

INS Sahyadri at Exercise Malabar-2025

1.Introduction

- The **Indian Naval Ship (INS) Sahyadri**, a Guided Missile Stealth Frigate of the Indian Navy, is currently at **Guam** in the **Northern Pacific Ocean**.
- It is participating in the **multilateral Exercise Malabar-2025**, one of the most significant naval exercises involving key Indo-Pacific nations.

2. About Exercise Malabar

- **Origin:** Began in **1992** as a bilateral exercise between **India and the United States**.
- **Expanded Membership:**
 - **Japan** became a permanent participant in **2015**.
 - **Australia** joined in **2020**, making it a **quadrilateral naval exercise** involving all **QUAD nations** (India, USA, Japan, and Australia).
- **Purpose:**
 - Enhance **interoperability** and **coordination** among the navies.
 - Strengthen the **rules-based international order** and **freedom of navigation** in the Indo-Pacific region.
 - Promote **regional peace, stability, and security**.

3. Significance of India's Participation

- **Strategic Engagement:** Reaffirms India's commitment to the **Indo-Pacific vision** and **QUAD framework**.
 - **Regional Security:** Demonstrates a collective resolve to safeguard **maritime security, trade routes, and freedom of navigation**.
 - **Partnership Strengthening:** Highlights India's **enduring partnership** with other democratic maritime powers.
 - **Operational Readiness:** Provides Indian naval personnel exposure to **advanced naval tactics, technology sharing, and joint operations**.
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4. About INS Sahyadri

- **Class:** Shivalik-class (Project 17) **Guided Missile Stealth Frigate**.
- **Design and Construction:**
 - **Indigenously designed and built** by **Mazagon Dock Shipbuilders Limited (MDL), Mumbai**.
 - Embodies the vision of **'Aatmanirbhar Bharat'** (Self-Reliant India).
- **Capabilities:**
 - Equipped with **state-of-the-art stealth features** that reduce radar and infrared signatures.
 - Armed with **surface-to-air missiles, anti-ship missiles, torpedoes,** and **advanced sensors** for multi-dimensional warfare.
 - Designed for **anti-submarine, anti-surface,** and **anti-air operations**.
- **Previous Operations:**
 - Participated in various **bilateral and multilateral naval exercises**.
 - Deployed for **operational missions** across the Indo-Pacific region, showcasing India's maritime strength.

5. Structure of Exercise Malabar-2025

The exercise is conducted in **two main phases**:

A. Harbour Phase (at Guam)

- **Focus:** Planning, interaction, and coordination.
- **Key Activities:**
 - Operational planning discussions.
 - Communication protocol alignment.
 - Cross-visits and familiarisation among participating navies.
 - Professional and cultural exchanges.
 - Sports events to build camaraderie.

B. Sea Phase

- **Focus:** Execution of complex joint naval operations.
- **Key Drills Include:**
 - **Joint Fleet Operations** – coordinated maneuvers among multi-nation fleets.
 - **Anti-Submarine Warfare (ASW)** – detection and neutralisation of submarines.
 - **Gunnery Serials** – live weapon firing exercises.
 - **Flying Operations** – coordination between ship-based and shore-based aircraft.
 - **Maritime Surveillance and Air Defence Drills.**

6. Broader Strategic Context

- **Indo-Pacific Strategy:** Exercise Malabar underlines India's growing naval role in the **Indo-Pacific**, balancing regional power dynamics.
- **Maritime Diplomacy:** Reflects India's emphasis on "**Security and Growth for All in the Region (SAGAR)**" policy.
- **Defence Cooperation:** Enhances **trust, communication, and technical coordination** among partner navies.
- **Deterrence:** Sends a message of **collective preparedness** against any maritime threats or coercive tactics in international waters.

7. Relevance for UPSC Exam

- **GS Paper II (IR Section):** India's role in multilateral engagements and Indo-Pacific cooperation.
- **GS Paper III (Security Section):** Maritime security, defence modernization, and indigenisation under Aatmanirbhar Bharat.
- **Essay Paper:** Topics related to India's foreign policy and regional stability in the Indo-Pacific.

8. Conclusion

The participation of **INS Sahyadri** in **Exercise Malabar-2025** symbolizes:

- India's **strategic alignment** with like-minded nations.
- Its **commitment to maritime security** and a **free and open Indo-Pacific**.
- And the growing success of India's **indigenisation efforts** in building advanced naval platforms like INS Sahyadri.

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