

PRESS BRIEF
UNITED STATES COAST GUARD SHIP BERTHOLF VISIT
TO PORT BLAIR FOR JOINT EXERCISE WITH INDIAN COAST GUARD

New Delhi 07 Mar 24: The **United States Coast Guard Ship Bertholf arrived at Port Blair on 07 Mar 2024, for a two-day visit**, marking a significant step in bolstering bilateral cooperation between the Indian Coast Guard (ICG) and the United States Coast Guard (USCG). The visit is part of a broader initiative aimed at strengthening maritime security and safety in the Region.

The USCGC Bertholf is a Legend-class maritime security cutter, equipped with advanced technology and weaponry, including helicopter landing pad, state-of-the-art sensors and communication equipment. The ship serves the operational function for complex law enforcement, defence, and national security missions, reflecting the USCG's commitment to maritime safety and security.

Highlight of the visit is the upcoming joint exercise, codenamed "Sea Defenders-2024", scheduled to take place from 09-10 Mar 2024 off Port Blair. This exercise will involve coordinated efforts between the USCG Ship Bertholf and ICG ships and aircraft, focusing on aspects of maritime security and safety, especially counter drone attacks, drug interdiction and other contemporary transnational organized crimes in the oceans around us.

The exercise will simulate scenarios relevant to maritime piracy and asymmetric threats, including simulated drone attacks on commercial merchant traffic, joint maritime search and rescue operations, major firefighting, marine pollution response, and counter-drug interdiction exercises. Additionally, a simulated medical evacuation will be conducted to enhance readiness in emergency situations.

This visit underscores the importance of international cooperation in addressing maritime challenges and reaffirms the longstanding partnership

between the Indian Coast Guard and the United States Coast Guard. The presence of the USCGC Bertholf in India travelling more than 16000 Nautical Miles from Alameda, California reflects a shared commitment to upholding maritime norms and promoting a rules-based order in the Indo-Pacific region.

Coast Guard to Coast Guard cooperation is an important component of the strategic partnership between India and USA. The Indian Coast Guard has extensive interactions with United States Coast Guard (USCG), particularly in the field of training, exercises and cooperative measures. High level interactions between the two maritime agencies has been a regular feature towards maintaining professional relationship. On 22 Sep 2022, USCG Ship Midgett visited Chennai towards interaction and joint exercise with ICG.

During its stay in Port Blair, the USCGC Bertholf is scheduled to engage in a series of professional interactions, courtesy calls, and sports events, fostering camaraderie and mutual understanding between the two Coast Guard forces. Cross-deck visits will allow for the exchange of expertise and best practices in maritime operations.

