

# EXERCISE MILAN 08

## *Friendship Across the Seas*

by Mrityunjoy Mazumdar/Bharat Rakshak, Jan 2008

This year's MILAN multinational exercise took place from 18 - 23 January at Port Blair in the Andaman and Nicobar Islands. The event was characterized by the largest participation to date, with several ASEAN member countries attending. This underscores the growing significance of this exercise within the context of the Indian Navy's "Look East" policy and naval interactions to this effect. In addition to Indian naval vessels, eight naval vessels from Australia, Bangladesh, Indonesia, Myanmar, Singapore, Sri Lanka and Thailand participated in the exercise. Naval delegations from Brunei, Malaysia, New Zealand and Vietnam arrived by air. This year's event marked the first time that an Australian ship deployed to the exercise along with the participation of Brunei, New Zealand and Vietnam.

Visiting naval vessels were HMAS Maitland (Australia), BNS Sangu (Bangladesh), KRI Cut Nyak Den (Indonesia), UMS Bayintaung (Myanmar), RSS Punggol and RSS Katong (Singapore), SLNS Suranimila (Sri Lanka) and HTMS Thayanchon (Thailand)

MILAN, meaning *meeting* in Hindi, is a biennial gathering of regional navies that is hosted by the Indian Navy. The aim of this exercise is to foster understanding and cooperation in the areas of common interest and safeguard SLOC's (sea lanes of communication) from poaching, piracy and terrorist activities, promote interoperability to the extent possible and engage in joint search and rescue and humanitarian operations.

Opportunities to promote understanding and camaraderie amongst the navies are encouraged through ship visits, social interactions and cultural presentations by the participating countries.

MILAN has grown from a small congregation of five nations to nine during 2006 (with 20 ships attending from eight countries) to 11 nations (of 13 invited) and 16 ships in 2008.



Growth of Ex MILAN from 1995 to 2006

MILAN's have been held in 1995, 1997, 1999, 2003 and 2006. The event was not held in 2001 and 2005. In 2001, the Indian Navy hosted an International Fleet Review. In 2005, the region was recovering from the after effects of the devastating tsunami of 26 Dec 2004 and all available naval assets were deployed in relief work.

### **Day 1, 18 Jan 2008.**

Six foreign naval ships, HMAS Maitland (Australia), BNS Sangu (Bangladesh), KRI Cut Nyak Den (Indonesia), UMS Bayintaung (Myanmar), SLNS Suranimila (Sri Lanka) and HTMS Thayanchon (Thailand) arrived during the morning hours of the 18th of January while the two ships from Singapore, RSS Punggol and RSS Katong arrived on the morning of the 19<sup>th</sup> of January. Arriving ships were given a traditional military welcome with gun salutes and by the Navy Band and children from Navy Children's School.

Visiting delegates, along with the commanding officers of the visiting ships, called on Air Marshal S Radhakrishnan, AVSM, Commander-In-Chief Andaman Nicobar Command and Commodore A. V. S. Ramesh, Naval Component Commander.



Later in the afternoon the Hon'ble Lieutenant Governor Lt Gen (Retd) Bhopinder Singh, PVSM, AVSM hosted the delegates and the commanding officers at Raja News and had a fruitful interaction with the guests.

The personnel of the visiting ships were conducted around the city of Port Blair including the light and sound show at the national memorial. The day culminated with an enthralling dance performance by Dr Sonal Mansingh at the Milan ground.



HMAS Maitland at Naval Jetty, Port Blair. *Indian Navy*

For HMAS Maitland, an Armidale Class Patrol Boat, MILAN was the highlight of her maiden South-East Asian deployment from Darwin commencing 05 January 2008. The ship's company will also get the opportunity to promote the RAN's relationship with other Navies through port visits to Singapore, Thailand and Malaysia. This deployment was part of her pre-commissioning sea acceptance trials. Maitland will be fully commissioned upon her return to Australia.



