want to tell everybody in this history business is to bring maritime stories to life. When I was in school, we had to stand on tables and we had those foot-rulers or whatever they're called now scales, wooden scales and we were pretending to be popular maritime characters. We had all the wrong guys but our history was alive. It wasn't some textbook with four paragraphs slashed through and then three paragraphs completely unrelated to.

That is not how you build maritime narrative. So then how do you build it? You build it, as Cmde Kesnur said, by not converting to the choir, not preaching to the choir, but going and doing outreach. So does the National Maritime Foundation do this? Yeah, how many interns do we get? Last year we ran an internship program for a period of six months, ranging from six weeks to six

months, we had 118 interns and how much do we charge them? - Free. This is what the Indian Maritime Foundation does in Pune. This is what I hope all of us will do in future. I've long been an admirer of Cdr Mohan Narayan and I think he typifies the image of this World War II or World War I infantry captain. It's charging out of the trenches and he's got his pistol in his hand and he finally says alright, charge and then he looks behind and there's nobody behind him. We can no longer afford this. We could never afford this now. In any case, we can't afford this. So, we need to be able to stand up behind him. Was I not fascinated by the perspectives I heard today? What about this business of museums of which so much was spoken and so brilliantly at that? I went to the museum in Israel where you have the hospitaller, fortress and treasures in the wall. What is it? What is the difference between that and what we do? It is coming like we have technology. If you go there, you will see that as you pass, you will not only see artifacts, you will see dioramas. Dioramas are - where as you change, the colours change, the perspective changes. Are we not the software capital of the world? We are and where is it? Or are we just the Software Coolie Capital of the world? In which case we better put that baggage down and start to work like hell. So why are we then otherwise studying history? Because if we can't get it, if we don't specialise in it, we can't work. Retro diction is required if you want to do prediction. In other words, you find something, some pattern which happened a long time ago. It repeated itself and it produced a result, you can see the result a long time ago. Then you see the pattern that's going to repeat itself now and result in the future. Retro diction leads to prediction. Don't do retro diction. My advice is to hire a chap with a tota (parrot) and those cards. That's the future. You will then be able to predict it.

We have monuments. We talked a great deal about monuments. We spoke admiring terms about the Commonwealth War Graves Commission. What are we talking about? - Maintenance. Are we at capital expenditure and are we good at the day-to-day maintenance? - No. Do we think that that makes it elitist? Yes. Does it make it a bit elitist? - No. Does it mean that simply because our poor people cannot afford some fancy place that we should close a booger? Of course not.

So I found myself having strong resonance with the comments. I was privileged to be on the same panel as Dr Ruksana Nanji was, not too long ago but at the INA in the *Dilli* seminar 2021 edition. I was a moderator then and I'm very happy. I emphasised the criticality of romance and I was very happy that we are now all singing from the same sheet of music. By the time we reached Session III today, I said my job is to listen to this. Yeah, this is how to run a seminar and the one which captured our imagination is the one which you all know and that's looking into the future where we found not only brilliant steering of this session by Mrs Meera Bhadre, who was brilliant throughout and who continues to teach at the SNDT University and make herself proud and she is also going receive another port of call for the NMF as soon as this is over. This was a fascinating journey with such diverse champions, not all champions, not young, fat, tall champions, just champions. So Adhvait Prashant Menon is not great because he was young, that's not what he's great about. He's great because it didn't matter whether he was 21 or 12, it's still great. Lt Cdr Swati, and her passion for skydiving, passion for the Army, passion for the Navy, passion for yachting, passion for mountaineering and her determination throughout just fascinated me.

