

WORLD HYDROGRAPHY DAY

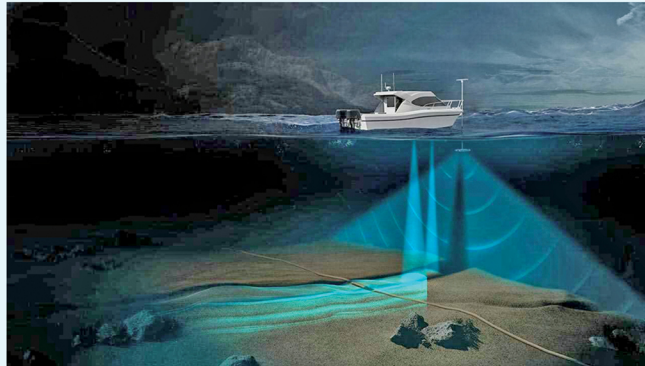
NAVY HYDROGRAPHIC SERVICE PLAYS PIVOTAL ROLE

Hydrography involves measuring depth of the navigable waters and mapping of those interested areas. Thus, the hydrography can be defined as the scientific methodology of mapping data such as hazards to navigation, the nature of the seabed, rocks, and light-houses that support safe navigation. The International Hydrographic Organisation (IHO) has been established in Monaco with 98 member's countries, to set guidelines and criteria for hydrographic works for its member countries.

By a UN charter that was proposed by the IHO, the 21st June in each year is dedicated to celebrate the World Hydrography Day under a special theme. The main purpose of this day is to promote the contribution of hydrography to the world. This year's theme of World Hydrography Day is "Hydrography - contributing to the United Nations Ocean Decade" which aims to highlight how hydrography as an applied science supports the sustainable use of the oceans. This includes how to use updated maps and data for initiatives to protect the marine environment, coastal zone management, maritime protected areas, maritime data infrastructure, renewable energy and all other components of the sustainable economy.

The use of the ocean as a means of transportation as well as its impact on our lives will be made known to interested parties in conjunction with this special day. Furthermore, this day will help to educate people regarding the contribution of hydrographic surveyors for the rapid development of countries, through collecting, updating and managing hydrographic data.

In the backdrop where plans are being made to develop Sri Lanka as a maritime hub in the South Asian



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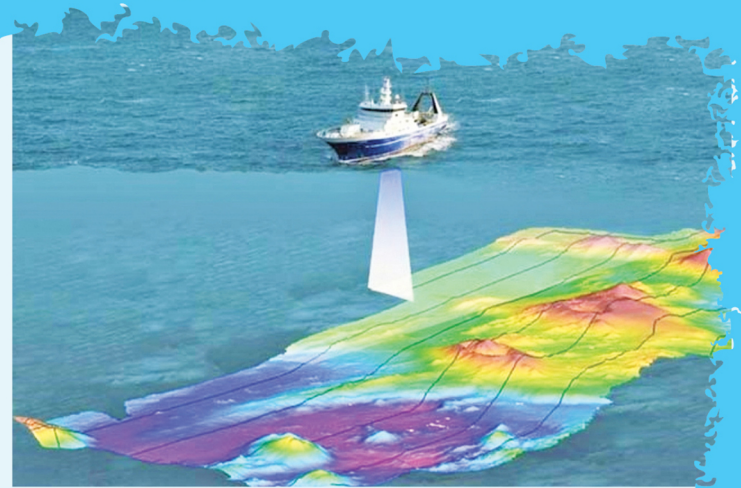
region, it is imperative that all stakeholders in the maritime sector will be benefited through hydrographic products. Therefore, there is also a timely need to develop the hydrography sector in Sri Lanka as this directly contributes to almost every process that takes place in the sea and on the subsoil. The development of hydrography has the potential to reap great benefits.

Most countries in the world carry out their hydrographic surveys through navies. All states in the Indian Ocean Region except Saudi Arabia and Sri Lanka have delegated hydrographic surveys to their navies. In Sri Lanka, then the Royal Navy handed over hydrography related affairs to the Sri Lanka Navy. But in 1984, due to certain situations prevailing in the country, the contribution of the Navy had to be further directed towards the security concerns. Hence, the responsibilities pertaining to hydrography shouldered by the Navy was transferred to NARA by an Act. Eventhough, in 2016, the Navy Hydrographic Service re-entered into hydrographic surveying through a

Memorandum of Understanding with NARA. Since then, Hydrographic surveying of Sri Lanka has been carried out jointly by the Sri Lanka Navy Hydrographic Service and the National Hydrographic Office of NARA.

There are number of reasons why countries around the world entrust hydrography to the navies of particular countries. The most important reason is to ensure the national security of the country. The main responsibility of the Navy is ensuring the maritime security of a country. In this context, it is important to ensure the safety of confidential maritime data that directly affect national security. This confidential data and information should be handled only through an agency under the Ministry of Defence. It is also an advantage that the skilled manpower and other resources of a country's navy is effectively utilized for hydrographic affairs at no extra cost to the government.

The last major survey of the seas around Sri Lanka was carried out by the Royal Navy during the period 1875-1950. According to the SOLAS



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Chapter V, the coastal state is responsible for the safety of navigation of its water by providing updated bathymetric data and other required information. This responsibility can only be fulfilled by an organisation that has the capability and commitment to do so. Reflecting this, the Sri Lanka Navy Hydrographic Service having re-entered the field of hydrographic surveying in 2016, carried out surveys in Sri Lankan waters in a very short period of time in association with the NARA. Accordingly, sea areas of depths less than 200 m have been surveyed to an extent from 8% to 30% and depths of more than 200 m have been surveyed to an extent from 2% to 8%. In addition, Sri Lanka Navy Hydrographic Service has contributed its services to the following public and private agencies as well.

- Survey work near Anavilundawa Sanctuary - Ministry of Wildlife and Forest Conservation.
- Measurement of Basic Spatial Values - Survey Department
- Surveying of Beruwala Fisheries Harbour - Sri Lanka Ports Authority
- Delimitation for aquaculture of sea cucumbers - NAQDA
- Survey of Hambantota Fisheries Harbour - Ministry of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources
- Surveying of Hambantota International Port - Hambantota Port Group Pvt Ltd
- Beira Lake South Survey - Ministry

of Megapolis and Western Development

h. Survey work related to Kelani River - Survey Department

A country's hydrographic service contributes directly and indirectly to a country's GDP, through services such as,

- Provide data, charts and facilities for navigation.
- Provide data required for naval operations.
- Providing data and expertise required for coastal conservation and management.
- Provide technical knowledge and data needed to identify and protect marine ecosystems.
- Provide data needed to identify and explore marine resources.
- Installation of seabed pipelines, provision of seabed data for laying communication lines.
- Providing data and expertise to determine local maritime boundaries.
- Providing data for various maritime research and educational activities

The field of hydrography is not yet a well-known topic in Sri Lanka. Therefore, World Hydrography Day is a great opportunity to make the subject known to others and to take appropriate action. Proper study of the potential in the field of hydrography and taking suitable action will be beneficial to the field as well as to the country as a whole.