



PASSEX with the U.S.A

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Why in News

Recently, Indian Naval ships **conducted a Passage Exercise (PASSEX)** with the U.S. Navy's USS Nimitz carrier strike group near the Andaman and Nicobar islands.

- A passage exercise is normally undertaken whenever an opportunity arises, in **contrast to pre-planned maritime drills**.
- Recently, the Indian Navy had **also conducted similar PASSEXs with the Japanese Navy and the French Navy**.

Key Points

- **PASSEX:**

Four frontline Indian naval ships which included **INS ShivalikINS Sahyadri**INS Kamorta and INS Rana, teamed up with carrier USS Nimitz and three other U.S. ships to conduct the exercise.

USS Nimitz is the U.S. Navy's **largest aircraft carrier**.
- **Aim:**

To **improve the cooperation** between the U.S. and Indian maritime forces and to **maximize training and interoperability**, which also include air defence.
- **Impact:**
 - It will **enhance both sides' ability to counter threats at sea**, from piracy to violent extremism.

A free and open sea promotes an international rules-based order wherein each country can reach its potential without sacrificing national sovereignty.
 - It will also **present opportunities to build upon the pre-existing strong relationship** between the United States and India and allow both countries to learn from each other.

- **China Factor:**

- PASSEX comes amid a high alert by the Indian Navy in the Indian Ocean Region (IOR) due to the **stand-off with China along the border in Ladakh.**

The exercise also came amidst mounting tensions in the **South China Sea** where the U.S Navy just conducted a major exercise involving USS Nimitz and USS Ronald Reagan.

- The Indian Navy is keeping a close watch on the movement of Chinese naval ships in the IOR, whose presence has gone up considerably over the years in the name of anti-piracy patrols.

In 2017, China opened its first overseas military base in Djibouti in the Horn of Africa.

Source: TH