What about Tia Chatterjee? She fascinated us with how many people learn an ancillary course skill like scuba diving? The National Maritime Foundation took part in a seminar not very long ago on India's underwater cultural heritage organised by UNESCO. Do you know what is the definition for a cultural heritage site in India By UNESCO? It must have been 100 years old. Everything in India is 100 years old, even I. So, all of us are artifacts. Yet, our endpoints are nearly zero because our serious research has been poor. Therefore, when we see Tia Chatterjee and we see the commitment and we see the fact that she has managed to write a book on 'Underwater Archaeology in India and the Lost Enigma', I think she deserves protracted applause. Is there only that way to enter the maritime domain? - No. What about art? Do you know how hard it is to paint? How many paintings have you not seen often of an idiotic ship with the wrong wind, the wrong

sails and yet we have artists like Pratekk and Deepshikha. Aren't they deserving of praise? Yes, and they are deserving of emulation. Do they spread maritimity? – Yes. And when we do talk about maritimity, the one part which really didn't sit well with me was this business of the media only publishing bad news. Let me give you a question, ladies and gentlemen. India wins the Olympic gold medal in field hockey - the next day, two more newspapers get sold or two less newspapers get sold? India produces PV Sindhu who wins the world championship. So do we sell more newspapers or we sell less newspapers the next morning? So anybody who tells you that only bad news sells is merely lazy. Bad news doesn't need a journalist but good news needs a journalist. And therefore, if you wish to call yourself a leading cutting edge documentary filmmaker, a journalist and multimedia specialist. Let's see some proof. I once saw a BBC film on a Kabaddi match in which a guy fell and he took about two and a half seconds to fall, in slow motion. The bead of sweat from his brow came slowly towards the ground and just before the bead of sweat hit his hand and the dirt in tiny slow motion specs. My kids said, what is this game? I want to play.

Cmde Kesnur correctly said, *Shooting, Golf*, anything can become a spectator sport, you need the interlocutor. Once again, there is no boring or non-viewer interesting sports game. There are just lousy journalists of that particular sport. Let's become good and let's make first class movies. How many of you saw the movie involving pirates? How many people in India now are talking about? When we say the Pirate what is the word association? Johnny Depp? Any chance of producing Johnny Depp? Was the *Pirates of the Caribbean* not about ships? Did you not see massive seas, high problems, pirates, good guys, all of that? Where is our stuff? Is all our stuff related to how many warships are made available to you by the Ministry of Defence? If that's the limit of our imagination, we deserve to be where we are.

Finally, I want to say and end my address to you (it is really an exhortation more than an address). I think that this was a fabulous webinar. I think that this is the kind of webinar that involves young people, old people, experienced people, novices and greenhorns, the whole gamut, it involves India. The biggest credit that I can give to the three organisations involved in producing such a fantastic day is this - they are attempting, ladies and gentlemen, to provide quality in quantity. Let us be both those things. Let us be part of the quality, and let us multiply that quality in quantity so that we don't have needles of excellence upon which we are seeking to balance the mass of India, but we have a mass of excellence upon which we are balancing the mass of India.

Thank you very much for your attention and thank you very much for giving me the opportunity, and my congratulations once again to the organisers and my gratitude to them for giving me the chance. Thank you.

## About the Speakers and Editors

**Capt Kapildev Bahl, Master Mariner** is an ex “Dufferin” cadet of the 1969-1971 batch and a Master Mariner. He sailed on board general cargo ships, bulk carriers & OBO/tankers including 5 years in command. From 1989 to 2016, he worked as a Nautical, Cargo & Warranty Surveyor for the P&I, H&M & Shipping Industry, specialising in Emergency Response, Risk Assessment & Claims, as well as an OCIMF SIRE accredited Oil Major Vetting Inspector. He is a Maritime Arbitrator and has a degree in law.

**Capt Anand Dixit, Master Mariner** is the President, Indian Maritime Foundation. He is an alumnus of Training Ship Dufferin and has had 42 years of sea service. He has command experience of 32 years and has served as master with various companies, notably Mosvolds – Farsund (Norway) and Teekay Shipping (Canada). He has commanded various types of ships which includes Bulk Carriers, Oil Tankers, VLCCs of 276000 DWT and 325000 DWT, Gas Carriers and FPSO. Post retirement, he has been a lecturer at Tolani Maritime Institute, Talegaon and the Chairman of the Company of Master Mariners of India, Pune Chapter. He has also been Editor/ Associate Editor of SeaGull magazine for about 10 years. Presently, he is a Guest Lecturer at Pune University (Dept of Defence and Strategic Studies).

