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SUBMARINE MUSEUM INAUGURATED AT VISAKHAPATNAM

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INS Kursura, a Foxtrot class submarine of the Indian Navy, was decommissioned and inaugurated as a museum at an impressive ceremony held at RK Beach, Visakhapatnam. Admiral VS Shekhawat (Retd), ex-Chief of the Naval Staff, the Chief Guest, dedicated the decommissioned submarine as a unique "Submarine Museum", the first of its kind in Asia. It would also give a boost to tourism. The ceremony was attended by Vice Admiral Vinod Pasricha, the Flag Officer Commanding-in-Chief, Eastern Naval Command, Vice Admiral RN Ganesh, and a number of ex-Commanding Officers including Rear Admiral Arun Auditto (Retd), first Commanding Officer of INS Kursura.

Commissioned at Riga in erstwhile USSR on 18 Dec 1969, INS Kursura joined the 8th Submarine Squadron which paved the way for a new cra in the history of our country adding a third dimension to it. She served both the Eastern and Western seaboard of the country for 31 long glorious and eventful years before assuming the distinction of being converted to a Naval Museum. Such a Submarine Museum does not exist anywhere in Asia. The submarine played an important and major operational role in 1971 war whilst she was deployed in blockading of sea-lanes and ensured effective deterrence against the enemy's naval forces. She participated in a number of flag showing missions to foreign ports in South East Asia and many other countries.

The novel idea of converting a decommissioned submarine into a museum at Visakhapatnam was conceived by Headquarters, Eastern Naval Command with an aim to bring the Navy closer to the civilian population and provide them, the layman and learned alike, an exclusive opportunity to have an invaluable experience of boarding a submarine and getting an insight into various aspects of its weaponry, machinery, confined spaces and life onboard. This city of destiny is considered to be the most befitting place for the museum, as Visakhapatnam is the home station for all the submariners of the Indian Navy where the premier submarine operational establishment, INS Virbahu and training establishment, INS Satavahana are located.

The arduous task of beaching the submarine was undertaken by the Naval Ship Research and Design Centre at Visakhapatnam and accomplished after sustained efforts and perseverance. It has indeed been a marvel of engineering to bring the submarine on to the beach.

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