UMS Bayint Naung of Burma (Myanmar) Navy at Naval Jetty, Port Blair. *Indian Navy*

Burmese (Myanmar) naval vessel UMS Bayint Naung (pennant 772) is an indigenous 77m corvette armed with 4 Chinese C-802 surface to surface missiles and a 76mm Oto Melara 76/62 Compact gun mount. Her sister ship, UMS Anawratha (pennant 771) visited Port Blair during Milan 06.

Bangladeshi OPV BNS Sangu (P 713) departed Chittagong Naval Base on 15th January, 2008 with officers from the Bangladesh Army and Bangladesh Air Force.



BNS Turag P 714, sister ship of BNS Sangu, P 713. *flickr.com*



Indonesian corvette, KRI Cut Nyak Dien *Indian Navy*

KRI Cut Nyak Dien is a Parchin class corvette acquired from the former GDR.



SLNS Suranimila

SLN

SLNS Suranila is a Saar 4 class Fast Missile Vessel of the Sri Lanka Navy that was acquired from Israel. She recently took part in two deep sea operations to sink several LTTE supply and logistics vessels.



HTMS Thayanchon.

RTN

HTMS Thayanchon is a Thai built corvette displacing around 600 tons.

### Day 2, 19 Jan 2008.

This was a busy day with two Bedok class MCM vessels arriving from Singapore, sightseeing tours, ship visits, professional exercises, dress rehearsals for the city parade and cultural programs taking place simultaneously.



RSS Katong. Punggol is identical. These Bedok/ Landsort class MCMV were built in Sweden.

E.S.

*Estrada/flickr.com*

The highlight of this day was a Table Top Exercise focusing on maritime issues such as anti-piracy, search and rescue and pollution control common to all the participating countries.



The participants were exposed to a live situation and countries were divided into three syndicates. The exercise provided an opportunity for the participating countries to discuss their individual strengths and bring out a collective solution. Issues such as inter-operability and coordination of operational procedures were also highlighted during the exercise.

### Day 3, 20 Jan 2008.

Beginning with a Pollution Control Demonstration by the Coast Guard, the third day was largely devoted to a day long professional seminar to discuss issues like Maritime terrorism, Maritime Domain Awareness through regional co-operation, surveillance, coordinated patrol. The seminar, titled 'Regional Maritime Cooperation - A Necessity For Growth' was inaugurated by Air Marshal S. Radhakrishnan, AVSM, Commander-In-Chief, Andaman And Nicobar Command. In his inaugural

address, C-in-CAN highlighted the fact that the maritime threats were transnational in nature and no single country would be able to contain these by her singular actions. He said that as the oceans were indivisible and the maritime threats do not respect any boundaries, there was a need for regional cooperation at all levels be it bi-lateral or multi-lateral to ensure the growth of this region.



The seminar was conducted in three sessions. The focus was on issues pertaining to maritime security, marine environment and disaster management. During the proceedings of the seminar, 11 professional papers were presented by the participating countries. During the presentation, speakers highlighted the need for understanding regional problems and information sharing. There was a general agreement on the need for an institutionalized framework for multi-lateral cooperation to ensure the growth and prosperity of the region. The seminar concluded with closing address by Rear Admiral P.K Nair, Chief Of Staff, Andaman and Nicobar Command.

#### **Day 4, 21 Jan 2008.**

The main event of the fourth day was the City Parade which included a parade by contingents from all participating ships, Naval, local school children, NCC and police contingents, an Air display by Su 30 of the IAF, Marcos demo, Army Dare Devils show, Beating Retreat and fireworks. Naval ships were also illuminated at night.



Ship visits. INS Tarangini and a LSTM can be seen alongside.

The visiting ships were opened to the public. Earlier in the day, an amphibious demo, including slithering operations, were carried out.

#### **Day 5, 22 Jan 2008.**

This day was mostly for sporting activities. The Indian Air Force organized flights to Carnic AFB using IL 76 and AN 32 transports for visiting sailors and officers. A communications exercise/ trials were conducted in preparation for next day's Passage Exercise (Passex) involving the 8 visiting ships and 8 Indian ships.

#### **Day 6, 23 Jan 2008.**

MILAN 08 ended on 23 Jan 2008 with ships leaving Port Blair for the traditional Passex.