**Admiral R Hari Kumar**, an alumnus of the National Defence Academy was commissioned into the Indian Navy on 01 Jan 1983. He specialised in Gunnery. He has commanded Coast Guard Ship C-01, INS Nishank, INS Kora, INS Ranvir and INS Viraat. His other sea going appointments include Fleet Operations Officer and Fleet Gunnery Officer of the Western Fleet, EXO of INS Vipul, GO of INS Ranjit, commissioning GO of INS Kuthar and commissioning GO VIII of INS Ranvir. His ashore appointments include Command Gunnery Officer at HQWNC, Naval Advisor to Government of Seychelles and Training Commander at INS Dronacharya. His Flag appointments include Commandant of Naval War College at Goa, Flag Officer Sea Training, Flag Officer Commanding Western Fleet, Chief of Staff, Western Naval Command, Controller Personnel Services, Chief of Personnel, NHQ. Prior to taking over as FOC-in-C Western Naval Command, VAdm R Hari Kumar was the first VCDS, post creation of the institution of Chief of Defence Staff (CDS)/ Secretary Department of Military Affairs (DMA). He served in the Civil-Military Operations Centre of UN Mission in Somalia (UNOSOM II) at Mogadishu from Dec 1992 to Jun 1993. He attended the US Naval Staff Course at Naval War College, Rhode Island in 1996, Army Higher Command Course at AWC, Mhow in 2004 and the Royal College of Defence Studies, London in 2009. He holds a B.Sc from JNU, MA (International Studies) from Kings College, London, MPhil (Defence and Strategic Studies) from Mumbai University and PG Diploma in Shipping Management from Narottam Morarjee Institute of Shipping, Mumbai. He was awarded the Vishist Seva Medal in 2010, Ati Vishist Seva Medal in 2016 and Param Vishist Seva Medal in 2021. He is presently the Chief of the Naval Staff.

**Capt Gyanendra Singh** is the CEO and Managing Partner at Abaca Research and Consultancy Services, a Safety Consultancy Firm, and Founder Director – Utkrisht Gyan Edu Solutions Pvt Ltd. He comes from a defence background. He completed his professional training on board Training Ship Chanakya. Upon completion of training he was awarded “Runner’s up for President’s Gold Medal” and adjudged “Cadet with most Officer-like Qualities”. He has served at sea for 16 years, with over 6 years in command. While serving ashore for 9 years, he has carried out Accident investigations and P&I Surveys for Damages, Safety, Security and Operational inspections and audits on board ships, and Training on board and ashore. He is a columnist in few shipping magazines. Visits training institutes and Maritime events as motivational speaker and Corporate Trainer. He is a registered trainer with DNV-GL. He holds various Professional



memberships, being “A Director at Nautical Institute India West”, “A Warden of the Court of The Company of Master Mariners of India” and “Ex-Committee member of DRACEA (Dufferin – Rajendra – Chanakya Ex-Cadets Association)”.

**Dr Malini V Shankar** is a career bureaucrat belonging to the 1984 batch of the Indian Administrative Service and is currently the Vice Chancellor of the Indian Maritime University. She is also the Chairperson of the National Shipping Board (Government of India) and a Member of the Government appointed Board of the Directors of the IL&FS group of companies. She obtained her doctoral degree in Institutional Economics from the Indian Institute of Technology, Madras (India) and Management degree from the Asian Institute of Management, Manila, Philippines. She also holds a Master's Degree in Chemistry from Mount Holyoke College, Massachusetts, USA. She had her professional mid-career training at the IIAP (Institut Internationale d'Administration Publique), in Paris, France, from where she obtained a diplome in International Economics. She has been a recipient of several academic recognitions. In recognition of her professional achievements, she has been invited by academic and professional organisations to contribute to policy making and represented India in international fora. Dr Shankar was nominated by the IMO as an honorary Member of the Board of Directors of the World Maritime University (2018-2021).

