

Update on Indian Navy's Circumnavigation Voyage

Commander Dilip Donde of the Indian Navy set sail on August 19, 2009, to create Indian maritime history by circumnavigating the globe on a yacht, alone. He is on the last leg of his trip — his boat, Mhadei, docked into Cape Town on Thursday, February 25, 2010 — and he aims to reach Mumbai by May-end.

The 56-foot sloop INSV Mhadei was flagged off from Mumbai on August 19, 2009 for a maiden attempt by an Indian to circumnavigate the world, in which less than 300 persons world over could succeed so far. Commander Donde would cover about 21,600 nautical miles (38,880 kms) during his voyage. The circumnavigation of the world is an exercise that tests the human limits of endurance and tenacity and is challenge like no other, as the perils of the sea and the vagaries of the unpredictable weather to be faced by a lonely sailboat brings out the human spirit. The feat is often compared to conquering Mount Everest but requires greater mettle and much longer time.

Earlier, the Indian Naval Sailing Vessel Mhadei, , arrived at Port Stanley in Falkland Islands (UK) on Jan 15 after completing more than 14,000 nautical miles of voyage. Commander Donde left Christchurch in New Zealand on December 12, 2009 and travelled about 5,000 nautical miles (9,000 km) in his third leg of his voyage.

Interesting details of the circumnavigation voyage are:

- Was flagged off by in Aug 2009 by the then Chief of Naval Staff, Admiral Sureesh Mehta.
- A project conceived by Vice Admiral (Retd) M P Awati.
- Voyage planned for with four stops in Fremantle (Australia), Christchurch (New Zealand), Port Stanley (Falkland Islands), and Cape Town (South Africa) with a total Duration of nine months.
- At a cost of INR 6.5 crore funded by Government of India.

Details of Sailing yacht Mhadei are:

- Built by Aquarius Fibreglas, Goa.
- 56 feet long, Wood Core Fibreglass yacht.
- Carries a set of six sails to be used in different combinations to reach up to ten knots speed.
- Has all basic amenities and latest navigational and communication aids.
- Named after the river, Mhadei.

Excerpts from Commander Donde's blog, narrating the everyday experience as it were from the "horse's mouth" can be accessed at :
(<http://sagarparikrama.blogspot.com>)