The visiting naval ships ceremonially departed Naval Jetty with the Indian Naval band playing military tunes and the national anthems of all participating countries.



Myanmar corvette UMS Bayint Naung casting off for Passex. Indian Navy

The Singapore Naval Ships, RSS Katong and RSS Punggol, were first vessels to depart in the morning and the last vessel to leave was Thailand's HTMS Thayanchon. Commodore A.V.S. Ramesh, Naval Officer In-charge, Andaman & Nicobar, was the overall officer in-charge of this exercise, during which the participating ships carried out maneuvers, communication drills. The Passex culminated with a steam past.

The next MILAN Exercise is scheduled for 2010.

**ARRIVAL DETAILS OF SHIPS AND DELEGATES – MILAN 08 AS ON 16 JAN 08 0800 HR**

**BY SHIP**

COUNTRY	NAME OF SHIP	CO	XO	DELEGATE/DESIGNATION	ARR/DEP DETAILS
AUSTRALIA	HMAS MAITLAND ETA 180800	LT CDR TROY VAN TIENHOVEN	LT EVAN SMITH	CAPT LESLIE VAUGHN HENRY RIXON, CSC, CDR AUSTRALIAN PATROL BOAT GROUP	ARR/DEP ONBOARD MAITLAND 180800.
BANGLADESH	BNS SANGU ETA 180945	CDR MASUQ HASSAN	LT CDR ABMJH BHUIYAN	--	--
MYANMAR	UMS BAYANTNAUNG ETA 171730	CDR SOE AUNG		CMDE MYO MYINT THAN, CDR KO KO KYAW, CDR NAING MIN KYAW	ARR/DEP ONBOARD BAYANTNAUNG ETA 171730, ETD 250930
INDONESIA	KRI CUT NYA DHEIN ETA 180830	MAJ TEGUH GUNAWAN		COL MOCHAMAD IMRON JUNAEDI LT COL MOHAMAD ZAENAL	ETA 180830 ONBOARD
SINGAPORE	RSN PUNGGOL, ETA 190800 RSN KATONG ETA 190800	MAJ CHIA CHUN HOE CLARANCE MAJ HO CHING MING TERENCE	CAPT NGO WOON KIAT ALEC CAPT TAN KIAN TECK	COL HARRIS CHAN DY DIR COASTAL CD LT COL TAN YONG KEE, SR OFFR MCM SQN	ARR ONBOARD RSN SHIP ETA 190800, DEP AM 25 JAN BY RSN MPA.
SRI LANKA	SNLS SURANIMILA ETA 180900	CDR JP PRAMARATNE		CMDE S JAYAKODY	ARR/DEP ONBOARD SURANIMILA ETA 180900
THAILAND	HTMS THAYANCHON ETA 181330	LT CDR SARAWUT PHENTHONG		CAPT RONNAPHOB KANCHNABANDHU DIR OPS DIV 3 <sup>RD</sup> NAVAL AREA CD	ARR/DEP ONBOARD THAYANCHON ETA 181330 ETD 240830

**ARRIVAL DETAILS OF SHIPS AND DELEGATES – MILAN 08 AS ON 16 JAN 08 0800 HR**

**BY AIR**

COUNTRY	DELEGATE/DESIGNATION	ARR/DEP DETAILS
BRUNEI	LT COL (L) ROSLAN DIN DATO PADUKA HAJI YAKUB, ARMADA CDR	ETA 170705 BY 9W629 ETD 240835 BY IC 550
MALAYSIA	RADM DATO AHMAD KAMARULZAMAN BIN AHMAD BADARUDDIN, CDR NAVAL AREA 2	ETA 180750 BY IC 549. ETD 201240 BY IC 550.
NEW ZEALAND	CMDE AJ PARR	ETA 171210 BY 9W613 ETD 241240 BY 9W 614
VIETNAM	SR CAPT NGUYAN VAN KIEM, DY COS CAPT PHAM VAN TRINH, DDNO	ETA 190705 BY 9W 629 ETD 231255 BY 9W1630

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