The Indian Navy's "two-fleet concept" has come into force with the formation of the Eastern fleet to be based at Visakhapatnam. The first Flag Officer to command the fleet will be Rear-Admiral Sree Harilal Sarma, 49, who has till recently been on the directing staff of the National Defence College, New Delhi.

The Navy's Indian Fleet was redesignated as the Western fleet on March 1, 1968, and was based at Bombay.

Admiral Sarma completed his initial training in the DUFFERIN in 1939 and was awarded the Viceroy's Gold Medal. After three years in the mercantile marine, he joined the Navy as a Reserve Officer and spent the remaining years of the war on convoy-escort duties and minesweeping operations in the south-east theatre.

Among the important appointments held by him were Deputy Indian Naval Adviser, London, Senior Officer of the 16th Frigate Squadron, Commanding Officer of INS 'MYSORE' and Chief of Staff, Western Naval Command.

RST:JLS(1927)