**Dr Anuradha Majumdar**, Dean of Faculty of Science and Technology, University of Mumbai, has more than 24 years of experience as an academician and scientist. Currently she is leading the newly established Centre of Excellence in Maritime Studies (CEMAS) established in the Kalina Campus of University of Mumbai in the capacity of In Charge Director. Dr Majumdar's area of specialisation is Pharmacology. Dr Majumdar has successfully completed a significant number of Government sponsored projects including AICTE, BRNS-DAE, DBT-BIRAC, DBT, UGC Major etc. She is a consultant to Pharmaceutical and allied industries and has completed several industry sponsored projects. Recently her “Proof of Concept” on a drug delivery system platform has been selected by Cipla Ltd in its Innoventia drive and taken up by the company for further development. She has taken up the mantle of Dean, Science and Technology since more than a year and has worked relentlessly towards upward benchmarking of academics and research at the University of Mumbai.

**Prof (Dr) S Shanthakumar** is the Director, Gujarat National Law University with about 30 years of teaching experience at prestigious universities including Hidayatullah National Law University. Prof Shanthakumar is holding charge as the Director of Gujarat Maritime University and also appointed as the President of Gujarat International Maritime Arbitration Centre. He is an alumnus of Madras University, Chennai, where he earned his graduation, post-graduation and doctorate degree in law. Before joining the legal academia, he had practiced at the Madras High Court for seven years. His areas of specialisation are Environmental Law, Human Rights Law, International Law and Constitutional Law. He has authored 3 books on Environmental Law and 2 books on Human Rights Law published by LexisNexis, National Law School of India University, Tamil Nadu Dr Ambedkar Law University, etc. He has published a number of research articles on contemporary legal issues in various national and international journals and edited volumes. He has presented papers and delivered key note addresses in many national and international conferences in India and abroad. He is also the recipient of prestigious awards like the Environmental Law Champions Development Award from Asian Development Bank, Philippines and the Best Social Scientist Award from the Indian Society of Criminology. At the IP Fest 2020, Prof Shanthakumar has been recognised as the IP director of the year. He has travelled around the globe extensively and had the privilege of being invited to deliver lectures at 30 premier Universities in various countries.

**Commodore J Gurumani** was commissioned in the Navy on 01 July 1994. He is an alumnus of Naval War College, Goa, Defence Services Staff College, Wellington and a Master in

Hydrographic Surveying from Goa University. He holds a Diploma in Geo-Informatics from C-DAC Pune and also undergone Ice Navigation Course at Buenos Aires, Argentina. In the year 2005, he led the Naval Hydrographic team as part of 25th Indian Scientific Expedition to Antarctica. He has held various appointments afloat and ashore that includes Commanding Officer of IN Ships Investigator and Darshak. He has tenanted appointments at National Institute of Hydrography, Goa, National Hydrographic Office, Dehradun and Integrated Headquarters Ministry of Defence (Navy), New Delhi. He is presently Commodore (Hydrography) at Office of the Chief Hydrographer to the Government of India at New Delhi.

**Cmde Ajay Chitnis (Retd)** was commissioned into the Indian Navy as a Naval Aviator in June 1971. He specialized as a Helicopter Pilot, and is a pioneer in Ship-borne Helicopter operations, having garnered a lot of experience flying off the Decks of Leander Class Frigates and the Rajput Class Destroyers. He has also commanded three Frontline ships, an Operational Air Station and was the Naval Officer-in Charge of Gujarat during the 1999 Kargil War. He has been decorated with two Gallantry Awards - Shaurya Chakra and Nao Sena Medal. After retiring from the Navy in 2001, he spent 15 years in the Offshore Maritime Industry, both at sea and ashore. He is currently the Vice President of Indian Maritime Foundation.

**Commander Mohan Narayan (Retd)**, an alumnus of the National Defence Academy, Pune, was commissioned into the Indian Navy on 01 Jul 1978. A Communication and Electronic Warfare specialist, he has held a number of appointments in the Navy. Cdr Narayan has had the privilege of being the longest serving Curator of the Maritime History Society (MHS), Mumbai from 2000 to 2015. In that capacity he planned, organised and conducted the myriad activities of the Society. Eighteen of the twenty books published by the MHS on India's maritime past / heritage were during his watch. He was part of the team that between 2001-04 set up the Maritime Heritage Exhibition at Mumbai during the first ever International Fleet Review, the restoration of the Bombay Castle, heritage walks of the 500-year-old Naval Dockyard, the maritime museum onboard the Vikrant, the memorial at Cooperage in honour of the Naval Uprising of 1946 and the Ballard Bunder Museum. In 2011, he independently curated the 45-day Maritime Heritage Exhibition at CSMVS involving all major maritime agencies in the country. After relinquishing charge of the MHS in 2015, Cdr Narayan remains actively engaged in his pursuit and promotion of maritime history and heritage.

