

PRESS INFORMATION BUREAU (DEFENCE WING)
GOVERNMENT OF INDIA

NEW NAVAL ESTABLISHMENT AT ANDAMANS

Vice-Admiral Soman Commissions I.N.S.
JARAWA

Port Blair (Andamans) Feb. 15, 1964
Magha 26, 1885

The islands of Andaman and Nicobar were put on the naval map of India when the Chief of the Naval Staff, Vice-Admiral B.S. Soman, formally commissioned I.N.S. JARAWA, the Navy's first establishment in these islands, here this morning.

At a colourful ceremony at Laddo hill, over looking the calm waters of the Port Blair harbour where ships of the Indian Fleet were anchored, the Chief of the Naval Staff handed over the commissioning warrant to Commander H.K. Mukerji, Commanding Officer of the new naval establishment. Following the naval tradition, the first lady of the Navy, Shrimati Soman, named the establishment as I.N.S. JARAWA after an ancient tribe of these islands.

A large gathering including the tribals of the area witnessed the ceremony. The Flag Officer Commanding Indian Fleet, Rear Admiral B.A. Samson; Commodore East Coast, Commodore J.S. Mehra and other important government officials were also present.

Speaking at the ceremony, Vice-Admiral Soman said that the commissioning of I.N.S. JARAWA was a step towards the development of Port Blair and the defence of India. The Indian Navy had, a long time back, planned to establish base facilities at Port Blair; the recent events along the country's frontiers had accelerated the fulfilment of those plans, he said. The Chief of the Naval Staff while advising the naval personnel to endear themselves to the local population of the islands asked the local authorities and the people there to look after the new "Baby" of the Navy which had been entrusted to their care.

I.N.S. JARAWA will provide the necessary communication and base facilities to naval ships operating in that area which is quite often the venue of a number of naval training exercises. The establishment will be administered by Commodore East Coast whose headquarters are at Vishakhapatnam.

After the commissioning ceremony a cultural programme was presented by the sailors, the local Police and representatives of the Onge tribe who had come from Little Andamans to attend the celebrations.

This was followed by a route march. Over 300 naval officers and sailors, marched through the many streets of the city. The day's celebrations concluded with the "Beating of the Retreat" by the band of I.N.S. MYSORE, illuminations and a display of fireworks. Ships of the Fleet were gaily illuminated and standing floodlit in the harbour gave a colourful display of fireworks.

Earlier, on Friday evening a reception was held in honour of the Chief of the Naval Staff on board I.N.S. MYSORE.