

4. All Women Samudra Pradakshina – Defence

Rajnath Singh flags off 'Samudra Pradakshina', world's first tri-service all-women circumnavigation sailing expedition. Samudra Pradakshina is the world's first tri-service, all-women expedition to circumnavigate the globe on an indigenously built yacht. The 9-month voyage is a powerful national statement on 'Nari Shakti', armed forces' jointness, and India's 'Aatmanirbhar Bharat' vision.

The Expedition – An Overview

Samudra Pradakshina is the world's first-ever tri-service, all-women global circumnavigation sailing expedition.

The Crew – The expedition features 10 women officers drawn from all three branches of the Indian armed forces – the Army, Navy, and Air Force.

The Vessel – The journey is being undertaken on the Indian Army Sailing Vessel (IASV) Triveni, a 50-foot, indigenously built yacht.

The Voyage – It is a grueling 9-month expedition (September 2025 – May 2026) that will cover approximately 26,000 nautical miles.

The Route – The challenging easterly route involves crossing the Equator twice and navigating around the Three Great Capes of the Southern Hemisphere – Cape Leeuwin (Australia), Cape Horn (South America), and the Cape of Good Hope (South Africa).

Symbolism and National Vision

Nari Shakti (Women's Empowerment) – The expedition is a powerful and visible symbol of women's leadership and capability in high-risk, high-skill maritime domains that have traditionally been dominated by men.

Tri-Service Integration – It serves as a tangible example of the increasing jointness and synergy among the Indian Army, Navy, and Air Force, a key priority for modernizing India's armed forces.

Aatmanirbhar Bharat (Self-Reliant India) – The use of an indigenously built yacht for a global mission underscores India's growing self-reliance in its defense and maritime manufacturing capabilities.

Strategic and Geopolitical Significance

Blue-Water Aspirations – The expedition is a clear demonstration of India's blue-water naval ambitions, showcasing its capacity to operate and sustain long-duration missions across the globe.

Soft Power Diplomacy – Such ventures act as a form of soft power diplomacy, projecting India's national values—including its commitment to gender equality and sustainable seafaring—onto the world stage.

Geopolitical Signalling – The voyage is a visible assertion of India's maritime confidence, with its flag being carried across the world's most critical sea lanes of communication.

Social and Cultural Impact

Breaking Gender Stereotypes – The image of women officers undertaking an extreme endurance challenge like global circumnavigation directly challenges and helps to dismantle traditional gender stereotypes.

Inspiration for a New Generation – The mission serves as a potent source of inspiration, encouraging more young women to consider careers in the armed forces, especially with expanded recruitment opportunities under the Agnipath scheme.

Public Engagement – The expedition is linked to a national and global awareness campaign that connects the theme of women's empowerment directly with the larger project of nation-building.

Operational and Training Value

High-Level Skill Demonstration – The journey demands an exceptional level of professional competence, including advanced seamanship, navigation, meteorology, and crisis management under some of the world's most extreme oceanic conditions.

Fostering Jointness – As the first time that officers from all three services are sailing together on such a prolonged global mission, it provides an invaluable opportunity to foster inter-service camaraderie and operational understanding.

Resilience Building – The 9-month voyage in a confined and high-risk environment is a powerful tool for enhancing the psychological endurance, leadership skills, and teamwork of the crew.

Key Challenges of the Voyage

Extreme Weather – The crew will face some of the world's most treacherous waters, especially when rounding Cape Horn and navigating the Southern Ocean, which are infamous for high winds, massive waves, and sub-zero temperatures.

Sustenance and Logistics – The mission requires meticulous and robust planning for food, water, medical emergencies, and arranging for technical support or repairs in remote parts of the world.

Crew Well-being – Maintaining positive mental health and strong crew cohesion is a critical challenge during a 9-month voyage in a confined and high-stress environment.

Conclusion – A Statement of Modern Maritime Power

Samudra Pradakshina is more than just a sailing expedition; it is a national statement on India's progress in women's leadership, defense preparedness, and maritime ambition. By weaving together the threads of gender empowerment, strategic signalling, and Aatmanirbhar Bharat, the expedition effectively positions India as a modern, inclusive, and capable maritime power.

Source – https://www.thehindu.com/news/national/rajnath-singh-flags-off-samudra-pradakshina-worlds-first-tri-service-all-women-circumnavigation-sailing-expedition/article70038151.ece#google_vignette