**Mr Bharat Gothoskar** studied mechanical engineering and business management, but actually wanted to be a conservation architect. The city's history and heritage has been an abiding interest in him since childhood, and that made him give up a 16 years career in sales and marketing with corporate houses like Godrej, Pidilite and Mahindra to pursue his passion of Heritage Evangelism through experiential travel. Khaki Tours was founded by him in 2015 to create awareness about Mumbai's history and heritage in a fun and interesting manner. In 2018, the Khaki Heritage Foundation (KHF) was formed with the objectives of conservation, archiving and generating awareness about heritage in Mumbai and beyond. One of the Foundation's initiatives is the KHAKI Lab, a multi-purpose cultural space dedicated to the city of Mumbai.

**Ms Batul Raaj Mehta** is the founding partner of Batul Raaj Mehta & Associates (BRMA), a museum and cultural planning firm based out of Mumbai. As one of the foremost museum planners in India she prioritizes audiences, their engagement with content, with cultural and historical narratives. She has led teams for the Bihar Museum, one of modern India's largest museum projects, the Statue of Unity Museum, Gujarat, Dr APJ Abdul Kalam Science City, Patna, The Science Gallery Bengaluru which is part of the prestigious Science Gallery International Network, the Koba Jain Museum, Gujarat, the historic Patna Museum, Patna and the National Maritime Heritage Museum, Lothal. Batul has a degree in architecture from CEPT, Ahmedabad and

further specialisation in heritage management from Brandenburg Technical University, Germany. She has worked on heritage, conservation, and museum projects across seven countries.

**Dr Rukshana Nanji** is a double postgraduate and has a doctorate in Archaeology. She has worked at several excavations in Gujarat, Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra and Karnataka. She has authored two books and numerous papers in edited volumes and academic journals and has presented her work extensively at conferences and seminars in India and abroad. Her main area of study is the maritime history and archaeology of coastal sites with special interest in the Early Medieval period.

**Ms Meera Bhadre** is a Doctoral Scholar and faculty at the Dept of Political Science, SNDT Women's University, Mumbai. She has teaching experience of over 10 years engaging both graduates, post-graduates and even UPSC and SSB aspirants. Her subjects of interest include Political Thought and Theory, Peace and Conflict Studies, and International Relations. She has conducted independent research in areas of foreign policy, geopolitics, strategic affairs, and maritime history. She has been associated with Indian Navy's IFR 2016 as a researcher and contributing editor for its publications.

**Master Adhvait Prasant Menon** is a Class X student of NCS, Mumbai. Adhvait started sailing at the age of 09 and has received several awards at state and national events. He has sailed Optimist, Enterprise, Laser Standard and Laser 4.7 classes of boats. His hobbies also include debating and essay writing and also enjoys running.

**Surgeon Lieutenant Commander Swati** is a serving Medical Officer at INS Angre, Mumbai. She is an avid adventure enthusiast, a healer and a mother to a three years old. She has done basic Sky Diving course and keeps keen interest in sailing. She always looks forward to adventures and also wants to experience mountaineering.

**Mr Pratekk Tandoan** is a full-time professional artist. Hills, greenery & rain make him creative and inspire him with unique ideas. His paintings are mostly Landscapes (including Seascapes), on Spirituality & on Magic & Fantasy. His solo art exhibition was held at Nehru Centre, Worli, Mumbai in August, 2018 where 40 artworks, primarily landscapes were displayed. His work has been displayed in prestigious art galleries such as Jehangir Art Gallery, Mumbai, Gallery Gold, Kolkata and many galleries of Pune. Am a life member of the Art Society of India, Mumbai and the Secretary of the Society of Indian Marine Artists (SIMA), Pune.

