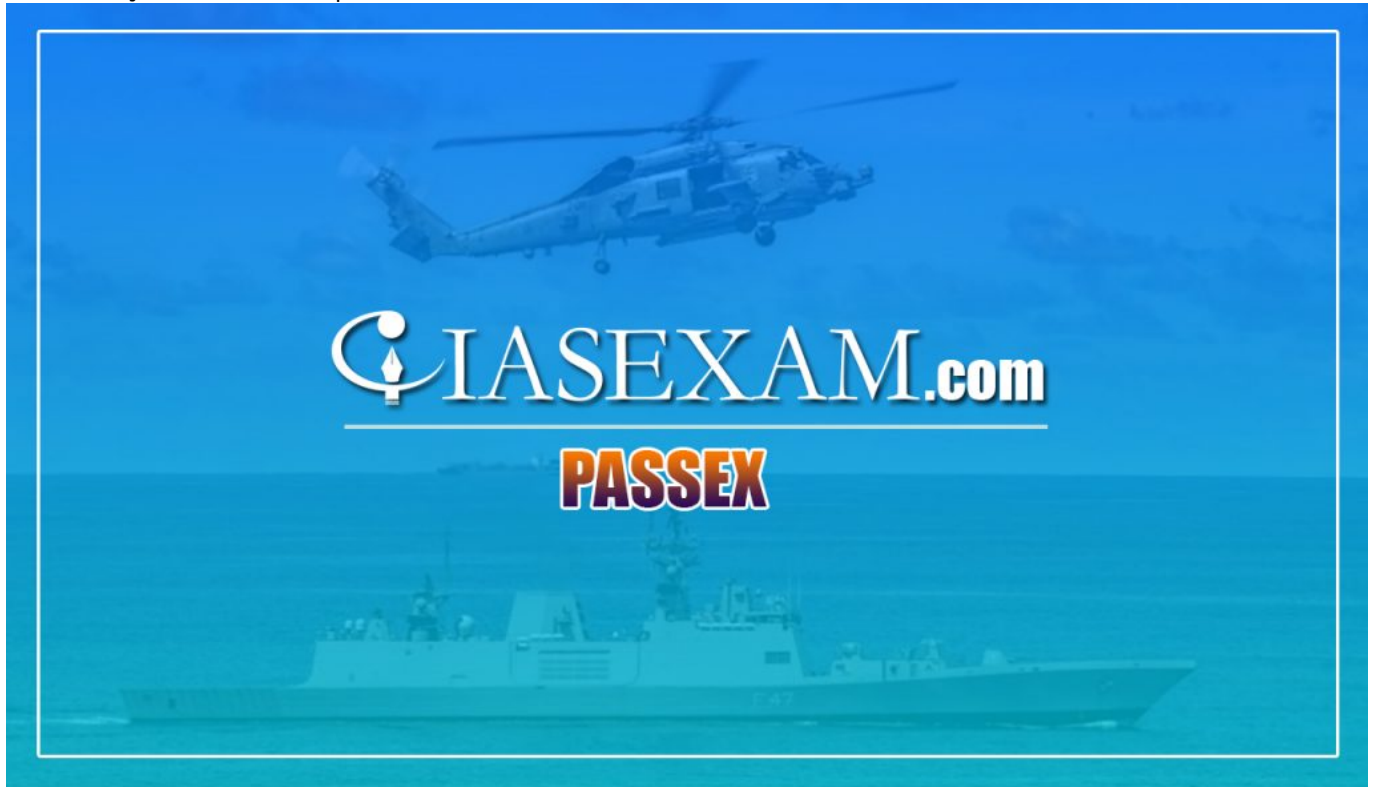


Indian naval ships conduct Passage Exercise (PASSEX) with US Navy

written by iasexam.com | 21/07/2020



A US Navy carrier strike group, led by USS Nimitz, on Monday conducted maritime drills with Indian warships in the Indian Ocean region (IOR), against the backdrop of the India-China border standoff in Ladakh, people familiar with the development said on Monday.

The passage exercise involved a total of eight Indian and US warships, said an official, requesting anonymity. The drills also came at a time when tensions have mounted over China's activities in the South China Sea, where the US Navy has just conducted a major exercise that involved two carrier strike groups.

Key Highlights

- While operating together, the US and Indian naval forces conducted high-end exercises designed to maximize training and interoperability, including air defence, the US 7th Fleet said in a statement. It said the Nimitz carrier strike group's operations were designed to provide security throughout the region while building partnerships with friends and allies.
- The 7th Fleet is the largest of the US Navy's forward deployed fleets.
- The Nimitz carrier strike group, consisting of flagship USS Nimitz, Ticonderoga-class guided missile cruiser USS Princeton and Arleigh Burke-class guided missile destroyers USS Sterett and USS Ralph Johnson took part in the drills. India was represented by INS Rana, INS Sahyadri, INS Shivalik and INS Kamorta.
- The Indian Air Force has deployed half a squadron (eight to 10) of its Jaguar fighters at the Car Nicobar air base, in a show of strength amidst the tense confrontation between Indian and China along the Line of Actual Control (LAC) in Ladakh, said a third official.
- The IAF has raised its guard along the northern border to deal with any military provocation

by the Chinese forces and forward bases have been ordered to be on their highest state of alert.

- The Andaman and Nicobar Islands are more than 1,200 km from mainland India. A significant volume of China's oil imports passes through the Malacca Strait, which is south-east of these islands.
- The Nimitz carrier strike group entered the Indian Ocean from the Malacca Strait and is on its way to the Persian Gulf.
- The navy has been on an operational alert in the Indian Ocean where scores of warships are ready for any task in the aftermath of the border row. It has positioned warships along critical sea lanes of communications and choke points under its mission-based deployment and the vessels could be diverted for any mission.
- The US deployment to the South China Sea came after China's People's Liberation Army-Navy conducted drills in the contested waters, provoking a sharp reaction from neighbouring countries and Washington. The US Navy has said its operations in the South China Sea are designed to support a "free and open" Indo-Pacific.

SOURCE: *The Indian Express, Hindustan Times*