

## Draft Press Release

### Handing Over of ICGS Varuna to Sri Lanka Coast Guard

1. Director General Rajendra Singh, PTM, TM, Director General, Indian Coast Guard formally handed over ICGS Varuna to Rear Admiral Samantha Wimalathunge, RWP, USP, Director General, Sri Lanka Coast Guard during a colourful ceremony on 05 Sep 17 at Kochi. Rear Admiral SS Ranasinghe, Chief of Staff, Sri Lanka Navy was also present during the ceremony.
2. The handing over of the Indian Coast Guard Offshore Patrol Vessel to Government of Sri Lanka for training and surveillance purposes is part of India's continuing efforts for cementing the historical and cultural ties between the two countries. It may be recalled that India has earlier handed over two OPVs of the Indian Coast Guard - Varaha in Apr 2006 and Vighraha in Aug 2008. Incidentally, DG Rajendra Singh had the honour and privilege of handing over the vessels on both earlier occasions.
3. ICGS Varuna, synonymous with Lord Varuna remained the 'Alma Mater' for Indian Coast Guard Officers over near three decades and has very glorious accomplishments to her credit. The Ship was decommissioned with traditional honours on 23 Aug 2017 to facilitate the handing over.
4. The ship has been allocated pennant number SLCG-60 by Sri Lanka Coast Guard and will be commanded by Captain (ASW) Neville Amara Ubayasiri. Prior to the ship's departure to Sri Lanka, the Sri Lanka Coast Guard crew will be imparted familiarisation and On Job Training by Indian Coast Guard Workup Team on ship handling, bridge navigation, engine room controls and machineries.
5. DG Rajendra Singh during his speech at the transfer ceremony, highlighted the significance of mutually beneficial relations shared between both the countries. DGICG also fondly remembered the contributions of the erstwhile training ship and wished good luck to the Sri Lankan crew in all future endeavours. The Director General, Sri Lanka Coast Guard conveyed deep gratitude of Sri Lanka Govt to the Government of India for the transfer. He also thanked the DG Coast Guard for proactive support and assistance for transfer of the ship to Sri Lanka Coast Guard.

