

PRESS RELEASE:
OVERSEAS DEPLOYMENT OF ICGS VARAHA TO AFRICA

New Delhi, 06 Feb 24: The Indian Coast Guard Ship Varaha, an Offshore Patrol Vessel, arrived at Port Mombasa, Kenya on 05 Feb 24, for a three-day visit as part of the overseas deployment of ICGS ships to Africa. The primary objectives of the visit are to strengthen long-standing diplomatic ties, enhance maritime cooperation, and promote interoperability with the Kenya Coast Guard Services (KCGS) and other maritime agencies. The itinerary includes professional interactions such as onboard training and lectures on Visit, Board Search and Seizure (VBSS) and Maritime Search and Rescue (M-SAR), cross-deck visits, joint yoga sessions, planning conferences, and table-top exercises for Marine Pollution Response (MPR). Activities during the port call involve Courtesy Calls by the Commanding Officer on various dignitaries and government officials of Kenya, including the Kenya Coast Guard Services.

Kenya and India have historically maintained warm and friendly bilateral relations, sharing common values and diverse cultures. Regular interactions between ICG and KCGS occur through ICG ship visits and various capacity building programmes. The overseas deployment of ICG ships aligns with the organization's plan to foster bilateral relationships and strengthen international cooperation with Foreign Friendly Countries (FFCs). During this Africa deployment, the ship is also scheduled to make port calls in Maputo, Mozambique and Dar-e-Salam, Tanzania.

This visit plays a crucial role in strengthening bilateral relationships with key maritime agencies, including the Kenya Coast Guard Services (KCGS), Mozambique Navy and Tanzanian Naval forces. These relationships, developed over the years, aim to ensure the safety, security, and cleanliness of the seas in the region while addressing contemporary maritime issues. Engagements with senior officials and personnel from these agencies during the visit will further enhance regional safety and security.

The visit of ICGS Varaha to Africa underscores India's ongoing efforts to foster friendly relations through maritime cooperation, aligning with the maritime vision of Hon'ble Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi, known as "SAGAR – Security and Growth for All in the Region," with due emphasis on the "Global South."

ICGS Varaha is part of the Indian Coast Guard fleet of OPVs, based on the West Coast of India in New Mangalore, Karnataka and operates under the operational command of Commander Coast Guard Region (West). The ship is equipped with modern weapon systems, sensors, state-of-the-art navigation and communication systems, including an integral helicopter to support both surface and air operations. Varaha has undertaken various Coast Guard operations, including Coastal Security and IMBL / EEZ surveillance, anti-transnational crimes, and Maritime SAR and Pollution Response operations in the past.