**Ms Deepshikha Saxena** is a Pune based self-learnt artist and has been practicing art since childhood. She is a nature lover and hence her pictures are also close to mother nature. She also loves travelling and likes to put what inspires her into her work.

Author, Archaeologist and Museologist, **Ms Tiya Chatterji** likes being known as a 'Maritime Enthusiast'. She is passionate about Underwater Archaeological and Maritime History studies and is a Padi certified diver and finds her peace in diving and helping her stray furry friends. Her goal is to aid the dissemination of knowledge about the maritime domain and bridge the gap between laymen and professionals. She is currently working as a Research Associate for the Indian Naval History Division, New Delhi, and as a freelance writer and editor for academic and non-academic platforms.

**Commodore G Prakash, NM (Retd)** is an alumnus of Sainik School, Kazhakootam and the National Defence Academy. He retired from the Indian Navy on 31 Dec 2019 after serving 35 years in the Executive Branch, with Air Warfare and Anti Submarine Warfare as specialisations.

During active service he has commanded three Warships and three large Bases, including INS Venduruthy, the largest Base of the Indian Navy. He was also the Director of the Maritime Warfare Centre at Kochi. Has served twice at the Naval Headquarters at New Delhi and at the Headquarters of all the three Regional Commands of the Indian Navy. He has well rounded exposure to Naval Operations, Strategic Planning, Operational Planning, Project Management, Fiscal Management, Leadership, Large Community Management, Security and Training. He has been lecturing on several subjects for over 15 years, and has lectured at the National Defence College, New Delhi, the Naval War College at Goa, The College of Defence Management at Hyderabad, The College of Air Warfare at Secunderabad, DSSC Wellington, the Centre for Air Power Studies, New Delhi, Centre for Joint Warfare Studies, New Delhi, at various Colleges in India and at various national and international seminars. Salient topics of his academic interest are World History, Military History, Maritime History, Strategic Affairs, Maritime Strategy, Military Affairs, Leadership & Motivation.

**Ms Richa Pant** is an Indian documentary film director, writer and the Creative Director of MASS Studios. She has over two decades of experience as a broadcast journalist and has worked with media organisations like NDTV in India and BBC World Service in London. A Chevening scholar who turned her creative genius to tell stories has won many international awards for films including 'Tarini', 'India's Citizen Squad', 'Kerala Floods' and 'Inside Indian Naval Academy'. Her body of work can be found on channels like National Geographic, History and Discovery India.

Writer of fourteen books & three screenplays of short films, **Commndant Kulpreet Yadav (Retd)** is a retired officer from the Indian Coast Guard. He's also an actor & filmmaker besides being a co-founder of two startups headquartered in Delhi NCR. Kulpreet lives with his family in Delhi and his latest book is titled "The Battle of Rezang La" (Penguin India, Sep 2021).

**Mr Vishnu Som** is NDTV's Executive Editor. He anchors Left, Right and Centre, the flagship 9 pm news show on NDTV 24x7 and has 8000 hours of live broadcast experience over a 25 year career, all in NDTV. He oversees the International and Defence beats and has a specific interest in maritime security. He has sailed with the Indian Navy on submarines and flown off the deck of the INS Viraat on a Sea Harrier trainer, two of his most memorable stories. Vishnu has been embedded in war zones covering the Kargil, Afghanistan, Congo and Iraq conflicts. He was the only Indian journalist in Sendai during the Japan tsunami, the first reporter to enter the 2001 Bhuj earthquake disaster zone and the first to report from Great Nicobar during the Indian Ocean tsunami.

**RAdm RJ Nadkarni, AVSM, VSM (Retd)** was commissioned on 01 Jul 1983 and served for 37 years in the Indian Navy, prior to his retirement in Nov 2020. A Navigation and Direction specialist, he had the privilege of commanding four ships and also held several other important Command and Staff appointments. He is a recipient of the AVSM and VSM for distinguished service.

