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**Press Information Bureau
Government of India
Ministry of Defence**

26-September-2015 11:32 IST

Visit of INS Trikand to Toulon, France

In continuation of Indian Navy's overseas deployment to West Asia, Africa and Europe, INS Trikand entered Toulon today for a three day visit. The ship will engage extensively with the French Navy during its stay in the country. Apart from professional interaction, a number of sports and social engagements are also planned, which would go a long way in enhancing cooperation and understanding towards mutually beneficial issues of maritime interest. The Indian and French Navies routinely undertake bilateral maritime exercises known as VARUNA which is the fulcrum of maritime engagement between the two navies.

Indian naval assets are regularly deployed as part of the Indian Navy's mission of building 'Bridges of Friendship' and strengthening international cooperation with friendly countries as well as to address maritime concerns of the region including piracy in the Gulf of Aden.

Relations between India and France have traditionally been close and friendly. With the establishment of the strategic partnership in 1998, there has been significant progress in all areas of bilateral co-operation including defence, nuclear energy and space. Both countries conduct a high-level annual exercise code-named 'Varuna', the last edition of which was conducted off Goa this year with the participation of the French aircraft carrier, Charles De Gaulle. India and France are also collaborating in the Scorpene submarine programme, under which six submarines are being built in India with French assistance.

INS Trikand, commanded by Captain Vinay Kalia, is a state-of-the-art warship of the Indian Navy equipped with a versatile range of weapons and sensors capable of addressing threats in all the three dimensions – air, surface and sub-surface. The visiting ship is part of the Indian Navy's Western Fleet and is under the operational command of the Flag Officer Commanding-in-Chief, Western Naval Command, with its Headquarters at Mumbai.

DKS/CKP 70/2015