An alumnus of the National Defence Academy, the Defence Services Staff College, the Naval War College, and the National Defence College, with BSc, MSc and MPhil degrees under his belt, **Vice Admiral Pradeep Chauhan, AVSM & Bar, VSM (Retd)** is currently the Director-General of the National Maritime Foundation, New Delhi. The admiral retired on 30 November 2013 after an illustrious four-decade-long career in the Executive Branch of the Indian Navy. His rich and varied naval career included a three-year deputation to the Government of Mauritius, where he set up and commanded the Mauritius National Coast Guard. He commanded four ships including the guided-missile frigate, INS Brahmaputra, and INS Viraat. As a Flag Officer, he was the Navy's first Assistant Chief of the Naval Staff (Foreign Cooperation & Intelligence), Chief of Staff of the Western Naval Command and the Commandant, Indian Naval Academy (Ezhimala).

He has been commended three times by the President of India for sustained distinguished service. After retirement, he is a much sought-after thought-leader, leadership mentor, and an outstanding orator. Apart from being on the visiting faculty of the higher-command establishments of all three of India's defence services, as also tri-Service establishments such as the College of Defence Management, Hyderabad and the National Defence College, New Delhi, he has also been advising the government through his interaction with the Integrated Headquarters of the Ministry of Defence (Navy), the Ministry of External Affairs, the National Security Council Secretariat, and the Joint Intelligence Committee.

**Cmde Srikant B Kesnur, VSM** has more than 35 years' experience in the field of operations, training, leadership, HR management and diplomacy. He has held several important assignments in the Indian Navy and commanded two frontline warships, INS Vindhyagiri and INS Jalashwa. He holds four master degrees in science and social sciences and is a PhD in African Studies. He has attended all important courses in the Navy and is a recipient of the Lentaigne medal from the Madras University for the best thesis while doing his masters. A frequent contributor to several in-house journals and magazines, he has also edited several of these journals. He has also been the lead write/ Chief Editor of nine books for the Navy. He is presently the Director of Maritime Warfare Centre, Mumbai and additionally the Officer-in-Charge of Indian Navy's History Project.

**Cdr Yogendra Kumar Sharma** is a Gunnery and Missile specialist with more than 13 years' experience in the field of operations, weapon analysis and training. Other than serving onboard frontline ships for about seven years, he has also tenated a shore appointment during which he was responsible for analysis of the weapon firings. He is presently the Directing Staff (Gunnery) at Maritime Warfare Centre, Mumbai.

**Ms Krishna Kataria** completed her M.A (Hons.) in Politics from University of Mumbai (2019). She also holds a Post Graduate Diploma in International Studies from University of Mumbai. The trajectory of her academic endeavours in Political Science and International Relations signifies her research interests in Geoeconomics, International Security Policy, India's Neighbourhood Policy and Maritime Security in the Indian Ocean Region. She has extensive think - tank and policy research experience. Currently, she works as a Project Research Associate with the Maritime History Society.

## **Acknowledgements**

We would like to acknowledge the contributions of various establishments, institutions and personnel who have facilitated the conduct of the webinar, assisted in generating the compendium and have been associated with the overall effort in bringing about the publication of this book.

At the outset, to all at Headquarters, Western Naval Command, under whose aegis the webinar was conducted and in particular, the following: -

- Adm R Hari Kumar, Former Flag Officer Commanding-in-Chief
- VAdm Ajendra Bahadur Singh, Flag Officer Commanding-in-Chief
- VAdm Krishna Swaminathan, Chief of Staff
- RAdm Sanjeev Sharma, Chief Staff Officer (Personnel & Administration)
- RAdm Janak Bevli, Chief Staff Officer (Operations)

The Indian Maritime Foundation (IMF) and the Nautical Institute India (West) who brought about the merchant marine interface and in particular, Capt Anand Dixit, Master Mariner (President IMF) and Capt Kapildev Bahl, Master Mariner {Chairman NI India (West)}.

We would also like to express our gratitude to VAdm Pradeep Chauhan (Retd), President, National Maritime Foundation who consented to deliver the Valedictory address.

And above all to the Officers and Men at Maritime Warfare Centre, Mumbai for their unstinting support and solidarity through this entire endeavour.